



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

Galatians 6:14

**DECEMBER 2014**

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## *The King Consummated*

*Author unknown*

His birth was contrary to the laws of life,  
His death was contrary to the laws of death;

He had no cornfields or fisheries,  
But He could spread a table for five thousand and have bread and fish to spare!

He walked on no beautiful carpets or velvet rugs,  
But He walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee and they supported Him!

When He died, few men mourned,  
But a black crepe was hung over the sun!

The men trembled not for their sins,  
But the earth beneath them shook under the load!

All nature honored Him!  
Sinners alone rejected Him!

Corruption could not get hold of His body;  
The soil that had been reddened with His blood could not claim His dust!

Three years He preached his Gospel;  
He wrote no book, built no church house, had no monetary backing.

But after 1900 years, He is the Central Character in human history;  
The pivot around which the events of the ages revolve,  
The only Regenerator of the human race!

Was it merely the son of Joseph and Mary who crossed the world's horizon 1900 years ago?

Was it merely human blood that was spilled on Calvary's Hill for the redemption of sinners?

What thinking man can keep from exclaiming, "My Lord and My God!"



## Son of God, Son of Man

“And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, ....” (1 Timothy 3:16a).

Jesus of Nazareth was God in human form. While I may not fully grasp that fact, but because of what both God and Jesus said about it, I believe it. I embrace Jesus as fully human and fully divine. Furthermore, as I ponder this and worship Him, it changes my perspective. A quote from R. A. Torrey is helpful: “It is not our main business to reconcile the doctrine of the deity of Christ with the doctrine of the real humanity of Christ. Our first business is to find out what the various biblical passages mean in their grammatical interpretation. Then if we can reconcile them, well, if not, believe them both and leave the reconciliation to increasing knowledge.”

Many of Jesus’ own countrymen misidentified Him. John observed that “He came unto his own and his own received him not” (John 1:11). Some accused him of **blasphemy** because He said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). Some saw Him as **mentally deranged**, and asked those who began taking His words seriously, “He hath a devil and is mad, why hear

ye him?” (John 10:20). Some decided that He was **causing upheaval and seeking political power**, saying, “If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation” (John 11:48). But those who listened carefully experienced something totally different. When He said, “I am come that [you] might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10b), **they repented of their sins, believed on Him and were transformed!**

### The Incarnation

For God to take up humanity is not an everyday thing. It requires a miracle. God did that by having the Holy Spirit conceive a child in the Virgin Mary. That defies easy explanation, but when we believe it, He bestows on us the power of an endless life!

Many today do not take Jesus seriously. Let us hear and believe His words. Let us partake of the blessings He promised when He said, **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

**Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”** (Matthew 11:28-30). Our lives do not improve as long as we dodge the fact that we all have problems bigger than we can handle.

### **The Transfiguration**

Once, toward the end of Jesus’ earthly sojourn, apparently at evening, Jesus went to Mt. Hermon, where He was transfigured before three of His disciples, Peter, James, and John. John later testified, **“And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”** (John 1:14). Peter also wrote enthusiastically about it in 2 Peter 1:16-18. It seems that God was showing these three eyewitnesses some of the glory God the Son had before He came to earth. On the mountain of transfiguration His **“countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening”** (Mark 9:29). *Glistening* means that flashes of light came from Him. That was not reflected light! It came from Him who said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

As Moses could not bear to look upon the face of God, so also these three disciples got only a brief look at the Shekinah glory of God. Then they fell to the earth, terrified! Then God spoke from heaven and said, **“This is my beloved son, in whom I am**

**well pleased, hear ye him”** (Matthew 17:5), and Jesus touched them and said, **“Arise, and be not afraid.”**

This mountain-top experience gave those disciples *a three-fold vision*: First, they got a vision of Jesus’ glory. Second, they got a vision of His decease in Jerusalem. Third, they got a vision of His glorious return to earth some day, for as Moses died and was buried by God on Mt. Pisgah, so the dead in Christ will rise and be escorted by Him to glory. Furthermore, as Elijah went to heaven in a chariot of fire, so those who are alive at His coming will meet the Lord in the air.

Biblical faith requires that Jesus is both human and divine. **“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God”** (1 John 4:2).

We praise God that Jesus came to earth in human form. Our response may resemble that of a rather tame deer a traveler in a national park once observed. This animal came to his open car window, obviously wanting to be fed. So he offered it something on his outstretched hand. The deer ate it eagerly. In order to get closer, the man stepped out of his car. Then the deer seemed to fear him. It moved away and took nothing more from his hand. Soon it slipped into

the woods. As the man considered how he might overcome the deer's distrust, he thought, *If I could become a deer, it would trust me.* Does not his musing help us understand why God chose to come in human form? We tend to misunderstand God, but we need not draw back in fear! In fact, we are invited to **“come boldly [with confidence] unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”** (Hebrews 4:16).

### **Son of God and Son of Man**

Chrysostom once observed, “I do not think of Christ as God alone, or man alone, but both together. For I know that He was hungry and I know that with five loaves [and two fish] He fed 5,000. I know that He was thirsty and He turned water into wine. I know that He was carried in a

ship and He also walked on the sea. I know that He died and rose from the dead. I know that He was set before Pilate and that He sits with the Father on His throne. I know that He was worshiped by angels, and I know that He was tortured by the Jews. And truly some of these I ascribe to the human and other to the divine nature. For by reason of this He is said to have been both God and Man.”

In my mind's eye, God the Son places one hand on the believer's head and the other hand He places in God the Father's hand and claims us as His own. God forbid that we carry such life-giving truths only in our *heads*. Having received God's grace, let us always carry these truths in our *hearts*, and acknowledge with Thomas, **“My Lord and my God!”**

—PLM

## *REACH 2015 Announcement*

### **REACH 2015**

March 19-20, 2015. Conservative Anabaptist Ministry Convention  
Hosted by Faith Builders Educational Programs

96 Workshops, 7 Main sessions, 41 ministries.

March 19: Focused on the needs of people in non-profit ministry, open to all

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Re: **Just Chapter and Verse or also Scriptural Principle?**, Oct., 2014.

I was very much blessed by the editorial on scriptural principle. God hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). “So may our lives and lips express the Holy Gospel we profess.” (Isaac Watts) Agreeing on definitions can be very helpful in walking together.

Clayton Weaver, Bastrop, TX 

the bottom line

## *Plain Preaching*

*Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA*

Preaching is a calling and a privilege. It is one of God’s ways to make truth known. Plain preaching is allowing the plain and clear words of Scripture to retain their clarity without beclouding them with mere suppositions. “What does the Bible say?” should never be far from our consciousness in Bible teaching. Preaching is one of the most serious of life’s responsibilities, with direct accountability to God.

