



Calvary messenger

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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2014

Meditation

Whisper His Name.....1

Editorial

What Makes Jesus Believable?2

Announcements

Prairie Lighthouse Ministry4

Anabaptist Identity Conference5

Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute6-7

While Being Radiated8

Ministers' Meeting Messages

4. The Doctrine of Repentance.....10

Marriages14

Cradle Roll.....15

Ordinations16

Obituaries17

Observations20

Mission Awareness

Lift Up Your Eyes25

Helpers at Home

A Quiet Heart29

Junior Messages

Daddy, There's a Verse31

Youth Messages

Growing Through Persecution..... 32


Thought Gems back cover

Whisper His Name

Ruth Miller, Honey Grove, PA

Whisper His name in the brightness of morning,
Whisper His name in the noontide heat,
Whisper His name in the twilight of evening;
Jesus is here!
Whisper His name!

King of all Kings at the dawn of the morning,
Lord of all Lords in the mid-day fair,
Savior and Friend in the shadows of evening;
Jesus is here!
Whisper His name!

Enter His courts at the break of the morning,
Bask in His love in the noon time toils,
Trust in His grace in sorrows of midnight;
Jesus is here!
Whisper His name! 

What Makes Jesus Believable?

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1,2).

God does not ask us to believe the Gospel because of one isolated fact. The verses above say He spoke often and in different ways. Three times (at His baptism, His transfiguration, and shortly before He was crucified) God spoke from heaven to affirm the teaching, life and work of Jesus Christ (See Matthew 3:17; 17:5, and John 12:28, 29).

God often spoke by miracles. These all add evidence that He is the Son of God. When someone doubts the Good News, because of something that doesn't make sense to him, he should consider that God did not use just one incident to put our doubts to rest.

Granted, we can be too gullible. We all need help in knowing where to place our faith. We are not asked to believe the truth of the Gospel simply because Jesus was born of

a virgin. The virgin birth is just *one of many evidences* of His role in bringing us mortals to God. His conception and birth were certainly unusual. Have you ever met a person who didn't have an earthly father? I have not.

What are some other ways Jesus was acclaimed to be the Son of God? (This is not a complete list!)

- Did you ever hear of a birth of a peasant baby boy that had folks come to see him after his birth was announced to them by angels? (Luke 2:8-18).

- Have you ever heard of a very old man going regularly to the temple to wait for the coming of Messiah who saw a young couple bring in their child for the rites of birth and then identified the child as the Savior of the world? Remember how this man exclaimed, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace...For

mine eyes have seen thy salvation...A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel....” (Luke 2:28-32 and 34, 35).

- Have you ever met a 12-year-old that could hold his own in discussion of questions about the mysteries and meaning of life with mature, learned men? (Luke 2:41-52)

- Have you ever observed mere water made into a refreshing grape drink? (John 2:1-11).

- Have you ever seen a man walk on water? (not ice, *water!*) (Matthew 14:25-27).

- Have you ever seen someone cast out demons, heal scores of people and even raise some from the dead? (Matthew 8:16; John 11).

- Have you ever seen a man feed thousands of people with one small lunch? (Matthew 14:15-21; Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; and John 6:5-14)

- Have you ever heard a man stop a life-threatening windstorm by speaking to it? (Matthew 8:24-27; Mark 4:37-41; Luke 8 8:23-25).

- Have you ever seen or heard a man merely speak to a fruit tree that rendered it fruitless forever afterward? (Matthew 21:18-20; Mark 11:12-14, 20, 21).

- Have you ever heard of a man rising from the grave after he had been buried for three days, then to

have an angel point to the grave and say, “He is not here, for he is risen as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Matthew 28:6).

- Have you ever seen a man rise off the ground without any means of support, defy gravity, and keep on going up and out of sight into heaven? (Acts 1:9).

Here’s my final question: Is there any reason to doubt that He will return for his bride as the angels said He would? (Acts 1:11).

God spoke from heaven. Eye witnesses of Jesus Christ saw and heard what He did and said and recorded them for us. No one else comes close to doing the amazing things He did. (See John 7:44-46) No one else said the life-imparting things He said. All of them are true (1 John 4:1-3). None of them are “cunningly devised fables” (2 Peter 1:16).


All these incidents would surely get our attention if we were not so strongly bent toward selfish actions and reactions. Unless we have His grace and help, we take ways to do things that put us at the center of attention and that benefit us. Furthermore, we naturally ignore or take advantage of our neighbors.

Jesus invites us to come to Him and learn from Him (Matthew 11:28-30). When we receive Jesus as the

Son of God He dwells in us. We are welcome, but we must come “on our knees” as it were, in repentance and faith. He provides faith for us to live by His power. He has also prepared a place for us to come and live with Him forever when this life is over. (John 14:1-6)

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had

by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” (Hebrews 1:3)

Jesus will finish His work at the end of time. As He fulfilled the prophecies of His first coming, so He will fulfill other prophecies when He comes in the clouds with power and great glory! Every soul must then go with Him. He comes to reward those prepared for Him. *Even so, come Lord Jesus!* —PLM 

ANNOUNCEMENT

Prairie Lighthouse is a new ministry in Hutchinson, KS, for men who have just been released from prison. We were able to obtain a sizable facility that was last used as a retirement home which will meet our needs quite well. We want to provide ex-inmates with the support, friendship, and accountability they need to succeed.

We are looking for a married couple with a pioneering spirit to serve as houseparents. One requirement is that they have no young children.

Please contact: Joshua Yoder

10008 W. Blanchard Ave., Partridge, KS 67566 | P: 620-707-1317 

A child that grows up without realizing that “No” is a complete thought has a distinct disadvantage.

ANNOUNCEMENT

ANABAPTIST IDENTITY CONFERENCE


To be held, the Lord willing, February 13, 14, and 15, 2014.
(Thursday evening, all day Friday and Saturday),
In Pinecraft, Sarasota, Florida.

**WHO ARE WE? WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?
WHERE ARE WE GOING?**

Speakers:

Edwin Blosser, Tampico, IL
Aaron Stoll, Caneyville, KY
John D. Martin, Chambersburg, PA
Bryce Geiser, Caneyville, KY
Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN
Shannon Latham, Caneyville, KY
Stuart Loomis, Stover, MO

Coordinators:

Nathan Overholt, Phone: 941-954-2399
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and
The Christian Hymnary Publishers,
P. O. Box 7159
Sarasota, FL 34278
E-mail: songs4nations@verizon.net 

Eighth Annual Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute

“One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts” (Ps. 145:4).

Mark your calendars for Feb. 28 and Mar. 1, 2014. This term’s school board institute is scheduled to be held at Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church, Goshen, IN. It is planned for school board members, ministers, and principals—anyone involved with the overall planning and operation of our Christian day schools:

Some of the scheduled main addresses include:

- *Lessons I’ve Learned Since I Came on the Board*
- *High School—What Are We Trying to Accomplish?*
- *Practical Ideas for Cultivating Hearts of Service*
- *Why Teach Music?*
- *Restoring Hope: The School’s Role in Supporting the Church and Home in the Rising Generation*
- *Helping Parents Parent*
- panel discussion

Some choices of sectional topics planned are:

- *Building Trustful Teamwork in the School Family*
- *What is the School Board? --Its Structure and Function*
- *Who Lives Here? --How School Layout and Maintenance can Affect Attitude*
- *The Blessing of Mature Men as Helpers in the*

Classrooms

- *Dealing with a Problem Child of Staff*
- *The Chairman's Role in Effective Leadership*
- *Directing Boy-Girl Relationships in School*
- *Practical Ideas for Cultivating Hearts of Service*
- *Ministers Providing Oversight and Support without Meddling*
- *Classroom Visitation:*
What to look for; Encouraging Feedback, Helpful Follow-up

Confirmed speakers include:

Leon Bontrager, Darrel Hershberger, Philip Horst, John M. Martin, John Miller, Laverne Miller, Mark Miller, Raymond Peachy, John Risser, Jonas Sauder, Chester Weaver, Jamin Yoder, and Paul Yoder.

