

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

Galatians 6:14

MARCH 2014

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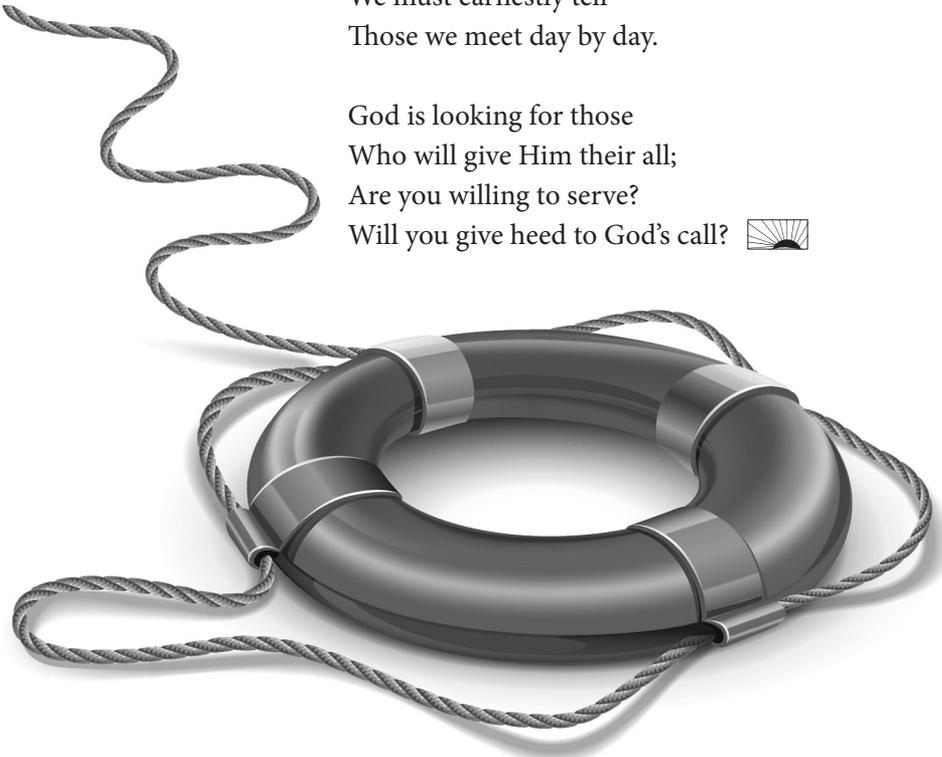
Chosen by God

Laura Knepp, Odon, IN

As unworthy servants,
We are chosen by God
To proclaim the good message,
At home and abroad.

Throw out the lifeline!
Oh, do not delay!
We must earnestly tell
Those we meet day by day.

God is looking for those
Who will give Him their all;
Are you willing to serve?
Will you give heed to God's call? 



The Holy Spirit's Work Among Us

Vance Havner once humorously said, “The professing church wavers today between two extremes; *rigor mortis* [the stiffness of death] on one side and *Saint Vitus’ dance* [the jerky movements associated with a certain disease] on the other side.” Both extremes miss the mark of true saintliness. Without poking fun at error or extremes, we nevertheless want to find a better way—God’s way, and walk in it.

I do not propose to find the truth merely by steering a course between two extremes. God’s Word gives us direction. God’s Spirit was given with ample introduction from Jesus, including these words, “When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself,...he will glorify me” (From John 16:13,14).

When the Holy Spirit leads God’s people,

• **The church aligns itself with the Word of God.**

Since the Holy Spirit is committed to standing for the Truth of Jesus, we can safely assume that He would have us give primary attention to the Scriptures. If we replace that with people’s impressions and preferences

above the written Word, we venture into unsafe territory.

In the second century A.D., Montanus taught that the Father was the Old Testament God; Jesus was the God of the Gospels (Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, and ascension followed); and the Holy Spirit is the God for today. According to Montanus, we no longer need to look to the written Word to guide us. He taught that we must look to the Holy Spirit and what He says supersedes what Jesus and the Apostles said. This opened the door to great confusion. The church leaders of that time finally gave it the designation it had earned: Heresy.

• **The church focuses on Christ.**

The Holy Spirit promotes Jesus. He does not promote Himself. This gift of the Sovereign God to his children makes it possible that we are never alone. We are provided the presence of Christ, because Jesus said that when He returns to heaven, He would send the Comforter, the third person of the Godhead who goes with God’s children to bring them through all of life’s experiences victoriously.

