



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

Galatians 6:14

FEBRUARY 2009

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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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More Like Thee

Diana Kornelsen, Checotah, OK

More like Thee

-- in loving others;

Let us all agree,

--'mid all our failures.

More like God

--though friend betray

E'en through the fog

--for me too gray.

More like Christ,

--in caring, true.

Yes, dear Jesus,

--Thy will to do.

More, O Jesus

--about Thy Word

Teach me, too,

--Thy grace afford.

More like Thee

--in all I am.

More like Thee,

--in all. Amen 

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Annual Beachy Ministers' Meetings

are scheduled to be held March 24-26, 2009, D.V.,

hosted by Sunnyside Mennonite Church in Sarasota, Florida.

NOTE THAT THIS IS ONE WEEK EARLIER THAN USUAL.

Committee chairmen and organizations who plan to make a presentation during business sessions, please e-mail Brother Lester Gingerich at lesterandsarah@juno.com to reserve a slot on the agenda. Lester's phone number: 941-371-4818. Please give approximate length of time needed for your presentation.

Attendees with families or friends in the Sarasota area, please make lodging arrangements directly with them if possible. A lodging committee will be established by Sunnyside Mennonite Church, but due to their congregation's size, your direct lodging arrangements will be helpful. 

That Comfort Zone

In 1944, when I was ten years old, I spent eight weeks of the summer working on the farm of my uncle, David M. and Laura (Wagler) Miller. Each forenoon and afternoon for a few hours, Uncle David had me walk among and keep an eye on his small herd of about a dozen milk cows as they grazed in the ditches beside the rural roads two miles east of Partridge, Kansas. I was comfortable doing that.

One day, Uncle David gave me a new assignment. He asked me to do something for his father-in-law, Peter Wagler. Old Pete kindly asked me to take the horse and buggy to Partridge and bring home a hundred-pound chunk of ice for the family ice box. I nearly panicked. I had finished fourth grade and I could drive a horse alright, but to do something I had never done before—and that I feared doing wrong—pushed me well beyond my comfort zone. But Pete was very reassuring and finally persuaded me to go on that errand. Things worked out well and, to my surprise, nothing bad happened!

Why is being comfortable so... well—comfortable? While we're

asking questions, let's ask a few more:

- Is the work of God done better by people who make comfort a priority than by people who follow God beyond their comfort zone?

- Do those who find adventure in their walk with God always avoid paths that others before them have taken?

- Does God have the right to ask us to go with Him where the future looks uncertain?

I thank God that my great grandfather, Daniel E. Mast, addressed his comfort zone. In 1886, he believed God was leading their family to move west. When his young wife died shortly before their planned departure, he faced a very difficult decision. Should he give up what he and his late wife thought God was leading them to do? Should he take the young family and go West even as a widower? The farm was already sold. They'd have to make other arrangements if they didn't go ahead with the move. He must have wrestled mightily with questions! Finally, he went ahead, leaving their newborn daughter, Sarah, in the care

of a friendly neighbor, a childless couple. In spite of other neighbors who helpfully urged him to give up his insane idea, D. E. Mast left the beautiful, productive hills of Ohio and moved to the plains of Kansas.

Here he broke sod with a walking plow and worked hard in many other ways to make a living in this sparsely-populated, wind-swept land that we still call home. Whether or not he enjoyed the adventure, Great Grandpa Mast somehow overcame his fear of the unknown.

I do not enjoy pushing out of my comfort zone. I must not have inherited Great Grandpa's courage. It seems that's how it is for many of us. We don't like the discomfort of the unknown. We want things predictable and safe. When the unexpected comes up that disturbs the status quo, we hope someone will quickly set things straight.

Is there something bad about being cautious? I don't think so. But several extremes must be acknowledged and avoided.

We must avoid the extreme of independence. The work of God depends on direction from the Holy Spirit. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He promised His direction and power to those who lean on Him. This promise applies across the years to the end of time

and across the miles to the ends of the earth.

We must avoid the extreme of primarily seeking adventure. Man's desire for adventure does not justify every new undertaking. Sheer adventure is not reason enough to do anything, but if God calls us to a task, we honor Him when we trust Him to supply our needs and to lead us forward in it.

We must avoid the extreme of always avoiding risk. No one knows what all life will bring, but we can come to a place of fully committing everything to God—come what may. When special needs arise, God will be there and He will give us what we need in abundant measure. Our anxious fears, hugged to ourselves, do not foster God-honoring faith.

We must avoid the extreme of telling God what to do. The faithful Christian follows God's agenda, not his own. Although it is not in our power to earn salvation, *we can obediently follow His Word and this we must do.*

Proverbs 3:5 and 6 speak meaningfully to this struggle: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." Fortunately, God's willingness to help us doesn't seem to disappear when we wait

longer than we should to say “Yes!” to Him.

With confidence in God’s boundless wisdom and love, we can venture where we have not gone before. If He asks us to do something new, He will give us what we need for the assignment.

I’ve been noticing that when I’m yoked to Christ, He takes the heavy end of the load.

I wish I could always honestly say with Paul “when I became a man, I put away childish things” (1 Corinthians 13:11c). I’m working on it. Whenever duty calls me out of my comfort zone, I mean to claim this promise, “I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Fortunately, the man who walks with God always gets to his destination! —PLM 

reader response

Re: The Covering

The covering symbolizes our acceptance of God’s headship order. It symbolizes our submission to His line of authority. Do our hearts match our covering? Does our attitude match our covering? I know that I personally fail at this many days, but I want to do better with Christ’s help...

My husband summarized some of his thoughts on the covering and I have to agree. Here’s my paraphrase of what he said: “Let’s not remove the covering to fit the heart. Let’s fit the heart to the covering.”

The Christian veiling is a beautiful vision of God’s desire for a beautiful woman’s heart. Let’s match our attitude to God’s plan, and be a beautiful woman inside and out.

If anyone would like to reach me to talk to me further about this, you can

write me at the address below. God bless you as you give up self and take up Christ.

Karen Szekalski
9089 Bastable Mill Rd.
Catlett, VA 20119

• • • • •

Dear friends,

We were pleased to see our daughter’s poem in the December issue of Calvary Messenger. Yes, this is Glenda’s poem. There is no Brenda Coblentz here at Greensburg that we know.

Ed Coblentz
Greensburg, KY

I apologize. Apparently in copying the name I made this error. I also note, (according to the directory), that Glenda is now Mrs. Marcus Lengacher, and that she still lives at Greensburg. -PLM 

A PRAYER REMINDER FOR CALVARY BIBLE SCHOOL

Give thanks to God for Calvary Bible School. It is His ministry!

We thank all the laborers and donors who have improved the main building with a much needed new roof.

Pray for the staff, teachers, evangelists and students that we may allow God's Word to change us from one degree of glory to another degree of glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

To the praise of His glory!

Floyd Stoltzfus

Principal



the bottom line

Congregational History Increases in Value

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

It has been three years now since the new Weavertown Church History book came out. In some ways, it seemed like a “pioneer adventure” into the past. It was written by Yours Truly, a lifelong member at Weavertown.

Weavertown was formed in 1909, almost a century ago. The poignant struggles and triumphs of a new kind of church are heart warming to many people, even those who don't know the individuals featured. The developing story of a Beachy church as it struggles for congregational identity and purpose is set in a certain idealism that can be helpful in church administration for our day.

The incremental movement by each decade shows the good hand of God upon this inspiring and dedicated congregation.

The main thrust of this month's article is to give whole-hearted encouragement, a gentle nudge here, and a brotherly push there, to congregations to propose and plan a history book to be written for your church. It is not as difficult as you might suppose.

Choose a committee of interested persons. Select a writer who has a good “feel” for words, an expressive person, who injects some humor, which is a plus for any such endeavor. Gather pictures of church life. Be

prepared to subsidize the project with some money. The demand for books of church history is not a big and exciting market. I hope it will grow. Discovering our roots in order to be more appreciative of who we are and why we exist is beneficial. We really could profit from being more interested in our own history and of the history of other congregations.

Several of our Beachy churches have begun work on a church history book of their own. If this is happening in your church, give it all the encouragement you can. It is possible and it is worthwhile. Digging into the past is a good way to invest in the future.

Let's say it this way: The past is history, the future is a mystery, and "the now" is a gift. That's why we call it "the present."

The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society has a periodical that is sent out to inform and to excite interest in their church history. The June, 2003, issue had a neat idea about history which follows:

"Give me a good reason for supporting the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society! I'll give you two good reasons: divine extravagance and human creativity."

The fabric of creation demonstrates certain divine extravagances: brilliant vermilion sunsets, the

rolling percussion of a thunderstorm, the fragrant smell of mint crushed between fingers, the juicy, dripping taste of a perfectly ripe peach. Why did God build such extravagances into ordinary creation? Why did He give us the ability to be "wowed" by them? Is this aspect of life merely a divine playfulness? Or is it something else?

