



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

Galatians 6:14

NOVEMBER 2007

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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 Savior;
 To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;
 And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

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I Give It All

Beulah Swartzentruber, Montezuma, GA

Not a thing have I done,
To deserve Thy gracious love.
Nothing good or kind or noble,
For Thy love from heaven above.
I am really just a sinner,
Saved by Thy most wondrous grace,
Poor and wretched, blind and naked,
So I come before Thy face.
Jesus, spotless Lamb of God,
Now I give my heart to Thee.
Praying that Thou wouldest cleanse it,
And restore it perfectly.
More and more just like my Master,
I would wholly long to be.
More and more just like my Jesus,
More and more, dear Lord, like Thee!
I am really just your servant,
But it fills my heart with peace.
Just to know that You're my Master
Lord, I give my ALL to Thee! 

Living and Giving

November is Thanksgiving time. It's also thanks **living** time! Several months ago, I asked for reader response on the matter of living and giving. I appreciate what came in, but I hoped for much greater participation from readers. Apparently I did not ask the right questions to trigger a ready response. I guess it is now up to me to make further observations pertinent to this subject, which I had hoped would come from you.

In the United States and Canada, we have a standard of living that is much higher than in most other parts of the world. How would God have us look at our good fortune?

We might give honorable mention to the men who laid the political foundations of our respective governments and who held a high regard (theoretically, at least) for the rights of all men, regardless of race, creed or social class. I gratefully acknowledge that fact.

We could point to the freedoms that our Anabaptist forefathers won because they would not go against what they believed God was showing them. We could rightly acknowledge

that many of today's freedoms in the western world were bought with martyr blood. But how would that mark out the path of faithfulness for us today?

I believe we must ask ourselves a form of that most basic question in the simple and profound refrain of Charles E. Sheldon's book, *In His Steps*: "What would Jesus do?"

What Would Jesus Have Us Think and Do?

If Jesus were here in bodily form and came to our homes and churches, what He would want us to think and do? We don't know, but judging by what He did and taught when He was here some 2,000 years ago, we can make some sensible observations:

1. We do not own our material bounty in a final sense. God is owner. We are only stewards and managers. We must be careful not to claim as our own that which belongs to God.

2. We ought to give cheerfully, not simply out of surplus, or "to get people out of our hair," but with love and gratitude. We realize that we have not deserved this bounty and these freedoms. They are gifts of God.

3. We know from the case of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus would not have us turn a blind eye to those in need. It is not enough to simply shrug our shoulders and turn away from need because “it isn’t our problem.” Jesus asks us to do what we reasonably can.

4. We are to tithe, if we are to qualify for the blessings of godly giving. If we can’t give a tithe cheerfully, it may help us overcome our inordinate love for wealth to give *more than a tithe*. God wants to wean us from that dangerous love for riches. We should mark the tithe as belonging to God—not to us. The other nine-tenths also belongs to God, in the final analysis.

5. We should give carefully. There are many causes asking for funds, some of which are unworthy of our support. Let us thank God that we can give *through* reputable aid agencies that bring help to victims of disasters—both man-made and natural. Let us give where a Gospel message accompanies a gift of charity.

6. We ought to cultivate alertness to needs around us. Many smaller needs are not noted by large organizations. It is up to you and me to take note of a “Lazarus” at our door. If we take personal responsibility we can live a giving lifestyle, but if we always give

through large organizations, we will brush right past significant opportunities at our elbows.

7. We should give through the local church. Paul clearly taught that we are to do good to all men. But notice also the Apostle’s instruction that we are to give higher priority to those in the household of faith. This might mean a low-interest (or a no-interest) loan to a struggling brother. It might even sometimes mean a gift, not to be repaid. Cheerful participation in a church-sponsored health plan gives us opportunity to lift each other’s burdens, even though we don’t know when we might need such help.

A Personal Experience

We have been on the receiving end of brotherhood charity. In 1998, I was able to walk only by using crutches. I was so afflicted with an earlier hip transplant that was failing that we wondered when--or if--I would ever walk unassisted again. In this difficult time, Eldo and Dorcas (son and daughter-in-law) generously offered to move from Pennsylvania to Kansas to help us. That move would place them in our old farm house and would require having a retirement house built for Martha and me.

Our church family made it clear that they wanted to help us build that house—while I hobbled around.

They volunteered so much labor—so willingly—that it gave us much-needed courage. Some months after that, my failing hip was successfully replaced. This new joint has been working much better and I hope it will last as long as I do. But if not, that is in God’s hands. I cannot improve my prospects by worrying about it.

Doing Good

Opportunities come to us all. Let us not fail God by ignoring those in need. Let us be looking for ways to help. God blesses us with a sense of acceptance in His family. He will give us cheerful spirits so that the recipients of our charity won’t find us drawing attention to ourselves. They will see our good works and glorify God.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9,10).

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Reminder regarding unsigned material:

Someone sent in comments for Reader Response, but they were anonymous, so I will not be publishing them. We have a policy not to use unsigned material, even though if a writer prefers anonymity, we try to grant that. —PLM 

reader response

Re: Living and Giving, (Sept., p. 2)

With opportunity comes responsibility, and blessings are given to be shared. We consider our good fortune of living in a land of economic opportunity as being more than that. It is God’s blessing given to us with His reasonable expectation that we live frugally and share generously.

This understanding was further impressed upon us some 40 years ago when we struggled to find

enough money for food, rent and utilities. Giving seemed impossible. In that time of struggle we began to “double-tithe” and marveled at how quickly God delivered us from our “poverty.”

That experience motivated us to a method of discipline that has worked well for us. We strive to spend less on ourselves than we did the previous year and to give a greater percentage to charity than we had before. We have not always succeeded because

of changing circumstances over the years. This method of competing with ourselves rather than with another's standard of living and level of giving has been very "freeing" and yes, it has helped us to give cheerfully. The lesson learned and the method pursued has blessed us many times over.

We prefer to support fewer charities with regularity rather than heeding the many requests that keep coming. Our giving may not be balanced properly, but we feel at peace in giving for both evangelism and humanitarian needs when it is channeled through a reliable Christian organization.

—*Jay and Verna Miller,
Hutchinson, KS*



During World War II, Americans lived under a wartime economy. The government diverted sugar, gasoline, and other resources to the front lines. Should we not live and give under a spiritual wartime economy?

Other questions arise:

1. By New Testament standards, the vast majority of us are *very* rich. Do we see our retained wealth as weapons of spiritual mass destruction? The rich young ruler could eloquently affirm this from hell.

2. Do our eyes of faith see through the battle haze to the reward? Paul's

command to the rich end with breathtaking promise "that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:19).

3. Does the amount we have saved reflect obedience to our Lord's commands not to lay up treasures on earth (Matt. 6:19)? Are we as fervent about non-accumulation as we are about non-resistance?

4. Have we developed a conscientious objection to self-indulgent consumerism? Do we need a house twice the size of our grandparents? A depreciating, late-model SUV? Gadgets that are obsolete in 18 months?

Childlike trust in our Father's provision for our *basic* needs frees us to joyfully divert our resources to the front line—perhaps to our Bibleless brothers in China, or to the pew behind us. The needs are vast; the rewards are eternal.

—*Brent Inion, New Holland, PA*



For the past seven years we have been living in Honduras, so my perspective is from someone living outside the land of plenty. I have often thought of a challenge Brother Ervin Hershberger shared at CBS almost 30 years ago on what God required from His people in the OT. With the various tithes and offerings they were to pay, and the rests they

were to take, it totaled around 24% of their money and 30% of their time, plus their free will offerings and feast days. Bro. Ervin shared that this was what God *required* of them, so what should we be giving as we share from a thankful heart?

I believe as Christians, our main interest needs to be to introduce others to the One who is omnipotent, and can meet all our needs. I believe at times it is proper to give humanitarian aid, but it should be viewed more as an aspirin, as a temporary help until a cure can be accomplished. I believe a lot more souls could be won to the kingdom if we as Christians would be willing to tithe our time as well as our money. Money alone will not meet the needs of society suffering the results of sin, such as providing parents for unloved children. Only God can meet those needs, and who will share the good news of salvation with them? Can we say with Isaiah? “Here am I; send me.”

