



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

Galatians 6:14

OCTOBER 2010

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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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If I Gained the World


Anna Ölander (1861-1939)

Translated from Swedish

If I gained the world, but lost the Savior,
Were my life worth living for a day?
Could my yearning heart find rest and comfort
In the things that soon must pass away?
If I gained the world, but lost the Savior,
Would my gain be worth the lifelong strife?
Are all earthly pleasures worth comparing
For a moment with a Christ-filled life?

Had I wealth and love in fullest measure,
And a name revered both far and near,
Yet, no hope beyond, no harbor waiting,
Where my storm-tossed vessel I could steer;
If I gained the world, but lost the Savior,
Who endured the cross and died for me,
Could then all the world afford a refuge,
Whither, in my anguish, I might flee?

O what emptiness!—without the Savior
'Mid the sins and sorrows here below!
And eternity, how dark without Him!
Only night and tears and endless woe!
What, though I might live without the Savior,
When I come to die, how would it be?
O, to face the valley's gloom without Him!
And without Him all eternity!

O, the joy of having all in Jesus!
What a balm the broken heart to heal!
Ne'er a sin so great but He'll forgive it,
Nor a sorrow that He does not feel!
If I have but Jesus, only Jesus,
Nothing else in all the world beside.
O, then everything is mine in Jesus;
For my needs and more He will provide. 

Thriving Families

*What makes a happy family?
Listen and I will tell,
It's not your house; it's not your farm,
Or the car you like so well.*

*The trips you take or the phonograph
Or the money you have to spend.
It's something better than all of these;
It's something that will not end.*

*It's love for Dad, who works so hard
To get the things you need
It's Mother loving and helping you
In every kindly deed.*

*It's Sister's love and Brother's love
And your love for each one.
That makes for joy and happiness
When every day is done.**

[*Slightly revised.]

The above words (source unknown) which my wife's sister, Josephine, set to music, gave inspiration to their family as they faced life's challenges in the mid-1900's.

Every family faces tough times. It seems that when faithful Christian families have trials, both the parents and children handle it with more

enthusiasm and joy than do their unbelieving neighbors. In poorly functioning families, life is often "a bore and a chore." God-fearing families handle tough times best, but even then, no family gets everything right.

I invite readers to give insights on significant differences between how thriving families and dysfunctional families handle the issues of life.

Some situations reflecting family welfare are indicated in the following questions:

1. **Favoritism.** *How do parents of a young child give the child the impression that he/she is more (or less) desired than their other children?*

2. **Sibling Rivalry.** *How is it that rivalry among siblings sometimes affects many aspects and years of life?*

3. **Discipline.** *What is excessive child discipline and how does it show itself? What are some indications of insufficient discipline in children?*

4. **Home Atmosphere.** *How does the atmosphere of the home, especially the parents' relationship, affect the children's priorities, values, and decisions?*

5. **Finances.** *Why do some families get bogged down in debt, while others with similar health and economic opportunity go through life mostly debt-free?*

6. **Aging.** *In what circumstances might an aging parent be admitted to a residential facility for elder care?*

7. **Inheritance.** *How should matters of family inheritance be viewed? Should children of Christian parents expect that all family wealth will eventually be distributed to them? How should Christians who have no direct descendants plan to distribute their savings?*

I believe we could gain much from the collective wisdom of our readers on these questions. Likely no writer will respond to all of the issues mentioned above. Some people will naturally take a greater interest in one question than another. That is fine. I hope to hear from a number of you on all of the above questions.

If you have seen (or personally experienced) either positive or negative aspects of any of these issues, we would like to hear from you. A well-told, real-life story

probably communicates better than simply telling us how to do it—or *not to do it*. If you hide the identity of the persons referred to, actual incidents will communicate well without giving readers needless “baggage.”

In a month or two, when I have gathered a substantial amount of material, I would like to publish your contributions in *Calvary Messenger*. Obviously, the sooner I have a good amount of material, the sooner I can go to press with it. Contributions may be fairly short.

We continue our policy of requiring a name with submissions for publication. If requested, I will leave your name off what is published. I invite you to leave your name attached, but I understand why some of these questions are easier to address anonymously.

I doubt that there is a better time than today for you to get started with writing down **your experiences, observations, and/or concerns** about any of the above questions. Please don't put it off so long you forget it. Give it careful consideration—**soon**. Thank you and God bless you!

—PLM 

***Children need applause—
sometimes with two hands, sometimes just one.***

Minister's Meeting Messages — 2010

This is a condensation of the third message given at the annual ministers' meetings held at Fair Haven Church, Goshen, IN, on April 6-8, 2010. The complete set of eight CD's may be ordered from Victory Music Services, 5520 Harrison St., Apt. 4, North Highlands, CA, 95660 (Phone: 443-480-1489), for \$50, postpaid.

3. The Essence of Salvation

Ken Miller, Stuarts Draft, VA

Let us pause for a moment to remember Bro. Howard Eichorn, whose beloved (Ellen) is very ill. I believe this dear brother would love to be here to receive encouragement. Let us pause and silently intercede for our comrade and his situation. [Ellen died on April 9.]

In 1993, nine miners in western Pennsylvania were trapped underground by rising water. It seemed as though it would take a miracle to rescue them. Rescue teams bored down through 240 feet of earth and rock and punched right into the cavity where the miners were trapped. They followed with a 30-inch bit, straight down. Then they lowered a 24-inch cage through that hole, and eventually all those men were plucked to safety, one by one. It was a drama that transfixed America and the world for three days. We say, "That day salvation came to those

men and their families."

Salvation in a New Testament sense means to rescue, to deliver, to save. I'm grateful that those of us who have experienced life, can say with Simeon, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Simeon cradled the infant Jesus in his arms and those whose faith is fully on Him can be assured that He is in their hearts. "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

We can say with assurance, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (1 Corinthians 3:11). There is only one name and we're here because of Him.

We have a two-fold obligation to this salvation: First, we are called to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12) Secondly, we are called to stand with Paul to endure all things for the elect's sake that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. (2 Timothy 2:10)

We don't understand everything about salvation, but we do know it works for all those who put their faith in Christ!

I shall do this by looking at three aspects of this question:

1. The problem of the other gospel. (self-ish salvation)

2. The atoning work of Christ our Victor.

3. What does saving faith look like?

1. Self-ish salvation:

Paul warned us that there would be a watering down of the Gospel. It is the gospel of easy-believism, cheap grace, and unconditional eternal security. This other gospel uses this kind of terminology: "Would you like to go to heaven? Would you like to accept Jesus as your personal Savior?" No doubt, many people have been genuinely born again with the use of such phrases and buzz words. Then what is wrong with these statements? I think they come from another gospel that is mainly about: *What's in it for me?*

By contrast, when Saul lay on the Damascus Road, he realized that this Lord he was facing is too great for him. With fear and trembling, he cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" That is the language of genuine salvation. He surrendered to Christ, was poor in spirit, and entered the kingdom of heaven. Paul

gave his reason for being confident and unashamed of the gospel of Christ, "...for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." He gave a second reason: Because the righteousness of God is revealed by this gospel that leads to salvation. Paul's understanding of salvation was fully God-centric.

Paul was not primarily concerned about saving people from going to hell, although he was concerned about that. He called people to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus. (It was in that order, according to Acts 20:21.)

One of the primary reasons that we are caving in to the culture and losing identity is because of a fundamental misunderstanding of salvation, of what it means to be saved. If we borrow from the other gospel we lose something important.

What is wrong with this other gospel? First, a neglect of Jesus' teaching. Before the term "gospel" (good news) came into common use, it was used to express the pleasure of those people when a new Caesar came to power in Rome. Heralds were sent out into all the major cities of the Roman Empire to proclaim that a new Caesar had come to power. The people were called to give their allegiance to this man. When the

herald came to a given city, the people were required to congregate to hear the good news about the new Caesar. Thus, the herald would announce “the gospel of Augustus Caesar,” for example. This gives us the context of Romans 10:9 and 10, because those Roman citizens in that vast empire were required immediately to publicly and verbally declare their allegiance to this new God ruler. When Paul gave the conditions of salvation in Romans 10:9 and 10, his audience understood that they were to give public verbal allegiance to Jesus Christ, the new King of Kings. It was total commitment against all opposition to the new King. In many cases, it meant taking a stand of total allegiance in spite of the danger of death.

Jesus gets really specific about things we must give up in order to have salvation. In Matthew 7:24, “No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Jesus is here prescribing terms for salvation. He seems to be saying that a man will either hang onto God and let go of money or he will love money and possessions and let go of God. You can’t have both!

