



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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2015

Meditation
God on the Mountain, God on the Hill.....1

Editorial
Offering Sympathy.....2

Anabaptist Identity Conference Announcement.....3

The Bottom Line
Paul’s Last Will and Testament.....4

It Happened 59 Years Ago.....9

The Red Sea Place in Your Life.....10

Myths About the VS Unit.....11

A Tribute to Mervin Lantz (1961-2014).....12

Marriages.....14

Cradle Roll.....14

Ordinations.....16

Obituaries.....16

Observations.....19

Ministers’ Meeting Messages - 2014
Balancing Evangelism and Preservation.....22

Mission Awareness
What is Truth? Part Two.....28

Helpers at Home
The Beauty of a Disciplined Woman.....30

Junior Messages
A Cat, or an Angel?.....32

Youth Messages
Loving God in a Parent/Child Relationship — Part One..... 34

Thought Gems..... back cover

God on the Mountain, God on the Hill

Craig Eicher, Butler, IN


The God of the Mountain descended in thunder and flame,
On the Mountain of Sinai, Feared was His name.
If a man or beast touched the mountain, they its life were to take,
Said Moses, the Brave Heart, “I exceedingly quake.”

The people entreated the trumpet voice speak no more!
They hadn’t seen Jehovah God so near or real before.
In the tempest and blackness, fear slaved to His will,
But their hearts were unchanged, so God came down to the hill!

The Hill, where a poor man died falsely, all his friends ran to hide,
Savagely rejected and beaten—then crucified!
No angel brought justice, the heavens were still,
While blasphemies rained down for this God on the hill!

Oh, how great the rejection, how cruel the cross,
How immense the injustice, how huge Heaven’s loss.
The gross public shame and the blood-splattered gore,
Man had never seen Jehovah so humiliated—or so loving—before!

Justice but one cry away, but that command never came,
Avenging angels awaited restlessly, but God’s mercy held sway.
The world’s first Servant Leader was faithful; “It is finished” was His cry,
The God on the Mountain taught survival—the One on the Hill, how to die!

The God of Sinai and Golgotha are the same,
Christ Jesus was present at Mt. Sinai’s dreadful flames.
But the sin stain ran so deep, fear just didn’t fit the bill,
Victory came not from the Mountain; it came from the Hill! 

Offering Sympathy

Who can describe our feelings of helplessness when someone dies? When there has been a long life and much suffering and yet we have no doubt as to the new birth and the new life in the person departed, we can rejoice with them. But relating to those left behind is not like that. Also when death takes a person early in life, through tragedy or sickness, it is harder to accept and the wish to say something helpful is increased. Because we'd like to *do* something helpful, we try to *say* something helpful. Sometimes we succeed, but at other times less said or even silence would be better than what comes forth. Those in grief may offer things of greater insight than those wanting to bring comfort.

When I met Nephew Chester Mast on December 6, 2014, I wanted to sympathize. Chester's wife of 27 years, 51-year-old Karen (Troyer), mother of six, had died two days before after a four-year battle with cancer that defied all their efforts and the efforts of doctors trying every treatment they thought might be effective. When I came to Chester, I

said: "I wish I could do something for you that would help you."

Chester said, "You are. You are here." Then he continued, "Even when I wanted so much to help Karen, as we and the doctors were fighting a losing battle and when Karen was suffering so, it seemed that I could do nothing more than to be there with her and for her."

Did I feel understood? Yes. Did I still wish that I could do something more? Yes! But Chester's comments summed things up so realistically that I was blessed. His assurance that I was doing what I could brought me comfort, but remember, I was wanting to *comfort him*.

Reinhold Niebuhr is credited with coining the well-worn, yet appropriate prayer: "O God, give us the *serenity* to accept what cannot be changed; *courage* to change what should be changed; and *wisdom* to distinguish one from the other."

Receiving Lines

Have you ever been in a receiving line at visitation for those in bereavement when the line moved very slowly? Have you ever wondered when folks take lots of time to visit,

whether there might be something better than prolonged conversation to encourage the bereaved? Have you ever thought that sometime later a longer conversation might be more appropriate? I have.

Perhaps you would like to tell me that I should learn how to better sympathize. That may be true but please allow me to further pursue this question: **“How can we effectively sympathize?”**

Here are several things we might do that I think might help:

- Possibly make a brief, positive reference to a memory of the departed.

- Offer a comment of support and encouragement, such as “God bless you,” or “I shall pray for you.”

- Give little or no advice on how to cope with their sorrow.

- Converse longer only if the bereaved wants to talk. Don’t prolong conversation, unless they do.

- If you offer to help, offer something specific, such as running an errand or making a phone call, rather than saying, “If I can do something for you, please let me know.”

These thoughts are certainly not exhaustive, but I hope they are helpful. I think this might even speed up a long receiving line. If a long line of people waiting to express sympathy could get their turn sooner and with less hassle, would that not be better for us all?

I welcome your thoughts.

Whatever we do, let us live by Paul’s injunction, **“Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep”** (Romans 12:15).

—PLM 

Anabaptist Identity Conference Announcement

To be held in Nappanee, Indiana, March 12, 13, and 14, 2015.

(Thursday evening, and Friday and Saturday all day) At the Ramer Building.

(Please notice the change in location—There will be no meeting in Florida this year.)

Speakers include: Chester Weaver, David Bercot, Dean Taylor, Ernest Strubhar, John D. Martin and others.

Sponsored by Nathan and Matthias Overholt with Christian Hymnary Publishers, P.O. Box 7159, Sarasota, Florida 34278

Telephone: 941-373-9351 or 941-954-2399

E-mail: hsofgrace6550@yahoo.com



Paul's Last Will and Testament

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

In Paul's last letter written from a prison in Rome, we have a verbal picture of his last days. He saw his life as full of privileges, but it was certainly not rich and pampered. Saul of Tarsus was well known to people in the Jewish religion. He was a scholastic marvel, a "three-stage rocket going into the religious stratosphere."

Stage One: He was born in a notable city. He says he was born in Tarsus, a distinguished and significant city in Cilicia (Acts 21:39 AMP).

Stage two: He was the son of a Pharisee, in the tribal lineage of Benjamin. He studied at the feet of the renowned Gamaliel.

Stage three: He was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Philippians 3:5). He acknowledges that he "Outstripped many of the men...in my advancement in study and observance of the laws of Judaism, so extremely enthusiastic and zealous was I for the traditions of my ancestors" (Gal. 1:14 Amp.).

He was privileged with brains honed to excellence. He was privileged with religious fervor that put him in the academic limelight.

He was privileged with an insatiable zeal for the advancement of Judaism. About the time his rocket was poised for its zenith, rising to new heights, the arc of blaze he was making imploded into blackness and fell like a burned out spaceship. It was like a sudden death enveloped in darkness. Paul says of himself being "as one prematurely and dead born, no better than an unperfected fetus among living men (1 Cor. 15:8 AMP). He was struck with blindness on his way to Damascus.

So much for the past life of Saul of Tarsus! Paul's name change and life change was so total. Thank God for the Apostle Paul, the evangelist, missionary, church planter, and teacher. Now he sits in prison, elbows on his knees, chin in his cupped hand. It is all but over; this is the end. "The Roman soldiers will come for me and that will be that!" He could close his eyes and thank God for the past privileges of seeing souls saved and churches established after Jesus saved him. What all God did through him is more than he can remember all at once. He imagines he hears

footsteps of the executioner, but instead it is his meager rations at the close of another day.

He takes up pen and papyrus, or pen and parchment and writes. He has been so busy, folks, that he almost forgot to make out his will. He leaves his two lovely white horses to his favorite nephew. Another nephew is lucky enough to be given his imported Phoenician chariot. The investment he had at the Jerusalem Savings and Loan Company is to be divided to his sisters. The Christian businessman who gave Paul more support than anyone else is designated to receive the outstanding tent-making business which had expanded to five countries. The doctor who treated Paul numerous times without charge is named to receive royalties coming from the writings copyrighted in Paul's name.

The last paragraph is what I might have done, but not Paul, this great soldier of Christ. He does take pen and paper in hand and write. No dark dungeon can extinguish the light of the Gospel. Paul proceeds to write to the churches he started, and leave with them the great legacy of God's will for them and "all the churches of all the saints" for all time. He passes on, not a monetary inheritance, but a priceless heritage of faith founded on the resurrected Christ.

Tapping into that heritage links us to the unsearchable riches of Christ.

