



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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 2006

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JUNE 2006

Purpose of CALVARY MESSENGER is
 To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;
 To stimulate a deeper study of God's Word;
 To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;
 To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Saviour;
 To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;
 And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to CIRCULATION MANAGER. WHEN YOU MOVE, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$7.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$21.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$6.00 per year to individual addresses. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW, Dundee, OH 44624.

My Daddy

Katrina Byler · age 16 · Middlefield, OH

Dedicated to my father, Tim Byler



Hands so gentle, heart so soft;
Arms that hold me tight;
Words that swiftly comfort me
Through the day or night.

Sometimes reprimanding me,
Sometimes sighing too,
At the silly things I try
Now and then to do.

Never hating me for all
The bad things I have done.
Just forever loving me
Like God does His Son.

I love my Daddy very much,
Too much to express
In words that I don't know,
This must I confess.

Dad, I won't stop loving you
Even when you scold;
For I know you love me more
Than precious gems or gold.



[Submitted by Katrina's aunt, Twila Hochstetler.]

Fathers

The greatest thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. This familiar advice is useful for all fathers who would pursue greater godliness. Let me pass along several other homespun maxims:

The trouble with a juvenile delinquent is not always apparent—some-time it's two parents.

Too often an abandoned child is one who still lives with his parents.

The best thing fathers can spend on their children is not money, but time.

Too many modern dads worry more about their golf swing than their offspring.

Father holds a revered and responsible role in God's plan for His people. Let us honor fathers who honor God, who love their wives, and who care for and nurture their children as gifts of God. Some gems of wisdom from the past follow:

A happy family is but an earlier heaven. —Sir John Bowring

The family was ordained of God that children might be trained up for Himself; it was before the church, or rather the first form of the church on earth. —Pope Leo XIII

My son, hear the instruction of thy

father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. (Proverbs 1:8)

Humility is strong—not bold; it is quiet—not speechless; it is sure—not arrogant. —Estelle Smith

I have had more trouble with myself than with any other man. —Dwight L. Moody

What the world calls virtue, without Christ, is a name and a dream. The foundation of all human excellence must be laid deep in the blood of the Redeemer's cross and in the power of His resurrection. —Frederick William Robertson

What we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence. —Johnson

The weakest part of a man's creed is that which he holds for himself alone; the strongest is that which he holds in common with all Christendom. —McVicker

Clair Schnupp observes that "Men are not biologically attuned to being responsible fathers. Too often, men's sexual activity is promiscuous, their paternity casual, their commitment to their children weak. But godly fathers bring an array of unique qualities like nurture, admonition, protection, and affirmation to their

sons and daughters.” (*The Focus*, April, 2006)

Let us teach our sons and daughters that manliness is God-given and integral to Christian character. Let us respect fathers who take their leadership role seriously, who provide work for their families, who bring enough love and control to their families to provide security, and who lean on God for strength and wisdom.

My father, Levi D. Miller, was serious about being a good, Christian father. He died of congestive heart failure in 1985 at age 83. He had survived a major health crisis at 46 because God intervened. The doctor had given him up but “Dad” requested anointing and prayer. Then God in His great mercy healed him. Dad diligently provided for Mom and 12 children in the Great Depression.

I felt loved by Dad, even though I don’t think he was indulgent with me. I remember one time when he shed more tears than I did when I deserved and he gave me corporal punishment. Now that I’ve piqued your curiosity, I’ll tell you what brought on the punishment. Our neighbor (as I recall, he made no Christian profession) stopped in to use our telephone, an old crank-style wall model. Several of us young boys were disrespectful enough to mock the neighbor’s manner of speech. We

got noisy and silly enough that the man had trouble hearing the party he was calling. Dad wasn’t at home, but Mom told Dad how embarrassed she was. Parental punishment for mockery? Yes, my parents had no allowance for mocking others! As I have learned to know God, I realize that Dad was imperfect, but I thank God that he modeled so much of God to me.

Dad was not a minister, but he never commented negatively about our ministers or the church. Dad’s confidence in God’s Word as eternal, unchanging truth will inspire me to the end of my life.

God bless all our Christian fathers!



This month we have several contributions on the subject of purposeful living. A number of youth have made significant observations and contributions to the excellent discussions our Youth editor, Ernest Eby, is leading.

The discussion about purposeful living comes at an interesting time. America has a growing problem with obesity, with illegal immigrants, and with a number of other challenges. In the church, youth socials are sometimes more popular than work projects. Our service units seem often to have worker shortages. Which of these issues are related? Do they

have anything to do with purposeful living?

I think we may be touching different parts of the same “elephant.” Several observations seem relevant to this discussion:

—Many in America’s current work force are not interested in toilsome manual labor.

—Immigrants from Central America and Mexico are often willing to do hard, boring, repetitive jobs without being paid high wages for it.

—Many American workers hold out for high wages that cause the fruits of their labors to be protected by high tariffs, because they are priced out of competition in the world marketplace.

—Many American children do not have daily work assignments that cause them to break a sweat. We as American Amish Mennonite families

must be vigilant to avoid the laziness that pervades current American culture. Good nurture imparts a willingness to work with diligence.

—Praise the Lord, some of our adolescent children are willing to “work with a will in the strength of youth.”

—Thank God, some of our youth at home are reaching out in ways that minister to others, rather than taking interest only in activities that are fun or make money.

—Glory to God, some of our youth and families are also making themselves available to work sacrificially in our service units. God bless them for it!

Surely, boredom does not pose an insurmountable problem, if we “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” —PLM



Ministers’ Meeting Messages—2006

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual Ministers’ Meetings, April 4-6, 2006, at Sugarcreek, Ohio. The set of eight cassette tapes with 11 messages is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA 20136, for \$40 or a set of 11 CD’s for \$45, postpaid.

1. Marks of a Healthy Congregation

—Ernest Stoltzfus, Perry, NY

I know you care about your congregations. That’s why we’re here. Let us take courage from this fact: Jesus Christ walks among His church. In Revelation 1: 10, “I was in the Spirit

on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest, write in a book and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; ... And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." That was Jesus Christ walking among His people. What an encouragement!

Jesus knows the name of your congregation. He knows who its leaders are. Here in Revelation, He had specific rebuke and encouragement for each congregation.

I shall lift up an ideal tonight and trust you will be encouraged and blessed. My text is found in Acts 9:31, which gives us five marks of the early church. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

Mark #1: "Then had the churches rest."

Mark #2: They "were edified" (encouraged)

Mark #3: They walked "in the fear of the Lord."

Mark #4: They walked "in the comfort of the Holy Spirit"

Mark #5: They "were multiplied"

First, let's look at rest as peace in the congregation. Before the situation described in the text verse, there was great growth. Then judgment was brought upon hypocrisy. This was followed by persecution. In Acts 8:1, we are told that the church was scattered abroad throughout Judea and Samaria. Saul was making havoc of the church, in his efforts to destroy it. There was a general feeling of unrest. Who would be next to get arrested?

What is the general church scene today? Is it one of rest or of unrest? I think we all know the answer. It's not God's will that there be strife and unrest in the congregation. A young person gave me a note that said, "Where is God in all this confusion? It's like an army that can't seem to get in step. Instead they're pushing and shoving and arguing about issues. The leaders try in vain to bring some semblance of order and stability to a tangled mess. Where is God?"

Where do we find God walking among His church? He has eyes of fire and a sword in His mouth. He has the answers. We find Him in the midst of His church.

A healthy congregation has rest. Psalm 23 says, "He maketh me to

lie down in green pastures.” I think that means He sometimes makes us lie down. He may take measures that are unpleasant to make me lie down in green pastures. Sometimes when I was a little shaver and my dad asked me to do something I didn’t want to do, he would simply make me do it. That was good.