It was as sharp as it was for a citizen

to choose either to serve Caesar or Jesus. When do you hear in a personal evangelism methodology class that one must choose between money and Jesus? Is this something you’d find in a Roman’s Road tract? It will be one king or the other—make your choice. It is saving faith only if it results in a lifestyle surrendered to Jesus, His Kingdom teachings and the teachings of His apostles. Otherwise, it is not saving faith.

Jesus’ teachings are sometimes pushed into some future time or that they were intended for the old covenant. Why? They are too hard for us now.

Some years ago, Robert Friedman, an Austrian, had a passion for Anabaptist history. He wrote a paper entitled, “The Doctrine of the Two Worlds.” It is now published by Herald Press under the title of “The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision.” He said that the mainstream of Protestant theology is a one-sided interpretation of the Pauline teaching of justification by faith. Central to this theology is the idea that we’re all guilty because of Adam’s original sin. That original guilt and sin was passed along to us, which I trust we do not believe.

We make our own decisions and are accountable for our own sin. According to Friedman, the

Protestant gospel goes something like this: The individual, a totally-depraved sinner, who cannot do any good, yet craves for salvation, eventually can find his salvation by putting all his confidence in the finished work of Christ. While there is truth in that, it contains a one-sided emphasis. This one-sided emphasis is found in Protestantism which tends to ignore both the remainder of Paul's teachings and the Gospel. It produced a theological system which assumed an extremely individualistic (and selfish) outlook. This Gospel didn't really change the culture of the people who embraced it, because it was not the Gospel of the Kingdom.

I believe the early Christians and Anabaptist reformers saw salvation primarily as a world drama. A conflict between good and evil in which Christ the Victor came and overthrew the tyranny of the old despot, Satan. By entering His Kingdom by the new birth, we can now live a new kind of life and we can be justified by faith.

2. Anselm's Atonement theory (penal satisfaction theory)

What did Jesus actually do on the cross for us? Anselm, who lived in the 1100's, developed an explanation of Jesus' work on the cross: God's holiness and justice require perfect

obedience to His law. Since all men have fallen short of his law and have sinned against the law all their lives, God's justice and holiness have been seriously violated. There was an ever-widening deficit between what God's law required and the way mankind was living. Someone had to make up that deficit in order for God's justice to be satisfied. That someone had to be a man, since man caused the problem in the first place. But it couldn't be man because man had already proven himself that he couldn't meet the requirements of the law. Therefore, it took both the God part of Jesus and the man part of Jesus to be that someone to make up the deficit. Jesus came here, lived a perfect life, fulfilled the law, He merited the righteousness of God. Then on the cross, according to Anselm's theory, God placed the sins of the world upon Jesus. We also believe that. What happened next? As Jesus hung there on the cross as the sacrificial Lamb of God, God looked down and was satisfied. So far, so good.

This theory goes further and makes claims that I don't think are supported by Scripture. God's sense of justice had to be satisfied. Every sin that was ever [or would ever be] committed had to be punished. So as Jesus, the God-man hung on the

cross, God also put the guilt and the punishment of sin upon Him for all the sins of mankind. If you follow that theory to its conclusion, it says that Jesus even went to hell and suffered there. That was required to make up that deficit. Every sin then was fully punished, now God's justice was fully satisfied, so that now God can be merciful to us. Now He can impute Christ's perfect righteousness to us. The song, "Jesus signed my pardon, this I surely know; took my place on Calvary; now I don't have to go...when He signed my pardon, there on Calvary" expresses this legal transaction concept. This all took place to satisfy and appease the wrath of God. That theory is quite common in the Gospel songs of our day.

I have discovered that this is not what the early church believed about the atonement. David Bercot's three-part lecture on the atonement explains this. Another book that's really helpful is *Christus Victor* by Gustav Alann, a Swedish theologian, who traces the different views of the atonement. He also believes that the early church did not believe this.

The first problem with this view is about God. Does God require exacting retribution of justice for every sin that was ever committed before He can extend mercy? Is God like that? What about the parable

in Matthew 18, where the king had a servant who owed him millions initially, at least, and he just forgave him? That was not justice. Some other parables carry the same message. The biggest problem that I see with this model of the atonement is that the work of Christ was primarily a work of appeasement of the wrath of God. It wasn't primarily a victory over sin, Satan, human will, and death.

Let us think about the word, *atonement*. It means at-one-ment. Its essence is reconciliation, to be made one with. God has a heart for one-ness. Jesus came to remove the thing that separated us from God in the first place. 1 Peter 3:18 says, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." That wonderful Scripture explains the atonement as the early church perceived and believed it.

The early church believed in what has been called the *Christus Victor* model. This view held that Christ voluntarily paid a ransom for our deliverance, in a way that is somewhat like Neto Glick, in El Salvador, paid a ransom to free his father from kidnappers some years ago.

1 John 5:19 describes the world Jesus entered: "We know that the whole world lieth in wickedness" or as one translates it, "the whole lies

under the sway of the evil one.” In the 1980’s, Ronald Reagan described the Soviet Empire as *The Evil Empire*. That statement had some repercussions. The empire this verse refers to is far worse than any totalitarian empire on earth. This empire was under the control of the despot, Satan, was a bondage of body, soul, mind, and spirit. Into this enemy empire Christ came with a new way and a new kingdom. He said in Matthew 20:28, “Even as the Son of man came not be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” In this view, which I believe was also the view of the early Anabaptists, the price was not paid to God, but to the “bad guy,” Satan.

This was not some deal with the devil. Jesus had to pay a ransom in order to free us from the tyranny of Satan, which we had voluntarily given ourselves to.

Jesus in this model of the atonement was the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He was the sacrifice for our sins. He is the mediator between God and man. God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. That is the *Christus Victor* model of the atonement and I have chosen to embrace it. The Gospel song, “Victory in Jesus” expresses this very well. (Additional references: Luke 11:20-22; John 12:31; 16:33; Romans

8:3; Ephesians 4:8; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14,15).

In Matthew 1-8, we have many manifestations of the authority of Christ: His victory over the temptations of the devil, and every conceivable enemy after that: He forgave sin, He raised the dead, He healed the sick, He caused the lame to walk, He healed the blind, He healed the lepers, He cast out demons, and He calmed a storm.

He defeats the enemy and all the bondage the enemy has brought, but He also introduces a new lifestyle: another kingdom. He brings a counter-culture, of which we can be a part. We can’t be a truly separated people, unless we understand salvation in this way. When He came, He announced that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Now we can better understand the very first thing that Jesus taught publicly: Repentance.

The invitation to repent is not just a warning; it is an invitation to a new life in a new kingdom. Jesus said He came to overthrow the tyrant. The Sermon on the Mount is the constitution of His new kingdom. It is salvation when we follow Him in faith and love. Here is a God-man who single-handedly by His death and life defeated Satan, sin, death, and the world. He overthrew the corrupt regime and brought in His

own benevolent rule for all who follow Him in faith. It is a God-centered salvation.

The early church saw Jesus as Lord, not as some victim of injustice appeasing the Father. They saw Him as ruler of heaven and earth. Saving faith means following Christ as Lord. It does not promise freedom of struggle, but gives clear evidence of a surrendered life. It requires yielding to Christ in a poverty of spirit. His last words on earth were, "All authority has been given to me." Who are we to oppose Him?

We are called to follow by faith. I speak here of adoration. A brother told me, "We need more effervescent joy that comes from following Christ." That need may come from a lack of adoration. Christ has come to redeem and heal our emotions. He would set us free. We need an outlet for our emotions. Maybe we as the plain people tend to squelch our emotions, because we don't want to be known as fanatics. While that may have its good points, there is an outlet for our emotions and it is Jesus! Can we not learn from Mary who came to Jesus and adored Him as she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair? Just adore Him!

We can obey all the commandments of Christ and be as legalistic as the Pharisees were with the old law. I fear for the dogmatism that comes if we keep His commandments without adoration.

We must also allow Jesus to be Master Teacher. I believe the other gospel leaves this out. Jesus said in Matthew 24:11-13, "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many, And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

This is a call to follow him now as Master Teacher. He is like a master carpenter, who has an apprentice under him. An apprentice watches the master closely and tries to duplicate his master's workmanship. We must study His life, His teachings, and the teachings of His Apostles and embrace them all. Let us accept 1 Corinthians 15: 57 and 58 as our final challenge; "...thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."



When I do wrong, it's me. When I do right, it's God in me.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Anabaptist Identity Conference will be held at the Midway Reception Center near Ephrata, PA, on October 14, 15, 16, 2010, D.V. This conference, sponsored by Christian Hymnary Publishers, has been held at the Tourist Mennonite Church in Sarasota, FL, for the last four years. For a full program contact Nathan Overholt at: hsofgrace6550@yahoo.com or 941-321-0305.

Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN 

NEW BOOK RELEASE

A Life Redeemed, The Life Story of Ludlow Walker,

by Harvey Yoder, TGS International, 2010, 224 pages.