—David A. Yoder, Honduras

Re: Mode of baptism comments,
(Observations, Sept., p. 18)

Baptisms I have observed:

In Haiti, I attended three different baptismal services. One was just in a dirty pool. Another was in a

swimming pool behind a house. The third one was in a river about a mile away. They sang as they went. In each case, they lowered the applicant in backwards. One was lowered in the second time. Afterward, I asked the minister why the second time. His answer that he had put his hand on the applicant’s head and it was still dry, so he dunked him again.

In the Holy Land, lots of people came from all over the world to be baptized in the Jordan River. There they knelt in the water. The minister cupped his hands and brought the water to the applicant’s head.

In Germany, I was at a confirmation service. Those baptized as infants were confirmed, while those not previously baptized knelt while the minister poured water on their heads in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In our home community, I attended a baptism where they had a baptismal tank. The applicant knelt in the tank, while his head was dunked forward into the water.

Whatever mode used, the goal as I observed it, was to get the top of the head wet.

—Perry E. Bontrager, Kalona, IA



ANNOUNCEMENT from Conservative Anabaptist Service Program (CASP)

In March, 2005, there was a meeting at a Brethren church at Elgin, Illinois. The attendees included several persons from Selective Service. The meeting was hosted jointly by Mennonite Central Committee and the local brethren at Elgin.

The Church of the Brethren is trying to recover a dwindling peace position. About 90% of their draftees chose the military in World War II.

The Elgin meeting drew representative attendance from a broad Anabaptist base. This included five brethren from four different groups whose identity is seen as more conservative than mainstream Mennonitism.

There was a growing vision that we would do well to make provision that in case of a draft, our young men would have a relatively safe place to serve. Hospital work in the 1-W era is seen as having produced too many casualties.

Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) was asked to consider becoming something of an umbrella, recognized in Washington, under which smaller groups could serve. After due consideration, CAM gave a favorable response. Selective Service welcomed this development.

Eventually, an interim board was

formed to provide some structure to this effort. It was named Conservative Anabaptist Service Program (CASP).

CAM has certain minimum specific expectations for participation, but groups within are free to make additional provisions to fit their specific concerns. Groups are expected to provide their own service personnel and funding.

Last fall and winter, a pilot project was carried out where different groups did one to six week projects in disaster areas. Our branch of the church (Beachy A. M.) did not participate. We are now trying to plan ahead in order to be involved this time. Present plans are for us to be responsible for the time slot from March 24 to April 18, 2008. This will call for perhaps 12 to 14 laborers, a project coordinator, crew leaders, persons for food preparation, and perhaps also a unit pastor. The project will require significant funding.

Not only are there continuing disaster-related needs, but we feel that we need the practical experience of staffing and funding such endeavors.

It is not too early to mark your calendars and to plan ahead. If you are

able to help personally or financially, please contact: Elmer J. Miller, 63511 CR 33, Goshen, IN 46528.

We need your prayer support and welcome any suggestions that will

help to make this a God-honoring experience.

Please watch for further announcements.

—DLM 

Technology—Master or Servant?

Chester Weaver, Grandview, TX

Western society has been trained to hold technology in high esteem. Technology has proven humanly beneficial in many ways. Technological advances in medicine relieve suffering, save lives, and speed recovery for those afflicted. Travel is much faster and easier today than it was just one hundred years ago. Cars, trucks, and airplanes have made a great difference.

Computers have made record keeping easy and thus have freed manpower to be more creative in the workplace. Children no longer even need a typing teacher; a computer program does the teaching. In fact, if we have a problem, one of the first things we tend to think about is how a computer could help solve it. Why be inconvenienced if it's not necessary? We have learned to think of turning to technology to solve many problems. This kind of thinking is not all bad, but it is not all good, either.

Recently when the iPhone was released, people stood in long lines

for the privilege of getting one immediately. The iPhone combines a cell phone, and iPod, and a PDA into one fun-to-use unit. Suddenly the previous cell phone, the iPod, and the PDA were outdated! Any “thinking” person can see the advantages! And so it goes.

Technology proceeds with one improvement after another. And there is no end in sight. Mankind steps back in awe and says, “What hath man wrought? I must have one!”

Is technology a gift from God? Where is God in all this? With all the problems technology has solved, has technology improved marriages? Has a sense of needing and being needed deepened? Has our relationship with God been enriched? Has family life improved? Are people becoming wiser about the issues of life because of internet access? Are children more satisfied now than they were before computer games? Has moral sensitivity increased? Has technology moved man closer to God—and to his fellow man?

Keeping pace with all the ad-

vancements of technology seems to produce a brisk consumerism. “Everybody” seems to “need” technology. Do we all need cell phones and computers? (or Web access, or iPods, or PDA’s or whatever is available next) When we have this mindset, we seem to look for whatever is new that we could possibly use.

Selfishness seems to be at the heart of craving for instant pleasure and convenience. We spend our money on more good food (thank God for good food!) while our middles expand. We buy more “toys” so we can have more fun (God wants us to enjoy ourselves!) while our Bibles get used less and less. We need so much stuff that we soon need a storage barn to keep it dry (good stewardship!). And the landfills—they increase in size every day!

Where does all the money go? Into souls, into service, into sacrifice, or into technology? Where have our lives gone? Into mammon (wealth) or into people? Into materialism or into Jesus? Into myself or into you?

Each little gadget snatches a bit from its owner. A bit of time, a bit of money, a bit of personal attention. And when all the bits are lumped together, what do they amount to? If a man gains the whole world and

loses his own soul, what does he have in the end? A starved and puny soul instead of a heart vibrant with life from God.

Here is a test: If I had adequate food, clothing, and shelter for a year and during that year I spent no money or time on computers or electronic gadgets, but instead poured my energies into people, how would I fare? By focusing on enduring values, I would be better off at the end of the year than at the beginning.

Things do not satisfy. Technology does not meet our deepest needs. Only God satisfies the inner longings of the heart. Our lives are fulfilled only when they are engaged with God and with people.

As communication becomes easier with those we do not see, we may find ourselves spending less time cultivating good relationships with the people we do see. I think cell phones tempt us to ignore our families and to be less considerate of those around us.

The choices people make as they pursue technology give evidence of the strong, yet subtle, enticement technology exerts upon the natural desires of man. Technology—servant, not master!



—Your laugh reaches my ears,

but your smile reaches my heart.

NOTICE TO READERS

Calvary Messenger is presently undergoing financial pressures. Postage and printing increases, as well as a \$5,000 drop in church and individual donations, have created a need for immediate funding in order to keep on publishing this periodical.

We encourage churches to take offerings. We would appreciate private donations and interest-free loans to get us through this difficult time. Please send any contributions to Mark Beachy, our treasurer, whose address appears inside the front cover.

—Elmer Glick, *Calvary Publications Board*

The Ministry of Red Roses

(A true account with names changed)

Mary Jane Beachy, Millersburg, OH

Mom,” choked Beth, almost in tears as she came home from school, “Miss Miller had a talk with me today. She said I have bad attitudes and that’s why I’m not doing well in math.” As they walked to the house, Beth poured out her heart. “You need to talk with her, Mom, please!”

“Well, I don’t know what she means,” Mary replied, calmly, “but if you don’t have bad attitudes, there is no reason to be upset, Beth.”

Mary, mother of four daughters, had learned to lean on God in a new way since the death of her husband several years before. After pondering the situation, Mary decided to call the teacher to get her point of view.

Picking up the phone, Mary called. After a few preliminaries, she got to the point. “Beth came home tonight, mentioning your talk with her today about bad attitudes. I decided to call and hear ‘your story.’”

“Yes, she *does* have bad attitudes,”

Miss Miller said, without hesitation, "I can't really talk to her because there is a 'wall' between us. I don't think Beth has accepted the fact that she had to stay in the 'little room' this year!"

Because of lack of space, the seventh graders had to be divided, and Beth had been chosen to stay in the 'little room.' The rest of her class were in the 'big room.' Mary felt it would probably be good to help polish Beth's character if she stayed.

The problem that looked big to Mary was that the year before, the lower grade teacher found it difficult to help the seventh grade students when they came to a certain level in math. Now Beth had reached that level and did not understand her math. Mary tried to adjust to this solution although she found it hard because she felt that Beth's need was not being met.

Which is more important, thought Mary, character or math? Character, of course. By God's grace, I'll keep quiet. Maybe my attitudes are the problem instead of my daughter's.

"I thought Beth had accepted the fact of staying with the younger students," Mary continued on the phone.

"Could it be that Beth has not yet accepted her dad's death?" Miss Miller suggested, trying to analyze

the problem.