If we heed the Holy Spirit, He

directs us to honor and follow Christ through obedience to the written Word of God, which states that His “word is truth” (John 17:7) and that “no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, except by the Holy Ghost” (From 1 Cor. 12:3). Thus the Holy Spirit enables us to do what we cannot do by ourselves. Without the conviction that Jesus is Lord which is ministered by the Holy Spirit, we grope in pagan darkness.

•**The church is set for real revival.**

Real revival starts with genuine repentance. Our sins grip us. We see that following Christ requires more than saying things that make us look good and sound pious. It requires that we are honest and make restitution like Zaccheus did. It enables shy people to courageously identify with Jesus as the only Savior, instead of limply saying that He is good. Real revival is the “fuel” that powers difficult undertakings for the Master. The Holy Spirit does not simply endorse self-serving, business-as-usual activity. He enables us to “quit... like men and be strong” (From 1 Cor. 16:13).

•**The church can expect healthy growth.**

In the early church, we see that the Holy Spirit was active. They “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers”

(Acts 2:42). These are keys to the Holy Spirit’s working in our midst. The early church did not embrace Christianity as a pastime. They had outreach because they had invited the Holy Spirit’s deep “in-reach.”

As we undertake outreach, let us remember that the joy of the Lord is our strength. It is His work from start to finish. As we welcome people to church, let us keep the invitation to repentance and faith in Christ clearly in first place. Joining the local body shall build on that.

•**The church becomes more unified in the true Gospel.**

Because I see conservative Anabaptism as coming as close to Apostolic purity as anything I know, I am grateful to see a movement of unity among conservative Anabaptists. As a larger group, we do not present total *uniformity* but I doubt that that is essential. We have a *unity* that encourages faithfulness. Hopefully, those looking in note a commitment to biblical principles. Let us hope they also sense welcome from us.

A diversity of application may actually encourage better prioritizing so that we have less tendency to “major” on “minors.” I am concerned, however, that we don’t move toward lowest common denominators. A limited, liberal, or spiritualized interpretation of a biblical principle is not necessarily better.

Finally, my brethren—

Let us avoid these misinterpretations and extremes:

- *Overemphasizing spiritual gifts.*

This unbalanced emphasis does not engage the gifts of everyone in the body (Note 1 Cor. 12:31, and the balance provided by 13:1-13).

- *Demanding miraculous physical healing.* Anointing with oil (James 5:13-18) is good, but an over-emphasis on healing that scorns medical treatment often leads to telling God what to do. This is most unfortunate! Dr. Luke's profession is not denigrated in the biblical record. We honor God in sickness when we turn to Him first, but He is not dishonored if we also seek the services of those who are trained in the healing arts. (Luke 4:31) After all, no doctor can keep death away.

- *Constantly searching for new truth.*

Willingness to examine the truth we embrace is one thing. But endless searching for new truth is not unlike the Athenians who, "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21), yet not committing themselves to what they knew. This is fruitless and dangerous. Those who seek God in this way are likely to eventually turn from God's plain truth. Jesus made the church custodian of "the faith, once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). This Faith, a new covenant ratified in Jesus' blood, is a complete gift from God. Our efforts at *adding to* or *subtracting from* that gift may bring us extra attention and seem courageous, but it is exceedingly risky. (See 1 Cor. 15:58 and Col. 2:6-8). —PLM 

Ministers' Meeting Announcement

The annual Beachy Amish Ministers' Meetings are scheduled April 8-10, 2014, in Yoder, KS, hosted by the Center, Cedar Crest and Arlington congregations.

The theme of these meetings is "Guarding the Gift Entrusted to You," with topics from 2 Timothy 4.

- **To request time in a business session, contact James Shetler: jameshetler84@gmail.com or 620-728-9926.**

- **To request display tables or booth space, contact Nathan Nisly: natemarj@gmail.com or 620-728-9925.**

- **If you plan to attend and have not yet received an invitation, contact Harry Shenk: harry@sturdi-bilt.com or 620-899-1438** 

Concerns about the head covering and non-conformity in appearance:

Dear Editor,

My reason for writing is concerning the need of us sisters needing to be reminded concerning the covering. Apparently, it is for us who are single and no longer have a dad to remind us on these matters and for our hard-learning hearts. I am certainly sorry it is this way.

I have concluded that the husbands of the married sisters might also need a reminder to do their part as godly leaders in the home. When the husband does not have identification in appearance of a godly person, would it not automatically be that the wife would want to follow?

It would be nice that we as a people could speak in a way that is biblical with our church rules. It seems best from what I have observed to not only have guidelines for the men with their hair and beards (not stubbly beards) in a uniform manner and practice, instead of each to his own, just as well as the sisters. There is

some sense of belonging when there are guidelines and they are obeyed. I understand God is a God of order. Should we not also be people of order in all areas?