At least a decade ago, Bro. Ludlow Walker conducted a blessed week of revival meetings at Cedar Crest. We had little idea of what all this man of God had been through in earlier times. When plans for a book of Bro. Ludlow's life were announced, we looked forward to finding out more. Yesterday I got the copy of Harvey Yoder's *A Life Redeemed*. I have now read it. It is so well-written and so inspirational that I found it hard to lay down.

Here is how Bro. Ludlow presents the book that describes his earlier life:

The Life Story, Success and Failure of Ludlow Walker, Sr. An unraveling marriage led to a divorce. Later two transformed lives brought together a marriage restoration, graciously providing two marriage certificates for God to restore a covenant that was once ignorantly broken!

Today Ludlow and his household are citizens of Heaven. He faithfully pastors a church and travels globally as an evangelist preaching the Gospel.

Copies of this book are available now: By phone or online TGS International – www.tgsinternational.com Phone: 330-893-4828. CAM – Published Books.

Bookstores and dealers are welcomed to call TGS International for wholesale discount schedules, \$11.99, plus shipping.

—PLM 

How to Pray the Lord's Prayer

Source unknown

Matthew 6:9-13

I cannot pray "Our" if my faith has no room for others and their need.

I cannot pray "Father" if I do not demonstrate this relationship to God in my daily living.

I cannot pray "which art in heaven" if all my interests and pursuits are only in earthly things.

I cannot pray "Hallowed be thy name" if I am not striving with God's help to be holy.

I cannot pray "Thy kingdom come" if I am unwilling to accept God's rule in my life.

I cannot pray "Thy will be done" if I am unwilling or resentful of having it done in my life.

I cannot pray "in earth, as it is in heaven" unless I am truly ready to give myself to God's service here and now.

I cannot pray "Give us this day our daily bread" without expending honest effort for it, or if I would withhold from my neighbor the bread that I receive.

I cannot pray "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" if I continue to harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot pray "lead us not into temptation" if I deliberately choose to go into a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot pray "deliver us from evil" if I am not prepared to fight evil with my life and my prayer.

I cannot pray "thine is the kingdom" if I am unwilling to obey the King.

I cannot pray "[thine is] the power, and the glory" if I am seeking power for myself and I desire my own glory first.

I cannot pray "for ever" if I am not serving and glorifying Him today.

I cannot pray "Amen" unless I honestly say, "Cost what it may, this is my prayer."

[From *The Eastern Mennonite Testimony*, August, 2010. Used by permission.]



marriages

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

Byler-Hostetler

Bro. Virgil, son of David and Regina Byler, Mill Creek, PA, and Sis. Bertha Rose, daughter of Ervin and Mary Hostetler, Belleville, PA, at Locust Grove Mennonite Church for Pleasant View A.M. Church, on July 17, 2010, by David J. Peachey.

Byler-King

Bro. Nathaniel, son of Freeman and Mary Byler, Windsor, OH, and Sis. Kathryn, daughter of Abner and Rebecca King, Kinzers, PA, at Martindale Reception Center for Summitview Christian Fellowship on May 29, 2010, by Leroy Lapp.

Chupp-McGurrin

Bro. Devon, son of Delbert and Sarah Chupp, Millersburg, IN, and Sis. Meghann, daughter of Joe and Becky McGurrin, Durbin, WV, at Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church, on June 12, 2010, by Wilbur Yoder.

Coblentz-Cross

Bro. Arlen, son of Vernon and Susan Coblentz, Millwood, KY, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Verlin and Naomi Cross, Millwood, KY, at Cedar Springs A.M. Church, Clarkson, KY, on July 23, 2010, by Jim Yoder.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. James, son of Marion and Clara Miller, Middlebury, IN, and Sis. Angela, daughter of Jerry Merle and Anita Yoder, Ligonier, IN, at Fair Haven Amish Mennonite Church on July 24, 2010, by Wilbur Yoder.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Brian and Valerie (Stoltzfus), Auburn, KY, third child, second son, Joel Hudson, July 23, 2010.

Brenneman, Lowell and JoAnn (Miller), Falkville, AL, ninth child, fifth dau., Dorcas Lynette, July 30, 2010.

Burkholder, Kendall and Glendora (Overholt), Etna Green, IN, third child, first son, Kade Nicholas, June 21, 2010.

Coblentz, Willis Lamar and Rebecca (Yoder), Leesburg, OH, fifth child, fourth dau., Lydia Serene, March 20, 2010.

Kauffman, Richard and Mary Ann (Peachey), Rural Retreat, VA, third child, second son, Tyler Layne, Aug. 7, 2010.

Kaufman, Laban and Julie (Alsbaugh), Middlefield, OH, sixth child, second son, Elijah Jordan, July 21, 2010.

King, Mahlon and Marlene (Beachy), New Holland, PA, fourth child, second dau., Jessica Brooke, May 10, 2010.

Lapp, Daniel and Connie (Yoder), Holtwood, PA, third child, second son, Brandon McKinley, August 3, 2010.

Lapp, Dave and Ruth (Lapp), New Holland, PA, fifth child, first dau., Amanda Rachele, August 27, 2010.

Mast, Aaron and Gina (Weaver), Denmark, SC, first child and dau., Alayna Chantel, August 8, 2010.

Mast, Michael and Ruth Anne (Overholt), Auburn, KY, sixth child and dau., Beverly Ann, August 5, 2010.

Miller, Josh and Marlene Kay (Peight), Shreve, OH, first child and son, Tyrell James, July 13, 2010.

Miller, Stephen and Karen (Wagler), Shreve, OH, fifth child, fourth son, Wesley Aaron, August 1, 2010.

Nisly, Lee and Yvonne (Gingerich), Hutchinson, KS, fourth child, second dau., Chloe Ariana, August 25, 2010.

Peachey, Jason and Nancy (Yoder), McVeytown, PA, second child and dau., Jenna Lynn, August 14, 2010.

Ropp, Hubert and Joanna (Miller), Centreville, MI, first child and dau., Hadassah Grace, May 21, 2010.

Stoll, Marlin and Marietta (Miller), Summersville, KY, second child and son, Sheldon James, May 20, 2010.

Stoltzfus, Mervin and Nancy (King), Honey Brook, PA, tenth child, sixth son, Jeffrey Mark, July 5, 2010.

Wagler, Marlin and Orpha (Troyer), Cottage Grove, TN, fifth child, third son, Alex Wade, July 31, 2010.

Weaver, Lonnie and Evelyn (Glick), Antrim, OH, third child, second dau., Rachel Simone, July 24, 2010.

Yoder, Jeremy and Lois (Beachy), McVeytown, PA, third child, (one daughter deceased), second son, Cody Lynn, August 19, 2010.

Yoder, Roman and Brenda (Miller), Fredonia, KY, fourth child, third dau., Heidi Elaine, August 10, 2010.

Zook, Marvin and Rachel (Stoltzfus), Gap, PA, tenth child, seventh son, Marvin Jacob, Jr., June 4, 2010.

ordinations

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

Bro. Arlyn Nisly, 42; and **Bro. Dwight Miller**, 39, were ordained as ministers in Center A.M. Church on August 22, 2010. Bro. Abe Yoder, Paynesville, MN, brought preordination messages. The charge was given by David Yoder, assisted by Lee Nisly. Bro. Lowell Miller was also in the lot.

Beachy, Eli Walter, 85, died at Greenview Hospital, Bowling Green, KY, on Jan. 11, 2010. He was born Nov. 8, 1924, son of the late Noah Eli and Lydian (Miller) Beachy, in Stark County, Ohio.

He was a member and former bishop of the Franklin Mennonite Church, Franklin, KY.

On Sept. 3, 1950, he was married to Martha Lucille Graber, from Middlebury, IN. She survives. Children surviving are: David (Betty) Beachy, Franklin, KY; Noah (Rose) Beachy, Heron, MT; James (Irene) Beachy, Auburn, KY; Thomas (Brenda) Beachy, Gladys, VA; Philip (Sue Ann) Beachy, Millersburg, OH; Mary (Lavern) Yoder, Malta, OH; Ruth (Jason) Miller, Concord, AR; Titus (Renai) Beachy, Springfield, TN; Grace (Brad) Groff, Russellville, KY; and Mark (Regina) Beachy, Franklin, KY. Other survivors include 64 grandchildren and 28 great grandchildren; five brothers: John, Jonathan, and Daniel, Hartville, OH; Joseph, Sarasota, FL; and Alvin, Phoenix, AZ; four sisters; Amanda, Uniontown, Oh; Nancy, Centerville, PA; Mary, Sarasota, FL; and Martha, Sumas, WA.