It is the secured position for us as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. It is duly authorized, sealed, and authenticated by the Holy Spirit. God is our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren. Paul doesn't have it to give, but to assure us of our being chosen in Christ, according to "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18). Paul enjoins us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved as an entry in his last will and testament.

We believe 2 Timothy is the Apostle Paul's last letter. The peaks of his prison letters are Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. But in this letter to Timothy he really touches our hearts. The fourth chapter is not meant for speed reading. Slow down and read it, considering that here we have Paul, the aged, slowly writing from the depths of his own soul, words that pertain to his physical condition. It is a rare peek into the window of this prisoner's soul who existed in a far away dungeon where few, if any, windows let in light.

In chapter 4, verse 6, he says, "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand." "Offered" and "departure" are words of martyrdom. Paul was always in a state of readiness. He was "ready to preach the gospel" in Rome (Romans 1:15). He wrote, "I am ready not to be bound

only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:13).

Earlier, while in prison, he had written, “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness...Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death” (Philippians 1:20).

As we continue in this final chapter, 2 Timothy 4:8, he says, “henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness...” The crown! The reward! Some well-meaning Christians have said even if there were no rewards in heaven, they would still serve Christ just as sincerely. Paul never said that. He exhilarates in joy for the reward and the crown. The thought provides an endurance factor. For Paul in prison, for the missionary in the field, for the sufferer of terminal illness, for the Mom seemingly locked in the meals-cleaning-washing-errands cycle, for the undesirable dependency of old age, faithfulness to the end has an unequalled reward!

In verse 10, he notes, “For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world...” Paul also did not have a 100% rate of retaining all his converts and companions. We deeply regret the loss of salvation for a son or daughter or a relative or a church member who turns away from the saving Gospel to a love for

the present world. The loss is always incalculable—life, heaven, and reward traded for death, judgment and hell.

Verse 11: “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee...” The biblical principle of multiple witnesses spills over to multiple fellowship. Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20). Paul felt that. He needed companionship, even as we do, as a representation of Christ. Loneliness is no small trial.

Verse 13: “The cloak that I left at Troas...bring with thee.” Paul desired another layer of fabric. The Roman prison had no central heat. Being alone and shivering is very tiresome. Then he adds, “bring the books, but *especially* the parchments.” Something to read! Likely he had read these previously. Books and magazines are wonderful companions. Reading feeds the mind, while writing expresses the mind. Both should be done as long as we are able, right up to the glorious end!

The parchments may have been Old Testament Scriptures which he had studied and painstakingly memorized in his training to become a Pharisee. Oh, just to read all that once more! You see, memorization never takes the place of actual reading. Paul knew Greek philosophy, literature, and their poets

and could quote them. But when it came to end of life reading, nothing could replace the “word for word” reading of the Scriptures. The word “especially” stands out.

Verses 14 and 15: “Alexander, the coppersmith, did me much evil...for he hath greatly withstood our words.” Satan always has people who can speak great swelling words of vanity, of slander, of lies, to wreck the verbal edifice of truth erected by those who bear the true Gospel. Then, even as now, but we can be assured that God always has the last word.

Verse 16: “At my first answer (hearing) no man stood with me.” Alone in a Roman court! I just read *Street Spectators*, a book about five Mennonite men who labored to get into the Supreme Court hearing in the Hobby Lobby-Conestoga Wood case. Any court is an awesome place, but the Supreme Court in final appeal (final verdict) makes the word “awesome” seem lame and inadequate. My body even now tingles at the experience of these men, and I only read about it. In the final court, before God, it will be beyond awesome!

In the reality of the Supreme Court, they were only spectators. Quiet. Reserved. Stoic. Solemn. They had the Green and Hahn extended families, other friends, and they had each other. Paul had no one who

stood by him with a confirming word or supporting testimony. He stood to answer for himself in this court. There were no family members, no friends, no church brothers were there in support. Few of us know what it is to stand alone and to answer alone.

Verse 17: “Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me...and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” What do we have here? Paul in the yawning cavity of the amphitheater surrounded by cruel men and ravenous beasts. Alone? No, for he says God stood with him. In the form of an angel? Perhaps. Paul sensed the reality of physical deliverance, and of a heavenly presence by his side.

Verse 18: “The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory forever and ever.” (“from eternity to eternity”—Luther’s German) Amen.

Thank God for His Almighty deliverance now and at our eventual end, as He chooses. Be encouraged by God’s deliverance in your difficult circumstances!

Verse 21, one more thing. “Do thy diligence to come before winter.” Today at our house it is 34° outside. Our thermostat is set at 69°. My office is a degree or two cooler. I wear a cardigan and wrap my feet

and lower body in a wool blanket. I am writing in physical comfort with double windows to my north and west. Plenty of light falls on my ample desk. A mere 20 feet away is a table with things pleasing to my taste three times a day. My situation has almost no comparison to Paul's conditions.

Paul says, "Come before winter." Dungeons are known to be dark, damp, and cold. Truly he "suffered the loss of all things." He writes in this letter to Timothy to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3). A bit later he adds that he "endured all things for the elect's sake" (Verse 10). that "enduring" was for the Christians then, for the centuries since then, and now, too, for our sakes. I can scarcely appreciate Paul's sacrifice and service to the church at large and how his writings have impacted my life.

Paul's life quest, his will and testament are all incorporated in his writings. He wrote 14 letters (counting Hebrews), some of them are very extensive works, comprising significant parts of the New Testament. His Jewish scholarship is quite evident. He was well-versed in the Old Testament, and by it, he linked it together with his writings which became part of the New Testament.

Paul bequeathed his faith to all

the children of God in the then-known world, many of whom he had begotten in the faith. His family were those in Christ Jesus, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14,15).

To us he leaves as our inheritance a priceless heritage of faith as an example in discipleship and suffering, and in his scholarship a giftedness in writing the verities of the Kingdom of Christ.

In his resume and declaration of assets, he says he counts "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

What the Apostle Paul has bequeathed to us is unequalled by anyone, except our Lord Jesus Christ. Even so, Paul's work blends perfectly with the writers of the four Gospels and all the other epistles. They complement each other.

The Bottom Line is that the tangibles of leaving an inheritance for our children, of houses and lands or businesses and investments, does have value in time. By comparison, the heritage of faith we leave to our children and our world is much greater than earth's treasures. Consider again, and highly value your birthright in Christ, given by God, world without end. Amen.



It Happened 59 Years Ago

David L. Miller, Partridge, KS

In 1956, Bishop Elmer Swartzentruber, then 65 years old, wrote an earnest appeal to the five-member Executive Committee of Conservative Mennonite Conference. Elmer was an influential and well-respected bishop in their conference. The appeal was co-signed by fellow-bishops, Sam Eash, Roman H. Miller, and Clarence Yoder. The essence of the appeal was a fervent request that the conference resolution of opposition to radio use would be honored. Failure to do so, they said, would surely lead to television acceptance, which is clearly at odds with principles and practices of separation and non-conformity.

We do not know how the executive committee responded. But this much is clear: The appeal and concern was well-founded. The conference resolution that was made following the appeal did not support their concern and television is now widespread within CMC.

Obviously, we cannot change what went on in 1956 and subsequent decades. Furthermore, to point fingers and criticize is not helpful. But for us to be indifferent about such outcomes would be hard to reconcile with responsible pastoral leadership.

History can be a very effective teacher, if we are not too busy to

notice. It is interesting that we now have more history from which to learn than any previous generation has had. Ideally, this can help us to avoid mistakes that would lead us where we should not go. We believe careful notice of the 1956 record is worthy of our serious attention. This need not distract us from giving needed attention to other issues that have surfaced since 1956.

Computers and cell phones have legitimate uses, but they also provide easy access to things that are entirely foreign to a sincere Christian life. To deal wisely with the electronic media is a major pastoral challenge. People need a renewed mind not to be caught up with things that are not only worthless but evil and potentially addictive.

It would certainly be unbalanced to not notice the many ways in which the Lord is blessing us. Congregational autonomy operating within constituent guidelines has allowed the development and growth of many service opportunities, both domestic and foreign. Boards and unit leaders are in a good position to promote sound doctrine and practice. There is strong support by youth, parents and seniors for these programs. There is also widespread concern for stability

and faithfulness. Many congregations have their own Christian day schools and there are various Bible school options for our youth.

It is only realistic to acknowledge

that our challenges are not new. Others have struggled with the conflict between contemporary culture and Christian identity. Let us learn from them.