Human creativity likewise exhibits an esthetic sense that exceeds the merely useful. Is the tasteful and coordinated color, pattern, and form of a beautiful, handmade quilt a necessity of human life? Wouldn't a gray wool blanket accomplish the same end? What about the pleasant turn of a verse that delights both the tongue and ear? Is this esthetic bent just human wastefulness? Or is it something else?

In a similar fashion, the education and inspiration of each generation with a sense of the past is both a divine extravagance and a wonder of human creativity. Stories of the past lend color to the "black and white" of daily human existence. Tales of bygone heroes give symphonic sound to the monotonous hum of birth, sleeping, eating, working, and dying. History brings to the palate a special dessert to add to an endless menu of meat and potatoes. These metaphors describe a quality of life. Such a quality is not always practical,

and often not necessary. History with its stories and heroes brings quality to life that makes it rich--esthetically and creatively.

Every life has a story. The story of any one of our lives is worth something to someone. Seldom does one know that his life will be a significant contribution to a larger story which a later generation will record in a history book. Those featured in recorded history didn't live their lives for that purpose. They just made their contribution in their own way and someone took notice of it. Few people make choices for the purpose of impacting history. But all of us can be faithful and this eventually becomes part of the larger

story. All of us should be interested in contributing in a way that will benefit future generations. We don't need to lead in a revolt in order to be known, remembered, and appreciated.

What really counts is what counts with God. Faithfulness counts with God, more than being in the limelight of the masses. Having one's name written in the Lamb's book of life is of far greater importance and significance than being included in a national list of Who's Who.

The Bottom Line is that history is constantly in the making. God records and rewards as He sees fit. God's intent is that His people (we) learn from history and by its lessons order our lives more wisely. 

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ireland Boys' Camp

Bald Eagle Boys' Camp, the Missions Interests Committee, and our mission church in Ireland have appointed a board to pursue the possibility of a boys' camp in Ireland.

The five-man board met there in December. A work of this type will be more of a legal challenge in Ireland than it is in the United States. Your prayer support is valuable. An e-mail newsletter is available by calling the secretary, Melvin Glick, (864-972-4840), or sending an e-mail to news@boyscamp.ie.

We hope to have a print newsletter in the future, but are presently using the lower-cost option of e-mail distribution.

Wes Sensenig
wesnkaren@gmail.com



ANNOUNCEMENT

Conservative Anabaptist School Board Institute

On March 6 and 7, 2009, (Friday all day and Saturday morning) the Portico River Brethren School near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, will host the third annual institute for Christian school board members, principals, and ministers. The previous two were held in Ohio.

Some of the topics to be addressed this year include:

- Maintaining purposeful vision and enthusiastic support
- The role of the board, ministers, and principal in boosting parent morale
- How to guide the board to resolution in tough issues
- How the church, board, parents, and teachers can work together
- Ten important issues all boards should discuss
- Practical ways boards can be supportive in the small school

Some time will be planned for attendees to discuss the implications of issues raised in the topics for their home communities.

Programs are being mailed to schools who have attended before and also to schools who have attended the Conservative Mennonite Teachers' Institute. If you do not receive a program and want further information, you may contact Jonas Sauder at 3260 Marietta Ave., Lancaster, PA, 17601. E-mail is: jonassauder@gmail.com Phone: 717-285-3495



Golden Eggs

Lester Bauman, Tilley, Alberta

[We submit the following for your consideration. -PLM]

The golden eggs are cracking and it seems that the goose that laid them is dying.

The corporate world is in turmoil as financial executives try desperately to dig their companies out from under the rubble of the collapsing economy. It's a very gloomy way to

end the year.

It's been coming for a long time, though. It would seem that there could have been lots of opportunities for the wealthy nations of the world to take evasive action. But that's the problem with capitalistic democracy—it feeds on the greed

of men. Any kind of evasive action that required belt tightening would have been rejected by the masses who cast their votes (not to mention the powerful money-mongers who run the capitalistic system.) So power-seeking politicians kept on giving the masses what they wanted, and hoped that somehow a miracle would happen that allowed them to avoid the repercussions. But the miracle didn't happen, and the whole system seems to be caving in—like the proverbial house of cards.

Already men's hearts are beginning to fail them for fear. Evidence of that is in the lowest interest rates we have ever seen. But if this fails to jump-start the economy, then what? As money-hungry men become more desperate to maintain their golden eggs, they will probably lash out at those that are siphoning away their profits: The Middle Class.

This is certainly a time when Christians need to put their faith and

trust in Christ, not in men. We may lose everything we have. Others have. But no one can take Jesus away from us, and that is the greatest treasure on earth. But it is only a treasure if we truly have given up all to serve Him.

That is my personal challenge today: Do I love Jesus so much that the rest is just peripheral? If I lose my job, and my home, can I truly say, "I still have what I absolutely must have"? Our neighbors will see if what we have really works for us. And some of them will want it, too. If they see that it really is genuine. But if it turns out to be just a culture for us, anyway; if we end up as terrified and angry as the rest, then we may well have lost the best opportunity for evangelism that we have ever seen.

Let us not fail Him during these tumultuous times. He won't fail us, if we stick to Him.

[Submitted for publication by Richard Mummau, Mt. Joy, PA.]



Reverence

A. W. Tozer

Churches don't really succeed in trying to 'induce' reverence. You can't do it with statues, and beautiful windows, and carpeting on the floor, and with people talking through their adenoids."

"A man who has passed the veil, and looked upon the holy face of Isaiah's God will not be irreverent."

[Adapted from The Tozer Pulpit, Christian Publications, Harrisburg, 1967, p. 57.]



Before You Pedal Off

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

David was an avid bicycle rider. He had an ambitious goal of riding his bike from Northern Virginia to the west coast. The bright sunrise and pleasant summer weather made for a perfect day to begin his journey. He lived with his parents several miles from our Choice Books office. On the morning of the much-anticipated departure, he stopped by the office. In the parking lot, we had somewhat of a ceremony with our best wishes for his journey. In my mind, I still see him pedaling west with the bright sunshine on his back. Soon he was out of our sight.

David was born into a Christian home. He was taught the Scriptures during his childhood and raised in the Anabaptist persuasion of theology. He had the opportunity to be part of a people who teach that knowing Christ truly is following Him daily in life. He had a promising future of partaking of the good life his parents modeled and taught him. The anticipation of celebrating his return never happened.

As we watched him pedal off, little did we realize that he was pedaling out of our lives. As he crested the last knoll and rode out of our sight, he also pedaled out of the Christian faith he was raised in and rode into a false cultic religion that changed his life. He unexpectedly connected with the people of the Unification Church (often referred to as the “Moonies”), led by a

South Korean-born, Sun Myung Moon, He later took a wife at one of their mass weddings performed by Mr. Moon, and has remained in that cult.

In the Scriptures we have examples of rebels who turned into disciples of Christ. Saul’s conversion was such a dramatic turn around that even his name changed. God used Paul not only to be a missionary in his time, but also to write instructions on how the church should live in our time. From these letters God’s people are instructed to walk in newness of life in Christ—a life that is turned around from following the life of the unredeemed. As Saul experienced a complete turn around in his life, the repentant believer is born again into a new life with Christ. This, too, is a turn around in direction, walking in the way of Christ.

After a clear conversion to Jesus Christ, the believer becomes an obedient follower of the teachings and the writings of Jesus and His apostles as given to us in the New Testament. This includes loving your enemies, often referred to as nonresistance. It includes not adopting the patterns of this present world, known as nonconformity. It embraces the covenant of marriage till “death do us part.” These teachings are based on the conviction that the greatest fulfillment in life comes through careful obedience to the Scripture.

I embrace and promote conservative

Anabaptist theology. We hold the Bible for our guide. In living the Christ life, in this “adulterous and sinful generation,” we do so in a religious culture that offers a smorgasbord of ideas and alternative teachings to the clear instructions in the Scriptures. We walk in the narrow path of Christ surrounded by wolves in sheep’s clothing and where false messiahs appear as angels of light. We walk in the midst of those who have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness and deny that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We live in an era where the truth of God is turned into a lie. It’s a religious culture where “being Christian” may be far removed from a true New Testament disciple of Jesus Christ. To say, “I’m a Christian” doesn’t necessarily mean true conversion to Jesus Christ that came through repentance of sin.

This easy, non-repentant religion has a strong appeal to those who want an easier way of life. It appeals to those who look across the Anabaptist fence and see the prosperity of those who blended their religion with the culture around them. It is appealing to be “Christian” and not stand out by being so different.

I think of some of the many young people who pedaled out of the Anabaptist tradition in which they were raised. Some have chosen another theology. Some have neglected connecting with any church. Some have left the teachings of nonresistance and nonconformity and have conformed to the culture and traditions of the world around them. Some have

taken marriage partners from other religious traditions against the advice of their parents and pastors.