The funeral was held at Franklin Mennonite church on Jan 15, with Laverne Eash, LaVerne Swartz, and Homer Zook serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Herschberger, Carrie (Bontrager), 85, died peacefully in her home at Arcola, IL, August 15, 2010. She was born July 7, 1925, daughter of the late Christian and Lovina (Kauffman) Bontrager.

She was faithful member of Pleasant View Church, Arcola.

On Sept. 13, 1945, she was married to Levi Herschberger, who preceded her in death in 1991. Survivors include her children: Verna (Ray) Helmuth, Arcola; Elva (Shirley) Herschberger, Arthur; Ira (Marjorie) Hershberger, Arcola; 13 grandchildren, 28 great grandchildren, five step great grandchildren; five brothers: Ray (Ella) Bontrager, Sullivan; Melvin Bontrager, Kokomo, IN; William Bontrager (and wife); Fannie, Millersburg, OH; Irvin (Mary) Bontrager, Shipshewana, IN; Sam (Pam) Bontrager, Purdin, MO; eight sisters: Fannie (Jacob) Schrock, Sarasota, FL; Mattie Miller, Arthur; Elizabeth (Joe) Diener, Humboldt; Verna Bontrager, Sarasota, FL; Mary (Lewis) Chupp, Tuscola; Clara (Nelson) Herschberger, Arcola; Katie (Glen) Helmuth, Flora, WI; Lorene (Oba) Herschberger, Sullivan.

She was preceded in death by an infant daughter; three sisters: Ida Otto, Edna Miller, and Anna Mae Bontrager; and two brothers: Levi and Eli Bontrager.

The funeral was held at Pleasant View on August 18, with Howard Kuhns officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Emmon M., 85, of Etna Green, IN, died July 23, 2010, following a brief illness. He was born July 30, 1924, in Kosciusko County, IN, to the late Menno W. and Malinda (Miller) Yoder.

He was a member of Clay Street A.M. Church, Bourbon, IN. He was known for faithful attendance, enthusiasm, as an encourager and a prayer warrior.

On April 4, 1957, he married Mary Anna Nisley, who survives. Children surviving are three daughters: Bertha (David) Miller and Esther Cochenour, both of Etna Green, IN; Dorothy (Tim) Schwartz, New Paris, IN; three sons: Menno (Doris) Yoder, Plymouth, IN; Philip (Kathy) Yoder, Freeman (Debbie) Yoder, both of Goshen, IN; 14 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Other survivors include three sisters: Elizabeth Hochstetler, Laura (Ray) Nisley, Sylvia (Devon) Fingerle, all of Sarasota, FL; and five brothers: Alvin, Wooster, OH; Amos (Marie), Sarasota, FL; Owen (Elnora), Nappanee, IN; Willie (Leanna), Belle Center, OH; and Ervin (Amanda), Shipshewana, IN.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Gertie Yoder, two brothers, Lester and

Levi Yoder; and two grandsons, Christopher Miller and Trevor Yoder.

The funeral was held at Maple Lawn A.M. Church on July 26, with Wade Burkholder, Gary Burkholder, Mahlon Miller and Aaron Yoder serving. Burial was in the adjoining cemetery.

Zook, Anna Mary (Peachey), 57, of Virginia Beach, VA, died July 5, 2010. She was born Feb. 23, 1953, in Reedsville, PA, daughter of the late Alvin J. and Effie C. (Kauffman) Peachey.

She was an active servant of the Lord and member of Kempsville Mennonite Church.

On Nov. 28, 1974, she was married to Alvin D. Zook, who survives. Also surviving are children: Andrea and Alva, Virginia Beach; Anita (Curtis) Mast, Brooksville, MS; Arlan, Althea, Arlene, Breanna, and Alvin David of Virginia Beach. Other survivors include two grandchildren; sisters: Linda Yoder, Katie Peight, Vera Yoder, Lovina Swarey, Saloma Byler; brothers: Leon, David, and Steve Peachey.

The funeral was held on July 8, with David Peachey, PA, and the local ministerial team serving.



observations

Columnist David Brooks compares the effect of learning for school age children who freely spend time watching a screen with those who spend significant time reading books. Worthwhile reading is conducive to concentration and more profound

thought patterns. It is helpful to good performance in grade school. Widespread use of home computers and high speed internet is associated with significant decline in math and reading scores. Educators report that it shortens a pupil's attention span. The article deals essentially with the

negative effects of computer/internet on the learning progress of children with this exposure.

When we consider the fact that much internet and television content is not friendly to wholesome character development of children, we have a good reason to guard our homes accordingly. For conscientious Christians, unrestricted access should not be an option. And those who choose not to have it at all, that is certainly understandable and defensible.

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Stanton Anderson is an advocate of private enterprise as opposed to socialism, who likes to take his message to college students. He offers a crisp \$100-dollar bill to anyone who can make three computations in one minute: convert to calendar days and years one million, one billion, and one trillion in sixty seconds. His answer is: 12 days, 12 years, and 32,000 years. So far he has not had to give away the \$100.

Mr. Anderson is concerned about the government's continued move toward more regulation and his perception that young people are becoming more favorable toward socialism. (Westmont, *Spring, 2010.*)

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Wes Stafford, a son of North American missionary parents, grew

up in a primitive village in Ivory Coast, West Africa. He is now CEO of Compassion International. He has written a book that reflects his concern for children. The book is entitled: *Too Small to Ignore, Why the Least of These Matter the Most*, Random House, 2009. The book highlights the stark contrast between a West African village, which survives with the bare necessities and modern North America. A chapter entitled, "When is Enough... Enough?" includes the following about America:

- We spend more for garbage bags each year than 90 of the world's countries spend for everything.
- Three out of five teens have a TV in their bedrooms.
- Seventy percent of children/young people get an allowance.
- According to one survey, the average weekly amount for a five-year-old is \$3.15; for a 10-year-old is \$9.18; for a 15-year-old is \$15.57. Spending money encourages the accumulation of stuff and stuff takes up room.
- In 1950, the average single family home was 983 square feet. In 1970 this had grown to 1,500 square feet; by 2009 it has grown to 2,329 square feet.
- The average American is now carrying more than \$7,000 in credit

card debt. The 40% who pay off their balances each month are privately scorned by the credit card industry as “free loaders” and “dead beats.” But this means that the other 60% has more like \$12,000 credit card debt. There are more than 35,000 self-storage facilities across the nation. Shopping remains an all-time favorite activity.



Let us be reminded that our dear children do not develop well when things are offered to them instead of giving of ourselves for their nurture and security. That children are supremely important to God is evident from the fact that THEIR angels do always behold the face of God Himself. (Matt. 18:10)



I have not been privileged to visit the Creation Museum near Cincinnati, in Kentucky. I am aware that a significant number of our readers have done so. Evolutionists who visit are often radical atheists. Such people have given several harsh and uncomplimentary reports.

An evolutionist decided to see for himself what the place is like. Based on such reports, he expected to discover “some terrible offensive attack on evolutionary scientists. It really isn’t like that at all.”

He spoke very highly of the quality

of their scientific exhibits and the facility in general. He said far too many evolutionists have an “un-objective chip on their shoulder toward creationism.”

The visitor, who is not named, claims that he is still an evolutionist, but he wonders out loud if some scientists might be a little jealous. “I don’t know but I do know that I enjoyed the museum even if I didn’t agree with everything.”



The following incidents support the concern that opposition to Christians in this country seems to be becoming more intense:

•A Texas judge is quoted saying, “If any high school student mentions the name of Jesus at their graduations, that student will be arrested and will sit for up to six months in the Galveston County jail.

•In 2009, police came to a middle school in Kentucky to stop eighth graders from praying during their lunch hour for a student whose mother had been tragically killed. (*Religion Awareness Post*. Above two items courtesy Johnny Miller, Minerva, OH.)



On August 11 and 12, I attended a CASP (Conservative Anabaptist Service Program) meeting in Holmes County, OH. Brother-in-law Ollie

Troyer went along to help drive. We felt well rewarded to have arrived a day early to visit several places of interest, only found in Holmes County.

This included *Behalt*, a tourist attraction that depicts a visual view of Anabaptist beginnings and history. Cassandra Costly, director of Alternative Service of Selective Service found *Behalt* so interesting that she toured the place a second time during her visit to Ohio.

A visit to Carlisle Printing is an exposure to warm friendliness of people using ultra-modern equipment to do a large volume of printing. The monthly run of roughly 4800 copies of this periodical is a very small part of their operation.

We had a very pleasant visit with Paul and Eddie Kline at their historical library. To interact with others who have an interest in our history coupled with corresponding concerns for the present and future is a blessing and encouragement. Time did not permit us to give serious attention to the content of their library.

Ivan Schrock gave us a most interesting tour of Hiland Wood Products. They receive green, rough lumber and take it through many automated steps in the manufacture of parts for the cabinet and furniture

industry. Their equipment is designed to minimize waste. Inevitable waste is processed to saleable form and generates significant income. Schrock Woodcrafts has recently added caskets to its production. Hiland Wood Products and Schrock's Cabinets have a combined total of 170 employees.