"I think she has," Mary responded. "I will talk with Beth and try to help her see herself. Thanks for your time, Miss Miller."

Later that evening, Mary took Beth aside and talked with her. "I just don't know what I'm doing wrong," Beth sighed, bursting into tears.

Mary felt helpless. "Let's pray together and commit this problem to God," she said to comfort Beth.

That evening in Mary's personal devotions, she sought God for wisdom. *I feel so helpless, Lord, she prayed. How can I help Beth?* Claiming God's promises and trusting Him to give her wisdom, Mary felt His peace flow into her heart. Before she fell asleep, a thought struck her forcefully. The next morning the thought was still with her. She knew what she had to do.

That afternoon Mary drove to the flower shop and selected several beautiful roses. *Red roses are for love, thought Mary, I think I want these.* Driving to school, Mary took her daughter aside, and asked her to write a note to the teacher on the card she brought along to attach to the roses.

"Thank you, Miss Miller," Beth wrote, "for helping me with my math. Love, Beth."

Mary put the note in the envelope,

and instructed Beth, “Beth, take these roses, walk into your classroom, and give them to Miss Miller.” Mary could not bear to watch the scene and left quietly.

That evening Beth came home from school a very happy girl. “What happened when you gave the roses to Miss Miller, Beth?”

“Oh, Mom, she said ‘thanks’ and tears came to her eyes.” Mary felt certain that the roses had conveyed

a good message.

That evening the phone rang. It was Miss Miller. “Mary, I want to give you a good report on Beth. I think I falsely accused her of not wanting to understand math when she really did not understand.”

Kneeling at her bedside that night, Mary thanked God for roses that could break down a wall between her daughter and her teacher. *Thank You, too, Lord, for wisdom*, she prayed. 

Overeating: A Weighty Subject

Harold S. Martin, Lititz, PA

The holidays are coming. For many of us, food will be plentiful. It would seem that this is an appropriate time to consider what God says about overeating. Overeating is *living to eat* instead of *eating moderately to live*. Gluttony is an uncontrolled preoccupation with food.

Obesity is one of the nation’s greatest health problems. In spite of all the emphasis on thinness, and on diet formulas, and on exercising—the average American is twenty pounds overweight. Former U.S. Surgeon General, Dr C. Everett Koop, a few years ago said that “*obesity is the second most preventable cause of death in the United States. 300,000 people die every year because of being over-*

weight—but often it is not put on the death record so as not to embarrass the family.”

Many of us have more to eat than any other people in the history of the world, and it is easy to eat much more than is necessary. We are aware that this is a touchy subject, but the Bible says that “*whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31). To stumble away from the table and spend half the afternoon in misery and pain because we have eaten too much, certainly does not glorify God. In Proverbs 23:21, gluttony is placed on an equal basis with drunkenness.

Gluttony is hard to define. Thomas Aquinas used to say, “*It is eating too*

soon, eating at the wrong time, eating with no power to stop, and eating with no self-discipline.” It is not wrong to eat well, but what the Scripture condemns is excessive indulging, eating more than is necessary to sustain the body.

Gluttony is a sin we cannot hide. We can be envious and lustful—at least to a degree; we can hide these sins—but one who overeats is eventually exposed. Even nature tries to help us not to eat too much, because as one writer says, “the more we overeat, the harder it is for us to get close to the table.”

In these days of Big Macs, Double Whoppers and large fries, architects are finding that seats in community buildings are too small. Builders of sports arenas and movie theaters are building bigger seats to accommodate larger people. A number of airlines have begun charging obese people the price of two seats, because they take up so much room. Medical equipment manufacturers sell heavy-duty commodes and wheelchairs and mechanized beds that can hold up to 1,000 pounds. As Americans get bigger, car seats, door openings, and even caskets are being made in wider sizes in order to accommodate the larger people. A February 23, 2002, news report says that “an astonishing 26% of all adult Americans are now

obese, up from 15% in the 1970s.”

There is a website (www.overweightpeople.com) that sells XXXL sizes (extra, extra, extra large], including bathroom scales that record weights up to 500 pounds and an extra long shoehorn for those who can't bend over to put on their shoes. Some auto manufacturers (in 2003) began making their seats an inch wider to provide for wider people; some heated seats in luxury cars have shorted out because heavy people pushed too hard on the wires in the seats. These are factors that are causing the word *obesity* to appear in 56 bills currently before the U.S. Congress.

Perhaps more and more citizens of the Western World should pray the early Christian's prayer: “Lord, give me day by day my daily bread—and not one crumb more.”

1. Chemical Imbalances

It is easy to condemn people who are overweight in unfair and cruel ways. We must gracefully take into consideration such factors as bodily constitution, genetic structure, and chemical imbalance. It is *not* true that *all* obese and overweight people are gluttons. A predisposition to obesity can result from genetics or from some diseases. —*to be continued*

From BRF Witness, Vol. 41, No. 6.

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marriages

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

Coblentz-Miller

Bro. Leon, son of Andy and Clara Mae Coblentz, Millwood, KY, and Sis. Kaylene, daughter of Freeman and Maudene Miller, Bloomfield, MO, at First General Baptist Church for Crowley's Ridge Menonite Church, on August 17, 2007, by Melvin Troyer.

Ebersole-Mejia

Bro. Loren Ray, son of Philip and Karen Ebersole, Siguatepeque, Honduras, and Sis. Yesenia Judit, daughter of José Inocente (Chente) and Mary Jane Mejia, Puerto Viejo, Sarapiquí, Costa Rica, in Puerto Viejo for Iglesia Menonita de Puerto Viejo, on August 4, 2007, by Philip Yoder.

Halteman-Yoder

Bro. Floyd, son of Alvin and Lois Halteman, Newville, PA, and Sis. Audrey, daughter of David and Dorothy Yoder, Lyndon, KS, at Lyndon Amish Mennonite Church on Aug. 10, 2007, by Rudy Overholt.

Mast-Troyer

Bro. Wilmer Kenton, son of James and Eunice Mast, Amelia, VA, and Judith Catherine, daughter of Julius and the late Linda Troyer, Farmville, VA, at Evergreen, Baptist Church for Farmville Mennonite Church on March 9, 2007, by Bennie Byler.

Mast-Yoder

Bro. James, son of Allen and Laura Mast, Caneyville, KY, and Sis. Marcie, daughter of Jim and Rose Yoder, Clarkson, KY, at Cedar Springs A.M. Church, on July 27, 2007, by the bride's father, Jim Yoder.

Miller-Gingerich

Bro. Monroe Miller, Farmville, VA, and Sis. Emma, daughter of Verna and the late Ora Gingerich, Plain City, OH, at United Bethel Church for Bethesda Fellowship, on March 31, 2007, by Elmer Stoltzfus.

Weaver-Miller

Bro. Ernest, son of Chester and Barbara Weaver, Grandview, TX, and Sis. Patricia, daughter of James and Rachel Miller, Chilton, TX, at Temple, TX, on June 8, 2007, by Mervin Lantz.

Yoder-Plank

Bro. Kevin, son of Lyle and Viola Yoder, Arthur, IL, and Sis. Amanda, daughter of Merle and Linda Plank, Arcola, IL, at Otto Center for Pleasant View Church on Sept. 1, 2007, by Howard Kuhns.



cradle roll

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

Coblentz, Jonathan and Sara (Wagler), Lyndon, KS, first child and son, Kyle Daniel, Aug. 25, 2007.

Fehr, Joe and Dorothy (Beachy), Cross Hill, SC, second child and dau., Shaina Ryanne, Aug. 31, 2007.

Gerber, Paul and Brenda (Zehr), Gadshill, ON, eighth child, first dau., Courtney Rose, June 5, 2007.

Gingerich, Aaron and Charity (Kuhns), Arthur, IL, first child and dau., Kylie Ann, Aug. 22, 2007.

Lapp, Randy and Wilma (Lantz), Nakuru, Kenya, East Africa, fifth child, fourth son, Craig André, Sept. 21, 2007.

Martin, Elam and Barbara (Jantzi), Belgrave, ON, fifth child, third son, Gerald Ray, July 14, 2007.

Mast, Jason and Eunice (Troyer), Crossville, TN, fourth child, second son, Josiah Arlen, Sept. 7, 2007.