Programs will be mailed in early January. If you have any questions or comments on the program, contact someone on the planning committee:

Allen Beiler 540-337-4106

Edwin Eby 717-977-6607

Lee Lehman 717-263-9710

Mark Miller 330-231-6664

Jonas Sauder 717-285-3495

You may email questions, suggestions, or requests to be put onto the mailing list to casbinstitute@gmail.com

Submitted by Jonas Sauder 

While Being Radiated

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

The doctor sat on his little stool and explained to me the results of the biopsy. It was an aggressive case of prostate cancer. Eventually this led to the beginning of 45 treatments of radiation. After several treatments, I noticed something. The technicians, Ed and Andi, got me positioned properly on the flat bench and made sure the markers they placed on my body were properly aligned for the machine. Then they hurriedly left the room and closed the heavy door (about six inches thick) behind them. This was to protect them from unwelcome radiation.

I kidded them about running out and leaving me alone in a tightly closed room. They assured me that I was not forsaken. They watched me closely through the monitoring cameras. If I would have called for help they would have been right there. Even though they left me in the room alone, I was not forsaken nor out of their sight.

While being radiated, I prayed for God's touch of blessing on the treatment. Even though I was humanly alone in the closed room, I also knew I wasn't alone. God's promise in His Word is: "I will never

leave thee, nor forsake thee. So we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5b-6).

The journey though life stops at many unanticipated places. For some people it is many stops at a cancer center for treatment. Those stops are often accompanied by pain and much uncertainty of the future. This experience has put me in touch with fellow travelers in a similar journey. Paul wrote about the whole creation groaning in pain. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for the adoption," (Romans 8:22,23 NRSV). This is one of those experiences that remind us of Hebrews 13:14, "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

However, the good news for the believer in this groaning and painful journey is the precious promises of God. Those are the times we hold to the promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." We have assurance that God doesn't hurry out of our life and close the door. Paul wrote about the whole creation groaning in pain.

He reminds us us that nothing can separate us from God's love to us through Christ. "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38,39 NRSV).

We know God doesn't hurry out and close the door. David wrote, "For the Lord...forsaketh not his saints, they are preserved forever" (Psalm 37:28). God assures us that He will not forsake us on our journey toward the "city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

While we have the assurance of God's presence in our earthly journey, we can also anticipate a new heaven where we will be with our Lord. The Apostle John was banished to the Isle of Patmos. While there, God gave him a vision of events to come. He saw a "holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven...saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God." Just think of this: The future of the disciple of Christ will be in the very presence of God himself. Not only will we be with God, but notice what else we can anticipate, "And God shall

wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Revelation 21:2-4).


"Wipe away all tears." John saw a future heaven where there will be no more weeping over the sickness and death of our loved ones. Some writers and poets have made applications to comfort and encourage us in our present journey. I have walked the path of grief. One phrase of a song sung by Jimmy Davis has stayed in my memory for these many years. The phrase that stuck with me is from the song, "Someone to Care."

"He'll come down from the skies
And brush the tears from your eyes.

You're His child and He cares for you."

Life is a journey. It's a journey with pain and uncertainty of tomorrow. This journey will end. For the disciple of Jesus, the end of this journey will be the beginning of an eternal joy and peace resting in the very presence of the Lord.

In the meanwhile, if it feels like your Ed and Andi left you alone in your world of trials and pains, be assured of this promise from God, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." God is as good as His Word!

[November 25, 2013.] 

Ministers' Meeting Messages

This is a condensation of a message preached at the ministers meetings hosted by the Holmes County, Ohio, churches on April 2-4, 2013, and held at Fairlawn Mennonite Church, Apple Creek, OH. Seven sermons and two women's session are available from Victory Music Services, P.O. Box 1498, North Highlands, CA, 95660, for \$50, postpaid. Telephone: 443-480-1489.

4. The Doctrine of Repentance

John D. Martin, Chambersburg, PA

A question that arose with regard to repentance in the late 1790's was this: "How can you be sure that you have a saving faith?" The answer given by some fiery revivalists was, "You must have an emotionally defining moment with God. That's the proof that you have faith." They also said, "You need to have a second defining moment to eradicate the old nature and establish holiness in your life." This held a very forceful appeal.

A godly bishop looked at the situation and identified the problem with this analysis. He said that if you have a genuine experience with the Lord, and you have allowed God to do a work in your heart that is so thorough that you sense in your life hatred changing to love, incontinence changing to chastity, lying changing to honesty, covetousness changing to liberality,

and above all, pride changing to humility, you have experienced a true work of repentance. In his mind true repentance is a thorough, ongoing work in the life of the believer. Humility gives major evidence.

In Romans 12, the first two verses tell us about the transformed life. Verse 3 gives us a clear mark of a renewed mind, which means that if we allow this process of repentance to work itself deeper and deeper into our lives, it will result in a pure love to God and to our neighbor.

John Bunyan was once asked by a king of England to sum up the Gospel in one word, He thought and finally said, "Repent!"

The first word that Jesus spoke when He began preaching, was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The time was fulfilled and the kingdom of God was at hand. The Amplified Bible gives this: Having change of mind which issues in regret for the past and in a change

in conduct for the better; and belief in the Gospel. It was also the keynote emphasis in the first sermon Peter preached after the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. Acts 2:37 says, “God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” Christ told five of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 to repent.

My neighbor said she went to church for 30 years before she heard the word “Repentance” spoken from the pulpit.

Let us look at genuine repentance characterized, repentance compromised, and repentance confirmed.

Repentance Characterized:

This is more than a mere change of thought. It means a change to a new mind—a mind that processes everything differently than it did before. In Luke 3:10, he was asked what he was asking for. He said in essence, if you have two coats, give away one. If you have extra food, give the extra away. That will show that you have repented. We are naturally acquisitive. It is not natural to do that. We are driven by our desire for security so we accumulate.

I want to show you that this is not just changing a few surface thoughts. It is a drastic change of response. I used to wonder why the Sermon on the Mount does not include emphasis

on the new birth. Then I saw that the beginning gives us a blow-by-blow description of the new birth. When we become poor in spirit and mourn, we see things very differently than before. Our whole outlook on life changes. The renewed mind sees everything in the reality that God sees it in. This change of mind is a gift of God.

It is dangerous to put it off. Time changes us. We make our decisions, then our decisions make us.

What are the evidences of true repentance?

- Sin is abhorred. In 2 Corinthians 7:10 we see that the fascination for sin goes away as a new fascination for God’s approval comes in. I do not understand those people who say they’ve repented but obviously are not done with the world. Repentance gives you an abhorrence of what’s in the world. It radically changes our values.

I think it’s good to preach good morals, but when we preach good morals, we still have not preached repentance, we’ve shown the need for it. Morals tell us what’s right and wrong. Values have to do with what’s most important. Hebrews 11 is all about values. Moses saw the reproach of Christ of more value than the treasures of Egypt. Worship is about “worthship”—about what you value

the most.

Paul said, “To me to live is Christ.” That’s what was most important to him. All of us have something that is most important to us. For some people that is “my business,” or “the retirement that I’m planning,” or “fishing or hunting,” or “whatever”. You can check this out tonight. If you have truly repented, the kingdom of God is the number one passion of your life.

- The disposition to repeat sin is gone. You may take a wrong step, but you won’t repeat. Something has been planted in your being that rises up if you tell a lie and convicts you and you will confess and do everything necessary to get that lie cleansed from your life. As many as are driven by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. I would say, if you must ask, “Is the man a Christian,” he probably is not.

- The conduct changes to increasing Christlikeness. John says that we are to abide in Christ.

- Confession and restitution become a way of life.

Repentance compromised:

The human heart is loathe to repent. Why? Because of fear or bitterness. Bitterness is wounded pride. We hide behind walls. We don’t want ever to be hurt again. People will think bad of us and it’s just going

to be a disaster. That’s why there’s partial repentance.

- There’s no total change of heart. A few ideas change even though assent is given to a few good things. A little reform takes place here and there, but the outlook is unchanged. If they could think that sin would end in happiness, they would never forsake it. Basically, they fear punishment. Charles Finney said, “Any person who is a Christian primarily to escape hell shall surely go there.” The early Anabaptists were not paranoid about whether or not they were saved. They committed their life to the kingdom and that would take care of itself. It was the Protestants who were always worried about whether they were going to heaven or hell. The person who has thoroughly repented needs not to have those concerns, because he’s had a total change of mind.

- The feelings have not changed. The person still secretly loves to sin. If you talk to him about the little compromises he’s making, he shrugs and says, “What’s the big deal?”