Why the pain of my heart? Casual Christianity and casual decisions have produced casual commitments, which have further produced disappointing and painful results. As I think about the number of my acquaintances who have chosen to leave their Anabaptist teachings and go elsewhere for marriage partners, my heart is pained at the rate of failure. I think of the husband whose wife left him and the children with an empty house. I think of fathers with court-appointed times when they can be with their children and of mothers who are left to raise the children alone. I don’t have enough fingers on my hand to count all of them.

Am I saying that conservative Anabaptist tradition is the perfectly-guaranteed successful, no-pain way of life? Not at all! We are not perfect. We are redeemed sinners with a desire to be true disciples of Jesus Christ. The list of “in house” failures is also painfully long. But before you pedal out of the truth of Scripture you have been taught, think prayerfully and very carefully about the direction you are going. Examine it carefully under the magnifying glass of Scripture. Don’t be like the little boy who was running away from home, but didn’t know where he was going.

Before you take off, consider carefully whether you can expect God’s blessings by pedaling past the warning pleas of your parents and pastors. Before you start on this journey, take a long, careful look at where it leads.



A Beacon for Boris

Bruce W. Jantzi, Chernovtsi, Ukraine

Bro. Bruce Jantzi, who wrote this account from notes he took when Boris Sirbu gave his personal testimony, adds this note: I am impressed by Boris' testimony and search for a church that follows the Word of God, because, sadly, some of our Beachy people are throwing away what Boris was seeking. It is my prayer and desire that this article of Boris' search will be an encouragement to the readers of Calvary Messenger.]

Boris Sirbu grew up in southern Ukraine in the part of the country that is below Moldova. In 1996 he came to know the Lord while he lived and worked in Athens, Greece, for two and a half years. He returned to the Ukraine in 1998, upon the death of his father, since he was the heir of his parents' house. Here he joined an evangelical church where he was soon commissioned to be the leader of a small group. Even though Boris put his heart into witnessing for Christ and inviting people to the services, he was disappointed that his church failed to practice some Bible teachings.

Some time in 1999 Boris saw a Bible with the name "Kiev Evangelical Mennonite Church" stamped inside the cover. When he asked others from his church who had sent these Bibles, he was informed that they were given by Mennonite brothers. This was the first time that Boris heard or saw the word "Mennonite."

In 2000, the "Seed of Truth" magazine, published by Christian Aid Ministries (CAM) and distributed by Master's International Ministries (MIM), began to trickle in to the southern part of the Ukraine and fell into Boris' hands. After reading several issues he concluded that the

articles are of excellent quality and according to the Word of God.

Soon he started receiving some of the tracts MIM distributes. Some of the tracts left a deep impression on him. He specifically remembers reading "The Christian Woman's Head Covering" and "Jesus is Coming Soon—Maybe Today." At that time Boris was hearing that all Christians in America are apostate. Yet he noticed that MIM's tracts had an Ontario address and the *Seed of Truth* magazines had an Ohio address. The teaching in these tracts seemed biblically sound, so he doubted that all people in America are lost. Nevertheless, doubts lingered. What if this literature was simply the work of convincing authors and artists who could draw good pictures? What if the churches that sent MIM's literature over to Ukraine did not actually practice what they wrote?

Boris had been searching a number of years for believers who lived according to the Bible. When working in Greece, he asked his pastor about several teachings from the Bible that the church was not practicing. Surprisingly, the pastor agreed with Boris that the Bible actually does teach these points. When Boris asked him why the church does not practice

them, the pastor replied that if he were to stand on these Bible teachings, he would have only 20 members left of the 1500 in his congregation.

As Boris read the New Testament as a new Christian, he read names of cities in Greece in which churches had been established by the apostles. He knew these cities still existed not far from Athens. He even lived in Salonika (Thessalonica) for while. He traveled to these cities in search of believers who practiced what the Bible teaches, but did not find any in those cities. At that time he sadly concluded that there are no believers in the whole world who really practiced what the Bible teaches.

However, when Boris found our literature, a spark of hope was ignited. Here at last was Christian literature that gave teaching according to the principles he found in the Word of God. He thought, *Maybe there are still believers somewhere in the world!*

In 2005, Boris visited with some brothers from southern Ukraine who had met brethren from the Kiev Mennonite Church. One of the brothers showed Boris some pictures of the Mennonites in Kiev. Boris really appreciated the outward appearance of the people in the photographs. He noticed the bearded brothers. He observed that the sisters wore modest cape dresses and veilings. But what was in their hearts? Do they have the true faith?

Boris had the privilege of attending a service at the Kiev Mennonite church at Alvin Kramer's (Franklin, KY) farewell service. He noticed the conservative clothing of the members, both Ukrainian and American. He

was quite surprised that Americans would dress this way. More than that, he was deeply moved by the preaching he heard. It was biblical--purely biblical! On his train ride home, Boris thought deeply about what he had heard and seen.

Boris is not looking for the perfect church. He is balanced enough to recognize that every church consists of human members and therefore there are faults and weaknesses wherever he goes. He was, however, seeking a church in which brothers sit together to study the Bible to find direction for the church.

Some months later he observed a communion and feet washing service in Kiev with Bishop David Peachey officiating. This was the first time Boris had ever seen a literal application of the saints washing one another's feet. He was acutely convicted that he should also practice this ordinance.

In time, Boris also visited MIM's other churches in Berezyinka and Chernovtsi. He eventually moved to Chernovtsi in the fall of 2007 because Victor Bernyk, a member of the Chernovtsi Church had found a job for him there. On March 4, 2008, he was accepted as a proving member of the Chernovtsi Evangelical Mennonite Church and on October 30, 2008, Boris Sirbu was received as a full member.

We praise God that Boris saw God's beacon. I guess it shouldn't surprise us that Boris enthusiastically lets his light shine as he passes out tracts and New Testaments, either as a team member with us, or by himself as he travels to and from the job site.



marriages

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

Brenneman-Yoder

Bro. Joseph, son of Henry and Vera Brenneman, Rochelle, VA, and Sis. Michelle, daughter of Glen and Pauline Yoder, Grantsville, MD, at Maranatha Church for Mt. View Mennonite Church, on Sept. 13, 2008, by Jerry Yoder.

Wagler-Lapp

Bro. Wesley, son of Dale and Rose Wagler, Montgomery, IN, and Sis. Kendra, daughter of Glenn and Naomi Lapp, Penn Yan, NY, on December 13, 2008, at Crystal Valley Mennonite Church, Dundee, NY, by Lonnie Beachy.

Yoder-Wengerd

Bro. Josiah, son of Lonnie and Violet Yoder, Lexington, IN, and Sis. Loretta, daughter of Daniel and Dorothy Wengerd, Summersville, KY, at First Baptist Church for Summersville Mennonite Church on Nov. 21, 2008, by James Hershberger.

cradle roll

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

Coblentz, Glenn and Abigail (Brumbaugh), Decatur, IN, fourth child, third dau., Jasmine Alexandria, Oct. 3, 2008.

Graber, Sanford and Deborah (Coblentz), Bloomfield, IN, first child and son, Deremy Lavone, Aug. 29, 2008.

Heatwole, Wesley and Lois (Sommers), Olar, SC, first child and dau., Emma Ruth, Nov. 27, 2008.

Kauffman, Ervin and Edna (Yoder), Antwerp, NY, second child, first dau., Shanda Kylie, Aug. 19, 2008.

Miller, Arlynn and Nina (Miller), Canon City, CO, first and second children, son and dau., Davian Emmanuel, born Dec. 9, 2004, adopted Nov. 14, 2008, and Trinity Zahne, born Nov. 15, 2005, adopted Dec. 19, 2008.

Peachey, Joseph and Susan (Yoder), Ephrata, PA, first child and dau., Sierra Lanae, Nov. 7, 2008.

Wagler, Leland and Sherri (Knepp), Montgomery, IN, fourth child, second son, Josiah Dean, Nov. 19, 2008.

Wagler, Thomas, Jr. and Marjorie (Overholt), Hartville, OH, (presently serving in Kisumu, Kenya), fourth child, second son, Logan Anderson, Dec. 12, 2008.

Yoder, Ralph and Janice (Nissley), Paris, TN, third child, second dau., Kandace Rose, Oct. 27, 2008.

Yoder, Tim and Julie (Brovont), Sarasota, FL, first child and son, Caleb Dean, Nov. 8, 2008.

Zook, Alvin and Wanda (Miller), Aroda, VA, fourth child, first dau., Elizabeth Irene, July 11, 2008.

o b i t u a r i e s

Eash, Dennis M., 52, of Romney, WV, died unexpectedly on December 17, 2008, of an apparent heart attack. He was born December 17, 1956, in LaGrange, IN, son of Mahlon D. and Emma (Yoder) Eash.