Should I be in left field and way off track in what is biblical. I am open to correction. I acknowledge I am not perfect. I do miss our former ways as a Beachy group. I wonder if there is such a thing as working on the branch of the problem when we should be working on the root.

Let us pray for each other and not faint by the way!

Please do not publish my name. If it can benefit something, praise the Lord!

[I submit this unsolicited letter as a matter of concern and invite comment. Surely we can do better than wring our hands in despair. Have we contributed to this problem by speaking of "wearing a covering" when the Scriptures speak of "covering the head"? I invite your comments on any aspect of the issues this sister has raised. -Editor]



The Reach of God's Love

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Every denominational boat has people on board who seemingly think it is their calling to “rock the boat.” Their “Glee Club” is satisfied to make the captain of the boat upset with a reaction of some kind. Never mind that sometimes the boat (church) needs to cast anchor for a mid-journey review of its intended course.

But now one of the larger ships has the captain himself yanking on the steering mechanism. The Catholic's Pope Francis is into some biblical gymnastics up on the bridge. Soon after his election as pope last spring, he “told non-Catholic and atheistic journalists he would bless them silently out of respect. Soon after, he eschewed Vatican practice and included women in a foot-washing ceremony.” If you can't do what is right, you can at least be nice.

An article carried by *The Washington Post*, adds that a few weeks ago, Francis said Catholics shouldn't be obsessed with imposing strange doctrines, which includes opposition to gay marriage and abortion. Past popes steered the Catholic ship on a straight course in regard to

these essential matters. There was no question where the official hierarchy stood. But now, Catholics don't know if their ship is going north toward the icebergs or south toward the sharks.

It was only a month ago that “Francis told an atheist journalist that people should follow good and fight evil as they conceive of it.” Imagine! Having a pulpit with an audience as big as the world and missing the Kingdom message by that far!

Even atheists can have a heart that beats in unison with following the good and fighting the evil as they conceive of it. The punch line is: “As they conceive of it.” Of course! That is how mortal men and women have lived since the Garden of Eden. That is how poor mortals have justified their pernicious ways without even a hint as to what God prescribes in His Word. Their “self-conception” is grounds enough for personal choice. It is also the route to self-destruction with eternal consequences.

Almost everyone lives a good life, as they conceive it. So what if that means stealing, getting drunk on alcohol, indulging in free love, or justifying debilitating hate. All of it has been

conceived as the “good life.” Perverted thinking—perverted living!

Surely the pope would know James 1:14 and 15 and have the “churchly high office” credentials that befit a clearer insight of God’s view for human response. James says, “But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Evil men can only conceive godless, self-justifying thoughts, hence they give birth (origin) to more godlessness.

Self-justifying ideas for their own individual good is how almost everyone lives. The pope has just raised the human justification factor for the ungodly and sinners. That, however, does nothing in God’s eyes. God’s standard cannot be pushed higher or pulled lower by any measure of good, or fighting evil.

Including more people under the big tent of the nominal church changes nothing by God’s standards. God’s love is inclusive, but it is also exclusive. The love of God extends to His born-again children is a relational love. That relation with God is put in place and is exercised in uncompromised faith in God and His Word and a life of committed discipleship.

Faith in God cannot be separated from His Word. Believing in the whole Bible cannot be separated

from obedience to it. Obedience to His Word cannot be separated from discipleship. Discipleship cannot be divorced from self-denial. Self-denial is conjoined to service and worship.

What does this have to do with atheists, agnostics, and unbelievers? A longer rope given by the pope does nothing to extend more hope outside the parameters of God’s Word. And that is also true for any Bible teacher or preacher. The Bible says it as it is, which is a full and complete revelation of God’s message for all men in all ages.

A bumper sticker said, “God loves everyone. No exceptions.” True. That is a good place to begin. The Apostle John fills in the other half by writing, “We love him because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). That “love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Romans 5:5). That love is pure, ready to listen to the voice of God through the Bible, ready to deny self rather than serve self, ready to confess sin and need, rather than justifying it, ready to sacrifice and serve and worship God.

The Bottom Line is that God loves everyone with an all-inclusive love. It is also true that God’s love is exclusive in a relational way to His children on the earth. Not that we earn it. It is out of His Father care for us and as a part of God’s plan to those who make proper responses to His loving call. 

Minsters' Meeting Messages

This is a condensation of a message preached at the ministers' meeting hosted by the Holmes County churches on April 2-4, 2013, and held at Fairlawn Mennonite Church, Apple Creek, OH. Seven sermons and two women's sessions are available from Victory Music Services, P.O. Box 1498, North Highlands, CA, 95660, for \$50, postpaid. Telephone: 443-480-1489.