The Red Sea Place in Your Life

Annie Johnson Flint


Have you come to the Red Sea place in your life,
Where in spite of all that you do,
There is no way out, there is no way back,
There is no other way but through?

Then wait on the Lord with a trust serene
‘Til the night of your fear is gone;
He will send the wind, He will heap the floods,
When He says to your soul, “Go on.”

And His hand will lead you through—clean through—
Ere the watery walls roll down,
No wave can reach you, no wave can touch,
No mightiest seas can drown.

The tossing billows may rear their crests,
Their foam at your feet may break,
But over their bed you shall walk dryshod,
In the path that your Lord will make.

In the morning watch, ‘neath the lifted cloud,
You shall see but the Lord alone,
When He leads you on from the place of the sea
To a land that you have not known;

And your fears shall pass as your foes have passed,
And you shall be no more afraid;
You shall sing His praise in a better place,
A place that His hand hath made. 

Myths About the VS Unit

Leonard Mast

Voluntary Service Unit Pastor, Hillcrest Home, Harrison, AR

1. Most young people go to VS to find a spouse.

Although many people do find a spouse at a VS unit, it has much more to do with the age that most people are when they do VS. Those of that age group living at home are also finding spouses. Most young people who serve in a VS unit don't want the distraction of courtship.

2. The VS unit is just a place to party.

Lots of social activity, good times, and games do happen at a VS unit. However, over 80% of a VSer's waking hours are spent doing mundane and repetitious work and/or necessary chores, planning, studying, cultivating relationships, and serving.

3. Working in a nursing home is too gross.

Although some nursing home work includes unpleasant sights, sounds, and smells, nearly all people of average IQ and a little of God's love in their hearts, find tremendous fulfillment in caring for people as they learn to do even the unpleasant parts as a matter of course.

4. You can't do well in VS if you have already started dating.

Although there will be limitations, if it is God's will to for you date and be in VS at the same time, it can be done well. If you can't date while in VS, how do you expect to serve God after you're married?


5. "I couldn't serve in a VS unit; I'm not a "people person."

If you are created in God's image, you are a social being. It could well be said that you need a VS unit to teach you social skills. You don't have to be around people and talking all the time to be seeking God's Kingdom, which is made up of people.

6. VS is only a specified "term" of service.

True Christians live their whole lives in service to others. Most people who have served in a VS unit find that they are more of a servant to God and to others than they were before VS.

7. Serving in a foreign country is more "epic" and life-changing.

Both the VS unit and foreign service are life-changing. The biggest factor is how much God is a part of your service. Jesus says the greatest (most epic) thing to do is the lowliest or most ordinary thing with great love for God and others. 

A Tribute to Mervin Lantz (1961-2014)

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

We grieve for we have lost a servant of God today.
And stunned by the shock, we don't know what to say.
It seems unfair that you were taken this early in life,
Leaving three bereft daughters and a widowed wife.

As children of God we want to believe He is good,
Yet we often struggle to maintain a yielded attitude.
In our restlessness of soul and spirit we wonder why
A loving God would allow a good man like you to die.

Does He not realize how desperately we need you?
Yes, we relied on your leadership to see us through.
Furthermore, we were most certainly richly blessed
By your godly character and exemplary holiness.

You gave yourself to the service of our congregation,
Making the calling of Christ your lifelong vocation.
We too often took for granted what you did for us
And when things displeased us we sometimes made a fuss.

Because of your gentle manner some misjudged you
Spreading accusations not necessarily true.
They claimed since you could not stand your ground,
You were a leader who was easy to push around.

The truth is, even though to some you seemed weak,
In reality, you were a kind shepherd who was meek.
You sincerely longed to win the heart of each member,
To be able to effectively govern as a Christ-like pastor.

Being a man of humility, you did not grasp position,
But if necessary, you were willing to give up your station.
Thus if the faults exposed by others proved factual
You would submit yourself to the church's counsel.

But even outside the walls of your religious setting,
You perceived a world of people who were hurting.
You joined a team of CAM Billboard Evangelists,
Answering calls from seekers, mockers, and atheists!

Moreover, you had a burden for the lost in Liberia,
So you lived four and a half years within Monrovia.
You ceded the American dream of material prosperity
In order to prepare native Liberians for eternity.

In fact, in your heart you desired still to be there,
And possibly to return some day, was your prayer.
The Liberians affectionately label you, “Pastor Mervin,”
And consider you a spiritual father to many of them.

Now your greatest concern was the church at home,
No doubt, you travailed for us before God, all alone.
In our indifference we were not sensitive to your fears,
Yet expected you to pay attention to our gripes and tears!

To strangers, you may have appeared a very serious man,
Perhaps someone who did not like to have much fun.
Although you did not laugh loud as some of us do,
We could still make you chuckle with a joke or two.

Being quite close in age, I considered you a peer.
So I offered you advice when you ministered here.
I imagine now you are smiling at how little I knew,
For from your vantage point you have a superior view.

Our Creator is the Sovereign Father, this we know.
However, we admit it is very difficult to let you go.
There were so many things you intended to get done,
But now we feel somewhat lost, not sure how to go on.

Certainly, we will yearn for your gentlemanly ways,
And your unique method of preaching on Sundays.
We will also miss your voice on the One Call Network,
Announcing important information to us as a church.

Yes, today a saint has left this sin-tainted earth
And gone home to the Land of Heavenly Mirth.
Because you lived your life in selfless sacrifice,
You are privileged to rest in the bosom of Christ.

[Mervin Lantz, 53, died suddenly in his home on July 5, 2014. His obituary was published in the September, 2014, issue of Calvary Messenger. This tribute, which was sent in December, reminds us not to neglect appreciation due to shepherds, who “Feed the flock of God” (1 Peter 5:1).]



marriages

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

Hege-Bontrager

Bro. Jeremy, son of Simeon and Louise Hege, Free Union, VA, and Sis. Veronica, daughter of Glen and Margaret Bontrager, Stanardsville, VA, at Bethel Baptist Church for Faith Mission Fellowship, on Nov. 29, 2014, by Ivan Beachy.

Lapp-Stoltzfus

Bro. Quentin, son of Elvin and Nancy Lapp, Dover, DE, and Sis. Emily, daughter of Mahlon and Rhoda Stoltzfus, Millington, MD, at Chestertown Baptist for Harmony Christian Fellowship on Nov. 8, 2014, by Marty Miller.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Winston, son of Steve and Evelyn Miller, Hutchinson, KS, and Sis. Bridget, daughter of Paul and Ann Yoder, Harrison, AR, at Red Oak Baptist Church for Gospel Light Christian Fellowship, on Oct. 11, 2014, by Laverne Stoltzfus.

Weaver-Wengerd

Bro. Matt, son of Thomas and Elaine Weaver, Greensburg, KY, and Sis. Beth, daughter of Daniel and Dorothy Weaver, Greensburg, KY, at First Baptist Church for Summersville Mennonite Church on Nov. 7, 2014, by James Hershberger.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Sheldon and Jamie (Witmer), Huntland, TN, fourth child, and daughter, Jaleigha Grace, Dec. 5, 2014.

Beiler, Darren and Diane (Yoder), Plain City, OH, second child and daughter, Clarissa Nicole, Dec. 21, 2014.

Beiler, Larry Ray and Karla (Mullet), Gap, PA, second child and son, DeAndre Christian, Dec. 18, 2014.

Byler, Joseph and Verina (Schwartz), Augusta, WV, seventh child, second son, (one son deceased), Carl Isaac, Nov. 10, 2014.

Fisher, Mike and Verna (Peachey), Crockett, KY, fourth child, first daughter, Kimberly Nicole, Nov. 28, 2014.

Gingerich, Gabriel and Gwendolyn (Stoll), Bloomfield, MO, second child, first son, Lincoln Jace, Dec. 2, 2014.

Glick, Emanuel, Jr. and Sarah (Fisher), Morgantown, PA, fifth child, fourth son, Josiah Tyler, Sept. 4, 2014.

Helmuth, Galen and Edith (Beachy), Huntland, TN, first child and daughter, Erin Brooke, Dec. 16, 2014.

Correction: **Helmuth**, James and Janice Kay (Miller), Wellman, IA, third child and son, Kurt James, born Jan. 24, 2012. adopted Feb. 5, 2014.

Hershberger, Mark and Emily (Miller), Millersburg, OH, first child and son, Adam Brant, Dec. 15, 2014.

Hershberger, Titus and Evelyn (Swarney), Stuarts Draft, VA, second child and son, Trevor Ivan, Oct. 22, 2014.