He was a member of Slanesville Community Mennonite Church and served on the joint board for Faith Mission Home.

On October 2, 1982, he was married to Wanda Miller, who survives. In addition to his wife and parents, he is survived by five children: Monica (Michael) Ropp, Monkton, ON; Kenneth, Aroda, VA; Melody, Anthony, and Philip, at home; six brothers: Mervin (Esther) Eash, Utica, OH; Duane (Nancy) Eash, Gambier, OH; LaVerne (Sara Kay) Eash, Gambier, OH; Floyd (Linda) Eash, Utica, OH; Mahlon, Jr. (Erma) Eash, Gambier, OH; Ernie (Janice) Eash, Utica, OH; and two sisters: Karen (Paul) Miller,

Bladensburg, OH; and Lorene (Dan) Hochstetler, Utica, OH.

He was preceded in death by one sister, Marietta Eash.

The funeral was held on Dec. 20, at the Tearcoat Church of the Brethren, with Elmer Glick, Paul Overholt and Ivan Beachy officiating. Burial was in the Slanesville Community Mennonite Cemetery with Laverne Ropp in charge.

Graber, Ann Barbara, 90, of Montgomery, IN, died at her daughter's home in Richmond, MO, on Nov. 20, 2008. She was born April 11, 1918, in Daviess County, IN, daughter of the late Samuel and Mary Graber.

She was a member of Mount Olive Mennonite Church.

On July 3, 1966, she was married to John Henry Graber, who died in 1999. She is survived by three sons and daughters-in-law: Mervin and Linda Graber, Whiteville, TN; Loren and Barbara Ann Graber, Montgomery, IN; and Calvin and Katie Graber, Montgomery, IN; two daughters and sons-in-law: Delores and Paul King, Richmond, MO; and Sharon and Lloyd Mast, Whiteville, TN; one sister: Mary Knepp, Montgomery, IN; 29 grandchildren and 45 great grandchildren.

Preceding her in death were five brothers, three sisters, and one grandchild, Regina Graber.

The funeral was held on Nov. 23, with Clyde Stoll, Jonathan Miller, Cletus Graber and Allan Mast serving. Burial was in the Zion Amish Mennonite Cemetery.

Hostetler, Benjamin S., 85, died at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, PA, Nov. 25, 2008. He was born March 3, 1923, son of the late Noah and Mattie (King) Hostetler.

He was a member of Valley View A.M. Church, Belleville, PA.

On Nov. 29, 1945, he was married to Ada Byler, who survives. Their six children are: Elsie (Leon) Peachey; Ivan Hostetler; Mervin (Wanda) Hostetler; Sam (Carol) Hostetler all of Reedsville; Norman (Anna) Hostetler; and Arlene (David) Zook, both of Belleville.; and 22 grandchildren and six great grandchildren; as well as three brothers: Sollie D. and Alvin Hostetler, Belleville and Elam Hostetler, McVeytown.

He was preceded in death by three infant children and three sisters: Lizzie Kauffman, Ada Hostetler and Sadie Hostetler.

The funeral was held at Valley View A.M. Church on Nov. 29, with David Peachey and David King serving. Ezra Peachey was in charge of the committal at Locust Grove Cemetery.

Spenler, Sarah, 90, died at Knollcrest Lodge, Milverton, ON, on Nov. 19, 2008. She was born in Mornington Twp., Oct. 15, 1918, daughter of the late Peter S. and Mattie (Zehr) Spenler.

She was a member of Fairhaven A.M. church, R.R. #1, Milverton.

Survivors include two sisters: Mary Schmidt, Newton; Magdalena Gerber, Millbank; two brothers: Jake (and wife Dorothy) Spenler, Mooretown; and John Spenler, Brunner, and a number of nieces and nephews.

Sarah was preceded in death by sisters: Leah, Emma, Elizabeth, Amanda; sisters-in-law: Gladys Spenler, Erma Spenler and brothers-in-law: Lorne Schmidt and Norman J. Gerber.

The funeral was on Nov. 22 at Faith Mennonite Church with Bishop Melvin Roes officiating. Burial was in the Mornington A.M. Cemetery.

Stoltzfoos, Simeon M., 84, of Leola, PA, died Dec. 7, 2008, after several months of declining health. He was born April 3, 1924, son of the late Aaron B. and Annie (Stoltzfus) Stoltzfoos at Leola.

He was a member of Weavertown A.M. Church, Bird-In-Hand.

On Feb. 6, 1947, he was married to Fannie Mae Miller. She survives. Their seven children are Omar Aaron

m. to Mary Helmuth; Edwin Ray m. to Esther Yoder; Norman m to Donna Eberly; Allen m. to Vina Gabour; (all of Leola); John m. to Ada Fisher, Willow Street, PA; Brenda m. to J. Sam Nisly, Oswego, KS; and Mary Ann m. to David King, Ronks, PA. Other survivors include 35 grandchildren and ten great grandchildren and one sister, Sarah Stoltzfoos, Leola.

Preceding him in death were five brothers: Moses, George, Thomas, James and Samuel.

The funeral was held on Dec. 11, with John U. Lapp, William Miller and Dave Stoltzfoos serving. Lloyd Beiler officiated in the commital at the Weavertown Church Cemetery.

observations

The sudden death of Dennis Eash, 52, comes as shock and a solemn reminder of the uncertainty of life. (See obituary) Dennis had roots in the Melita congregation in the Utica/Martinsburg, Ohio area. After serving in VS at Faith Mission Home for eight years, he with his wife, Wanda, and young family moved to Slanesville, West Virginia, where they have lived for the last seven years.

The extended family is concerned that Wanda and the family can be provided for without having her take employment outside the home. There is a mortgage on the property.

While the extended Miller family wants to assume primary responsibility for Wanda’s ongoing support, they assume that there might be others who would welcome the opportunity of helping, especially to pay off the remaining mortgage. To “visit” the widows in their affliction is something we all believe in and sometimes such visitation can be well-expressed by sharing a tangible gift of support. Donations can be made to Slanesville Community Mennonite Church. (Note this in memo: “Wanda Eash fund.”) Send to: Winston E. Miller, HC 64 Box 1390, Romney, WV 26757. If you have additional questions, feel free to call Paul Miller (Wanda’s brother) at 330-897-4804.



This month has been unusual in column preparation in that several items required last-minute preparation. This includes a letter from a pastor who is seeking clarity on a number of issues. Because of time and space limitations, Paul (editor) and I have decided to try to simply highlight the main burden of the letter and invite reader response to these concerns. Perhaps a longer article could address these issues at some later time. Let us consider these concerns from these perspectives:

- God is not the author of confusion, but of peace. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

•We as individuals and churches have not been sentenced to failure. He has provided that we can be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. (Romans 8:37)

•*Gelassenheit* or yieldedness seems to have been a major ingredient the strength of our early Anabaptist heritage. Evidence of this characteristic in company with serious church problems is very unlikely. They simply do not go together.

To condense the concerns of the pastor who wrote is a major challenge, but I will try: He is concerned that he can be a responsible leader without becoming a lord over God's heritage. He recognizes this danger, but also the danger of becoming passive and letting things follow a natural course of drift. Have we been overly influenced by the democratic system of the political structure in our land? Are church leaders entitled to having a preference or bias in decision making, or are they simply at the beck and call of an influential majority? How can leaders balance their obligation to the flock with their accountability to God? Must they prioritize? What are the long-term implications of leadership that errs on the side of laxity and permissiveness, on the one hand or of authority in the absence of a shepherd's heart, on the other hand?

We believe this brother and others like him are entitled to a fair hearing

and a helpful response. We invite our readers to participate in this process.

P.S. I had not read Ernest Eby's youth column before I wrote the foregoing comments. It seems to me that his comments are very pertinent and helpful to this discussion.



I take this opportunity to thank our many friends for their prayerful interest in my wife Mary's health problem. We are encouraged that there is improvement, usually observable on a daily basis. Actually, recovery seems to us a rather slow process.

Mary was initially in the hospital for three weeks and three days. We engaged the services of home health care who drew blood for lab analysis. After four days at home, we received an urgent summons to return to the hospital to adjust medications that were working too vigorously. That hospital stay was eight days.

At this point we continue to look to the Great Healer with gratitude and hope. Thank you again for your prayers and your friendship.



Myron Augsburg has been a well-known Mennonite name for more than 50 years. He wrote an article that appeared in *Mennonite Weekly Review*. (12-11-08)

The concern of the article is that some people are dropping the Mennonite name to identify with a more

elite group. Some are dropping it because they would rather identify only with the present and cut themselves off from history. Others are embarrassed to be identified with a group that has been so obviously non-conformed to the world. Others are dropping it because they are not committed to the principle of peace and non-violence that has meant rejection of military service. And others think they can have a clearer message if they use a substitute like the word “Grace” or “Covenant” or “Community.”

