



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

Galatians 6:14

JANUARY 2015

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Trust

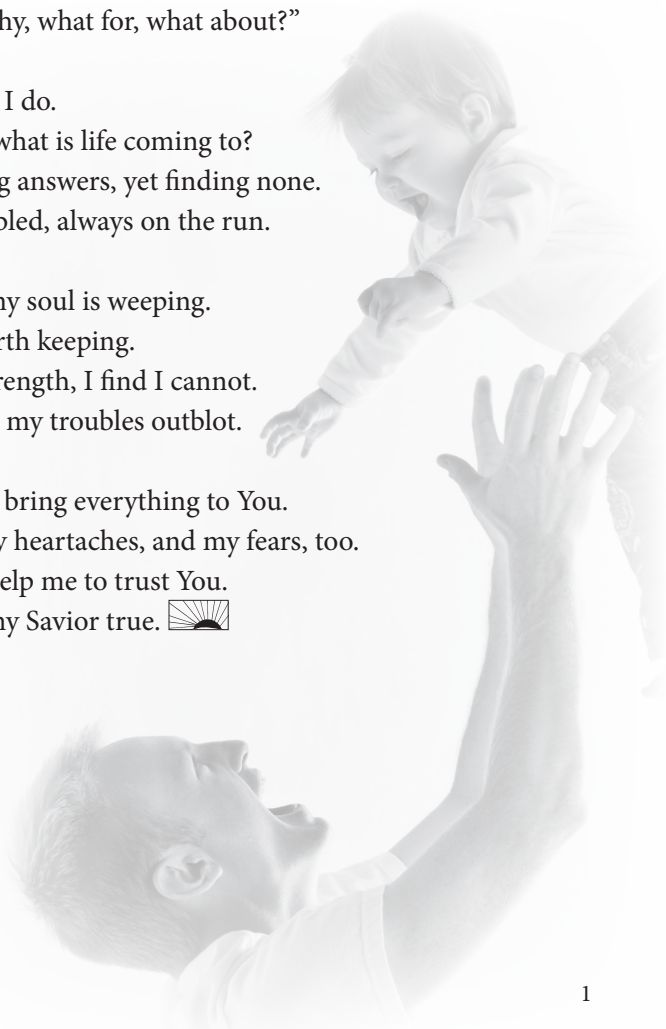
Carmen Beachy, Bastrop, TX

Trust, *Trust*, Oh, Lord, what a hard word.
Fleshly feelings within me are stirred.
Oh, my Lord, my flesh cries out,
Wanting to know “why, what for, what about?”

I want to trust; truly, I do.
But, Lord, I cannot; what is life coming to?
I’m grasping, wanting answers, yet finding none.
I am constantly troubled, always on the run.

My heart is crying; my soul is weeping.
Nothing in me is worth keeping.
Trying in my own strength, I find I cannot.
On my own I cannot my troubles outblot.

Most loving Savior, I bring everything to You.
Take my troubles, my heartaches, and my fears, too.
I surrender to You; help me to trust You.
For You are my all, my Savior true. 



He is Faithful that Promised

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

Avivid imagination tends to distort reality. Such a situation occurred in ancient Israel. A very low point in the life of Israel occurred after their 430-year sojourn in Egypt. This time in Egypt saved their lives during seven years of extreme drought. But life changed, and several centuries later their descendants were in severe bondage. Egypt, in Moses’ time, demanded that the Israelites “work their fingers to the bone.” But God put His hand on Moses as their leader, came to their rescue, and led them out of Egypt with a mighty hand. He led them to refuge and freedom in Canaan, a land several hundred miles to the northeast of Egypt.

As they traveled, God provided for their needs. He supplied them food and water. But God’s care wasn’t good enough for many of them. They thought they needed better food than the manna God was providing. So they complained bitterly! They thought God should *meet their needs and their wants*.

When they finally approached Canaan, they sinned again. God had promised that He would give them Canaan as their homeland. Moses commissioned 12 men to go and scout out the area that lay before them. Moses expected them also to take note of the people living there. So their mission was both *scouting* and *spying*. What they saw shattered the courage of most of them.

Even though these 12 men returned with a cluster of grapes apparently so heavy that it required two men to carry it, another perceived obstacle stood before them: **The gigantic men of Canaan sent a shiver through their liver!**

The people’s optimism hit rock bottom when Shammua, Shaphat, Igal, Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, and Geuel painted vivid pictures of hopelessness. They saw that Canaan was very fruitful, but it hosted a big problem: The Canaanite men were huge! Thus the people of Israel decided that Moses and Aaron were to blame that they

had ever left Egypt. They actually decided that Moses and Aaron meant to kill them by taking them out of Egypt!

When Caleb heard what was being said and sensed the people's courage disappearing, he called for quietness and bravely announced. **“Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it”** (Numbers 13:30).

The “Faithless Ten” countered with, “We be not able to go up against this people; for they are stronger than we.” They continued to talk about how pitifully they were out-manned, saying that they felt like mere “grasshoppers,” next to the Canaanite men. The scouts' imagination even got so vivid that they were convinced that they were also seen as mere “grasshoppers” to the Canaanite giants.

The people were in wretched despair. They lifted up their voices and wept the night away. After that, their discouragement took yet another downward turn. They blamed Moses and Aaron for their situation. They started making plans to appoint a new captain to lead them back to Egypt, the land of bondage.

At that point, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the Lord because they felt so helpless before men. They had not asked for the work of leading these people out of Egypt into Canaan. Falling on their faces,

they cried out to God.

Joshua and Caleb were willing not only to stand up to Canaanite enemies. They stood up to their faithless comrades about their cowardly desire to go back when God had commanded them to go forward. Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes in abject horror. Brave Caleb again spoke words of courage. **“The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land flowing with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land. For they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not”** (Numbers 14:8, 9).

But the people decided that they were facing not only two fools. They promptly made plans to stone four witless men who were asking them to face the giants of Canaan.

At this point, I believe God said, in effect, **“That's enough! This far, and no farther!”** How did He say it? **“And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel”** (Numbers 14:10b). With that, their plan to execute the four men who took God at His word came to a sudden halt!

Later, God said that because of their unbelief, all of the older

generation, except Joshua and Caleb, would spend the rest of their days in the desert.

The negative example of the ten spies teaches us that faithlessness sometimes masquerades as wisdom. Paralyzing fear sometimes hides behind caution. Their motivation was anything but noble. God had promised them safe passage into Canaan. By doubting God, they acted like an adolescent who questions his parents' godly judgment. They thought they knew better than their Heavenly Parent did how to move to a new home, how to face their enemies and how to solve their problems.

Let us learn from this incident in history. Both the negative examples and the positive examples are rich with instruction. How can we rise up like Caleb and Joshua, and claim the promises of God? By acknowledging that God is faithful and what He asks of us is right. Then our enemies don't look so overpowering. Deliverance and progress still depend on God,

not us.

Let us never forget, **“He is faithful that promised”** (Heb. 10:23).

• • • • •

On the evening of October 31, David L. and Mary Miller had just left their home in Partridge, KS, for a supper appointment when a young driver failed to stop at a stop sign, and collided with them. The errant car struck the front end of David's car, sending them into a quick spin into the roadside ditch. Air bags spared them from serious injury. However, David sustained a broken bone in his left leg just below the knee. He's been wearing a knee brace. At first, he was quite immobilized, but is now (Dec. 1) improving well. Their car is "totaled." If it had not been for seat belts and air bags, David and Mary's injuries would likely have been much worse. The other driver was not seriously injured and expressed serious regret at her reckless (not wreckless) driving.

—PLM 

Religion is not something we use to eliminate pain, so much as to find meaning for pain.

Who Are We?

Johnny Miller, Minerva, OH

Brethren, it is with a heart burdened for my people that I attempt to call attention to a malady which is slowly but surely eroding important features of our faith.

WeasaBeachyconstituency have, to a large degree, enjoyed the freedom of autonomous church government. We have maintained our cohesiveness through a group conscience sensitive to the Holy Spirit and God's Word. We also have championed this truth: A gospel which is only taught and not lived is no Gospel at all. We have embraced the fact that we must be born again by the Spirit of God or we are not a part of the Kingdom of God. Upon these foundation stones God has built our churches.

Living out these truths has saved us from the abuses of mainstream American Christianity and formed us into a unique body of believers. We have enjoyed the fruits of faithful laborers from our autonomous congregations who have entered the world's harvest fields with a passion for souls. The glorious light of the Gospel which they preached, taught, and lived was so powerful that it transformed lives and called the redeemed out of their ungodly associations to follow the Lord Jesus. But a cloud has arisen casting

a large, dark shadow upon our horizon. Within the blessing of our congregational church government there also lies the potential for deviation, negative change and the loss of true brotherhood.