Hostetler, Keith and Arianna (Stoltzfus), Plain City, OH, fourth and fifth children, twin sons, Zachery James and Zayden Michael, Dec. 5, 2014.

Hottle, Matthew and Aimee (Beachy), Parsons, WV, first child and son, Landon Israel, Dec. 1, 2014.

Mast, Alvin and Verba (Hershberger), Greensburg, KY, first child and daughter, Gracelynn Ava, born and received for adoption on Nov. 5, 2014.

Mast, Bern and Lori (Kropf), Campbellsville, KY, fourth child, second son, Colton Wyatt, Dec. 17, 2014.

Mast, Forrest and Genevieve (Stoll), Greensburg, KY, sixth child, fifth daughter, Sadie Rose, Nov. 28, 2014.

Mast, James and Marcie (Yoder), Caneyville, KY, fourth child, second son, Jordan Andrew, Nov. 16, 2014.

Miller, Brandon and Yvette (Otto), LaGrange, IN, fourth child, second son, Zachary Neal, Nov. 4, 2014.

Miller, Brian and Rosie (Gingerich), Grove City, MN, fourth child, second daughter, Tina Marie, Dec. 5, 2014.

Miller, Javan and Suetta (Hershberger), Dundee, OH, third child, second son, Samuel Grant, Oct. 10, 2014.

Miller, Jesse and Lori (Hostetler), Blackville, SC, third child, second daughter, Audrey Linn, Dec. 3, 2014.

Miller, Timothy and Heidi (Yoder), Goshen, IN, fourth child, third daughter, Amy Danielle, Dec. 3, 2014.

Mullet, Marvin and Viola (Miller), Jackson, OH, first child and daughter, Alexia Kaylee, Oct. 1, 2014.

Pichiya`, Obed and Johanna (Kirkman), Odon, IN, first child and daughter, Lilianna Jean, Sept. 11, 2014. Lilianna is welcomed by her foster sisters, Felicity and Brooklyn Adams.

Sommers, Titus and Rose (Hochstetler), Huntsville, AR, third child, first son, Tyran Ken-yen, Jan. 4, 2008. Received for adoption Sept. 8, 2014.

Stoltzfoos, Dwight and Brenda (Petersheim), Kinzers, PA, fifth child, fourth daughter, Ava Marie, Nov. 29, 2014.

*Although I am very sad
And just don't understand,
Yet I will trust in Jesus
For this is how He planned.*

*Then some day when I leave this place
And go to heav'n above,
I'll see my little sister
With Jesus whom I love.*

Mast, Karen Joy (Troyer), 51, of Ossian, IN, died Dec. 4, 2014, at her home. She was born Jan. 16, 1963, daughter of Calvin and Sadie (Overholt) Troyer, at Canton, OH. On Sept. 11, 2011, she was given the shocking news that she hosted Stage Four colon cancer. Through her tears she said, "I want to praise God through all of this." She had earlier been diagnosed with Addison's Disease, an often fatal adrenal deficiency. While it is not curable, medication had stabilized her health.

She was a member of Christian Mission Fellowship, Berne, IN.

On Oct. 24, 1987, she was married to Chester Mast. He survives. Also surviving are five sons and one daughter and two daughters-in-law: Chadwick Loyal and Krista (Lengacher), Brentwood Calvin and Tammy (Eicher), Lindale Robert, Julianna Sadie, Carlyle Philip and Donavon Chester.

Karen's encouragement to others, especially at the last, was to be faithful. The way she lived life matches that legacy.

The funeral was held on Dec. 8, at Hope Missionary Church in Bluffton, IN, with Leonard Mast, Melvin Bontrager, Samson Eicher, and Maynard Nisly serving. Burial was in Prairie View Cemetery near Tocsin, IN.

The following poem was read by Homer Zook in a family time that preceded the funeral service.

Mother

By Margaret Widdener

*She always leaned to watch for us,
Anxious if we were late.
In winter by the window,
In summer by the gate.*

*And though we mocked tenderly,
Who had such foolish care,
The long way home would seem more safe
Because she waited there.*

*Her thoughts were all so full of us
She never could forget!
And so I think that where she is
She must be watching yet.*

*Waiting till we all come to her,
Anxious if we were late—
Watching from heaven's window,
Leaning o'er heaven's gate.*

Miller, Andrew L. (Andy), 76, of Greensburg, KY, died July 14, 2014, after a two-year illness with cancer. He was born August 14, 1937, in Millersburg, Ohio, son of the late Levi H. and Fannie (Kurtz) Miller.

He was a member of Summersville Mennonite Church. He was also owner and operator of Andy's Woodworking.

On Jan. 19, 1961, he was married to Amanda Raber. She survives. Other survivors include two sons and daughters in law: Leroy and Esther, Malta, OH; James and Judith, West Jefferson, OH; three daughters and sons-in-law, Leona and Lonnie Eash, Lexington, IN;

Lorene and Don Coblentz, Freeport, OH; and Esther and Galen Lengacher, Summersville, KY; 29 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Also surviving are brothers, sisters and their spouses: Melvin and Amanda Miller, Baltic, OH; Susie and Raymond Hochstetler, Fredericksburg, OH; Amanda and Elmer Mast, Shreve, OH, Ben and Mary Lou Miller, Emma and Levi Raber, Ada and Raymond Yoder, all of Millersburg, OH, Jonas and Ella Mast Miller, Berlin, OH, and Aden and Susan Miller of New Philadelphia, OH.

Miller, Ella W., 89, of Apple Creek, OH, died after a period of declining health, Dec. 19, 2014, at Majora Lane Care Center in Millersburg, OH. She was born in Holmes County, OH, March 8, 1929, daughter of the late William T. and Sarah (Miller) Weaver.

She was a member of Grace Haven Fellowship.

On Dec. 12, 1957, she was married to Abe J. Miller. He survives. Other survivors include children: David (Amanda) Miller, Apple Creek; John (Robin) Miller, Wooster; and Paul (Lorna) Miller, Apple Creek; six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by sisters: Esther and Mary Miller and a brother, Eli Weaver.

The funeral was on Jan. 4, 2015, with David Yoder officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Weirich, Orpha (Miller), 91, of Middlebury, IN, died August 12, 2014, at her son's residence, after a decline in health for several years. She was born May 3, 1923, in Elkhart County,

IN, to the late Reuben B. and Lizzie (Hershberger) Miller.

She was a charter member of Woodlawn A. M. Church. As a homemaker, she enjoyed helping her husband on the family farm, preferring the outdoors. She also enjoyed flowers, birds, and quilting. Favorite ministry activities included helping ship Scripture booklets at World Missionary Press and interacting with people who came to their door to buy eggs. In later years, after dementia had set in, she still cut blocks from fabric squares for Christian Aid Ministries.

On Oct. 28, 1948, she was married to Harry D. Weirich. He died Feb. 22, 2012. Surviving are two sons: Marvin (Sharon) Weirich and Darrel Weirich, both of Middlebury. Also surviving are two grandsons, Caleb (Sheryl) Weirich and Joel (Stephanie) Weirich, and four great granddaughters, all of Aroda, VA.

She was preceded in death by her two sisters, Nellie (Edwin) Miller, of Hutchinson, KS; and Mary LuDean Pelfrey and an infant brother.

The funeral was held on August 15 at Woodlawn Church, with burial in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Susan Mae, 71, of Kalona, IA, died Oct. 14, 2014. She was born July 30, 1943, daughter of the late Lloyd and Clarissa (Hochstedler) Yoder.

She was a member of Sharon Bethel A.M. Church, Kalona.

Close relatives surviving are siblings: Velma Yoder, Willis (and Wilma) Yoder, Alta Yoder, and a sister-in-law, Esther Yoder, all of Kalona, 12 nieces and nephews and a number of great nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were a brother,

Ernest, a sister, Pauline Yoder, an infant brother, Glen Dale Yoder, an infant sister, Anna Marie Yoder and a sister, Iva Yoder.

The funeral was on Oct. 17, with Delmar Bontrager, Gabriel Beachy, and Lamar Ropp serving. Interment at Sharon Bethel cemetery.

Zook, Anna, 82, of Honey Brook, PA, died Oct. 17, 2014. She was born Aug.

22, 1932, daughter of the late Isaac and Barbara (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfus.

She was a member of West Haven A.M. Church, New Holland, PA.

On Nov. 27, 1952, she was married to Christian Zook. He died in 2012.