Some try to force the question: “Why would God say that?” Forcing that question might lead into academics. It could as well lead into doubt. But pursuing the “what” question more assuredly leads to

God’s desired faith response. “What does the Bible say?” is always the right approach. Academics *can* foster pure faith. However, what may appear as innocent and sanctified academics can also lead away from an unadulterated faith.

Some have attempted to assume that the clear and simple statements of Scripture must have some hidden and unclear truth lurking somewhere. Some even seem to think being deep in understanding of the Scripture is taking plain truth and making it complex. Some preachers dead end in their own complexities when they claim inner light that defies verbal explanation. They sometimes stall

without words to finish a proposed thought. Is that deep? No, it is shallow. God's Spirit gives light. God's light gives words—words that explain and words that cause faith to flourish. The Bible calls that enlightenment. Ephesians 1:18 says, "*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened*; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance of the saints."

Jesus said, "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you *into* all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13). Divine guidance takes us into truth and light, *never away from* truth and light. If one has difficulty with *what* the Bible says, he will have even more struggle with what a given passage means.

Plain truth and plain preaching was the hallmark of the Apostles after Pentecost. This was accompanied by plain truth in all four Gospels and the Epistles, accompanied by plain words that conveyed understandable truth. Plain preaching can be obscured by making clear Bible statements unclear. It is compromised when the plain truth is questioned unduly and replaced with statements from the Bible that are more palatable, even though they are not really related to the text under consideration.

Here are some ways in the which plain and clear Word of God is clouded

over. The following illustrations happen all too frequently among us:

Someone says, "This is a negative subject." But Bible doctrine is said to be profitable in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and *is profitable...*" How often have we heard a certain Bible doctrine being called a negative subject? Nonresistance is said to be a negative subject. Nonconformity is held as a negative subject. Hell has been called a negative subject. Women's veiling can be seen as a negative subject. Sin is a negative subject. Are preachers of the life-changing Gospel of Christ sent to make apology with regrets from God for the life-giving words of truth and righteousness? God forbid! All directions and restrictions from God's Word are very positive words of truth, always with a positive effect in Christian growth and relationship to God. Layman Nate Kauffman once said, "I don't know why we are given to believing sensational negative things rather than unsensational positive things!"

Speakers tend to say, "This is a very familiar verse." That's passionless. Just skip the apology, Brother. It is another disclaimer and a worthless preface to the text. Why do we assume this is familiar to all our listeners? There may be some present who never heard it before, or are not familiar with it. And we discount its

freshness and newness for everyone. For instance, you come to the fruit stand. You ask, "What are your best apples today?" The merchant says, "Oh, our apples are an old variety that has been around for many years." Poor merchant. He's like the poor preacher with a familiar verse.

Giving an *ignorant and wrong meaning* is a distraction. One preacher used Psalm 84:1 for his text. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." His whole sermon was about taking good *aim* in life! It was a humorous distraction, unintended, but due to faulty design.

Trying to be a *self-assured specialist* is a distraction. Assurance and conviction for God's truth can be handled without arrogance. "Shooting above people's heads doesn't mean you have superior ammunition. It means that you are a lousy shot," said Oscar Handlin.

*Plagiarism* is a distraction. Plagiarism "is to take ideas from another and pass them off as our own." (New World Dictionary) We pastors tend to quote big name authors for some of our sermon quotes and ideas, but when it comes from our own people, we might just say, "Someone has said," as a preface to a good one-liner or idea.

*Overstatements* are a distraction. Obvious overstatements take away from the Word of Truth, because they cross over the border of truth.

These are very real temptations to preachers.

*Overuse of commentaries* is a distraction. Such sermons seem to be more second-handed than personal, ending up as a compromised oration. Reading someone else's writing needs to be very selective and brief. It often is passionless and less than interesting, unless it is read with good expression. As a sermon filler, it is labeled "Dry Goods."

One preacher got up to preach and gave this opening statement, "Now before I get into my sermon, I'd like to say something." Unfortunately, some sermons don't say much.

### **Old Mother Hubbard**

Let me go to lighter mode and give the following as an example of how not to preach. It is a composite of thoughtless cliches and perhaps unintentional fillers. Poor speaking habits can overtake us with our being scarcely aware of it. (You may need to ask your wife if you say any of these.) These may come more readily from a commentary-type sermon or where a man "just shoots from the hip." The composite preaching on the text of Old Mother Hubbard will show two things: For one, it illustrates how a commentary-type preacher can take almost any text and add conjecture and needless detail, until the simple thrust of the text becomes nearly lost by monotonous, trite statements, reinforced by years

of habit. Secondly, this lengthy treatment employs a composite of unnecessary and boring cliches that take away from clear and direct teaching. (Italics are used to highlight the trite statements and cliches.)

*Now I know that this is a familiar story...*

***“Old Mother Hubbard  
went to the cupboard,  
To get her poor dog a bone,***

***But when she got there,  
The cupboard was bare,  
And so the poor dog had none.”***

Notice it says she was *old*. It doesn't say how old. It also says she *went*. Maybe she limped, maybe she hobbled. We can suppose it took effort. We don't know *how long* it took her. It just says she went. We can expect the cupboard didn't come to her. *Okay?*

*Anyhow*, it was her dog—not the neighbor's dog. But *we don't know* if there was only one dog there. *Now let me see*, her dog was probably hungry, and maybe he went with her to the cupboard. A bone wouldn't be much for her to give, nor even for the dog to eat. *I never thought about this verse in this way before.* (Pretty deep, eh?)

Now when she got there, for it must have taken some time and a lot of effort, maybe at the far end of the kitchen. *My thought was* that her

cupboard was probably up, maybe hard to reach, and not the handiest thing for an old mother, especially if she had arthritis. *I just had to think* since she was old, she may have had mostly gray hair, or even white by this time, which were thinned out. She already likely had quite a few wrinkles. *We really don't know.*

*Now where was I?* Oh, yes, the cupboard. It could've been old like she was, the hinges creaking for want of 3-in-1 oil. *Okay? Anyhow*, it says here it was a cupboard, likely in need of re-finishing or replacing.

*Well, like I was saying*, such an old cupboard was bad enough, let alone when she opened it...*You know it really hurts me to say this* about this old lady. My thought is that she was saddened by it all.

*I can't imagine how badly she felt .* *But just permit me to say* it must have been a sad day for her.