When a congregation makes decisions which satisfy that individual congregation but violates the group conscience, it wounds the brotherhood of the entire Beachy Amish constituency. This throws into jeopardy not only our Bible schools, places of service opportunities, and mission outreaches, but this action erodes the very foundations of our existence.


A case in point is the deviation to accept the radio by several congregations within our Beachy Amish constituency which has violated the group conscience of the whole. Yet, as autonomous congregations, they have their governmental right to exercise this freedom. How will their decisions be understood by our brethren in foreign mission churches who sat at the feet of our missionaries, repented of their sins, were genuinely

converted, left their ungodly society behind, and are walking faithfully within the safeguards of the mission church? How will such a father be able to teach his teenage son: They can, but we cannot?

How will the decision of a few congregations affect the group conscience of the entire Beachy Amish constituency? Are we open, as a church group, to embrace changes which include the radio's false doctrine, free internet access with its negative social media, its insatiable entertainment, and Hollywood's movies, as well? Should we merely proceed and see how things play out in the end, while knowing full well that history has shown multiplied

times over that we cannot feed on garbage and produce glory?

Joshua, in his day, faced a similar malady. His solution was to draw a line of demarcation so that the people themselves would know where they would stand. Would to God, that in this our day, we had many Joshuas who would help us understand who we are and where to stand.

I shall close with this: What I say here is in no way an attempt to circumvent our Bishop Committee's goals or authority. Rather, it is an attempt to express our support of them in bringing into focus the issues we face. May we together seek God's design, knowing He will never give us a stone if we truly seek His Bread. 

Why I Wear the Cape Dress

Kathleen Carter, Bastrop, TX

A couple of months ago a friend attended our church and later said that he would have considered becoming a member except for the standards stating that sisters are to wear the cape dress. He said he could not belong to a church that required a "church uniform." He also claimed that another brother in our church said the sisters could not give a reason why we wear the cape dress except that it was a tradition.

I happily ran down a list of reasons why the cape dress meets scriptural principles and is an intelligent choice.

During devotions on a Wednesday night service a month or so later another brother brought this up to the congregation asking why we wear the cape dress.

In response to those two incidents, I wrote a list of why I wear a cape dress. Be assured that I do it NOT because I have to.

•The cape dress is beautiful. I love the way it flows.

•It is comfortable. I can wear the same dress in the summer and not be overheated. I am more comfortable in my cape dress than my co-workers and neighbors, who wear barely anything.

•It is feminine. I don't have to worry about looking gender neutral. There's too much of that already.

•It lends itself to various "looks," as I choose a different collar, no collar, long sleeves or 1/4 sleeves.

•It is economical. The same basic pattern has served me well for years.

•It is adaptable whether a sister is nursing or not.

•It limits the pride of elaborate patterns and embellishments.

•Conformity with other sisters in the faith is wonderful. It shows a spirit of community when we stand together on this. I feel comforted when I can look across an airport and see another sister in the faith. Many times I'll stop and visit with her. We don't feel so alone when we visit in a strange place.

•It easily identifies me as a Mennonite, thereby serving as a witness to those who I don't have opportunity to talk with.

•Like a good basic black, the cape dress never goes out of style. I am not subject to the changing trends of common fashion.

•I know my dresses will last a long

time because they are sewn well and I can tailor them to fit my body, not a store standard.

•My husband loves the way I look in it and I love to please my husband.

•It gives me a chance to witness to others who stop me to ask why I dress this way.

•Lastly, we are called to submit to the authority of the church. We agreed when we applied for membership to abide by the guidelines. We were not forced to do this; we did it of our own free will. If we do not abide by our commitment, that is dishonest.

Why worldly clothing won't work for me:

•You may be able to be modest in a skirt and blouse, but it is increasingly difficult to get skirts that are long enough and loose enough to be modest and not too sheer.

•Store-bought clothes are mostly cheaply made so that they don't last long. I would end up replacing my clothes more frequently.

•Store-bought clothes are subject to the whims of fashion.

•A sister expecting a child would need to buy special maternity clothes which she can wear only for a limited time.

•Many of the cheaper clothes are made overseas where women and children work long hours for very little pay.

•Store-bought clothes tend to fit poorly.

There is something good to be said for tradition. Tradition gives us security, comfort and sweet memories. I know the Bible doesn't say specifically that we must wear a cape dress, but the cape dress is not in opposition to Scripture. The Bible doesn't say we shouldn't watch television, either, but we know that it is a danger to us and we avoid it. Godly leadership understands proper application of godly principles for daily living and the church order sets guidelines in place for our benefit.

We are surrounded by a world that is fighting to make us conform to it. Little by little people are leaving the security of the church to conform to the world we are assigned to be leading to God. The Bible teaches us not to conform to the world.


I've known sisters who grew up conservative Mennonite and started conforming to the world rather than the church. First the cape dress went, then the covering, then some take on habits like smoking, applying make-

up, and finally the Bible itself is cast aside. It's a slippery slope. Once you start down that path, it quickly goes out of control.

I did not grow up in a conservative Anabaptist home. In fact, I did not grow up in a Christian home. Perhaps that is why I find it easy to say why I wear it.

It is very important that we know where we stand. The world is asking questions that we and our children need to be prepared to answer. The world is putting on pressure to get us to conform to its ways. We must be firmly grounded in our faith and our traditions, if we are to respond appropriately to that pressure.

This is especially true for our children. Worldly people hope they will have an easier time changing impressionable youth than us older folks.

[I hope you will be able to use this for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom. The ministers who encouraged me to send this are Clayton Weaver and Paul Beachy.] 

Perhaps more sales are helped when the salesman closes his mouth than when he keeps it open.

Marriage, Home, and Children

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

The Lancaster newspaper recently had an article on the front page that gave pertinent news of the day. It stated the academic falterings of our county's public schools. The scores of 61 schools dropped from last year, while 54 showed improvement.

Our newly-elected governor is Democrat. He knows, as do many other people, that public schools are not making the grade. He says we need more money for our schools. We have heard that and done that for the last 50 years, at least. He says we must hire better teachers and dismiss the incompetent ones. But then, there is the teacher's union to buck about such dismissals.

A lengthy letter to the editor says it isn't the teachers who are the learning problem. He says the problem is in the homes. Oh, really? We thought we were hearing society call for self-expression with a do-it-yourself lifestyle. You know, when people are free to choose, society is supposed to rise.

We are told that the average is pulled down with so many students coming from single-parent homes. So who is supposed to fix that? Many Protestant people send their children to public schools, as do

some Mennonites. That would help the averages, would it not?

Immodest dress and bad morals can take away from learning. We doubt whether worldly music and preoccupation with sports helps learning. There is home TV, frequently proven to reduce real learning. The god of this world has a handle on public education.

The newspaper also features Cal Thomas, a well-known columnist, who attended the Calvin Coolidge Memorial Foundation dinner in New York City. The evening was to address social ills. A team of Canadian students argued for the national distribution of wealth. That idea is as old as Communism and weary with wear. The U.S. team argued that that was a bad idea. Senator Phil Gramm debated a member of the Canadian Parliament on the same subject at this special meeting.

Cal Thomas writes that Larry Kudlow was the final speaker, a

CNBC commentator, who gave “the most profound thought of the evening. Kudlow came on clear and strong in saying the greatest help for individuals and for our nation “is for people to get married.” He was serious. “The super-sophisticated New Yorkers fell momentarily silent. When the shock wore off, many heads began to nod.” Imagine!

Kudlow said, “Marriage gives people a reason to work, a home one hopes is stable, and children for whom two parents feel responsible..” How profound!

Thomas quotes sociologist Melanie Heath, who writes in her book on the value of marriage, that “married people are happier, healthier, and better off financially.” This in no way is to discredit the many older singles among us. Thomas is directing his thrust toward divorced people and many Americans who live together without benefit of marriage.

Along with this is an aged Mennonite pastor who officiated at his son’s “wedding” to another man. He is pictured with his wife, his son, and his son’s partner, as though they were all family. In an open letter, he wrote: “When my wife and I read the Bible with today’s fractured, anxious church in mind, we ask: ‘What is Jesus calling us to do with those sons and daughters who are among the most despised people in the world?’” He says he is at peace with what he did.

