

# CALVARY MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

## SEPTEMBER 2014

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## *The Choice*

*Joshua McClung, Lewisburg, TN*


Another day dawns clear and bright,  
A day that holds two choices.  
Another day to stand for right,  
Or heed the other voices

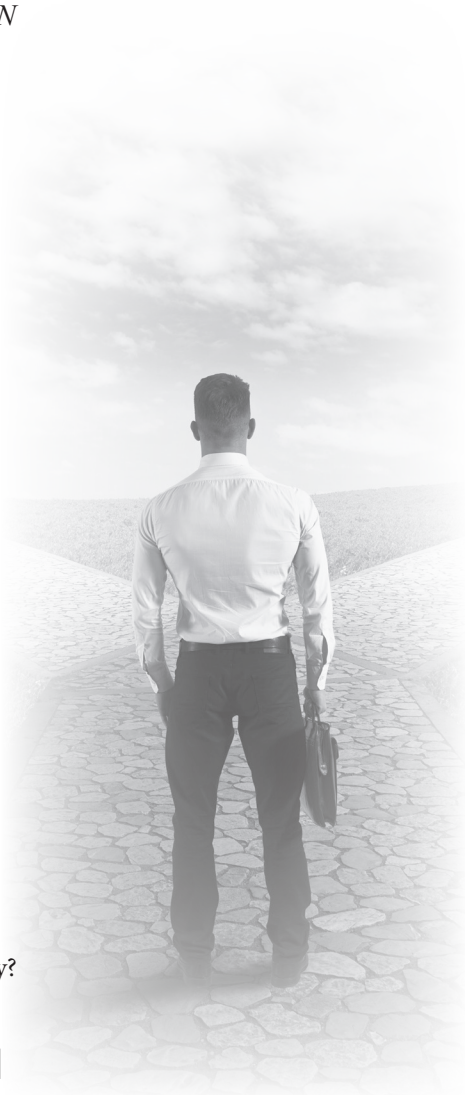
Who seek to draw us from the way  
That leads us on to Heaven.  
Remember that our Savior said,  
“Be careful of their leaven.”

A day to closer draw to God,  
To shun the world and Satan,  
To cast aside the many snares  
That others hold such faith in.

Or we can choose the other way—  
Embrace the world’s temptation.  
And live each moment for ourselves,  
For every new sensation.

And so we have another day  
That God gives us the choosing;  
To take the right way, or the wrong.  
Eternal life thus losing.

What will we choose? What will we say?  
The choice still lies before us.  
Let’s make the narrow way our choice,  
Our Savior walks beside us. 



## Heaven is For Real!

**T**ongues of fire rested upon people's heads and they spoke in tongues at Pentecost. When Peter explained what was happening, he identified these signs as the coming of the Holy Spirit. This fulfilled Joel's prophecy, some 800 years before, that in the last days God would pour out His "Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

I was reminded of this recently when the mid-week planning committee at Cedar Crest church gave me a difficult assignment. They asked for an evaluation of several recent books on the subject of people who died and later reported having been to heaven.

The four words in the title above are what 10-year-old Colton Burpo gave when his family was trying to bring focus to a meeting in which Colton's near-death experience (some six years earlier) was to be shared. That story is told in a book with the above title.

**IF what the author, Todd Burpo, and editor, Lynn Vincent, of this book have written is trustworthy (not exaggerated or contrived) it**

**provides glimpses into what awaits those who have made preparations for heaven by repenting from sin and pledging sincere faith and obedience to Jesus Christ.**

Briefly, here's what happened to the Todd Burpo family: In 2003, four-year-old Colton's condition had deteriorated to the point that it was thought to be a hopeless case, medically speaking. His appendix had burst and the doctor had not realized it, and so gangrene set in. Very soon little Colton was so gravely ill that he was completely listless.

Todd Burpo, Colton's father, a Wesleyan pastor living in Nebraska was taking his family on a trip to Colorado when Colton became so terribly sick. When it appeared hopeless that the four-year-old would live, Todd sent an urgent message to their congregation back home to pray earnestly that the little boy's life would be spared.

The church took their pastor's request seriously. They prayed earnestly! That night Colton's condition did a dramatic turnaround! The next morning found him sitting up in his hospital bed—responding and on the way to recovery.

Later, as time went on, Colton reported—by casual comments—things he saw when his life was ebbing away. These snippets of information that Colton mentioned in the months that followed comprise the essence of this 162-page book that has now sold more than two million copies.

Colton reported seeing his grandfather whom he had never seen, as well as a tiny sister who had not come to live birth (miscarriage). Both of these incidents happened before Colton was born. His clear reference to these persons' presence in heaven and other descriptive comments gave validity to his observations, because Colton had no known link to this adult information. What Colton reported seeing did not seem like a typical dream. He spoke candidly and confidently about people he saw and incidents that had occurred before he was born, which no one on earth had told him.

### **Books About Heaven**

There are other recent books about heaven. Some of these books seem less credible and safe than does *Heaven Is For Real*. I propose several ways to evaluate such books:

- Beware of a book that brings everyone safely to heaven, without regard to what faith they espouse. Some of Jesus' most solemn warnings are toward people who come to the final judgment and expect to enter heaven, but are turned away (Matthew 7:21-

23). We must not participate in giving hope to people unless they have met the Savior's conditions for salvation.

- Beware of a book that idolizes the person who has had a near-death (or to death and back) experience, rather than making Jesus Christ the hero. Paul apparently spoke of his experience in going to the third heaven and hearing things God forbade him to speak about. He then also acknowledges that God gave him a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be lifted up with pride for these revelations. (2 Corinthians 12:1-9)

- Beware of taking specifics in a book about heaven above the Word of God. If these specifics were essential to our salvation, would not God have included them in His Word? And always, where there is lack of harmony between what the Word of God says and what someone reports seeing, the Word of God must be what we go by.

- Beware of saying that if the Apostles did it, we must do it, too. The New Testament was not brought together until after the apostles had passed on. Jesus had charged them with taking the message of salvation into their world. They stand with Jesus, the Chief Cornerstone (Revelation 21:14), in the founding of the church. The Apostles made frequent reference to the Old Testament Scriptures because the New Testament was still in formation. We are privileged

to teach from and live by a finished product—the New Testament, sealed with Jesus’ blood. (Hebrews 8, 9, and 10 and Revelation 22:18, 19).

•Evaluate out-of-body experiences by whether they embrace the whole Gospel. It is hazardous to promote a partial Gospel! Solid doctrinal ground is formed from the basics: Jesus’ virgin birth, His sinless life, His teachings, His suffering, death and resurrection, and His ascension

to heaven with His promise to return. We must give Him His rightful place at the Father’s right hand, where He intercedes for those who love and serve Him in a walk of holiness.

Yes, heaven is for real! May we build—and help others build—on the only true foundation. **“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”** (1 Cor. 3:11).

-PLM



## reader response

### Re: Reader Response, June, 2014.

I agree with Michael Galdonik’s concern that some Anabaptists are, in effect, trimming down the Bible to the Sermon on the Mount. However, I do not think his description of the manuscript theory of the KJV and modern Bible versions is accurate. A better introduction to the same topic can be found in Rodney Yoder’s recent book, *The Story Behind the Versions*, published by CLP...

*[Editor’s comment: I’m leaving out some comments by Bro. Dwight, based on Yoder’s book. I hear Bro. Gingerich encouraging us to read Yoder’s book. Reader Responses need to be kept fairly short.]*

My purpose in writing is not to undercut our trust in God’s Word! Rather, it is to encourage readers to read a helpful book such as Rodney

Yoder’s so that better information can free us from needless fear about Bible translations. While I might disagree with Yoder on a few secondary points, I am thrilled to see that such a scholarly, wise, and balanced book has been written and published on this topic by our own conservative Anabaptist people.

I will close with a quote from Yoder about biblical manuscripts: “For whatever reason, God has not given us all the facts, nor has He given us a completely flawless copy of the Book that He inspired. But He has assured us that His word is forever settled in Heaven. It seems that He intended the Bible to be a treasure in an earthen vessel, so that all could see the power is from Him and not of us. Besides this,...the variants are all ultimately insignificant...There is

absolutely no danger of some textual problem suddenly upsetting an important Bible doctrine.”

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• • • • •

**Re: July, 2014.**

First, thanks for letting me subscribe to Calvary Messenger!

Please let me purchase a few extra copies of Calvary Messenger, July, 2014. I receive many blessings from this publication!

Blessings on you!  
Sincerely in Christ,  
Rev. Dr. Carter A. Smith  
United Methodist Church  
Mt. Arlington, NJ

*[I sent two copies to him. -PLM]*



**the bottom line**

# *The Encroachment of the Endless Week*

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

**T**ime flies. It comes in here, goes by, and is gone! Time is fleeting. Only the present moment is ours.

Time is fixed. You can't start it, stop it, or cause it to go slower or faster. Watching the clock is like watching the sun. It goes ever so slow, boringly slow. Yet, when we have much to do, or much to enjoy, time goes fast.

Cecillia Kang, in *The Washington Post* says, yet another large business will make delivery of packages available on Sunday. *Amazon.com* will team up with the U.S. Postal Service to make it happen. Three other large entities are also scrambling to do so, not wanting to be left behind.