5. The Doctrine of Transformation

Donnie Brenneman
Virginia Beach, VA

“But we all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). How is this done? In a Gospel song, Daniel Whittle says, he does not now know “why,” “how,” or “what” about how God’s grace is wrought in the human heart, but confessed with Paul, “I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I’ve committed unto Him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12).

As we go up a mountain, it usually gets colder. When Jesus took Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, it was good for them to be there. It was invigorating.

Peter enthusiastically proposes building three tents for them. But God the Father seems to say, “Sh, Peter! This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.” It is for us to hear, not to talk and tell Him all our wishes and plans and how He’s to run the Kingdom. When we listen, we experience transformation.

At Creation, God spoke into that vast quietness. “Let there be light.” The voice of the Lord is so powerful that He created everything by His spoken word. It is full of majesty. When we look at animal life and the vegetation, we note that God told it all to reproduce after its own kind.

We are in the spring of the year when we plant gardens. What happens? Sunshine and rain come and something happens to the seed. New life springs forth. God delights to do things that are hidden from

the wisdom of man. Man cannot figure it out, but it works! It is a manifestation of transformation.

Romans 5:12 and 15 include these statements, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, ...much more the gift of grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” So as sin and death were introduced by Adam, so the second Adam brought salvation, transformation, and eternal life. John says that in Him was life and that life was the light of men.

Peter tells us that the world was created by the Word of God. We are in the process of transformation. This world is in the process of transformation and is reserved by the same word to a day of fire. There will be an amazing transformation when that angel in Revelation 10 plants one foot on the land and one on the sea and raises his hand and says time shall be no longer, when Jesus descends from heaven with a shout bringing His saints with Him. That will bring an amazing transformation. Jesus says in Revelation 21, “Behold, I make all things new.”

In Hebrews 7:16 says that this man, Jesus Christ, “is not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.”

God spoke this world into existence. When “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten son of God, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). What does this Word in the flesh do? Psalm 40:8 says, “In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.” In John’s Gospel, we read that Jesus said, “I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.”

After Jesus was tempted, He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. This endless life has power so that whenever it comes into contact with need, something happens. Something changes. Jesus said in John 10:10, “I am come that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly.” Each seed bears after its own kind. When Adam sinned, that corrupted humanity’s seed. Every seed thereafter is corrupted seed. It is corrupted and being corrupted. When you have some bad seed, what do you look for? You look for new seed—good seed. God has provided that seed in His Son.

In 1 Cor. 15:47, we read, “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” In Christ there is a new, living, powerful seed of the Almighty

God! Jesus reminded us that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Let us be reminded that this seed produces after its kind. 1 Peter 1:23-25 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever..." The seed is the Word of God. There is life in the Word. The Word is a living, powerful Word. It brings forth life where there was no life.

Jesus was made after the power of an endless life. How does transformation work? I shall not attempt to speak on the process of transformation. Rather, I have chosen to speak of its practice. Let me ask you a question: How many of you ate supper last evening? How many of you worried at bedtime about how your food would be digested? How many of you wondered what the beans would do when they meet the potatoes? Or when both of them encounter the apple sauce? How many of you are worried about how that form is going to be changed into a different form that flows through

your body and ministers life to the various parts and even carries away the waste? How many of you are consciously worried about how that all operates? You're sitting here and not even thinking about these processes and yet these things are working in you right now, even though you're not thinking about it. Well, I don't know how all those processes work, but you and I both know they work.

I also don't know all about how this transformation of believing and applying the Word of God works in our lives, but I do know that it works! 2 Cor. 3:18 says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as the Spirit of the Lord." How do we behold the glory that changes us? 2 Cor. 4:5 and 6: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord: and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Do you want to know and see the glory of God? Look in the face of Jesus Christ. As we look in the face of Jesus Christ, we see the attributes of God, living and exemplified. We see

the compassion and love of Christ.

I want to point us this morning to that lonely hill, Mt. Calvary, where Jesus, the Word of God, became flesh, gave up His life that brought us life. Look at Jesus on the cross. There we begin to get a glimpse of His glory. Read the Word, God's revelation to us of Himself.

Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit is come, He would guide us into all truth. The Holy Spirit's work is to transform us, conforming us to the image of His own dear Son. In Romans 8:29, it says God wants us to be conformed to the image of His Son. The song writer says, "O, to be like Thee!" We resemble our parents. We produce after our kind. Earthly children resemble their parents, so God wants many sons who resemble Him.