Jesus said that families would be divided because of Him. In this case, a daughter and son-in-law’s response to this situation is noteworthy. They said: “We would love to agree with [our parents]. We resonate deeply with their call for compassionate, embracing love for all those in the LGBTQ community....But we believe that homosexual actions are sinful and that we should not attempt a more inclusive definition of Christian marriage....We appeal [with this]: ‘Show us from the Scriptures.’” Lancaster Mennonite Conference, of which the aged minister is a member, has since canceled his credentials. And what about God?

Life is a testing ground of either faith or unbelief, of doing right or wrong. God says, “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and commiteth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abomination that the wicked man doeth, shall he live?” That thought becomes a burning question. Right now. The Scripture continues with a divine verdict: “All his righteousness which he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die” (Ezekiel 18:24).

Homosexuality and lesbianism are addressed in God’s Word. God says, “For this cause God gave them over unto vile affections: for even their

women did change their natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Romans 1:26, 27).

But Paul goes further to state the principle of guilt by association, when he irrevocably writes, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:32). What does all this mean? The aged pastor has clearly become an accomplice. But then the newspaper says that already 24 out of 29 comments of online respondents were in support of the “marriage of the two men.”

The moderator of Lancaster Mennonite Conference is quoted as pointing out that Mennonite Church USA has guidelines which state, “Pastors holding credentials in a conference of Mennonite Church USA may not perform a same-sex marriage.”

The streams of society around

us are not all flowing in the same direction. But the main current seems to be clearly going downstream. Self-improvement is not given much encouragement in God’s Word. Repentance and amendment of life was a term Mennonites of the past freely used. I still recommend it for those who will turn to God with their needs. An old proverb applies here, “None is so blind as he who will not see.”

The Bottom Line is that God’s plan for marriage was and is for one man and one woman to be committed to each other for life, and as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:39, “only in the Lord.” Jesus said if persons are divorced and marry again, they commit adultery (Mark 10:11,12).

We thank God for the privilege of having our own Christian schools. They are not perfect, but are to be commended for their sincere efforts to promote needed learning in a biblical context and atmosphere. As the public schools mirror the larger society, so our Christian schools mirror our church’s own social units. We have a priceless opportunity to teach our children principles, modeled by Christian parents and teachers.



*The best tranquilizer is a
clear conscience.*

Marks of a Good Leader

Eli J. Yoder, Hutchinson, KS

A Good Leader:

•Continually seeks after God.
(James 4:8, 2 Chronicles 26:5)

•Has learned the importance of servanthood, who leads by example and is a role model for those whom he leads. (Jonah 3:6) Women are also role models. (Titus 2:3-5)

•Will take on responsibility, even if it means stepping out of his comfort zone, faithfully and diligently serving where he is without aspiring for more prominence. (Genesis 39)

•Listens—really listens— before answering. (Proverbs 18:13)

•Has a happy, secure wife and well-behaved, secure children and a good testimony from his friends and neighbors. (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

•Stands in the hardest of times, including prosperity. (Job 42:10-17)

•Shares, with humility, his own struggles. By being transparent, he communicates well with the people he serves. (James 4:6, 13, and 5:16)

•Is no better than how close he walks with the Lord, no matter how well he can speak of Him. (James 4:8)


•Is always approachable. (James 3:13-18)

•Can laugh at his own mistakes, but not at sin. (Ecclesiastes 3:4)

•Will accept criticism without defending himself, and after seeking the Lord, can change what needs to be changed without getting “derailed.” (James 3:17)

•At any time, is willing to repent. (2 Corinthians 7:8-11, as in Jonah 3)

•Will, in the toughest of times, look to the Lord for strength and guidance to know where to go and what to do. (1 Samuel 30:1-8)

While I cannot hold myself up as being a role model, I offer these observations as things I have learned from life’s experiences. Godly manhood means that we do our best for the Lord. He helps us take responsibility for those in our care. 

The 2015 Annual Ministers’ Meetings will be held at Fair Haven A. M. Church, Goshen, Indiana, on April 7-9, 2015.

Submitted by Aaron Yoder, Clay Street Church, Bourbon, IN. 

Empty Hands


Donna Lowry, Hutchinson, KS

I was standing there with empty hands
And a heart so tired and worn.
I'd lived a life of self-abuse,
With hatred and with scorn.

And then I heard the Master's voice,
So kind and full of grace,
Telling me he came to earth
To die and take my place.

That's when I lifted empty hands
Toward heaven and the Son,
To show Him I had nothing left
To give for what He'd done.

And then He said, "Don't worry, child,
Just follow Me and come.
Just rest your empty hands in Mine;
The victory has been won."

That's when I knew my life was changed,
And I was born anew.
Because my empty hands now held
The One's the nails went through. 



marriages

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

Albrecht-Byler

Bro. Leslie, son of Lloyd (and the late Irene) and Kathryn Albrecht, Brunner, ON, and Sis. Judith, daughter of Louis and Darlene Byler, Milverton, ON, at Faith Mennonite for Fairhaven A.M. Church on August 30, 2014, by Melvin Roes.

Nisly-Nissley

Bro. Brandon, son of Brian and Doris Nisly, Partridge, KS, and Sis. Holli, daughter of Mark and Rose Nissley, Haven, KS, at Arlington A.M. Church, on Nov. 29, 2014, by David Yoder.

Overholt-Brechbill

Bro. Adam, son of Leon and Ida Overholt, Hiddenite, NC, and Sis. Gwen, daughter of Donald and Mary Ann Brechbill, Chambersburg, PA, at Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church for River Brethren Church, on Sept. 13, 2014, by Donald Brechbill.

Peachy-Warner

Bro. Robert, son of Ray and Annie Peachy, Lewisburg, PA, and Sis. Abby, daughter of Brian and Melissa Warner, Broadtop, PA, on Sept. 9, 2014, at Shady Grove Christian Fellowship, by Perry Troyer.

Wagler-Yoder

Bro. Jeremy, son of Wayne and Diane Wagler, Milverton, ON, and Sis. Evelyn, daughter of Elmer and Pauline Yoder, Paris, TN, at McKenzie Church of Christ for Calvary Christian Fellowship, on Sept. 12, 2014, by Lavern Esh.

Yoder-Otto

Bro. Larry, son of Mervin and Lorene Yoder, Arcola, IL, and Sis. Cynthia, daughter of Mervin and Lou Ida Otto, Plains, MT, at Plains Bible Chapel for Cornerstone Christian Church, on July 18, 2014, by Emanuel Troyer.

Yoder-Smoker

Bro. Luke, son of Nathan J. and Doris Yoder, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Esther, daughter of John F. and Naomi Smoker, Belleville, PA, at Valley View A.M. Church, on Oct. 25, 2014, by Eli B. King, Jr.

Zook-Beiler

Bro. Joel Matthew, son of Chester and Julia Zook, Milroy, PA, and Sis. Wilma Mae, daughter of J. Omar and Naomi Beiler, Sabina, OH, at First Baptist Church of Kettering for Faith and Light Christian Fellowship, on Oct. 11, 2014, by Duane Troyer.

Zook-Otto

Bro. Nelson, of Arthur, IL, son of Abner and Sovilla Mae Zook, Trenton, KY, and Sis. Beth, daughter of Omer and Lorene Otto, Humboldt, IL, at Trinity Christian Fellowship, Arthur, IL, on Sept. 20, 2014, by Wilbur Gingerich.

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

Beiler, Marvin and Lydianne (Stoltzfus), Dundee, NY, second child, first son, Douglas Elliot, Sept. 18, 2014.

Bontrager, Darrel and Karen (Yoder), Abbyville, KS, first child and dau., Kirzah Joelle, Nov. 4, 2014.

Bontrager, Gregory and Patricia (Schlabach), Arlington, KS, fourth son (one son deceased), twins: Bryant Lael and stillborn twin daughter, Aiyana Rose, Sept. 14, 2014.

Coblentz, Mark and Naomi (Miller), Flemingsburg, KY, sixth child, fourth son, Zachary Mark, Oct. 3, 2014.

Jantzi, Derek and Janice (Gerber), Wellesley, ON, fifth child, third dau., Deanna Joy, May 27, 2014.

Jantzi, Ronald and Jennifer (Mullet), Milverton, ON, sixth and seventh children, fourth and fifth sons, Trenton Wayne and Tyrell James, Oct. 31, 2014.

Jara, Joel and Rosetta (Miller), Crossville, TN, first child and dau., Nancy Lanae, Sept. 30, 2014.

Kauffman, Arlyn and Sue (Wagler), Leon, IA, second child and son, born

May 11, 2005, Fentress David. Received for adoption Oct. 20, 2014.