*Now just allow me to get to my main point. Her cupboard was bare. There was nothing in it. I don't know what thoughts went through her mind at that point.*

*I myself just had to think* how bad off she was with a bare cupboard. *It just struck me* that an old woman with a bare cupboard and a hungry dog should teach us a lesson or two about how sad life can be. *Okay?*

*Permit me to say* we should be careful it doesn't happen to us. *Anyhow*, the facts of this case *strike*

me in a touching way. You know what I mean?

In closing, I just wanted to share with you how this touching story unfolded. This subject was so broad, I hardly knew where to begin or where to end.

Here is my last and final and concluding point in this familiar story:

### **The dog got no bone!**

#### **Lessons from Old Mother Hubbard**

A spouse or family member can help us weed out some of these worn-out phrases. Plain preaching will not be injured by excluding these over-used cliches.

Doing a lot of reading can help to broaden our vocabulary. But one of the scariest and most direct ways to bring in self-evaluation is to get a CD and listen to some of your own preaching. I do the reading part, but the CD's—Oh, Lord, deliver me!

Last winter my good wife was downstairs using up fabric to make comforter tops. She had her CD player down there, often listening to singing and sometimes to sermons. One day, when she was busy at work again, I was upstairs studying and doing some serious writing, which has its own demands of concentration and

organization. She had a long-winded preacher on who just went on and on and on. I couldn't hear the words distinctly or even recognize the voice. Finally, I thought I could stand it no longer. I went halfway down the stairs and looked around at her and in a loud and urgent voice asked her if she couldn't just shut that guy off. (I was shocked that I actually called any man a "guy." I'd always shared Ervin Hershberger's strong feelings against that term.)

My good wife, with kind feelings and tenderest compassion, said, "Well, dear, I was just listening to one of your sermons!" We both experienced a good dose of biblical medicine (See Proverbs 17:22).

**The Bottom Line** is that none of us is perfect, and I for one, am certainly not. We learn to bear one another's burdens, even those that involve speaking both in private and in public. James says that in many things we offend all ("fail" - Luther's German), and he who does not fail in his speech is a perfect man. This is sent with a prayer for the perfecting of the saints, especially the teachers and preachers among us, to speak forth God's Word with "plainness of speech." (Note 2 Cor. 3:12) 

***It is better to fail in the right than  
to succeed in the wrong.***

## marriages

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

### **Knepp-Byler**

Bro. Joshua, son of Ernie and Delilah Knepp, and Sis. Kaylene, daughter of Dan and Rhoda Byler, both of Whiteville, TN, at Grace Pointe for Whiteville Mennonite Church on Aug. 29, 2014, by Kevin Yoder.

### **Kooistra-Yoder**

Bro. Joshua, son of Steven and Donna Kooistra, La Grange, IN, and Sis. Bethany, daughter of Steve and Marilyn Yoder, Bloomfield, MO, at First United Methodist Church for Crowley's Ridge Mennonite Church, on Oct. 24, 2014, by Melvin Troyer.

### **Kuepfer-King**

Bro. Timothy, son of Mark and the late Esther Kuepfer, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Regina, daughter of Ivan and the late Barbie King, New Holland, PA, at Ephrata Business Center, for Summitview Christian Fellowship, on June 7, 2014, by Dave Stoltzfus.

### **Mast-Ainsworth**

Bro. Elias, son of Ruth and the late Melvin Mast, Crossville, TN, and Sis. Andrea, daughter of Howard and Leslie Ainsworth, Cleburne, TX, at Franklin Mennonite Church on Oct. 4, 2014, by Jonathan Overholt.

### **Rhodes-Zook**

Bro. Daryl, son of Allen and Mary Ellen Rhodes, Columbiana, Ohio, and Sis. Kathryn, daughter of Marvin and Rachel Zook, Gap, PA, at Ephrata Business Center, for Summitview Christian Fellowship, on July 26, 2014, by Dave Stoltzfus.

### **Shetler-Yoder**

Bro. Ryan, son of James and Janet Shetler, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Rebecca, daughter of Enos Yoder, Lancaster, PA, and Bobbi Jo (Yoder), ME, at the Episcopal Church in Meadville, PA, for Meadville Mennonite on Oct. 11, 2014, by Ryan Zook.

### **Stoltzfus-Barkman**

Bro. Arlin, son of Alvin and Lily Stoltzfus, Oxford, PA, and Sis. Charissa, daughter of James and Christina Barkman, McConnelsville, OH, at Cornerstone Full Gospel Church for Ebenezer Amish Mennonite Church, on Oct. 25, 2014, by Alvin Stoltzfus.

### **Weaver-Fehr**

Bro. Benjamin Lewis, son of Lewis and Karen Weaver, Mechanicsburg, OH, and Sis. Ruby Ann, daughter of Peter and Elsie Fehr, Sarasota, FL, at Evangelical Free Church in Canon City, CO, for Skyline Mennonite Church on Oct. 10, 2014, by Lonnie Beachy.

### **Yoder-Byler**

Bro. Jonathan, son of Wayne and Erma Yoder, Cynthiana, KY, and Sis. Kathleen,

daughter of Paul and Rose Byler, Vanleer, TN, at Salem United Methodist Church for Lighthouse Mennonite Church, on August 22, 2014, by LaVern Eash.

### **Zook-Stoltzfus**

Bro. Patrick Andrew, son of Paul and Miriam Zook, Burgettstown, PA, and Sis. Yvonne, daughter of Chester and Rebecca Jane Stoltzfus, Honey Brook, PA, at Ephrata Business Center for Summitview Christian Fellowship on Aug. 9, 2014, by Dave Stoltzfus.

## **cradle roll**

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

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

**Bernik**, Andrei and Hannah (Miller), Dover, OH, second child and son, Danik Christopher, Oct. 20, 2014.

**Burkholder**, Luke and Heidi (Eby), Russellville, KY, fifth child, third dau., Monica Roz`Ann, May 11, 2011. Adopted August 28, 2014.