- It rationalizes. They try to make you believe they had spiritual reasons for doing what they did. It apologizes and explains. It wants you to think that things are not really as they appear to be.

- There is a partial reformation of the conduct.

- It's temporary. It's high-maintenance. Israel was constantly going back to sin and idolatry. The prophet felt he could not get them to go forward for any length of time.

- Their reformation is a forced reformation. They must constantly be cajoled into right conduct. They will obey God grudgingly, but they will never please Him. There is an important difference between *obeying God* and *pleasing God*.

- He drifts into self-righteousness. He focuses on a few things he does well and watches if others are failing in that area. A neighbor who was not serving he Lord one time told me that he noticed that I dried my hay on Sunday.

- There is a false security. These people are complacent and unconcerned. They have less and less conviction. It just sort of fizzles out. If you try to help them they lack a sense of need for repentance.

- There's a hardened heart. Their religion is half-hearted. Their church attendance is irregular. They get no joy out of worship. Watch them sing and you see half-heartedness.

- The focus drifts from Christ to


something else.

In Revelation 2:3, the church at Ephesus looks like a very good church, but they had left their first love. The focus had moved from devotion to Jesus to keeping the church pure. They *left* their first love. The intensity had not diminished, but it had shifted from Christ to something else.

Repentance Confirmed:

Repentance is a beautiful thing. It has wonderful fruits. God loves repentance. Cornelius did a lot of wonderful things, but he hadn't repented until Peter came and explained that step to him.

It is by repentance that we enter the kingdom of God. Repentance is the ability to make decisions today that will still be good tomorrow and on into the future. His work has the mark of spiritual permanence on it. If I meet you in 30 years from now, I expect you to still be driven by the presence of Jesus in your life, Who entered into your life when you repented.

When God says to do something and we do it willingly, that is clearly the repentant way of life. 

Do what you're assigned and then some. "Then some" is what makes your contribution outstanding.

marriages

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

Helmuth-Beachy

Bro. Galen, son of Glen and Rosanna Helmuth, Belvidere, TN, and Sis. Edith, daughter of Henry and Clara Beachy, Huntland, TN, at First United Methodist Church for Belvidere Mennonite Church on October 12, 2013, by Stephen Beachy.

Helmuth-Schwartz

Bro. Victor, son of Frederick and Anna Helmuth, Piedmont, OH, and Sis. Edna, daughter of Amos and Ida Schwartz, Sommerton, OH, at Antrim Mennonite Church on Oct. 18, 2013, by Jason Miller.

Herschberger-Otto

Bro. James, son of Mervin and Verna Herschberger, Sullivan, IL, and Sis. Sharon, daughter of Willis and Dorothy Otto, Humboldt, IL, at Pleasant View Mennonite, Arcola, IL, on Oct. 19, 2013, by Howard Kuhns.

Histand-Hostetler

Bro. Wendall, son of Gerald and Donna Histand, Rome, PA, and Sis. Katie, daughter of Amos and Emma Hostetler, Watsontown, PA, at Watsontown Alliance Church for Shekinah Church on Nov. 2, 2013, by Dave Beiler.

Knepp-Stoltzfus

Bro. Jeremy, son of Ernest and Delilah Knepp, Whiteville, TN, and Sis. Krista, daughter of Ivan and Katrina Stoltzfus, Middleburg, PA, at Richfield Mennonite Church for Shekinah Church, on Sept. 7, 2013, by Dave Beiler.

Schbach-Beiler

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

Schrock-Beachy

Bro. Eldon, son of Simon and Pauline Schrock, Catlett, VA, and Sis. Anita, daughter of Philip and Ruth Beachy, Salisbury, PA, at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church for Mountain View Mennonite Church on Nov. 2, 2013, by David Nisly.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Daniel, son of Joe and Twila Yoder, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Kathy, daughter of John and Freida Miller, Hutchinson, KS, at First Presbyterian, Hutchinson, for Center A.M. Church, on Nov. 9, 2013, by David M. Yoder.

Yoder-Tice

Bro. Jerry, Grantsville, MD, son of Crist and Elnora Mae Yoder, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Ella Tice, Grantsville, MD, daughter of the late Simon and Ruth Tice, at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church for

Mountain View Mennonite Church, on Oct. 26, 2013, by Merlin Beachy.

Zook-Yoder

Bro. Randall, son of Jonathan and Mary Ann Zook, Rural Retreat, VA, and Sis. Mary, daughter of Mark and Sandra Yoder, Trout Creek, MT, at Crossroads Church of Christ for Light and Hope Christian Fellowship on Nov. 9, 2013, by John Beiler.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Philip and Rosanna (Troyer), Fredonia, KY, second child and dau., Jolene Rose, Nov. 21, 2013.

Bontrager, Clifford and Krista (Martin), Aroda, VA, third child and son, Andre' Lamont, Oct. 29, 2013.

Hershberger, Adrian and Miriam (Esh), Antrim, OH, third child, second son, Leyton Jude, Oct. 12, 2013.

Hochstetler, Jethro and Twila (Beiler), Aroda, VA, first child and dau., Olivia Brooke, Nov. 9, 2013.

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

Gerber, John and Tanya (Jantzi), Millbank, ON, fourth child, third dau., Rachel Marie, Oct. 3, 2013.

Kuhns, Johnny and Verna (Miller), Sullivan, IL, second child and dau., Stephanie Laine, Oct. 4, 2013.

Miller, Alan and Laura (Plank), Arthur, IL, fifth child, third son, Joshua Adrian, Sept. 20, 2013.

Miller, Caleb and Rosalyn (Stoltzfus), Spencerville, IN, first child and son, Tyler Wade, Sept. 18, 2013.

Miller, Darrell and Hannah (Gingrich), Uniontown, OH, third child and son, Bryan Mark, Oct. 3, 2013.

Miller, Glenn Dale and Ruth Eileen (Lapp), Bird-in-Hand, PA, fifth child, second son, Jamin Andrew, Nov. 12, 2013.

Miller, Richard and Mary (Glick), Madison, NY, tenth child, fourth son, Jordan Richard, Sept. 1, 2013.

Nisly, Rod and Sylvia (Miller), Nickerson, KS, ninth child, fifth dau., Sarah Grace, Nov. 10, 2013.

Schrock, Ellis and Daniela (Ciocan), Antrim, OH/Suceava, Romania, second child, first son, James Eliot, Oct. 31, 2013.

Stoltzfus, Glendon and Rhoda (Stoltzfus), New Holland, PA, first child and son, Brycen Cole, Nov. 5, 2013.

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

Weaver, Daniel and Ayse (Nix), Laclede, MO, first child and dau., Chantel Danae, Sept. 6, 2013.

Weirich, Caleb and Sheryl (Hochstetler), Aroda, VA, third child and dau., Raquel Grace, Oct. 6, 2013.

Yoder, Lavern and Elizabeth (Miller), Fredonia, KY, sixth child and son, Jadon Don, Oct. 14, 2013.

Yoder, Mark and Alana (Rodes), Leon, IA, first child and dau., Tirzah Kate, Oct. 3, 2013.

Yoder, Wendal and LaRhea (Stutzman), Leon, IA, first child and dau., Chanelle Rose, Oct. 25, 2013.

ordinations

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

Bro. John Gerber, 33, of Millbank, Ontario, was ordained as minister at Cedar Grove A.M. Church, Wellesley, ON, on Oct. 27, 2013. Preordination messages were given by Jay Mast, Goodspring, TN. The charge was given by Arthur Gerber, assisted by Laverne Ropp and Lee Stoltzfus. The lot was shared by four brothers: Wayne, Ralph, Daniel and John Gerber.

Bro. Floyd King, 39, was ordained as minister for Mine Road A.M. Church, Kinzers, PA, on Nov. 17, 2013. The ordination was held at Faith Mennonite High School due to lack of space at the church. The charge was given by Alvin Stoltzfus, assisted by Elmer Glick and John U. Glick. Others in the lot were Randy Lapp, Marcus Beiler, and Larry Beiler.

Bro. Thomas R. Wagler, 59, of Harville, OH, was ordained as bishop of Pleasant View Amish Mennonite Church, Hartville, OH, on Oct. 27, 2013. Preordination messages were given by Bobby Miller and Philip Miller, both from Holmes County, OH. The charge was given by Homer Zook, assisted by Bobby Miller and Philip Miller. Tom's brother, Mark Wagler, was also in the lot.

