



Calvary messenger

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

Galatians 6:14

OCTOBER 2014

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Amazing Love

Alaina Lee, Mooringsport, LA

Once, at the darkest of earth's night,
Where sin and sorrow reigned alone.
God sent His Son to bring men light,
Their lives to redeem and sin to atone.

His love for man exceeded by far
The glories of Heaven from whence He came.
Into darkness He stepped, with a loving heart,
Yet not seeking riches, might, nor fame.

My Savior! He loved me enough to die
The criminal's death to save my soul;
To banish darkness with His light;
To save me, cleanse me, make me whole.

He conquered death and rose from the grave!
Through Him we have the victory!
O, give Him now your heart to save,
He conquered death to set you free!

O Lord, I don't deserve Your love!
Amazing love that sets me free!
You humbly came down from above
To give Your life for men—for me!

Dear Jesus! Now to You I give,
In thankfulness for what You've done —
My life! For You I'll always live;
Through You redemption is begun!

O, blessed hope, that I shall see
My precious Savior, face to face!
At life's journey's end, on bended knee
With joy, I'll then my King embrace.



Just Chapter and Verse, or also Scriptural Principle?

Strict biblicalists like to ask for “chapter and verse.” If these are not given, they give it little consideration. I, however, propose that the “chapter and verse” method is not the only way to faithfulness. Honestly pursuing scriptural principle also yields godliness.

Case in point: What chapter and verse in the New Testament forbids tobacco and recreational drugs? Let me propose that good evidence abounds that a true follower of Christ has a safe place to stand in opposition to these indulgences. A serious study of Christian principles indicates that our bodies are to be temples of the Holy Spirit and that we are responsible to give them care and respect.

Another case in point: What New Testament evidence is there that we should have a church wedding service? By consulting Christian principle, I see four reasons why marriage ought to be solemnized by a public, religious ceremony: 1) A time of waiting before entering marriage helps prevent decisions that arise suddenly from a hasty, ill-considered decision to live together. 2) A church

wedding service sets a line of clear demarcation between celibacy and cohabitation. Unless cohabitation occurs within a relationship that has been solemnized by marriage vows witnessed by others, it probably rests on the flimsy foundation of whim and lust, neither of which honor God. Christian marriage includes commitment of vows to God and lives sacrificially for one’s marriage partner. 3) Such a service gives testimony to the permanence God has designed for marriage in which a man and a woman commit themselves to exclusive, lifelong devotion to each other. This commitment acknowledges “the glue of God” when He joins a man and woman together, with Jesus’ pronouncement, “What God has joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6). Thus it closes the door left standing open by those who say, “If it doesn’t work, exit by divorce.” 4) Jesus went to a wedding feast and blessed it.

More examples of scriptural principle could be given, but these two examples illustrate that we are wise to take biblical principles and

make careful application, as well as consulting chapter and verse.

Creeds and Statements That Apply Biblical Principle

Through the centuries men have expressed their understandings with written creeds and statements of faith. In our faith heritage, Michael Sattler is credited with writing the seven-article Schleithem Confession of Faith. The work abounds with supporting Scriptures. It was a risky undertaking because it challenged the papacy in corrupt teachings and practices that had crept into the church. The date given for its writing is February, 1527, and Sattler's martyrdom is given as May, 1527, so he was soon martyred, apparently for taking that stand of courage.

We might say the Word of God is written with permanent ink. We must acknowledge that whatever men write when interpreting the Bible must be written in a more tentative mode. We might say, *It shall be written with erasable ink*. So what Michael Sattler wrote is not as fully dependable as that which the writers of sacred Scripture wrote, whose writing did not come by private interpretation, but they simply wrote what the Holy Spirit moved them to write (2 Peter 1:20, 21). While I have no disagreement with Sattler, I maintain that the Schleithem Confession of 1527, is not inspired in the same sense that the 66 books of

the Bible are, with the New Testament fulfilling the Old Testament. The Schleithem Confession addressed issues pressing upon them at that time and became a catalyst for much-needed change.

Interestingly, 105 years later, a replacement statement of faith appeared. In 1632, in Dort, Holland, Anabaptists of that time and place adopted the Dortrecht Confession with 18 articles of faith. Both of these two confessions of faith served a good purpose. Conservative Anabaptist fellowships in the western hemisphere have been using the Dortrecht Confession. It has served well. I appreciate it.


While lauding these efforts, I acknowledge that a worthy statement of faith must have as its supreme object devotion to the Lord Jesus. We strive for singular devotion to our blessed Savior beyond the perfect verbal formulation of the tenets of our faith.

Lively, realistic fellowships still make pertinent interpretations of a more general statement of faith. We process questions like, "Shall we take up membership in a certain organization?" (the unequal yoke), "What is a sensible and biblical way to dress in our time, where we live—for men, for women?" "What is the ideal age for baptism?" (Our forefathers got a nickname and many gave their lives for replacing infant baptism.) "How

shall we process health care issues— shall it be only American Medical Association-approved care or can it include treatment adopted in other countries?” “Shall we participate in social welfare programs?” While this list of questions is far from exhaustive, it shows a range of specific applications in our time, if we would live by “a faith that will not shrink, though pressed by many a foe, that will not tremble on the brink of any earthly woe.”

Where is the denomination that has gone strictly by “chapter and verse” for 50 years, that has not eventually also abandoned specific New Testament teaching? For those who say that unless we go strictly by “chapter and verse,” we will find ourselves on the dangerous ground of adding to Scripture (Rev. 22:18,19),

I beg to differ. I believe Christian faithfulness naturally follows embracing Christian principles. Otherwise, we slip into neglect of Christian practice for our generation, and shortchange the generations to come.

When the early church faced a tough question in Acts 15, the New Testament was not yet compiled. They applied biblical principles to practical problems. God guided them. They gained new strength and direction to proceed with God’s blessing. Notice that “as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders, which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith and increased in number daily” (Acts 16: 4,5). —PLM 

the bottom line

The Comradeship of Pain

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

I don’t know much about pain. My seventy-six years have been relatively pain-free. But why are even infrequent times of pain so easy to recall?

Pain is the interference of life. The disruption is not welcome. We wish it wouldn’t come. When it does come, the hurt is very real.

My greatest experience with physical pain was when one-third of my index finger was cut off, leaving a small amount of flesh and skin, with the tip left dangling. The worst part for me was to dip it in iodine for awhile before the doctor could sew it back on. The pain was intense and relentless! I had a shock mechanism

whereby I sang through a whole song in an involuntary reaction, partly unaware that I was singing. Later I realized the song I sang was, “When I survey the wondrous cross,” which was not altogether out of order for the occasion.

Five days later the pain began to return. Being it was Saturday, the doctor would not be able to see me until late afternoon on Monday. What are those black streaks in my finger coming out from under the bandage? Gangrene! The doctor removed the bandage and said abruptly: “Your finger died on you!” Further, he said, “We will need to remove it.”

In my truest Aaronic form, I said, “Okay, let’s do it right now.” “No” he said, “tomorrow.” Call him Dr. Pharaoh. For when God sent frogs jumping in and out of everywhere in Pharaoh’s domain, out of the ovens, in the dinnerware, in the bathroom, bedroom, closet, clothes hamper, on the table, sofa, desk—they might have opened the front door and found two dozen frogs hopping out, but, behold three dozen come jumping in. Pharaoh demands of Moses relief. Moses asked, “When?”

Pharaoh said, “Tomorrow.” Tomorrow? Like Pharaoh and all of Egypt who had one more night with the frogs, I had one more night with my pain!

God had my attention with this whole episode. At my lowest and most

helpless point, I had prayed earnestly for relief. I knelt by the living room sofa and told God I would even be willing to be ordained as deacon, if that is His will for me. Our congregation was preparing for a deacon ordination. I had serious reservations about myself concerning that—an easy-to-remember unwillingness.

Loss is frequently associated with pain: The loss of a dearly beloved child. The pain of childlessness, heightened by several miscarriages. The loss of a parent to small children or later is especially painful. The variety of broken relationships can bring most excruciating pain. Failure to reach goals truly hurts.

God is tender toward our pain, more than a human comrade. He is our loving Heavenly Father. Among God’s attributes, His mercy stands out then. His mercy is highlighted through relief from our pain. Those who know can say, “Amen!” But there is even much more to God’s mercy. There have been those, and perhaps right now in our readership, who at this very moment have tried man’s best pain control and still suffer intensely. We don’t know how, but somehow, God gives these sufferers His most tender mercies, even a hundredfold.

My wife, Marian, had cancer in her bones for one year. Oh, what awful pain! And then she had a double stroke, affecting both hemispheres of the brain. It left her blind, with major

emotional loss and memory loss. After another seven months, she had her wish, to go home to be with the Lord. Pain free! Forever!