Brother Augsburgur cites the following items that have historical and present significance. He believes that the larger church community can profit from exposure to these principles:

- An important part of Anabaptist history is separation of church and state. (This included the free church movement. –DLM)
- Anabaptists were zealous in evangelism and missions.
- We need to be zealous and honest to teach our families the way of Christ in love and service rather than military involvement.
- We need to model a community of faith that is accountable to each other as disciples of Christ rather than just people who go to church.
- We need to show others that being Christians involves membership in Christ’s kingdom. This is more im-

portant than any earthly citizenship. Nationalism is contrary to those who live as resident aliens or as strangers and pilgrims in society.

I found this article particularly interesting for a number of reasons. I have lived long enough to have observed several Anabaptist groups move from a visual cultural/religious identity to cultural assimilation. Those groups have generally maintained an official position in support of some Anabaptist distinctives-- chiefly the peace position. But the article in MWR is a fresh reminder that the restless desire to blend in is commonly satisfied only when such blending in is fully realized.

I shared my written comments with Bro. Augsburgur by telephone. He graciously consented that they may be used here.

• • • • •

“Pills are poison with desirable side effects,” said Jim Neel, M.D., cardiologist. This outgoing, 56-year-old doctor just left Mary’s hospital room. (12-13-08)

We usually think of side effects as a negative result of using prescription medications. So it was interesting to hear this professional refer to the side effects as desirable. It is also noteworthy to hear him say that pills are poison.

People sometimes have very strong feelings about health issues. Some people consider anything besides

medical orthodoxy to be objectionable. Others react to such thinking with extreme anti-medical attitudes. There is a position somewhere between these two positions. It could be called balance or moderation. It reflects a teachable spirit rather than a closed mind.

I find it very interesting to meet people who see the value of natural methods of preventive care as opposed to a philosophy that treats only symptoms. This leaves room for radical/surgical intervention when prevention is not an option.

Another quote from the above-mentioned doctor: "Our bodies were not created for poison/medicine." Dr. Neel was at one time a part of a network of health care providers, in case of emergency, for President Reagan.

• • • • •

In the August, '08, "Observations" column, I made favorable mention of the book entitled, *Overcoming Evil God's Way*, by Stephen Russell.

Alvin D. Byler, Grove City, MN, has more recently become aware of this book. He feels very strongly that this volume belongs in all of our homes. He sees it as second in importance only to the Bible. His correspondence caused me to re-examine the book. It also caused me to review what I had written. Our editor agrees that we should again call attention to this important book. This also provides

an opportunity to apologize for the omission of section #4 in my earlier comments. We left out: "Non-resistance in Church History." I have no helpful explanation or excuse. [Neither do I; but I am sorry. -PLM]

I was impressed that the book is very reader-friendly, but also scholarly and backed by solid research. The bibliography lists 31 sources but Bro. Russell wants it to be understood that he does not agree with everything that these other authors wrote.

Early and more-recent church history and current observations are forceful reminders that it would be a serious mistake to take these teachings for granted. The pressure of patriotism and cultural conformity are always around us. This Anabaptist distinctive had been taken seriously by the early church for three centuries. This, of course, predated the Anabaptists more than a thousand years. The book reminds us that there are still people without Anabaptist connections that see this as an integral part of Christian doctrine and practice. At the same time there are significant numbers in some sections of the Anabaptist community who no longer subscribe to this important principle.

Bro. Russell is a teacher. The chapters are designed for group study. If it seems out of reach to get this book into every home, how about as many homes as possible, plus the church

library?

The book can be purchased from your local bookstore or from: Faith Builders Resource Group, Guys Mills, PA, 16327. (Phone: 877-222-4769) Retail: \$12.99.

While the military implications of this teaching are obvious, let us be diligent to live by these principles in the body of believers. Returning good for evil is still right and effective when given a chance.

• • • • •

Recent mail includes a letter and a bulletin pertinent to earlier discussion about Rick Warren and the “purpose-driven” movement.

The letter writer introduces herself as a former fundamental Baptist. She says her sister-in-law attends a church that champions Warren’s methods, a huge church that is fuzzy on doctrine and heavy on activities (seven nights a week). Activities include children’s clubs, rock band, hip hop dancing classes, speaking in tongues, and so on. Those who try to live a separated life are mocked by the majority... “May the Lord bless you with wisdom in your work.” The letter is signed by Lisa Bonanno from Vineland, NJ.

The bulletin in the December, 2008, issue of the *Prophetic Observer*, published by Southwest Radio Ministries from Bethany, OK. It contains an article by Noah Hutchings, “Rick

and Tony Show,” where he writes about Rick Warren and Tony Blair’s philosophy of religion. The information in the following three paragraphs is based on that article, some of it direct quotes.

On September 3, 2008, Spero News announced that former Prime Minister, Tony Blair of the United Kingdom (England) launched a new organization called Faith Foundation “to bring together the Abrahamic faiths (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) with eastern religions (Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism).”

Also on September 3, 2008, the news was announced that Rick Warren was on the advisory Council for Tony Blair’s new Faith Foundation.

“It appears evident that Mr. Blair and Dr. Warren have joined to unite the Purpose Driven Churches with Judaism, Islam and the eastern religions to bring in a Millennial Kingdom without the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. This is why, evidently, that Dr. Warren never preaches on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.”

My appeal is simply this: Let us keep the lordship of Christ and the Authority of the Word central and basic. That will keep us from being unduly influenced by people that we know relatively little about. A commitment of loyalty to a faithful local body of believers is part of the Lord’s provision for our safety. —DLM 

7. The Word, Our Offensive Weapon

Darlton Bontrager, Kokomo, IN

This is a condensation of a message preached at the annual ministers' meetings, held on March 25-27, 2008, near Arthur, IL, at Otto Center. The complete set of eight cassette tapes or nine CD's is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA, 20136, for \$45, postpaid.

A weapon is an instrument of offensive or defensive combat. It is something to fight with, a means of contending against another. The Word of God is not so much a weapon of choice as it is a weapon of necessity. Some of my friends who hunt like the bow best, others prefer a rifle. In this struggle, we have no choice. One weapon we are given is the Word of God. It is the only weapon that can push back the enemy. It is a weapon so powerful that Satan trembles and flees, yet it is so gentle that we must teach our children to handle it at a young age.

Do you remember the first time you shot a rifle? The first time my Dad let me use a 22, I felt like I could have conquered the world as I was chasing those rabbits, because I had the power to shoot a mile. I let my boys, 5 and 7, shoot at a target. It was probably a mistake. I let them shoot it while I held the gun. Ever since that, I hear, "Dad, when can we shoot your gun again?" Do we teach our children the strength of the Word of God so that they want to handle it?

1. *The Word of God is active and*

powerful. It is alive. It has words in it, but these words have life. If we look at Hebrews 4:12, we get a picture of this. The Word of God is alive; it has strength. This book speaks to the heart. It is meant to be used by us. Or it can work by itself. It is because of this written word that we know that God is from the beginning. The Word of God is quick. It has life and energy.

It is sharper than any two-edged sword. We don't need to hack with it to make it work. It cuts like a very sharp knife. It pierces into the soul and the spirit. Can those two be divided? Can you separate the thoughts and the intents of the heart? We can try, but God is the only one who really knows the innermost part of a man. This is God's revelation to us of who He is [and who we are.]

This book is not magic. Magic is a supposed power, but it is tricky and false. This book has the power of God.

2. *The Word is eternally established.* Why is this Word eternal? Because God is eternal and His Word can never fail. It will go on through the ages. Psalm 119:160 says, "Thy word is true

from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.” In the same psalm, verse 89, it says: “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.”

3. *The Word is sufficient.* We don’t need other things, because God is sufficient for all our needs. I am not saying there is no need for medical help in certain situations, but for our spiritual needs, God’s Word is all we need. Why? Because God is sufficient. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he explained how the Scriptures came to be and said that it is thus, so “that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

4. *The Word is powerful.* The story of Greasy, the Robber, illustrates this. In 1897, after a time of hardship, a group of Russian families decided to move to Siberia. On the train, the father and mother both died, leaving Pasha and Shorta, a son and daughter. They were left in the snow and eventually caught by authorities and put into children’s homes. But Pasha didn’t adjust to the children’s home. It was a rude and rough place. He escaped and ran and fell in with a band of robbers, who took him in as family and nurtured him. They made their life appear good.

He had come from a Catholic home. As they parted, his sister said, “We shall not despair, my beloved; God will not forsake us.”

When he joined the robbers, they

asked him, “What is your name?”

He said, “Pasha.” (or Paul)

They asked, “What is your family name?” ‘Ticomido.’ (meaning ‘quiet peace’)

They said, “You can’t have a name like that living with us; we’ll just call you ‘Greasy,’ because you’re very dirty.”