Bro. Jonathan Weaver, 38, was ordained as bishop at Sonlight Bible Fellowship Mennonite Church at Wendell, ID, on Nov. 10, 2013. Preordination messages were given by ministers of Gospel Light Fellowship, Lincoln, MO. The charge was given by B. Truman Yoder, assisted by Merle Yoder and Alton Garber. Galen Hoover was also in the lot.

Beachy, Alma “Fern” (Yutzy), 88, of Staunton, VA, died peacefully Nov. 23, 2013, at her home. She was born at Hutchinson, KS, January 15, 1925, daughter of the late Eli N. and Sylvia (Miller) Yutzy.

She was a faithful member of Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA.

On April 7, 1968, she was married to Dan Yoder of Hutchinson, KS. He preceded her in death on Feb. 21, 1970. On January 24, 1971, she was married to Jonas Swartzentruber of Montezuma, GA. He preceded her in death on Dec. 25, 1980. On August 28, 1983, she was married to Rufus Beachy, Sr., a widower from Staunton, VA. He was her beloved companion for 30 years, preceding her in death on Oct. 30, 2013.

Surviving from the Beachy family are Edward (Louise Miller), Honey Brook, PA; Henry (Clara Miller), Huntland, TN; Alton (Lovina Helmuth), Plain City, OH; Simon (Loretta Byler), Itasca, TX; Marvin (Orpha Beiler), Marion, KY; and Rufus, Jr., (Saloma Byler), Staunton, VA; three sisters: Elizabeth (William) Nisly, Emma (Harley) Nisly, and Laura Yutzy, and one sister-in-law, Alta Yutzy, all of Hutchinson, KS. Also surviving are 18 nieces and nephews, 18 step children, 128 step grandchildren, 308 step great grandchildren, and 57 step great great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were three

brothers: Herman, John, and Raymond Yutzy, one niece, and six stepchildren.

The funeral was held at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship on Nov. 26, with Simon Schrock and Ken Miller serving. Allen Yoder conducted the committal at the burial in the church cemetery.

Beachy, Rufus E., 94, of Staunton, VA, died Oct. 30, 2013 at his home. He was born August 5, 1919, in Arthur, IL, son of the late Eli and Cora (Yoder) Beachy.

He was a member of Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft, VA.

On Oct. 10, 1946, he was married to Amelia Schrock, who preceded him in death on Sept. 5, 1981. On August 28, 1983, he was married to Alma Fern Yutzy, who survives. Survivors include six sons: Edward (Louise Miller), Honey Brook, PA; Henry (Clara Miller), Huntland, TN; Alton (Lovina Helmuth), Plain City, OH; Simon (Loretta Byler), Itasca, TX; Marvin (Orpha Beiler) Marion, KY; Rufus, Jr., (Saloma Kauffman), of Staunton, VA; 34 grandchildren, 43 great grandchildren, two step great grandchildren; one foster sister, Katie Graber, Arthur, IL, and six nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by a brother, Ervin Beachy and a sister, Dora Schrock.

As a single young man, Rufus was committed to serving Christ and he served in CPS camps. Rufus and Amelia raised their family of six boys, and also

provided care for Pete and Sara Kinsinger, and later for Ed and Annie Mast. Through custom farming and in many other ways he served the community.

The funeral was held at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, with burial in the church cemetery.

Erb, Norma (Zehr), 89, died at her home Oct. 22, 2013. She was born Feb. 4, 1924, in Wellesley Township, daughter of the late David S. and Magdalena (Jantzi) Zehr.

She was a member of Cedar Grove A.M. Church.

On Oct. 22, 1947, she was married to Allan Erb. He survives. Their five surviving children are David (Eva) Erb, Wellesley; John (Shelley) Erb, Monkton; Allan (Linda) Erb, Wellesley; Darlene (Louis) Byler, Milverton; Mary Ellen (James) Ropp, Monkton; and son-in-law, Raymond Paul Gerber, Brunner; 32 grandchildren, 33 great grandchildren; and sister-in-law, Katie Erb, wife of the late Cornelius Erb.

Preceding her in death were daughter Deborah (wife of Raymond Paul Gerber), in 2010; grandson, Nathaniel Erb, in infancy; sisters: Laurene and husband Norman Jantzi; Mary, in infancy; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Elmer and Vera Erb; John and Frieda Erb, Cornelius and Emma Erb; Laura and husband Harvey Nafziger, Norman and Amanda Erb, and Dan G. and Doris Erb.

The funeral was held at Cedar Grove on Oct. 26, with Arthur Gerber, Timothy Gerber, and Paul Jantzi serving. Burial

was in the church cemetery.

Martin, Sheldon Wade, 31, died in a canoeing accident Nov. 17, 2013, on Cheney Reservoir in SE Reno County. He was born May 12, 1982, in Ephrata, PA, oldest son of Grant and Judy Martin, of Newville, PA.

He was a member of Cedar Crest A.M. Church. He was employed at Sanford's Computerworks in Hutchinson, and was a special friend of children and eagerly served Christ wherever opportunity presented itself.

On July 24, 2010, he was married to Louisa Carol Schmucker, at Yoder, KS. She survives. Other survivors are his parents; his brothers: Randal and wife Judy Martin, and their son Michael, Clarkrange, TN; Anthony and wife Amy of Shippensburg, PA; Adrian and wife Angela, also of Shippensburg, PA; and one sister, Sheila of Newville, PA.

The funeral was held at Cedar Crest on Nov. 23, with Lee Nisly and Elmer Smucker serving. The committal was conducted by an uncle, Ivan Martin, with burial in the West Center Cemetery.

Miller, Florence (Zook), 80, of Fredonia, KY, died Oct. 23, 2013. She was born April 4, 1936, daughter of the late Amos C. and Mollie (Byler) Zook.

She was a member of Fredonia Menonite Church.

On March 6, 1964, she was married to Alva T. Miller. He survives. Also surviving are three daughters: Marietta (Leon) Wagler, Princeton, KY; Sharon (Lester)

Eicher, Jesup, GA; and Karen (Daniel) Yoder, Leesburg, OH; and 14 grandchildren. Other survivors are two sisters: Katie Troyer and Mary Jane Beachy and one brother, Crist Zook.

Two sisters and two brothers preceded her in death.

The funeral was held on Oct. 26, with Ruben Miller and Vernon Troyer serving. The burial was in the church cemetery, with the committal conducted by Floyd Lengacher.

Schrock, Mary S., 75, of Stuarts Draft, VA, died after a battle with cancer Oct. 5, 2013. She was born in Princess Anne County, VA, Sept. 26, 1938 to the late Simon and Sadie Yoder) Schrock.

She was a faithful member of Mt. Zion Amish Mennonite Church. On her death bed, she spoke of wonderful things she saw and heard—glimpses of heaven.

She is survived by two sisters-in-law, Edith Schrock, widow of Harvey Schrock, Millersville, PA; Amanda, wife of Noah Schrock, Costa Rica; and brothers Alvin, Staunton, VA; and Elmer, Stuarts Draft; and Noah of Costa Rica. Many nieces and nephews have fond memories of Aunt Mary.

She was preceded in death by a brother Harvey, three sisters: Barbara (and husband John) Beiler, Amanda (and husband John) Summy, Amelia (Rufus) Beachy, and two sisters-in-law, Ida (wife of Elmer) Schrock, and Lucy (wife of Alvin) Schrock.

The funeral was held at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship on Oct. 8, with Alton

Beachy and John Beiler serving. Interment followed in the Mt. Zion Cemetery.

Schrock, Miriam Ruth, 61, of Staunton, VA, died several weeks after a diagnosis of lymphoma on March 19, 2013. She was born July 20, 1951, to the late Lucy (Yoder) and Alvin Schrock at Waynesboro, VA. She dealt with many health issues over the years. Her cheerful outlook and smile inspired many.

She was a member of Mt. Zion Amish Mennonite Church and lived a life dedicated to Christ Jesus and service for Him.

She is survived by her father, Alvin S. Schrock, Staunton; three sisters, Barbara Ann, Staunton; Mary Lois, Raphine, VA; and Sharon Joy, Madison, NY; two brothers: David Alvin (Miriam Hershberger) Schrock, Rutherford, TN; Phillip Ray (Rachel Beiler) Schrock, Cumberland Furnace, TN; four nephews and six nieces and four great nieces.