But then, I had a new, unknown pain. Loneliness. Marian's body had become very thin, pitifully so. God in His mercy gave her a new body. Now I needed mercy in a new dimension, just to live. God's grace comes wrapped in His mercy, or it it the other way around? God is fully adequate and He is adequately full.

My present wife Esther's first husband, Roger, walked into the doctor's office eleven years ago for a follow-up visit. On a routine EKG, while the doctor was listening to his heart, it suddenly stopped. Roger was gone. Esther also needed God's mercy and grace. Not as a pain remover, or pain reliever, but that full measure from God in bearing pain. Four children at home were also in pain.

Some experience pain through deep financial losses. For some it has meant working and living frugally for 10–20 years to pay off back debts for their just-for-fun lifestyle. Here and there is someone doing the same as a result of an unscrupulous, unethical business partner who walked away from legitimate debt. Likewise for some who lost big-time in farming or some other business venture. Many such situations—same results, which meant a long time of paying off a “dead horse.”

Besides accidents, health issues, loss by death, the pain of missed opportunities, loneliness, and financial loss, there is the pain of old age. For some persons, aging is painful. Socially, most of their peers have died. Expectations have not come to fruition. Physically, the joints and muscles tighten. The mind just wearies of the futile aspects of life.

Spiritually, for some, there are the regrets of an undeveloped sonship with God, the Creator of all men and all things. This is the hardest pain to identify. For such, the spirit, soul and body of man lives and operates outside the design by its Maker. This is the basic cause for pain of spirit and certainly contributes to much physical, social, emotional, and financial pain. I realize that this sounds preachy, but really, for some in our churches this point warrants emphasis and some meditation. Thinking of others who are worse off does little for me in my pain.

Can pain be relieved? Yes. Physical pain can often be reduced or even eliminated with physical pain relievers. Social and emotional pain are more tricky to be diagnosed and treated. Many times, the local congregation would have persons capable of helping relieve some of these pains, but people in pain tend to say, “My church people know me too well.”

Excellent diagnosis! Some of those very people could soon get to the

point of need and provide help earlier in working toward betterment. But, no, that would hurt even more. Consequently, they go to some counseling center for ten sessions, and get mixed results.

Local persons may have seen the pain and need for years. They could suggest real and vital changes, with appreciable and substantial results.

Some people would really rather keep their pain. It is their crutch. Their frequent complaint is that the way to keep attention focused on themselves. It is living room conversation, after church talk, and may even come up in Sunday School class discussions. Answers to their complaints of emotional pain would mean change—a change for the better and a change to end the pet subject. The Bible says, “Fear hath torment” (1 John 4:18). In Luther’s German, it says, “Fear has pain.” The fear factor is somehow intertwined with our hurts. The fear of being discovered, the fear of being misused again, the fear of loss instead of gain. Fears causes hurts, pain and torment.

We know fear and faith don’t mix. It is either one or the other. Faith in God and faith in people can put our fears to rest, reduce them substantially, or remove them entirely.

Jesus has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. “He was wounded for our transgressions...and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4,5).

Internal healing of our emotions is possible by Jesus Christ and is a very real need for some in our churches.

The healing of memories is also possible by our Lord Jesus, the loving and compassionate Counselor and Physician. Jesus comes to us by His representatives on earth—pastors, lay persons, or even a family member, at times.

Professional counselors certainly have their place in our day. They have helped many deserving people. The web of wrong reactions and sin can be too tangled for those near us to adequately help at times. However, the long wait for scheduling at the counseling office might be relieved by someone closer to home.

In a certain sense, everyone is pained in some way. We live in an imperfect, fallen world. Grief, burdens, mishaps and sorrow are the lot for everyone at times. For some there is tragedy, misfortune and even calamity. Some seldom speak of their troubles while others major on them.

Even sadder is the thought that long-term hurting people not only resist seriously facing and working through their hurts to eventual resolution, but instead, in a carnal way to compensate for their hurts, they hurt other people. It is a circular path of self-justification without human remedy, and of blaming others as a way of compensating for the blame that belongs to them.

A friend of mine has an acquaintance with a doctor in Chicago. The doctor is not a Christian, but he said the hardest people to treat are atheists. Belief in God has power and tends to promote good health and make life more bearable—hence more free of pain.

Even the creation experiences pain. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22). Groaning is the mechanism that expresses the desire for release from the consequences of sin, pain, and sorrow. Hurricanes, tornadoes, thunderstorms, earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, heat waves, and drouth may all be considered as the earth’s groanings. The Bible says, “And not only they (it), but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23). We groan in our spirit. The Holy Spirit, as God’s intermediary agent resident in us, also makes groanings on our behalf to God. (Romans 8:26). Our God-directed groanings of pain are heard by God. He is not against us. He is our Helper. Jesus Christ is our Intercessor who pleads our case as a Heavenly Advocate.

The pain factor is expressed in several important specifics in Romans 8. The creation groans, verses 21 and 28. The heirs of salvation in Christ

groan, verse 23. The Holy Spirit groans to God on our behalf, verse 26. These groanings are expressions to God for release.

Romans 8:28 is a favorite verse for many people, especially for those experiencing pain, sorrow, accident, loss of health, possessions, and other undesirables. This powerful verse appears in the context of verses on groaning. The expressions of hope in verses 24 and 25 appear in the midst of this context.

The events of life on earth involve loss, disappointments and pain. We experience helplessness at times. In such times we cry out to God. But God’s children need never be without hope. In such times we groan, joined in our groanings of pain with the earth beneath, with the Holy Spirit from above and both in us and for us to God.

The Bottom Line is that it is immeasurably helpful to know that God sees our pain. Those of us who want help and relief from our pain can be assured that God will give us a measure of relief from our pains if we are humble enough to cry for help. His help often comes from His Spirit within us. And sometimes it comes from people whom God has placed near us and around us.

P. S. I was ordained as deacon in that same year, following my painful event. Pain figured prominently as preparation in my becoming willing.



Compassion for my Friends

Stephen Miller, Belle Center, OH

I often wonder, yes, I do
When kind folks pass away,
And in the coffin I observe
How peacefully they lay.

With folded hands—so calm and still,
A smile plays on their face
But of the trials of this life,
There's not a single trace.

I really wonder—If I could,
See deep into their heart,
And share a portion of their life,
Where few have had a part.

I wonder so, what would I learn,
Or secret thing I'd view;
Or fierce battle that was fought,
Of which we had no clue.

Those days they longed to have a friend,
Who really, really cared.
But quietly, with bleeding heart,
Alone with God they shared.

Alas, my friend, I bow in shame,
These tears I shed are true;
For in remorse I now repent;
I was not there for you.

And so I pray that God would now
A double portion give
Of such compassion for my friends
To share yet while they live!



To Thailand and Around – *Part Two*

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

We were with IGo (Institutes for Global Opportunities) in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in June. It was the greatest global experience I ever had. I have traveled to three countries in South America, four in Central America, Alaska, twice to Europe, twice to Kenya, once to Israel, Syria and Egypt. But Thailand puts a vastness to the world in distance traveled, in populations of nearby countries, and the gigantic economic power house, Asia, more than anywhere I have ever traveled.

Asia includes Russia and Japan, besides other very populous countries. China has 20% of the world's seven billion population. India has very nearly 20% also, with each having in excess of one billion. (20% of 7 billion = 1 billion and 400 thousand souls!) It is said that India could well surpass China because India does not have government intrusion for family size. Their families tend to be quite large.

We were told that if one would take the entire population of the United States and all the people of Canada, plus all the people from the whole continent of Africa and place them all in the land area of the Rocky

Mountains west to the Pacific Ocean, you would have the same number of persons per square mile that exist in India right now. It is just incredible! My guess is that Asia has one-half of the world's population.

India is predominantly Hindu. They strongly believe in reincarnation. When you die, you come back again in this life. If you were good, you could be born in a higher caste (social class). But if you were bad, you have no say as to what you will be the next time around. You might be a monkey or a horse; very bad people might even come back as a rat.

Fear is a major motivator for many Asians. Their beliefs offer no hope—no salvation. No deliverance. No grace. No reward, except possibly of being lucky in reincarnation. What a contrast to the resurrection theme of the Bible, verified by the living Savior Himself, who suffered and died and rose again. All God's children will be resurrected to share the glory and presence of Jesus Christ in a celestial body. If we were more excited about this, it could put us in a new witnessing mode!

This article in Mission Awareness should not only address what

missionaries out there are doing. Back, “at the ranch,” we also have a word to give to those around us who are lost in sin and to those who do not know whether or not they are saved. Why is it that when it comes time for a funeral, all of a sudden, everyone knows the dead person went to heaven? God’s Word is clear about everyone’s need of salvation, how to be saved, and how to receive assurance of salvation, as well as being clear if one is not saved.