King, Calvin and Lin (Esh), Kinzers, PA, seventh child, fourth son, Malachi Andrew, Nov. 2, 2014.

King, David and Carla (Miller), Lancaster, PA, first child and son, Judson Daniel, Aug. 31, 2014.

King, Paul and Kimberly (Overholt), Homeworth, OH, first child and dau., Jasmine Ruth, Aug. 27, 2014.

Lapp, John and Beth (Lantz), Honey Brook, PA, eighth child, sixth son, Darius John, Nov. 18, 2014.

Lapp, Jonas and Leah (Zook), New Holland, PA, sixth child, second daughter, Abigail Renee, Nov. 22, 2014.

Miller, Earl and Sheri (Kuhns), Arcola, IL, first child and son, Harrison Blake, Nov. 13, 2014.

Otto, Joshua and Regina (Wagler), Crossville, TN, second child and son, Karson Blake, Sept. 20, 2014.

Schmucker, Levi and Angeline (Bontrager), Langdon, KS, fifth child, third son, (one son deceased), George Levi, Nov. 6, 2014.

Weaver, Micah and Rebecca (Yoder), Owenton, KY, fifth child, first son, Brian Lee, Oct. 16, 2014.


Weaver, Rodney and Glenda (King), Denmark, SC, second child and son, Judson Drew, Oct. 31, 2014.

Yoder, Caleb and Sherilyn (Troyer), Haven, KS, first child and son, Theodore Andrew, Nov. 9, 2014.

Yoder, Nicholas and Lynette (Troyer), Leesburg, OH, second child and son, Jaxon Riley, Nov. 20, 2014.


Yoder, Sheldon and Shanna (Byler), Shipshewana, IN, second child and daughter, Sophia Kate, Nov. 11, 2014.

Yoder, Tim and Ruth (Miller), Lewistown, PA, fourth child, second dau., Meredith Delight, June 11, 2014.

Yutzy, Ryan and Heather (Beachy), London, OH, second child and dau., Kierra Jewel, Nov. 14, 2014. 

ordination

May the grace of God be upon our brother as he ministers faithfully. Let us pray for him.

Bro. Glen Chupp, 39, of Eden Valley, MN, was ordained as minister at Believers Fellowship Church, Grove City, MN, on Nov. 16, 2014. Preordination messages were brought by Paul L. Miller of Partridge, KS. The charge was given by Melvin Beiler, assisted by Paul Miller and Delmar Bontrager of Wellman, IA. Prayers of dedication were led by the home ministers. Andrew Chupp, Daniel Chupp, and Jason Yutzy were also in the lot. 

obituaries

Lee, Sovilla S., 73, of Aroda, VA, died August 2, 2014, following a four-and-a-half year battle with cancer. She was born in Dover, DE, June 11, 1941, daughter of Tillie (Yoder) Bontrager and the late Samuel Bontrager. In her childhood, the family moved to Chestertown, MD, where her mother still resides.

Sovilla was a member of Oak Grove Mennonite Church. She was a homemaker and a true friend of all. She and Ernest opened their home to many guests, boarders, and elderly people for

whom they cared.

On June 8, 1963, she was married to Ernest E. Lee, who survives. For most of their married lives they lived in Madison County, VA. They also spent a number of years in Guatemala, serving as houseparents for Mennonite Air Missions.

Surviving are a son, Jonathan (and Anita) Lee, Grottoes, VA; a daughter, Naoma Lee, Aroda, VA; two grandsons; a sister, Anna Bowman, Baltimore, MD; and four brothers: Enos Bontrager,

Fred Bontrager, and Vernon Bontrager, all of Chestertown, MD, and William Bontrager, Dover, DE.

Preceding her in death were two sisters, Cora Bontrager and Edna Beachy.

The funeral was held on August 7, with Lamar Hochstetler, Duane Eby, and Tim Miller serving. Henry Brenneman conducted the committal at the Oak Grove Cemetery.

Schrock, Naomi Joy (Gochnauer), 31, of Bealeton, VA, died peacefully Oct. 23, 2014, after nearly a four-year battle with cancer. She was born April 7, 1983, in Columbus, OH, daughter of James and the late Linda Gochnauer.

She was a faithful member of Faith Christian Fellowship, Catlett, VA. She was blessed with a gift in music which she shared generously with those around her. The songs and music she wrote encouraged many—most recently the 3-Fold Chord Trio. She embraced life with a genuine spirit and held to an unwavering faith and trust in the goodness of God.

On December 10, 2005, she was married to Darrell Schrock. Two daughters survive: Jolynn Marcia and Carina Joy. A stillborn son predeceased her. Also surviving are her father, James, Plain City, OH; brothers: John Gochnauer, Plain City, OH; and Mark (and Rose) Gochnauer, London, OH; and grandmother, Helen Gochnauer, Gorin, MO.

She was preceded in death by a son; her mother, Linda; and grandparents,

Melvin and Mary Yutzy and Norman Gochnauer.

The funeral was held on Oct. 26, with pastors Nathan Beachy, Ivan Schrock and David Nisly serving. Burial was in Faith Christian Fellowship cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Samuel B., 66, of Gordonville, PA, died unexpectedly in his garden July 30, 2014. He had a stroke in November, 2013. Samuel was born Feb. 21, 1948, in Leola, PA, to the late Melvin and Fannie (Beiler) Stoltzfus.

He was a member of Bethel Christian Fellowship, Morgantown, PA, and a deacon for 39 years. He was a welder by trade and owned Ridgeview Bookstore and Fabrics in Gordonville since 1996. His burden for evangelistic ministry showed his concern for the souls of many. He took his family to a local prison for ministry, even after he had lost his eyesight. His last message on July 27 was “Love not the World,” which he gave in his usual frank and earnest way.

On November 18, 1969, he was married to Anna Mae King. She survives. In addition, he is survived by their children: John Lee (Verna) Stoltzfus, New Holland; Linda (Emmanuel) Zook, Narvon; Edward (Mary) Stoltzfus, Narvon; Samuel (Michelle) Narvon; Lydia (Conrad) Beiler, Abbeville, SC; and Naomi (Jada) Stoltzfus, New Holland; and 27 grandchildren. Also surviving are three sisters: Edna Stoltzfus, Kinzers; Fannie (Menno) Stoltzfus, Leola; Caroline (Dan Esh), Flemingsburg, KY; and two brothers: Aaron, Mannheim;

and Isaac (Ada), Mifflinburg.

One grandson preceded him in death. Also preceding him in death were three brothers: Daniel B., Omar, and Melvin and one sister, Katie.

The funeral was held at Weavertown A.M. Church, Bird-in-hand, PA, on August 2, with James Stoltzfus, David Fisher, Jonas King, and John Petersheim serving. Jonas Lapp conducted the burial at the Weavertown Cemetery.


Yoder, Ernest Ray, 52, of Cooks Mills, IL, died after a battle with cancer, Sept. 18, 2014. He was born July 13, 1962, son of Ralph Leroy and Mattie A. (Helmuth) Yoder.

Ernest was a member of Trinity Christian Fellowship, in rural Sullivan. He worked at Riverside Door in Chesterville. He loved to sing. Church and family were very important to him.

On Oct. 28, 1982, he was married to Clara Mae Schrock. She survives. Other survivors include: two sons: Lynn Marcus and wife Gina (Farmwald),

Arthur; David Allen Yoder (Marlene Detweiler, special friend), Humboldt; four daughters, Wilma Fern (husband Verrel Miller), Arthur; Karen Sue (husband Norman Kauffman), Arcola; Carolyn (husband Clint Herschberger), Tuscola; Marnita Kay Yoder, at home; nine grandchildren; his parents, Ralph and Mattie Yoder, Arcola; his in-laws, Reuben and Fern Schrock, Arcola; one sister, Carol Ann (and husband Elva) Schrock, Arcola; six brothers: Paul (and wife Naomi) Yoder, Sullivan; Dennis (and wife Lorene) Yoder, Arcola; Eldon (and wife Dena) Yoder, Arcola; Jerry (and wife Marnita) Yoder, Arthur; Mervin (and wife Lorene) Yoder, Arcola.

He was preceded in death by one daughter, Rosanna Yoder, one brother, Marcus Yoder, and his grandparents.

The funeral was held at Otto Center on Sept. 21, with Ervin Helmuth, NC; Freeman Yoder, Worthington, IN; Rick Wagler, Daviess County, IN; and Wilbur Gingerich, local, serving. Burial was in the church cemetery. 