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An unexpected plus of the trip was the tent revival meetings during that week. The evangelist was David Alspaugh, from Myerstown, PA. We were able to attend three meetings.

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An outstanding feature of our visit was the warmth of hospitality we experienced. We stayed with David A. and Ruth Miller, Millersburg.

The natural scenery of a rolling landscape with rich greenery is very different from the level and often drab Kansas landscape.

There is a visual display of variety, creativity, and thrift in ways in which people make a living. An integral part of the total scene is the religious aspect. There is similarity and variety. There are many church buildings. Perhaps the majority meet in homes for worship. "The Lord knoweth them that are his and let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19b).

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The CASP meetings were an effort for brief review of past projects and to make plans for the future, as God leads.

On the one hand there is a growing awareness of CASP and its purpose. But the number of people who are only vaguely aware of the vision and function of CASP suggests that we have not effectively communicated its purpose.

There has not been a draft since the early 1970's. But 18-year-olds still need to register with the draft board. While a draft does not appear likely in the near future, our government has kept a structure in place including local draft boards where a draft could quickly be activated in case of emergency. We also believe that it is important that our young men keep the concept of Christian non-resistance and Christian service in their minds fresh and vibrant.

We are fortunate that Christian Aid Ministries has agreed to be an administrative umbrella for the 15 different groups who are affiliated with CASP. For service opportunities or other information, call 330-893-2428. Ask for Eli Weaver.

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On August 12-15 there was a

gathering of 42 girls ages 13-16 on the campus of Calvary Bible School. The adult sisters who led the sessions report that the attendees were very serious-minded and teachable. In this important time between childhood and adulthood, girls are certainly eligible to make lifetime commitments to the Lord. It is a good time to strengthen convictions of modesty and moral purity and to address other matters relative to their emotional and spiritual health.

The event underscored the fact that young people are sometimes eager to seek helpful counsel for some problems they are facing. Do the reports coming from this experience suggest that we should be giving more serious attention to the needs of pre-adults of both genders? Surely we would all agree that whatever can be done to better prepare our adolescents for responsible adulthood in the church and in the youth group is well justified.

The vision for this effort grew out of the Cornerstone community at Harrison. They have not charged participants. Persons wanting more information or to help with financial support may contact: Ben and Sharla Bowser, 4333 Keener Lane, Harrison, AR, 72601. Phone: 870-743-9614.

—DLM 

Conscience can always go to Truth for instruction.

Thinking Inside the Box

Dr. Shelton Smith

From Sword of the Lord, April, 2010

*[FCM Editor's note: While we do not want our people to be merely bound by tradition, it is still important not to forsake the ways of truth. Some in our circles have tended to jettison good and right things in the name of "thinking outside the box." May the following article by a non-Anabaptist writer be heard in its caution.]**

In an effort to encourage creativity, some motivational speakers urge their clients to "think outside the box." It is a clever catch phrase that implores one to think differently, act in an unconventional manner, or operate from some new or novel perspective.

The phrase was spawned by the management consultant industry in the 1960s. "The encouragement to look for solutions outside our usual thinking patterns was championed in the United Kingdom by Edward de Bono, the psychologist and inventor who coined the term 'lateral thinking' in 1967 and went on to develop it as a method of structural creativity."

Some writers suggest that "outside the box" should mean the discarding of all your previous thinking so that you can be engaged by new ideas heretofore unacceptable. For those who do so, it usually becomes the prelude to a practice of pragmatism that soon has them saying, "Whatever works is all that matters."

Quite candidly, all of us have probably used the expression once in a while. Especially when there's frustration over inactivity or failure or when there is resistance to progress, it is a natural catch phrase for making an appeal.

Sometimes Christians, including us preachers, also use the term. Once in a while it is employed by someone who is totally on target in what he is attempting. Some, however, use it in innocence or naiveté without giving thought to what they are attempting.

However, there is a concern with getting "outside the box" that merits a full red-code alert. When a speaker or an advocate has an agenda that necessitates compromise of treasured scriptural principles in order to succeed, then we had better watch out. Thinking "outside the box" becomes an unworthy appeal, a mere ploy to enable success, when some people get hold of it.

As I've heard the pitch again and again, my level of discomfort has

steadily increased. Here's my thesis: When you start urging people to set aside their standard or whatever restrictive and disciplined principles they may have, the chances are good that a lot of change is coming.

It is that very mentality that has caused a lot of fundamental men to climb the fence into evangelical or charismatic circles. When we read books, attend conferences and adopt philosophy "outside" the norm, we run the risk, a very high risk, of seeing our entire ministry lose its distinctive scriptural character and flavor.

With all of this in view, I think we would be much better served if we would, wholeheartedly, faithfully and excitedly...

Think Inside the Box

We teach our children to color inside the lines because that's the way to have a pretty picture when they are done. We know that certain inviolable standards are necessary in medicine, in pharmacology, in industry, etc. We expect that sports teams will play within the boundaries of acceptable practice for each particular sport.

Frankly, much of what the Bible is about is designed to get us "inside the box" and keep us there!

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if

there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Notice, "think on these things." That sounds like "inside the box" to me, not outside.

Instead of yielding to Christ and understanding the voluntary servitude (the New Testament *doulos* concept) of our liberty in Christ, some of us struggle to get our own way. "Outside the box" there is an accommodation to the flesh. "Outside the box" there is a friendship with the world.

So when we shrink from such freewheeling and suggest that being "inside the box" is a better option, what exactly do we want? Could we not make a case for a Christian "box"? What about a Bible "box"? a moral "box"? a church "box"? a standards "box"? a methods "box"?

I suspect that "outside the box" advocates will be dismissive of my appeal on this. They will say it's just a word game, nothing more! But to the contrary, I must insist that the words are important. The standards are important. The methods are important. The associations are important. They are, in reality, so important that they are the elements that define us. The character and the caliber of our life and work are determined by these very choices. Our image in the eyes of others and the influence we have with them will also be shaped by how we address this.

•Marriage needs to be conducted "inside the box" (Eph. 5; Heb. 13:4).

•Families need to function “inside the box” (Col. 3:18-21).

•Children need to be taught how to live “inside the box” (Eph. 6:1-3).

•The joy of Christian living is found only “inside the box” (John 15:11; 1 John 1:4).

•The hope of salvation is “inside the box” (John 14:6).

•The dynamics of the Christian faith are specifically so “inside the box” as to be ‘the strait and narrow way’ (Matt. 7:13,14).

•The parameters of the Christian way of life are so “inside the box” as to require that we ‘live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world’ (Titus 2:12).

The church ministry can be awake and exciting without venturing “outside the box” of what the Lord God intended it should be. It is such a sacred charge that has been entrusted to us.

Our doctrine should be found “inside the box.” Our vision should be contained “inside the box.” Our mandates should be from “inside the box.” Our camaraderie should be with others who are “inside the box.” Our methods employed in the pursuit of success should be “inside the box.” Our outreach, locally and globally, must be built on strategies from “inside the box.”

Inside the Box Is Not an Endorsement of the Status Quo

Our advocacy for staying “inside the box” is not based on ho-hum and

“We’ve always done it this way.” Not at all! I offer no support to the status quo unless the status has something really worth “quo-ing” (crowing) about. What I am advocating is integrity, honesty, doctrinal soundness, scriptural moorings, walking with God, the Spirit-filled life, a clean slate, personal standards of godly behavior, a separation from doctrinal error—coloring within the lines. Amen!

Inside the Box Acknowledges our Allegiance to the Lord

The work of God is first, foremost, and finally all about the Lord. It is not our work; it is His work. It involves us, but it is not about us. We are the servants, and He is the One to be served. He is the King, and we are His subjects. He is the Master, and we are the ones to be mastered.

Going “outside the box” has a connotation that subtly suggests we should invent something; that we should think of something no one else ever dreamed up; and that the real way of doing business has just now been found. I don’t even like the sound of such reasoning, and I’m not buying it. Not even for a moment!

Inside the Box Honors the Heritage of Our Faith and the Legacy of Our Fathers

I am happy that I’m a Christian. I’m not smothered because I have standards. I don’t want to graze in Satan’s deceptively green pastures. I’m still so into sharing my faith

that I often get so carried away that I go ahead and lead folks to Christ! The Gospel is powerful (Romans 1:16) whether or not you have had time to build a relationship with the people. I'm not opposed to building a relationship with people, but I am opposed to waiting five years before you give the Gospel while the relationship is simmering! "Inside the box," we are still aggressive and diligent in our pursuit of souls.