Psalm 133 gives us a beautiful picture of unity. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is as the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.” When does dew come down? Does it come down in times of storm? No, dew comes when there is stillness. In the church, God’s blessing comes down when there is rest and peace. That’s how unity blesses the church. An absence of strife provides the right atmosphere for the “dew” of heaven, the unity of the Spirit and blessing from God, to come.

This unity of the Spirit is the well from which all these other marks of health flow. Our enemy is distraught when there is a church that is together, unified, that marches in unison, that is not confused and bewildered. The enemy knows that if the church is marching in unity, nothing can stop it from adding the other four marks of a healthy church. Rest and peace provide the right conditions

for health and growth.

The graces listed in Ephesians 4:1-3 are a call to engage God’s people in the work of the Holy Spirit. These graces promote, protect and safeguard the unity the Spirit gives. Let us notice them, briefly:

—lowliness of mind...Peter tells us to be clothed with [to wear] humility.

—meekness...a heart that yields to my brothers, which is viewed by some as weakness: “I’m not going to let someone walk all over me.” While we are not required to have no position of our own, unity is fostered by bowed heart, a yielded spirit. Preferring one another in love gives strength from God.

—longsuffering...forbearing, putting up with someone, and the needs they have in their life. We are not to compromise with sin, but, being human, we all have needs.

—endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...endeavoring means to be zealous, diligent, to labor intensely, to make a serious effort, to strive for, strenuously press for the unity of the Spirit. When unity is present in your congregation, make every effort to keep it.

—peace is the glue that holds it together.

A healthy church is edified, encouraged. For this to happen, there must be a constant reality of the liv-

ing Christ in our lives. Paul admonished the believers at Colosse, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Col. 2:6, 7). That sounds like an encouraging experience, wherein one is being built up and established in the faith.

Let us notice the church at Ephesus. In Acts 19, we find the beginning of the church at Ephesus. These early believers had only heard of John’s teaching, but when they heard the good news that Jesus brought, they were ready to accept Him and His Holy Spirit into their lives.

When Paul stayed in Ephesus for three months, many came to Christ. He stayed on for two more years, bringing deliverance from sin and sickness to many of them. When Sceva’s seven sons, vagabond Jews, who were exorcists, saw this they desired the same power. They called on Jesus, whom Paul preached, for power to drive out evil spirits. Notice that the evil spirits asked Sceva’s sons, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” I like that, even though it came from an evil spirit. Leonard Ravenhill once asked, “Does hell know your name?” Hell knew Paul’s name. A church empowered by the Holy Spirit

was shaking the gates of hell. That’s a mark of a healthy church.

The evil spirit that Sceva’s sons attempted to exorcise, instead jumped on them and beat them badly. They fled from the house naked and wounded. That caused the fear of God to fall upon the others. One mark of a healthy congregation is the fear of God.

Next, the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. It still works that way. When we do things God’s way, it’s not about us, it’s about Jesus. He said, “... if I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32).

Then many who used curious arts, brought books worth some 50,000 pieces of silver together and burned them before all men. As a result, the Word of God grew and prevailed. Praise God! May it happen again! That’s the beginning of the church at Ephesus. Ephesus was an influential church. From this church sprang up many churches, six of whom are mentioned in Revelation. Some were located as far as 60 or 70 miles away.

The church was multiplied, both by increased numbers in the church at Ephesus and in the number of churches in the area surrounding Ephesus. I believe that’s God’s will for the church today. God wants to take our congregations and move them all over this land. Little fellowships of

believers—that’s good. While I have nothing against large congregations, and the church at Ephesus was a large church, I believe God wants to scatter His people all over the world. When the disciples were scattered right after the death of Stephen, they went everywhere preaching. Thus the Word of God grew mightily. Ephesus became a hub from which the Gospel spread. Many churches other than the six mentioned in Revelation sprang up.

Seven years later, Paul writes an epistle to the Ephesians. He offers no corrections, but has many words of commendation for the church at Ephesus. This epistle has rich and powerful teaching. It lifts you out of the earthly church scene into heavenly realms. I believe it reflects what the church is to receive from God and the health God promises to give her. They were doing well in Christ. Jesus Christ was a living, dynamic reality in their hearts and lives. In the first three chapters of Ephesians, 22 times we have the terms “In Christ,” “by whom,” and “in Him.” It was all about Jesus! They were in love with Jesus. That fire in their hearts moved them in their service for Him. Paul had no correction, but prayed for them that they would be rooted and grounded in Him, that they would know the love of Christ, which passes

knowledge and so on.

Paul had been there at the start of that church. He had been there for more than two years. He had sent Timothy back to see how they were doing, to encourage them and to make sure things were going well. A good Gospel witness was still going out seven years later. They were still going strong and they were on the rise. Brothers, preacher friends, are we encouraging our congregations in the living reality of the living Christ indwelling our hearts by faith? We have our doctrines all in place, don’t we? And we should. But there is a higher standard.

It is the standard of Jesus Christ in our hearts by faith. It puts “the cart before the horse” if we think that maintaining the doctrines and standards comes before vital connection with Jesus Christ. He must be all in all, absolutely supreme in our presentation, preaching, teaching, mentoring of people, and in our exemplary lifestyle. Jesus Christ must be taught and preached and lived. A healthy church is one that is encouraged and built up in Christ.

A group of men in our home congregation get together periodically and focus on prayer concerns to try to be honest with what’s going on in our hearts. We have an accountable relationship with each other. We

keep tab on each other. We might ask, “How’s your relationship with the Lord?” or, “How’s your prayer life?” or even, “How’s your appetite for the Word?” Thus we struggle together, pray together, weep together and rejoice together. Sometimes we have been frustrated with our lack of progress, but slowly, steadily, and surely, He’s doing a work among us. Praise God! I hope it never stops.

John, according to history, later served at Ephesus as bishop for a number of years. I wish we could leave the story there, but we can’t. The reality is that only 30 or 40 years later John received the vision we call Revelation. In that vision, Jesus came to him and revealed to him a message for the local churches. The honeymoon was over. Jesus said to this church, “I know thy works.” He also knows where we are tonight, brothers. He knows the condition of our churches, or rather—His church.

When I note that He commended their works, labor, patience, their intolerance for those who are evil, their testing of those who falsely claimed to be apostles, that they had labored for Jesus’ sake, and hadn’t fainted, I find myself asking, “Jesus, what more do You want?” That sounds pretty good.

Jesus says, “Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou

hast left thy first love.” Very sobering words! They had lost the reality of Jesus Christ in an every-day, vibrant, experiential relationship and were just “running the machinery.” They were running it very well, but they had lost the reality of the living Lord Jesus in their hearts and lives. Thus the Lord could no longer build His church as He had in the earlier time.

There was a good show going on. There was patience, work, a hatred for evil, but they had let the fire of their first love cool off. Jesus wasn’t all in all, any more. They were just having church. This is sobering, because when the fire gets low, we know how to act. We must get our doctrines in place. We get along alright for a while, just like the church at Ephesus, but if we leave our first love, we must repent if we are to be restored to His approval. They had left their first love by a series of choices.

Our relationship with Jesus doesn’t just slip away. We, too, make conscious choices that determine how things go in that relationship. Whether it’s us personally or the church corporately, we make conscious choices, like refusing the grace of God over here, taking my own way over there, having a problem with a brother, getting irritated with a sister—after a while, many unresolved problems cause me to lose the fire of my love

for my brothers and sisters. How do I take such things to the Lord Jesus without doing some repenting? If the living Lord Jesus is not active in our hearts and in our congregations, we are not “in health.” Maybe it’s good things, or the pressures of the office, or whatever, but it happens. We cool off.

There is a remedy. Jesus said, “Remember!” Remember how it used to be when you had those revivals, those fervent prayer meetings, the bonfire—remember how it was when you loved Me! Remember how it was when you couldn’t wait to get together and worship. Remember when your obedience sprang from a heart that overflowed with gratitude, and the commands of God were not grievous. Jesus seems to be saying, “I want a relationship with you. You are My Bride!”