**Byler**, Lavern and Cheryl (Yoder), Whiteville, TN, third child, first dau. Janessa Betty, Sept. 15, 2014.

**Fisher**, Elvin and Saralynn (Esh), Honey Grove, PA, fifth child, fourth son, Chad Andrew, Oct. 25, 2014.

**Gerber**, Joseph and Anita (Wagler), Brunner, ON, fifth child, fourth dau., Ashlynn Diane, Sept. 7, 2014.

**Gerber**, Peter and Jenia (Muntean), Suceava, Romania, first child and son, Edward Peter, Sept. 16, 2014.

**Glick**, Alan and Emily (Stoltzfus), Laurelville, OH, first child and dau., Natalia Dawn, Oct. 1, 2014.

**Graber**, Allen and Rosa (Yoder), Bloomfield, IN, fourth child, second son, Wendell Lamar, July 18, 2014.

**Hamilton**, Nicholas and Shae (Heft), Harrison, AR, second child, first dau., Megan Jewell, August 10, 2014.

**Helmuth**, Anthony and Amber (Upchurch), Whiteville, TN, second child and dau., Valerie Kate, Oct. 1, 2014.

**Jantzi**, Charles and Melanie (Ropp), Lucknow, ON, fourth child and dau., Mia Catharine, August. 26, 2014.

**Kauffman**, Arlyn and Sue (Wagler), Leon, IA, second child and son, Asher Luis, July 30, 2014.

**Lapp**, John and Jolene (Stoltzfus), New Holland, PA, first child and dau., Mariah Charis, August 5, 2014.

**Lengacher**, Nelson and Krista (Co-blentz), Lexington, IN, second child, first son, Landon Bruce, Sept. 29, 2014.

*Correction:* **Mast**, Lyle and Donna (Bechtel), Concord, AR, first child and son, Jadon Clark, April 24, 2014.

**McClung**, Gary and Alexandria (Heft), Western Grove, AR, first child and dau., Brooklynn Scarlett, Oct. 8, 2014.

**Miller**, Jonathan and Diana (Yutzy), Linn, MO, first child and dau., Jenna Noelle, June 4, 2014.

**Miller**, Matthias and Cynthiann (Schrock), Bloomfield, IN, third son and daughter, Tristan Lee, born June 10, 2009 and Kierra Lynne, born Nov. 23, 2010. Adopted Sept. 9, 2014.

**Nisly**, Wayne and Sharon (Brenneman), Hartselle, AL, eighth child, sixth son, Anthony David, Oct. 9, 2014.

**Peachey**, James and Rachel (Kauffman), Pierrepont Manor, NY, third child, second dau., Jalinda Erma, Oct. 2, 2014.

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

**Stoll**, Matthew and Marlene (Miller), Goodspring, TN, first child and dau., Valerie Ruth, Sept. 17, 2014.

**Stoltzfus**, Stephen and Kendra (Barkman), McConnelsville, OH, first child and son, Rilan Dyshon, Oct. 4, 2014.

**Stutzman**, Ethan and Julia (Miller), Bloomfield, MO, fourth child, third dau., Kaitlyn Brooke, Oct. 20, 2014.

**Yoder**, Marcus and Becky (Miller), Georgetown, OH, sixth child, second dau., Makayla Grace, Oct. 23, 2014.

**Zook**, Timothy and Janelle (Hochstetler), Orange, VA, first child and son, Logan Reece, Oct. 22, 2014.

## ordinations

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

**Bro. Carl Gingerich**, 39, was ordained as bishop at Shady Lawn Mennonite Church, Mountain View, Arkansas, on Sept. 7, 2014. The charge was given by Elmer Gingerich, assisted by Ivan Beachy, Michael Mast, and Jason Miller.

**Bro. Charles Jantzi**, 27, was ordained as minister at Whitechurch A.M. Church, Whitechurch, ON, on Sept. 28, 2014. Preordination messages were given by Ben Miller, Goodspring, TN. The charge was given by Laverne Ropp, assisted by Lee Stoltzfus and Arnold Jantzi.

**Bro. Wayne Lapp**, 43, was ordained to the office of bishop at Cornerstone

Mennonite Church, Burgettstown, PA, on Oct. 5, 2014. Bro. Phil Miller was speaker for the weekend.

**Bro. Henry Miller**, 27, was ordained as minister at Leon Salem Mennonite Church, Leon, Iowa, on Oct. 5, 2014. The charge was given by Monroe Gingerich, assisted by David Yoder. Virgil Wagler was also in the lot.

**Bro. Roman Miller**, 56, of Spencerville, IN, was ordained as bishop at Fellowship Haven A.M. Church, Woodburn, IN, on Oct. 26, 2014. Preordination messages were given by Wilbur Gingerich, Arthur, IL, The charge was given by Eugene Eicher, assisted by Wilbur Gingerich and Melvin Roes. Timothy Eicher was also in the lot.



## obituaries

**Beachy**, Cornelius "Neal", 84, of Millersburg, IN, died at his home August 2, 2014. He was born August 21, 1929, in LaGrange County, Indiana, son of the late Daniel C. and Susan (Miller) Beachy.

He was a member of and deacon at Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church, Goshen. Their family lived in Paraguay for six years where he helped establish Luz Y Esperanza Colony. Later he served as director of Christian Mission Charities until his retirement.

On Oct. 6, 1949, he was married to Alma Bontrager, She survives. Their children are: Marvin (Carolyn) Beachy, Amboy, IN; Sue Ann (Dennis) Hershberger, Nappanee, IN; Rosemary (Marvin) Miller, LaGrange, IN; Eileen (Harold) Yoder, Millersburg, IN; Dave (DiAnn) Beachy, Goshen, IN; Wayne (Rosanna) Beachy, Ligonier, IN; Tim (Leona) Beachy, Columbia City, IN; Paul (Janice) Beachy, Syracuse, IN; Ginny (Jim) Kauffman, Millersburg, IN; Sam (Heidi) Beachy, Milford, IN; and Maggie

(Nate) Schwartz, Sturgis, MI. Also surviving are 27 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. Other close relatives surviving are sisters: Ida (Henry) Yoder, Bloomfield, IA; Esther (Arthur) Martin, Sarah (Jake) Stoltzfus, and Barbara Bender, all of Goshen, IN; brothers: Harvey (Marie) Beachy and David (Mary Ellen) Beachy, both of Goshen; Sister-in-law Irene Beachy, Sarasota, FL; and brother-in-law, Dan (Fern) Gingerich, Belle Center, OH.

Preceding him in death were brothers: Alvin, Eli, and Daniel Beachy and sisters: Katie Ann Jones, Anna Gingerich, and Susie Miller.

The funeral was held at Fair Haven on August 5, with Wilbur Yoder, Dan B. Miller and Harvey Miller serving. Burial was in Thomas Cemetery, Goshen.

**Lapp**, Lena (Esh), 61, of New Holland, PA, died Sept. 11, 2014, at Hospice Center. She was born Jan. 22, 1953, daughter of David and the late Rebecca

(Esh) Smoker.

She was a faithful member of Summitview Christian Fellowship, New Holland.