Sunday has a long history of being a day of rest and worship. Even non-

Christians respected the community practice of no strenuous labor, field work, or over-the-road commerce on Sunday. Businesses were closed. It is a timeless creation principle of spending one day in seven by resting. “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: Because that in it he had rested from all his work which he had created and made” (Genesis 2:3).

Jesus’ apostles and disciples met for rest and worship on the first day of the week. The Lord Jesus on several occasions after His resurrection, miraculously appeared to them. The early church routinely gathered on the first day of the week, a practice by Christians worldwide since that time. The non-Christian western world has largely recognized the Lord’s day

as a time of rest and worship, while stores, restaurants, and businesses—community-wide—were closed.

**Encroachment** came most forcefully after World War II. Cars and highway building and improvement contributed to mobility. There was a shift to higher education and more manufacturing. Great advancements in medical knowledge and application were realized, lengthening the average life span. The space age brought with it home-based computers. On the heels of that came the technology explosion in communication, which brings us to today.

Two things stand out about *encroachment*. These two pertain to the dilemma of having a life style that dares to have the Lord's day set apart from any semblance to the six work days. They are: first, the ease by which compromising on the practice can overtake us. Secondly, the speed of life into which the world has its impact on us. There is more to life than increasing its speed.

It is not only the world that shapes our choices. The Christian church and our own congregation have their own influence on our everyday life, including Sunday activities. Jonathon Gruber, professor at a secular college, says, "We are moving toward society where e-mail and social media have caused the week and weekend to blur."

Sanctifying the Lord's day is to make it **distinct** (well-defined, unmistakably separate; not alike, different). It also makes it **unique**

(one and only; having no like or equal). Originally, God did that on the seventh day. And later to Moses, God made it simple and clear in saying, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work..." (Exodus 20:8-10).

I doubt that anyone ever became poor because he refrained from unnecessary work on the Lord's day. No one who frequents unnecessary work on the Lord's day, has by it become rich in which he could rightly enjoy it. Old Testament revivals always reinstated temple worship, the tithe to support the priestly functions at the temple and setting aside the Sabbath day a work-free, commerce-free day, hallowed by attendance in places of worship to God.

Some family-owned grocery stores and restaurants in our area are open on Sunday. Their forbears were Christian, even Mennonite. One Mennonite man from a local church was asked what he plans to do on Sunday. He said he will go to church, then take his wife out to eat at a restaurant, then go to Philadelphia to watch a Phillies ballgame.

Fredric Rolando, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, says that expanding Sunday mail service "would benefit the economy, consumers, businesses and the nation as a whole." We strongly challenge, especially the last part

of, that statement. No nation can expect to have overall benefits where it commercializes the Lord's day. History proves the opposite. Nations who have not recognized God, nor respected His day, become poorer, not richer. They tend to fractionalize (break apart) rather than increase and multiply.


Likewise for our churches. Buy no fuel for travel. Or food. No strenuous games. No unnecessary work. No change of \_\_\_\_\_! (Oh, no, Lord!) What would happen to how I keep the Lord's day if I would wear my church clothes all day on Sunday? Week-day casual wear on Sunday afternoon tends to take away from it being a day of rest, worship and service. Our clothes remind us of *who* we are, and others *who* we are and well as *whose* we are. Clothes are part of an identity.

Not only are stores and restaurants easy shopping places for the Lord's day desecration, but the web is stepping right up for amusement, tracking news and sports, and also 24-hour shopping on the internet.

Steven Overly, in *The Washington Post* (Oct., 2012) says Americans spent 511.9 million minutes accessing the web (in 2012) from desk-top computers. By comparison, they used 278.6 million minutes accessing the internet by smart phones and tablets that year. The next year (2013), it went to 445.5 million minutes from desktop computers, plus 410 million minutes from smart phones and tablets.

All of this encroaches on keeping the Lord's day distinctly and uniquely a day of rest, worship, and service. Nonconformity is taking on some new possibilities, yea even necessities, in our time. Nonconformity goes far beyond clothing, shoes and hair. We say it is very important to not participate in shopping on-line on the Lord's day for the full 24-hour period from midnight Saturday night to midnight Sunday night. This is not a return to the law of Moses or the rule of man. Let's do it for the sake of God's timeless principle. Let's also do it for conscience sake to truly be at rest on the Lord's day in spirit, soul, and body. Let's not only refrain from actual on-line shopping on the Lord's day, but also avoid window shopping or strolling through the mall, just to look. May the oncoming generations help us raise the flag of victory over these modern encroachments!

A professor in California says fewer blue laws, ever greater consumer demand, and retail competition, "combined with technology, has made the week endless."

**The Bottom Line** is that we as followers of Jesus and His Word, are the only ones who are a light to the world, to first show the way by how we live. Besides that, we are the salt of the earth by our witness in word, declaring unashamedly the truth and the right. Let's remember that our own children need this as much as anyone else. Let us show it by example, and speak it by precept. 



# Understanding God's Ways

*Daniel Nisly, Partridge, KS*

**E**very good gift and every perfect gift is from above..." (James 1:17). Are we to understand by this that things that don't seem good to us are not from God? Isaiah 55: 7 and 8 tell us that God's ways and thoughts are far superior to ours. We draw our conclusions on what we see and hear. God sees a much larger picture than we do.

John 9 records the healing of a blind man. The disciples wanted to know if the man had sinned. Was it perhaps his parents that had sinned that caused him to be born blind? Jesus said it was not because of any personal sin, but so that the works of God could be made manifest in him.

John 11 gives us the account of Lazarus' sickness and death. In talking about his sickness, Jesus said that Lazarus was sleeping and that He would wake him up. The disciples thought sleep would be good for him. Jesus then said it plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad I wasn't there." That is a rather mysterious comment about the death of a friend. But Jesus knew what He would do. God's ways are better than our ways.

## **Jonah's Experience**

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell the people there that God

would overthrow their city. Jonah did not like this assignment, so he resisted it. He not only resisted it, he refused it. He ran away. Going to Joppa, he found a ship going to Tarshish. All of this would take him even farther away from Nineveh. Boarding the ship, he went to the lower deck, made himself quite comfortable, and fell asleep.

God sent a huge storm which not only halted their progress, but they also threw their cargo overboard in their efforts to save the ship. When they woke Jonah he said he was the cause of the storm. He asked them to throw him overboard, which they did. Then the sea quieted down.

God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, for God was preserving Jonah's life. While Jonah was in the belly of the fish, he prayed. After three days, God directed the fish to the right place (Joppa?) and caused the fish to vomit him up on dry ground.

God told Jonah again, "Go to Nineveh." So Jonah went a day's journey into Nineveh and preached that, unless they repent, God would destroy Nineveh in 40 days. His preaching was not in vain. The people heeded the message. They proclaimed a fast and turned from

their wicked ways.

Jonah was not happy at this turn of events. In fact, he became angry and wished to die. He even told God, “I thought this is what You would do.” Jonah went out to the east side of Nineveh and built a shelter from the sun. There he sat and waited to see what God would do.

Then the Lord prepared a gourd (a vine) to make shade for Jonah’s head and bring relief from the heat. Jonah was very glad.

Next, God prepared a worm to destroy the vine He had prepared and the sun beat down on Jonah’s head. God also sent a very strong east wind. Such winds are extremely unpleasant. The Bible says that Jonah fainted and wished to die. He was defensive and angry. Jonah was told that he was much more concerned about his own physical comfort than for the souls of a whole city with no sense of direction toward God.

Let us notice the acts of God in this story:

- God sent a storm to stop Jonah.
- God sent a fish to save Jonah from drowning.
- God directed the fish to put Jonah on dry ground.
- God provided shade—a very welcome gift.
- God prepared a worm to remove Jonah’s comfort.
- God sent a hot, east wind and Jonah’s anger was intensified.

Looking at the things God sent Jonah’s way brings us to these questions: Did God send only things that pleased Jonah? Were these gifts all good?

### **Job’s Trials**

In Job 1, we read how Job lost his family and his earthly possessions. Job expressed deep grief and worshiped God. He said, “I brought nothing into this world and I won’t take anything out. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

After much suffering in a long silence, God asked Job some hard questions. Job acknowledged God’s sovereignty and his own weakness. God had a sharp rebuke for Job’s three friends. He told them to ask Job to pray for them so He would not need to punish them for their work of folly (Job 42:7, 8).

How do we respond when we face unpleasant things in life? Job’s wife blamed God and wanted Job to curse God. Job called it foolish talk. In all this, Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 1:22; 2:10).

So what does this say about giving short-sighted advice or making glib judgments when things don’t go as we think they should? Let’s not lose track of this: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights,” Who does not switch back and forth between light and darkness.” (from Luther’s rendering.)



# *Praise to God, Immortal Praise*

*Anna L. Barbauld, 1773*

Praise to God, immortal praise,  
For the love that crowns our days.  
Bounteous source of every joy,  
Let thy praise our tongues employ.

For the blessings of the field,  
For the stores the gardens yield,  
For the joy which harvests bring,  
Grateful praises now we sing.