Miller, James and Amy (Kropf), Riverside, IA, third child, first dau., Allison Kierra, Feb. 21, 2007

Miller, Loren and Marcia (Swarey), Stuarts Draft, VA, first child and son, Kylan Travis, July 18, 2007.

Miller, Mark and Judy (Miller), Sugarcreek, OH, fifth child, second dau., Kayla Marie, June 25, 2007.

Miller, Mark and Maureen (Beachy), Newcomerstown, OH, third child, second son, Mark Isaiah, Sept. 22, 2007.

Miller, Raymond and Anita (Troyer), Dover, DE, second child and dau., Mariah Jo, Aug. 2, 2007.

Miller, Shawn and Marnita (Beachy), Sugarcreek, OH, fifth child, fourth son, Beau Matthew, August 10, 2007.

Miller, Steven and Melissa (Yoder), Auburn, KY, fifth child, fourth son, Chadwin Lamar, Sept. 26, 2007.

Miller, William and Gwendolyn (Stauffer), Centreville, MI, first child and dau., Sierra Brooke, Aug. 31, 2007.

Nisly, Julian and Bertha (Beachy), Hutchinson, KS, second child, first son, Johan Levi, Oct. 2, 2007.

Nisly, Larry and Amy (Yoder), Antrim, OH, fourth child, second son, Lane David, Sept. 6, 2007.

Ropp, Jonathan and Marie (Byler), Millbank, ON, first children and sons, Monte Jon, born Nov. 8, 2003; Austin Lee, born Dec. 11, 2004; received for adoption July 27, 2007.

Schrock, Darrell and Naomi (Gochnauer), Catlett, VA, first child and dau., Jolynn Marcia, May 12, 2007.

Stoltzfus, Luke and Ruth Ann (Stoltzfus), Waterville, NY, eleventh child, sixth dau., April Jolene, Sept. 14, 2007.

Stutzman, Paul J. and Carol (Miller), Arthur, IL, second child and son, Jaden Marcus, May 28, 2007.

Troyer, James and Vera (Gingerich), Farmville, VA, third child, second dau., Amanda Jo, July 31, 2007.

Troyer, Jason and Holly (Mast), Pularski, TN, third child, second son, Shawn Weston, August 23, 2007.

Weaver, Levi, Jr., and Glenda (Stutzman), Auburn, KY, third child, second son, Luke Jamison, Sept. 20, 2007.

Yoder, Conrad and Rebekka (Van Ammel), Poperinge, Belgium, first child and dau., Ketura Jochebed, Sept. 15, 2007.

Yoder, Delmar and Dorothy (Hershberger), Kalona, IA, fourth child, third dau., Danita JoAnn, May 7, 2007.

Yoder, Leighton and Joanna (Miller), Kalona, IA, fifth child, third dau., Kristi Ranae, April 1, 2007.

Yoder, Levi and Amanda (Gingerich), Belvidere, TN, seventh child, fourth son, Levi René, Sept. 18, 2007.

Yoder, Marvin and Janelle (Beachy), Salisbury, PA, fourth child, second son, Dominik Grant, Sept. 20, 2007.

Yoder, Michael and Miriam (Dueck), La Estrella, Costa Rica, fourth child, second son, Nelson Gabriel, Aug. 31, 2007.

Yoder, Roman and Brenda (Miller), Belvidere, TN, third child, second dau., Marcia Mae, Sept. 24, 2007.

Yutzy, Matthew and Mary Esther (Schlabach), Plain City, OH, third child, second dau., Amanda Jo, July 22, 2007.

Zook, Chester and Marian (Glick), Leola, PA, fifth child, second son, Laverne James, Aug. 3, 2007.

ordination

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

Bro. Roger Hostetler, 38, was ordained to the office of minister on Sept. 9, 2007, at Canaan Fellowship Church, Plain City, Ohio. Preordination messages were brought by Bill Mullet, Raymond King and Wilbur Yoder. The charge was given by Nelson Beachy, assisted by Lonnie Beachy and Elmer Stoltzfus. Also in the lot were Carl Miller and Matthew Yutzy.

obituaries

Hochstetler, Katie (Miller) (Nisly) (Miller), 94, died Feb. 20, 2007. She was born March 24, 1912, daughter of the late Manasses and Mary (Yoder) Miller.

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

On Nov. 19, 1933, she was married to Fred Nisly. He died Oct. 1, 1970. Nine children were born to them: Reuben, deceased; Daniel (Alma) Nisly, Kalona, IA; Mary (David) Dayton, Kalona, IA; Jesse (Carol) Nisly, Clarkdale, AZ; Es-

ther (Joseph) Borntreger, El Paso, TX; Orpha (Willis) Miller, Kalona, IA; Ruth (George) Statler, Washington, IA; David (Jill) Nisly, Kalona, IA; and Paul Nisly, Webster, IA; 24 grandchildren; and 49 great grandchildren. Daughter-in-law, Mamie Nisly, Kalona, IA, also survives. Three sisters-in-law surviving are Esther Miller, Lovina Miller both of Kalona; and Beulah Miller, Riverside, IA.

Ten step-children surviving are: Eunice Yoder, Kalona; Lois Nissley, Donna, TX; Laban Hochstetler, Middlebury, IN; Samuel Hoshstetler, Aroda, VA; Miriam Schrock, Daniel Hochstetler, and Marietta Stoltzfus, all of Goshen, IN; Noah Hochstetler, Dangriga, Belize; Walter Hochstetler, England; and Joseph Hochstetler, Minerva, OH.

Katie was married later to Jacob Miller, who died May 25, 1979; and to Elam Hoshstetler, who died Nov. 10, 1994. Others preceding Katie in death were granddaughter, Sara Eicher; great granddaughter, Ashley Eicher; step-daughter, Esther Herschberger; three sisters: Lena Bender, Lizzie Miller and Eliza Yoder; and six brothers: David, Lewis, Dennis, Chris, Ivan, and Reuben Miller.

The funeral was held at Sharon Bethel Church on Feb. 27, with Delmar Bontrager, Daniel Nisly and Jacob Yoder serving. Burial was in the East Union Cemetery, rural Kalona.

Kanagy, Esther N. (Yoder), 84, of Blackville, SC, died June 19, 2007, at her home after complications from a series of strokes. She was born March 26, 1923, in Princess Anne County, VA, daughter of the late Noah W. and Sadie (Schrock) Yoder.

She was a member of Calvary Fellowship Mennonite Church, Blackville.

On Jan. 27, 1948, she was married to John Timothy Kanagy. He survives. Their children are: Virgil Lee (Fannie Mae) Kanagy, Blackville; Martha (Peter) Schwartz, Jackson, OH; Elsie (Alvin) Beachy, London, OH; Joseph Daniel (Freda) Kanagy, Belvidere, TN; and David Ray (Mary) Kanagy, Williston, SC; sisters: Freida (Galen) Yoder, San Vito, Costa Rica; Sarah (Alva) Yoder, Amanda (Isaac) Plank, and Lena (Enos) Swartzentruber, all of Montezuma, GA; brothers, Clarence Yoder, Harrison, AR; Allen Yoder, Fairview, MO, and Noah Yoder, Jr., Pratts, VA; 22 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by brothers William and Dan Yoder; sisters, Verna Brenneman and Elsie Brenneman, and one stillborn great grandchild.

The funeral was held on June 22, at Calvary Fellowship Mennonite Church, Burial was in the church cemetery.

-Faith in God is not a leap in the dark;
it is a walk in the light.

observations

The following notes are gleaned from an editorial in *U S News and World Report*, (9-10-07):

—The average American consumer burns about 26 barrels of oil a year. By comparison, Europeans use 12.

—The U. S. has about 5% of the world's population, but uses about 25% of the world's oil.

—Oil discovery is not keeping pace with increased world consumption.

—If U. S. cars had the same energy efficiencies as those in Europe, it would save four million barrels a day—the equivalent of Iran's total production.

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According to the Kansas Driver License Renewal Examiner's Handbook, motorcycles make up 4% of highway travel. They are involved in 10% of the accidents.

• • • • •

According to a George Gallup poll, well over 90% of Americans own Bibles. The average American owns four. But Gallup says we are a nation of biblical illiterates. This ought not and need not be so. Let us always remember the need for Bible study and Bible teaching. May our lives reflect that ideal.

• • • • •

Joni Eareckson Tada's diving injury as a youth resulted in her becoming

a quadriplegic (paralyzed arms and legs). Her writings reflect a cheerful attitude and a strong Christian faith that is widely respected.