The funeral was held on Oct. 20, with Lee Stoltzfus, Ben Stoltzfus, and J. Ivan Stoltzfus. Burial was in the West Haven Cemetery.



observations

Since congregational autonomy has become a subject of spirited discussion, it seems right that we take a closer look at the subject. Let us start with the question: Why have Beachy people historically been opposed to conference or executive committee control? It had been observed that a conference-appointed, non-local committee sometimes usurps the authority of local leaders.

It is only fair to notice that a conference structure seems to have worked well in some cases. It is also true that a conference structure can be very intentional in allowing congregations to self-govern. General Conference Mennonites are one such example. Any visual Christian identity, however, has not been apparent among them in my lifetime.

Historical review can teach us many helpful lessons if we are not

too busy to pay serious attention. But is it not even more important to be humble and teachable about the present and the future? After all, there is no way that we can relive the past. Several questions seem pertinent: Where are we? How did we get here? Where are we going? How well is congregational autonomy working for us?

If my memory is correct, in the 1950's, it was assumed that there was a common consensus that we need to be actively engaged in and providing for evangelism and Christian service. In light of divine principles of separation and non-conformity that affected our lifestyle, we wanted to so live that "the god of this world" would not control our lives.

In spite of shortcomings and mistakes, we can honestly say the Lord richly blessed us during the last five decades. Elected boards provided

stable leadership for mission work, Christian service units, and Bible School. Many para-church, service/mission opportunities have surfaced. There are married couples and many singles who are willing to invest themselves in service for Christ and the church.

God forbid that our gratitude, however, should become an attitude that we “have arrived.” A prominent feature of the lukewarm Laodicean church was the thought that they didn’t need anything. A realistic vision of world needs should be an effective safeguard to the mistaken notion that we “have arrived”.

Mennonite Church USA is experiencing significant disruption because some congregations are disregarding the official position of recognizing marriage only between a man and a woman. It is easy for us to see the seriousness of misguided autonomy in such a case. While the issues are vastly different from the things we face, there is a troublesome similarity. That similarity is in the mistaken impression that a local congregation is ethically free to disregard constituent standards, because they have decided that they are not important. If they are unimportant, it should not be hard to deal with, to do without and thus make allowance for others’ conscientious beliefs. To back pedal and reconsider should be a reasonable option, unless

congregational autonomy is more important than constituent loyalty. Only dead fish cannot swim against the current.

Since the 1950’s, much technology has become available that presents a serious challenge to faithful Christians. To minimize the importance of the use of the radio in homes and cars is not a helpful solution. Let us pray for wise and courageous leadership worthy of faithful following.

Finally, let us be realistic about the consequences of misguided freedom.

—DLM



I once knew a man who did not consider it acceptable for his children to complain of boredom. He reasoned that boredom was a result of not having enough to do. So his standard prescription when his children complained was to assign them bathroom cleaning duty. He described one time that this occurred while they were guests in someone else’s home, and he needed to inquire where their bathroom cleaning supplies were so his daughter’s boredom could be addressed.

Don’t we agree that we live in a parallel environment of increased opportunity of distraction and growing boredom? Why are we more bored with all this opportunity for diversion? One reason is that increased distraction can actually lead

to long-term growth in boredom—the more glitzy the diversion, the more boring the mundane becomes. However, Webster’s gives us another clue by defining boredom as, “the state of being weary and restless though lack of interest.” So, boredom is not primarily due to not having enough to do, but the lack of interest in what there is to do.

Children, whether they are age 6 or 60, often address boredom through an uptick in *activity*, when an increase in *interest* would be more effective long term. We tend to be interested in what we value. Wise parents look for ways to help their children grow in understanding the value of a project. When a child understands that we are picking beans because we like to be able to eat beans in the winter when they don’t grow in our garden, it helps to blunt the tedious and boring nature of the task at hand.

I applaud my friend’s efforts at combating boredom in his children through increased work assignments. After all, he said his children now seldom complain of boredom. When Christians become bored spiritually, it is a good time to reflect on the tremendous blessing that God’s children enjoy as redeemed sinners, preparing for an eternity with Him. That focus helps us understand that life can have meaning and purpose, whether or not we understand all

the repetition and tedium. This realization goes a long, long way toward addressing boredom.

Increased activity is a short-term and incomplete response to spiritual boredom. Boredom can set in spiritually, when believers coast along on cruise control. God wants us to continue to grow and mature, regardless of how old we are. Spiritual growth can be painful, clumsy, and awkward, but it need not be boring.



In the November issue I made some comments regarding the Ebola outbreak. A kind reader sent me the testimony of Dr. Kent Brantly who was stationed in Liberia with Samaritan’s Purse where he contracted that dread disease. He received an experimental treatment drug and was evacuated to the U. S., where he recovered. His testimony is a compelling account of one person who made choices to serve his fellow man as a response to the call of Christ. His life and words are a call for us to invest our lives similarly in selfless, grateful blessing to others.

One sad side effect of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa is that many people are reluctant to seek medical intervention when they fear they might have Ebola. The real diagnosis in many cases, would be much more favorable and treatable than Ebola. *The New York Times* reports, “West Africa’s fight to contain Ebola has

hampered the campaign against malaria, a preventable disease that is claiming many thousands more lives than the dreaded virus.” In 2013 alone, the tiny country of Guinea, population 12 million, reported 15,000 deaths from malaria. Globally, in 2014, the death toll from Ebola is approaching that number. Ebola and malaria share symptoms, but are not similarly transmitted or treated.

• • • • •

Lower gas prices are serving as a de facto economic stimulus in the U. S. It is estimated that the savings that U. S. drivers realize at the gas pump is the equivalent to a 125 billion

dollar tax cut, putting an additional \$750—\$1,000 per year in the hands of the average household because of the money that isn’t spent on gas. One peril of mentioning numbers like these is that with the rapid change in prices, these numbers can grow and shrink rather quickly. Of course, the news isn’t all roses as lower prices have the oil industry groaning under the ‘austere’ reality of eroding revenues. Not surprisingly, those whose livelihood is linked to petroleum aren’t as enthused about lower gas prices as the average motorist is.

—RJM 

Ministers Meeting Messages – 2014

This is the fourth message given at the annual ministers’ meetings, held on April 8-10, 2014, at Journey Mennonite Church, Yoder, KS. These meetings were hosted by the three Amish Mennonite churches of Reno County, Kansas. Sets of ten CD’s are available from Victory Music Services, P. O. Box 1498, North Highlands, CA, 95660, for \$50, postpaid.

Telephone: 443-480-1489, Email: victorymusicervices@gmail.com

Balancing Evangelism and Preservation

*Laban Kaufman
Middlefield, OH*

I believe that this topic has often divided God’s people. I have things I consider important and am passionate about, that without your

input in my life I become unbalanced. I acknowledge that to be human is to be biased to a certain extent. I also believe that this area has not been our greatest strength as conservative Anabaptist people. We need people that talk straight to us, don’t we?

My friend, Sam, doesn’t know he’s an evangelist. I think he thinks of

himself as a Dutchman who's been touched by the grace of God. He got a call from Mr. Joe to come and do some work at his house. In the days following, Mr. Joe gave him some of the worst psychological abuse he's ever been through. My friend got yelled at, cussed out, blamed for things he didn't do, and then went home with his nerves frazzled. Emotionally he was so battered that he lost sleep. In the course of the project, Sam learned that Mr. Joe's wife and most of his family, as well as other people who have tried to work for him, have largely abandoned him because of his abusive ways.

Sam came to me one day at church and told me some of what was happening and how it was getting to him. I didn't think Sam should be put through this kind of treatment. But Sam has been touched by the grace of God himself, and so he cares about Joe. He kept going back and bearing the image of Christ.

Then one day, Mr. Joe at the end of the day, broke down sobbing. He apologized to my friend, Sam. He went on to open up about how his abusive ways have driven his wife and basically every other person out of his life. Sam offered to pray with him and did so on several occasions. At one point Mr. Joe pounded on his chest and said, "I don't know how you did it, but somehow you got in there. No one else has been able to do that." Sam was virtually the only person in his life

that hadn't walked away from him as a result of abuse.

Sam is an evangelist, but he doesn't know it. On another occasion, Sam was coming out of the restaurant just in time to see a lady back out of her parking space and ram right into the side of his truck. Sam promptly walked up to her vehicle, opened the passenger door and asked, "Do you need prayer?" He took time to pray right there. That is evangelism.