Clouds that drop refreshing dews,  
Suns that genial heat diffuse,  
Flocks that whiten all the plain,  
Yellow sheaves of ripened grain;


All that spring, with bounteous hand,  
Scatters o'er the smiling land;  
All that liberal autumn pours  
From her overflowing stores:

These great God, to Thee we owe,  
Source whence all our blessings flow;  
And for these our souls shall raise  
Grateful vows and solemn praise.

Lord, should rising whirlwinds tear  
From its stem the ripening ear;  
Should the fig tree's blasted shoot  
Drop her green, untimely fruit.

Should the vine put forth no more,  
Nor the olive yield her store,  
Though the sickening flocks should fall  
And the herds desert the stall;

Should thine altered hand restrain  
The early and the latter rain,  
Blast each opening bud of joy,  
And the rising year destroy.

Yet to Thee my soul shall raise  
Grateful vows and solemn praise;  
And when every blessing's flown,  
Love Thee for thyself alone! 

*Editor's note: Recently I found four additional verses by poet Barbault to this well-known, much-loved hymn. These additional verses speak of full confidence in God's goodness expressed in Habakkuk: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17, 18).*

# Washed White or White-Washed?

Melvin L. Yoder, Gambier, OH

**“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow” (Ps. 51:7).**

The ongoing heart cry of the child of God is to have things in order and to be washed whiter than snow. To him material things have lost their significance for his affections are on things above. His every fiber yearns for holy communion with God. His daily cry is, “Wash me whiter than snow!”

Satan is an expert at contriving counterfeits, which look and seem so real that the natural senses do not detect the error. When a question confronts us and we seem to have no answer, my friend might grin and say, “Give me a few minutes and I will tell you something that sounds reasonable.” This is his way of admitting that he also does not have an answer.

Satan’s solutions and proposals seem very reasonable to the natural mind. It is only by having the mind of Christ that we can discover and overcome his cunning devices. This, we believe, is possible only by putting off the old man and putting on the new man, who is being washed white in the blood of the Lamb.

When a marriage without proper counsel, guidance and effort ends in fighting and divorce, Satan, in soothing tones assures, “God would not want you to be married under such conditions.

It is much better to find a partner who loves you and is more compatible.” When discussing this with a minister friend of mine, he assured me, “It is so comforting to know that we do not need to judge them.” His position on television, sports, fashions, and other worldly activities reflect this same spirit of kindness and tolerance. To the natural mind, it seems so right and reasonable. After all, have we not all been freed from the law and washed in the blood?

Is it possible that those with such a mentality, have fallen for one of Satan’s clever counterfeits? Have they perhaps been *white-washed*, rather than *washed white*? Back home on the farm, we annually swept down the dust and spider webs in the barn and called someone to come and white-wash the entire interior. Each year, the barn was white-washed, but it was never washed white.

Christ, in confronting the scribes and Pharisees, said “You are like tombs that were white-washed on the outside and full of dead bones inside.” The world and liberal theology constantly confront us with answers which sound so reasonable. Only by rightly dividing the Word and believing it, can we avoid Satan’s devices and actually be washed whiter than snow.



## marriages

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

### **Bontrager-Kauffman**

Bro. Earl, son of Lanell and Rhoda Bontrager, Macon, MS, and Sis. Regina, daughter of Eli and Rosie Kauffman, Hartselle, AL, at Fairview Church of God, Falkville, AL, for Emmanuel Mennonite Church, on June 21, 2014, by Paul Shirk.

### **Bontrager-Wagler**

Bro. Joseph, son of Jason and Rosy Bontrager, Bastrop, TX, and Sis. Andrea, daughter of Titus and Donna Wagler, Cross Hill, SC, at Mount Zion Baptist Church for Cross Hill Mennonite Church on June 6, 2014, by Virgil Kanagy.

### **Farmwald-Otto**

Bro. Ryan, son of David and Irene Farmwald, Arthur, IL, and Sis. Lori Marie, daughter of Omer and Lorene Otto, Humboldt, IL, at Sunnyside Mennonite Church for Trinity Christian Fellowship, Arthur, IL, on June 14, 2014, by Wilbur Gingerich.

### **Hurst-Hochstetler**

Bro. Anthony Jay, son of Aaron and Janice Hurst, Leola, PA, and Sis. Abigail Rose, daughter of Eldon and Lois Hochstetler, Aroda, VA, at Bible Holiness Church for Gospel Light Mennonite Church, Charlottesville, VA, on June 28, 2014, by Aaron Hurst.

### **Miller-Hochstetler**

Bro. Marion, son of Edward and Anna Miller, Burr Oak, MI, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Raymond and Rosemary Hochstetler, Burr Oak, MI, on May 17, 2014, at Calvary Chapel by Jon Yoder.

### **Miller-Miller**

Bro. Allen, son of Irvin and Elizabeth Miller, Stuarts Draft, VA, and Sis. Joanna, daughter of David A. and Ruth Miller, Millersburg, OH, at Maranatha Fellowship Church for Bethel Fellowship, Berlin, OH, on June 14, 2014, by Mark Yoder.

### **Nisley-Byler**

Bro. Jacob, son of John and Mary Nisley, Meadville, PA, and Sis. Anna, daughter of David and Christina Byler, Meadville, PA, on March 15, 2014, at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, for Plainview Gospel Chapel, by Ervin Miller.

### **Peachy-Stoltzfus**

Bro. Allen David, son of William and Linda Peachy, E. Waterford, PA, and Sis. Rhoda Fern, daughter of Reuben and Sadie Stoltzfus, Port Royal, PA, at Bunkertown Church of the Brethren, for Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship Church on June 28, 2014, by Daniel Fisher.

### **Shenk-Kauffman**

Bro. Brian, son of Harry and Edith Shenk, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Cynthia, daughter of Marvin and Rosanna Kauffman, Weldon, IA, at Leon Salem Mennonite Church, on June 14, 2014, by Monroe Gingerich.

### **Swartzentreuber-Barkman**

Bro. Nolan, son of Lowell and Anna Mae Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Heidi, daughter of Clement and Michelle Barkman, McConnelsville, OH, at First Christian Church for Ebenezer Mennonite Church on May 24, 2014, by the bride's grandfather, Raymond Barkman.

### **Swartzentruber-Slabough**

Bro. Kevin, son of Ray and the late Elma Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Retha, daughter of Dale and Ina Slabough, Nappanee, IN, at Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church for Bethel Mennonite Church on June 21, 2014, by Lyle Miller.

## **cradle roll**

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

**Beachy**, J. Ellis and Kimberly (Zelaya), Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, third child, first son, Ishmeral Jemuel, Feb. 6, 2014.

**Beachy**, Peter, Jr. and Melody (Sommers), Salisbury, PA, fourth child, third dau., Aliya Joelle, July 11, 2014.

**Beiler**, Timothy and Vasi (Bitica), Gordonville, PA, first child and dau., Danae Faith, July 23, 2014.

*Correction:* **Beiler**, Vincent and Lydia (Croutch), Lancaster, PA, fourth child

(one daughter deceased), second living dau., Adelyne Grace, Feb. 6, 2014.

**Bontrager**, Justin and Danita (Yoder), Harrison, AR, fifth child, third dau., Esther Joy, June 25, 2014.

**Fisher**, Gene and Charity (Stoll), Due West, SC, third child, second dau., Aubrey Kate, Jan. 22, 2014.

**Graber**, Donnaton and Elana (Miller), Jerusalem, Israel, third child first dau., Anabelle Ruth, May 24, 2014.

**Helmuth**, Micah and Natalie (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, fifth child (one deceased), third son, Clark Alexander, Feb. 10, 2014.

**Herschberger**, Clinton and Carolyn (Yoder), Tuscola, IL, second child, first dau., Kiana Brooke, July 22, 2014.

**Hostetler**, Dannie and Sarah Ann (Yoder), Centerville, PA, third child and son, Jayden Wyatt, May 3, 2014.

**Knepp**, Adin and Miriam (Stoll), Odon, IN, sixth child, fourth dau., Emma Beth, July 16, 2014.

**Lapp**, Randall and Wilma (Lantz), Gap, PA, eighth child, second dau., Kayla Faith, July 20, 2014.

**Lengacher**, Brent and Juliana (Witmer), Loogootee, IN, third child, second son, Maccoy Aaron, June 11, 2014.

**Jackson**, Benji and Karin (Stauffer), Abbeville, SC, fourth child, second dau., Leah Rose, May 15, 2014.

**Korver**, Kelvin and Denise (Yoder), Colon, MI, second child and dau., Renee` Brooke, Oct. 6, 2013.

**Mast**, Elson and Beth (Zimmerman), Harrison, AR, second child, first dau., Isabelle Marie, April 17, 2014.

**Miller**, Anthony and Sherri (Chupp), Stuarts Draft, VA, second child, first son, Damian Anthony, July 14, 2014.

**Miller**, Jonathan and Lena (Miller), Worthington, IN, second child, first dau., Dianna Mae, April 24, 2014.

**Miller**, Justin and Michelle (Yoder), Leon, IA, second child and son, Terell Drew, May 30, 2014.

**Miller**, Lloyd and Ruthie (Fisher), Plain City, OH, seventh child, fourth son, Bryant Jase, July 23, 2014.

**Miller**, Marvin and Jackie (Yoder), Partridge, KS, first child and son, Dominic Roman, July 12, 2014.

**Miller**, Timothy Paul and Lisa Arlene (Steven), Meadville, PA, third child, first dau., Rainelle Azalea, April 28, 2014.