Eight years went by and Greasy took an active part in the life of robbery. They would go through the forest, robbing and killing many victims in a 75-mile radius. One day they came upon two men who went down on their knees and pled for their lives. They killed them in cold blood and took their possessions. Among their possessions were two books: one was *A Test of Faith*; the other was a New Testament. As they went back to their hideout, Greasy took this book and began to read in Romans 3:10-18. He found the description of sinful men. As he was reading, a strange feeling came over him. Greasy had been the jolly one of their band. The next morning, he was not himself. He was distant and gloomy. The others asked, “What’s wrong with you?”

He said “I’ve been reading from that book.” They demanded that the book of witchcraft be surrendered and burned. And yet, as they got it out, they began to take an interest in that book. They began to read the words of this book. These were robbers—not pastors and teachers! They had only

the book. One of them said, “My mother was a believer and always read in the Gospels. She often took me to children’s meetings where we read out of this book and sang and prayed.”

A month passed. The young man whose mother had taken him to children’s meetings, said he could no longer live this way. And Greasy said, “Neither can I.” Imagine, a band of robbers, saying, “What do we do from here?” The whole group recognized that they could no longer live this way because of The Book. Is God’s Word alive? Is it powerful? It is a tool from God.

Seven of these men turned themselves in to the magistrates, who were shaken by what could happen from a book. These seven surrendered; the rest dispersed and went their ways. This is what was heard as these robbers dispersed: In tears, some said, “Forgive me, do not remember my sins; wash me in Thy blood; give me power, I shall sin no more, I promise.” Those who surrendered took their weapons and walked into town and laid them on the table. The magistrate in charge went home. He couldn’t sleep. He read his Bible and was converted.

Greasy had to serve time and became an evangelist in prison. Finally, he got out of prison and decided to go to his home town and preach the Gospel to his homefolks. He had lost track of his sister. As he was traveling, they came to a place and stayed for the night. As

he was telling his story, the wife where they were staying said, “You are Pasha. I am your sister.” God had brought them back together. How big is your God? Is His Word sure? Is it powerful? Is it alive?

God is going to work. Are you willing to work with Him? Or will you work against Him?

What would a Roman soldier be without a sword? Very embarrassingly, I once went deer hunting and left my rifle at the tent. I was about as effective, unfortunately, as many Christians are.

The written Word of God establishes all the points of the armor. The Word of God gives us the shield of faith. We must build our faith on the Word of God. When I hear how the Word of God affected Pasha, it builds my faith. As I face adversity, that builds my faith. But ultimately, the Word of God is expressed by experiences through His Word. If these experiences come by revelation, they must line up with this written Word. I believe God speaks to people. He speaks to their hearts and gives them something to share with others.

Take the helmet of salvation and fill it with the promises of God. Push out the doubt. Protect your mind. The sword of the Spirit defends us not only against attacks; it is also to be used for attack.

We must also step aside and allow God to work. Let us never become

enamored with the power that we have over the enemy. It's not about us. It's not about fighting him; it's about bringing honor and glory to God. We must stay out of the way! God wants to use us. He needs us, but we are not the ones who are fighting the battle. It is God.

Today the Roman soldier is no more. How were they overcome? We could think of invaders, but really, the cause of their defeat came from within. They died internally.

When we begin to rely on our armor, and the things that we have put up, we're going to die internally. Maybe that's why we have those trivial (and not so trivial) issues in our churches. We forget that it's not us--it's God. The enemy comes in from the outside, but many times the enemy is inside.

The Word of God here refers not to *logos*, but to *rhema*. It refers not to the whole revelation of God's Word, but to a portion of this Bible and to a particular battle. If you're in combat, and you need to use the sword, it has different purposes. There are different passages in here. We need to learn how to use the Word of God for the specific needs we must address.

The sword that the Roman soldier had was from 12 to 20 inches long. It was made for close combat. In modern warfare, who gets the heat? The troops do. There still must be close combat. There are still times when they must use the sword.

The Sword does five things:

1. The Sword represents the authority of God. When Satan faces a representation of God, he must move back. The whole Bible teaches us to be under authority, to be under God, to be under our parents, to be under God's Word. When we are under authority, we have power. In Mark 1:23, Jesus met a man with an unclean spirit. He commanded the unclean spirit to flee. It had to leave in the presence of Jesus.

In Luke 10, the disciples reported that the devils were subject to Jesus' name and we had power over them. Jesus said that he saw Satan fall as lightning. He told them, "Don't rejoice so much that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (v. 20).

2. The Sword reveals truth. When Satan tempted Jesus, Satan also used some Scripture, but Jesus used the whole truth, not just a tiny, misapplied segment of it.

3. The Sword resists the devil. We see this in Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Satan came to Him and opened the conversation with, "IF thou be the son of God..." Jesus could have turned those stones to bread. There would have been nothing wrong with that, except that Satan told Him to do it. Satan challenged Jesus. Jesus had been fasting for 40 days and His body was hungry and weak, but His spiritual being was in tune with

His Father. In the second temptation, Satan left out part of the Scripture he used to try to trip Jesus. In the third temptation, Jesus said to Satan, “Get thee hence; it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.” Satan has only counterfeits. He doesn’t have the real thing. He can’t even offer us the real thing; he just tries to get us to think he has the real thing. He wants us to fall down and worship him. After Jesus resisted Satan, the angels came and ministered unto Him.

4. The Sword routs Satan. I don’t enjoy being on a ball team when somebody says, “Oh, we’re going to lose anyway. What’s the use of trying?” Victory can come through studying the weakness of the enemy. I’m not saying we should study Satan, but I am saying that we can only win in this battle if we are persistent in defense and also “score some points.”

5. The Sword rescues the captives. God has not called us to whip Satan, but He has called us to rescue the captives and to push Satan back. Jesus defeated Satan. It’s not our job to do that. We’re in Jesus’ army. Jesus has a purpose for us.

In Philippians 2:13-16, that rescue of the captives is explained. Jesus rescued those with unclean spirits. He healed the sick. All of those are part of fallen humanity. He rescued them and gave them life. 2 Timothy 2:25, 26, says in part, “that they may

recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

Unless we choose life from Jesus Christ, Satan has dominion over us. He is under God’s authority. When we choose the power of Christ, Satan cannot have the power of death. Satan does not say when and where things shall happen.

Even though the Word of God is powerful, yet our children can have it and use it. I don’t leave my guns lying around for children to play with. But we can leave our Bibles within their reach. They must learn to use this weapon. They must learn to respect the authority of God. You must know your weapon. Wield it with knowledge. In a hunter’s safety course, they teach you all the parts of the gun. That doesn’t guarantee that you will use it safely or effectively, but it gives you the knowledge to do so.

We must know how and when to use it. By that, I’m saying that it must be used! We must also teach others how to use it. Know the strengths and limitations of your weapon. In bow hunting, I can be effective only within 30 yards. Some of you can do much better than that, but I can’t.

When the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:14-20) tried to cast out the demons, not in the power of the Jesus they had, but in the power of the Jesus that Paul had, it didn’t work. They didn’t know how to use the power. They were

defeated and couldn't do it. As we use this Word, we must never take credit for what we can do with this.

We must take the Word of God with us. Where did the Roman soldier have his sword? Was it in his tent? No, he had it in his scabbard, right by his side at all times. The Bible is not magic. It does no good if we don't use it.

It takes work to use this power. Satan does not move easily unless we're under God's authority. Satan will not budge if he knows if we have unconfessed sin in our life. Then we become defeated and discouraged.

Dunkard Brethren missionaries served some time in the West on an Indian reservation where there was a lot of spiritual warfare. They went there with no teaching in dealing with spiritual warfare. But, as they encountered these things, they went into the Word of God and asked, "How did Jesus deal with this?" Sometimes He called the demons by name. Sometimes He asked, "What is your name?" The demon would respond. Then He would speak and cast it out. Sometimes it was by prayer and fasting.

They worked with one girl for eight months before she was completely delivered. Why did it take so long? I believe God wanted them to persevere and to know His Word. This girl would get deliverance; then there would be something else. So they would dig

and learn some more and look for the *rhema*. (A Scripture that dealt with that problem), then they would use the Word and push back Satan.

When the Bible says the Word is quick and powerful, that doesn't mean that we must use it real fast and with a lot of force on those people who aren't listening. Jesus used the Word of God with compassion. He loved the people He spoke to. He had to confront issues and the hardness of their hearts. Even when they scorned and hated Him and He knew they were going to put him on a cross, He loved them with a compassionate heart. I confess I don't have the compassion I see in Him for my people. It must come from God. When I see how miserable I am before a holy God, then I can start having compassion.