She was preceded in death by her mother.

The funeral was held at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship on March 22, with Daniel Yoder and Bennie Byler serving. Interment followed in the Mt. Zion Cemetery.

Swarey, Mary M., (Yoder), 88, of Greenville, VA, died Oct. 21, 2013, at her home, surrounded by her family. She was born Sept. 6, 1925, in Belleville, PA, daughter of the late Seth K. and Hettie (Peachey) Yoder.

She was a member of Pilgrim Christian Fellowship.

On Sept. 6, 1947, she was married to

Ben B. Swarey of Stuarts Draft, VA, who preceded her in death on Oct. 19, 1985. Survivors include children: Thomas and Tena, Allen and Sylvia, of Stuarts Draft; Irvin and Sharon, Long Island; VA; Ivan and Lena, Greenville, VA; 21 grandchildren, 40 great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death was an infant son, two sisters, and two brothers.


She was buried at Mt. Zion Cemetery beside her husband.

Yoder, Minnie (Gingerich), 99, of Goshen, IN, died Nov. 9, 2013. She was born at Thomas, OK, May 11, 1914, daughter of the late David and Delilah (Yoder) Gingerich.

She was a member of Fair Haven A. M. Church, Goshen.

On Feb. 10, 1935, she was married to Levi “Lee” Yoder. He died in 1996. Their five surviving children are Nelson (Erma) Yoder, Millersburg, IN; David Yoder, Goshen; Norman (Elizabeth) Yoder, Goshen; and Mabel Yoder, Phoenix, AZ. Other survivors include five grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, and two step great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were two daughters: Alma Neterer and Ruby Yoder; one half sister, Millie Mathis, three sisters: Alma Lambright, Annie Miller, Fannie Miller; and two brothers: Joni Gingerich and Eli Gingerich.

The funeral was held at Fair Haven Church with Wilbur Yoder and Harvey Miller serving. Burial was in Thomas Cemetery, Goshen. 

observations

Walton, Kansas (population 250), is located in Harvey County, about 50 miles east of Partridge. In 2006, Walton was about to lose its public elementary school, when enrollment dropped to 86. They then decided to form a charter school focused on agriculture.

Now their enrollment stands at 186. Four new portable classrooms were added last fall. The waiting list is reported to be 2,018—more than 10 times the present student population.

Students take turns doing the chores which include tending chickens, gathering eggs, and feeding pigs. This

includes weighing and keeping track of the feed intake and cleaning the pig pen. They also keep a few sheep. The pupils and some teachers have chore boots. The pupils love school and are said to prefer cleaning pig stalls to playing at recess. A big attraction for parents is the teaching of a fourth “R,” responsibility.

The article (from *The Furrow*, 11-13) also mentions another charter school in Labette County (close to where our son, Ronald, and his family live) that is somewhat similar. Ronald tells me it is located south of Hwy. 400, along Wallace Road, which

means that we drive past it when we visit Ronalds.

It is interesting that the students doing these projects outside of the classroom have done well in Kansas standardized test scores. Twice they have received the Governor's Achievement Award for scores in the top 5% of schools in Kansas.



I regularly note the names and ages of persons listed on the obituary page of *The Hutchinson News*. A significant number do not reach the three score or the 70 mark. Our church body was recently jolted when an 18 year-old sister was suddenly taken in a traffic accident in which she was not at fault. Her brief life and her untimely departure here touched many lives. More recently, another sister born in 1953, succumbed to cancer. The bright side amid this pain and sorrow is the assurance that both are now with their Lord and Savior.

Earlier this week I attended a funeral at Yoder Mennonite Church for a man aged 55. Only three months earlier he was diagnosed with a very aggressive cancer that did not respond to medical treatment. The service was attended by more than 700 people. Besides family and relatives, his brief life had touched many others in business and church circles. Being taken at such a young age attracts more attention than had he lived to a ripe old age.

He made a commitment to the Lord at a young age. The change was very noticeable and had lifelong effects. He was part of a very successful family business. His personality included an interesting combination of diligence and humility. It was said he would not have wanted the many expressions of praise at his funeral. Without question his business ability was outstanding. But that was not mentioned in the memorial services. As I recall the only reference involving the business was an employee who spoke who had the misfortune of having rolled a company truck. He felt terrible and assumed he would lose his job. This partner of the family-owned company was very gracious and wanted him to stay on.

The importance of business expertise and financial success was not apparent in the memorial service. But the way in which he unselfishly helped others came up repeatedly. The man's wealth and success in material things did not become a barrier to usefulness in things of lasting value.

The church at Laodicea is a stark reminder that our measurement of wealth may be very different from the Lord's. Their self-analysis was that they were well off and had "need of nothing." God's balance sheet showed that they were desperately poor. They were appealed to see their miserable

poverty and not to allow temporal goods to become a barrier to true riches.



Recently I came across a printed sermon by Merle Ruth, entitled: "Let Her Be Covered." This has been transcribed and is available from Still Waters Ministries, 285 Antioch Road, Clarkson, KY 42726 (Phone: 270-242-0459)

History and observation both remind us that this ordinance of God's headship order can be abandoned, often gradually, for a practice that blends in with contemporary appearance. When popular pressure wins over Christian teaching and practice, the negative effect is far reaching. This should not happen and need not happen when Christian churches take seriously what was written to the Christians at Corinth and to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord..." (1 Cor. 1:2).

I wonder what would happen if there was offered a generous sum as a reward for reading this very helpful booklet. The reward for making an honest response to this teaching is worth far more than any monetary figure. And yet, it can be lost by disinterest and indifference. Let us assume that none of us would want that to happen. Perhaps it has never been easier for Christian leaders to do something very simple and

potentially very helpful to preserve and strengthen a principle that has often been lost for lack of needed attention. This message is available and could be placed in every church mailbox with encouragement for every member to read, assured that God's reward for honesty and sincerity is not to be compared with a reward of filthy lucre. To me this possibility seems entirely doable, and also potentially very helpful--in some cases urgent.

Still Waters is eager to honor your orders in any quantity. They are happy to send these messages without charge, but are open to receiving donations at your discretion.

—DLM



My contribution in November had an error. The last paragraph should read like this: "Harvard's Law School's Food Law and Policy Clinic recommends that the dating labels be standardized to help correct the misunderstandings about what those dates mean as the result of their recent study that found that in one year this country wastes 160 billion pounds of food worth 165 billion dollars, which is about 40% of this country's food." I apologize for the misinformation.



"Community" is a concept that seems to have gained visibility and traction among church groups. From time to time, we hear about

“intentional community,” “global community,” or “virtual community.” The agriculture-based rural economy of many of our church communities in bygone years was especially friendly to the concept of community. I recently heard an elderly brother fondly recalling his childhood days and the times of threshing rings and silo-filling rings, as they were called, and the way that big farming projects crowded out the involvement of neighbors to get work done in a timely manner. “Community” was a practical reality, back then, not a fuzzy theory. Shane Hipps says that “virtual community” is a contradiction of terms, since it is more “virtual” than it is “community.” He says that real community involves at least these four ingredients: shared experiences, shared proximity, shared context, and a common vision for the future. Communities are built on the concept of “give and take” and are not sustainable when there is more “take” than “give.”

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Unemployment rates are an important economic indicator in helping us understand which direction the economy is moving. The general trend in recent years has been one of declining unemployment, which is encouraging. However, one of the factors influencing the unemployment rate that doesn't jump off the page is the number of

persons on disability. Persons who qualify for disability support are generally removed from the work force and don't count as unemployed. During the 4-year period from 2008 to 2012, the number of persons on social security disability increased from 7.2 million to 8.5 million, a 20% increase. (Paul Roderick Gregory, Forbes, 6/4/12) If those people would be counted as *unemployed* instead of *disabled*, the unemployment figures would be more sobering.

Two personal acquaintances, one an upper teenager and one in his 50's are currently on disability. The younger gentleman reports job-related anxiety and the older gentleman was gainfully employed until the economic slowdown forced the closing of the company that employed him. He told me that as he was counseling with social services, they suggested that he would qualify for disability. His ability to express himself verbally seems to lag behind his ability to work. These two examples seem to be indicative of an effort to transition people from the ranks of the unemployed to the disabled, which skews unemployment statistics. About 60% of today's disabilities are made up of those who are disabled due to mental disorders and back pain. Young people can qualify if they feel nervous at work or at school.