And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Recently I received a book catalog from Pathway Publishing, Aylmer, Ontario, Canada. In looking through it, I was impressed with the very large number of books that support the basic doctrines of Christian faith and life.

Only a few days later, we received another catalog. This one was from Rod and Staff. It also offered a very impressive selection of sound reading material. Someone has observed that never in history has there been such an abundance of literature helpful to serious Christians. It seems that if the available materials were put to good use in our circles it would assure much needed inter-generational stability. It would be a needed safeguard against unworthy and unsound distractions.

Sometimes I wonder how well we are doing with good reading habits. Electronic media can entertain viewers while being entirely passive. This is different from choosing good reading material and books that have spiritual nutritional value.

I think of several parents who are careful to not allow their children to be exposed to electronic media trivia. At this point it seems that the children are doing well with good

quality reading habits. I would like to think that there are many parents who are careful to provide a home environment that is friendly to the spiritual development of their dear children.

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Recently we had an unexpected visitor named Laban Eichorn from Paraguay. Though Paraguay is far from Partridge, Kansas, he does read *Calvary Messenger*. The pilgrimage of the Paul Eichorn family and others was fraught with major challenges to carve a living out of the untamed jungle. But with hard work and persistence, the fields were eventually cleared for crop production. But unregenerate humans are a different matter. Life-threatening robberies and unreliable law enforcement have been part of their lot in Paraguay.

Bro. Laban's visit was very pleasant and, for my part, could have lasted much longer than it did. He sort of made provision for that by giving me his book, which is a very interesting account that begins before the Paul Eichorn family moved to Paraguay.

This book has 132 pages and 22 fairly short chapters. It is a story about a God-given vision, trying circumstances, (including wicked humans) and a steadfast faith in

meeting life. The book contains a variety of family and other human events and has a number of photos that add interest to the story.

The author has functional mastery of seven different dialects and languages. The book is not a literary masterpiece and has a few misspellings. But these do not diminish the value of the well-told story.

The book may be ordered from Lela Eichorn, 52931 Summit Rd., Leonidas, Michigan 49066. (Phone: 269-496-7430. Price: \$12.00. Postpaid.)

We were sorry to hear that Bro. Laban more recently suffered a stroke while visiting in Holmes County, Ohio. He was promptly treated at a clinic in Cleveland. The family reports that his mobility has not been affected. They are hopeful that his memory and communication skills will continue to move toward total recovery.



My kind friend and brother, Ernest Hochstetler, recently sent me two books he wanted me to read. Both books are available from Christian Aid Ministries. The book, entitled, *The Trailblazer* is written by Rachel Lofgren. It is the life story of Sanford Yoder. It begins in Oklahoma while Sanford was possibly four or five. After nine years of struggle, the colonization effort in Nowata, Oklahoma, was abandoned and the families moved to

different communities. Ben and Mary Yoder initially moved to Garnett, Kansas, until they were financially able to move to Stuarts Draft, Virginia. For some time, Sanford resisted the call of Christ and obedience to his parents. But when he repented there was no question that he had become a changed person. It was such a change that a church leader was concerned that his ideals would not be compatible with the church's expectations.

Sanford was respectful to the church where he wanted to live his Christian life. It was there that he was attracted to a fine Christian sister, Martha Yoder, who eventually would become his exemplary companion and the mother of their ten children.

Sanford and Martha participated in an outreach to Aroda, Virginia, where he was ordained by lot to the ministry. Then their journey took them to a remote area of Virginia where the hill people showed some openness to the Gospel.

The author describes in some detail the acquisition of the property that became Faith Mission Home. The mission board appointed him as their first administrator. His tenure there is a colorful part of this story. He enjoyed the work but felt that it did not allow sufficient time for his family, especially his sons. His vision for mission outreach led them to participate in a move to

Costa Rica. Their experiences in Costa Rica were very eventful. It has geographic, linguistic, social/cultural and spiritual dimensions. The evangelistic challenge was real, involving both the native population and sons in their own family. An earthquake and a volcanic eruption provided unexpected drama.

Much has happened and there have been many changes, but God's faithfulness is unchanged. Others have taken up his vision. They have planted and watered and God has given increase. We have good reason to believe that God will continue to bless the faithfulness of additional laborers in the harvest.

The main character of the book is a model of faithfulness, but the author is very candid about the humanity of Sanford and his family. May their journey of faith continue to encourage many readers.

The other book Bro. Ernest sent is entitled, *Daddy, Are You Sad?* It is the story of Donny and Nicole Good. As a young married couple with an infant son they hoped for a long and happy future together. Then Donny received a shattering health diagnosis and things changed drastically. Only three years into their marriage, lab work indicated that Donny had leukemia, cancer of the white blood cells. The couple were committed Christians but the future looked dark and foreboding. Their journey for the

next five years was a journey of firm faith, in spite of the misery of the ill effects of the illness and the side effects of the treatment. At a certain point, doctors in the United States acknowledged that they had nothing more to offer.

Treatment in Tijuana, Mexico, sometimes brought temporary improvement. Donny's firm faith and joyful witness touched many lives, both fellow patients and medical professionals.

Donny kept a journal which the author found very helpful in writing the book. An important feature of the book is an introduction by Antonio Jimenez, M.D. Aspects of his essay include the following: "The crisis of this disease can rip open a person as nothing else can." He says some patients with their companions face their trials and tribulations with a faith that blesses others. A few such patients have left a profound influence on this doctor. He calls Donny Good a "shining star" among such patients. When Hope 4 Cancer Institute added a wing to their facility that doubles the patient capacity, they called it the Donny B. Good wing in big bold letters.

I believe readers who decide to purchase and read this book will not be disappointed. It is available from Christian Aid Ministries' book division.

—DLM

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Dallas Witmer reports in Christian Light Publication's Oct-Dec, 2014, edition of *Alight* regarding a church plant effort in Colombia, South America. During an investigative trip to Colombia they met people from a group of churches called, "The Church of Christ." These believers stand out because they believe and practice "virtually all of what conservative Mennonites do." Bro. Witmer writes that these churches teach and practice nonconformity to the world and nonresistance, as well as some slight variations of what we recognize as the seven ordinances. In spite of not having had contact with any foreign missions or with Anabaptists, this fellowship of churches has now grown to number more than 1,000 members in 17 churches. The conservative Anabaptists who moved to Colombia to plant churches, are working in areas where the Church of Christ is not active, but they do maintain frequent contact with them.

As I ponder the fascinating story of these churches, I am reminded that relevance and faithfulness should not be pitted against each other. We are rightly concerned when our walk of life, faith, and testimony finds little intersection with the culture and society at large so that it doesn't really touch people. However, a push for relevance in our manner

of life and expression of faith can result in homogenization with our surroundings. In our desire to be relevant, let's not lose sight of the value of being distinctive. Salt is distinctive because it is different. Light is noticeable because of the darkness. Our goal should not be to blend in with our surroundings, but to identify with Christ. It is that identity that provides us with something to call the lost and seeking world unto. A holistic understanding of our identity with Christ takes 2 Corinthians 5:17 seriously, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Those "all things" include our manner of thinking, our appetites, our priorities, our behavior, and even our appearance.

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In 2012, Jason Brown was a well-paid professional football player with the St. Louis Rams of the NFL. He told his agent that he felt the Lord was calling him to be a farmer. Knowing that Jason still had high earning potential as a football player, he agent told him he was making the biggest mistake of his life. Jason replied, "No, I am not."

Brown had never farmed a day in his life, but he set out to learn. He purchased a 1,000-acre farm in North Carolina, where he lives with his wife and four young children. He

founded a ministry called Wisdom for Life, and named the farm, First Fruits Farm. They spent last year trying to get the farm back in shape. This year they had some encouraging harvests. Volunteers gathered and harvested about 170,000 pounds of cucumbers on 50 acres and 100,000 pounds of sweet potatoes from five acres. They are donating all these crops to food pantries and related ministries. After having earned millions of dollars, Brown says he has never felt so successful in his life. “When I think about a life of greatness, I think of a life of service,”

he commented recently. He hosted a fishing derby on his farm for youth this year and wishes to continue to expand his outreach efforts.

One paragraph on the mission statement says, “We always attempt to share the Gospel by sharing our hearts first. This is done through meeting the immediate needs of the community and having genuine fellowship with believers and non-believers. By sharing the same love that Jesus Christ has displayed to us all, we hope to win over lost souls for the glory of God’s Kingdom.”