In 2 Timothy 2:24-26, Paul says to young Timothy, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

Let us entreat men with the compassion of Christ, under the authority of God. 

True Love

Esther Marie Beachy, Belvidere, TN

If you can continue to show love to someone who has time after time refused your love, and you can keep your own heart from bitterness...**that is true love.**

If you continue loving someone who repeatedly slams you and you look at them with a heart of compassion for his/her own happiness...**that is true love.**

If you are willing to stoop down and love those who are loved least by most people, even though you realize you're risking your own possible rejection from peers...**that is true love.**

If you continue to show love to those around you, even though your own heart is broken and you wonder whether you will pull through...**that is true love.**

If you can show love to someone when you would much rather avoid them, and you are willing to go out of your way to show kindness or do something nice for them...**that is true love.**

If you are willing to go speak to someone about an area in his/her life, even though it would be much

easier just to be quiet, yet you are willing to do it for the sake of his soul...**that is true love.**

If you are willing to lay down your opinions and ideas for the sake of peace even though it may mean you have to put up with something you think is unwise, and if through all this you can still keep your own heart free from grudges toward those to whom you give in to...**that is true love.**

True love does not only follow the emotions and feelings of the heart, it goes much deeper. Love gives when all feelings to keep on giving are gone. Love endures painful things from others, yet carries no desire to retaliate or hurt those who caused the pain. Love keeps on hoping for a change for the better even when the situation seems hopeless. *Love beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never fails!*

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34,35).



Roadblocks on the Path to Hell

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

Psalm 107:1-31 is a song of thanksgiving for deliverance from the Babylonian captivity, from the perils of travel, from prison, from sickness and more. It is a picture of a poor, wandering soul who is hungry and thirsty.

Jesus told us about the two roads leading to two eternities. He told us to enter through the narrow gate because the broad road is a path of trouble that ends in destruction or everlasting hell. Some think it is an easy road and does not take much effort to follow. Well, maybe so. But God, in His mercy has chosen to make it difficult to continue on that road. Harold Martin comments, "The Lord Jesus (in every sermon recorded in the Gospel of Matthew) makes mention of hell. There is no doubt that it is a real place. But God has done (and is doing) everything possible to keep men and women from going into that awful place."

The Bible

The Bible is a blockade! Years ago my dad had severe headaches to the point of death. They went to several doctors but they had no diagnosis for his problem. It kept getting worse. Finally, in desperation, my brother took him to the hospital and they quickly did a brain scan.

It showed that he had dried blood pushing against his brain. Some months before, he had a slight injury from bumping his head against an iron frame on the bottom side of a travel trailer that he was repairing. The bleeding wound healed on the outside but not on the inside. The doctors soon relieved the pressure by using surgical instruments and applying proper medical solutions. When Dad awoke after surgery, he rejoiced and praised God. He said, "I feel like a new man."

Harold Martin writes, "You cannot go very far in the path of sin without finding the Bible standing in your way. It is the great disturber of history. The message of the Bible will haunt you until you find peace with God." We must allow the Bible and the Holy Spirit to scan our hearts. We can safely trust the master Surgeon to do His divine work in our soul.

The Cross

God had a plan before the Creation for man's redemption. The cross stands in the center of all history. Think of Jesus' blood dripping down across His face, hands, arms, back and feet. The cross is a most excruciating way to die. It is much worse than shooting, drowning, beheading, or the gas chamber. Those methods all

are quick, but crucifixion is a slow, lingering, painful way to die. One of the roadblocks that He (the sinless One) put in front of sinful man is the marvelous work of redemption through the blood of the cross.

The Conscience

The conscience is a universal gift from God. It means “to know with.” It is not merely a knowing of ourselves. It is a knowing if we are doing His will or not. Our conscience tells us not only what we are but also what we ought to be. It is a remarkable judge! Allow your conscience to be trained by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. It serves as a roadblock in the sinner’s life. Saul and his followers’ consciences were smitten while Stephen was preaching: “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart...” (Acts 7:54). These men hardened their consciences against the Gospel message, for “they gnashed on him with their teeth.” But it is evident that these words of Stephen were used by the Holy Spirit and sank deep into Saul’s heart. When he met the Lord on the road to Damascus, Jesus said, “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” (“goads”—center margin) His conscience was troubled by the Holy Spirit and it was difficult for him to resist.

A Gospel Tract

A tract can go many places where you cannot go. It never fears, never tires, can be read by many, and can travel with little expense. A tract can tell the wonderful story of salvation in the kitchen, store, factory, office, car, bus, or in the jet airliner. It can

be picked up in the garbage barrel, on the highway, on the foot path through a field. The story is told of a laundry worker who felt impressed of God to place a Gospel tract in a rolling basket. The next day the manager confronted the servant with the tract. The worker told the manager that he had placed it there. “Last night,” the manager said, “I came here discouraged and disappointed with life. I wheeled the basket under the middle girder of the pressing room, intending to hang myself from the girder and kick away the basket from under me. But I saw that paper in the basket and I read it. That tract not only saved me from suicide, but its message saved my soul. I have received the Lord as my Savior.”

Christian Parents

Thank God for your Christian parents. Their wisdom in establishing godly rules and administering physical discipline can serve as roadblocks on the road to hell. “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell” (Proverbs 23:13,14). This method of discipline, though it is necessary, must to be applied with love, prayer and explanation.

The Church and Preaching of the Gospel

A personal friend sharing kind advice may make an eternity of difference at the appropriate time to save a person from hell. Harold Martin continues, “God has ordained

the simple preaching of the Gospel as one means of stopping people on the road to hell. If you are determined to continue on in your sinful way of living, then this article (which is really a sermon) becomes a blockade which troubles your conscience.”

Friend, does the Word of God haunt you? Does your conscience

keep you awake long into the night? You can laugh at sin and the church, but you had better not trifle with the call of the Holy Spirit. Repent! Turn to Jesus Christ with all your heart in obedience to The Faith.

[This article drew heavily from an article by the same title by Harold S. Martin.]



helpers at home

LOVE

Mary June Glick

February is the month known for expressions of love. I was at WalMart a few days before Christmas and the clerks were already replacing some of the Christmas products with Valentine cards and chocolates. Do merchants really care if we express our love to each other? I realize they may actually remind us to express our love in a special way to our loved ones.

I enjoy receiving a reminder of my husband's love on special days. We need tangible evidence of love. However, the word *love* is used very lightly in today's world. We see all kinds of bumper stickers declaring "I love" just about anything we can think of. Love should have a deep personal meaning; love is not just a light, sentimental expression. We understand what the advertising world means as they exploit the word *love* in promoting their products. However, for Christians it must be

rooted in the love which comes from God alone. Love is much deeper than mere outward expressions.

Love can be either a verb or a noun. We use it as a noun when we say: "God is love" or we talk about His great love to humankind or even our love toward God or others. Love is also an action verb. We use it to express how we feel or the way we will act toward people or circumstances. We say, "I love to read or sew" or whatever we do with a passion. We use love as a verb to say, "I love you." Love devotes, cherishes, and takes pleasure in, feels tenderness and concern toward. Love is action. Christians need to express love in God's way (agape love). As we learn to know and love God, we will want to reach out to people with His love. I believe our love must begin at home to our family and then extend out to others.

Loving our husbands

Your husband must come first in

your love list. A busy mother's life seems to revolve around her children. It is easy to go through those years and forget that your children will grow up and leave the nest and life will again be back to the two of you. Somehow, you must make time for the man you love. Your appearance and even the appearance of your house and children are important when he comes home in the evening. Give him a kiss and a listening ear. Do not leave all the discipline for him. Give him time to relax and unwind. Respect and honor your husband. Laugh with him, never at him. Enjoy your love life. Love unconditionally.

Loving our children

Children need love. We show them love by touch; even a tiny baby gets this message. We show love by taking time with them, letting them know they are important to us. Love is being gentle, speaking kindly, and listening. Love is reading a book or playing a game. Love teaches Bible principles and godly values. Love also teaches discipline. It teaches obedience and that "no means no."

Love teaches children to be unselfish, respecting others, not showing partiality or discrimination toward anyone. Love prays for each child.

Loving our friends

To have a friend is to be a friend. However, there are requirements in friendship. Treat your friend as you would want to be treated. Keep her confidences. Respect her time and privacy. Love her unconditionally. Remember there are some things you do not even share with your best friend, such as marital privacies, your children's secrets, and other people's problems. [Privacy should be protected unless a very serious situation has developed and the home is becoming dysfunctional. -PLM] Do not demand anything of your friend that she hesitates to give. Enjoy spending fun times together occasionally. Broaden your circle of friends.

Love also reaches out to our church family, to our community, and to whomever we meet. Love reaches people in other parts of the world. Let us touch lives today with God's agape love. 

A smile is the light in the window of your face that tells people you're at home.