She wrote an article for *World* (9-15-07) that I found very interesting. She writes about a gifted and likeable college senior. He is a volunteer at family retreats held for disabled children and their parents. He takes a great interest in children with Down syndrome.

Joni was startled when he told her that when he gets married, he hopes that his wife and he will have a child with Down syndrome.

He has "observed a special joy in children and adults with this condition, as well as a godliness that strengthened his faith." He could tell that such children blessed the lives of moms and dads with whom he has related over the years.

Joni goes on to say that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists now recommends routine prenatal testing for Down syndrome, for all pregnant women. Earlier, only older women were tested. Over 90% of pregnant women who are given a Down syndrome diagnosis choose abortion. Joni says, "I am deeply concerned about this trend. The effort to eliminate Down syndrome translates into the worst kind of social engineering: the annihilation of an entire group of people who are precious."

Jesus says, "Bless the little children, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,"

even (or should we say, especially) the children with this special condition.

• • • • •

An unusual document has come to my attention. A 46-year-old man reflected on certain memories of his grade school days in a community that was conservative and plain. One of the patron families was desperately poor. The clothing of their school children was often old and well-worn. The mother was not a gifted seamstress, so that often the clothes did not fit very well.

Learning in school was difficult for them. The oldest son, born in 1963, became the object of incessant teasing and ridicule. Several of the boys resorted to inflicting injury for sport. For the most part, those who did not participate stood by and watched with amusement.

Naturally, this young man grew up with a heavy load of emotional baggage. He was deeply troubled. Eventually, he became mentally ill. At 33, he took his own life.

One of his former school mates has decided to write his story. It is an effort to appeal to other former school mates to help them see how terribly they wronged one who may have been "one of the least of these."

I know of several other cases where school children of conservative Anabaptists were cruel and ill-mannered to others whom they considered "different." Christian parents should

teach and exemplify kindness to their children. Failure to do so is a serious reproach to Christian witness.

• • • • •

Parents and Grandparents Alliance are buying full-page ads in major newspapers to protest violence and sexual promiscuity and perversion propagated by TV, teen music, video games, and Hollywood movies. The ad cites numerous headlines to verify that these things have influenced people to commit suicide, rape and murder.

The organization calls itself a "group of mothers, father, grandparents, and others who finally have the ammunition to stop what we call the most despicable crime ever committed against America's children." They are now more than a quarter-million strong. They will be petitioning the boards of directors of TV, Film Music and Video Game Companies. The ad includes a blank petition that may be submitted with or without a financial contribution.

Their address:

Parents and Grandparents Alliance

Petition Processing Dept. 11

P.O. Box 452

St. James, NY 117810

This should remind us afresh that not only should TV be considered unacceptable in our homes, but children's access to video games and unrestricted access to internet present unacceptable risks.

ANNOUNCEMENT

There seems to be an increased awareness of the need to be Christlike in all of life, whether or not there is a draft. The board of Penn Valley Christian Retreat is hosting a program on November 9-11, 2007, that will address basic principles, historical perspectives, and practical expressions of this important doctrine.

We believe that attendance should interest parents, leaders, and young people. It is important, even urgent, that this awareness permeates the entire constituency. Your prayers are requested. Your attendance is invited.

—DLM

Minister's Meeting Messages—2007

T*his is a condensation of a message given at the annual ministers' meetings, April 3-5, 2007, at Yoder Mennonite Church, in rural Hutchinson, KS. The set of eight tapes or CD's with 10 messages (plus three sermon responses and a men's and women's session on tape) is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA, 20136, for \$45, postpaid.*

7. Goals and Pitfalls for the Minister in Relating to Co-Ministers and the Local Church

Johnny Miller, Minerva, OH

If you consider how God called each of us, it wasn't all the same. Some of us felt a call at a very young age, which never left us. For others, it was more vague and almost a surprise that God would want them. I well remember kneeling at my ordination with Bro. Leonard Overholt on one side and Bro. Willis Miller on the other. I felt like a little sapling between two mighty oaks, but I felt protected and blessed.

When you were ordained, you had potential that neither you nor your co-ministers fully understood. It's not until we're put to the test, that we begin to realize our potential. Sometimes

what we see being developed is not what we anticipated or wanted. How are we to develop that which is godly and mortify that which is fleshly? We are under a “magnifying glass,” with many people observing how we respond under pressure.

We need to nurture and build up the church. We need to bring others to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We need solid, biblical teaching. We need to develop conviction among our people. I’m appalled when we point out something in the Scriptures and someone says, “Yes, but...” The Word of God is the final authority. We must not compromise that with human reasoning. The “Yes, buts” don’t work. We must preach the Word of God, but we must also live it. It is much easier to preach it than to live it. When your congregation and your fellow ministers see a live demonstration of what Christ is in your heart and life, the message gets through.

One day I gave a tour for about 30 Romanians at the orphanage. Among them was a psychologist who asked me a very pointed question. He asked me if it was right for me to come to Romania from America and establish a bond that I would break in a few years when we return to America. It was a difficult question. I responded that I don’t know how long we would be in Romania, but I want to spend my

time in building relationships of love from my heart to the heart of every one of the children. Over that bridge of relationship and love, I plan to transmit all the godly values I possibly can so that when I do return to America, those children have something solid in their lives upon which to build further. I think that also is what is needed to build bridges of compassion and love to the laity, to the people on the fringes, and win their hearts by a relationship over which we can transmit the values of God’s Word. Someone has said, “You can never deliver a dump-truck load of instruction over a plywood bridge of love.” It needs to be stronger than that. Sometimes, I find it hard to do that. When I see a line pusher, the easiest response is to be irked. It’s hard for me to build a relationship with someone I’m irked with, but we must never lose sight of this goal.

I cringe when I hear little, telltale indications of what is going on in some minister’s minds, like, “My church, my ministry,” and so on. Our call to the ministry is a very personal thing, but somehow we must get beyond the fact that it is personal. If we can internalize the goal of “our ministry team” instead, it will serve us better.

I appreciate the plural ministry. Note Ecclesiastes 4:9, “Two are better than one because they have good reward for their labor.” Two people work-

ing together are more efficient than two people working separately. They get more accomplished. If you take a strand of string and add weight it until it breaks, then take an identical string and weight and twist the strings together, they will not break. God has chosen us to work together in a team, entwined, as it were, so that we are stronger and more effective.

In verse 10, it says further, "For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow, but woe unto him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him." This provides checks and balances for the ministerial team. Often the idealist is a younger man, while the more experienced man is more realistic. He may ask, "Will it work? Is it a good idea?" He may bring up things that point out that it's unlikely that the dreamer's dreams would come to fruition. Sometimes that builds tension between us.

Then we have people with different characteristics. There is the laid-back brother, calm and not very organized, but he has good relationships and he can get close to a hurting brother. But the brother that's the do-er, has a problem with the first one. He wonders why the other one can't get with it. The first thinks that the organizer is just cold-hearted and unfeeling.

The quartet that was just singing up here did it so well, that it took me four

songs to figure out who was singing what. (I only figured it out when they sang different words.) Why? They blended well. In our ministerial teams, that's what we need. Harmony. There are diversities of gifts and those are a blessing. In our ministerial teams we need to learn to appreciate the differences. We need to commend and affirm each other.

One day I visited a man who was on his deathbed, even though he didn't know that it was his death bed. The doctor and I went in together. He was asleep so the doctor touched him lightly. He awoke with a start and said, "I'm sorry; I'm just a bundle of nerves!"

The doctor commented, "That's right; if you could see into your body, that's what you'd see. You are a bundle of nerves." It is a gift of God that He created us to be beings that feel. But sometimes those feelings are so negative that we need help. We need someone to reassure us and to help us.

If a minister faces strong opposition, we fellow ministers need to provide encouragement. And sisters, you need to be there for your husbands.

One time we were facing a tough situation in church. It became clear to me that we needed to move on, and so I tried to kindly encourage us to do just that. Afterward, as I was leaving, a man stopped me and proceeded to

criticize me and my plan thoroughly. He painted a very dark picture. He was like the man who once worked for my dad. When evening came, he might say, “It’s getting dark; I want to go home.” Then he might remove his glasses and wipe them and say, “Oh, it’s not as dark as I thought,” and work a while longer. We ministers sometimes make that mistake and the laity can, too, because “the glasses need cleaning.”