In our Friday morning men’s prayer meeting in which we men share prayer requests around the table, personal needs, we have a time of strengthening and blessing one another. We’ve been doing this for seven or eight years now. Someone noted that the number of prayer requests about community contacts had lessened. It caused us to ask, “What’s happening? Is the honeymoon over?” We’ve been in Perry, New York, for 10 years. That does not

mean that the living reality of Jesus Christ has come to an end. His grace is there and He wants to continue filling and empowering us—and all of us here tonight.

Remember the confessions that were coming from hearts that were broken and tender. Remember the healing that followed. Our love for the Lord Jesus wells up within us when we are healed. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6). “Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). The living reality of Jesus Christ is just as fresh and powerful as the day you received Him. Do you remember what that was like? We did some “foolish” things, such as talking to a neighbor about the Lord.

We had a neighbor who planned to start a job at the World Trade Center just two days before the attacks on 9-11. Later, one morning I talked to the Lord about Bob, I prayed, *Oh, God, maybe today I will be given an opportunity to share with him.* That day I was painting Bob’s kitchen. As I was working there, he walked in and stood there watching me, and the Lord seemed to say to me, “Here you are.”

We got into a conversation and he opened his heart. I asked him to consider God, and he told me he had never thought about God a whole lot,

but he said it's strange that I asked that, because he had been offered a job at the World Trade Center just two days before the twin towers were destroyed. He said, "I turned the job down." Though he did not make a decision for Christ, it made Jesus Christ a living reality that day at work.

When we hear God speaking and saying, "Where's the reality of Jesus?" and we make excuses, the fire gets cooler. Jesus says, Either repent or your candlestick will be removed.

He said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches. To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." If Jesus has not been the reality in your life He is meant to be, He says, "Overcome!"



Above the Culture

Alvin Mast · Millersburg, OH

A few years ago we took a tour of Europe. Our reason for going was to search out historical sites that link to our family and to our rich Anabaptist heritage. We rented a van in Frankfurt, Germany, and traversed the countries of Germany, Switzerland, and France in search of our historical roots.

Probably the highlight of the trip was finding a cave where our Anabaptist forebears hid to worship. The cave was at the head of a deep ravine. We thought of how it must have been on dark, dreary nights several centuries ago when thunder rolled and

lightning flashed to gather there for corporate worship. I cannot imagine all the dangers in trying to find your way up that steep mountainside just to worship with other believers.

The deep commitment those people had challenges me to greater depths. I am challenged with having a greater love for the brethren. I hold a deeper appreciation than I ever had for my ancestors who pioneered the Anabaptist movement. [Their courage is truly inspiring, but perhaps they did not think of pioneering a new movement as much as simply obeying God. —PLM]

Those early saints were content to be wanderers...in mountains, dwelling in dens and caves of the earth. They counted not their lives dear unto themselves unto death. They accepted their lot with contentment for “the joy of the whole earth” was upon them. They took the Scriptures seriously. Though not enjoying prison and torture, they embraced persecution as bringing purification for the church. We do not read that they considered themselves losers in society or that they were troubled or depressed that the larger society did not understand them. I read of no meetings in the community to attempt to persuade the larger society to accept them.

The zeal for Christ drove those Anabaptists forward into the very arms of persecution. They were not a generation of whiners, demanding equality with the culture around them. Their zeal and love for Christ separated them from the larger culture.

We, too, need to carry the torch of faith high. It is still faith and obedience to the Word of God that separates us from the larger culture and creates a distinctive culture capable of communicating the love of Christ.

“Love not the world” is a commandment of God to His people. God has had problems from the

beginning with His people wanting to enjoy the creation rather than the Creator. The inclination of man is to become a *creation* worshiper rather than a *Creator* worshiper. The reason for this is that we listen to Satan’s lie that we are our own gods. Every time we love the world, contrary to the commandment and will of God, we give deference to man’s wisdom.

“Love not the world” is not a suggestion, based upon God’s will that it is better for us. This is a command of God because He is sovereign and we are weak. We are weak enough to desert the One who created us, and make idols of pleasure for ourselves. We have the tendency to revert to what seems best *to us* instead of what is best *for us*.

The world is going in one direction while all of God’s holy, called-out people are going in another. There are two rulers in this universe. God is the ruler of light and is sovereign above all. Satan, as the prince of the power of the air, is the ruler of darkness. Light and darkness do not harmonize and find no agreement.

Satan knows that he has little time to pursue his agenda. His agenda is so contrary to the will of God that to any alert Christian his plan is obvious. Satan desires to overthrow the government of God and take God’s seat as sovereign ruler over

the universe. In these latter days his roaring becomes louder. No longer is he working underground to upset and rob the faith of individuals. He is going after the church with a roar. He is blatant and loud in his desire to promote wicked lifestyles. He is going after the true church through the false church. He is setting up his kingdom and is becoming ever more desperate.

Satan's people are proud of their filthiness and ungodliness. They separate themselves by boastful proclamation, deviant lifestyle, and wicked externals, such as body piercing, unscriptural hair styles, and immodest and extravagant clothing which reflects their peculiar lifestyle. These people are boastful and delight in being separate from their fellow citizens.

The church dare not compromise with Satan's ungodly agenda. To be a friend with the world governed by Satan is indeed to be an enemy

of God. It should be clear on which side we belong. It should be clear by our words, our lifestyle, and our external appearance. It is not popular to be a Christian in our increasingly ungodly nation. It may be only a matter of time until we might have to worship in some dark, dirty cave. The time might be close that we will be convicted of discrimination if we do not endorse homosexuality or other perversions.

At such a time, will we continue to try to fit in with the rest of the people around us? Will we copy their lifestyles, clothes, and entertainment? Or will we throw down our playing cards and take up the Bible? We should practice holiness while we have freedom to do so. Is persecution just around the corner? I don't know, but I urge all of God's people to take up the cross of Christ and walk to the music of true holiness.



Only as Christ makes all things new
does history stop
repeating itself.



marriages

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

Beachy-Miller

Bro. Leon, son of Henry and Clara Beachy, Huntland, TN, and Sis. Edith, daughter of Ruben and Kathryn Miller, Belvidere, TN, at Winchester First Baptist Church, Winchester, TN, for

Belvidere Mennonite Church, April 21, 2006, by Stephen Beachy.

King-Yutzy

Bro. Steven, son of Jake and Joyce King, (Steven's birth mother was Bertha Kurtz), Arlington, KS, and Sis. Ruth, daughter of Norman and Rhoda Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS, at Cedar Crest A.M. Church, April 29, 2006, by Paul L. Miller.

cradle roll

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

Fisher, Raymond and Lana Sue (Yoder), Chuckey, TN, sixth child, (one deceased), third dau., Rayanna Faye, March 28, 2006.

Knepp, Galen Jay and Joyce (Knepp), Russellville, KY, sixth child, fourth son, Tristan Wyatt, Nov. 28, 2005.

Knepp, Kristin and Rebecca (Esh), Sarasota, FL, first child and dau., Abriana Sage, April 3, 2006.

Miller, David, III, and Charity (Miller), Berlin, OH, first child and dau., Chloe Makenna, March 31, 2006.

Miller, Luke and Beth (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, first child and son, Elliot Luke, March 31, 2006.

Nisly, Stanley and Carol (Yoder), Altamont, KS, second child and dau., Kathryn Grace, April 24, 2006.

Overholt, Steve and Jairia (Miller), Abbeville, SC, first child and dau., Elaina Grace, April 25, 2006.

Stoltzfoos, Dwight and Brenda (Peterheim), Abbeville, SC, first child and son, Andre` Grant, April 23, 2006.