There are three provinces in northern India where it is said that 97% of the people are Christians. Apparently, many are nominal Christians, even as it is in America. Real Christianity is not necessarily resisted in those areas. Stating it too mildly, the need for teachers and pastors is still very great.

Part of IGO is Macedonian Teaching Ministries. Raymond Burkholder takes another teacher along to these various neighboring countries to give Leadership Seminars. He does much travel, which frequently is a grueling experience. This effort has reached probably thousands of saved men, some who rise to God’s call to teach and preach. How to study the Bible is a big assignment. I am too old to go, I suppose, but that fire is rekindled in my bones for such a work as this. How can we do more?

ADAM is a part of IGO in witnessing to monks in their monasteries. Christians are welcome. The first stage of becoming a monk is for young boys

to enter the program, even as young as 10 years old. Here they have food and a bed. At age 21 or so, they decide to either stay or take the vows for life, or leave. Monks love philosophy, either to hear or speak some new thing. It is a great way to teach Jesus and the Gospel.

RANSOM Ministries is carried forward by several ladies who walk the streets in the red light district, or go inside the bars to talk to women and invite them to a nobler life. This is a recent endeavor. They have two houses for staff residence and project classes and respondent’s residence. Three women have been saved by the Lord Jesus. They make greeting cards for sale in the U.S. as a means of support for the respondents.

People are funny and life is strange. Here in America, people go to a tanning salon for that wonderful bronze look. In Thailand, they already have that beautiful bronze look, given them by God. But there they have whitening salons to get that famous white look!

They have both modern super stores and old time markets. This is not a place to bargain and haggle over prices. Remember, these are soft-spoken, gentle people. They have street vendors and very large markets. You pay their prices or move on.

On our street, one half of the conveyances were low horsepower motorcycles. The big stores have huge areas for cycle parking, under roof.

Chiang Mai has several McDonald's and one KFC, a welcome sight for us. What is a foreigner to do with rice for dinner and supper? Eat rice, of course. They vary the accompanying food to go with it. It was okay.

Foreigners are not allowed to own land in Thailand. Visitor visas are accepted for 90 days. Before expiration, they often go to Nepal, a four-hour drive, to have them renewed by a mere stamp.

We were there when Brett Bontrager succumbed to heat exhaustion in running a physical fitness marathon. Esther knew Brett as a boy in Indiana. She is related to the family. Brett was a worker for IGo's EDGE team, also based in Chiang Mai, only several miles from IGo headquarters.


"Wright G" is a small Thai man. At 79, he has had many years as a committed Christian and a witness for Christ. He seems to disregard his declining health. He will likely die of natural causes for the sake of the Gospel. He travels up the mountains, where only two legs can take a person, to preach Christ. He is an inspiration. May God raise up ten more like him!

Visitors come to IGo every Sunday morning, even from neighboring countries. A couple from Pakistan says Burkholder's seminars are a very urgent need in his country. Jeremiah, from Nepal, was with us, imploring us with much entreaty to come to his country. Nepal is a relatively small

country, with 30 million people. People are being saved, primarily through their own people, but they have few leaders and Bible teachers.

The church of Christ is growing rapidly in Nepal, India, and China. Faithful and proven teachers are in great need. Bibles and Christian books are needed. Should we re-evaluate our mission endeavors and re-direct our resources to areas needing biblical nurture, lest they die? Here missionaries don't spend years to evangelize, as also in Kenya, and in many other places of the world.

I chose my title with purpose. The major leg of our flight home was canceled. Re-booking took us to Tokyo, Japan, and from there a direct flight to Washington, D.C. With that, this trip literally took us around the world. Either way to Thailand is nearly the same amount of flying time. We thank God for His providence and for an enlarged vision of world needs.

We were greatly enriched by deeply committed men and women on staff, plus visitors from different parts of the world who are passionate about spreading the Gospel. One outstanding student couple is Matthew and Andrea Nisly, from Kansas, who have returned to the U. S. to pursue more studies at Faith Builders for two years. Matthew's goal is to be a full-time missionary by age 30. May there be many more such while it is day, "for the night cometh when no man can work." 

CASP in Hutchinson, KS, 2015

Present plans are for two, four-week Conservative Anabaptist Service Programs (CASP) projects at Hutchinson, Kansas. Term One is for January 5-30, and Term Two is for February 2-27, 2015. We would also like to add a third term for March 2-27, if we have staff and finances. We are again looking for volunteers for ASW's (Alternative Service Workers), and staff, as well as finances.

These projects involve remodeling and repair of homes in Hutchinson.

Please help us reach our goal of eight men per term. Dan Byler, Huntsville, AR, [home phone: 479-738-2444; cell: 540-790-3084] is recruiter for this project. Contact with the Kansas CASP committee can be made by calling Oliver Troyer [620-567-2360].

We are again inviting constituency churches to help with the financial support of this program. As little as \$4 per member in our churches would meet the expenses anticipated in these two terms of service. Contributions may be sent to Elmer J. Miller, 63511 CR 33, Goshen, IN 46528 [574-642-3056].

Timothy D. Miller, Chairman, Peace and Service Committee

21604 Westover Drive, McKenney, VA 23872

[Home phone: 804-895-4288; Cell: 540-718-0096]



CBS ANNOUNCEMENT

Thank you for your support of Calvary Bible School in so many ways and through so many years! One avenue in which we especially value assistance is during the annual fall clean-up on campus as we get the facilities ready for 12 weeks of Bible School.

The dates for this effort are regularly scheduled for the second Tuesday and Wednesday in November. This year those dates fall on November 11 and 12. We are in need of many volunteers throughout these two days, whose main attributes need only be willingness and a good dose of enthusiasm. Especially valuable are young alumni of our constituency's Bible School and "grandparent" types of alumni who are glad to "give back" to this ministry.

You may call 717-989-7864 or contact norman@kauffmansfruitfarm.com to make your willingness known! Thank you in advance!

Norman R. Kauffman, For the Calvary Bible School board



marriages

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

Charles-Kauffman

Bro. James Marvin, son of Kevin and Sharon Charles, Marietta, PA, and Sis. Martina Rose, daughter of Samuel and Mattie Kauffman, Ronks, PA, at Weavertown Mennonite Church on June 28, 2014, by Glenn Bender, grandfather of the bride.

Escoto-Miller

Bro. Jason, son of Bilmer and Leah Escoto, Lott, TX, and Sis. Eileen, daughter of Sam and Vera Miller, Concord, AR, at Floral Baptist Church for Shady Lawn Mennonite Church, Mtn. View, AR, on June 21, 2014, by Carl Gingerich.

Farmwald-Miller

Bro. Loren, son of Delbert and Dorothy Farmwald, Monticello, KY, and Sis. Marlene, daughter of Howard and Catherine Miller, Bloomfield, MO, at First United Methodist Church for Crowley's Ridge Mennonite Church on June 27, 2014, by Melvin Troyer.

Hochstedler-Bontrager

Bro. Lester, son of Albert and Ruby Hochstedler, and Sis. Lisa, daughter of Steve and Joyce Bontrager, both of Kokomo, IN, at Bethany Fellowship on August 2, 2014, by Marvin Beachy.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Christopher, son of Ronald and Brenda Miller, Oswego, KS, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Ernest and Mary Yoder, Parsons, KS, at Oswego Christian Church for Cornerstone Mennonite Church on July 26, 2014, by Ronald Miller.

Stoltzfus-Hostetler

Bro. Shaphan, son of Simon and Joyce Stoltzfus, Taylorsville, NC, and Sis. Barbara, daughter of Ner and Rachel Hostetler, LaGrange, IN, at Pleasant Grove Mennonite Church for Hebron Fellowship, July 19, 2014, by Virgil Hershberger.

Yoder-Esh

Bro. Randall, son of Clyde and Marilyn Yoder, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Andrea, daughter of Kenneth and DeAnn Esh, Gordonville, PA, at Weavertown Mennonite Church on July 12, 2014, by Homer Zook, grandfather of the bride.

cradle roll

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

Banner, Mark Kenyon and Sherayne (Ysaguirre), Hattieville, Belize, first child and dau., Markiyah Kenae, August 11, 2014.

Beachy, Glen and Heather (Gingerich), New Berlin, PA, third child, second son, Eric Webster, Aug. 12, 2014.

Beiler, Marvin and Lydianne (Stoltzfus), Dundee, NY, first child and dau., Kara Marie, born April 4, 2013. Adopted April 23, 2014.

Chupp, Andrew and Michelle (Landis), Eden Valley, MN, first child and son, Jayden Paul, July 26, 2014.

Eicher, Marvin Joel and Gina (Hershberger), Millersburg, OH, fourth child, third son, Jeremiah David, June 28, 2014.