On July 31, 1971, she was married to Benuel Lapp, with whom she shared 43 years of marriage. He survives. Other survivors include three sons: David (Ruth) Lapp, Jonas (Leah) Lapp, John (Jolene) Lapp, New Holland; three daughters: Leona (Matthew) Raber, Antrim, OH; Lydia Mae (Paul James) Zook, Blackville, SC; Esther, of the home; 22 grandchildren; four sisters: Anna Mary (Jake) Stoltzfus, Sadie (Jonas) King, Lydia (Jon) Stoltzfus, Faith (Joe) Fisher and her father, David Smoker, New Holland.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Rebecca Smoker, just nine months prior to her passing.

The funeral was held at Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church on Sept. 14, with Dave Stoltzfus, Leroy Lapp, and Jr. Stoltzfus serving. Burial was at the Summitview Fellowship Cemetery.

**Yoder**, Ernest L., 65, of Mifflinburg, PA, died August 5, 2014 at the home of his sister, Martha and David Troyer. He was born Sept. 24, 1948, in Reedsville,

PA, a son of the late Noah A. and Amanda N. (Kurtz) Yoder.

Ernest was mentally disabled and lived all his life with his parents until July 1, 2014, when he moved in with the Troyer family, who lovingly cared for him. Only three weeks later he had a stroke and steadily declined until his passing.

He was a special part of Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, Mifflinburg. His favorite hobby was driving his “putt-putt,” a John Deere 50. Ernest loved singing and had many favorite hymns.

He is survived by two sisters: Alta (and Sam Mullet), Sugarcreek, OH; and Martha (and David Troyer), Mifflinburg, PA; and two brothers: Ervin (and Theda) Yoder, Bemidji, MN; and Kore (and Miriam) Yoder, Lewisburg, PA; 17 nieces and nephews and 20 great nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his mother, on May 2, 2014, and his father on June 26, 2014. Earlier he was preceded in death by two infant sisters and a nephew, Benjamin Mullet.

The funeral was held on August 10, at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, with David King, Joe Peachey, and Simon Bender serving. Burial was in the church cemetery. 

***Death is not a period, but a comma in the story of life.***

# *Tribute to Nathaniel Wagler, Newton, Ontario*

*By his family*

*(Obituary published in November, 2014. page 18)*

*Born: July 22, 1980*

*Died: May 4, 2014, at Listowel Memorial Hospital after a lengthy struggle  
with complications caused by Cystinosis.*

*Age: 33 years*

**A**s Nathaniel's parents and family, we feel it was our privilege to love and be loved by Nathaniel. Nathaniel put his whole heart into God, life, and others, even though his health often made life difficult.

Nathaniel had a way of noticing people who were hurting or needing a chance in life and finding a way to befriend them. Instead of allowing the setbacks of his illness to get him down, he took an interest in the exciting events that were happening in others' lives.

Nathaniel greatly enjoyed when family and friends took time to tell him things, and was always interested in the details of our lives. Nathaniel had a special relationship with his brother, Timothy, who suffers the same condition.

From about 1991 to 2004, Nathaniel had a few better years when he was able to work in management in the family business, do some traveling, and make some

really good memories with family and friends. He was very gifted with instructing employees, keeping the production facility well-organized, and fostering good relationships with customers.

It was very difficult to watch Cystinosis slowly win the battle with his health, but he courageously gave up one thing after another as his health continued to deteriorate. The last few weeks of Nathaniel's life were very difficult for him and us as a family. Despite the pain of parting, we are thankful that we have hope beyond the grave. As Nathaniel slipped away from us, we were comforted by these words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day..."

We appreciate this poem, written by a cousin, soon after Nathaniel's death:

*Not a word of complaint have we heard from your lips,  
Though your life was not easy, anything but bliss.  
You were as brave as they come, a courageous young man,  
Who faced a hard life as only the strongest can.*

*You knew a long life was not yours to take  
And you never assumed you were entitled to that cake.  
You just put us to shame with your wonderful soul  
And courageously fought till time took its toll.*

*Nathaniel, we'll miss you; your life was too short.  
None of us were prepared for God's timely escort.  
But I think we all agree, it was well-earned  
And we're so happy you're with Jesus—your eternal reward.*

*You were a Joshua, for sure, fighting battles so grave,  
Uncommonly strong and uncommonly brave.  
We'll not soon forget you, a soldier so dear,  
We rejoice you're in glory, but we still wipe a tear.*



## observations

From the Brethren Revival Fellowship (BRF) comes this interesting note, “With fewer and fewer congregations being able to afford a full-time professional minister, the leadership paper affirmed the longstanding value of the plural, non-salaried ministry. We remember what Jesus said about the difference between a shepherd and a herding-type leader. Such leaders are licensed, not ordained. They are expected to serve in a local setting.”

The Church of the Brethren has a variety of branches ranging from readily recognizable visual identity to total cultural integration.

BRF is a serious effort to recognize lost ground in the area of Anabaptist distinctives. Harold S. Martin is a prominent teacher/writer in this revivalist effort.



It is said that Benjamin Franklin favored that lawmakers in our government would serve without pay. That did not carry. Today there are financial benefits that make elective office financially attractive. Lawmakers have repeatedly adjusted their own wages, to make it even more attractive. Had Mr. Franklin's preference been followed, it would have been a built-in provision for

term limits. It would have supported a service motivation rather than a lucrative position with generous retirement benefits.

• • • • •

Harvey Yoder, Harrisonburg, VA, wrote an article for *Mennonite World Review* (9-28-14), entitled, "What Would Jesus Earn?" He points out that when Christian-based non-profits start it often involves financial sacrifice. As a work becomes more institutionalized, CEO wages and benefits rise, while entry level wage earners remain static.

The article states that when EMS (later to become EMC, then EMU) started, the teachers and staff all needed other sources of income to meet living expenses. Today's Mennonite college presidents generally have wages and benefits more than five times that of entry-level instructors.

Does it not seem evident that our tendency is the allow to dynamics of the secular market to guide us, rather than Christian values?

• • • • •

Nick Vujicic was born in 1982. He became a Christian at age 15. At age 19, he began speaking in public. In 2013, he completed a world tour, touching 24 countries, sharing his unusual life story and Christian testimony. His outgoing personality is contagious and he has a delightful sense of humor. He enjoys a fulfilling life as an author and speaker. I simply do not understand how his hobbies

can include swimming, fishing and painting. Why so? **Because Nick was born without arms or legs.**

Although his family and friends were supportive, the fact of being so different from his peers was a real trial. Nick constantly wondered why he was different from other children. He questioned whether his life had a purpose. He was depressed and lonely. Today he is a motivational speaker and evangelist.