Stutzman, Galen and Emily (Yoder), Auburn, KY, third child, second dau., Laurel Reyne, April 9, 2006.

Troyer, Joe and Debra (Nisly), Plain City, OH, fourth child, second son, Regan Jevon, April 20, 2006.

Troyer, Rodney and Faith (Helmuth), Quaker City, OH, third child and son, Wilson Rodney, March 31, 2006.

Wagler, Nathan and Connie (Schrock), Cross Hill, SC, sixth child, fourth son, Braydric Dejon, March 21, 2006.

ordinations

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

Kollie Juku, Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa, was chosen by voice of the brotherhood and ordained as minister on April 23, 2006. The charge was given by Mervin

obituaries

Stutzman, Leon A., 40, Garden Grove, IA, died from injuries when his pickup collided with another pickup nearly five miles from home April 6, 2006. He was born Mar. 3, 1966, in Holmes County, Ohio, son of Albert, Jr. and Emma (Keim) Stutzman.

He was a dairy farmer, an outdoorsman and a member of Leon Salem Mennonite Church.

On Sept. 21, 1991, he was married to Miriam (Beachy), daughter of Henry C. and the late Elsie (Miller) Beachy. Also surviving were four daughters and two sons: Hannah, 13, (who died April 25); Lyle, 11; Howard, 10; Monica, 8; Cindy, 5; and Emma, 2.

Other survivors include three brothers: Aden, Allen and Leroy, all of Millersburg, OH, and two sisters: Mary Ellen (Jacob) Beachy, Millersburg, and LeAnna (Lavern) Troyer, Canon, GA, 16 nieces and 20 nephews.

Funeral services were held April 19,

Lantz, assisted by Gary Kauffman and Andy Mullet.

Jonathan Miller, 29, Huntsville, AR, was ordained to the office of minister at Lighthouse of Faith, March 12, 2006. Preordination messages were given by Elmer Gingerich. The charge was given by Elmer Miller, assisted by Elmer Gingerich and John Nolt.

with Monroe Gingerich officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Stutzman, Hannah Rose, 13, Garden Grove, IA, died April 25, 2006, at University of Iowa Hospital from injuries in a vehicle accident April 6, which claimed the life of her father at the time of the accident. She was born July 16, 1992, in Holmes County, OH, daughter of Leon and Miriam (Beachy) Stutzman.

Surviving are her mother, Miriam, two brothers and three sisters: Lyle Eric, 12; Howard Lee, 10; Monica Faith, 8; Cindy Lou, 5, and Emma Sue, 2. She was preceded in death by her father and grandmother.

Funeral services were held April 28, with Monroe Gingerich officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Miller, Edna Catherine (Hostetler), 85, died at her son's home in Plain City, OH, April 20, 2006. She was born June 27, 1920, in rural Plain City, daughter of the late Mose M. and Fannie (Kuhns) Hostetler.

Deeply devoted to her family and the church, she was a long time member of Canaan Fellowship Church.

On Nov. 27, 1941, she was married to Joe Miller, Jr., who preceded her in death. They lived in matrimony for 63 years. She is survived by three sons: Freeman (Naomi) Miller, Philadelphia, PA; Vernon (Alice) Miller, London, OH; Lonnie (Vera) Miller, Plain City; three daughters: Martha (Mrs. Nelson Beachy), Plain City; Susan (Mrs. Ervin Hostetler), Plain

City; Frieda (Mrs. Paul Beachy), West Jefferson, OH; 26 grandchildren and 53 great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were two brothers: Freeman and John, a sister, Martha Helmuth; two great granddaughters: Angela and Vanessa Gingerich.

Funeral services were held April 23, with Robert Beachy, Perry Troyer, John L. Gingerich and Ryan Good serving. Burial was in the Canaan Church Cemetery.

observations

Answers in Genesis (AiG) is located at P. O. Box 510, Hebron, KY, 41048.

Their mission is to promote creation as taught in Genesis as opposed to Darwinistic evolution.

The following is gleaned from Ken Ham's monthly newsletter, (April, 2006).

Dr. David Menton has certain scientific credentials that made him eligible to attend the annual conference of the world's largest scientific society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). An estimated 9,000 people attended in St. Louis. Dr. Menton reports that evolutionists were very upset and vocal about a significant portion of the population who believe in creation.

They have identified the following strategies to address this "problem."

1. They will try to enlist clergy or other people of faith to help promote evolution.

2. Evolutionists must strive to convince Americans that our competitiveness is at risk if evolution is not taught.

3. They must introduce evolution earlier—as early as first grade. To wait until junior high is simply too late to convince students about Darwin.

4. They will intentionally use terms like "science" or "scientist" instead of "evolution" or "evolutionist."

5. They will recruit the cooperation of lawyers to ensure that public schools are God-free zones.

The mood of the meeting was strident and angry. They tried to equate creationists with terrorists. They also

depicted creationists as seeking an end to science. One speaker linked creationists' politically incorrect views with being opposed to homosexual behavior. Belief in a God who answers prayer was depicted as ridiculous.

One speaker evoked laughter when he mentioned that some creationists believe in God, the devil, prophecy and the return of Christ.

This report is shared to help us understand that atheistic evolutionists take this matter very seriously, for good reason. It is a conflict between truth and error, light and darkness.

AiG is committed to promoting the truth according to Genesis. Their website www.AnswersinGenesis.org has over 5,000 articles. The site receives 1.3 million visits a month.

Plans are underway for AiG to open a museum near Cincinnati in the spring of 2007.

We may rest assured that truth will ultimately triumph. Let us be thankful for those who are willing to confront the darkness of error with the light of truth. (My thanks to Ivan Schrock for providing this information.)



Despite legal setbacks, intelligent design is not dead or dormant. Discovery Institute from Seattle, endorses the strategy of exposing

the holes in Darwinism rather than offering an alternative theory. The Lancaster, California, school board voted unanimously to allow teachers to discuss problems in Darwin's theory. Policies adopted in Kansas, New Mexico, Minnesota and several individual districts encourage critical thinking. (*World*, 4-8-06)



The eleven million undocumented immigrants in the United States, mostly from Mexico and Central America are getting major media and political attention. It seems easier to analyze the problem than to offer helpful solutions. But for us to think of the issue in purely legal terms seems both simplistic and legalistic. Our mission workers in El Salvador discourage national Christians from taking the risky and illegal journey to the north. It has been observed that if people in the South would want to go to heaven as much as they want to go to the United States, mission work would be easy.

It is apparent the motive in wanting to come is essentially financial. Making a living is for many a serious challenge. Isn't it interesting that our country champions free enterprise and personal initiative, but wants such motivation to stop at our national borders?

It is also interesting that what our

books call the Mexican War, Mexicans call the American Invasion. In that conflict Mexico lost what is now California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona, and parts of Colorado, and New Mexico. This war was fought in 1846-48. Texas had been part of Mexico until 1836.

Our government is finding it difficult to know how to deal with 11,000,000 people whose presence is both a problem and an asset.

One proposal is to fortify the borders and penalize immigrants and their employers to reduce the problem to acceptable proportions. Other less stringent methods are also being discussed.

Meanwhile the undocumented population has staged massive demonstrations. Many have failed to report for work in protest of the proposed changes. Some have considered purchasing boycotts to call attention to how they contribute to the orderly routine of daily life.

One reason that this has become such a problem is that generally these illegals are responsible laborers, who are willing to do the kinds of work that are less attractive to our citizens. They do not need top wages to improve their circumstances.

Meanwhile, we do well to idealize an attitude that is free from selfishness and greed. It is doubtful that

such an attitude can come from purely legal considerations. Exodus 23:9 would seem to be a valid consideration for God's people: "Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."