**Ortiz**, Justin and Janelle (Ysaguirre), Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, first child and dau., Juselle Charity, April 9, 2014.

**Perdomo**, Elgar and Paula (Hulse), Isabella Bank, Belize, third child and dau., Camilia Isabel, June 5, 2014.

**Raber**, Elias and Deborah (Troyer), Cooperstown, PA, third child, first dau., Shayla Joice, Oct. 3, 2013.

**Schrock**, Jonathan and Myra (Gingerich), Colon, MI, third child, second son, Branson Adlai, May 26, 2014.

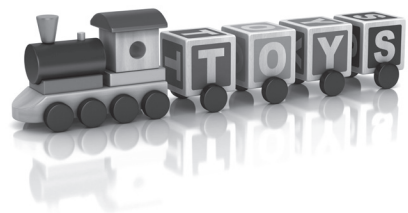
**Sommers**, Titus and Rose (Hochstetler), Huntsville, AR, third child, second dau., Ava Brielle, July 2, 2014.

**Stoll**, Daris and Karla (Yoder), Due West, SC, sixth child, second dau., Paityn Reece, April 16, 2014.

**Troyer**, Leon and Andrea (Nisly), Bourbon, IN, second child and son, Cedric Riley, July 26, 2014.

**Yoder**, Carlin and Mary Beth (Gingerich), Leon, IA, fourth child, second dau., Jenna Marie, May 13, 2014.

**Yoder**, David and Martha (Yoder), Bloomfield, IN, third child, second son, Japheth Allen, March 13, 2014.





## ordinations

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

**Bro. Arnold Jantzi**, 48, of Wellesley, Ontario, was ordained as bishop for Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church, Poole, ON, on June 15, 2014. Pre-ordination messages were given by Roman Mullet, Newcomerstown, OH, and John Mast, Crossville, TN. The charge was given by Melvin Roes, assisted by Roman Mullet and Laverne Ropp. Steve Adams and Steven Gerber were also in the lot.

**Bro. James R. Mullet**, 40, was ordained as minister at Salem A.M. Church, Newcomerstown, OH, (Bakersville), on Apr. 6, 2014.

Preordination messages were given by Daniel Bontrager, Shipshewana, IN. The charge was given by Bobby Miller, assisted by Roman B. Mullet and James B. Mullet. Jeffrey Mullet, a brother, shared the lot.

**Bro. Matthew Raber**, 43, was ordained a deacon at Heritage Mennonite Church, Byesville, OH, on July 27, 2014. Preordination messages were given by Jonas Beiler, Malta, OH. The charge was given by Roman Mullet, assisted by Bobby Miller and David Raber. Lamar Lapp was also in the lot.

## obituaries

**Hostetler**, Lizzie M. (Sharp), of Belleville, PA, died June 23, 2014, at the home of her daughter. She was born April 23, 1921, daughter of the late Joseph E. and Fannie K. (Deweiler) Sharp.

She was a member of Pleasant View Amish Mennonite Church, Belleville. In the past three years she spent time in Lyndon, KS, with her son, Jesse and Lillian's family, making many precious memories and dear friends.

On Nov. 27, 1941, she was married to Korie C. Hostetler. He preceded her in death on Nov. 1, 2005. Surviving are five daughters and two sons: Anna Mary (Amos) Zook, McVeytown, PA;

Linda Peachey, Allensville, PA; Esther Mast, Winfield, PA; Ella Mae (John Z.) Hostetler, Allensville, PA; Elsie (Ivan J.) Kauffman, Allensville, PA; Samuel D. (Anna Mae) Hostetler, Belleville, PA; Jesse L. (Lillian) Hostetler, Melvern, KS; 43 grandchildren, 72 great grandchildren; a sister, Mrs. Sadie (Daniel) Byler, Cortez, CO; sisters-in-law, Mrs. Malinda (Crist) Sharp; Mrs. Betty (Sim) Sharp; Mrs. Betty (John P.) Sharp.

She was preceded in death by two daughters: Sylvia Miller and an infant daughter; three grandsons, Robert Kauffman, Wilmer Zook, and Joseph Hostetler; three granddaughters, Mary

Joy Kauffman, Esther Hostetler, and an infant granddaughter; one sister, Fannie Yoder; and six brothers, Jesse, David, Crist, Joe, Sim, and John Sharp.

The funeral was held on June 27 at Pleasant View Church, with Bishop David J. Peachey, and ministers David J. Peachey, David Byler, and Jesse Lee Spicher officiating. Burial was in the Locust Grove Cemetery.

**Lantz**, Mervin K., 53, of Lott, TX, died suddenly at his home July 5, 2014. He was born in Ephrata, PA, on Jan. 19, 1961, son of Jacob and Katie (King) Lantz.

He was baptized at 16 years of age. He served at Sunnyhaven Children's Home, where he met his wife -to-be, Mary Miller. On May 20, 1983, they were married and moved to Lott, TX, where he eventually served as pastor for 20 years at Faith Mennonite Church. Mervin's life exemplified a quiet strength and passion to win souls for the kingdom. He lived with his family in Liberia for almost five years. The people of Liberia hold a big place in his heart. In 2011, he became a tele-counselor for a billboard ministry and spent countless hours praying with and for confused and discouraged souls seeking salvation. Mervin and Mary also opened their home to many exchange students and school teachers.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by their three children: Staci, wife of Joel Mast, Wagoner, SC; Angela Rose, wife of Josh Miller, Rosebud, TX; and Shawna Nicole, of the home. Other survivors include Mervin's mother, Katie Lantz,

Honey Brook, PA; two brothers, Jacob (Suzanne) Lantz and Marlin Lantz, both of Honey Brook, PA; six sisters, Anna Mary (David) Kauffman, Lott, TX; Sadie (Lee) Fisher, Lott, TX; Kathryn (Devon) Bontrager, Wheatland, WY; Naomi (Allen) Kauffman, Abbeville, SC; Wilma (Randy) Lapp, Gap, PA; Bethany (John) Lapp, Honey Brook, PA and three precious grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his father.

At the time of his death, he was a manager at Lone Star Structures in Temple, TX. He was fascinated with aviation and had a pilot's license. He left a legacy of faith and true example of steadfast service to Christ. His greatest wish would be to meet all of us "in the skies."

The funeral was held on July 8, with burial in the church cemetery.

**Marin**, Hilaria (Lanza), (known as Auntie Laura), 102, died at her home in Belmopan, Belize, on June 7, 2014. She was born Jan. 14, 1912, daughter of the late Faustino and Gertrude Lanza. When she was 17, her mother died, leaving her to care for her eight siblings. This she did, outliving all of them.

She was in the first group to be baptized at Isabella Christian Fellowship. She was well-loved, and will be missed by all her nieces and nephews and the many people who knew her.

Auntie Laura married Daniel Marin, but they did not have children of their own. When her younger sister died, she took in and raised her niece Prisca and

also her two nephews, Alberto (Bet) and Emil (Tim). She is survived by her two sons, Alberto and Emil and family, sister-in-law, Isabel Lanza, and many nieces and nephews and their children and grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Daniel Marin, all her siblings, her daughter, Prisca Wade, and two grandchildren.

The funeral was held on June 9, at Isabella Harmony Fellowship with Mario Lanza and Stephen schrock officiating.

**Miller**, Elvin V., 76, of Cross Hill, SC, died on June 28, 2014, at his home after several years of declining health. He was born Dec. 10, 1937, in Princess Anne County, VA, son of the late Valentine and Sylvia (Bontrager) Miller.

He was a faithful member of Cross Hill Mennonite Church.

On November, 27, 1958, he was married to Annie Hershberger. She survives. Also surviving are one son, Ernest (Judy) Miller, Hillsville, VA; three daughters, Betty Miller, of the home; Patricia (Earl) Miller, Cross Hill, SC; and Elva (John) Fehr, Wytheville, VA; twelve grandchildren; five brothers, Eli and Olen (Velma), FL; Amos (Friedgard), GA; Val, Jr., (Rosanna), SC; LaVern (Dorcas), VA; three sisters, Sarah (Leroy) Miller, VA; Anna, VA; Martha (John) Mast, GA; and sister-in-law, Ruth (Raymond) Miller, OH.

He was preceded in death by one grandson, Samuel; brothers, Ernest, Ray, a stillborn brother, a sister-in-law, Mary

(Eli) Miller, and two nieces.

The funeral was held July 2, at Laurel Hill Baptist Church with Virgil Kanagy, Titus Wagler, Wayne Nisly and John Glick serving. Burial was in the Cross Hill cemetery.

**Yoder**, Amanda (Kurtz), 90, of Lewisburg, PA, died at her home May 2, 2014. She was born Sept. 14, 1923, daughter of the late Enos J. and Mary E. (Sharp) Kurtz.

She was a member of Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, Mifflinburg, PA.