We have a great heritage "inside the box." It doesn't take 20/20 vision to see that it is a great thing to build on the foundations of what has been handed to us. Sure it will be criticized. True, it is out of step (thankfully) with the ecumenical, contemporary mind-set. Obviously, we are not caught up in adapting our ministry to the trends and the fads of the moment. We are unapologetically "inside the box." Amen!

Inside the Box is Exactly Where I Want to Be

"Inside the box" there is stability! It charts a steady course, because it is Bible-based.

"Outside the box" leaves us guessing. It makes us unpredictable and consequently, unreliable. It means we have no clue what we will do, when we will do it, how we will do it and with whom we will do it. It leaves us vulnerable. We believe it is unwise and altogether untenable!

"Inside the box" has a lot to

offer: the Bible, salvation, the local church, true and sound doctrines, the Great Commission, rescuing the perishing—and a whole lot more!

You'll forgive me if I choose not to go "outside" to play. I like it right here "inside the box."

A Closing Thought


What's all this about? Candidly, it's about staying on track as we journey through this pilgrim land.

I'm saying that you should be careful these days lest you be ensnared, lest you go where you should not be, lest you become enamored with that which is "outside" the realm of God's design, lest you assume that the tested, the tried, and the true "inside the box" are passé.

If you have ventured "outside," I'm asking you to make a prayerful, humble beeline and find your way back "inside the box." If you've been "outside" all along, I'm urging you to come over and come on "inside the box." There's room, and the welcome mat is always awaiting you!

Oh, dear Lord, may this earnest appeal resonate all across the world. May the servants of God discern the truth, stand up to be counted for it and give themselves devotedly for it.

"Inside the box," you say? Yes sirree! Amen! That's right where I want to be!

[*Reprinted in *The FCM Informer*, May/June, 2010. Submitted for publication by Nathan Yoder, Free Union, VA. Used by permission.] 

Those Manmade Rules

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

When is a person's lifestyle going by the commandments of men instead of the Commandments of God? The Pharisees and Scribes asked Jesus why His disciples did not walk according to the traditions of the elders by eating bread with unwashed hands. Jesus replied with a quote from Isaiah, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6,7).

I grew up in a church setting where teaching emphasized the New Testament command that Christ's followers should not be conformed to the patterns of this present world. We were reminded from various translations (including Luther's German) that the Bible is clear; "Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world" (Romans 12:2 TEV). In an honest attempt to follow and obey the Scriptures, the church had guidelines for her members to follow. They said, in effect: *This is what we believe; it is also how we practice our belief.* The guidelines included some defined standards of attire and personal appearance. This is often referred at the written standards of the church.

Citing Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees, some of my peers declared these

standards to be rules of men and not of God, similar to those the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day had. It is true that the Bible does not name all the items of distraction this world offers to ensnare the believer. It does give clear principles with which we can examine all things under the search light of God's written Word.

Many of my friends and acquaintances have left the church of "manmade rules" for the freedom to "live in the Spirit." Their way of life now blends into the surrounding culture. Their outward appearance has no hint of a renewed mind of Christ that is not in step with the ways of the world. The standards of the church have been replaced with the ways of the present culture. Certain teachings of Scripture: forbidding "the wearing of gold" ("the wearing of jewelry" – AMP), the sisters' unshorn hair and veiled heads have been overlooked and exchanged for practices that blend comfortably with the culture around them. They think of themselves as now being free of Pharisaical, manmade rules by people in the church.

Are they really free from manmade rules?

Seth and Sarah (fictitious names) have been dating for some time and plan to get married. They question the restrictions of the church, especially as

it relates to weddings. They transfer to a church that does not have these manmade restraints and that allows them more liberty, especially in their wedding. They plan their wedding with the new freedom from man's rules. The hour of their wedding arrives: the groom and his attendant enter from the front of the auditorium; they are dressed in rented tuxedos and bow ties; the white carpet is laid down the center aisle; the bride enters with a long, flowing gown trailing behind her; her gown does not cover her shoulders, exposing much of her upper body; her shorn hair is styled for the occasion. After the exchange of vows, comes the double-ring ceremony. A ring is placed on the third finger of the left hand. A prayer is recited and they are pronounced husband and wife.

The ceremony ends and they go on with their lives. They both keep in pace with the acceptable attire and body ornaments of the culture around them.

Are they free from manmade rules? Not at all! They exchange guidelines based on teachings of the Bible for manmade customs contrary to New Testament teachings and commands. Who decided that a person needs to purchase a ring and wear it to say that he/she is married? I find no such command in the Bible. I understand it to teach the opposite. Directed by the Holy Spirit, Peter wrote, *Don't be*

concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry or beautiful clothes (1 Peter 3:3 NLT).

The next verse gets to the heart of the matter. *You should clothe yourselves INSTEAD with the beauty that comes within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God* ("of great price to God" KJV; "of great worth to God" NIV). *This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands* (1 Peter 3:4,5 NLT). I understand this to mean that God wants the believer to be beautiful because their faith, trust, and heart are surrendered to Him, beautiful because they are experiencing God's forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ and because of the peaceful, joyful assurance of the abiding presence of His Spirit.

It is difficult for me to see the beauty of a gentle, surrendered spirit in a person who has quit wearing a headship covering, cut and styled her hair, has ornaments hanging on her ears, rings on her fingers and a chain around her neck. That has the appearance of bondage to manmade rules of the world instead of the glowing presence of Jesus.

The Apostle Paul gave a similar appeal: *And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing*

gold or pearls or expensive clothing. (1 Tim. 2:9 NLT) How then should Christian women attain attractiveness? The Bible's answer: *For women who claim to be devoted to God should make themselves attractive by the good things they do.* (verse 10, NLT)

Should believers be concerned how these traditions of men started? According to *World Book Encyclopedia*, the origin of the wedding ring does not come from a command of Scripture. It is not called for by Christ or His Apostles. "The custom of giving a wedding ring may also date back to the ancient Romans. The roundness of the ring probably represents eternity, and the presentation of the wedding ring symbolizes that man and woman are united forever. Wearing the wedding ring on the ring finger of the left hand is another old custom. People once thought that a vein or nerve ran directly from this finger to the heart."

The wedding ring itself raises questions when held under the light of Scripture. The roundness represents eternity. Are man and woman united forever? I understand from Jesus that "at the resurrection of the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Luke 20:35). Not only does the wedding band violate the Scripture to not be concerned about expensive jewelry, its symbolism also contradicts Jesus' teaching.

Many of these ancient and more recent manmade ideas are a blend

of pagan practices on which God's blessing is invoked. They have been "Christianized" to make them fit religious ceremonies. Cultural customs are explained to have Christian meanings. At the same time, they violate the teachings of the Bible.

As I observe the professing church today, I see a parallel with ancient Israel. They would rather follow the practices of culture than the commands of God. God's heart ached over the practices of Israel. Why am I feeling a bit of "Noah complex" as I address this issue? Noah faithfully preached of coming judgment. But "everybody" knew it was not an important issue. It is tempting to ask, *Why should I rock the boat when fitting into the culture has achieved such common acceptance?* My heart aches to see those who liberate themselves from churches with applications and standards, then step into the bondage of standards set by unbelievers. My spirit grieves to see them go into worldly bondage that seeks to erase the beauty of godliness that gives true freedom from pagan rules.


How will this all pan out with God? How will it hold up in judgment? How does this mesh with the warnings of Jesus? He said, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven* (Matt. 7:21). I don't know how it will hold up in judgment; I must leave that

in God's hands.

In the meantime, I'm going to follow the command of God given by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:21: *But test and prove all things until you can recognize what is good: to that hold fast.* (AMP) *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* (verse 22 KJV)

Paul gave this command to Christians: *And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may*

PROVE what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2) I take the command not to follow the customs of the world and to have a renewed mind of Christ seriously. Why? So that I can more perfectly know the will of God.

I'm going to keep on enjoying freedom from the bondage of keeping up with the constantly changing manmade rules of the world. I think you'd enjoy that freedom, too. 

mission awareness

A Visit to Belize

Floyd Stoltzfus

“And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city...” (Acts 15:36).

It had been some years since Marilyn and I visited Belize and our dear brothers and sisters in this tropical land. The first Sunday morning of our trip, when the song leader opened the service with a song at Cayo Christian Fellowship where our family had served for two and a half years in the early 1990's, I could hardly sing for weeping with joy to see the spiritual growth in the church. This church is now led by a national bishop. The father of the missionary family is serving as an assistant minister along with another younger Spanish brother. I doubt if we ever thought about it 19 years ago that this

Spanish lad who attended the mission school (he could hardly understand English) would be ordained minister of the Gospel at Cayo.