Mennonite Christian Fellowship sponsored week-end meetings at Richmond, MO, (Ray County) on April 22-23, 2006. Host congregation was Bethel Mennonite Fellowship. A similar meeting is being planned for May 6-7 at Stoystown, PA. This meeting is being hosted by Somerset Mennonite Fellowship.

The purpose of both meetings is to address basic issues of the way of Christ in the event of a military draft. It is a very intentional effort to prepare the young people to face the future in the spirit of Christ, whether or not there is a draft.

The meetings were planned with a good bit of variety and creativity. Areas for consideration included biblical, historical, practical, and contemporary bases for the way of the cross in human relationships.

Attendance and interest of young people appeared to be strong. They are anticipating approximately 1,000 to attend at the Somerset meeting. I think this effort is commendable.

I don't know who among us should take the initiative, but do we not owe it to our dear young people to take whatever measures are necessary to make sure that they understand this very basic principle?

One interesting feature of the above meetings was Glenn Bender's topic on Examples From Real Life. The following incidents are gleaned from his presentation:

After World War II, Henry Benders, Glenn's parents, lived on the edge of the Amish settlement at Kalona, Iowa. There was only one other Amishman in their threshing ring. The rest were mostly Catholics. With memories of the war fresh on their minds, they did not think or act kindly toward the Amish. Their language was rough and profane.

For some reason, Joe Bontrager became a frequent target for harassment and ridicule. His facial hair was sparse. They thought he should stay at home until he was mature enough to do a man's work.

On one occasion they removed a buggy wheel, then put the axle through the fence and re-attached the wheel. Joe smiled benignly, but remained calm. Another time they

put buggy shafts through a fence then hitched the horse. Joe's even-tempered response was obviously not going according to their plans. When it was time to go home, somebody's conscience had apparently corrected the prank.

When Joe was offered a drink, he told his tormentors that he preferred water. But he then consented to drink a soda. He sniffed the contents of the Pepsi bottle and remarked, "This doesn't smell like Pepsi. I don't drink that stuff"

A few years later, Joe decided to move out of state. Henry Bender was at his public auction, as were the former threshing comrades. Henry noted their change of attitude: their language now was clean and respectful. They couldn't understand why Joe wanted to move. They hated to lose such a good neighbor. They remarked that Joe was a very godly man.

This was clearly a case where practical non-resistance made a difference. Next month, I may share another case Glenn told us about.

—DLM



*Compassion is difficult to give away
because it keeps coming back.*

On Vanity, Values, and Virtue

Aaron Lapp · Kinzers, PA

Does our Pennsylvania state legislature need more work? Lately someone proposed a law that would prohibit public school teachers from “indoctrinating” students. Some church people might find that both amusing and strange, for it seems that certain churches have cut out doctrine for some time, already.

The church flounders over Bible doctrine, but the state legislature is different. Legislators deal with political issues. Their concern about “indoctrination” has to do with giving the wrong slant in state-funded schools.

In the proposed law, the teacher could *not* give his own personal ideas or values in the material presented. What is the public school teacher supposed to do? Give just bare facts? When values are removed from bare facts, does anything of value remain? Such a ruling could result in teachers being positively neutral and students becoming neutrally negative. When that happens, it moves the issue from values to vanity.

Espousing values was about as high as our nation could go in academics

and morals from 1960-2006. Prior to that, virtue had the high ground in Europe and in North America. The higher level of living held out to the general population was based on virtue as taught in the Bible. Nobility came as a result.

Coming into the 1960's, virtue was seen as too confusing, as holding to too few options, and as being too rigid. As our world came into the modern mode of plurality, it was soothingly massaged with values. Values felt more free. Values allowed for personal input. Values provided for a more flexible faith. Values gave us a no-fault works ethic that justify, mind you, almost any sin. America felt pretty good about having cleverly developed the perfect “self-effectualized” citizen based on values, not virtues.

Now the state wants to interfere by saying that the next generation cannot even be “indoctrinated” with our self efforts and the teaching of how much better off we are as “free thinkers.” Apparently, even evolution isn't far enough away from God. More help seems to be on the way to make

ours a tetherless society that can go farther without God than with Him.

Prior to 1960 (music revolution time via the Beatles), virtues based on the Bible were unashamedly held up from generation to generation. A definite shift changed all that as America tilted toward more personal freedoms. The secularization of public schools became much more pronounced as the schools consolidated into larger districts. This resulted in much larger centralized schools run by professionals. Secular values quickly replaced Bible-based virtues. The great debate currently going on about evolution versus Intelligent Design is a disappointing result of the earlier loss of values. Earlier it was virtue-less sex education in the guise of progress, fostered by independent thinking and decisions made by self-determination.

Now values themselves are “up for grabs.” In the academic tug of war, tolerance wins. Values can change as culture changes, as norms change, as tolerance allows a shift toward prevailing trends of thought. As former president, Bill Clinton said in the midst of his administration (1993), “Sometimes all of the answers have to come from the values that speak to us from within.” No doubt, the church people who heard Mr. Clinton’s speech that day in the Church of God

in Christ in Memphis, Tennessee, were pleased. Imagine, if you can, the wide latitude of behavior that allows.

Jesus said, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts...” (Matthew 15:19). And God had earlier said that “every imagination of the thoughts of [man’s] heart is only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Man’s answers from within say predictably just what man prefers to hear.

Some of the general population’s values are commendable. The problem is in mixing nobility and carnality, graciousness and selfishness, truth and error. The prevailing mood of tolerance will scarcely allow anyone to be sure about what is right, nor judgmental about what is wrong.

Bible-based virtues define a clearer line of deportment. Virtues have elevating qualities in them that contribute to society wherever they are lived out and expressed. They are never out of date, never inappropriate, and always commend any individual who consistently lives by them.

The Bottom Line is: The higher road of virtue cannot be legislated. It is God’s gift to those who are born again and who love Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. Virtue grows as we grow in Christ and rises as we rise in newness of life.



I Went to Church

By A Heavenbound Soul

I went to church.

I was greeted with a hug and a pat on the back; I felt welcome.

We sang many praise songs with clapping of hands and tapping of feet; I was emotionally stirred.

Over and over, I heard, "Praise the Lord!" and "Hallelujah!" I was thrilled.

Everyone prayed as they felt led; "Amen!" and "Praise Jesus!" were added to many prayers; I was excited.

Many testimonies were given and they were all given applause; I was wearing down.

More praise songs were sung and somehow, I missed the sermon. I don't think there was one; I felt cheated.

As I thought it over, I felt drained and hungry for more than I got.

I went to church.

I was greeted and ushered to my seat. Everything was orderly and well-planned, very quiet; I felt a sense of reverence.

A young man announced the song number and started the hymn at just the right pitch. There was beautiful harmony; the service was well-organized; I was impressed.

In the sermon and in prayer every word seemed measured; I was a little tense.

As I looked around the room, it seemed everyone sat rigid. There was little expression, almost no sound; I marveled.

I was invited to a home for lunch. The children were well-mannered, soft-spoken, quick to obey and helpful; I was impressed.

After dinner, the conversation was tense; I was ill at ease.

As I thought it over, I wondered if I could make myself good enough to fit in; I felt inadequate.

I went to church.

I was greeted with a holy kiss, a hearty "God bless you," and a warm smile; I relaxed and felt welcome.

We sang good, time-tested songs, well-harmonized.

The words of Scripture were not in today's form. A lot was said about Individualism; I was a little puzzled.

The message was preached in earnest, with conviction. The minister was in tears with a burden on his heart; I was moved.

As I looked around, I noticed a few heads nodding in agreement, and a

few tears; I was deeply touched.

Lunch was served to hearty appetites.

Some conversation at the tables was on spiritual topics and some relived yesterday's happenings, with occasional mirth; it reflected real life.

After thinking it over, I felt that the experience had left a mark on my heart and that my innermost being was addressed; it nurtured a closer walk with my Lord.