These notes should be thought-

provoking on several levels:

•Let ‘s pray for our leaders in government that they would foster policies that reflect stewardship and wise direction in the current social climate.


•One reason the government is so involved in social programs and financial support is that the church has encouraged many to look to the state rather than the brotherhood for help in bearing their burdens.

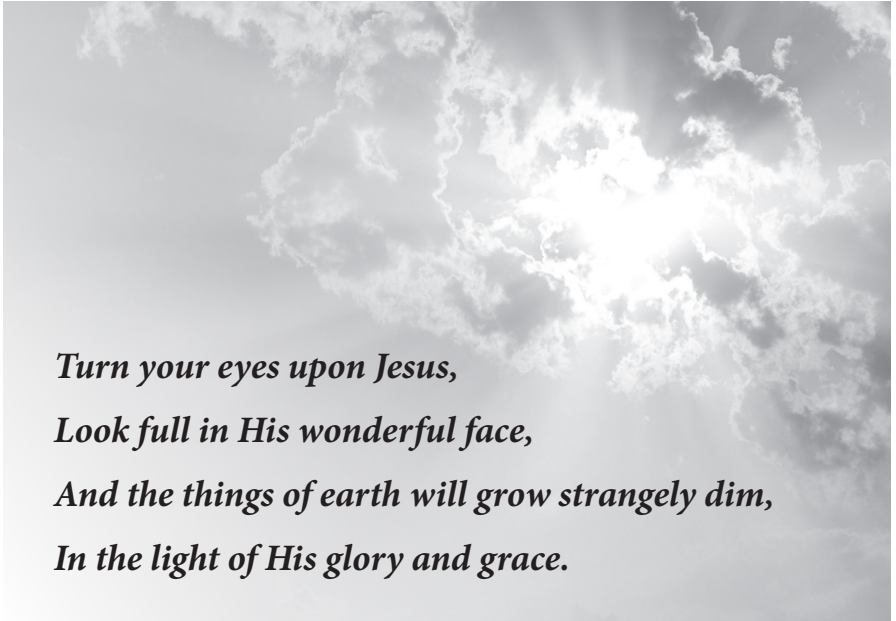
•Are there ways that you and I and our churches should be taking an interest in the needs of our neighbors?

•How do I respond in a helpful way to the needs of the two friends I referred to here? How would you respond to them?

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The Columbus Dispatch reports

that on November 25, a school bus transporting children was pulled over due to reports of erratic driving patterns. The driver had a blood alcohol content triple the legal driving limit. She was also transporting an open container of alcohol. She now faces unpleasant charges. Thankfully, no one was hurt. Understandably, authorities take a dim view of this person’s choices. It is easy for us to rise in righteous indignation at such irresponsibility. I am often reminded of the words of the late columnist, John McCormally, himself a recovering alcoholic who commented on the tragedy of drinking and driving this way, “But for the grace of God, there go I!” His attitude is one we all do well to emulate. —RJM 



*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Lift Up Your Eyes

Delbert Derstine, Guadalajara, Mexico

Say not ye, *There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you. Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest*" (John 4:35).

Imagine with me the scene and the events surrounding this verse. Jesus is sitting on the berm of the well. The city of Sychar is off in the distance, and all around are fields of grain that has sprouted and is growing nicely. The Samaritan woman has gone back to the city to call her friends. The disciples, as usual, are concerned with food. (Aren't we all?) But Jesus has something else on His mind. He said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields," and as the disciples looked around, one thing they saw was green fields of growing grain. The planting had been done, but the harvest was still four months away. In the meantime there was probably little to do for the growing grain. But as Jesus looked, He saw beyond the fields of wheat a Samaritan city full of souls needing the Gospel. [Were

Samaritans perhaps already starting to come out to meet Jesus? -Editor] He saw the lost sheep whom God had sent Him to save. I believe He saw the world of dying souls and the great work that He would be passing on to His disciples.

The difference between what the disciples saw and what Jesus saw highlights the difference between earthly and heavenly vision. How can we have a vision that is like Christ's? What are some things that cloud our heavenly vision? And when God gives us a vision for His work, how should we respond? I'd like to briefly consider these questions here.

How can we gain a vision like Christ had?

Having a godly vision requires the Holy Spirit in the heart. I believe the disciples of Christ, at this point, were still unconverted. They could not see the work that Jesus saw. Jesus was not condemning them for their lack of vision. I believe He was simply trying to help them understand what His work on earth was all about.

We cannot expect our unconverted neighbors to understand our vision for God's work. I once had a customer who worked as a guard in a local prison. He commented to me that he wouldn't waste his time visiting prisoners as our church did, because the prisoners would only try to take advantage of us. That man didn't have a vision for the worth of one soul. Maybe most of the prisoners we visited were only interested in trying to see what they could get. Maybe they would sell the Bibles we gave them. Worse yet, maybe some of them used the pages from the Bibles to roll cigarettes to smoke. I am told that some would ask for Bibles for that reason. But if one soul was saved in the 20 years we visited that prison, it was worth the sacrifices we made.

We need to do what we can to maintain a godly vision. Even after we have committed our lives to the Lord and received the Holy Spirit, the devil will do all he can to destroy our vision for God's work. Most times he does this by distracting us with other things. This brings us to the next question:

What are some things that cloud our heavenly vision?

Our vision for heavenly things can become clouded little by little. An example we could consider is the

drops of rain on the windshield of a car. We may be driving when a gentle rain starts falling. One drop at a time the windshield becomes clouded to the point that it is hard to see through it. I think it is possible that earthly things can cloud our spiritual vision so slowly that we do not realize how little we can actually see of the reality of God's work for us.

Most times when our heavenly vision is clouded or lost, it is because of legitimate things. Our children need to be clothed and fed and so we men need to go to work to earn our living. Our wives have their responsibilities cleaning the house and cooking the meals. It is very easy to become so busy meeting the physical needs of our families that our focus is shifted away from our responsibility to provide for their spiritual needs.

To properly meet the spiritual needs of our children we must have a vision of where we want them to be when they are grown. What are your goals for your family? I'm afraid many parents today have a vision for their children focused on making sure they know how to provide well for themselves when they are grown. They sacrifice to give their children a good education so that they will be able to get a better

job. But if that becomes the focus of our vision for them, they will not be likely to go very far in the work of God's kingdom.

In our churches we have typically avoided higher education, or sending our children to school beyond the age of 16-18 years. But if when we focus on teaching them how to run a business and how to provide for themselves, we are no different from other parents who promote education as the way to a higher standard of living.

We must not allow these legitimate needs to cloud our vision for the work of the Lord, or our vision for our children. I think it is good if our children grow up with the understanding that Dad and Mom would like to see them spend several years on the mission field, or teaching school, or some other voluntary service.

If that is our vision for our children, we need to focus on teaching it to them from the time they are young. The first thing we need to do is set an example for them to follow. It will do no good to promote the idea of future service in the Lord's work if we are not already focused on Kingdom work ourselves. We need to teach them how to sacrifice willingly and with joy. God's work always requires

that we surrender our own will and desires and many times that requires us to sacrifice personal comfort and pleasure. Our children can be better prepared for future service if they learn to sacrifice from the time they are little. So we need to live a life of sacrifice ourselves.

If God has given us a vision for His work, how should we respond?

If we truly have a vision like Christ's, the work we see is far greater than we could ever accomplish. How can we avoid becoming discouraged by the burden for the work?

We need to respond in faith. The work we are doing is the Lord's work and we need to trust that He will provide the resources to finish what He calls us to begin. Probably every great work that has ever been done for the Kingdom of God began as a vision in the minds of one or two faithful men of God. But nothing will happen if we are not willing to step out in faith. We may be surprised by all that God is able to accomplish from the efforts of one or two. Look through the book of Acts and note how many churches were established because Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church at Antioch.