We were cordially welcomed by some people we knew in the Barton Creek and Springfield communities. These people of both Old Order Amish and Mennonite faith seem to have a unique unity of spirit that was refreshing to us. Their churches draw a few from outside Mennonite background. The main language in these communities is Pennsylvania German. But the ministers will preach in two or three languages on a given Sunday morning, so that those in

the mixed audience of German, English, or Spanish can understand the message.

We took a bus to Punta Gorda. The paved roads and better bridges shortened the ride considerably. The long dory ride from Punta Gorda to Crique Sarco is history. The bus to Crique Sarco was packed with people. The effects of the mission endeavor of Amish Mennonite Aid in Crique Sarco were not in vain and we were warmly received by the few believers of that village, even though there is no Mennonite church there any more. A pastor evangelist formerly from Crique Sarco (now living in a neighboring village) expressed his deep appreciation to a former Amish Mennonite Aid (AMA) worker for what we had taught them from the Bible. He said some women believers are wearing head coverings and churches are practicing foot washing ordinance in the communities where he makes his circuit and preaches the Gospel.

We visited Haynes Street Mennonite Church in Belize City. This church is shepherded by a faithful national brother with the missionary brother as the assistant. God has given them an interesting blend of people groups in this congregation: Creoles from Belize and Haiti; Spanish; Indians from Toledo District who come to the city for work, and white missionaries from the states.

We were blessed with the love and care expressed by this group of believers for the backslidden and lost in the community. Many times when people of Belize City asked the missionaries where the mission and church is located, eyebrows were raised or expressions were made like: "You mean your mission is in that part of the city?" Well, yes, it is. Without question, Haynes Street is where God wanted a witness started many years ago. I remember so well how God clearly led us to this empty house in the southern part of Belize City. The AMA Mission at Haynes Street is in a unique setting. Just down the street, with a house or two between, is the central meeting place of a notorious gang in Belize City. Just recently Scott (fictitious name), the right hand man of the leader of this gang was shot and taken to the hospital.

The missionaries visited Scott (fictitious name) and encouraged him to surrender his life to Jesus Christ. Another pastor, who was a friend of the family, also spoke with Scott about his need for salvation. He apparently found forgiveness of sins and peace by believing in Jesus. Although Scott could not speak clearly because of his wounds, when he was asked about the condition of his soul, he strongly indicated by a "thumbs up" motion and his facial expression that his sins are forgiven and that Jesus has given him new life. They thought he was

improving, but soon after that he died.


Last winter a rival gang threw a grenade into this gang's yard, killing a 15-year-old boy. The newspaper article had in it a statement that the gang leader would not seek revenge. Since Scott's death, that gang's strategies have also changed. They decided not to seek revenge against other gangs and enemies any more.

Recently this group had a community celebration inviting children and others for activities. They got Miss Nancy to write out some Bible questions for them to ask the children so they could give some prizes to them if they answered the questions correctly. Miss Nancy's name was announced publicly over the loud speaker that she had written out these Bible questions. One of the gang members told her he knows they are not doing right and that he is thinking about changing his ways. Some are being convicted by the Holy Spirit and their hearts are softening. Do you think the prayers of the Haynes Street Mission and their witness in the community has a direct influence on these neighbors?

The effects of being salt and light are penetrating even into these dark corners of our world. Let us pray that these gang leaders would be transformed from darkness to light. God broke up numerous gangs in many cities in the Untied States in

past years through the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer. Even though the country of Belize has one of the highest crime rates per capita in the world, God can do it in this sin-infested city. Prayer gives God room to work. Let us pray for our missionaries: for their protection and for wisdom and courage to witness the truths of the Gospel effectively.

A warm, nostalgic feeling came over me as we set foot on the mission compound at Double Head Cabbage. We also visited the surrounding communities on the last week of our trip. This is where our family had served for seven years. Some things have changed –like the paved road, electricity, and telephone. But many things culturally, physically, and spiritually remain the same: the Creole language, the heat and humidity, the beautiful jungle birds, the tropical rains, the picturesque cumulus clouds, and the needs in people's lives. We deeply enjoyed our visit with the church members and are encouraged with the new names added to the book of life.

Remember to pray for the national Christians by name, that they may remain faithful and true to the Lord in the midst of sin and darkness. Write them words of encouragement. Send pictures of your family. Challenge them by words of Scripture to build the church of Jesus Christ. 

A Gift of God's Love

Corrie Troyer, Medina, NY

Pain released,
Efforts ceased,
At Thy Word'
Calm's restored,
Eternal Lord,

THIS IS PEACE! 

helpers at home

Encouragement

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Recently in my devotional time, I read Isaiah 41:6. The enthusiasm expressed by these people was an inspiration to me. Let me paraphrase this verse: *“Every woman reached out to help her neighbor encouraging her to be the woman that God planned for her to be.”*

The dictionary definition of encourage is *to give hope, confidence or courage, to motivate to action*. We all need encouragement. We need to know that someone cares, supports, believes in us, accepts and loves us in spite of our mistakes and failures. Encouragement inspires us to try harder. Criticism tends to make us

feel like giving up--to quit trying. Encouragement brings out the best in people. Flattery has a selfish motive. Flattery promotes the outward; encouragement strengthens the inward spiritual part of man.

Our Mennonite culture has not always been conducive to encouragement. We have been afraid of causing pride in another person, not realizing that by withholding encouragement, we have many times added to discouragement and depression. Women have many opportunities to encourage: Our husbands, children, siblings and friends all need encouragement. I would like to share some practical

thoughts on encouragement using three “C’s”: Compassion, Compliment, and Confidence.

Compassion

Compassion is a sympathetic consciousness of another’s distress and a desire to relieve it. Pity seems to be more of a feeling of sadness for another’s misfortune without doing anything to relieve it. Compassion is active; it finds a way to help. It is a means of bringing comfort or relief. I sometimes read articles on the suffering of people and feel pity for them without taking compassionate action in their behalf.

Compassion includes being sensitive to another’s feeling. Sometimes we need to put ourselves in their shoes and try to imagine what they may be feeling. It is easier to close our eyes and not become involved. There have been times in my life when I hesitated to be involved in another’s life because it is an emotionally and physically exhausting experience. Even Jesus felt the need to get away from people to fellowship with His heavenly Father, because He was human and His body became weary. Yet, He continued to minister to people.

Here are a few suggestions for showing compassion: Listen to the heart cry of a person who is hurting. Stay with the person for the duration of his pain. Give hugs; sometimes

words cannot say what we feel. Use the telephone or e-mail to give a message of hope. Write a letter or send a card. Flowers convey love and care. Be compassionate.

Compliment

A compliment is saying something to express praise or approval. It is also a gesture of respect and honor. We must be sincere in our compliments. There are also times when we seek a reason to compliment a person to help build his or her own sense of worth. Let us be quick to express appreciation to others. People want to know that their life has touched or influenced another person. I often wonder at a funeral if the person in the casket had any idea how much people loved and appreciated him or her. I find that to be sad.

Confidence

Confidence is having faith in a person’s ability to do a job well. It trusts their judgment and ideas. We must learn to trust each other. Mothers need to show confidence in their children, at least to hear what they have to say and be willing to talk about it. We must also be trustworthy. Can others trust us with their problems and concerns? Are we able to hold a confidence in our heart without sharing it with others? Trust builds healthy relationships. Encouragement is not seeing a woman’s limitations but seeing her potential.



A Happy Ending

Dolores Bontrager, age 15, Cedar Creek, TX

Asenath skipped along beside the Hebrew servant, Hannah. She knew she was too old to be skipping, but it was such a beautiful morning. Hannah seemed a bit more thoughtful than usual this morning, trying to keep up with Asenath and not drop the water pot. Up ahead the Nile reflected the morning sun.

As the girls rested beside the river, they saw something in it that startled them. "Hannah, is the river turning red?" The girls crept to the side of the river.

"Taste it Hannah!" Asenath commanded.

A moment later, Hannah's eyes widened as she declared, "It's blood, Asenath; it's blood!"

At supper that night, the main topic of discussion was the river. The servants had already begun digging wells for water and they expected to reach water before morning. Near the end of the meal, Asenath spoke up, "Hannah said that a man has come from the Hebrews' God and that the river turned to blood because the mighty Pharaoh won't let the Hebrews leave Egypt. It is a punishment and there will be many

more."

Her father snorted, "If the Hebrews' God were greater than ours, those people would have left a long time ago. Don't listen to what that girl says. She is a slave and nothing more. It's all a bunch of lies, I tell you!"

After the wells were dug, the bloody river was only a minor inconvenience until it flowed clear again six days later. The stench from all the dead fish, however, was almost overwhelming. The next four weeks were not needed to convince Asenath that the God of the Hebrews was far greater than all the gods of Egypt.

Two mornings after the river was flowing clear again, Asenath awoke wondering foggily why there were frogs in her bed. At breakfast, she discovered two squirmy things in her milk. For the next four days, frogs came up the path and through the front door. On the fifth day, the odor of dead fish was joined by the smell of dead frogs--not a pleasant combination.