Now that I have attended different services, I realize that there is no perfect church, but I shall seek spiritual nourishment and I shall worship regularly in spirit and in truth. Now more than ever, I know I won't even think of staying away from church on the Lord's day.



Individualism in the Church

Lowell Miller · Nickerson, KS

Today there seems to be a push for individualism that says, "It's just God and me. I am accountable only to God. The church is secondary." In one sense, that is true. We are ultimately accountable to God. But living in a brotherhood is part of God's plan for His people.

When we isolate ourselves, we tend to evaluate and criticize the rest of the church according to our perceptions and understandings. When we see the living church as Christ's body, we realize that God speaks not only to *me*, but to others in the body. Many times God's will for His people is revealed through the voice of the church.

It seems sad to have someone profess deep love for the Lord on the one hand and on the other hand hold a disdain for the local body. Individualism fosters division in the church. Those who operate on the individualistic model, can set themselves up as the only right persons in the church. Other people and their actions are compared with their insights and perceptions.

Identifying problems is relatively easy. Finding solutions is much harder. The analyst may display a great deal of zeal and passion, but he may never experience the real joys of Christian brotherhood. Sadly, in his disdain for brotherhood he loses

credibility with that same brotherhood when he seeks to address their weaknesses.

Can a person say he loves the Lord but can't tolerate the local church? If the church has been founded on the Lord Jesus Christ, shouldn't I rally around her? I am not saying that the church doesn't have problems, or that she should somehow have executive immunity. But the very support I withhold from the church has the effect of weakening her even more.


The building that is tied together is much stronger than the individual components standing alone. Paul intimates that unity is the mark of progressive growth, heading toward ultimate perfection in Christ. Ephesians 4:13 says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The Anabaptist model, (and I think the biblical model), is *interdependence* as opposed to *independence*. A building gets its strength in being joined to the

rest of the building.

Can we supremely love the groom, while we hold his bride at arm's length? In the world we see many dysfunctional marriages. Unity in the church, as in a marriage, is built on a love relationship. Out of this deep love flow a natural respect, devotion, and commitment by the Bride toward her Husband.

1 Peter 5:5 says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. *Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*" [italics added]

Together, let's find the joy and blessing of humbly submitting ourselves to one another. After all, the Christ we profess is the very head of the church. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:18).

The church is His institution. Let's rally around His church! 

EXERCISE DAILY.



Walk with the Lord.

My Sins and My Savior

Rosa Yoder · Stark City, MO

1. Jesus was abused
accused
misused
bruised

Because of my sins!

2. If you have been abused
accused
misused
bruised

There is healing in Jesus!

3. Jesus was unprotected
neglected
rejected
afflicted

Because of my sins!

4. If you've felt unprotected
neglected
rejected
afflicted

There is healing in Jesus!

5. His words were scorned
His body torn
feelings forlorn
emotions worn

Because of my sins!

6. Your words may seem scorned
your spirit mourn
your feelings forlorn
your emotions worn

There is healing in Jesus!

7. Yet He bore it graciously
silently
courageously
patiently

Because of my sins!

8. He will comfort you,
sustain you
cleanse you
live in you

As you find healing in Jesus!

9. My sins were:
the thorns on His head
the nails in His side
the spear in His side

By which I find healing!

10. Yes, my sins were:
the thorns on His head
the nails in His side
the spear in His side

By which I found healing!



Great Needs in Uganda

Allen Yoder · Nakuru, Kenya

[Allen is business director of Amish Mennonite Aid in Kenya.]

Since March of 2005 we have taken a number of trips into Uganda and have opened a post office box to enable us to communicate more economically with our Ugandan [Bible correspondence] students. We have been sending a Lamp and Light (L&L) brother to the Ugandan border about twice a month to drop off the lessons at the post office and to collect those that have come in.

Our Ugandan contact also continues to hand carry many of the lessons to and from church people and schools within a reasonable distance from his home. On the last trip that was made to the border, our L&L brother carried 981 lessons, and it was almost more than he could handle on one trip. At the beginning of 2005, we had around 150 students. Today there are over 2,200 active students and the number is increasing. That's how the work in Uganda is growing—so fast we can hardly keep up with it.

We traveled twice to Kampala, the

capital city, to distribute L&L enrollment forms and tracts. On one such trip we distributed approximately 8,000 forms in just a few hours! There seems to be a tremendous hunger for the Word of God and many opportunities. Very few people refused the literature, and many filled out the enrollment forms on the spot. One of the problems in this approach has been that many do not have a postal address. They want to give us their mobile phone numbers, and we try to explain to them that it will be impossible for us to do correspondence courses via mobile phone.

Since those first trips, we have changed our approach slightly and began concentrating more on secondary schools and colleges. We usually meet with the schools' Christian Union Patrons and try to work through them to reach the students. Sometimes they gather the students together and give us the opportunity to meet with them in person. At one smaller school, we were able to give a short teaching and afterwards the moderator gave an invitation. Almost the entire classroom of 30-

some students responded! We split up into smaller groups, shared with them further, and had the privilege of leading many to the Lord. We believe this approach is much more effective than the previous one.

There are literally thousands who are searching for truth and willing to listen to the Gospel message. *“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”* (Romans 10:14). Here we have a tremendous window of opportunity!

Not so many years ago it would

have been impossible to take the Word of God to these people so freely. Today we can shout it from the mountaintops! We can enter their public schools and proclaim it from their podiums! (Too bad we can't do that in America.)

Who is willing to go and tell them? They are waiting. God is not limited, but somehow we find ourselves unable to keep up with the many requests for teaching seminars and new churches. Please pray that God would open up a way that laborers could be placed in this enormous field that is ready for harvest. God is able if we are available!



Anyway

Author Unknown

People can be unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered. *Love them anyway.*

If you are kind, some people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. *Be kind anyway.*

If you are successful, you may win false friends and true enemies. *Succeed anyway.*

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. *Do good anyway.*

What you spend years building may be quickly destroyed. *Build anyway.*

People who really need help may attack you if you help them. *Help people anyway.*

When you give the world the best you have, you may not be thanked or recognized. *Give your best anyway.*

[Adapted from a poster in Crystal Nisly's room, who lives with her missionary parents, Darrell and Kathy Nisly, at Sioux Narrows, ON.]



The Pharisees

Darryl Miller · age 14 · McConnelsville, OH

The Pharisees were Jewish leaders from the time of the Maccabees onward. The Pharisees opposed the Saducees. The Pharisees were not from the priestly class but were laymen.

The Pharisees were lawyers, but they believed the Law should be open to new interpretations. They were nationalists and opposed foreign influences.

They believed in the Resurrection and in a future life with rewards and punishments. They were concerned with the outward observance of the Law.

They had right doctrines, but their lives contradicted their teachings. Spiritual attitudes played a very small part for the Pharisee. They saw the outward observance of the Law as most important and that was one aspect that brought them into conflict with Jesus. Jesus told them that for pretense they make long prayers and that they were like a cup and platter, which made themselves clean on the outside, but within were full of extortion and excess. He told them that they outwardly appeared righteous to men, but within were full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Once a Pharisee and publican went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee said a prayer of pride; the publican said a prayer of humbleness. The publican went home exalted; the Pharisee went home abased.

When John the Baptist saw many Pharisees and Saducees come to his baptism, he said, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance..."

When Jesus and his disciples plucked and ate corn on the Sabbath Day, the Pharisees thought it was unlawful. When the disciples didn't wash their hands before they ate, they thought the disciples transgressed against important tradition. Jesus offended them by telling them that they also transgressed against tradition. He called them hypocrites.

When Jesus told the parable about the wicked husbandmen, the Pharisees perceived that He spoke of them. They sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet.

Once while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What think ye of Christ?"