—RJM 

A Precious Gift

Velma Schnupp, Lebanon, PA

While God is the designer of the gift of self-esteem, parents have a crucial role in its development. An adequate self-esteem is a precious gift that you, the parent, can develop in your child. In most cases, it is not something that just happens, but it requires deliberate time and purposeful effort to give your child a healthy self-esteem. Romans 12:3 says, “**For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think**

soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

It is important to have a balance of not thinking too highly (pride) or too lowly (rejection) of oneself. It is the foundation upon which a person builds to wholeheartedly devote himself to living a useful and productive life. It enables the mind to think clearly so that he can be at his best. It helps him to concentrate to reach definite goals and it motivates him to a complete commitment to the task at hand.

An inadequate self-concept is a handicap. It provides no cohesion for the various forces of the mind to bring wholeness and it causes a person to try to measure up in some way in order to feel accepted by his peers.

In His sovereignty, God knows when each of us was conceived, and from His viewpoint, no one is a mistake. A baby can sense love just as he can sense rejection. The tone can be set from the very beginning. There is great potential for each new baby.

What do you do if you feel you have made mistakes along the way and have failed your children? The anxiety we sometimes feel over our children can be calmed when we realize that God is there by our side. He invites us to come and confess our inadequacies to Him, and to ask our child for forgiveness, where we have failed him. Regardless of our circumstances, or the age of the child, God will guide us as we seek to raise our children in the Light of the Truth. When a child sees a parent

with a humble heart seeking God, it will inspire and teach him to see the importance of putting God first.

We should practice getting on our child's level, which may mean getting down on the floor and pushing cars and trucks with him, taking bike rides, or having breakfast together in the coffee shop. We should ask God to help us deal with our children in love like God deals with us. We should take time to listen to him, even if it is toddler's talk, a detailed description of his day at school, or a journal of his day's events. We may be surprised at what our child has to say to us.

No matter how troubled your child may be at times, there is hope. Ask the Lord to help you discover how you can encourage and strengthen your child's self-image, not that he should be proud and arrogant, but rather that he should be his best in his service to the Lord.

[Adapted from The Mid-Atlantic Informer, August, 2014. Used by permission.]



The tragedy of our day is not unanswered prayer but unoffered prayer.

Another Gospel

J. Mark Horst, Breezewood, PA

Today I'm sharing with you two tendencies of many pastors/teachers today. These tendencies deviate from Christ-centered preaching and are often accentuated by a lack of clear, faithful, biblical exposition.

Moralism: This trend began in the rise of Protestant Liberalism near the beginning of the 20th century. Dr. Albert Mohler, former president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, defines moralism as, "the belief that the Gospel can be reduced to improvements in behavior."

Many of us raised in Christian homes were unwittingly inculcated with this idea. Our parents were concerned about our behavior and we quickly learned what brought approval or disapproval. But as Dr. Mohler so succinctly notes, "...our communities are filled with people who have been 'raised right' but are headed for hell."

As pastor/teachers we need to be especially aware of this tendency. Our fundamental task is not to change or improve the behavior of the listeners. Instead, it is our responsibility to preach the redemptive work of Christ and the adequacy of His sacrifice for our sin. T. David Gordon writes,

"Fill the sails of your hearers' souls with the wind of confidence in the Redeemer, and they will trust Him as their Sanctifier, and long to see His fruit in their lives." I say, "Amen!"

How To: This tendency is similar to moralism but focuses more on the method of changing behavior. It suggests that a sinner can change his behavior simply by applying the proper technique. While many would deny it, this tendency assumes the inherent goodness of humanity and ignores the reality of original sin. This kind of teaching is foundational in the "emergent church" movement.

Many pulpits today are filled with self-help monologues rather than biblical preaching/teaching. They offer a 12-step plan that leads to a better life, rather than personal transformation by adoption in God's family. We must heed Paul's warning to not "[desert] Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed." (Galatians 1:6,8).

(From Heralds of Hope, *Hope Horizons* newsletter, Oct/Nov, 2014. Used by permission.)



To Be Like Jesus


Alaina Lee, Mooringsport, LA

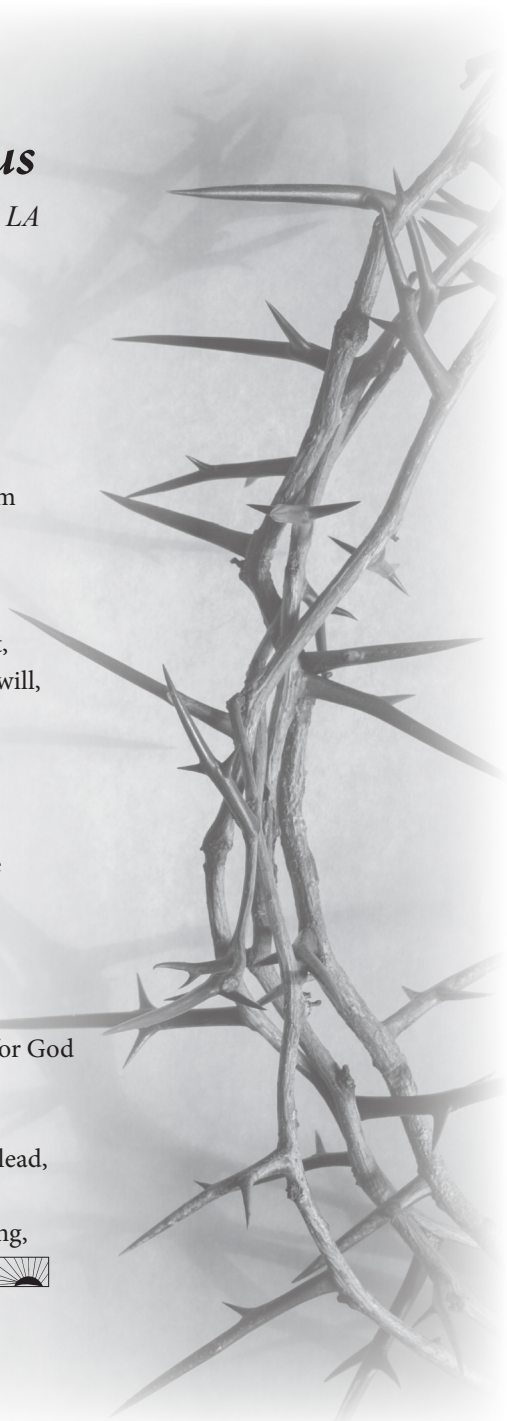
Oh, that I might glorify
The Lord with what I say.
That what I do will honor Him
And praise Him every day.

Oh, to be more like my Lord,
To be pure in mind and heart,
To humbly do His sovereign will,
And from it ne'er depart.

Oh, to have a fire for God
And only for Him live.
To put my trust in Him alone
My all to Him I give.

Oh, to have more of a heart
For the lost souls of men.
To help them see their need for God
And cleansing from their sin.

O, Savior, hear my prayer, I plead,
And use me in a way,
That honors only You, my King,
And lifts You up each day. 



What is Truth?

Part I

Lucy Schrock, Isabella Bank, Belize

Miss Isabelle Lanza (really Mrs.) was the faithful companion for many years of the late Brother Maurice Lanza. Maurice and Isabelle became members of the Mennonite church at Isabella Bank in the early years of the AMA mission in that quiet village. She is 89 years of age and blind, but remains strong in the Lord and has a radiant testimony for Jesus whom she loves dearly. -FS

And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; and I will lead them in paths that they have not known... These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them” (Isaiah 42:16).

Do you like stories? I do. Let’s run down to Miss Isabelle Lanza (“Granny Chab”) and ask her to tell us one. She can tell good stories. Maybe she will tell us about how she and her school mates hid fruit under their hats when they went to school or how she was an orphan and worked like a slave for a Syrian family.

“Afternoon Gran. We cum fi wa story.” (sic) We sit on a bench

while she starts thinking. “Did I tell you about the lady whose eyelids drooped? Well, back when I was a little girl living in Cayo there were only two kinds of churches. They were Anglican and Catholic churches. From when I was small, we always attended the Catholic Church. We never had Bibles—only the priest had one. But as far back as I can remember, my patron saint was Jesus. Then one year a Nazarene Church was established. The preacher used to preach real loud on the street corners, but our teachers told us if we ever went to listen to him, he would lash us! I never was allowed to go, but we heard that they talked about receiving the Lord and being

born again. We were taught about God all our lives, but this teaching was different. One lady that I knew well was born again. Then she left the Catholics and joined the Nazarene church.