Eicher, Thomas and Hanna (Sirait), Grabill, IN, second child and son, Thaddeus Tondi, July 11, 2014.

Eichorn, Howard and Sharon (Beachy), Harlan, IN, fourth child, third dau., Emily Joy, August 1, 2014.

Hostetler, Delbert and Lavera (Herschberger), Amboy, IN, fifth child (one son deceased), second dau., Brinley Janelle, July 12, 2014.

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

Mast, Duane and Debra (Mast), Summersville, KY, first child and son, Trenton Lane, July 6, 2014.

Mast, Lyle and Donna (Bechtel), Concord, AR, first child and son, Judson Clark, April 24, 2014.

Mast, Lyndall and Carla (Byler), Drasco, AR, first child and dau., Allison Rose, May 7, 2014.

Mast, Merlin and Catherine (Miller), Whiteville, TN, fourth child, second dau., Emmalise Shalom, July 20, 2014.

Miller, Dennis and Betty (Miller), Dundee, OH, third child, second daughter, Janessa Dawn, July 11, 2014.

Miller, Jeffrey and Laura (Miller), Holmesville, OH, third child and dau., Jenny Lynn, May 26, 2014.

Miller, Jon Eric and Anita (Yoder), Millersburg, OH, first child and dau., Jenna Addison, July 31, 2014.

Miller, Josh D. and Marlene (Peight), Holmesville, OH, second child, first dau., Erika Janae, July 22, 2014.

Miller, Philip and Edith (Martin), Grandview, TX, fourth child, second dau., Linsey Jo, June 7, 2014.

Miller, Philip and Joanna (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, fourth child and son, Andre Lavon, March 20, 2014.

Nisly, Brandon and Krista (Miller), Harrison, AR, second child, first son, Jude Oliver, July 24, 2014.

Schrock, Conrad and Judith (Yoder), Sugarcreek, OH, first child and son, Riley Everett, July 30, 2014.

Soefje, Justin and Stacey (Olin), Lott, TX, second child and dau., Alayna Grace, Aug. 15, 2014.

Stoll, Marlin and Marietta (Miller), Summersville, KY, fourth child, first dau., Rosina Joy, Aug. 9, 2014.

Stoltzfus, Chester and Regina (Yoder), Wytheville, VA, seventh child, sixth son (one son deceased), Chandler Shane, Aug. 3, 2014.

Stoltzfus, Noah and Rebecca (Lapp), Narvon, PA, fourth child, second dau., Aleah Rachelle, August 1, 2014.

Swarey, Samuel, Jr. and Dana (Toth), Whiteville, TN, first child and dau., Abigail Ruth, Aug. 18, 2014.

Troyer, Merlin and Amy (Gingerich), Garden Grove, IA, second child and son, Micah Elliot, Aug. 13, 2014.

Troyer, Titus and Kathryn (Mast), Fredonia, KY, third child, second dau., Kimberly Joy, July 25, 2014.


Yoder, Corey and Delores (Shetler), Itasca, TX, fourth child and dau., Anya Fern Janelle, March 15, 2014.

Yutzy, Wilmer and Joanna (Miller), Brookfield, MO, eighth child, fifth dau., Daisy Joelle, July 22, 2014.

ordinations

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

Bro. Ivan Chupp, 43, was ordained as a minister at Messiah Amish Mennonite Church, Millersburg, OH, on June 22, 2014. The charge was given by Philip A. Miller, assisted by Bobby Miller and Paul Leroy Miller. Merle Miller shared the lot.

Bro. Roy Hershberger, 40, of Guys Mills, PA, was chosen by lot and ordained as minister at Plainview Gospel Fellowship on August 24, 2014. Ray Stutzman and Homer Zook assisted in this work. Tim Miller was also in the lot. 

*On questions of right and wrong,
we must never be neutral.*

Chupp, Harvey J., 87, of Eden Valley, MN, died in an icy highway accident on March 17, 2014. He was born Dec. 9, 1926, in Owen, WI, son of the late Joseph and Amanda (Detweiler) Chupp.

He was a member of Believers Fellowship Mennonite Church, Grove City, MN, having moved there from Nappanee, IN, in 1979.

On June 28, 1956, he was married to Nancy Mast in Nappanee, IN. She survives. This union was blessed with five daughters and seven sons: Ruth (Jake) Beechy, Etna Green, IN; Samuel (Becky) Chupp, Nappanee, IN; Steven (Vera) Chupp, Goshen, IN; Barbara (Lynn) Weaver, Jonestown, PA; Paul (Marian) Chupp, Paynesville, MN; Lydia Chupp, Eureka, MT; John (Martha) Chupp, Mill Creek, WA; Mark (Freida) Chupp, Eden Valley, MN; Mary Ellen (Steve) Beiler, Kenora, ON; Joe (Pam) Chupp, Berthold, ND; Linda (Vern) McCray, Litchfield, MN; Glen (Katherine) Chupp, Eden Valley, MN; 62 grandchildren; 50 great grandchildren; brother John (Esther) Chupp, Nappanee, IN; and a sister-in-law, Sarah Chupp, Nappanee, IN.

Harvey was preceded in death by seven brothers, five sisters and a great grandchild.

The funeral was held on March 22, with Mel Beiler, Paul Chupp, and Abe Yoder serving. Graveside services at the Burr Oak Cemetery, Grove City, were conducted by Sam Chupp

Flaud, David B., 94, died in his home in Honey Brook, PA, June 21, 2014. He was born in Bird-in-Hand, PA, Dec. 10, 1919, to the late Jacob B. and Sarah (Beiler) Flaud.

He was a member of Pequea Amish Mennonite Church, Narvon.

On Dec. 7, 1946, he was married to Lena Riehl, who survives. Surviving children are: Nancy, married to Lester Coblentz, Millersburg, OH; daughter in-law, Mary Ann Nissley, Narvon; Alvin, married to Ruth (Lapp) Flaud, Honey Brook; Omar, married to Nancy (Glick) Flaud, Honey Brook; and Sara , married to Melvin Stoltzfus, Myerstown; 21 grandchildren, 59 great grandchildren; two brothers, Emmanuel, married to Barbara, Bird-in-Hand; and Jacob, married to Sally, Newburg, PA.

Preceding him in death were a still-born daughter; a son, Jacob R.; a grandson, Jay Omar Stoltzfus; and brother, Amos B. Flaud.

The funeral was held at the Pequea Church with Samuel J. Stoltzfus, Jonathan Stoltzfus, Melvin Zook and Ben A. Stoltzfus serving. Burial was in the Millwood Cemetery.

Glick, Lena B. (Lapp) (Beiler), 91, died at her home May 27, 2014. She was born at Gap, PA, Dec. 31, 1922, daughter of the late Moses and Rachel (Blank) Lapp.

She was a member of Pequea Amish Mennonite Church, Narvon, PA.

On Dec 1, 1942, she was married to Benjamin B. Beiler. To this union were born seven children: Barbara, married to Oliver Mast, Mohnton; Moses Beiler, married to Sylvia (Martin), Lowville, NY; Omar Beiler, married to Lisa (Kern), Fisherville, VA; Warren Beiler (deceased), married to Anna Mary Beiler, Narvon; Luke Beiler, married to Miriam (Stoltzfus), Narvon; Philip Beiler, married to Linda (Beachy), Narvon; Paul Beiler, married to Linda (Nafziger), Phoenix, AZ; 29 grandchildren; 36 great grandchildren; and one great grandchild. Also surviving are two brothers: Omar Lapp, Gap, PA, and John Lapp, Port Alleghany, PA.

She was married in a second marriage to Aaron S. Glick on Feb. 12, 1978, who was a pastor in the Pequea A.M. Church. He is also deceased.

Preceding her in death were a son, Warren; a grandson, Stephen Beiler; a step-daughter, Ada Marie Mast; and a step-son, Ivan Glick.

The funeral was held at Weavertown A. M. Church, with Ben A. Stoltzfus, Melvin Zook, John U. Lapp, and Philip Beiler serving. Burial was in the Weavertown A. M. Cemetery.

Meighn, Gloria Leonora (Clarke), 80, died of complications due to Alzheimer's Disease on August 6, 2014. She was born August 4, 1934, daughter of the late Thaddeus Clarke and Sylvia Abraham.

Gloria received Jesus as Lord and Savior in her youth and was a member of Pilgrim Mennonite Church, Hattieville,

Belize. Sister Gloria had a burden for young people in her little community that they would seek the Lord and find Him before it is too late. Her testimonies always ended with saying, "I am determined to serve the Lord and I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." May this be all our desire.

On April 22, 1961, she was married to Eurel Meighn, who preceded her in death on April 26, 2012. She was also predeceased by her sister, Jane Young and daughter, Sylvia Barton.