When I finally got home after the meeting Ruth said, “The food is getting cold, the children are getting very hungry, what has happened?”

I said, “Ruth, the Scriptures say, ‘Beware when all men speak well of you.’ Let me tell you, I ain’t got that problem.”

If a spirit of competition speaks of “my ministry and my church” and “I’m relating and he’s over there organizing,” we have stopped doing what we’ve been called to do.

I am also concerned that we are too soft on another problem that sometimes crops up. It is this: too often, when a man gets “a head of steam” going, he can just run over others. We find that coming from the laity, at times, don’t we? And sometimes we find it within the ministerial team. God forbid!

Our speech is to be with grace, seasoned with salt. When we fail to

do that it’s because our heart is not right before God. We have envy in our hearts. If we say that’s not possible, let’s just be reminded that the human heart is deceitful and that only the Lord can fully know our hearts. That means that I can’t know my heart, and I have to be on guard against myself and my own heart, with its feelings and ideas.

In 1 Thessalonians 5: 12,13, we read: “Now we beseech you brethren to know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake and be at peace among yourselves.” That is speaking to the body of believers, but you know where it must begin: in the ministerial team. Brethren, if we’re not at peace among ourselves, how will there be peace in the church? What the laity see in the ministerial team, they tend to multiply many times over.

It is time that we grow up—that we become men. I know of one situation where a minister was criticized over and over by a fellow minister. He sort of cowered under that and was intimidated for a time. Then finally, he grew up. He told his fellow minister, “Well, I’m finished being intimidated. I am a man, a brother, and a fellow minister. When there’s a disagreement, we can talk as mature men, and as brethren. There’s no point in getting angry or red in the face, or pounding our fists on the

table. We can talk as brethren.”

What percentage of church splits in the last 25 years in our constituency were generated by divided ministerial teams? And what percent were caused by a divided congregation? It is my impression that many of them were from a wedge that was driven by a minister. We were working in a situation together and a brother came into my office and said, “I’m leaving.”

I said, “Please, don’t leave now. I need you.”

He stated the reason he was leaving this way, “The team spirit has been broken.” He resigned and left. His words have burnt into my soul. What can I do and what can you do to keep the team spirit alive and healthy? That means that my personal ambitions and goals need to be sanctified and Christ-like.

I think that may be part of the reason we have not been more successful in keeping those who come to us from other backgrounds. Better teamwork would help us do that better. We need new people. It’s like the tomato growers who were doing well with some of their tomatoes, except that they kept getting blight. How did they solve the problem? They went back to Africa and got the original seed stock and started over again. I think that’s what we need. We need to have people who have been unchurched and gotten

saved, who are all enthused about the glory of the Gospel. The cartoon character, Pogo, had this line: “We have met the enemy and they is us.” It is all too true, that we often become our own worst enemy.

James has much to tell us about relationships. In 3: 13, he writes, “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom.” That’s what I need: meekness and wisdom. Meekness does not come easy for me. Maybe for some of you it does, but not for me. Without meekness, our work is vain. Unless we work in meekness for the glory of God, we will heap the glory to ourselves and that destroys the work.

In verse 14, he gives the flip side to meekness, “But if you have bitter envy and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth.” James then continues with his well-known description of heavenly wisdom: “Peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and without partiality and hypocrisy.” I need that heavenly wisdom.

Hypocrisy does not only parade around in long robes like the Pharisees. It is that subtle feeling in our hearts that is irked with our brother. We must also avoid “Absalomism,” where someone tries to gain favor with

a member of the ministerial team by flattery. My father-in-law was once present where one spoke against the church's ministers as he stood in my father-in-law's shop. He spoke up and said, "You may speak about other subjects, but I request that you don't berate and belittle our ministers here. I won't have it; not on my property." That ended the conversation.

Avoid sparring in the pulpit. The pulpit is the place where the Word of God is to be preached for the salvation of souls, for the building of the kingdom of God. It is not the place where I am to air my grievances and my disagreements with my fellowman.

On page 145 in the book, *Quests and Conquests*, there's a story poem, by Will Carleton, (#787) entitled, "The First Settler's Story." It speaks of a husband on the wild open plains of early America who spoke ungratefully

and harshly to his wife and caused her death. We must all sanctify our hearts and our words so that when we speak to each other, we speak in a Christ-like manner. The last lines of that poem are these:

"And whereso'er this story's voice can reach,

This is the sermon I would have it preach:

Boys flying kites haul down their white-wing'd birds:

You can't do that way when you're flying words.

"Careful with fire," is good advice we know;

"Careful with words," is ten times doubly so.

Thoughts unexpress'd may sometimes fall back dead,

But God Himself cannot kill them once they're said." 

Uncertain Sounds

By the editor

We're having a dry spell in Kansas. Not much grows and the countryside looks mighty drab. I could blame this drought for my dearth of ideas so that I've chosen to write about several issues that are not central to "The Faith once delivered to the saints" and, depending on one's view,

could even be considered merely "pet peeves."

Pet peeves are typically subjective. We want something better, like Peter's comments: "**So brace up your minds, and as men who know what they are doing, rest the full weight of your hopes on the grace that will be yours when Jesus Christ reveals**

himself...Don't let your character be molded by the desires of your ignorant days, but be holy in every department of your lives..." (from 1 Peter 1:13,14 Phillips)

What do Scriptures like these have to do with pet peeves? Stay with me now and see what you think:

Short hair

I think we men may find it hard to address this issue because of 1 Corinthians 11:14, "Doth not nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?" Yet we tend to extremes, don't we?

Some find reason to cut their hair too short to be combed. The next step: Shaving the head which is now a fairly common style *around* us, but fortunately, I believe, not *among* us. It surely reminds one of Isaiah's description of the desolation of defeated and disgraced people, "...Every head is shaved and every beard is cut off" (Isaiah 15:3b NIV). I doubt that the idea of a shaved head or a "beard" of less than a week's growth got started from that desolate picture in Isaiah. It must have come from somewhere else.

Footwear

When sisters choose shoes, are they to look for something that is comfortable or for something that lets people know they know what looks nice? Perhaps if they choose

wide platform shoes with a heel several inches in height, they think people will know they have good taste. By the way, I don't mean by this to put in a good word for spike heels, either.

Isaiah also notes how vanity is possible with footwear. He says, "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet..." [the Lord will judge them] (Isaiah 3:16-18).

I think it's because my wife has accepted her height and that she desires comfort more than style that she has never made a shoe selection that accentuates her walk or adds to her stature. I appreciate that.

Hemlines

We see that the hemlines of some of the younger sisters are lower than the hemlines of their mothers. In some cases, such a change may have been necessary for modesty. But perhaps, in most cases, it is simply a matter of worldly fashion. What do you think? Will sisters' hemlines change again when the styles change?

"With Pleats and Gathers"

From our mother church's beginnings in 1958, our written guidelines for modest dresses included "pleats and gathers." But, unfortunately, pleats and gathers can be so small

that they no longer obscure body contours. How does one explain that when the skirts get longer they often have insufficient pleats and gathers? Is skirt length to the ankles chosen primarily for modesty?

Necklines

In the present trend for lower necklines, men see more than is proper. Is this ridiculous, immodest, inappropriate or a matter of opinion? It's all of the above, if you want my opinion. Why would we fool ourselves into thinking that noble men want to see such exposure? *Well*, one may say, *some men look again*. That doesn't mean that they are benefited by what they see.

I believe that the marriage of a godly man and woman is blest by the knowledge that the wife does not provide such exposure to others. The fact that she saves that for her husband gives it a value that is compromised when women fool themselves into thinking that they are free to tantalize masculine desire elsewhere.

Isn't it interesting how easy it is to comply with church-prescribed guidelines for modesty when we become cheerfully willing to observe them?

Names

Sometimes when I see the names given to babies, I feel sorry for them. If a child must eventually often spell

his name, how will he or she feel about it? Will it become a lifelong burden? Or does it simply give him/her individuality?

Perhaps a name should be chosen for its meaning rather than simply for its sound. Jesus challenged and inspired Simon, the son of Jonas, by calling him Peter. Peter means a rock. I think this challenged unstable Simon to live up to his new name. I do not ask that we choose names only for their meaning, but I believe names ought to have good associations. A child can also be challenged by the name of a valiant character in the family, in the community or in the Bible.

One party commented very frankly to someone with an unusual name, "Your parents must have hated you to give you such an awful name!"