In 2012, he married a lovely woman, named Kanae Myaharae. They are now the parents of a wonderfully perfect son.

He is the president of a non-profit ministry, Life Without Limbs, established in 2005.

The above information was gleaned from *Loaves and Fishes*, an article by Darold Gingerich.

I simply confess that I do not understand how all this is possible. But his Christian commitment included a surrender of his future into the hands of God. It reminds us that God is still able to do more than we ask or think.

• • • • •

Ida (Yutzy) Gingerich lives with her husband Dannie and family in Wisconsin. He is a deacon in the Amish church. Ida's sister, Elizabeth Hershberger, her husband, William, and some of their adult children are members of the local Center church. A son, Leroy, has shared the following story.

A representative from an oil

company contacted Dannie Gingerich and made him an unusual offer. Eighty feet under their farm there is a deposit of a rare formation considered to be very valuable to the oil “fracking” industry. They offered to remove top soil in order to access and remove the valuable deposit and then put the top soil back in its place. For this privilege they offered the generous sum of 15 million dollars. Dannie listened respectfully but said their family would have to consider the proposal before reaching a decision.

While this sounds fair and very generous, it is not the whole picture. The sought-after deposit was under a prominent hill on which there are numerous hardwood trees. Obviously, those trees could not have been replaced. Neither could the hill be restored. The proposal, if carried out, would have been a major disruption to the landscape.

After the parents discussed this with their 10 adult children (all married), the family concluded that such a large sum of money would take away the need to work to make a living. The family concluded that it could have a negative effect on their posterity. They have 59 grandchildren and great grandchildren. With that much money no one would have to work, and that would be bad for their spiritual welfare.

The oil company was obviously disappointed. They asked, “How about 17 million?”

“No, thank you,” was Dannie Gingerich’s response.

I wanted to share this story because it is a worthy example of considering long-term implications of an offer that many people would have eagerly accepted. The response of the Gingerich family reflects the awareness that the most valuable things in life are not measured in dollars and cents.

The possibility that a strip mine would be opened in the middle of an Amish farming community was not a welcome consideration.

Dannie is nearing the end of his life and he cares more for his identity, his community, his way of life, his family and his responsibility as a church leader than he does for easy wealth.



I have access to Ronald Miller’s comments before they go to print. I affirm his thought that a correct view of ownership is important to our own well-being. A willingness to embrace a gift is certainly more mature than to assume something not tailored to our preference is somehow inferior. In the material world, investment is usually essential to ownership. Participation, investment or energy, is an important part of a sense of ownership in the work of the Kingdom. It is also helpful to remember that we must be careful not to overestimate our own importance (Romans 12:3).

—DLM



As I look around me, I see a number of things that I call mine. I see shoes in the closet that I bought in town. I invested quite a bit of time working on the floors in our house when we did some remodeling recently. I also have ten fingers and a nose among other things that I didn't really choose. They are still mine. I'm also sipping a cup of coffee that I made. I ground the beans and poured the cup of brew, adding a dash of milk. Several years ago my wife gave me a padded bag in which to carry my laptop computer that I've used ever since.

The concept of ownership is an important consideration as we think about church doctrine, application and policy. It is well-nigh impossible for one generation to pass on something that isn't theirs. The oncoming generation doesn't acquire ownership of these things automatically. I remember a conversation that I had with my father regarding ownership, when I was a teenager. The church I was raised in had its beginning some 8 years before I was born. My parents were members of this congregation. I pointed out to Dad that those of his generation had ownership of the things that were in place, since they were involved in its formation, but that my generation didn't have that option. I felt that my generation needed ownership.

The concern that my generation establish ownership was a legitimate one. However, my understanding of how that ownership can be

accomplished was a bit narrow. I well remember the "light bulb" moment when it dawned on me that I could acquire ownership of what was, by simply embracing and accepting it. I had assumed that I somehow needed to be involved in decision-making for me to experience ownership.

Successful transmission of doctrine, application and policy involves both successful giving and receiving. It is certainly not realistic to expect to be able to pass on something that we don't possess. However, it is likewise unrealistic to expect to acquire ownership without receiving something. Similar to things we call ours in our houses, we can assume ownership through investment, through involvement in the formation of policy or through simply accepting a gift.

Church leaders should seek ways to involve the congregation in the formulation of group policy in ways that build the sense of ownership, where it's appropriate. In a church with a diversity of ages, there has been a corresponding diversity of opportunities to be involved in discussions surrounding group policy. Hence, it is not surprising where there tends to be more sense of ownership among those who are older and less among the younger ones. However, there is always an equal opportunity for all to embrace and receive what is. All of us should remember that involvement in the formation of group

policy isn't the only way to acquire ownership. Ultimately, for me to own what is, regardless how it came to me, depends on whether or not I embrace it, rather than on my involvement in its shaping.

• • • • •

A pre-school girl found a nickel in a bookshelf in the public library in Plymouth, Michigan. She took the nickel to library staff, who then placed it on the desk with this note: "This nickel was found in the shelves by a very honest and concerned patron. I assured her that we would keep it here for the owner to claim." That little girl proved herself faithful in little things.

• • • • •

This year's Ebola outbreak is terrible for all those affected by it and should not be trivialized. Several comments seem pertinent:

-The fear of this unfamiliar virus registers quite strongly for people

in the United States. This feels like unfamiliar territory for a developed and rich country like this one.

-The fear seems disproportionately large. For example, annual deaths related to the flu in the USA are 20-25,000, depending on how the data is interpreted. So far this year, there have been fewer than half of that number of Ebola deaths confirmed globally, with one death to date in the USA. (That number is expected to climb.)

-Ebola is known to spread via body fluids. With a handful of confirmed cases in the USA so far, it seems remarkable that the virus doesn't spread more readily.

Our bodies aren't designed to last forever here. The birth-to-death ratio is pretty tight at 1 to 1. Events like this Ebola scare serve to remind us that here we "...have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14).

—RJM 

**mission awareness**

# *Prison Ministry in Belize*

*Floyd Stoltzfus, Belize City, Belize*

In mid-October, 2014, there were 1600 men and 45 women incarcerated in Belize Central Prison. Missionaries under Amish Mennonite Aid have offered Bible

studies to inmates there since the late '70s.

It is Thursday morning. We eat a healthy breakfast because a lot of energy and sweat will be required.

Preparation includes a message for the men and a Bible story for the women. We pack our bags with song books, Gospel tracts in English and Spanish, *Beside the Still Waters*, *La Antorchas*, World Missionary Press Scripture booklets, a few pens, and Bible Correspondence courses by Lamp and Light Publishers. We observe the deep blue sky decked with large, cumulus clouds as we travel the George Price Highway (formerly The Western Highway). Praying as we go, we thank our precious Lord for the opportunity of serving Him in this prison ministry, some 19 miles southwest of Belize City, close to Hattieville. Hattieville, established in 1962, was the first mission in Belize under AMA.