What began with two willing men and a supporting church spread to countless souls coming to faith

and the establishment of many churches. The work is great and the little we are able to do may seem so insignificant that we could be tempted to give up before we start. But all God wants is for us to start where we are with the resources we have. Right along with this thought, we need to support the vision of our brethren, even if it is not exactly the same as our own. God does not give the same vision to everyone. He sent the vision for the needs in Macedonia to Paul. Paul shared it with Silas and the others working with him, and they all immediately endeavored to go to Macedonia. What if Silas had refused to support the vision God had given to Paul? What if he had been determined to wait for his own vision or even to wait till God confirmed Paul's vision to him in the same way? The men with Paul were filled with the Spirit and they recognized the vision of Paul as coming from God. They didn't waste any time feeling bad that God had sent the vision to Paul instead of to one of them. They simply put their energy into supporting the vision God had sent to their brother.

Jesus told His disciples in John 4:37, "One soweth and another reapeth." Our vision needs to be broader than

what we can accomplish by ourselves. We need to support the vision of men of God before us and pass on the vision to our children and those in the next generation. Just because we may never see the fruit of our labor is no excuse not to work.

I think it is especially important that we support the vision of our godly leaders. It is good to have a personal vision for the work of God. It is good to be involved in personal witnessing in small ways. We must not wait to be a part of some grand effort. But there is only so much we can do alone. When a church is united in its vision for the work of the Lord, the efforts of all are organized and directed toward a common goal. But, more importantly, when I am faced with a question like that, it may help me to realize how clouded and misdirected my own vision has become. Why am I pursuing this business venture? How will it contribute to the work of God's Kingdom in 10 years from now? Sometimes our goals may be too shallow and worldly focused, but we don't realize it until we evaluate them in the light of eternity.

"God help us maintain a vision for the work of the Kingdom, and pass on that vision to the next generation!" 

A Quiet Heart

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

We are living in a troubled world. There is unrest in many places. We hear of Christians being persecuted for their faith, of tribal wars in different countries, of trouble in the Middle East, and of changes here in the United States that strike fear in our hearts. These fears are legitimate. We also live in a time of modern technology where news travels swiftly across the globe. The media seems, at times, to delight in making everything seem even worse than it is.

We are aware of Jesus' words where He told us that there will be wars and rumors of wars before He returns. There will also be earthquakes and other natural disasters. He also reminds us that men's hearts will fail them for fear because of these things. In spite of this in John 14:27, Jesus assures us that He will give us peace. It is not the peace the world looks for, but it is a quiet, settled peace in the midst of storm.

Many women today are living in fear of the future. We struggle with fear of world conditions, fear of change in our lives, fear for our children, our marriage, our relationships, our finances, and you name it, there are plenty of things out there to fear. Yet, God is calling us to **peace and a quiet heart.**

Is your heart yearning for **peace and freedom from fear?** God desires that peace for you and me as we start out in this new year, 2014. God desires the best for us and for our families. He has not given us the spirit of fear, according to 2 Timothy 1:7, but the spirit of power, love and a sound mind. Grab that promise and cling to it for this new year.

Only in accepting God's will and plan for my life can I experience peace.

As Christian women who are living in obedience to God, we can be assured that the situation in which we find ourselves is the place where God wants us to be. It may not be our

choosing, but it may be the very place where we will grow stronger in our faith and in a deeper likeness of Jesus. God may call us to suffer, but He knows that suffering brings cleansing and growth. He may be calling us to sacrifice our home and family for His sake. He knows that will cause us to depend on Him. However or wherever God leads you this year, be assured that God will be right there with you. In acceptance lies peace.

Peace comes through trust in God.

We live in a country of much self-sufficiency where we don't feel the need of other people or even God. We often miss out on the blessings God wants to give to us by relying on our own resources rather than trusting God to provide for us. I believe we need to do what we can to provide for our family, however, I also believe it is important to ask God for His help. Our children must grow up with the opportunity and awareness of answered prayers. Trust God's purpose and plan for you this year.


A forgiving heart receives peace.

Are you experiencing pain, rejection, or broken relationships? Is your heart full of bitterness and resentment? Open your heart to God and ask Him to forgive you. Then

forgive the person who wronged you—whether intentionally or otherwise. Do you need to forgive yourself for a mistake or failure? God is waiting with open arms to forgive. Forgiveness brings healing and peace.

Peace comes as we delight ourselves in the Lord.

Delight yourself in the Lord through Bible study and prayer. Meditate on His goodness throughout the day. Refrain from allowing negative thoughts to take root in your mind. Fill your mind with thoughts that are good, pure, kind and happy. Cultivate an attitude of thankfulness and joy. Look for the good in others. Here's a thought I read recently: "To make mountains out of molehills, just keep on adding dirt." It is easy to add dirt to unkind gossip, rather than "grabbing a shovel of thankfulness and burying gossip." Purpose in your heart to not defile your thoughts with unwholesome books, magazines, videos, or internet technology. There are many good things to look at and to read. Take time to enjoy the good and thus preserve a clear conscience. Remember that God delights in you!

My prayer for you is that you experience a quiet and settled heart throughout this New Year. 

Daddy, There's a Verse

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets” (Daniel. 2:28).

At the Schieffer’s house there was a list of verses right beside the breakfast bar in the kitchen. They were verses that seven-year-old Jake was learning in his reading assignments.

One day Antonia was vividly reminded that those verses were sinking deep into her son’s heart and making a difference. The Word of God is quick and powerful!

Antonia’s big wooden kitchen spoon had disappeared. She liked that spoon, which she used to stir big kettles full of bubbling hot food when she was canning. She also used it to spank her children when they were naughty.

“Did anyone see my wooden spoon?” she asked her three children. No one seemed to know anything about it. Finally she let the matter rest. That spoon is somewhere and it will turn up one day.

Later she was busy vacuuming and

cleaning up the house. Company was coming and she wanted her place to be neat and clean. What was this under the couch? Whatever—there was her missing spoon, but it was broken. Again she asked her children, but all seemed innocent.


She brought it up at dinner. Again, no one seemed to know anything about the spoon.

Later Andy questioned all the children. Seven-year-old Jake—did he look guilty? Andy told Jake to hold out his hand. Andy held one finger and asked him about that wooden spoon. Jake said, “Wait a minute, Daddy, let me think.” Then he started wiping his eyes and crying, then the truth came pouring out. “I had that spoon, Daddy; I went to spank Sophia (his one-year-old sister). I hit the chair by accident and the spoon broke, so I just threw it behind the couch. Daddy,” he sniffed, “Daddy, there is a verse we learned, ‘For he knoweth the secrets of the heart’” (Psalm 44:21).

Andy held and comforted his son. He was obviously sorry. Truly, none of us can hide anything from the Lord!

Later, one day the children were arguing. They did not listen to Jake but in the background Antonia heard

him quietly say, "There is a verse, 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.'"

That really blessed Antonia. God's Word was being hidden in her son's heart. God's Word was making a difference! 

youth messages

Growing Through Persecution

Ernest Eby, Guys Mills, PA

Vernon was the father of six children. He worked hard in the family welding business and the business was doing quite well until the year that one of his customers refused to pay his bill. This customer learned from a neighbor that Mennonites will not sue at law and so the customer took advantage of the situation and defaulted on his bill of \$40,000.00

Carrie was a cheerful, yet conscientious young lady who poured herself into the lives of many school children. Most of the pupils loved their teacher, but there were a few students who resisted her guidance in their lives. They sometimes disdained her when she required them to follow the school policies or when she

expected them to treat their fellow students with courtesy. At church Carrie was generally well respected, yet there were some people who did not include Carrie in their inner circle, simply because Carrie's goals and their goals in life were different. Carrie was a godly young lady and others who were not as godly were slightly uncomfortable when they were with her. Carrie didn't exude a self-righteous air; she just didn't laugh at their jokes or contribute to their condemnation of other people.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:12, "***Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.***"

There have been many times since I became a Christian at age 15 that

I've wondered how strong my faith would be if I were to face physical persecution. It is really hard to know how I would fare in a harsh, persecuted environment until I actually experience it. No test can quite compare to physical suffering and torment. Even though many of the early Anabaptists suffered severely for their faith, many others recanted when they were asked to retract their beliefs. Some of these, like Peter, felt deep remorse for their denial of Christ and were faithful to death the next time they were apprehended and faced death by the state church.

However, does this verse in 2 Timothy apply only to those who are jailed and tormented for their faith, or does this verse apply to Christians, universally, including Christian youth in 2014?