On Nov. 20, 1947, she was married to Noah A. Yoder (obituary shown below, with family information) whose death followed hers by eight weeks.

One sister-in-law, Mary Kurtz, survives.

She was preceded in death by three brothers: Crist Kurtz, Joe Kurtz, and John Kurtz; five sisters: Elsie Yoder, Sadie Peachey, Lena Kauffman, Mary Zook, and Bertha Peachy; one grandson, Benjamin Mullet; and two infant daughters.

The funeral was held May 6, at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, with local ministers officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

**Yoder**, Noah A., 89, died June 26, 2014, at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, PA. He was born in Belleville, PA, Sept. 29, 1924, son of the late Abe S. and Saloma P. (Zook) Yoder.


He was a charter member of Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, Mifflinburg, PA, where he was a Sunday School

teacher for many years. Noah was one of the first organic farmers in the area. He loved reading the Bible, was a devoted husband, taking care of his wife of 66 years and enjoyed visiting with family and many friends they entertained at their home.

On Nov. 20, 1947, he was married to Amanda N. Kurtz, who preceded him in death on May 2, 2014. Surviving are three sons and two daughters-in-law: Ernest Yoder, Lewisburg; Ervin and Theda Yoder, Bemidji, MN; and Kore and Miriam Yoder, Lewisburg; two daughters and sons-in-law: Alta and Sam Mullet, Sugarcreek, OH; and Martha and Dave

Troyer, Mifflinburg; 17 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren. Also surviving are two brothers: Kore Yoder, Belleville; Benjamin Yoder, Millersburg, PA; and one sister-in-law, Helen Yoder, Belleville.

He was preceded in death by six brothers: John, Moses, Samuel, Abraham, Steven and David Yoder; four sisters: Rachel Spicher, Annie Spicher, Fronie Yoder, and Mary Peachey; one grandson, Benjamin Mullet and two infant daughters.

The funeral was conducted at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, Mifflinburg, PA, with local ministers officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery. 

## observations

**G**ertrude Weaver is a resident at Silver Oaks Health and Rehabilitation Center in Camden, PA. She was married in 1915 when she was 17. She and her husband had four children. A son is the sole survivor. He is 93. His mother celebrated her 116<sup>th</sup> birthday on July 4. An employee at Silver Oaks says that she notices some decline in Gertrude's condition during the last year. But she is still able to come to all of her meals. Weaver mentioned three factors for her long life, trusting in the Lord, hard work, and loving everybody. "You have to follow God. Don't follow anyone else. Be obedient and follow the laws and don't worry

about anything. I've followed Him for many years and I ain't too tired yet." Research experts consider Weaver the oldest person in America and second oldest in the world.



The devotional booklet, *Beside the Still Waters*, is being widely distributed and apparently well received by many different people. In a recent year, they reported having distributed 1.5 million copies, averaging 250,000 for each of six printings.

Meditations are solicited randomly but with some specific doctrinal and lifestyle guidelines. A brief doctrinal statement includes conversion and

the new birth, non-conformity and non-resistance, integrity and permanence of marriage. They state that the use of radio and television is considered detrimental to true Christian living and is to be avoided. They acknowledge that many readers will disagree with some points of their statement, but are encouraged to enjoy the devotionals even if not in full agreement.

Brethren who support this very brief statement of faith and practice are invited to submit devotional meditations that include a key verse, the writer's meditation and the recommended reading of a related Bible passage. *Beside the Still Waters* is being blessed with a good supply of meditations and obviously, a very widespread reception.

Does it not seem that there is a far greater openness for conservative teaching and lifestyle than is generally recognized? I am also reminded that it is only Christian to appreciate and bless others whose perspective is more conservative than our own. One does not need to be Anabaptist to want to pattern and make application of principles clearly taught in the New Testament.

Mount Zion Literature Ministry is headquartered at Deer Lodge, Tennessee. Their vision is to provide sound, Christian literature at affordable prices to third world countries. They stock over 300

Spanish books and Sunday School material from various conservative publishers. Christian Light Publications, Grace Press, Lamp and Light Publishers and Rod and Staff Publishers are all ministries involved in the distribution of conservative Christian literature. All this seems to be saying that there is significant demand in non-Anabaptist circles for solid Christian teaching.



When Adolf Hitler came to power, Germany was still experiencing the effects of their defeat in World War I. Not only was there serious financial hardship, there was also wounded national pride. The national climate was rife for a dynamic leader who promised a better future.

In 1937, two Amish single brothers, Raymond and Willie Wagler from Partridge, Kansas, made a trip to Europe. International travel, especially by Amish, was very unusual at that time. Raymond and Willie stayed overnight with a Mennonite family in Germany. The young folks in the family attended a meeting that evening where Hitler was speaking.

Many church people, including Mennonites, welcomed the prospect of a better future for Germany. It is assumed that ordinary people were oblivious to the leader's intention to wipe out all the non-Germanic undesirables. It is also true that

in one case, Herman Goering, a man with Mennonite roots became a close ally in carrying out the unspeakably wicked murder of millions of Jews, Gypsies, and some Christian dissenters.

Paul Horst, from Penn Yan, NY, wrote an article entitled, “The Two Kingdoms,” for *The Anabaptist Forum*, July/August, 2014, that includes the following historical note:

“September 10, 1933.

To: Chancellor Adolph Hitler

The conference of East and West Prussia Mennonites assembled today in Frigenhogan Free State, Danzig, feels deep gratitude for the powerful revival that God has given to our nation through your energy and promises joyful cooperation in the upbuilding of our fatherland through the power of the Gospel faithful to the motto of our forefathers. ‘Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.’”

Hitler personally answered this telegram: “For your loyalty and your readiness to cooperate in the building up of the German nation, I express my sincere thanks.”

Without further sermonizing may this historical incident remind us of things we should not forget!

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In 2009, the United States began a program to challenge their employees to plant gardens at USDA facilities. Gardens vary in size, but all must

meet three requirements. They must benefit the community by providing recreation or donating produce; they must be maintained by local residents; and they must use practices such as composting, capturing rain water, and cultivating native plants. All fruits and vegetables grown on USDA property must be given to those in need. (American Profits, 7-27-14).

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Interfaith Housing Services (IHS) in Hutchinson, Kansas, is again eagerly anticipating the help of several CASP groups for housing renovation in January and February, 2015. We are encouraged that at this early date we already have a number of volunteers that have expressed their intentions to serve. At this point it looks like interested persons would do well to make their intentions known while we still have openings. Please contact: Dan Byler, 517 Madison 7735, Huntsville, AR. 72740 (Phone: 479-738-2444.)

Ron Fisher, Director of Operations at IHS says that they have work for as many periods as CASP can provide.

-DLM

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Several years ago, our neighbor, a professing Christian, was preoccupied with the details that needed to be addressed in preparing for her daughter’s senior prom, like selecting the right dress, and so on. She said

that in some ways, this was even a greater highlight than a wedding since the prom was a once-in-a-lifetime event and there was no way of knowing how often her daughter might get married. That mindset violates God's design for marriage. Our society's ambivalence regarding the permanence of marriage calls for repentance. Unfortunately, many churches of our land parallel society in this regard.

What do we make of divorce statistics? While the previous account isn't encouraging, I've recently read statistics and people's interpretation of them that trouble me even more.

It is widely reported and understood that the divorce rate in this country is about 50%. However, a host of reasons contribute to making this percentage a difficult one to accurately represent. One problem is that divorces don't occur at a single moment in time or a single stage in marriage. Consider the fictitious family, John and Jane, who have been married for 50 years. They have four children who are all married. Three of them are married to their first spouse, but one of them has been divorced four times and is married for the fifth time. So in this family the parents and their children have been involved in nine marriages and four divorces. What is the divorce rate for them? Is it four out of nine marriages or is it one person out of

six? Furthermore, there are still five marriages that haven't been dissolved by divorce or death. How shall this family's statistics be tabulated?

One statistic gleaned from census material is that 72% of persons married in the USA are still married to their first spouse. Most of the 28% who aren't, were divorced. But death also contributes to those numbers. This applies to those who were married yesterday, and those married 70 years ago. However, this isn't a particularly useful figure in understanding divorce rates. Ways that we can clearly understand divorce rates is to establish a time in a marriage when statistics are measured. About 10% of marriages end in divorce during the first five years of marriage. Another 10% fail in the next five years. By year 18 of marriage, another 10% divorce and for those married 50 years ago, yet 10% more have divorced. So far, of people whose marriages occurred 50 years ago, about 40% have been divorced by now. Currently, it appears as if the divorce numbers are declining overall, rather than increasing. I offer several comments related to these statistics:

- Cohabitation by unmarried persons tend to lower divorce rates overall, since people who live together and separate, don't show up in marriage and divorce statistics.
- The enemy seems eager

to undermine marriage. When marriage failure is seen as normal and statistically unavoidable for many people, his interests are furthered.

- Many approach marriage with the idea that, “We’ll ride this train as long as it works and when we have problems, we’ll simply go to an exit strategy.” If people understand the marriage rate survival as being statistically equal to a coin toss and problems arise, it is quite easy for them to assume that they are simply in the 50% failure rate and move on to dissolve their marriage.