We go through security without problems. They know us, especially "Miss Nancy" Coblenz, who has been involved in this ministry for years. We are registered under the Kolbe Foundation, a Christian ministry which is recognized by and legalized under the criminal justice system of Belize. Because of the change that the preaching of the Gospel has made in the lives of inmates, we are welcomed by prison officials.

The purpose of this ministry is to schedule and arrange for various Christian church groups to enter the prison and share the good news of God's love. It is to help inmates function more positively in the prison environment. Another goal is

to prepare inmates for re-entry into society (physically, mentally, morally and spiritually).

Last week one of the Voluntary Service girls with AMA gave the Bible story. When the invitation was given to the women to receive the Lord Jesus, seven responded. One in particular, shed tears of deep repentance. The others also seemed to be sincere, wanting to begin a new life with Jesus. Again this week, several more women made public commitments to receive the Lord and follow Him.

Tim Petersheim and I walk to Tango 1 (one of 10 buildings that houses prisoners). A security fence encloses many acres and it is quite a distance from one tango to the next.

The prison provides work for these men, who are all dressed in orange clothing. Some are working at keeping the yard and flower beds clean. Others are painting the buildings or sidewalks. Groups are playing basketball or soccer. Tango 1 is where the men charged with less serious crimes are housed. Tangoes 9 and 10 house men under tight security.

A small chapel is in Tango 1. We preach and teach the Scriptures. Sometimes there are 60 men in this cement-walled chapel. And oh, can they sing! After an hour-long service, we give out literature and answer questions.

Many of these men are Christians.

This ministry is intense, but the inmates inspire me. Everyone has a life story. Many grew up in dysfunctional homes without a father, leaving scars etched deeply on their faces. Some write out their stories and share them with me. One is writing a book, entitled: “My Journey of Tears.” He wept much but has found the grace of God very special in these seasons of deep sorrow and pain.

Another inmate shared with me his writing on love from John 3:16: “It has 24 words and is a message of hope, beginning with God and ending with eternal life. It is short and powerful and easy to memorize! It is solid and has weathered many storms in over 2,000 years. If you know nothing about the Bible, I urge you to begin with John 3:16. If you do know much about the Bible I encourage you to return to that special verse. We all need to remember that the heart of the human problem is the wickedness of the human heart and the only treatment prescribed for that is found in John 3:16. God loves us because He chose to do so. God wasn’t attracted to us or chose us because we’re big and important. He chose us out of pure love. ‘The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you...’ (Deut. 7:7,8a).

“God’s love depends on His

goodness, not ours. We as humans do not need to win God’s love. He already shared it with us. Our response to what God has done for us is simple. We must trust God, no matter how much we have sinned, to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We dare not trust our own efforts, but trust God in everything. God promised us a home in heaven forever in a perfect place with a perfect Savior. So my brother, do not forget John 3:16.” (Edited. FS)

As we walk the trails and sidewalks of the large compound, many ask for Christian literature. Rarely is there any refusal of Christian literature in the prison compound—or in all of Belize. I met Alfred Ordonez, an inmate who lived near Haynes Street. He told me to share with Alvin and Malinda Beiler and Harvey and Kathryn Kaufman (former unit directors at Haynes Street mission) that he never forgot them. He has a glowing testimony for Jesus and will meet them in heaven.

We go back to Belize City tired but rewarded. But there is more work. Miss Nancy grades the Bible correspondence courses. Marilyn (my dear wife) records the grades in the computer. If one booklet or study course is completed, a new lesson booklet is given to the person, if they so desire. Lamp and Light Publishers offer eleven courses of various subjects, all pertaining to the new life in Christ.



## Giving Gifts at Christmas

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

God gave His greatest gift to mankind just over 2,000 years ago. We do not know the exact time of the year that Christ was born, but we do know He came. This is the reason we commemorate Christmas. Angels announced His birth to shepherds out on the quiet hillside, as they herded their sheep. Wise men brought gifts to the new king: **gold**, representing His kingship, **frankincense**, a symbol of His priestly role; and **myrrh**, an anointing oil signifying His death and burial.

Many people take the idea of gift giving back to the gifts of those wise men. However, history does not prove this theory. There are different ideas as the reason for gift giving. Possibly one of the more plausible is that of gifts being given at the beginning of the new year and then later incorporated into giving at Christmas.

Parents can choose to make gift giving a part of Christ's birth, recognizing Christ as the best gift ever. Some parents emphasize the story of the wise men. I know of one family who give three gifts: something to wear, a book to read, and a toy to play with.

Gifts can also be given to celebrate, and as we celebrate Christ's birth we give joy by giving gifts. Giving and

receiving gifts can be a way of showing Christ's love through us to others. Rather than allowing gift-giving to become the focus of our Christmas, let it be a natural expression of your gratitude for God's gift to us.

Parents have the responsibility of finding a way to let this work out in their own family. Each family's Christmas tradition will vary. Come up with a way of making Christmas meaningful in your family this year. Let us look at some practical gift-giving ideas:

### Love Gifts

Many of you have probably read the book, "The Five Love Languages" by Gary Chapman. He believes each person responds to one of these five love languages: *Words of Affirmation*, *Acts of Service*, *Receiving Gifts*, *Quality Time*, and *Physical Touch*.

Have you ever spent time and money on a gift for someone, and could hardly wait to give the gift only to feel disappointed when they did not respond with enthusiasm? I love to give gifts and I feel loved when I receive a gift. Others may feel more loved by words of encouragement, hugs, spending quality time or helping them with their work.

### Appropriate Gifts

Children probably all enjoy receiving a gift. Gifts depend on the age and interests of the child. Gifts should teach values. Give small children toys that will serve more than one purpose. Legos can build many different things, however, be careful that the sets you choose do not teach violence.

Dolls teach a little girl to be a mother. Be careful of electronic toys or games. Know what you are buying for your child or teenager. Good books are always a good choice. Your child may appreciate a promise for a day alone with Mom or Dad, or a ticket to a special event or a letter of affirmation.

Elderly parents will appreciate your offer for a work day, coupons for a special meal, baked goods for the freezer, and so on. Learn what gift will mean the most to the recipient, whether it is your best friend or your

next-door neighbor.