You might think, We wanted a name different so that it's not confused with others. That's a good point, but I'm asking: When a name is so unusual that it is difficult to spell or pronounce, is that not taking things a bit too far?

Just Pet Peeves?

How important are these issues? What does it convey when we go along with the practices I've mentioned? Seriously, I mention them because I fear that they may indicate unworthy loyalties, at worst—or

thoughtless inconsideration, at best.

But are these issues all equally important? I doubt it.

When the Apostle Paul was teaching about the value of speaking in tongues, he raised a question I would raise in this context: “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8) I think an uncertain sound (testimony) comes from the life that is unwilling to take

a principled stand on practical issues. “If the Lord delights in a man’s way, he makes his steps firm” (Psalm 37:23 NIV).

May God help us gladly make applications that are considerate of others and that give clear testimony for Jesus, our Savior. He will take to heaven those who are unashamed of Him—here and now--and of the way of the cross that leads home (Mark 8:38). 

Anabaptist Convocation, 2007

[On June 18-20, 2007, a group of about 70 interested people (total in attendance, with each session somewhat smaller) met at Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute with the express purpose of seeking ways of recovering the vision that energized early Anabaptism.

Your editor was blessed in attending. I invited several brethren to report to our readers: —PLM]

1. Confessions, Pleas and Commitment

—Steven R. Troyer, Millersburg, OH

Daniel 9:3-19 and Nehemiah 9 are both striking records of men of God “seeking Him with all their heart” in confession and supplication for His people. Both texts were read in the opening address of the Anabaptist Convocation.

If you will read the Nehemiah pas-

sage aloud to yourself before continuing to read this report, you will find a depth of passion that is rare in our experience today. You will also see the pattern of confession, plea, and commitment I have used to organize my notes about these meetings. The word “we” is general. It is not meant to say that everyone is personally guilty, but to recognize that we, as a corporate body, do well to acknowledge these needs.

CONFESSIONS

—We have neglected the burden for evangelism.

—We have lost many of our children as well as others who have joined us.

—We have often chosen not to affirm each other as conservative Anabaptist groups.

—We have settled for surface relationships rather than risking the pain of honest exposure.

—We have sometimes guarded externals more than we have guarded hearts.

—We have too often embraced prosperity and lived as though we could actually serve God and mammon.

—We have often lost *Gelassenheit* (the attitude of trustful yieldedness.)

—We have been too satisfied with being mostly an ethnic church.

—We have too often seen education as something less than an investment, and have not taught our vision effectively.

—We have sometimes busied ourselves with “putting off” and missed the joy of “putting on” and have sometimes substituted mere isolation for separation.

—We have made a virtue of letting our ministers think for us, and have seen people with questions as trouble makers.

PLEAS

Lord, please teach us to repent; to be converted and become as little children..

Make us wise householders who make use of both the “new” and the “old.”

Teach us to be “about our Father’s

business” instead of dwelling so much on our problems.

Teach us to live with an open hand, willing to be hurt.

Teach us to die, even to normal desires, that we may live as Christ lived.

Teach us who long for change to love those who fear it.

Teach us and our ministers to be dynamic in our relationship with You, and to study with our might, so that our youth need not search elsewhere to find life and conviction.

COMMITMENTS

We commit ourselves, Lord Jesus Christ, to:

following You, wholeheartedly.

loving those who have wronged us.

not breaking “bruised reeds” among us.

living frugally and using our money for the Kingdom.

taking time in our days to minister.

2. Can We Do Better?

—*Jesse L. Martin,*

Washington Court House, OH

We are often tempted to classify our Anabaptist heritage as either perfect or pathetic. On the one hand, we may become defensive when criticism is given. On the other hand, we may discount the value of what we have received. Instead of either

extreme, we need to look honestly at the strengths and weaknesses of what our fathers have taught us by life and word.

At the Anabaptist Convocation held at SMBI in June, brothers and sisters from various backgrounds spent time looking at both strengths and weaknesses. We collectively acknowledged the successes of our spiritual heritage and sought repentance in our failures. By sharing together, we were better able to see both the strengths and weaknesses of our various groups.

As I listened to other brethren sharing, I came to appreciate the emphasis on cross-bearing that has been part of my upbringing. One brother said something like this, “The cross-centered life becomes beautiful when we lay down our life for our brothers and sisters who are fallen just like we are.” I thank God for this Christ-like part of my people’s worldview.

We were also reminded that the Kingdom of God and the power of darkness are at war. If we are not consciously choosing to go against our human tendencies and the flow of our society, we will be part of the darkness.

Many of us are haunted by our failure to bring in seekers from our neighborhoods. We have been the quiet of the land for so long that there is death in the silence. Would the Christian martyrs even recognize us? Do we feel the painful absence of brothers and sisters of non-Anabaptist birth? Pray for pain.

It was even more difficult to face the fact that most of those who do come in, do not stay. We like to think that they were not really sincere or that they just didn’t try hard enough. That leaves us guiltless—no repenting needed there. Really? If you were raising calves and eighty percent died within the first year, wouldn’t you carefully check to find what you might have done that contributed to such a rate of mortality? I think so! Can we not do the same here?

The Word of God and the testimony of the brethren exposed many areas of bitterness and disobedience in my heart. I thank God for this opportunity.

If the meeting is held again next year, go there and die. There’s life in it.

Can we do better? By God’s grace, any repenter can.



—The atheist doesn't know Who's good for him.

School Board Institute—2008

A two-day school board institute was held at Antrim, OH, in Feb., 2007. It was well attended and much appreciated. A similar meeting is planned for this term. It is to be held on Feb. 29 and Mar. 1, 2008, at Maranatha Christian School, 256 Smokey Lane, SW, Sugarcreek, OH. 44681.

Board attendance at this time of information and inspiration can help your school fulfill its mission. If you are not sure that you're on the mailing list, please send your school's name and mailing address to Jonas Sauder, 3260 Marietta Ave., Lancaster, PA. 17601

mission awareness

Pointers in Jewish Evangelism

Floyd Stoltzfus

During the feast of Tabernacles, (September 27-29), a group of us hope to visit several Jewish communities in Brooklyn, New York. Forenoons will be spent in preparation as various aspects of Jewish evangelism will be discussed. In the afternoons, after prayer, we will go out in groups of two to try to make friends with people (Jews and others), pass out Gospel literature, ask questions, and share our testimonies, as the Lord gives opportunity.

Why witness to Jews? Because Jews, as well as Gentiles, need Jesus as Savior and Lord. The Gospel command is "to every creature." Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of

God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

Some Helpful Pointers in Witnessing to Jews

A. Most Jews have a strong cultural identity, but a limited knowledge of Scripture.

B. Be familiar with the major sects of Judaism

1. Orthodox: Adhere strictly to Judaism.

2. Conservative: These try to achieve a balance in holding some traditions, but not strictly observing them.

3. Reform: Liberals who set aside most traditions.

4. Besides these three major branches, several minor movements exist.

The Reconstructionists are a branch of Conservatism, while the Hasidic movement is ultra-orthodox.

C. Try to take a view of Christianity through the eyes of the Jewish community. Many Jewish people view all non-Jews as Christians, unless they have embraced Islam, Hinduism or some other religion. To some of them, Hitler was a Christian. When hoodlums broke into a Jewish cemetery in Chicago and defaced inscriptions on the tombstones, the Jewish newspapers reported that “Christians did this dastardly deed.” Is it any wonder that the sons of Jacob are so steadfast in their unbelief of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus? It is hardly possible to make a complete record of all the atrocities which have been committed against Jews in the name of Christ. Thus many Jews view Christians as their enemies and traitors. For many of them to believe in Jesus is to join the enemy and become traitor to their own people. Such a commitment would make them less than Jewish. A messianic believer has aptly written on this issue: “This negative commitment toward Christ is generally not based upon a great deal of factual knowledge.”

D. Begin by developing a friendship. Take your Jewish friend to lunch or coffee. Invite him to your

home for dinner. Be a good listener and gain insight to use as you witness. Do not rush, but be alert to speak a word in season with just the right amount of salt.

1. Affirm that you appreciate and care deeply for Jewish people. The expression “You Jews,” is offensive to some. It is better to say, “The Jewish people,” or to refer to them as “Our Jewish friends.”