Here's another scenario: You have a community planning evangelistic meetings. They have a committee to arrange it: the right setting, the tent, private counseling rooms, name tags for counselors, and they invite the right evangelist to come. It is a major evangelistic program. There is only one problem—no one responds when invitations to receive Christ were given.

We sometimes struggle to understand what evangelism is. My assignment today is to consider how we can effectively reach the world around us without compromising biblical values.

Let us turn to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, "**For though I be free from all men yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without**

law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

We can adopt ways to evangelize that are self-serving. I think what Paul is saying here is, "I want to do everything I can so that I can be partaker of the Gospel with you." That commitment can sometimes mean making some changes. It means adapting, trying to understand. We can only be effective in our efforts if that desire is to be partaker of the Gospel with the people we minister to. This passage is also relevant to settings that are not specifically evangelistic.

The question before us today is, "How does this passage affect us today?" In my mid-20's, I was introduced to the idea that evangelism makes you worldly. I remember it specifically. It was said that when people go to the mission field, they come back liberal. I had spent seven of the first nine years of my life on the mission field. My parents had spent some 16 years serving on the mission field and I didn't see my dad as worldly. I just couldn't understand what this was about.

Sometimes a tension exists between evangelism and preservation. I was not

present but I heard about a situation recently where Bro. Yun (known as the heavenly man), was preaching to a group like this. Bro. Yun asked, "How many of you have won a soul to the Lord today?" The response stunned him, because no hands went up. He finally asked, "Are you people even Christians?" That is the tension we live with. We feel pretty sure that what we believe is right and good, but it's been a challenge convincing the world around us that it is so.

I present to you more of the dilemma than of the solution. What do we mean by balancing evangelism and preservation? How can we know that we have been successful evangelists? What exactly are we trying to preserve?

If we take the example of a teeter-totter, we might imagine balancing two boys, named Evangelism and Preservation, sitting on opposite ends of a balancing plank. We might just as well name those two boys, Faith and Works or Grace and Truth. Is it really our task as a church to stand in the middle and try to balance them? Are they actually opposites? What if Evangelism and Preservation, Faith and Works, and Grace and Truth are all realities that we have been given and called to by God through Jesus Christ to live by? Are they things that we must try to balance with our own abilities?

When Paul and Silas were speaking to the Philippian jailer, he asked what

he should do to be saved. They told him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Jesus told His disciples when He was about to ascend to heaven, “Go ye into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. But he that believeth not, shall be damned.” That is our goal. We are to do that lest we lose our own souls in that process.

Our challenge is somewhat different from what the early Anabaptists faced. For them the question of what they wanted to preserve was so much clearer than what we wrestle with, because what they wanted to preserve was, in fact, a matter of life and death. Their faith was defined by having their blood being spilled on European soil. That defined evangelism for them.

I think confusion and dissension among us will continue as long as we see evangelism and preservation as opposites. If we see them as opposing forces, the dissension will continue.

I enjoy my comfortable life. When I reach beyond my own world, it's a mess. I don't like messes. I have enough messes in my own life without looking for them. What I'm saying is that I like for my life to be safe and secure.

The Apostle Paul speaks directly to this subject. In Philippians 3:7, **“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things**

but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” Later, in verse 13, he says, **“...forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”** I think this is another way of saying that sometimes we must lose something in order to preserve a greater treasure.

Paul was not referring to a host of sinful practices that defined his sinful lifestyle. It was the things he thought he was doing right up to when he met Christ on his way to Damascus. He mentions circumcision on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee, keeping the law—blameless. He was saying, “Everything I had carved my identity out of, I'm letting go of. Not so that I can react to it, not so that I can look down on those who are still finding their identity in these things. It's not that, but it's so that I may win Christ. That I may know Him, be found in Him, may know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings and be made conformable unto His death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

It is letting go and experiencing loss of the things that we have clung to in

order to be preserved.

In the Nickel Mines tragedy, people whose lives were invaded in the cruelest of ways chose to respond in the way of Christ, thereby powerfully impacting the world through their suffering. They accepted loss of something, but by their response much was gained by their confidence in God's hand upon their lives. Luke 17:33 says, "**Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it.**" If preservation is a result of human resources, rightly utilized, let it be so, but let us never confuse it with the preservation that Christ spoke of in Luke 17:33. That was what He taught and what He lived.

Taunting mockery toward Jesus while He hung on the cross said scornfully, "If you are who you say that you are, prove it. Preserve yourself. Come down from the cross." They said that to Him who had said in John 12:24, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." When we are alone, perhaps it is because we are trying to preserve something that was meant to die.

One kernel dying brings forth many seeds. That is not only preservation, it is multiplication. In John 19:30, Jesus cried out, "It is finished." Then He bowed His head and died. He was and is the head of the church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. I know of no better

definition or expression of the reality of preservation than these words of our Lord.

I believe all of us here would like to be part of that kind of a church. I think we are part of it, but God is wanting to bring us into a deeper revelation of what His will is for us as we seek to expand into the world around us. He did not prove His power to preserve by coming down from the cross, but by bowing His sinless head in death.

What does this in reality mean for us as conservative Anabaptists today? I don't have many answers, but I trust that the Spirit of God will show us how this works out in our own lives. Understanding what we hold onto and what to let go of in relating to the unsaved and to other cultures, is not easy. But it is important to try to understand what it means and what we ought to let go and what we ought to hang onto. There is a death that needs to take place. But I believe it is also important to understand what should die. What are the things we have been called to count but loss for Christ? What are we to count but dung, that we may win Christ?

I shall share an incident of difficulty over some pizza. There was a death and quite a few people were coming in. A member of the church knew the pizza shop owner who, out of the generosity of his heart, sent about eight pizzas to the funeral for lunch. This church member delivered the gift. When it

was found out that the food committee was not excited about serving pizza (It was Sunday and they did not consider it funeral food), so that through this there were many hurts. Eventually, the brother involved decided to leave the church.

Am I saying that because it couldn't happen in my congregation? No, I could tell you stories that happened in my congregation where we have "blown it" in big ways. At some point we are going to have to decide what we are going to die to, that we might be partakers with them. In that case, they can say they did the right thing, but perhaps it is true that they lost a brother over some pizza.

We want to be right. But it is more important to be partakers together of the Gospel. That is where churches like ours sometimes divide. All we can do is bring the concepts that apply to preaching and living out the Gospel.

I believe that we cannot bring evangelism and preservation together in a way that ministers grace unless we have a present and ongoing experience of grace. This will make the teaching that we hold to more palatable to those we minister to. Jesus said in His first public teaching, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It comes first.

When the religious leaders of Jesus' day said, "We be Abraham's seed," they were saying, "We contain the truth." It was a well-intended statement,

but when we who have been given so much of a godly heritage, use that as a starting point, we fail to portray the true spirit of evangelism. Can we hold those things we have been given, charitably and in poverty of spirit? We don't need to apologize for it. I believe I can embrace with a deep sense of gratitude my conservative Anabaptist heritage.

This vision of evangelism and preservation is not one that is enhanced when we compare ourselves with each other, but with our Lord Jesus Christ.

We need a deep sense of respect and reverence for His Word. We must find our way in the spirit of Christ through His Word.

I'm in sales. If I don't believe in the product I sell and the services we provide, I'm going to be a very poor sales person. If we are to be effective in passing on our faith, we must believe in it. People go by what we convey and not just by what we say. Paul said in Philippians 3:16, "**Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.**" But it is imperative that we live in the spirit of verse 12, where Paul said, "**Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect....**"

Earlier today we heard that when we stop learning, we stop teaching. We must carry the spirit within us that we are still in process. We must convey this, "We have not arrived, but we are here to give you what we do have."

Someone said recently that he didn't think we can effectively minister to those in the gutter. I hoped he was wrong. It should bring us to a deepening brokenness and a renewed sense of how needy we are before God.

God also impressed me with the thought that I can support those who come to the cross from another direction. Perhaps they can minister in the inner city, even though I don't think I do it very well, in light of my situation. They are in fact the "foot" and the "hand" of the body that Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12. Less than a week ago, I had a converted hippie in my living room. She was talking about her days of drug addiction, immorality, and all of that. She talked about going into a widow's house in the inner city, a place where "the Hell's Angels, prostitutes, and scuzzy people like that" showed up. A certain widow lady was there and would simply

bring the Word of God to them. She said the Holy Spirit would fall on them with conviction that was undeniable. Today this person is a committed Anabaptist, who actively promotes the Anabaptist vision.