Perhaps we first need to define persecution. Persecution is hostility, cruelty, or unfair dealings one experiences as a result of his religious views or practices. Christian persecution is the rejection and wrongdoing that happens to those who follow Christ and take a stand for Him. Christian persecution is not just physical torment and severe harassment, but any kind of wrongdoing that comes as a result of one's faith and love for Christ.

So...according to this definition, have you ever been persecuted? Many of us downplay the persecution that we experience because it does not feel as heroic as dying for one's faith. We may minimize the persecution we feel, because we realize that others have experienced much worse suffering.

There is nothing wrong with being extremely thankful for the religious freedom we have and being grateful for how little physical persecution we experience. However, if we don't identify persecution for what it is, we may subconsciously avoid pain and suffering for the sake of Christ. We may not grow the way God intended for us to grow through the less severe persecution He allows in our lives.

This is what happened to Vernon after his business loss, his heart began to harden. He became very cynical and distrusting of other people and this attitude started to affect his relationship with his employees. Deep within, Vernon committed himself to never being taken advantage of again. The atmosphere this created in the business was toxic and contributed to the eventual failure of his business.

This story about Vernon could have been very different. Vernon could have told his employees about the loss and led them in forgiveness of the customer who wronged them. Taking

this persecution to God could have mellowed him and strengthened his trust and reliance on God. Because he did not recognize this as persecution, it failed to have the desired effect that God intended for it to have in his life and in the business.

Carrie responded quite differently. She took her rejection to the Lord. She solicited the help of other Christians who prayed with her. Her "minor persecution" contributed to her becoming a beautiful person who reflected the nature and character of God.

Isaiah 53 is written very candidly and describes feelings associated with rejection and persecution. In this chapter we learn how God feels about the rejection He gets from the people He created. He doesn't minimize or "sugar coat" it, but just states it as it is.

*Who hath believed our report?
and to whom is the arm of the Lord
revealed?*

This verse implies that not all people will want to hear what God has to say to them. Imagine the disappointment God must feel when He knows that people don't want to hear what He has to say.

Have you ever struggled with the fact that someone did not want to hear what you have to say? Have you ever said something and everything

got really quiet? Have you ever said something and you noticed that people suddenly remembered something else they wanted to be doing right then? Have you ever said something and out of the corner of your eye, you noticed that someone snickered, rolled their eyes, or whispered something under his breath? If the reason for this had to do with your godliness, then this is persecution.

Sometimes people don't want to hear what we have to say because of some fault of our own. That's not God's fault. But it is possible that we could find ourselves in a group setting in which our opinion is not valued, simply because we are a godly person. A less godly person in the group may be given more esteem simply because he or she is less godly.

*For he shall grow up before him as
a tender plant, and as a root out of
a dry ground: he hath no form nor
comeliness, and when we shall see
him, there is no beauty that we should
desire him.*

Have you ever watched a group of people get acquainted? Have you ever noticed that some of the ones who are not talking are checking out the appearance of others in the group? They may have their "social antennas" on high alert and are entering details about the person's

appearance into their mental card file. Some of this kind of evaluation is just normal for social human beings. However, some of what seems normal may also reflect carnality. How we evaluate others reflects what we are like on the inside.

This verse implies that people were going to be disinterested in Jesus simply because He was not particularly good looking. Is that fair? Is it fair that something a person says will be discounted simply because he is not handsome? Humans tend to pay more attention to those who are good looking. So it should not surprise us if we experience some initial rejection from other people simply because we are not the most handsome or most beautiful person around. Depending on the situation, you may not appear beautiful to others in the group because of your godliness. The way you arrange your hair, your choice of clothes, or your lack of jewelry and cosmetics may cause some people to distance themselves from you. Jesus felt something of this nature. He knows what it is like to have fewer friends, simply because his appearance was not attractive to those around Him.

He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised; and we

esteemed him not.

Has rejection from other people ever caused you sorrow? Have you ever wished for friends and when you needed people the most, they avoided you? Did they “hide their faces” when they saw your plight? This kind of rejection can come from being very godly. I once worked on a building site where there was loud music, smoking and drinking. This work scene was a very ungodly environment. The folks who engaged in these activities were civil toward me, but not overly friendly. They offered the expected courtesies, but didn’t befriend me more than that. It was obvious that I didn’t fit their social group. You may not face this at work, but depending on the community where you live, this kind of rejection could happen in your peer group.

Some people today infer that we should not let little injustices like this affect us and that we should just square our shoulders and not let such little things bother us. They believe that minor persecutions should just “roll off our backs like water from a chamois.” This is not the kind of advice God gives us. Are you noticing that God is not afraid to talk about how it feels to experience “minor persecution”? Jesus came to earth and knows what rejection feels like. Even

his close friends deserted Him when He needed them most.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

These verses talk about the physical persecution that Jesus faced from ungodly men and women (of which we all had a part).

Perhaps you've not suffered physical persecution, but there have been people in our nation who have. We as plain people tend to avoid dangerous situations and people, but some Christians attempt to show the Gospel to dangerous people in dangerous situations (even in our country). In the process some have been physically harmed and even killed. This is what happened to Jesus. He came to earth to live and tell the Gospel to the people He created and at the end, He was physically harmed and killed. Are we courageous enough to do the same?

As I reflect on this passage from Isaiah, I believe it is worthwhile for us to recognize ways that we are being persecuted, even if it seems minor. Being honest about the rejection

we feel helps us to recognize the experiences God is bringing into our lives to test us and perfect us. Being honest about the rejection we feel can help us build strong bonds with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

It is good for us to consider how strong our faith might be if we lived in a country that hated true Christians. But the important question right now is, How do I face persecution today? Do I avoid being godly in order to avoid minor persecution? Do I allow minor persecution to mellow me and make me more like Jesus? How we answer these questions may be a good indication of how we might respond if we some day find ourselves in a country that regularly harasses and mistreats followers of Jesus. One of the best ways to prepare for more severe persecution is to courageously accept the lesser persecutions we face and not try to avoid persecution that comes from following Christ. Many of us would feel very guilty if we denied our Lord verbally, but it is easier for us to minimize the ways in which we should be living godlier lives.

In what situations do youth find themselves, in which they may need to decide whether to avoid persecution or accept it as part of living godly in Christ Jesus?

Youth may be exposed to social or

work environments in which people listen to wrong or questionable music that saps their spiritual strength. Youth may be exposed to others who use bad language, tell dirty jokes, are involved in immorality, disobey earthly authority, and watch media that weakens their moral fiber. Sometimes youth may experience minor social persecution if they speak out against the wrong, or leave the group, or do not join in.

Sometimes I ask groups of youth how many of them watched media more than once during the past year that was detrimental to their spiritual growth. Many youth raised their hands. Think about it. You may face some social rejection if you leave the group or suggest a different activity, but God will reward you for putting your spiritual well-being and the spiritual well-being of others ahead of your own desire for acceptance.

In closing, I wish to encourage you to endure persecution whether it be in your work environment or your community. Contrary

to how it might feel to you right now, getting persecuted by fellow youth or fellow employees is a fairly “safe” introduction to persecution. Many of you have access to mature Christians who can help you and strengthen you as you work through your persecution and deal with it constructively.

2014 is going to be a tough year (if we are going to live godly in Christ Jesus, that is). So I’d encourage you to stock up on all the spiritual resources you can get—books, time alone with God, friendships with good people, and spiritual instruction.

May God give you lots of courage, strength, and a spirit of forgiveness as you face the coming year!

It may be harder to live godly for a lifetime than to physically die for Him.

I would much rather die for my Lord in faith than live for myself by denying Him in fear.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it.”



***A wise man thinks before he speaks;
a rash man speaks, then reflects on
what he has uttered.***

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

If we can't win the war against inflation, how about a cease-fire?

• • • • •

Contentment in life consists not in great wealth, but in simple wants.

• • • • •

Age doesn't always bring wisdom. Sometimes it arrives alone.

• • • • •

The things that don't happen may worry us the most.

• • • • •

Not wealth, but the arrogance of riches, is what offends the poor.

• • • • •

Truth is not always popular, but it is always right.

• • • • •

Rush hour is sometimes that time when traffic slows to a crawl.

• • • • •

Time can be wasted, but not recycled.

• • • • •

Bad temper displayed in public is indecent exposure.

• • • • •

Two sneaky words in the English language are "plus tax."

• • • • •

Some people with the "gift of gab" seem to have a problem "wrapping it up."