There was one day of peace before her oldest brother, Zaphnath's head began itching. Before many hours had passed, they all began scratching their heads. For two days and nights,

they all scratched the lice. Itching and scratching, they all felt like their hair would soon disappear, along with their brains.

On the third morning, one could have thought that all the lice had turned to flies. Flies buzzed in their ears and around their heads. Flies were everywhere, pestering, buzzing, and always escaping just before they killed them. This lasted for five days; then they all flew away again. Three days of tranquility followed.

After dinner, Zaphnath and Asenath went out on the veranda to relax. Asenath commented passively on the strength of the Hebrews' God as opposed to that of the Egyptians' gods, and soon learned what her brother felt about it. His jaw tightened as he continued gazing across the shimmering sand. Then, through clenched teeth, as if hanging to a last thread of hope, he said, "Until He touches the mighty bull, I will not believe in Him."

Over supper that night they heard that all of their father's cattle had died with scarcely any warning. The next day some servants were sent to buy cattle from the Hebrews whose cattle were just as healthy as ever.

The next three days were miserable, wretched, even depressing for every breathing thing. People and animals (with the exception of the Hebrews and anything they owned) had boils--great, painful, swollen masses of

them. Zaphnath declared that if he were the pharaoh, he would expel the Hebrews or plead with them to leave. Her father expressed no opinion either political or religious.

Every boil healed in four days. Then the sky became a black mass of boiling, churning clouds and a chilly wind blew. During breakfast, Hannah rushed in, "Oh, Master," she gasped, bowing slightly, "the man of God says to shelter everything. Anything left in the field will certainly be killed. The storm will not break until this afternoon." Her father's voice was a bit faint and unsteady as he brushed off the message.

That afternoon, as tall trees and any unsheltered thing was broken, twisted, or pulverized by the storm her father's faith in the local gods was broken.

The following day was calm except for a strong east wind that blew all day and into the night. The family went to bed wondering what the next affliction would be and awoke knowing--locusts, in the superlative plural form!

Asenath soon discovered that sitting down entailed crushing two layers of locusts, one on her and one on the chair. They were enormous and juicy. They stayed only two days but when the wind blew them all away again there was not one green thing in sight.


Two days later the family was resting

and recuperating on the back veranda. They heard a muffled yell, sounding like mingled surprise and fear, coming from the front garden. There was not time to inquire what it meant before they knew. It swept down on them silently and swiftly, a blackness blacker than the burial chamber of their mother's pyramid and thicker, it seemed, than its walls. It was almost tangible; but they could reach out and touch each other. Even that took effort. It would have been folly to stir from the safe confines of one's chair. For three days they sat "like mummies in a tomb," Asenath thought.

On what Asenath supposed was the fourth morning, though she couldn't say for certain until Hannah told her, the rays of exuberant sunshine pierced the darkness, illuminating the sky, and drew from Zaphnath and Asenath a whoop, whose sound must have carried to the neighbors. Their father's comment was almost inarticulate, "So old Ra, even you

have been conquered."

Hannah came before the family again on the following morning. "Oh, master, the man of God said that tomorrow night at midnight God will pass through Egypt and kill all the firstborns." Six eyes focused on Zaphnath momentarily and Hannah continued, "If you will save Master Zaphnath, you must come to Goshen and follow the words of the man of God. You can only bring what you can carry for you must go with us to Canaan."

The father's voice was strong and clear when he spoke. "My children, all my life I have followed faithfully the gods of Egypt. But I have seen clearly in the past weeks that the greatest power the Egyptian gods have ever summoned is nothing next to the power of the Hebrews' God. I believe that if we obey His servant He will protect us. We will trust Him with our lives. Children, let us prepare for the journey to Canaan." 

youth messages

Get Your Hands Dirty

Ryan Shetler, Hutchinson, KS

When I was a freshman in high school, I was not a motivated student. I wasn't the smartest kid in school, but wasn't necessarily dumb either. Math was terrible and English was great. I loved the social aspect of school, but I

put socializing and playing basketball ahead of my school work as often as possible. If it hadn't been for Mom, graduation would have been unlikely. At one point, I was disillusioned enough with school to consider dropping out.

In the midst of this, my older cousin, Brad saw that I was struggling and needed some motivation. He had the sensitivity to talk to me about it and wondered if I would like some help to get more work done. He even gave up a part of a Saturday to help me do some school work. I don't remember how well it worked. I don't think I even got enough work done to receive my reward, but that's not the point.

I never told him, but I think he had no idea how much it meant to me. In my mind, Brad embodied everything I admired--from the way he dressed to the way he played basketball. He was also a super nice guy with a great sense of humor. The list could go on. I looked up to him a lot. And when someone you look up to that much takes the time to care about what is going on in your life—not just the time to talk, but actually helps you out with the problems in your life, it makes you feel like you are really worth something, like your problems are actually worth talking about. Anyone who has experienced anything like this knows that there is no price tag on such an experience.

It was especially valuable to me at the time because I was still very much trying to figure out who I was. Brad could have just talked to me and encouraged me to work harder. He wouldn't have had to use up part of his valuable Saturday to help me

out. He would not have had to offer to spend some money and possibly more time with me. If he wanted to be somewhere else, he did a great job of hiding it. I hope he felt great about it, because I certainly did. God has designed us for relationships and by giving ourselves we most effectively fulfill that design.

It's easy for me to help others without giving myself. I can get that pleasant, generous feeling very easily by dropping a check in the offering that will help the people rather than actually taking the time to help them myself. It's not wrong. The Bible endorses that kind of giving, but I often cheat myself by failing to take the time to minister to others.

It is important to give ourselves to the needy around us for the following reasons: First, God destined us to be fulfilled by it; second, it gives a sense of worth to those we help; and third, Jesus exemplified this concept in His ministry.

When we allow God to use us by helping others, we actually invest in another person's life. I think God created us to feel fulfillment by building relationships and filling needs in unfortunate people's lives. It is not always fun. But there is invariably a feeling of fulfillment that is only realized as we serve those around us—as we permit Christ to use us as His hands and feet.

On the inverse side of the situation,


it feels great too when someone cares about me enough to spend some of his valuable time on me. There is something invaluable and lovely about realizing that this person really cares about me as a person. He's not just throwing money or resources at me to relieve himself of my situation without getting involved. God wired us to want acceptance from our fellow humans. Ultimately, we need approval from God more than anything, but human beings are the ones we can see, touch, and to whom we can most easily relate.

That's the beauty of Jesus becoming a man. He cared enough about us to actually leave the absolute perfection of Heaven, not just to keep us from falling into hell, but so we could be restored enough to love Him and have a relationship with Him. This is one of the things I like best about Jesus.

We are called to emulate Jesus as much as is humanly possible. He showed us how to love others by the example of His ministry—not just by becoming a man and descending to the slum we know as home, but by the people with whom He associated. In his book, *Searching For God Knows What*, Donald Miller points out that Jesus did not spend much time with the socially elite. From the Bible, it is obvious that while Jesus walked the dusty roads of ancient Judea, He spent much time with people whom few of us would consider decent or civilized.

Let's face it. It's not always fun or attractive to delve into the life of the homeless guy who looks like he hasn't showered or changed clothes for a week. But people like him are the ones who need our love and attention the most. The rest of society puts value on people by whether they are rich, good looking, or famous. Too many people already see the world that way. What a shame to Jesus if we as Christians also use these criteria to determine a person's worth.

So dig into the relationships around you. Get your hands dirty because those around you have done the same thing for you. It is good for you, good for those around you, and most importantly, Jesus Himself did it. Even if you feel neglected by the people in your life, Jesus never neglected you. He loved us all even when we were unlovable. If for no other reason, love others for Jesus. "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

Jesus loved us enough to dirty His hands so He could cleanse us. If Someone as holy and pure as Jesus could reach out and clean our sinful filth, certainly we can dirty our hands for those around us—if for no other reason than out of gratitude to the One who loved enough to get His hands dirty on earth, just to give us the chance to love Him back. 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

When a person plays a game, his character is on display; when he loses, it shows something and when he wins, perhaps even more.

• • • • •

A true Christian is neither ashamed of the Gospel or a shame to the Gospel.

• • • • •

You can't build Christian fellowship on stumbling blocks.

• • • • •

The man who cannot enjoy the simple things in life is poor indeed.

• • • • •

No one is too big to be courteous, but some are too small.

• • • • •

To speak ill of others is often just a dishonest way of praising ourselves.

• • • • •

In all of creation only man can say "Yes" or "No" to God.

• • • • •

Be bold in what you stand for, but be careful in what you fall for.

• • • • •

There is little blessing in serving the Lord at our convenience.