We have a very specific call as Anabaptist people. It's a call we must live out charitably. We don't have to apologize for who we are. We should hold this treasure with a sense of brokenness and humility. I think it's a distraction to present ourselves as representing a complete package of what every true Christian should be. We should not think that we can somehow come up with just the right application. No one can do that. Others are tempted to think that too. I think it is an intentional act of God that no single person gets it right every time. I find that to be incredibly freeing. The best we can do is to draw as close to the truth as possible. When we do, God can reveal to us more truth.



mission awareness

What is Truth? Part Two

Lucy Schrock, Isabella Bank, Belize

Maanin (Morning), Granny Chab, da we again. How you dis maanin?"

"Oh, think you came for the rest of the story of what I was telling you about, how I was blind to the truth. I

really did want to do what was right, but no one ever told me how to be pure and clean in my heart. Several times I heard things from people in other churches like 'Jesus saves,' but what does that mean? Then my first baby was born. I knew that the life I was living was not right. I did not go to church anymore to take part in Holy Communion and confession. Sometimes I would leave my baby with a friend during the week while I went to church to pray. A statue of Jesus was there. I knew this thing could not hear me so I prayed to God and asked Him for a home in which to raise my son.

"Several years later, I got very sick and had to be in the hospital for a month. This was during Lent when we were not permitted to eat any meat, unless it was hatched like a chicken. My blood count was very low after being sick so long and the nurse brought in a dinner to help me get stronger. I knew I couldn't eat beef, so I just ate the rice and vegetables. But it looked so delicious! I decided I really needed to build up my blood. After I ate the meat, I was surprised that I really didn't feel guilty. Later I went to the priest and confessed that I ate the meat during Lent. He told me it wasn't even a sin. He said that was a rule that some pope had made up. That bothered

me. What is sin then? I never went and confessed to that priest again.

"Later, I married Maurice Lanza and we lived in Isabella Bank. In the village of Bermudian Landing, which was about one and one-half miles from our village, there was a Catholic church that we attended. In that village the same building for church services was used for school. They had dances in that building. I was disgusted! I danced, but it didn't seem proper to dance and sell rum in the church building!

"There were more things like the big dance to bring in Easter Sunday, after no drinking or dancing had been allowed for a whole month during Lent. All this did not seem right. But we didn't know the truth. We didn't know the Bible. We just had prayer books.

"Then one day, I went to Belize City. I saw some ladies wearing head coverings. People were teasing them and calling them 'Mennonite.' Well, I decided, I am not putting one of those white veils on my head. Later, I found out those women were from the Mennonite Church in Hattieville.

"Quite a while later, when I visited the nurse at the clinic, close to the Belize River at Double Head Cabbage, I was surprised to see the mission and the church. I had no idea that there was a Mennonite church so

near (about three miles from Isabella Bank).

“Then the Mennonite missionaries came to our village to have church services under our big tambron (tamarind) tree. One Sunday a Mennonite evangelist was visiting our community and he preached the truth of the Gospel. I stood and Brother Lester Coblentz’ wife, Nancy prayed with me and then she asked me to pray. [Lester and Nancy were the first missionary couple at Isabella Bank. -FS] I told her I did not know how to pray. The only prayers I knew were memorized prayers. I started praying one of those prayers: ‘I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth...’ Nancy led me to Jesus Christ, the precious Savior who could wash away my sins. When I stood up, I felt like a heavy weight had dropped off my back! I felt light as a feather and that I could fly away. I felt like a different person

because I found the truth and became a child of God.

“There were many temptations and tests that I needed to go through. But God helped me gain the victory. One thing that worried me for some time was about those ladies that were punished when leaving the Catholic Church while I lived in Cayo (read Part 1). Finally, when I told someone that whole story and asked that person why God had punished them for that, she told me it wasn’t God that punished them. It was Satan trying to frighten these women and keep them from embracing the truth of God. I rejoiced that I finally found the truth about that.”

[Isabelle (89 and blind) is still rejoicing in her precious Lord whom she loves dearly. She has a glowing testimony and is thankful to God that the missionaries came to their village with the Gospel that set her free. -FS]



helpers at home

The Beauty of a Disciplined Woman

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

The root of discipline is “disciple.” A disciple is a follower, a person willing to

be taught, to learn, to follow in the footsteps of a teacher. Jesus is the Master Teacher, so as godly women,

we will first of all be disciples of Jesus, sitting at His feet and learning from Him. We will want to follow in His footsteps; we will desire to be disciplined in every area of our lives. I believe this will include the spiritual, physical, and emotional aspects of our lives.

Discipline does not just happen. It requires a plan. Many of us do not want to work that hard. We want life just to happen, but let me remind you that unless we plan for discipline, we plan for failure. God gives each of us 24 hours a day. However, without discipline those hours can slip by and we don't accomplish a single disciplined thing. Planning also requires prioritizing. *What is the most important thing on my list for today?* Discipline yourself to stick to your priorities. I realize that there will always be changes in our planning. There will be sickness, changes in schedules and many other situations that cause interruptions in our day. However, in the normal course of life, planning will make a difference. It will also remove much frustration and stress from your daily life.

Let me suggest some disciplines in maintaining our spiritual passion and zest for a deeper walk with God:

Set aside time each day to enjoy quiet fellowship with God. Find the time that works best for you. For a busy mother, it may be early

morning before the children are awake, or after they leave for school, or during afternoon naps. Older women or single women can choose the time that fits their schedule. It is good to have your own special place to meet God, although that may vary according to season and situation.

A basket works nicely to keep your devotional supplies together. Develop a plan that meets your needs and that you enjoy. Read a portion of Scripture. There are many devotional books written especially for women. I personally enjoy writing and marking in my devotional book or writing in a notebook or journal. Spend time in prayer. Mothers, pray for your family. It is not selfish to pray for your children and grandchildren. No one else will pray for them with a greater care and concern that you will. Pray for the families in church by name. Remember specific needs of missionaries. Prayer lists help you remember names and needs. Tell people that you prayed for them. Intercede in prayer.

A disciplined woman manages her time, her home, her money, and her family. What we do with our time determines much about how we manage the rest of our lives. Proverbs 31:27 says, "She watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness." I believe it is good to enjoy our homes, to take a sense of pride in keeping our houses

clean, comfortable, and “homey.”

Be organized. Plan a time each week for laundry, cleaning, baking, sewing, or whatever you do. Divide your week into days: *What shall I do first thing in the morning? What do I need to accomplish today? Do I make the bed, prepare breakfast, wash dishes?* I think it works well just to do the next thing that needs to be done. We don't need to follow a rigid schedule, but a schedule helps us get the work done.

I assure you, you will feel better about yourself and your family will be happier if you are happy.

A disciplined woman manages her money and finances in a way that will please her husband and will provide well for her family.

Many homes have been broken because of finances. Be frugal. Find ways to save money by doing without, making do, or being creative and making your own things. Through the years (most times) I have enjoyed the challenge of finding ways to stretch our income. There is a sense of satisfaction in being creative. Encourage your husband as he provides for the family.

A disciplined mother teaches values to her family. She will discipline her children in love, not in anger and frustration. Discipline is used to teach and to help the children grow into a disciplined adults. God uses discipline in our lives to form us into women of maturity and godly character.



junior messages

A Cat, or an Angel?

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

In 1982, Margaret was a young missionary mother living in a small village in central Nigeria.

Life in humid Nigeria was so different from what she was used to in America. Even though she had a godly husband and two small, precious children, she was lonely for her family and friends back home.

Homesickness seemed to follow her all around.

One day when she felt especially blue, she decided she needed to go visit her neighbor, Beatrice, who was a kind and motherly woman. The children were happy to go out with Mama on a walk.

Beatrice was working behind her

house, so they walked back to greet her. They had a pleasant visit.

When Margaret was ready to leave, and since all the doors in Beatrice's house were open, Margaret and her little ones decided to go through the house rather than walking around it. Three-year-old Jared ran happily ahead. All at once, the sitting room seemed to explode with the ferocious barking of a protective mother dog that had puppies in a corner of that room.

Jared screamed in terror, "Mama! Mama!"

Margaret called out to him, "Run out the door! Run out the door! I will come the other way!" But the small boy was so terrified that he did not know what to do. He just stood there.

Just then a black and white cat skittered into the room. Spitting and scratching, it flew at the mad growling dog. The dog whined and backed into a corner. Margaret rushed to her son. Beatrice grabbed him up and carried him part way

home. She said she felt his little heart pitter-pattering very fast.

Beatrice went back home. Margaret sat down on a fallen log beside the road and took her frightened son into her loving arms. She rocked him and calmed his fears.