She leaves to mourn five daughters: Mrs. Radiance Henry, Mrs. Grace (Philip) Latchman, Mrs. Sharon Mejia (Ruben), Mrs. Ruth Castillo, and Mrs. Lydia (Paul) Esquilano; four sons: Wilford Augustus, Mark, Joseph, and David Meighn; 31 grandchildren, 33 great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild.

The funeral was held on August 10 at the Hattieville Mennonite Church with Louis (Hughdelle) Ysaguirre serving.

Stoltzfus, Judson Taylor, 14, of Harrison, AR, went home to be with Jesus July 19, 2014. He was born June 1, 2000, son of Tim and Sara (Ropp) Stoltzfus.

Judson is survived by two brothers and five sisters: Erica married to Tristan Kreider, Squaw Valley, CA; Brendon, Katrina, Karla, Alissa, Jonathan, and Krista, of the home. Also surviving are two grandparents, his paternal grandfather, Jonathan Stoltzfus, Narvon, PA, and his maternal

grandmother, Sylvia Ropp, Kalona, IA, also many uncles and aunts.

We treasure the memory of Judson and thank the Lord for the joy of having him in our home for 14 years. He was exceptionally creative and was highly motivated. He was home-schooled and at an early age began the habit of starting his schoolwork by 6 a.m., so he could be the first one finished and get on with many interests he enjoyed. Judson loved to sing and spent many hours playing his violin. His family unitedly agrees that his life left a testimony of faith in God and a willingness to walk in God's ways.

On Saturday, July 19, 2014, Judson went swimming in the Buffalo River along with his dad and brothers and four

friends. He and his best friend, Gabriel Heft, had a wonderful time jumping off a 15-foot bluff into a deep hole in the river. On the way home on a dirt road near Hasty, he fell off the truck and the back tire of a second vehicle went over his upper body and head. It was immediately apparent that he was gone. We prayed and committed him back to the Lord, Who had given Judson to us. During this time the truck was still running and a Hallel recording was singing the song, "Enter In."

The funeral was held on July 22, with Charles Hamilton, Mark Auker and Ben Stoltzfus serving. Lamar Ropp conducted the committal at the Little Flock Cemetery.



observations

National news (8-12-14) reports that Robin Williams, 63, died of apparent suicide. He is remembered as a "lightning storm of comic genius and our laughter was the thunder that sustained him." Williams suffered from severe depression.

I do not recall ever having heard his name before. But he was obviously known for his ability to make people laugh. It seems clear that beneath a facade of levity, there was unresolved emotional struggle. It is also obvious that the ability to make people laugh does not mean that the entertainer

is happy. Those who enjoy making hilarity may well have unresolved emotional issues.

A sense of humor is not something to be despised, but should be incidental to circumstances rather than humor for the sake of humor.



News media report that this year a majority of students enrolled in the public schools in the U.S. are non-white. This reflects a growing population of families from Mexico. Part of the present situation includes the problem of illegal immigration. In 1836, Texas was a part of Mexico.

But it wanted statehood in the United States. Over the objection of the Mexican government, President James. K. Polk made Texas a state in 1845.

At that time what is presently California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona, some of Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming was part of Mexico. There were various issues of contention between the two countries that were not being resolved diplomatically. But there was a growing feeling in the U. S. that the country had a “manifest destiny” to expand westward into new lands.

Our history books refer to the war of 1846-48 as “The Mexican War.” Mexicans call it “The American Invasion.”

Some historians seriously question whether the war was necessary to settle differences. It was a case of a stronger nation attacking a weaker country to expand their boundaries. Some of the above details were gleaned from the World Book Encyclopedia.

One wonders if what Mexico lost through a war back in the 1840’s is now being regained through illegal immigration.

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Mennonite World Review regularly reports wedding anniversary celebrations. The number of children

and grandchildren listed typically reflect small families. This is typical of American middle/upper class society. Some persons in my age bracket from the Mennonite communities of Russian/Dutch background, tell me that their parents came from large families. It seems obvious that the trend to limit family size to a small number has developed in recent generations.

We do well to remember that our Lord loves children and Christian couples that are blessed with children have the privilege and obligation to bring them up in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

I know of only one couple who is intentionally childless. They seemed to feel that children would be an unwelcome hindrance to their lifestyle. We all know childless couples who would love to have God-given bundles to hold and to cherish. The Psalmist said it well, “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord.”

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Ludlow Walker reports that the Port of Miami is the world’s busiest cruise port. In 2013, more than four million passengers passed through its facilities. Brother Walker is involved in reaching out to people with a Christian witness.

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King Jesus Claims His Church is the

title of a book by Finny Kuruville, copyright 2013. He is the son of missionaries to India. He is a graduate of Harvard Medical School, a medical doctor. While at Harvard, he was involved with Inter-varsity Christian Fellowship.

He and his family now live in Boston, MS, where they fellowship with a church fellowship called Followers of the Way.

It is another case of a person who does not have Anabaptist roots, but wants to be identified with Christ and His Word. That pursuit has led him to most of the same theological positions that conservative Anabaptists hold.

Chapter Nine is entitled, "Against Cultural Relativism." That chapter closes with the following paragraph:

"The church today should stop conforming to the world. The church must be distinguished biblically in many areas including nonresistance, sexual behavior, head coverings, the holy kiss, feet-washing, manner of dress, entertainment, and the very way that it meets. The church should be a new social order, with a wholly new identity. For when the scales fall from our eyes, cultural relativism will be seen as nothing more than a repetition of the Enemy's tactic in the garden, 'Did God really say?'"

We are well aware of a level of indifference that, if unchecked, could

lead to identity with contemporary culture rather than with the way of Christ and His Word. This book is a welcome reminder that when the Word is taken seriously it affects our lifestyle resulting in a lifestyle that could rightly be called a sub-culture or a counter culture.

The book reflects the historical and scholarly credibility of the author. But we would do wrong to forget that Bro. Kuruville is also human and that as always, we should prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.

This 363-page book with 40 chapters is available from Scroll Publishing Co. Phone: 717-349-7033. Special prices are available for quantity orders for free distribution.

— DLM



The old adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" supports the idea that increased age inhibits change. However, the first verses of Romans 12 indicate that we are subject to being shaped by external factors, without any age disclaimers. Romans 12:2 says, "And **be not conformed** to this world, but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." In Nicholas Carr's book, *The Shallows*, he cites extensive research that indicates our minds and brains

are continually shaped and reshaped by non-physiological factors. He describes one characteristic of our brain as “plasticity” rather than “elasticity.” Elastic assumes a different shape when it is stretched or pressured, but reverts back to its former shape when the pressure is released. But a plastic object can be reshaped and holds its shape after the shaping forces are relaxed. Furthermore, plastic is not so rigid that it cannot be reshaped and remolded by continuing pressure.

Several years ago, an older church leader and I were discussing some struggles that his congregation had experienced. He commented thoughtfully, “I discovered that the young men in this church weren’t reading the same books I was reading.”

Many people in our congregations utilize an ever growing availability of books, podcasts, sermons, and other teaching material from a wide range of sources. Most of these sources are developed by people with values and goals somewhat different from our own. When we look to those sources for nurture, teaching, and direction, we are subject to their influence. Historically, we have primarily sought teaching and direction from the local congregation, and looked, secondarily, to people

from other like-minded churches. Is it coincidental that within our churches there is a discernible push to operate in ways that are more like contemporary “churchianity” and less distinctive?

Sometimes the differences we struggle with in our congregations are simply differences in perspective. Diversity in perspective can strengthen brotherhood when we share similar goals and values. Diversity in values and goals tends to have a fragmenting effect. Discerning people attempt to understand the difference between diversity of perspective and diversity of values and goals.

When I read Romans 12 and Nicholas Carr and observe what is going on in our churches and try to understand how my heart and mind are being shaped, I am sobered. This reminds me that I need to be very cautious about who I listen to and what I read because those things shape my mind and my thoughts. This awareness has adjusted the relative value I place on what is written, spoken, and lived by those in my congregation and like-minded brothers, as well as the Bible schools, fellowship meetings and social interactions I prioritize.

Scripture and prayer are primary tools that the Holy Spirit employs

to continually renew our minds. However, by ourselves we are vulnerable to misunderstanding and deception. One cherished characteristic of Anabaptist churches has long been the safety and blessing that we enjoy because of our understanding that God speaks to us through the brotherhood, the church.

Some of you have likely noted that in these paragraphs, I've cited Nicholas Carr, who as far as I can tell makes no profession of faith, and wondered about that irony. In no way do I wish to say that what other people and particularly other believers have to offer is worthless. However, we need to be particularly adept at sifting information. "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21).