Whose Son is he?" They said unto him, "The Son of David." He said unto them, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?" If David then called him Lord, how is he his son?" No

man was able to answer him a word, neither did any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

The Pharisees disappeared after the destruction of Israel.

[Submitted by Darryl's parents, Thomas and Edith Miller.]



Prickles

Rosie Bontrager · Chilton, TX

A prickle got into my thumb. It was practically colorless but I knew it was there beneath the layers of skin when I bumped the spot. Actually, it didn't bother me much until I started poking it. That really stirred things up! But all the while I babied my thumb, I never once thought of cutting it off to get rid of the prickle.

It is a challenge in my own emotional and spiritual life to remove the prickle instead of cutting off my thumb. For example, suppose my husband asks me to fill the van with gas for the weekend. Irked at his request, I may "forget" to do it. Or I may be "too busy" to take the time. In my heart, the real reason I didn't get it done was that I thought my husband could have done it. I felt imposed on. So the real problem is a

lack of submission on my part, not forgetfulness or being busy.

When I face an unwelcome request the easiest thing to do is to try to get out of doing it. If I would take the time to look beneath the layers of "skin" excuses in the way, I might find a sin problem in my own heart that is quite hidden. Though camouflaged by other "reasons," the root cause of my discomfort is something foreign to my Heavenly Father's design for me; it is a sin. I don't believe that sin is always the root. I am just encouraging us all to greater transparency in examining our own reactions and responses to discomforts in our lives.

How foolish to cut off the thumb when all we need to do is remove the prickle! Let us "walk in the light as He is in the light."



Artisan or Accident?

Ernest Strubhar · Perkins, OK

[Here's another letter to the editor of The Perkins Journal. While God is not required to satisfy our sense of reason, it is thought-provoking how He has chosen to give us glimpses of his vast knowledge through his handiwork.—PLM]

I have an exquisitely-shaped obsidian arrow head, one inch long, that my grandfather found on his farm in Oregon years ago. I can see the marks of the hand that took simple tools and formed it so nearly symmetrical. To me, it's a work of art. If you would look at it and tell me it was formed by chance and time, do you think I would believe you?

In my living room I have a glider rocker made from some three dozen pieces of oak lumber, carefully cut and sanded, joined together with screws and glue. I am told that the pattern for it came from some Hutterite craftsmen in Alberta, Canada, who brought it from Europe and passed it from generation to generation. I invite you to come and look at it and tell me if you think it was formed by an explosion in a carpenter shop—plus unaided time and chance.

I am writing this letter on a computer made of many components. I don't know how the parts work together or who put them together to

function as they do. I didn't see anyone build this computer. But when I look at it and think about what it does, based on logical inference, I believe that it was designed by skilled engineers and built by careful laborers who knew what they were doing.

All of us look at the design of such everyday things and *know*, without a flicker of a doubt, that an intelligent designer made them.

When we look around at the world we live in, we see beauty, order, and design all around. Some folks tell me that it all started with an explosion billions of years ago. From that explosion, unaided by any intelligence, modified only by time and chance, came forth the beauty, order and design we all see. Do I believe them?

No, I don't.

Why do people believe such "fairytale"? Because they're told everybody else does? Because the "tale" is repeated again and again? Because they don't stop and think? Perhaps all of these. But much more, they believe the unbelievable because they have determined before they look at the evidence that they will not believe in a Creator God. They don't want to believe in Him. They don't want to answer to Him.



God's Mailman

S. Y.

The mailman comes most every day
And brings you lots of bills to pay;
By paying them all your account
runs low,
But you don't blame the mailman,
you know.

on your toes,
Remember how often the mailman
goes.
And don't blame the man God has
chosen to use
To bring the conviction you should
not refuse.

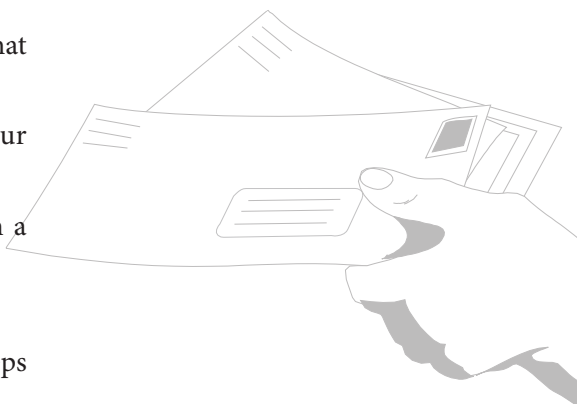
The minister stands to deliver God's
Word;

We groan and we sigh about what
we've heard.

We think of the man's faults, our
minds far astray,

Forget it's God speaking through a
vessel of clay.

The next time God's messenger steps



helpers at home

"Bee" an Encourager



Mary June Glick



Bees signal good things. One of the first signs of summer is the arrival of bees. I remember as a child I was allowed go barefooted after I saw the first bumble bee. Many of us have enjoyed

reading the book *A Hive of Busy Bees*, a wonderful book for children.


The honeybee is an interesting insect. Each hive needs only one queen. Her only job is to lay eggs. Female worker bees serve the queen.

They willingly give their lives for the queen. As Christians, we serve our queen, the church. May we be willing to lay down our lives, our own selfish desires and goals to serve and bring joy and happiness to others. We are called to be encouragers.


Encouraging gives incentive to others, it inspires them with courage and hope. Hope believes life will get better, that “I can do it.” It is at rest knowing that when trial comes “this, too, will pass,” but if it doesn’t, I know that God’s grace will carry me through, one day at a time.


God wants us to carry His fragrance to others, like bees carry pollen from flower to flower. “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish” (2 Corinthians 2:15). God will often use us to comfort others in the same circumstances in which He has comforted us. We are to be comforted “in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble”...(2 Corinthians 1:4). When you are going through a difficult experience, be alert to the fact that God wants to use your experience to encourage others.


Practical ideas for encouragement:


 1. *Kindness.* A touch of kindness can change someone’s day. Smile, speak kind words, give a compliment, (“You did a good job”; “You look hap-


py”; “I appreciate_____”; “You mean a lot to me,” and so on.) Mennonites have not typically been encouraged to give compliments for fear of causing pride. Flattery may cause pride, but a genuine compliment often makes us try harder.

 2. *Acts of compassion.* Acts are kindness in action, doing something, instead of offering pity. Lay a hand on someone’s shoulder; give a hug; write a note; give flowers or a gift; take a meal to the home. Don’t ask—just do it.

 3. *Express your love as sisters.* (Like you do to a birth sister.) Accept your faith sister as she is, spend time with her, speak well of her to others, make allowance for faults. Give her a telephone call; invite her to your house for tea; go shopping together; and show her she is important to you.

 4. *Be courteous.* Treat others with respect. Say, “Thank you,” “I’m sorry.” Just don’t say everything you know.

 5. *Forgive each other.* This can be a tremendous encouragement. Forgive readily and pray a blessing upon the person.

 6. *Be responsible for each other.* Yes, I am my sister’s keeper.

Encouragement is your best gift to others.



“I Can’t?”

Anita Yoder · Ligonier, IN

Have you ever found yourself saying? “I can’t!” David Livingstone seemed not to have use for those words in his vocabulary. His life proved it.

Robert Moffat, a missionary to Africa, spent time resting in his homeland, England. While there, he met a young, energetic medical doctor, David Livingstone. “Do you think I could be of help in Africa?” Livingstone asked Moffat.

Moffat replied, “Yes, but don’t go where the Gospel has already been taken. There is a great need in Africa, my friend. From my home I can see the smoke of many other villages where Christ’s name has never been heard. Go there.”

David Livingstone joined the Mofatts and worked with them for a time. In time, he married their daughter, Mary. David started traveling into regions where no missionary had ever been, following the Zambezi River. He became a trusted friend of many African people.