- I firmly believe that a primary reason that we don’t see more divorces in our circles than we do, is that we rightly understand that God’s design is “one man and one woman for life” and there is no honorable exit strategy or contingency plan if this doesn’t work out.

- There is a lot of statistical support for the idea that the widely understood 50% divorce rates are too high. At a minimum, those figures are overly simplistic and need more context to be correctly understood.

- Some surveys and polls are reasonably trustworthy and some are not. Often surveys are designed with questions that are tailored to make a statement rather than to gather information. One common way to misrepresent statistics is presenting general results without reporting the questions. For instance,

when it is reported that surveys show that a majority of Americans support gay marriage, we don’t really know very much until we know what questions were used. Did the questions address legality, expediency, personal position, or morality and how were they worded?

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I don’t recall ever wishing to get a tattoo. In fact, when I was a little boy, I was scared of people with tattoos. The societal acceptance of body ink has changed a lot from my first memories. The attitude of those who profess godliness has likewise evolved since body markings were prohibited under Levitical law. “Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you; I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:28). One pastor of a church in Florida offered to pay for his parishioners’ tattoos if they would tattoo the colorful logo of the church on their body. He was surprised when a dozen or so people in his congregation took him up on the offer. Evidently, there are some who don’t object to visible identity with their church.

I’m glad the church and family environment I grew up in helped me not to get body ink that I would now regret. I have no desire to encourage people who grow up in our churches to adopt a different policy and practice than we’ve had



for years. However, when seekers come, we sometimes need reminders to welcome those who have grown up with different understandings about what is acceptable in this regard. One such person comes to mind who got several tattoos before her conversion. She talks about some conflicting

factors for her. She likes her tattoos, but is sometimes embarrassed by them. She wouldn't get them now, if she were faced with the decision to do so. She has considered having them removed, but has not done so due to the expense and pain of the process.

-RJM



## *Ministers' Meeting Messages – 2014*

*The following message is the second one given at the annual ministers' meetings, held on April 8-10, 2014, at Journey Mennonite Church. These meetings were hosted by the three Amish Mennonite churches of Reno County, Kansas. Recordings are available from Victory Music Services, P.O. Box 1498, North Highlands, CA, 95660, for \$50, postpaid. Telephone: 443-480-1489. Email: [victorymusicservices@gmail.com](mailto:victorymusicservices@gmail.com)*

### **Preparing the Messenger**

*Marcus Kauffman  
Chesapeake, VA*

Let us begin by reading in unison 2 Timothy 4:1-8. The messenger is not the originator of the Word he is to convey. God is the originator. Preparation is not something we have given a lot of attention. There is, however, preparation that needs to transpire in our lives. We don't want to face the calling unprepared. There needs to be an ongoing perfecting of ourselves, our understandings, and our skills.

I bring a voice from the past: Ervin Hershberger. He was my teacher in Christian Writing class at Calvary Bible School. One essay that I handed in came back with this note, which I take as being from God through Bro. Ervin. Very kindly, he wrote: "Marcus, God gives gifts in raw material form. They need to be developed." I believe God wants us to pursue developing the gifts He has given us.

In the story of David and Goliath, we see how gifts are developed. David had a message to deliver to these God-defying Philistines. He needed

to tell them that there is a true God in Israel. He first tried conventional methods. I don't know why he even tried putting Saul's armor on. Saul was head and shoulders above average height and David was only a stripling. David assayed to go. I think that means he tried to walk and he couldn't. So he took Saul's armor off.

But David had prepared himself. He relied on the opportunity that God had given to him to prepare himself ahead of time. He did not realize when he was fighting the bear and the lion, that he would some day fight a human giant. He didn't realize what he was preparing for. His experiences were building his faith and strengthening his heart. It was causing him to rely on God. He pulled out his sling, stopped by the brook, and picked up five smooth stones. He placed a stone in the pouch of the sling and ran in the name of the Lord and delivered the message. It was a "power point" message, we might say. (powerfully pointed) It was unconventional, but it was what God had given him. I believe God is providing opportunities today for us to develop the raw material He has given us.

We must not simply say, "It is the work of God. God is going to do it." There is some truth to that statement. It is the work of God. But that does not give us liberty to exercise our laziness. We need to

be diligent in the work of ministry. Historically, we have not made special preparation for this work. There have been ministers who have struggled through many messages and there have been congregations who have struggled along with them through those messages. While it is true that God gives gifts severally as He will, at the same time, it is still up to the messenger to develop his potential.

Remember Ervin Hershberger's words: "God give us gifts in raw material form. They need to be developed."

### **Faithfulness**

One key aspect of effectiveness is humility. Without humility we might as well pack our bags and go home. We ruin not only ourselves, but will also harm others in the process. Samuel said to Saul, "When thou wast little in thine eyes" God could use you. Now since you are big in your eyes, you're no longer useful. We are the ones with a call from God and the church. It is easy for us to disregard the verse, "Esteem others better than yourself." Humility keeps relationships much clearer. "Only by pride cometh contention."

Another important aspect of faithfulness is a real love for people. One thing that got me to thinking about this is a chapter in Watchman Nee's book, *The Normal Christian*

*Worker.* This talks about how God loves people. He loves people in general. “For God so loved the world...” Recently we studied the epistles of John in our Sunday School. As we went through this, I actually found myself thinking: *John, your age is showing. You’re repeating yourself.* I don’t think that is what was going on, but he really does make a big deal of us loving each other. John interweaves loving God with loving each other, with knowing God, with love for people, with keeping His commandments, with God dwelling in us, with us dwelling in God—all interwoven. In reality, God indwells my brothers. How then, can I gossip and discredit my brother?

Faithfulness addresses our tendency to egocentrism. Rather than wanting to minister, we want to be ministered to. We must develop this unselfishness in ourselves and in our people. When Salome came to Jesus wanting John and James at His right and left hand, they were jockeying for position. Jesus said that’s not what we’re all about. That’s not for us to worry about. Furthermore, “...even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.” We must learn to be one who serves.

Faithfulness is also full of faith. If a man is full of faith, does he touch

people and they are healed? Does he speak in tongues? Does he live life with reckless abandon? Does he live life on a “shoe string”? If we look in the faith chapter (Hebrews 11), we find that every one of those heroes of faith lived with the mindset that they were going to be obedient to God for the next step, even if they did not know the outcome of doing so. Faith gives our soul connection to God, “I believe God. I take Jesus at His word. My life conforms to what I believe the Bible says.” Faith moves us into obedience. It is living life with eternity in view. It is living by what we cannot see.

Faithfulness is being full of the Holy Spirit. Is it the man who heals, or who makes a lot of noise? Is it the man who “wings” his sermons? Is it the one who is powerful and emphatic? Maybe. Maybe not. Some of that may be human effort. That may also be something else. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...” It is also longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. We tend to look for the lofty and the spectacular. We must strive to develop Christlikeness.

Faith is also strong. Being a faithful messenger calls not for somebody to be lazy, or for a weakling, or for someone who shrinks back in fear, but for those who do not lean on their own strength, but on the strength

of God. Then they can stand in the loneliness that it may cost with the discomfort and suffering it may bring. We like our comfort and our relaxation. But we need to be strong.

### **Preparation**

Mental preparation includes ongoing development. It is a refining and perfecting of your mind. How can we do that? What if the homework that the children bring home is sometimes too difficult? I believe we can learn to strengthen our minds. One good way is to teach school. There is a shortage of teachers [men, especially -Ed.] for our schools. I would encourage you to consider that. It would be good for you. It would help perfect your ministry.

Read. David Hershberger, another voice from the past, once said, “If you read anything but the Bible, read it like you eat fish. Chew carefully and spit out the bones.” Read other things besides commentaries. Read things that seem difficult—that stretch you. Read also things you enjoy. Some say we should read a book a week. I don’t have time for that, but I am glad that I read as much as I did when I wasn’t as busy as I am now. I am glad that at 14 years old I was introduced to the writings of C. S. Lewis. I have since learned that I cannot consider all he wrote scriptural. However, one thing Lewis did for me—he stimulated my thinking. Other writers I would

mention favorably are Philip Keller and A. W. Tozer, because what they wrote makes my mind go on further.

Study history. An idea today is around that history is not important. That’s past. Let’s just serve the Lord today. However, studying history gives us much better framework from which to make decisions. For example: Look at your grandmother, look at your mother, then look at your wife; noting their manner of dress, you might be able to predict what your grandchildren will look like. We can learn important lessons from other people. Moses recounted to his people what had happened to them and it formed the basis of his further instructions to them. Stephen, in his testimony, gave the audience a history lesson. He suffered for it, but he stood on truth.

Study people. There are different mindsets in different people. We all have our own mindset. We go to the mission field with it. If we think, *Oh, these poor people just don’t know enough; We have the answers.* Thus we wind up answering questions they haven’t even asked. We tend to push our ideas without really understanding those people.

Master your language. We have generally taken a fairly passive view of poor English. I think we could and should do better. If I cannot present something in good, proper

English, the message I am giving may be discredited. Howard Hendricks, a teacher at Dallas Theological Seminary for many years, once said, “When you stop learning, you stop teaching.” Use correct pronunciation. It’s not grievous, but grievous; not covetchous, but covetous; there should be no skism, no shism, but really there should be no schism (sizm) in the body.