2. Discuss family life and topics of general interest.

3. Get from the secular to the spiritual by asking, “Would you mind answering some questions I have about Judaism?”

E. Be tactful in asking questions so he may explain his answers. Questions about modern Israel and an upcoming Jewish holiday can often start a good discussion. As the Holy Spirit leads, you might follow with such questions as:

1. “How would you recognize the Messiah if He came?”

2. “Do you mind if I read something from the Bible?” (Do not mention the reference.)

3. Read Isaiah 53, then ask, “Who do you believe this is speaking about?”

4. “I had a life-changing experience a few years ago. Would you like to hear about it?”

5. “Would you like to hear about how

God answered a prayer of mine?"

6. "Do you have a particular need that I could pray about with you?"

F. As the Holy Spirit leads and your friend allows, show him that not all Gentiles are Christians. [When might you also point out that not all Christians are Gentiles, and that Jesus' death broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile? (Eph. 2:14-20) -Editor]

G. Show them from early church history (Acts 1-7) that most of those early believers in the Messiah were Jewish.

H. Help them to see what it means to be a follower of our lovely Messiah, Jesus, by sharing the testimonies of Anabaptist martyrs. These historical

atrocities are similar to theirs. Even though they are different from theirs, it can serve as a link of common experience and friendship.

I. Be prayerfully persistent. Visit your friend repeatedly. Jesus, our Master Soul Winner, urgently said, "Go out into the highways and hedges and urge and constrain [them] to yield and come in, so that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23 AMP).

(Bibliography:

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Mission Awareness

Mary June Glick

As I sat on the balcony of a Guest House in Barbados and looked out across the Caribbean Sea, I wrote part of this article. My husband and I recently had the opportunity of visiting four islands in the Caribbean, because of his work with Choice Books.

This trip is very special because we have the privilege of taking along our oldest granddaughter and oldest grandson on this trip. It was also a good time of bonding for the two cousins. We have been involved in missions from the time of their birth. Our grandchildren look forward to the time when they can go with us on a missions trip.

Our first destination on this trip was in Trinidad, to a women's prison which we have visited before and where two inmates are incarcerated to whom I write. One of these is on death row. My granddaughter has also been writing to this lady and was with me when we visited her.

Our grandchildren also had the misfortune of watching their grandfather being robbed and receiving a hard blow across the face on the streets of Port of Spain in Trinidad. I was blessed by their love and care and

their attempt to protect Grandpa.

Why am I saying all this?

1. Because I believe we need to influence our children and grandchildren to be actively involved in missions and to know what is happening outside our sheltered communities. We also need to learn to love and accept people from cultures and nationalities different from our own. We need to teach our children to love as Jesus loves and to see all people as those for whom Christ died.

2. I believe young people today need a world vision or they can become complacent and satisfied with all that money can buy. There is so much technology and so many modern "toys" that entertain and steal the hearts of children away from the compassion and care that God would have us experience for those who have so little of this world's goods. A glimpse into other parts of the world helps us to appreciate and be content for what we have. I do appreciate the many youth who give of their time and talents to missions.

3. We spent a few weeks in Belize this summer. Of course, it brought back a lot of memories for us. I was again reminded of the need of praying

for our missionaries and supporting them with cards, letters, e-mails, and gifts. They need to be assured that those back home care about them. I especially felt a bond with the missionary mothers. A mother is a mother whether on the mission field or back in the comforts of home, and the responsibility always feels a little heavier as she cares for her children, prepares

meals for her family and unexpected guests, visits and encourages the local women, deals with the climate and cultural changes, and so on.

Being aware of missionary needs helps us to earnestly pray for them. May we as mothers do our part in preparing our children to be obedient to the Great Commission, in which Jesus says, “Go into all the world.” 

junior messages

An Announcement

Anita Yoder

Not another announcement! The airline agent is picking up the microphone to make an announcement. I don't want to hear it.

He's done it four times already... and we've changed to four different gates! But wait, this time he's handing it to the smiling, friendly pilot. The pilot is middle-aged, nicely dressed, yet he looks like the kind that would eat Cheerios with his children. He acts normal. Can I trust him?

The announcement the pilot makes qualifies him for a round of applause, “Ladies and gentlemen, Flight 1026 is ready to board. We begin boarding in ten minutes from Gate 4A.”

He's inviting us to fly at least seven miles into the sky in a plane bigger than the house I live in. I don't understand the power that makes it go

hurtling through the air faster than the fastest race car.

I have a choice—either I board the plane and trust the pilot or I try to find some other way home.

Let's go to the room where Jesus' disciples had gathered after his crucifixion. They had just experienced delays in their plans and were deep in grief. Jesus was not supposed to die.

But wait, Jesus appeared in the midst of them and made this astounding announcement: “Here you can see where the nails were in my hands and where the spear entered my side. Come, trust Me; come trust my power; I am alive!”

That was quite an announcement!

Even though they couldn't understand the power, their response made all the difference. So does ours. Let us gratefully trust Jesus as our pilot! 

This Month's QUESTION

What have been some significant influences that have motivated you to keep turning your back to the world and turning your face toward God?

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

Jesus is my Shepherd. He is good and kind and He cares about me. He really cares about how I'm feeling every day. He protects me from danger, and watches over me. He assigns angels to keep evil from harming me.

Jesus knows when I'm discouraged and He encourages me either through a song or a message preached by one of his servants. Another way He ministers to my needs is to prompt someone (likely my sister in the Lord) to encourage me. It might come in the form of a hug, or through a few words like, "I'm praying for you." Encouragements like this lift my spirits so that they soar again like an eagle.

Jesus doesn't give up on me and gently keeps working on me. He is so patient and loving. He forgives me each time I make a mistake. He erases it when I ask Him and covers it up. He knows the intention of my heart, and gives me strength to do whatever He asks of me. I'm so glad that Jesus is my Shepherd, and that

He loves and cares for me.

—Youth reader from Indiana

Many things have changed since the first white man set foot on American soil. Men on this continent have changed in many ways since that day, but some things are much the same. The innermost being of modern man still faces the same desires as yesteryear's man. One word sums up what many men crave—"popularity."

Some people may passionately argue that the search for popularity will lead to self-improvement. But, contrary to that belief, the search for popularity actually limits a person's personal growth.

Admittedly, the search for popularity is not all bad; some benefits do exist. A person who seeks for popularity gets to meet a host of new people. He gets to meet many more people than one who has a tendency of retreating into the background.

The "friends" that people who seek popularity make are seldom true

friends. These friends are attracted to this person merely for their own benefit. But wait till the hard times come. Then these “friends” tend to disappear. In contrast, a more reserved person might have fewer friends, but the friends he has are often truer friends that will stand by him—no matter what happens.

Even though the search for popularity may bring happiness, it is often only a temporary happiness. There is still a deep, inner longing that is not filled with being popular. It takes more than popularity to bring happiness.

People who search for popularity often put other people down in order to raise themselves. They may do this by pretending to be a friend, but when the other person’s back is turned, they start viciously slamming his or her reputation.

The search for popularity limits growth. When people passionately

pursue popularity, they focus on what they can receive from other people. Their motives are selfish. In contrast, a person who focuses on being a friend and helping others, will begin to blossom. This kind of focus brings true happiness.

Most important of all, people who seek popularity overlook one unarguable fact. They forget that what God thinks of us is far more important than what mortals think of us. Therefore, we should not get emotionally wrapped up in what other people think of us. People will let us down; God will never let us down.

Many things change, but issues like popularity face every generation. The challenge is, “Deal well with the desire for popularity so that your example will live long after you pass from the scene.”

—James Yoder, Mifflinburg, PA

Next Month's
QUESTION

Just 50 years ago, rural men often worked hard, and often helped each other with farming and building projects. Times have changed for many Anabaptist communities. What can youth do today to help keep these values alive?

Please respond by November 20.



THOUGHT GEMS

Gems adapted from the pen of Raymond P. Brunk:

Anger and envy are close relatives.

• • • • •

An atheist is a man who whistles in the
darkness of his own making.

• • • • •

Opinions formed in anger are dangerous.

• • • • •

We must believe the Gospel before we can live it.

• • • • •

Your conscience forms the outline of your character.

• • • • •

It is hard to help a man who enjoys his troubles.

• • • • •

Carrying a grudge may give you a spiritual hernia.

• • • • •

The best remedy for fear of man is the fear of God.

• • • • •

Only those who have been forgiven can offer true forgiveness.

• • • • •

God's will cannot be separated from His Word.

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