“This woman had been the leader of the ladies’ group in the Catholic Church. One day she announced, ‘I used to think I knew the truth, but now my eyes are open.’ Just soon after that her eyelids began to droop. She wasn’t blind, but she couldn’t open her eyes to see. Only if she used her fingers could she lift up her eyelids. Her husband took her to the eye doctor, and he sent her to the eye specialist who still didn’t know what was wrong. They went to Merida, Mexico, but there seemed to no reason for this strange happening. Finally, they sold their property and moved back to Guatemala where they came from.

“About this time, we heard that strange things were happening to another lady who had left the Catholic Church. She was the mother of one of my former classmates. They lived in Maca Bank, upriver where my pa lived, so I didn’t see them often. But we heard rumors that she was born again and had joined the Nazarene Church. Her house was where they usually held mass in that village. But one day when she saw the

priests coming, she threw the idols out and told them not to come again. Soon after that we heard she was sick. Then one day I paddled dory for an hour to look for my pa and I met my good friend, Elda. She invited us to stay and visit.

“When I got there, Elda was in the kitchen behind the house. I started to walk through the house to go back to the kitchen when I saw something in the corner of the house. There in the hammock lay the girl’s mother. She used to be a fat lady, but now she was only a skeleton. Oh no, how could she have changed so much? Quickly I went back out and walked around the house. Elda told me how she became sick right after she left the Catholics. She said how they took her to many doctors. They even visited doctors in several cities in Mexico. But they all said there was nothing wrong with her and that there was no reason for her to be sick. But Elda told them, ‘She is sick. She is only skin and bones. I have to carry her to move around.’ The neighbors all told her she needs to confess to the priest but she just tells them she doesn’t have anything to confess to them. The brothers and sisters in the Nazarene Church sing and pray for her but she never gets well.

“Later I heard that the mother of Elda died rather than going back to

the Catholic Church. Seeing what happened to those two ladies when they left the Catholic Church settled it for me. I decided I was never going to leave.”

“Thank you fi tell we about this, Granny Chab. Da time fi we go, but we cum back sohntime and hear di res bout how you di change yu mind.” (sic)

[To be continued.]



helpers at home

Loneliness

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Loneliness is not something I like to think about at the beginning of a new year. I would rather think about a year filled with health and happiness. However, I believe if we are totally realistic, each of us will experience some form of loneliness in the year ahead.

Loneliness comes in different ways. Being alone or away from others is one form of loneliness. This may be especially true for widows or single ladies. There are times when we feel lonely in the midst of a group of people with whom we are not well acquainted. Perhaps we feel misunderstood or because we have different values, we feel alone.

Sickness, death, or suffering of any form can cause us to feel a sense of

aloneness deep within. Loneliness is not all bad. God created Adam and Eve as social beings. He desired fellowship with them. He also made them to enjoy fellowship with each other. This fellowship with God was broken when sin came into the world. Only then did they experience loneliness.

God has placed in the innermost center of each human heart a longing, a deep desire for fellowship. As Christians, we can know the joy of relationship with God. Only in eternity will we experience total fellowship and completeness. There will be no loneliness in heaven.

There is a difference between loneliness and solitude. *Loneliness* finds pain in being alone. *Solitude*

experiences joy in being alone.

There are times when we long for solitude, for the privilege of being removed from our busy schedule, and even from our families or other people. We desire to spend time alone, time to be renewed and refreshed. We plan for solitude—a walk in the woods, or on the beach—or we may settle for a closed door in our own house, shut away from the pressures of life. This brings joy, but loneliness brings pain.

Let us look at a few causes of loneliness:

Rejection and Misunderstanding

No one wants to be rejected. Rejection comes in different ways. It may come from friends or family. You may feel excluded from social activities. Perhaps you were not chosen for a position or promotion. You may have been misunderstood by someone dear to you. You feel alone. You are lonely. You can respond by building a wall around yourself or becoming critical and withdrawn. Or you can choose God's way of surrender. At the Cross, you will find forgiveness as you choose to forgive those who have hurt you. Choose to use your loneliness in this experience as an opportunity to reach out to others.

Death and Separation

Widowhood is caused by death.

I cannot fathom the loneliness that comes to a woman who has lost her companion of many years. She will feel lonely in many different situations, but especially in a setting dominated by couples. Special days bring loneliness as she recalls those special times with her husband. Perhaps even worse than death is rejection from the one she loved and had promised faithfulness until death. Remember in either situation, God will be your husband and Father, as you place your trust and confidence in Him.


Death brings loneliness in the loss of a child. A mother will feel that no one else can understand her grief and the feeling of separation from a child whom she loved and cared for all his life. Even miscarriage can cause a similar loneliness and loss. We have all experienced the loss of someone we loved and cared for, either family or friend. But sorrow can turn our thoughts to heaven and lead us to a closer walk and dependence on our Heavenly Father.

Sickness

Sickness is a wilderness experience. It is a road we travel alone. We may feel frightened and afraid, not understanding what is happening to our bodies. We may think that no one else actually understands or feels our pain. It can feel like a lonely

journey. However, we are not alone. God knows and He cares. God uses suffering and pain to purify our lives. These teach us to rest in His loving arms.

There are many forms of loneliness. Even young mothers may feel lonely as they care for small children in the home. New brides may feel lonely, removed from the familiarity of their

extended families, especially if they have moved with their husbands to a new place. Elderly people may become lonely as their bodies slow down and they find themselves facing the unknown. God knows the loneliness in your heart and He cares about your situation. It is often in our loneliest hour that God's voice can most clearly be heard. 

junior messages

Kindness in the New Year

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

What are your goals for the new year? Why not make a goal of being kind to someone every day?

This week I read such a wonderful story about kindness in the Word of God. I also saw good examples of kindness around me. Let me tell you about it.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah the prophet was a man sold out to obey and follow God. He did not have an easy life. But still, he was determined and diligent to do and say what God told him to. He obeyed God, but his message made the Lord's enemies mad and upset. They did not like Jeremiah or his

message, so they threw him into an empty cistern that had a thick layer of mud in the bottom. Jeremiah sank down into the awful, gooey mud.

Ebedmelech was an important Ethiopian court official of King Zedekiah. He was a man who feared the Lord. He heard what had happened to Jeremiah. Ebedmelech rushed to the king and said, "My Lord, the King, that is a very evil thing that Jeremiah the prophet was put into the cistern."

Then the king gave permission to get the good prophet out of the mud. They sent some old rags and handed a rope down into the cistern. Jeremiah

put the rags and then the ropes under his armpits and so he was pulled up. What a muddy sight he was!

Kindness Rewarded

When the Babylonian army conquered the city of Jerusalem, Ebedmelech was not destroyed or taken captive. This is the message God gave to Jeremiah for him. “You will see the destruction of this city, but I will rescue you from those you fear so much. You trusted me. I will give you your life as a reward. I will rescue you and keep you safe”

At a Bible study in Africa’s interior, I saw a sweet example of kindness. There was an old man sitting in the shade near his hut. Nyoyo, a corn and bean mixture, casava, and chai, were served to the people who attended the Bible study.

My friend, Mary, took a plate of corn and beans, casava, and chai over for the old man to enjoy.

A thin puppy was also wandering around there. It was a strange looking mutt with large ears. Mary threw some casava to the hungry pup.

Sharing is kindness

I thanked our hostess for the food and told her I liked the casava. She went out to her shamba (garden) and dug fresh casava for me to take home.

We were having a school picnic on the compound. A little lad was sobbing because his brother pushed him away and said he could not play the next game. My 14-year-old son went over to the crying boy, picked him up and comforted him. It made my heart happy to see that act of kindness.

Last, but not least, I accidentally deleted one of my stories. My son spent quite a bit of time figuring out how to retrieve the story that had disappeared. He got it back and I was quite pleased!

Kindness should be applauded. Give others kind, encouraging words today.

Pray that God would help you to be kind. Look for ways to show kindness.

Be a person who is kind, and remember, kindness does come back.



***Satan hinders prayer, but prayer
also hinders Satan.***

Thanksgiving Musings

Eldon Hooley, Grandview, TX

I find myself in thought today, thanksgiving contemplation,
My mind is turned to God in prayer and reverent inspiration.
This is a fact that I proclaim: We have a God who cares,
And does in all provide and prove that He our way prepares.

This is the day so many find a way to have vacation,
A turkey slain, prepared and stuffed with dressings to stagnation.
Is this the test of all that God has done for you and me?
Or can we find a way to praise and serve Him, is my plea!

Oh, child of God! Are you in awe and holy adoration
Of Jesus Christ you aim to serve and live in His salvation?
And do you find His strength and might alone in His abode,
Enough for you to dwell in peace and safety He's bestowed?