Suddenly she remembered the cat. That was quite unusual, actually strange, how that cat had come flying into the room and stood up to the snarling dog.

Then she knew! God had sent that cat. An angel in the form of a cat!

Together, Margaret and her children thanked God for His care and protection. They basked in the knowledge that God knew exactly where they were at that exact moment. He had sent help. He had sent a cat to help them.

She thought of the Bible verses that promise, "**I will never leave thee nor forsake thee**" (Hebrews 13:5), and "**... he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways**" (Psalm 91:11).



If people with spiritual problems don't belong in church, why do people with physical problems belong in the hospital?



Loving God in a Parent/Child Relationship—Part One

Ernest Eby, State College, PA

Last month we looked at one human relationship the Scriptures use to picture God's relationship to us and how he intends for us to relate to Him. We looked at "Loving God in a Master/Slave Relationship." This month and next month we shall look at a second human relationship referred to in Scripture.

I find it significant that when it comes to learning who God is, God uses many different metaphors to help us better understand His nature and character. By considering a variety of human relationships, we can better understand the kind of relationship God wants with us.

God doesn't want just a Master/Slave relationship with us. He wants to be our Father. Throughout the Scriptures God is often portrayed as someone with fatherly characteristics. Occasionally He is pictured with motherly qualities, such as a hen who gathers her chicks under its wings. Most fathers wouldn't use

that metaphor to describe their relationship with their children. They would save that metaphor for their wives. However, it should not surprise us that God is pictured as having both. In the first chapter of Genesis we read: "*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*" God can have both characteristics since He is the Creator as well as a spirit. Even though God is referred to in the masculine gender, it seems that He possesses all the qualities that we would typically assign to both men and women. In **Isaiah 66:12,13**, God is pictured as a mother who comforts her child. Because God is the source of all good. We can trust Him for all the good things we might experience from the best father or mother. We can do this without calling God a Heavenly Parent as some gender-equality folks are doing today.

So as we look deeper into this topic, we could ask, "**How does a person**

enter into this relationship and become a child of God?”

Again the Scriptures use metaphors to teach us. Our first claim to God as Father is based on his being our Creator. Isaiah 64:8, “But now, O LORD, thou *art* our father; we *are* the clay, and thou our potter, and we all *are* the work of thy hand.” Malachi 2:10, “Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?” Everyone of the more than seven billion people on the planet can claim God as their father based on the truth of these verses.

But, Isaiah 53:6 says, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” This means that all seven billion of us have walked away or will walk away from our Father. When we walk away from God, we are like the prodigal son who was no more worthy to be God’s son. We forfeit our privilege of being part of God’s spiritual family.

Jesus told Nicodemus that the only way back into relationship with God is by being born again. Nicodemus seemed unaware that a spiritual rebirth was necessary in order for a child to be part of God’s spiritual family. The Apostle Peter tells us that through Christ’s resurrection we can be “begotten again unto a

lively hope.” The Apostle Paul says that we who reject God are at enmity with God and that the only way to again be part of God’s spiritual family is through adoption. We can view ourselves as either “adopted,” “begotten again,” or both. The Bible uses both metaphors so that we for sure understand that we can turn from sin and again become God’s spiritual children.

Now, a question for you, “When you became a Christian, did you realize that by allowing Jesus to take up residence in your heart, that you were being ushered into God’s spiritual family?” I can’t say that I did. I was mostly concerned about avoiding eternal torment and accomplishing the things God created me to do. I didn’t think much about the relationship that God wanted to have with me as a new son who was brought back into God’s spiritual family.

This alludes to an opportunity you have as a Christian. If you know of people who have walked away from God or people who do not understand the relationship that God wants to have with them, picture for them the relationship that God wants to have with them. If there are children who look up to you, make sure that they know about God’s intention for every person who

walks away from Him. Once they are old enough to realize that they have turned their backs on God, they may also be old enough to understand the incredible offer of being brought back into a parent/child relationship. If they understand the relationship that God wants to have with them as their Father, they may experience salvation in a way that is not just self-serving.

Next, let's consider the kind of response that new birth and adoption into the family of God should produce in a person.

Which Loved Best?

Joy Allison

*"I love you, Mother," said little John.
Then forgetting his work, his cap went on.
And he was off to the garden swing,
Leaving his Mother the wood to bring.*

*"I love you, Mother," said little Nell.
"I love you more than tongue can tell."
Then she teased and pouted half the day,
Till Mother rejoiced when she went to play.*

*"I love you, Mother," said little Fran.
"Today I'll help you all I can."
To the cradle then she did softly creep,
And rocked the baby till it fell asleep.*

*Then stepping softly, she took the broom,
And swept the floor, and dusted the room.
Busy and happy all day was she,
Helpful and cheerful as a child could be.*

*"I love you, Mother," again they said.
Three little children, going to bed.
How do you think that Mother guessed
Which of the three loved her best?*

This poem may be fictional, but you can probably think of children who act like John and Nell, and also children who act like Fran. What would make a child want to help her mother with her work? We can suppose that little Fran, cheerfully helped her mother because she loved her mother. So what was different about Fran's inner being that produced a certain kind of doing that was different from that of her siblings? Didn't Fran's siblings love their mother also? The difference is that John and Nell's hearts were centered on themselves and satisfying their own pleasures. Fran's heart was centered on satisfying the pleasures of her mother. In satisfying the pleasures of her mother, she also found pleasure.

Every child comes into this world with a heart that is focused inward. John and Nell had the same mother that Fran had. Yet Fran's heart was turned outward while John and Nell's hearts were turned inward. So what happened to Fran's heart that made her outward-focused? The answer likely lies in something that Fran experienced. Fran likely experienced love from her mother and this

changed her. But this still doesn't answer the question of why John and Nell behaved the way they did, since they experienced the same love that Fran experienced. The difference is that Fran allowed her mother's love to develop her heart in the way that God intended. Love was flowing back and forth between Fran and her mother.

This illustration may help us understand why it is so important that *relationship* and *love* are key parts of our commitment to the Lord. As we get up in the morning and go about our day, are we aiming at satisfying our own pleasures, or are we aiming at satisfying the pleasures of our heavenly Father as a response to His incredible love? Our answer tells us a lot about the condition of our heart.

The poem doesn't tell us how old these children were, but if Fran was really young, she would have had a hard time hiding her real motivations for her good deeds. However, as

children get older, sometimes they begin serving with more subtle motives—motives that are not always noble or easily recognized. But for the sake of this discussion, we will assume that Fran's love for her mother was pure and that this was the motivation for her service.

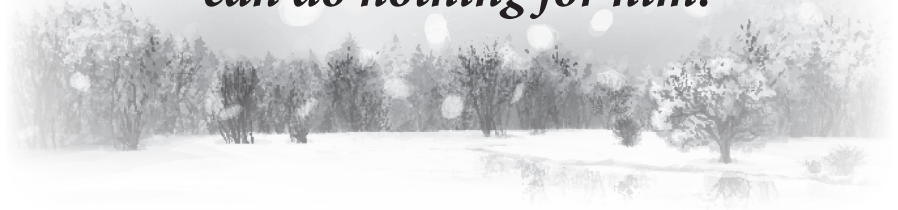
Now let's suppose that the reason little Fran cheerfully helped her mother is because little girls are supposed to cheerfully help their mothers. It is their duty. Has anyone ever served you out of duty? How does it feel to be served out of duty? Serving out of duty is better than refusing to serve, but it's not fun being around folks who are serving God and others simply because it is their duty.

Let's suppose that little Fran did all of these things for her mother because it made her feel like she was better than her siblings.

[to be concluded]



Character is indicated when we see what a man will do for someone who can do nothing for him.



(USPS 767-160)
Calvary Messenger
2673 Township Rd. 421
Sugar creek, OH 44681

Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

A believer at war with his brother cannot be at peace with his Father.

• • • • •

To know what a man really believes, note what he teaches his children.

• • • • •

If Christ is kept outside, there must be something wrong inside.

• • • • •

Compromise is always wrong when it means sacrificing principle.

• • • • •

Love of things, if it is to be satisfied, faces a tremendous storage problem.

• • • • •

We can tell how much of Christ a person has by the courtesy he shows.

• • • • •

If lack of appreciation could cause an animal to disappear,
the skunk would be extinct.

• • • • •

Success is not measured by what we start, but by what we finish.

• • • • •

Beware the sudden decision—good decisions often require time.

• • • • •

He who serves two masters, has to lie to one.