If you’re above 75 years old, I’ll excuse you. Otherwise, I encourage you to learn a second language. If someone can speak English and Chinese, he can speak with about 40% of the people of the earth. If you add Spanish to that, you can speak with about 50% of the people of the world. I may be more serious than you think; I don’t mean that you would have to master another language, but if you could learn enough to communicate in it, I really believe it would enhance your ministry.

I encourage you to write. We should encourage and develop that. There are many books out there that I would hesitate to give to my son to read, but if one of you would write a book, I would be likely to give him my full encouragement.

I also raise this question: Why is it that Moses and Paul wrote so much of the Scriptures? It is inspired by God, and yet these two men, who

were well-educated, wrote much of it. I also ask if it is significant that men by the name of Bercot and Taylor, were on the slate to debate in a big debate about two weeks ago in a doctrine that we hold precious: non-resistance. Taylor had military experience. I’m glad these two men defended it, but I would also be glad if someone of a more common ethnicity from among us would study their lesson and be willing and able to do so.

We need to learn to listen to each other. What are people really saying? We need to learn to ask what they really mean, not what we might wish they were asking. We need to know the people we are ministering to. We need to trust them. We need to learn to understand something from another’s perspective.

Finally, let us remember this, “Study to shew yourself approved unto God.” It is God for whom we are working. The motive is not to bring a “Wow!” factor for me, but that I bring a “Wow!” factor for Jesus. Jesus said in John 5: 44, “But how can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?” First and foremost, we seek God’s glory. If I want to enhance and improve my ministry, it is not so that I can be lifted up, but so that I can lift up Jesus Christ more effectively. 

## To Thailand, and Around

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

It was April, 2014. We were on our way to Kansas to the annual ministers' meetings in Kansas. The cell phone rang: "This is Val Yoder from Thailand. How are you, Aaron? How is the weather?"

"Look, Val. You never called me to find out about how I am or about the weather before. What's up?"

"A teacher needed to cancel," Val said, "could you come and take his place?"

*Where in the world is Thailand? Halfway around the world, I found out, south of China.*

Destination: International Global Opportunities (IGo). I would teach a one-hour class each week day. Three other teachers also have one-hour classes. A class on Thai Culture is taught by Pastor Kiat, twice a week. Teacher preparation includes creative homework assignments for students. This trip had some work connected to it. Very worthwhile work. Kingdom work.

We knew most of the staff there! Val Yoder married my cousin's daughter, Barb. Loren Miller, formerly from

Kansas; Verlynn Yoder, Minnesota; Gaylord Barkman, formerly from Ohio—and their families. Matthew and Andrea Nisly, Kansas, were among the students.

The goal of IGo is to provide Bible studies in conjunction with first-hand missionary experience. It is a hands-on training—a unique approach. We are careful not to elevate IGo above our own Bible schools, VS, and missions programs. These endeavors are all worthy of our support.

IGo students have three weeks of classes, followed by two weeks of mission orientation and ministry, going out to various countries in ministry teams. These countries have Christian contacts to facilitate travel and ministry.

A cycle of three weeks of Bible School and two weeks of ministry are repeated three times each semester. There are two semesters between April 28 and December 12.

The current opportunity is an open door for the Gospel to be lived out and proclaimed in southeast Asia,

with free movement to and from other countries (at least as yet). There are more than 1,000 church mission organizations headquartered in the large city of Chiang Mai, Thailand. Thailand is considered a second-world country with good roads and people services.

Most of these nations have Buddhism as their national religion. Some are predominantly Hindu. Both religions believe in reincarnation. Stealing, for instance, is a very minimal problem. The people recognize it as being bad. If you are a man who does bad things in life, when you die, you could come back again in the next life as a woman. A bad woman might come back as a cow, or maybe a cat.

We Christians believe in resurrection to eternal life, based on our Savior, Jesus Christ, who was raised in a new, powerful, ever living, recognizable body. We may not have preached and taught enough about the resurrection of Christ. It is the keystone of our faith, the foundation of our salvation, the surety of our life after death in a celestial, never-to-die-again, recognizable form. Reincarnation? No. Resurrection? Absolutely and emphatically and eternally, yes!

Buddhists have no special day of the week to honor Buddha. They have no day of the week for worship. One does as he is inclined, including his

religion. Take care of how you live so it will go well with you in this life and you will be reincarnated with some betterment in the next life. Buddhists live in fear. All religions outside of Jesus Christ live in a controlling and overpowering fear. Jesus Christ has delivered us from fear and given us assurance and confidence in God's salvation. We have a powerful message to live. In comparison to a life of fear, superstition, and guilt of non-believers in God, we have a compelling message to proclaim.

Many Thai people have no God or holy day. They have no Bible. They have many writings, larger than our Bible. Some of their writings contradict each other. They say this is good, because then one can pick and choose what fits his thought and desire. Why do some people do that with God's Word? Some say the Bible is full of contradictions, and that therefore it cannot be trusted. Using various interpretations to fit personal preferences can also make our Bible ring with an uncertain sound. It is like one Christian speaker recently said (using one half hour to press his point) that six different opinions on a six-man church board is good, because you find all of them to somehow be right. This kind of pluralism is not biblical, but fits the spirit of the age. It fits into an abstract age rather than a real faith and toward a life of do-as-you-please.

Buddha shrines, set on a post about five feet off the ground, seem to be everywhere in Thailand. People place food, or trinkets, or flowers on them for good luck and to appease the spirits. We can only imagine Paul's inner feelings as he wrote, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Romans 10: 14, 15a) Vision sees the need, dedication answers the call, resolution does the sending, individuals are chosen and go.

Thai people are generally very kind, personally accommodating, very agreeable, and easy to be entreated—so much so that a

planned appointment might be "Yes, yes!" with gracious smiles and bowed head. But at the appointed time and place, no one shows up. No problem—this is Thailand.

Thai people are very gentle. They look ahead to wishing for two girls who are more apt to care for their aged parents.

There is, once again, as Paul said, "...a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9). Paul seemed to be overwhelmed by his desire to advance the Gospel. That is the need we see in spreading the Gospel in the Far East. Open doors and adversaries have a way of arriving at about the same time.

*(To be continued next month)* 

## helpers at home

# God's Schoolroom of Learning

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

I was only 26, when my dad turned 70, so I felt he was getting rather old. I remember him quoting Psalm 90:10, "The years of our life are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength, labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Dad liked to remind us that he was living

on borrowed time. It hardly seems possible that I, too, have reached the borrowed years. However, instead of seeing this verse as an end to life, I see it as a challenge to make the best use of these borrowed years. Verse 12 reminds us, "so teach us to number our days," another translation says, "Teach us to live wisely and well."

I ponder this question: "How can



I live wisely and well in the years that God has given to me?” This question affects each of us—whether 26 or 70—or any years beyond. I have concluded that each one of us is a student in God’s schoolroom of learning. Our classes will vary; the subjects and the tests will not be according to age, but according to God’s plan for each individual. There are no petulant F’s (for failure) in God’s classroom. God is a patient and loving teacher. He often gives another opportunity, another moment or circumstance to pass the test.

I have definitely been a student in God’s classroom this summer. I cannot say I have passed with flying colors. Nonetheless, I trust I have passed the test, because I really do not care to repeat the lessons. God has allowed me much time for reflection in the classroom. I have faced the test of pain beyond anything I knew was possible to bear. However, I also experienced the love and care of both my physical and spiritual family. I cannot comprehend going through life without either one.

I want to share a few things God has been teaching me this summer:

### **Acceptance of His plan**

I repeat, God’s plan for each person is different. Regardless of our age, each of us is on a different journey. For one, it may include sickness or

even death in the family. Others may struggle with broken relationships, finances, or a wayward child. Life may seem unfair as we look at others whose lives appear so calm and easy. Remember that we do not know the inner and hidden turmoil they may be dealing with. Accept your life, as it is today, as God’s plan for you. *Only in acceptance lies peace.*

### **Not “Why?” but “What?”**

I hasten to say that I do not believe it is wrong to ask “Why?” for David often cried out to God in a psalm with that very word, “Why, O God?” I do believe, however, that we need to move quickly beyond “why?” to “what?” “God, what do You want me to do with this?” God has a reason and a purpose for allowing every situation into my life. How do I find and use this for God’s glory? *There’s always a WHAT behind the WHY.*

### **Focus on the good in life.**

I have been using a walker for the last few months. I don’t know if this will be permanent; I hope not. Yet, I needed to come to grips with the fact that it may be permanent. One morning, I was finally able to walk out to the garden and pick a bouquet of flowers. It was an ordinary job that I especially loved doing each summer. I stood there enjoying the butterflies and bees fluttering gracefully on the zinnias

and sunflowers. I even snapped some photos with my camera and was struck with the realization that there is life beyond the walker. There are still many things I can do and enjoy. So, rather than focus on what I cannot do, I want to focus on things I can do. *If you don't find contentment where you are, you probably won't find it anywhere else.*