One day David met a fierce chief who demanded medicine for his proud and angry heart. Livingstone could only point to his Bible. He told

him, “This is the only medicine for the soul that can be found. Believe it, brother.”

Even though the chief himself didn’t listen, Khama, his 14-year-old son became a Christian. Later, when Khama became chief of his tribe, he worked hard to rule his people in righteousness, helping to put an end to many wrong practices.

Livingstone kept pushing deeper and deeper into the Dark Continent. Many people in America and England were interested in his explorations and adventures. Suddenly the news about him stopped. David Livingstone was believed to be lost! An American newspaper sent a reporter, Henry Stanley, to search for him. After searching for months, Henry came upon him, but David was very sick.

After helping Livingstone back to health, Henry Stanley became so taken up with Livingstone’s work that he joined him. They planned to follow the Congo River and carry the Gospel to more people.

David Livingstone had many dangerous encounters. Once he met an angry lion. He escaped with his life,

but not without getting badly hurt. The lion chewed his arm. Yet he persisted in spreading the Gospel, telling people about a better way. Also, he taught them new ways to grow crops and how to build better homes. He

felt like these were the people of his continent.

He spent about 30 years in Africa and died while kneeling beside his bed in prayer. He was surely a man deeply devoted to the cause of Christ.

How Can We Give God His Rightful Place?

Matt Jones · Fifth-grade student at Hugh K. Cassell School · Waynesboro, VA

People are starting to lose focus on the purpose of life. God put us here for a reason. That reason is to serve Him and Him alone.

God gave us everything we have. He gave us our health, our house, and our family. He even gave us his only Son who was sent to the cross to die for our sins. But yet, so many people want God out of schools, and want absolutely nothing to do with Him.

If God can give us all of our blessings, don't you think we can make some time to thank Him and praise

Him for all He's done? If we start turning away from God, He will eventually turn away from us.

For those of you who don't think God is real, how do you think you and I got here? Do you think some scientist put us together...? Do you think some scientist filled the oceans with bath water? Let's start taking the time to give God a chance to work in our lives.

[Submitted by Bennie Byler.]



youth messages

Dear Youth,

About a year ago we discussed why young people sometimes get bored with life.

Boredom is sometimes the feeling that a person gets when he does not have something to do or wants some-

thing to do that will bring excitement or fulfillment. Feelings of boredom can also come when what we are doing for the Lord is motivated by some selfish desire.

If the reason we're "busy" is the result of some selfish interest—making

a name for ourselves, trying to protect the identity of our constituency, laying up treasures on earth, or any other selfish motive, it is fairly certain that, at some point, we will question whether we are doing what we are created to do.

When people accept Christ for selfish reasons, join the church for selfish reasons, and serve Him for selfish reasons, it can be expected that life will be boring, if not downright discouraging and frustrating.

This month's responses describe activities that some youth are doing out of love for God and their fellow man.

Service for the Lord only brings fulfillment when we serve Him out of love. When we choose to give Him

our spare time as a way of saying "Thank-you" for all He has given us, it is likely that our service for Him will bring us joy and fulfillment. If our service for others is an attempt at filling a void in our life, even when people notice our work, the praise will seem hollow.

So, with those concepts in mind, I encourage all of us to ask God for a clearer vision of how He wants to use each of our lives.

For those engaged in kingdom work, but getting very little affirmation for it, I commend you to God and thank you for being willing to put your shoulder to the work that is only our "reasonable service."

Thanks again to each of you who contributed thoughts for this issue.

—EE

This Month's **QUESTION**

Youth often enjoy being involved in Christian service, but get sidetracked with personal and social interests that are often monotonous and self-serving. This distraction keeps them from thinking up creative ways to serve their communities. What are some of creative things that you are doing that has enabled you to serve your communities?

r e s p o n s e f r o m o u r r e a d e r s ...

The youth from our church have had various opportunities to help with summer Bible Schools and

boys and girls clubs. It is a way of befriending children from the community who need a positive influ-

ence. Another way that I have found to be of service to the community is helping on our local volunteer fire department. I have had opportunities to be a witness and to answer questions that people have about us Mennonites.

Chet King, Port Royal, PA



I really like this question! I have tried to think of ways that I could be a better missionary, even to my own community people...but am not very good at making any ideas practical enough to fit my work schedule. So this made me think!

I am a clerk at our store and one thing I like to do is to put a tract in the customer's grocery bag when I bag their items. I really enjoy doing that, and even though it is not much at all, it is something I can do for The Kingdom while I am going about my earthly work.

I think another way to be a missionary is to support other missionaries in prayer. Our church just recently made up a "prayer warrior" paper, in which missionaries tell a man in our church their prayer requests, and then he gives all of us in the church a list of missionaries' names and their current requests.

Stephanie Kauffman, Bird-in-Hand, PA



I'm a counselor in our church's "Boys' Club" that meets every Thursday evening with boys from the community that range in age from about 7 to 17, Each of us counselors pick up our assigned boys and meet at the clubhouse at 6:30. The evening is divided into 3 periods consisting of Crafts, Bible Hour, and Dodge Ball.

Being with these boys for an evening really reveals the sick trash and filth that these boys fill themselves with all the time! Sometimes I wonder if we're even making a difference at all in their lives, but then I think of that verse that says something about us sowing the seed and the Lord giving the increase. My goal is that I could at least, in some way, point them in the right way and then let God work out his plan of salvation in each of their hearts.

Stephen Stoltzfus, Oxford, PA



This spring, the youth from our church did an interesting project. We made up "health and school kits" for CAM. A committee was in charge of buying the items for the kits, and then one evening we got together and assembled them. We made 60 health kits and 60 school kits.

In order to raise money for these projects, we asked the people from the church whether they had any work that we could do for them. In

exchange for the work, they paid us, and we kept accepting jobs until we had enough money. In fact, there were more jobs available than we needed. It was a worthwhile project and we really enjoyed doing it!

Twice a year, we have what we call "Arbor Night." The youth are divided into several groups. We rake lawns, houseclean, and pretty much do any job that someone needs help with. For example, this spring some fellows prepared the ground at an older couples' place for a patio, while the girls washed windows there.

We can expect to be involved in doing all kinds of odd jobs. We have an evening like this in the spring and fall. In the fall, we also help with garden work. Usually we help elderly persons, minister's families, or any other family that has lots of work and needs help.

Amy Gerber, Wellesley, ON



One thing that our youth group just started doing is designating a church family to be responsible for one of the activities one night a month. It has worked out quite

well so far. This gives each family and their youth the opportunity to plan something that they feel we as a youth group need and enjoy. It adds a lot of variety and makes it easier on the youth planning committee, also. A lot of times we have more fun or feel more fulfilled after we do something "not so fun" like work projects. Working makes your play more fun and you go home with a happy heart, knowing you've blessed someone else instead of trying to just satisfy yourself.

Jeanie Graber, Amboy, IN



Our youth girls started going to a Rescue Mission for homeless women and their children. We played games with them, sang some songs, and served desserts. It was a great opportunity to get a glimpse into their lives and it was a setting where they could ask questions as such as, "Why do you wear those things on your head?" and so on. It was also an opportunity to tell them some of the things that I learned in "Separation and Nonconformity" at CBS.

Sara Yoder, Bluffton, IN

Next Month's
QUESTION

Why do you think a young person who grew up in a Christian home, would drift away from God and from following the principles in his Word?

Please send your response by the 20th of the month.



THOUGHT GEMS

All God's directions are sealed to us until
they are opened by obedience.



Give God what's right—not what's left.



Don't put a question mark where God has put a period.



Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.



Many people want to serve God, but only in an advisory position.



Suffering from truth decay? Brush up on your Bible.



Worry is a darkroom where negatives develop.



Christian clothing fits properly,
and allows for freedom of movement.



The security blanket of the child of God is the Holy Spirit.



Brotherhood is "benevolent otherhood."

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Periodicals