### **Share with Others**

What better gift can you give to Jesus than to share with those in need? There are many children who will never receive a Christmas gift. You can bless them with a shoebox filled with toys organized by Samaritan's Purse. Good Life Ministries in India (Sam and Becca Gunti) prepare gifts for children (you send the money, they buy the gifts).

Christian Aid Ministries and many other organizations send Christmas catalogs from which you can choose a project to sponsor. Ebola has created tremendous needs this year, especially in the countries of Sierra Leone, and Liberia. Jesus says, "Inasmuch as you have done for one of the least of these, you have done it unto Me."

**May your Christmas be blessed!**



## **junior messages**

# **The Best Christmas Ever – Part Two**

*Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya*

Jason and Cynthia wanted to reach out to and bless someone on Christmas Day. What could they do? They thought about when their friends took a meal to a poor family on Christmas Day. That would be a good thing. But Cynthia was not sure she could handle the extra work

with four small children. They prayed and discussed it and felt it was what God wanted them to do. Jenelle, the teacher for the mission children, said she would help.

And so on the day before Christmas, Jason stopped at Wellington and Benter's house and told them they

wanted to bring lunch and eat with them on Christmas Day.

Cynthia got up early and slid a roast pan with a whole chicken, potatoes, and onions into the oven. Later she cooked a kettle of brown rice. The day before she had baked a plain white cake. Jenelle made a cabbage salad garnished with bright red tomatoes.

When they left for church at nine, the broth from the chicken was in their thermos jug. The roast pan with the chicken was in an insulated bag and the rice kettle was wrapped snugly in a towel.

Jason shared about Christ's birth in church that Christmas morning. The church members shared a song or a testimony if they wished to. The only carol sung was Silent Night, Holy Night, by Jason's family and Jenelle.

Jason brought a sack with 120 bright orange oranges along to church. Every person seemed so happy to receive a pretty orange. The usual oranges they bought were a natural, drab, greenish yellow, not bright like these oranges that had been dyed. It seemed that only people with some wealth could afford these pretty oranges. It was a pleasure to see the happy people walk home, each with a shiny orange clutched in his hand. It was just perfect too how three oranges were left, enough for their own three dear children.

The small, mud-walled hut with

happy children and their parents. Cynthia asked her children if they remembered how they had helped to stuff mud in the walls of that hut earlier in the year when their church had a house mudding. Agape Ministries had helped to fund this house for the needy family. Instead of a thatched roof, sturdy tin was over their heads and would keep the rains out for many years. The whole "dala" (homestead) was neat and tidy. A clipped hedge was around the yard. A nicely dug shamba that had all been hoed by hand was close to the house.

Cynthia was happy to fill the plates and serve while Jenelle held the sleeping Joseph. They ate around a low coffee table.

Soon clucking hens and their chicks came wandering in looking for anything that fell off the plates. The children giggled as the hens were shoed out the door.

Seconds were served. It looked like everything would be eaten until Cynthia mentioned that they would leave all the leftovers for them.

Benter insisted that they would not wash dishes, except for Cynthia's pots and pans which they washed outdoors. The chickens came running for any scrap of rice that was scraped out of the kettle.

Benter raised her hands and with a radiant smile on her face, she related how she had dreamed that food would come down from God on

Christmas Day. Food from heaven had filled her hands. Cynthia's heart was filled with awe and wonder when she heard about the dream.

Benter's happy dream came true all because one family was willing to listen to the Lord and share His blessings on Christmas day. That

family and teacher drove home with a deep awareness of fulfillment and blessing. Christmas had not been just a day of receiving gifts or of serving themselves. Their best Christmas ever was sharing their time, their hearts, and good, home-cooked food with a needy African family. 

## youth messages

### *God's Diamond*

*Alexis Miller, Lott, TX*

One evening a few weeks ago, my family and I were having dinner together in a restaurant. My sister and I were quietly enjoying our food when I noticed a gentleman who kept looking at us and was shaking his head. I thought it was a bit strange, but soon forgot about the incident. After a while, all of my family left except for my dad.

Later that evening my dad told us about what had happened after we left. He said that the gentleman who kept looking at us walked up to him and began asking questions. He asked about our religion. My dad replied that we were Christians and Mennonites. Then the man said, "Your children are just so well-behaved. They looked like they have a calm spirit and they just sat there and politely ate their food."

Not only the way I dress, but also the way I conduct myself affects my testimony. It is something that will follow me the rest of my life. That experience once again reminded me that my witness as a young woman of God is very, very important. The annual fall revival meetings that my church held recently also caused me to seriously consider my testimony by my actions and words.

Those meetings were eye-opening and life-changing. I was challenged and convicted each night. The two messages that have stuck with me ever since that week are the ones that were specifically preached to the youth. One evening the speaker requested that the young people sit on the front two benches. I really appreciated that because it is much easier to concentrate up front as compared to the back where one is more apt to be

distracted. That evening he shared a quote that I think I will never forget. He said, “**A diamond always shines brightest on the darkest night.**”

I believe that a godly young woman’s first goal should be to serve and love God. I believe she will obey, love, and honor her parents. I believe she will love God’s Word and have a sincere desire to do what is right. I also believe that a truly godly, sincere young woman will *not* strive for popularity amongst her peers by sacrificing principles for relationships. She will dress modestly, avoid flirting, and not follow the fads and fashions of the world. She will keep her mind and body pure. It is my desire to be that kind of young woman.

Being a diamond that shines brightly in this world is never easy.

However, I know it is possible. To be that diamond I must first deny myself, my fleshly desires, and the carnal pleasures of this world. I must have the testimony of a godly young woman. I must seek God and His will, love and obey my parents, have godly friends, and read God’s word daily.

The Apostle Peter writes, “Whose [the woman’s] adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” It is my utmost desire to be the godly young woman that this verse speaks of and to be a diamond that shines in this dark world. 

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Periodicals

## THOUGHT GEMS

Charity blesses twice—when it is given and when it is received.

• • • • •

It is unfortunate to consider friendship as primarily something to get rather than something to give.

• • • • •

Some people give a tenth to the Lord—a tenth of what they should give.

• • • • •

A breath of kindness goes further than a gust of flattery.

• • • • •

Knowledge humbles the great man, astonishes the common man, and puffs up the little man.

• • • • •

Some use words to express thought, some to conceal thought, and others instead of thought.

• • • • •

When you laugh, be sure to laugh at what people do and not at what people are.

• • • • •

Make sure the teeth you put into your commands are wisdom teeth.

• • • • •

Learning about history is easier than learning its lessons.

• • • • •

Let us give our lives to God. He can do more with them than we can.

• • • • •

Kindness is the trademark of a loving heart.