### **Prioritize and set goals.**

There are times in life when we are limited in our productivity. Things we took for granted, such as the amount of work we could do in one day, our availability to help or spend time with others, even our church activity suddenly becomes difficult or impossible. It may be childcare, sickness, or it may simply be getting older. We find that we just cannot do what we used to do and we tend to become frustrated or go on a guilt trip. We must learn to prioritize. We must save our energy for what is

most important in life. We can learn to set realistic goals for what we can accomplish on this day. Pace yourself and listen to your body. How much can you really do? *When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.*

### **Relax and enjoy life.**

I cannot say it too often: enjoy, enjoy, enjoy! Find joy in the small things of life. The soft, cuddly baby puppy or kitty enjoyed with a small child brings a smile to your face. Enjoy the fragrance of fresh cut herbs, the butterflies and birds, and a bouquet of flowers from the garden. Time spent with family, a barbecue on the deck or sitting at the dinner table together. Taking time to read, to write a letter, to sit on the porch and watch the sunset with the hummingbirds flitting around you are all opportunities to enjoy—whether young or old, or in between. Enjoy life now. Tomorrow may be too late. *We have this moment; cherish it!*



## junior messages

# *When Jesus Caught Him*

*Marcellus Beachy, Kenya*

**T**he night air felt tense as Joshua and a brother from his clan slipped stealthily

through the darkness in Kenya. They were cattle thieves and were in the middle of stealing more cows this

night. Unfortunately for them, the cattle owners were guarding their herd and waiting for the thieves' arrival.

Joshua's brother had drunk alcohol to give him more strength for stealing. Suddenly, the thieves realized they were in great danger and quickly tried to escape. The alcohol made it difficult to run quickly and Joshua's brother was caught. The angry cattle owners killed him on the spot with *pangas* (machetes) and clubs. Though they chased after him, tall Joshua escaped unharmed into the dark night.

The death of Joshua's 30-year-old partner in crime took place in 2008. This death left behind a widow with some small children. Although Joshua received many death threats, he continued stealing cattle. During the night, he would take a stolen cow to the butcher for cash. If the cow was worth \$2,000, the butcher would pay him half the value. In this way, the butcher would also benefit from the cattle thievery. Though it was quite dangerous, stealing cattle was Joshua's livelihood. He had been a cattle thief since 1996, and this was the way he provided for his family.

Joshua was a hardened man and never attended church. He felt that he was not good enough. He knew people would talk about him in a bad

way. He thought maybe they would preach about stealing and he did not want to hear about that. However, in 2011, God began doing a work in this man's heart. A neighbor invited him to a Bible Study and Joshua decided to go.

Joshua came to Christ that very day. In the few weeks before the Bible Study he had been doing some thinking. He was wondering how he could do something about his bad character and how he could change his life. In Joshua's own words, "That day at Bible Study is when Jesus caught me."

Today, 52-year-old Joshua is a faithful member at church. He is doing kind deeds for others and assists me in delivering food parcels to the poor and needy. God completely changed his life. He is no longer a thief, but works hard in his garden and builds houses to provide for his family. Even others who held grudges against him can see that he is not a bad man anymore. He is contributing to his community and neighbors. Joshua doesn't have the fear of death since he stopped stealing and came to Christ. He has a beautiful family and is leading them in the way of the Cross. May God receive all glory for the work of salvation in the heart of Joshua.



## *Delighting in the God who Fills Us*

*Ernest Eby, State College, PA*

**H**ave you ever wished you could do more for somebody you loved but were unable to do so because of your human limitations? Fathers who love their children often wish they could do more for their children. Friends often wish they could do more for their friends.

With God, this is not the case. He is capable of filling every need, every desire, and every wish. That is why Psalmists and other biblical writers repeatedly tell us to delight ourselves in God. He fills our hearts with love, knowledge and peace. At some point, our hearts become so full of Him, that His love starts overflowing into the world around us.

This can happen in mature human relationships as well. In fact, this is the purpose of human friendships and relationships. God intends that mature friendships will produce more love than can be contained within the relationship. God intends that this excess love will spill out into the lives of others.

You may know of people who seem to love each other a lot, yet all love seems to go inward. There does not seem to be much love left for anyone else. It is as if there is a leak in their love reservoir that consumes all the love that people or certain people can pour into them.

You may know of a Christian couple or group of friends who seem to love each other a lot, yet also appear to have lots of extra love for others. This is a result of delighting in the Lord. When we truly delight who fills us, there is more love, more joy, more faith, more hope than we can contain. It has to go somewhere so it starts spilling out.

When a container is being filled by a pitcher and the pouring continues even after the container is full, anything in the way of the overflow is affected. If the contents from the pitcher are wanted, the overflow is welcomed. If the contents of the pitcher are not welcomed, the overflow is a disaster.

In 2009, the British Petroleum

Co. began drilling a well in Gulf of Mexico with hopes of extracting large amounts of oil. The huge reservoir they tapped into was under great pressure. At one point during the drilling process, a deadly explosion occurred on the drilling rig. This catastrophe resulted in an uncapped well that spilled an estimated 4.9 million barrels of thick, sticky oil into the Gulf of Mexico. For about three months “all the king’s horses and all the king’s men” could not figure out a way to shut off the well.

This reservoir is a crude illustration when we compare it with the reservoir that is available to us when we delight ourselves in God. When Jesus talked to the woman at the well, He told her that anyone who drinks of Him, would have a fountain of life-giving water rising up within him. A few chapters later, it reports Jesus standing up in the temple and crying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Have you ever noticed that you are in need of Living Water? Do you have situations coming up that require more love and joy than you have, to give out? Jesus tells us to come to Him to get filled!

If you would come to me to get filled, I might be able to fill you for an hour

or so. But before long my well would go dry. However, if you tap into God’s resource, you will find a reservoir of love that cannot be depleted.

Would you like to guess what supplies God’s reservoir of Living water? God’s reservoir is kept full from the overflow of love that spills out of the Godhead. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live and relate in such harmony that love spills out of their relationship into the lives of billions of people.

Delighting ourselves in God is much more than maintaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Judas Iscariot had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but he didn’t love Jesus. Judas saw Jesus as someone he could use to accomplish his goals in life. Judas delighted in Jesus, but to him, Jesus was someone to exploit—not someone to adore.

### **So how do we delight ourselves in God?**

Think of how a servant delights himself in a loving master. Think of how a child delights himself in his father or mother. Think of how a fiancée` delights herself in her fiancé` .

When we delight ourselves in someone, we think about them a lot. We try to be where they are. We try to please them. We adjust our preferences to fit their preferences. We gaze on them with intrigue. We

bask in their love and affirmation. We offer them gifts. Not necessarily because they need it, but because we think they might like it.

When we delight in God, we think about Him a lot during the day. We want to be with Him, we offer Him the sacrifice of praise and we use our time for things that please Him. When we delight in God, we adjust our preferences to fit His preferences. We watch Him. We can't get done looking at Him.

Think of all the different things a person could be an expert in and God is all of these. God is THE Administrator. He is THE Carpenter. He is THE Father. He is THE Healer. Delighting ourselves in Him allows Him to rub off on us. This makes Him worth emulating.

Perhaps this is what motivated Jesus to go out to a hillside "a great while before it was yet day" (Mark 1:35).

As we delight ourselves in the Lord, our cup of joy becomes full and running over. Martha, the sister of Lazarus, had things to do. So do we. Mary chose to sit at the feet of Jesus, because her heart needed God. Only people who need God are willing to set aside their "to do" list in order to fellowship with Him.

In conclusion...

How would you answer the question, "What is life?"

Here is one way to answer this question: **Life is the path you beat from your bed back to your bed each day.** Whatever you do in that circuit is what makes up "life."

Each person's circuit is a bit different. Whatever you do each day is *your* circuit. You can choose some parts of your circuit and other parts may be chosen by God. Either way, it is up to you to make that daily circuit accomplish the purposes for which you were created. God is eager to help you do this.

Perhaps your circuit is to wake up, sit on the sofa a while, walk to the barn, and then hop into the car and drive to work. Perhaps you work at home with your family or go to school. At various times throughout the day you may rub shoulders with children, employees, customers, or family members. When evening comes, you eat supper, go through your evening routines, and crawl into bed.

It is my hope and prayer that as you circuit each day with God, your days will be filled with much delight. I hope that as you love God, your relationship with Him will produce more love than you can contain. And as you walk *your* circuit, I hope that people all along the way can't help but get soaked with Living Water that flows out from you!



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## THOUGHT GEMS

If honesty isn't kind, it's the wrong kind.

• • • • •

Walk tall, but remember how to stoop.

• • • • •

Ease is the enemy of diligence.

• • • • •

Good leadership is the ability to make people want to follow.

• • • • •

God notes how much we love Him by how much we love others.

• • • • •

The moon might as well stop shining if it took seriously the dogs that bark at it.

• • • • •

He who thinks money grows on trees will surely find himself out on a limb.

• • • • •

No modern pain medicine gives a child better relief than does a mother's kiss.

• • • • •

Old age is when it takes longer to rest than it did to get tired.

• • • • •

Two men looked out through prison bars; one saw mud  
—the other saw the stars.