A Lesson from Nature

Anita Yoder

Is anyone willing to help me bring in some firewood?" called Father.

"Sure, I will," Nicole replied to her father's retreating figure.

"You will need a warm coat and hood tonight; it's frigid outside," he called back over his shoulder. Nicole pulled on her coat.

Anything is better than studying for a science test, she decided. "How long is this going to take us?" she asked.

"Not too long; but we need to move some of the wood from the lean-to into the shed so that it will be dry by the time we need to burn it." Nicole kept up with her father's long strides and followed the bobbing of the flashlight.

"How have things been going at school?" Father grabbed the door open as the wind whipped it against the shed.

"Oh, it's been going alright and I have been doing well in English and science. Today during math class we had to go to the chalkboard and so some really hard division problems. Two of

mine were wrong, and I heard snickers coming from the back. I tried so hard. I think it's mean to laugh at someone," she blurted.

"You are right about that," stated Father. "And I certainly would not want you to do that to someone else. I don't know why you experienced unkindness today. People who are not disturbed about injustices in this world will do nothing for others when they see it happening. Today you were at the receiving end. You know that hurts and feels unfair. Now you also have a responsibility to reach out to those around you and do what's right even if you have to stand alone," he calmly added.

"But it's so hard to understand what I'm supposed to do or say. I actually feel worse for them than for myself," Nicole observed with honesty.

"You're not responsible for anyone but yourself, Nicole. Here-- how about giving your Dad a hand with this wood pile?" As Father moved away some of the heavier pieces, his light revealed the cutest

sight: two, half-grown rabbits asleep. The light startled them; their ears popped upright and their eyes flew open. Both of them took a huge leap and landed at Nicole's feet. Quickly she tried to catch them, but with another desperate scramble, they were out of sight.

"Where did they go?" Nicole lost her balance and fell to the ground. "They were so cute!" she giggled and brushed bits of bark

and sawdust off her clothes.

"What a sight," commented Father. "You know that was a perfect picture of peaceful sleep, yet not being spiritless. They were instantly alert to danger. Hurts can cause us to lose spirit but, Nicole, we must not let that happen."

"I think I understand," she laughed. "Those rabbits looked so funny! I won't forget that right away, either!" 

youth messages

With Whom Are You Running The Race? – Part One

Have you ever run in a race? If so, how many runners were there and how many people won?

The Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9:24 says, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." Paul instructs us to run the Christian race as though we are the only one who is going to win the prize, yet he implies that all of us are able to win.

The Christian race may be compared to a race in which the runners are physically handicapped. According to Author Hauthuille, "*Whatever*

the race, the dream of the handicapped is to see all the competitors cross the finish line together." Stories about handicapped racers and the encouragement that they exhibit toward fellow racers paints for us a clear picture of what God intends for His body. Imagine the unity that Christians would experience if every church member ran with all his might, while linking arms with the slower ones and pulling them along as he ran.

Perhaps one reason this type of team spirit seems somewhat rare to us is because too many of us are "thanking God that we aren't like other men." Instead of seeing ourselves

as a group of spiritually handicapped individuals who need to pull each other along toward the day of our final healing and redemption, we distance ourselves from those we deem spiritually inferior. It is rare to hear someone publicly imply that there are believers in our nation whose offering to God is much more acceptable than our own. This smug satisfaction with how we live our lives, positions us on a pedestal where we can view all others as sliding too far to the left or to the right.

Isn't it strange how so many of us can view ourselves as living the perfect balance and yet be so diverse in our expressions of godliness? Yet, this should not surprise us since the Scriptures clearly suggest that spiritual smugness and isolation from other believers will produce fragmentation and questionable fruit. Elevating oneself above other members of the body of Christ is not the attitude that Paul is promoting when he writes, "So run that ye may obtain." Based on his other writings, Paul is promoting a spirit that encourages Christians to recognize the godly example of others and to adjust their course of life based on the example of others.

Maybe you are wondering, "How important is it that we run as a team? Aren't there men and women of

God who have run all alone? What about men such as Abraham, Elijah, and Isaiah? Didn't they need to run alone?" Or maybe your questions are more like this, "Aren't we all created in the image of God? God doesn't need anyone else to run with Him, does He? Why would His people need to run with a group? Doesn't 1 John 2:27 say, *'But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him?'*"

There are many verses like this in the Bible, if not viewed in their context and not harmonized with other Scriptures, that would lead us to believe that, "No, we don't need others to run the race with us. Every person can live his own life with Christ and does not need others to run with him." In fact, a few chapters later Paul tells us to run the race as if we were the only one who would win the race. Yet, it is the same Paul who teaches us to view ourselves as a body, and that the various members of a human body cannot act independently of each other.

All of us are running with some group. The fact that you are reading this means that you are either want-

ing to benefit from someone else or wanting to critique them. Either way, you are indicating that you are part of some group—some way of thinking. Even if you are a hermit, you have identified yourself with the “society of hermits.” Hermits have a lot of things in common with each other.

So there are two truths that we need to reckon with. One truth is, “Every man must give account of himself to God.” The other truth is, “We need other spiritual body parts in order to be complete.” None of us are like Jesus in that we have all we need to be complete. Jesus said that He always does those things that please His Father. We can’t say that. We don’t always do those things that please God, even if we try really hard. We need other people to do what we don’t get done. Together we make up the bride of Christ. Individually, we would not make a very good bride, but as a unit of believers, we can be a worthy bride for Christ when He returns.

Much of truth is like this. If we take what appears to be two contradicting truths and embrace them simultaneously, we gain a more complete picture of God’s truth. All of us need to be willing to run alone when necessary, yet realize that we will not be complete without others to make us complete. God has designed the

church to function that way.

Until recently, we as conservative Anabaptists were much more familiar with the “community” concept than many other denominations. Our history is filled with barn raisings, disaster service, family gatherings, and church gatherings, where we worked together, socialized together, and worshiped together. In many Anabaptist churches it is still common for the members to stay around and talk after church for long periods of time. In contrast, many American churches experience a mass exodus as soon as the benediction is pronounced.

The years 1800 to 1950 are considered the period in which our culture was dominated by modernism. During this period many in our nation admired and idolized self advancement and independence. Many Christian denominations and some Mennonites adopted this culture as evidenced by the lack of heart-to-heart interaction with fellow believers. This independence, however, has caused so much heartache in families and churches that today many Christians are again attracted to community concepts.

In the last few decades post-modernism has dominated our culture and many people in our nation are taking interest in such concepts as:

“community, relationship, connecting, and village dynamics.” Many people in today’s culture are tired of trying to live out their lives in a solitary way.

Each of us needs to ask this important question: “Who am I?” Asking this question in turn produces more questions, such as, “Where did I come from? Why am I here? What is my calling? What is God’s plan for me?” These questions have been key questions in America for a long time.

But an equally important question that each of us should also consider is, “Who are *we*?” As we consider this question, we find ourselves asking other group questions, “Where did *we* come from anyway? Why are *we* here? What is *our* calling? What is God’s plan for *us*?”

Maybe the following brief comments will whet your interest for exploring these questions further:

We, like a group of believers in Antioch of Syria, endeavor to follow Christ. This makes us Christian. We are a people who believe that men and women must call on the name of Jesus in order to be saved. This makes us evangelical. We are a people who believe that the evidence of Christ’s life within is demonstrated by the fruit that comes from his or her life. This among other things makes us

Anabaptist. We are a people who affirm the doctrinal beliefs of the early church. This makes us orthodox. We believe that Christians must align themselves with the universal church. This makes us catholic. (See the Apostles’ Creed) Many of us are spiritual descendants or followers of Dutch, Swiss, or German Anabaptists. This makes us Amish, Mennonite, Brethren, or Hutterite, or some variation of these.

All of us associate with some people groups more than others. Most of us tend to associate with those people I last described. But---this people group does not have a monopoly on Truth. Identification with this people group is not synonymous with eternal life. Running the race with this group of people is not necessarily a sure path to acceptance with God.

We tend to espouse the values of the people with whom we are running the Christian race. As the values of Amish and Mennonites change, we need to inspect our values and beliefs and compare them with the worldview of other faithful Christians.

Next month, we will discuss some contrasts in values among those who call themselves Christians. Until then---think about the group with whom you are running and see if you can identify some basic values that characterize your group. —EE 

THOUGHT GEMS

Yawning might be the unconscious opening of one's mouth when we wish others would close theirs.



Why not take the world as it is instead of as it should be?



Humans, like chickens, thrive best when they have to scratch for what they get.



The army of the unemployed has too many volunteers.



Fortunately, it is often harder to hide a lie than to tell the truth.



In an argument the best weapon to hold is your tongue.



Time invested in improving ourselves cuts down on time wasted in disapproving of others.



Kind actions begin with kind thoughts.



Whether you're on the road or in an argument, when you see red, put on the brakes.

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