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Corn harvest in our area is under way. This country's 2014 corn and soybean harvest may be a near record breaker. The widespread weather conditions throughout the corn and bean belt are more favorable this season than in any year since the early 90's. For the farmers, the down side of big production is that grain prices are falling quickly. For many farmers, the price of corn has now dipped below production costs. However, the lower grain prices are good news for beef producers. Beef

prices are at an all-time high. When hamburger costs \$3 to \$4 a pound, it nudges many people toward more economical forms of protein. My friend compared beef versus beans this way: "You can start with a pound of beef and end up with less after you cook it, But if you cook a pound of beans, you end up with more."

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The news of the abduction of two preteen Amish girls in northern New York in August from the family's roadside vegetable stand and their return back home within 24 hours, gripped people nearby and far away. I am encouraged by how these people's neighbors rallied around the Amish family during this time of heart-wrenching uncertainty. It speaks well for the relationships that have been cultivated over time. The little girls, their family and the perpetrators all need the prayers of God's children in the days and months to come.

It is probably good for us to be reminded that the combination of good will, precaution, isolation, and innocence doesn't necessarily guarantee that bad things don't happen to good people. While God doesn't promise freedom from adversity, His grace is always sufficient for our need, regardless of how acute it might be.

—RJM 

Vengeance Belongs to God

Ray Stutzman, Plain City, OH

I greet you in the name of the Prince of peace. Isaiah prophesied of Him in Isaiah 9:6, “His name shall be called Wonderful, counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” I have struggled with feelings of revenge. For some eight or ten years I had quite a struggle but then I got victory. Sometimes I still have to ask God to give me that victory again.

Vengeance is not designed for humans to handle. Romans 12:9 says, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” He is saying we don’t need to take revenge. In fact, we’d better not dare to. We must not hope that someone will carry out vengeance, because if we do, we already have vengeance in our heart. God has given us a total release from any kind of vengeance to be carried out to a brother, sister, or anyone.

Vengeance in the heart is a “get even” spirit; it’s revenge and that belongs totally to God. As I think of revenge, I ask, *Isn’t the root of it bitterness?* Yes, sin and evil must be dealt with, but not with vengeance.

God has designed the church and the home and even the government

with laws of the land so that there is a structure of authority to deal with wrongdoing. In the church there is authority to deal with evil and sin and wrongdoing. In the home, there is that structure of authority of Christ and the father, and the husband and the wife, and the children. That is properly designed authority, but that is not vengeance.

In vengeance, there is talking about issues between people that are not resolved, where feelings of revenge, bitterness and spirit of getting even.

Let us look at some of the spiritual implications of bitterness. Notice Hebrews 12:13-16, “And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”

When there is friction between people it may turn those who are

weak out of the way. The Bible speaks of lifting up the hands that hang down. It also mentions that when chastening is received well, we are making straight paths for our feet. Otherwise, we may cause a weak person to stumble on life's pathway.

We are to pursue peace with all men—and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. This admonition is followed by encouragement to look diligently lest we fail the grace of God. That indicates bitterness. When we have a root of bitterness (vengeance, revenge, retaliation, getting even, wishing the person could be put in his place) we are failing to live in the grace of God. This root of bitterness not only troubles you, but many others may be defiled.

I see a similarity of response in Samson's life. To get revenge, Samson caught 300 foxes and tied their tails together, tail-to-tail, two at a time. He got some firebrands and set them on fire and sent them through the standing corn, the wheat, and the vineyards and burned everything up-to get even. I believe when there is that kind of feeling between brethren in a church setting, it oftentimes puts the tongues in motion, there are rumors, whisperings, and so on. Little "foxes" are caught and "tails" instead of "tails" are tied together. When these

go through the church, the standing corn (the elders) and the vineyard (the children) are affected.

Someone has said that bitterness is a progressive disease of the soul that will cause us to lose a sense of God's divine plan for our lives. In that same article it said that it is the acid that destroys the vessel that contains it. It will invade and destroy a person.

There are also physical results of bitterness. It can restrict the flow of blood to some of the vital organs in the body and so cause ulcers, disease, sickness, and even death. It is claimed that people have died because they were so bitter. It saps the goodness and joy out of life. Bitterness will cause spiritual death if it's not taken care of.

Did you know that when you become bitter at someone, you become his or her slave? The very person that a person hates becomes their master, because that person controls his or her thoughts, actions, their way of doing things, and the even the way they think. So if I become bitter at somebody, I become his slave.

Some people carry resentment in their hearts for years and years, but I've come to the conclusion that life is too short to carry a grudge and ill feelings. Life is a vapor. It is like grass. It is here for a moment, then it

passes away.

Some years ago, I met a fellow who had some questionable priorities and practices. He told me that he feels his main gift is making money. He read the Bible to say, "Whatsoever they hand finds to do, do it with all your might." For him that was making money. If he had a devotions in church (when he still went to church; he doesn't go any more), his wife would write everything out, because he said it is just not his gift. I'm not belittling him, but I'm saying that we need to take heed where our priorities are.

Eventually, because of his business practices, he was given a nickname that wasn't nice. I heard about it in town one day. I went home and told my family about it, but I said, "Now we are not going to call him that name. He may have deserved it, and it may be true what people are saying, but in our house, we are going to call him by his right name. We are going to be respectful."

Eventually, he got word of his new name and he accused me of giving it to him. I told him what I had told my family and why I was clear of guilt in the matter. He said, "Until you come out and admit to me that you started this, I will not forgive you." I asked him for forgiveness. He asked, "Did you start it?"

I said, "No."

Then he said, "Well, as long as you lie about it, I won't forgive you. You did start it." For a while, I actually almost wished I had started it. It might have been easier to have failed and to get him to clear me. Last summer one day, he said, "I still believe you started it, but I will forgive you; we'll just drop it and I'll forgive you." Since that, everything seems to be fine. I thank the Lord for that.

Jesus came not only to give us eternal life, but He came to give us abundant life here. He came to give us peace flowing between brethren without any friction. So if there is any bitterness within you, if there is any resentment, if there is in your mind any desire of getting revenge or of getting even toward another person, there is a simple cure. The simple cure is forgiveness. That seems simple, but it can be very hard.

Ephesians 4 and Romans 12:9-21 speak about the structure of the church and the brotherhood and how each one's differing gifts are to be useful in the church. It also includes teaching on how we should relate to each other. We must never say to another person, "Well, you just wait, the Lord says, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' You just wait." We must never use it in that way, He's simply saying it's His responsibility. We don't

need to do it. He's releasing us of that obligation. We don't have to and that's wonderful.

He says that love should be without dissimulation, love without pretense or hypocrisy. When everything is clear between you, it's real and genuine and sincere. A secret to relating lovingly together is to in honor prefer one another. If we love the other person as we should we will love him a little bit more than ourselves. That love also distributes to the necessity of the saints and shows hospitality.

The following instructions involve issues of vengeance: "Recompense no man evil for evil," "Avenge not yourselves," and "Overcome evil with good." They all align with the thought of "Live peaceably with all men."

In Ephesians 4, we have further nuggets of truth like these: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth...Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, (with all malice,) be put away from you." "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." These clear instructions tell us how we need to relate to each other. The secret to overcoming harmful feelings is the kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness that Christ has given to

us. The Lord's Prayer includes our asking God's forgiveness, even as we forgive others.

In 1 John 2:9, I believe John's saying that a forgiving spirit needs to be the very life of the Christian. Forgiveness from God requires repentance. Does forgiveness to my brother require his coming to me and repenting? I believe that forgiveness to my brother must be spontaneous and unconditional. It can only be forgiven by God through repentance and turning the other way. In other words, we do have the right or the power to forgive a sin that is not confessed.

We must not simply overlook sin. When Jesus forgave the adulterous woman, He said to her, "Go and sin no more." We must not overlook the violation of scriptural principle. When someone violates Scripture, we dare not simply piously say, "Well, I need to forgive." I'm talking about issues between people where there is friction. Christ teaches that we need to be quick to forgive and not to retaliate, but to turn the other cheek.

If I relate an incident that happened some years ago, and don't remember it to hold a grudge; I release it. If we focus on forgetting, it divides us as brethren. If we focus on forgiving, it brings us together. Christ forgave us. He didn't forget us. He removed the sin from us as far as the east is from

the west. We are all human enough. We are going to make more mistakes. So let's not focus on just overlooking and trying to forget. Let's focus on forgiving.

Now we'll look at the vertical relationship. Do you know that when you come to God with your prayers and concerns that if there is any ill will between you and your fellowman, your prayer stops right there? Did not Jesus say that when we bring our gift to the altar and remember that our brother has something against us, we should leave our gift on the altar and go to seek reconciliation with our brother? Then we are to come back and offer our gift.

I believe our good deeds and prayers and everything we do is measured right here at the pivotal point of the cross. That's where Jesus hung when those who put Him to death were there and He cried out, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." That laid the foundation for us to deal with and to relate to our brethren. When we bring our gift to the altar we need to be sure that everything is right with our brother. Our relationship with our brother decides how our relationship is with God. We may think it is the other way around and that we can kind of hold something against our brother in the back of our mind.