My life, and all of mine is His, true child of His possession,
Oh, may each day my best be served; I stay in His profession.
In thankfulness for everything I praise my God so good,
I find new joys and pleasures doing what He says I should.

So let us all the Christ adore, the Rock is our Foundation,
Our great and mighty Lord and God, we praise in acclamation!
Ah! Savior slain, we humbly bow before You now as King,
You washed and purchased us; our lives to you we bring.

You promised us, if we in trust, will bring You our petition,
To do for us, supply our needs, this daily consolation.
Sweet rest we find, if we will trust this God Almighty, Great,
And when we find the way is hard, we in His will can wait.

Oh, God, to You, my Savior King, I make this proclamation,
You are my God! In You I dwell in peaceful habitation.
Thank You, God, for bringing peace that passes understanding,
I give my life for service true, to heavenly treasures clinging.

And then, while in this life, the fruit we yield is affirmation.
We walk with Christ, our Holy King of worthy admiration.
It is the proof of all that's good, and written in His Sword,
This Jesus Christ, the Living Bread, we choose to be our Lord!



Loving God in a Master-Slave Relationship

Ernest Eby, State College, PA

The scriptures use four different human relationships as metaphors to describe our relationship with God. In this issue we will look at what it means to be in a master-slave relationship with the God of heaven.

“But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life” (Romans 6:22 KJV).

The word *servant* in the KJV is translated *slave* in many translations. The word *slave* communicates the meaning more fully since servants in the Bible were owned by their masters. It is estimated that one out of five people were slaves in the Mediterranean world when it was under the control of the Roman Empire.

So how does it feel to be in a master-slave relationship with God?

It's hard for us in the free world to conceptualize a positive form of slavery. Many of us have read stories of slaves that lived on southern

plantations where their treatment was sometimes worse than that of horses belonging to someone in the North. This has conditioned us to think that being owned by someone else could not possibly result in something good. We would rather think of being God's *child* or God's *bride*.

The disadvantage of being owned by someone is that we are not free to come and go as we please. Many of us like to make our own decisions and would find it very difficult to be owned by someone else.

However, if we were unable to provide food, clothing, and shelter for ourselves and could fare much better if we were purchased by a loving master, many of us would likely jump for the opportunity to become a slave. Or consider how many pets, that are owned by a loving master or mistress, fare much better than do many people in the world who are not owned by a loving master. These illustrations do not justify human slavery, of course, but

they do show us that being owned by a master is not only a negative situation.

Whether or not slavery is a negative word depends mostly on what the master is like.

To help us realize how foreign this concept of slavery is to us, let's use our imagination. Imagine that a young lady from a west African country (where slavery is still practiced) would come to live with your family as a refugee. After living with you for some months, this young lady would tell your parents that she has something important she wants to talk with them about later in the evening. Your parents sense that this is an important matter so they readily agree.

When they meet in the living room, the young lady opens the conversation by telling your parents that she has been thinking about something for a number of weeks and has decided the time has come to make a request that may have life-changing effects for both her and your family.

Your parents' interest is aroused. They shift slightly in their seats and ask her what's on her mind. She says, "I've really enjoyed living in your home these last three months. I think the world of you and your family. I'm wondering if I could become your household slave."

Do you think your parents would

say, "Sure! That's a splendid idea!" Probably not. They might say something like, "I see, well...we don't practice slavery here in this country. But we are very glad to have you live with us and we'd be glad to pay you for your work."

This young lady is not about to be put off by their reluctance, so she tries again, "I don't want to be your employee. I don't want to be a hired servant. I'm not looking for wages; I just love all of you so much that I think it would be a great privilege to work for your family for the rest of my life!"

What would your parents say next? Perhaps they would answer with, "Let's continue the relationship the way it is right now and see how this goes."

The young lady at this point is beginning to feel a lump in her throat and the tears want to come gushing out, and she wants to come and hug your parents. But she knows that this is not the right thing to do at the moment, so she calms herself and tries once more: "Do you not understand? We don't need to try this to see if we like it. I'm sure I won't cause you a bit of trouble. I'll work from sunup to sundown without complaint, if you will just let me serve your family as a slave!"

It is quite unlikely that anything of this nature will ever happen, but if making her a slave were an option,

how in the world would you go about making her your slave?

The Scriptures tell us of at least three ways people become slaves for life. Firstly, a slave became a slave if he was born into a household of his/her master. Secondly, a slave could become a slave if he was bought by a master. Thirdly, a person could choose to be a slave for life by having his master make a hole in his ear lobe. Once this was done, a slave was indebted to his master for life. In Old Testament times, the latter option was the procedure that applied to the lady who wants to become a slave of your parents.

There are interesting spiritual parallels to each of these. Firstly, we became slaves of God when we were born of the Spirit. Secondly, we became slaves when we were bought by the blood of Jesus. Thirdly, we were made a slave for life when we promised at baptism to serve the Lord faithfully for the rest of our lives.

So let's go back to our imaginary story and put a different twist on the events. Let's suppose that following this young lady's request to be a slave to your family for the rest of her life, that your dad would say, "I have good news for you! I bought you years ago. Remember ten years ago when your former master was thrashing you and kicking you in the rice field, that a stranger walked by and saw what

was happening and came up to your master and asked if he could buy you? That stranger was me! We then set you free, but we've been praying ever since that God would bring you to us."

The girl would then fall at your parents' feet and begin sobbing and through her sobs, she would thank your parents over and over for buying her away from that terrible master, setting her free, and giving her the chance to live where she was cherished.

Your parents would assure her that she could live at your place for the rest of her life, and that you as a family would take good care of her. You would adopt her into the family and this young lady would then become the most faithful, dependable, and cheerful worker that ever graced your home. She would not be the kind who watched the clock to see when her shift was over. She would work from sunup to sundown and not think twice about it. After coming in from a strenuous day of work, she would go straight to the kitchen and begin making supper. When supper was over, she would start doing laundry for the day. By 10 o'clock, she would climb exhausted into bed, thinking of herself as an unprofitable servant who had had the good fortune of being bought by a kind master and adopted into his family. In her mind, your parents had done so much for

her that this was the only reasonable and sensible way of expressing her gratitude.


Can you see how hard it is for us to read the Scriptures and consider pursuing and loving God in a master-slave relationship? We have very little perspective when we read Bible verses about being servants or slaves of God. About the closest analogy we are familiar with is that of serving our families day in and day out without keeping track of how much we are giving and how much these sacrifices cost us.

Because we've grown up in a culture that does not have master-servant relationships, many of us who believed on Jesus in our youth never really gave much thought to being a slave to Jesus for the rest of our life. Many of us thought of Jesus as a kind grandpa who could rescue us from a burning fire. Some of us perhaps thought that when Christ set us free from being a slave to Satan, that we were free to go fishing at the lake—not free to be a slave of Jesus Christ. Some of us perhaps thought that when Christ freed us from Satan, there would be no more whippings. Perhaps we thought that chastening is only for those who are serving Satan,

and so we became disillusioned when we realized that chastening from God is a mark of sonship.

If we came to God with any of these perspectives and have not since grasped the reality of what God has done for us, then we probably have not given much thought to what an appropriate response of gratitude would be.

There are many things we could point out about our Master. Here are a few of them: We don't have a Master who is concerned only about the work we can get done for him. Our Master wants to talk with us throughout the day. We have a Master who was willing to come to earth and live like we do, and suffer for us. Our Master understands what we are going through. We have a Master who went to great lengths to buy us back after we had turned away from Him. Many masters would have punished us for running away.

The fact is that being a servant of the God of heaven is not something to be despised. It is a very high honor. To be God's slave is a wonderful privilege. Nobody in the world has the opportunity to a **more rewarding and fulfilling life than we do as "slaves of God."** 

***Egotism is the world's most
poorly-kept secret.***

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

The problem with being an atheist is that you have no one to talk to when you're alone.

• • • • •

Sometimes swallowing pride almost chokes us.

• • • • •

Answers seem easy to come by for other people's problems.

• • • • •

Hard work may be but an accumulation of things we ought to have done last week.

• • • • •

Don't drive as if you owned the road; drive as if you owned the car.

• • • • •

Library books on how to get rich fast and easy should be listed under "Fiction."

• • • • •

How do rumors without a leg to stand on get around so fast?

• • • • •

What foolishness it is to think that what I do is nobody's business but mine.

• • • • •

Most of us know *how* to say nothing, but it is harder to know *when*.