In Matthew 18:21, 22, Peter asked about how many times we should forgive a brother. Not seven times, but seventy times seven, Jesus told him. Peter thought he was making a generous offer with seven. But Jesus said, "No, that's not enough—490 times! If you put that in a 243-hour period, that's less than every three minutes. Surely nobody is going to wrong us every three minutes. Isn't it simply saying that we need to have the spirit of forgiveness every time the thought occurs? Every time the thought comes back to me, I need to release and forgive. I'm not talking about covering up sin, but about releasing and forgiving wrongs done to us.

When there is bitterness and ill will between people, usually it's one of the last things you think about when you go to bed.

In Matthew 18:23-35, a tremendous Scripture is found about forgiveness. A man owed his master roughly 16 million dollars. It was a debt he was absolutely unable to pay. He was forgiven. It would have cost him his wife, his children, and everything he had, but his master forgave him. Then his fellow man, probably one he worked with just fell down at his feet and begged him to forgive a 20-dollar debt. He became angry and had him bound and put into prison, until he

should pay the debt. I wonder how he thought he could pay the debt in prison, but he may have thought the man could arrange to pay the debt. We think that 's pretty terrible, but isn't that the way we are sometimes? We forget that we stood there with a debt that we absolutely could not pay and God sent His Son to pay our debt.

Do we have any just claim on anyone? I don't think we do. We were bound for condemnation, for hell, but the blood of Jesus paid our debt. People today are still going bankrupt because they hold a grudge or ill will or resentment.

I once had an experience in which I thought I was treated unfairly. I thought I was cheated out of money and I probably was. It wasn't really my problem, though. I wrestled with that for quite a while. But when I came to the conclusion that life isn't fair, it helped me overcome those feelings I had. When I started praying and thanking God for that brother, my negative feelings vanished.

When you have been cheated or treated unfairly, when you begin to pray for the person involved and thank God for him or her, I can assure you that God is going to give you the grace to release those feelings and to forgive. My attitude toward my brother directly reflects my claim to God's grace for myself.

There is another aspect to forgiveness: When our sins are forgiven, we need to accept it and forgive ourselves. I believe it is the devil's trick to go back and make us question and wonder, *Am I really forgiven?* It is a lack of faith. I believe that to doubt God about my sins being forgiven is sin.

Now here is a fine line, but I know of people who really wonder, *Has God really forgiven me for this?* They have become overly sensitive and don't think rationally anymore. That is dangerous. I know of a sister who struggles with this. She is concerned over things she has long ago confessed and repented of. I believe it is a trick of the devil to get us confused to make us doubt and fall away again.

In Luke 15, in the story of the prodigal son, the father evidently went out every morning to look for his son's return. He would look all around to see if he could possibly see his son. When the son was yet a long way off, he saw him and ran toward him to meet him. You remember how his son had treated him. He took his inheritance early and had wasted it all. He ended up in a pigpen. His father could have thought, *You just wait, when he comes home I'm going to teach him a few things, He's going to come across and he's going to do this or he's not stepping one foot inside our*

door. No, the father totally released his son's sins against him.

I don't know how old the father was, but it says he ran to meet his son, fell on his neck and kissed him. When the son started making his speech of repentance, he didn't get all the way through it, before his father interrupted and would not consider not having him as his son.

The son was probably barefooted, raggedy, and badly in need of a bath. The father asked his servants to bring the best robe and put a ring on his hand to show that he is a son, not just a servant. "Put shoes on his feet. You know that steer we have out there in the stall, the best one, bring it in and butcher it. Let's have a feast and let's rejoice, because my son was dead and is now alive." They began to rejoice—total forgiveness.

I have a relative to whom something similar happened. He had a son, about 18 or 19, who became dissatisfied at home and threatened to leave several times. He got tired of living at home. He wanted a car, some nice clothes, and a nice haircut.

One day, he said, "I've had it. I'm leaving!" and went upstairs and packed his clothes. The father went into the living room and sat on the rocker. Soon the boy came down the stairs with a couple of suitcases. He was leaving. His father got up and

said, "Here, let me help carry those out to the road." They lived back in a ways, so they walked together to the road without speaking and waited for a bus to come along. When they heard the bus coming the father turned to the son, and said. "Son, if you get in a bind or need me for anything, just call home, just send a note to me, or something and I'll be here to help you." His son said nothing, got on the bus, never said good-bye, and away he went.

Four years passed with the father hearing nothing from his son. He feared he may have gotten killed. One day, he got a message that his son was in deep trouble in another town, and was headed home. He was broke. He wondered if his dad could be at a certain bus station to pick him up.

His dad went to the bus station and looked at all the people as they came off the bus, but he did not see his son. He stood there wondering what he should do. About that time a young man tapped him on the shoulder. He asked, "Dad, don't you know me?"

His father replied, "No, I didn't recognize you." He was unshaven and had hair down to his shoulders. He was literally in rags, broke and in deep trouble.

He said, "Dad, we have to get out of here, the law is after me. It is not even safe to go into my home town."

They left for home. When they got home, he told his son, “Now we are going to give you a haircut, you go take a shower and we have a new set of clothes here for you, then we are going to the police station.” “Oh,” He said, “It’s not safe; if they see me, they are going to lock me up for a long time. I’m in deep trouble.”

His dad said, “Let’s just do it; I will take care of it.” So they went to the police station and there he took his son in to the authorities. He told the sheriff, “I’d like to introduce you to my son. He is in deep trouble. He called me for help. I went to get him and on the way home, he made a commitment that he is going to change his life. He is going to live a different life.” Then he said, “I am here to take his place. If he needs to be locked up, I want to be locked up.” He continued, “Don’t you have a form that you can bring out and have me sign the papers where I’ll take total responsibility for my son? If he does something wrong, I’ll take the punishment. I’m here to sign the papers and to serve the time for my son.”

They gave him a miraculous release. The son and father both went home that day.

The son joined the church of his

father. He married a girl in the church and today he’s still a faithful church member.


Several years later I was there and preached his mother’s funeral sermon. That was when I first met the father and son.

Not every story ends so beautifully, but I believe it’s a lot because of the father’s attitude toward the wrong that had been done to him that his son was redeemed.

That’s a modern-day prodigal son story and I believe we do well to heed that message of forgiveness and release for any ill will we might harbor or be tempted to harbor.

To forgive or not to forgive is a condition of the heart. It’s a personal choice. How do you stand with the Lord today? How do you stand with your fellow man? Are you selling your birthright? Is the seal of redemption broken? Are you failing the grace of God?

The moment you forgive, God will grant you the grace to bury all ill will and resentment.

[This is a condensation of a sermon Bro. Ray preached some time ago, showing a better way. It is especially helpful in the explanation that we haven’t been given the responsibility of revenge. That belongs to God.] 

School Time!

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Autumn has arrived and the children are back in the classroom. Moms are adjusting to the end of summer activities. For some, school means a more quiet, peaceful atmosphere at home with the children back in school. Sending your child to school may be a first-time experience. You may be struggling with letting go of that little person who has always depended on you. For others, it may be your youngest child entering the classroom and you are not sure whether or not you are happy.

Many Moms are teaching their children at home and that means learning to prioritize, making sure that your child's needs and education come first in your daily schedule. Whatever your situation, your children are back in school and it calls for adjustments for you and your child.

As I write this, I am trying to remember my school days. It was a long time ago. However, I do remember the fun of starting to school with a new school dress, new pencils in my pencil box (Do today's

children still have pencil boxes?) and I loved having a new lunchbox. I still have one of my old lunchboxes. One of our lunch treats was putting a potato on the old wood stove and letting it bake until lunchtime. Now lunches are baked in microwaves, which definitely makes it easier for Mom to pack lunch. Try to walk in your child's shoes, as it were, and remember those things that made your school days happy.

Let us begin with the morning preparations for school. Oftentimes the things that take place before the child reaches the classroom affect his or her attitude throughout the day—and even his grades. Studies show that a child performs better if he eats a good breakfast. Breakfast can be a simple affair of toast and cereal, fresh fruit and yogurt, oatmeal or even fruit smoothies. Oatmeal can be prepared in a crock pot and left to cook overnight. Serve the food with a cheerful smile; avoid nagging and fussing. Teach the child to have her homework finished, to set an alarm clock, to get up promptly, having chosen her clothes the night

before—otherwise, she will suffer the consequences. Missing school or going without homework finished a few times may take care of the problem of procrastination or of simply depending on Mom to come to the rescue. Remember you want your child to learn responsibility, to grow up equipped to deal with daily life. There are always exceptions to the rules, especially if your child is physically or mentally challenged or handicapped. Pray with your child before he goes out the door.

Carpools can save gas. Be a friend to other children in the car. Listen carefully for bad language or signs of belittling each other or the teacher. Make sure each child is seated, with the seat belt secure. Bless them with a friendly good-bye as they leave the car.

Always be aware of bullying in the school or of cliques among the children. Children can be very unkind. Do not let this behavior continue toward your child or any other child. Be sure your child is not at fault, then talk to the teacher. Occasionally a teacher will pick on a child, embarrassing him in front of the class. This conduct cannot be tolerated. You can talk directly to the teacher or go to the school board. Be careful not to take a child's part against the teacher, without knowing the full details. Many children grow

into adulthood with deep wounds from unfair or unkind actions, either from classmates or from teachers. If you suspect any type of sexual abuse at school, act immediately for the safety of your child.

Do not push your child to perform academically above his abilities. However, let him know that you expect him to do his best. Be at home when your child returns from school. Prepare a snack, and take time to ask about your child's day. Take an interest in it. Have a specific time for him to do his homework. Remember, your child is weary from a busy day at school and will probably appreciate some time to play or relax.

A good education is important. Together as parents be involved in the life of your child's education. Attend parent-teacher conferences and school meetings. Encourage your teachers. Learn to know them. Ask about your child's behavior and grades, and listen to the teacher's comments. Invite them to your home for a good, cooked meal, with a family atmosphere. Many teachers are away from their own families. Send flowers, notes, or home-made goodies along to school to school for them. Teach your child to respect her teachers, to always speak kindly to and about them.

Christian schools are a blessing; let us value them!



Feisty Esther: A Widow in Need

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

Esther is one of the many widows in this country. She is in her 70s. We met her the first time at Bible Study on Wednesday. She called Tony's children her grandkids, and was quite talkative and funny.

Esther was only 29 when her husband died. Here it is common to consider such a widow merely a dead man's wife, who is the property of her deceased man's clan. As such, she seldom remarries. Sadly, such relatives will often not care for or otherwise help such a widow.

Recently on a Friday evening, Esther was shopping at an outdoor market. It had rained and the ground was slippery. She slipped, fell, and gasped in pain. She did not yet know it, but her ankle was broken. A kind *piki* (motorcycle) rider came to her rescue and gave her a ride home to her hut far back in the countryside.

Saturday afternoon "Celly" (Marcellus) got a call asking if he could pick up Esther and take her to a hospital. I decided to go with him. It was a 30-minute drive. Joshua, a

tall, native Christian showed us the way. Earlier Joshua had helped Celly deliver SAW parcels in that area. He was happy to meet Celly's mother, asked me how old I am, and told me he is 51.

We drove as close as we could to Esther's house. The last road was a small, narrow, bumpy, dirt road. We parked and walked a quarter mile over that footpath to her tiny house.

Esther was sitting on her couch. We had prayer and she told me to sit beside her, exclaiming about how she had met me just on Wednesday and now we are coming to help her.

She told us that after her accident she got home and really cried for her neighbors to come and help her, but they all shut their doors, except for an old man who came and put some "bush medicine" on her swollen ankle and tied it with a thin cloth. That night rain danced merrily on her tin roof, but Esther did not enjoy the merry music. She said she sat on her sofa all night in pain, cold, unable to reach a blanket, could not get to her bed, and was unable to sleep all night!

In the morning, curious neighbor children came to her door. Esther sent a helpful child to Margaret, a friend from church. Esther has no cell phone and lives all alone. Margaret quickly came, fixed her some tea and food and went to get help from Joshua, a man from her church. Joshua's long legs strode rapidly over the hills to her house. He called to the mission for help.

How do you get someone who can't walk over an uneven path to the car? We suggested putting her on a chair, so they started carrying her that way. Small neighbor boys followed and snickered.

Before long, Joshua wanted to stop. He said he would like to just carry her on his back. Okay, whatever. Thankfully, she is thin. Soon she was having a piggy-back ride, an amazing sight! I had to walk briskly to keep up!

Four little neighbor boys were still following, so when we got to the vehicle, I gave them each a *25 Bible Stories* book. As we drove away, I looked back. The boys were happily holding high their new books and were gleefully dancing.

We took Esther to Maseno Mission Hospital. The men went to get a wheel chair. Esther leaned forward and said, "Your son, he is very handsome; he is very handsome. Yes, he is so

attractive. Is he at marriageable age?"

I said, "Yes, but there is no hurry." I agreed that he is handsome.

We were delighted that the place was not busy. They x-rayed her in a room where the door had a notice: "Notice, X-Ray Plant, Caution, Radiation Area" posted on it. Joshua and Celly lifted her up onto the x-ray table. When it was done, they lifted her off again and placed her back on the wheel chair.

Her ankle is fractured, but thankfully, it's just the smaller bone. They wrapped it and sent her home. Next week, if the swelling has gone down, they will put a hard cast on it for her. We drove back to her home. I wondered if she would get another piggy-back ride, but just as we stopped at the footpath, a *piki* came behind us and dropped a man off. They asked him to drive her home. Giving consent, they sat her on the cycle "side saddle," and away they went. God had timed that ride perfectly for her.

The hospital visit cost about \$30. To us, that is cheap. To Esther and Joshua, that is well beyond their reach.

Isaiah 58

- Share your food with the hungry.
- Give shelter to the homeless.
- Give clothes to those in need.
- Help those in trouble.



Dear Youth,

Is it easy for you to cast your lot with the people of God, or is it hard?

For many of us who grew up in Christian homes, it was not a difficult step to become part of the church of Jesus Christ. For many of us it would have been difficult for us *not* to join Christ's church.

It has not always been this way. In the following paragraphs you will read the story of some valiant people, including a 16-year-old who was willing to die for his faith and preach the Gospel until the very last.

These martyrs and many others helped to pave the way for us to experience religious freedom today. Let's not take our privileges for granted. May these heroes inspire us to live sacrificially and give our best to the Lord! May we take the hard choices in our time so that others after us will also be blessed!

—EE

Martin, the Painter; Wolfgang Eslinger; Pain; and Melchoir, and three others, A.D. 1531.

In this year, Martin, the painter, a minister of the Word of God, and six others from the Swabian church, were

apprehended for the faith and the divine truth. After long proceedings, they were promised, that if they would renounce, they might go home unmolested to their wives and children. But they answered frankly, "No," but that they would willingly die, and not renounce. Afterwards, having been imprisoned almost a year, all seven were sentenced to death. They were led under the town hall, and several articles of their doctrine were read to them. When the first article was read, Brother Wolfgang Eslinger said, "As you judge today so shall God judge you when you come before His face. God shall well know you." (Matt. 7:23.)

When the third article was read, Brother Pain said, "You stain your hands with our blood (Jer. 7:6); God shall certainly not remit it to you, but require it at your hands."

When the fourth article was read, Brother Melchoir said, "Today we will testify with our blood, that wherein we stand is the truth."

When the fifth article was read, Brother Wolfgang Eslinger said, "Forsake your sins and unrighteousness, and repent, and

God shall never remember it to you” (Jer. 26:13).


All seven were then led under guard to the place of execution. There Brother Martin and all the others commended themselves unto God their Lord, praying that He would grant them a blessed end, and care for His sheep. When they were brought to the field, the miller’s servant, who was about 16 years old, said to the people present that they should forsake their sins and turn to God, since there was no other way to heaven than through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and redeemed us. (Ps. 34:14; Isa. 45:24; John 14:6; Matt. 27:50)

When they were brought into the ring, a nobleman rode up to said servant, admonished and entreated him, saying, “My son, desist from your error, and renounce it. Why do you allow yourself to be thus persuaded? Spare your young life. I will take you home with me and always keep you; you shall enjoy the good things with me all your life, if you obey me.”

But the servant said, “God forbid

that this should ever come to pass; if I should keep this temporal life (John 12:25), and lose the eternal, I would act foolishly. I will not do it; your wealth can help neither you nor me. I expect one that is far better, if I persevere to the end (Matt. 10:22). I will surrender my spirit to God, and commend it to Christ (Luke 23:46), that His bitter suffering which He endured on the cross, may in my case not be in vain.”

This servant was inspired by God in his purpose, for though he was younger in years than his brethren, they were nevertheless, as far as the purpose is concerned, of like age. Thus all seven valiantly and joyfully confessed God and His truth, even unto death and the shedding of their blood. The above-mentioned Martin, when he was led out over the bridge, said, “This once yet the pious are led over the bridge, but no more hereafter.” This came true, for a short time afterwards, such a violent storm and flood came that the bridge was demolished and carried away.

[From *Martyr’s Mirror*, Thieleman J. van Braght, page 439-440.] 

It is not good judgment to think more highly of tolerance than truth.

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• • • • •

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