As we look at lives that are marred by sin, by guilt, by not knowing what to do with sin, brothers and sisters, God has given us ALL we need. 2 Peter 1:3 says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature..."

John 19:34 says, "But one of the soldiers with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water." There's a fountain open for uncleanness and for sin. Because of the power of the blood of

Jesus, you and I can be transformed. The Spirit leads us to the fountain for cleansing, not just once or twice, but time and time again.

How many of you remember the bath you had when you were born? You don't remember it, do you? I'm assuming you had one. Who gave it to you? You probably don't remember that, either. How many baths or showers have you had since you were a baby? You probably don't know. How many did you have this week? Did you have one today? A fountain is for cleansing. The blood of Jesus is for cleansing. That's why it says in 1 John 1:7, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with him, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son," goes on cleansing us from all sin.

How many of you have gotten dirty physically since your first bath? How many times? You probably don't know. Now, how many of you have sinned since you first became a believer? I can raise two hands to that question. I'm so thankful for the fountain that's open for us. 1 John 1:9, says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The fountain has transforming power that can be found nowhere else. It has a remedy for sin. It has transformation.

How many of you just bite off a piece of carrot, or steak or a hot dog and swallow it? I hope no one. You chew it, munch it, and crunch it. You also savor the flavor. How are we transformed? By the renewing of our mind. Renew means renovate. Remodel. Take old things out and put new things in. I believe it is as we read the Living Word, not just biting off a chunk and quickly swallowing it, but as we chew it and savor the flavor, we are doing what David says in Psalm 1: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord and in his law doth he MEDITATE day and night.”

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” Brothers and sisters, it is possible to be transformed—and to continue to be transformed—by the word of God! The song writer says, “More about Jesus would I know, more of His grace to others show; more of His saving fulness see, more of His love who died for me.” There needs to be a hunger for God, a poverty of spirit, a brokenness. Brothers and sisters, when we come to Jesus broken and marred, He doesn’t get scared and ask, “What

shall I do?” I think a good subtitle for this topic on the doctrine of transformation might be, “The Omnipotent Transformer.” Without the Transformer, there can be no transformation. This Transformer can wash away any and all sin, except one—the blasphemy against he Holy Spirit. When I stumble and fall, when I return to Him for cleansing, and He picks me up again, it makes me love Him all the more. Transformation leads us ultimately to pure worship and service.

Jacob was a schemer, a conniver, and a cheater. He was a “gimme, gimme, gimme” person. He made sure he got what he wanted, regardless of the cost. Sometimes God speaks to us by making us aware of our of need. Financial. Emotional. Spiritual. Through those needs He wants to make us aware of our need of Him.

Here was Jacob the schemer. He knew *what* buttons to push, and *when* and *where* and *how* to get what he wanted. But there came a time when something came into his life that he could not handle. God in His mercy brought something too big for him, so that Jacob would turn to Him for help. Esau was coming against him with 400 men. What should he do? He’s got his livestock and his family and they’re all very vulnerable. The

problem is bigger than Jacob can handle. God often brings problems into our lives that are bigger than we can handle. Like Jacob, God meets us in that crisis. There we wrestle with God. We ask, "How did I get here? Why am I here? What's going on? I don't understand."

Jacob wrestled all night with God and he said, "I won't let you go unless you bless me." That's perseverance; that's desire; that's being driven by hunger. It's saying, "I need something I presently do not have and I'm not going to let you go till I get it." Jesus said, "Seek and ye shall find, Knock and it shall be opened unto you." God gave him a blessing. He broke him. Brokenness! God wants to bring us to a new brokenness. Progressive brokenness. A new level and area of brokenness. God wrestles with us and wants to bless us more than we want to be blessed. God wanted to change that "gimme,gimme,gimme" of Jacob's lifestyle. The wrestling of the will with God produced blessing. Jacob came to the place where he gives his name honestly as Jacob. He had wrestled with God and had prevailed. He that humbles himself shall be exalted. God gave him a new name, Israel.

Instead of "gimme,gimme" he was next found to be freely giving out presents. "You can have it; you can

have it, it's yours, that's also yours" seems to be his new vocabulary. "It's my present to you." Do you see the transformation? Last of all, he bows seven times before Esau. Esau looked at Jacob and saw a new man.

Metamorphosis brings forth a beautiful creature. Before a caterpillar flies, it spends its time on the ground. Its progress is slow and difficult. Then it crawls up a tree and fastens itself to a twig and makes a cocoon. Then what happens? It is transformed, it takes on a change and then comes out to the glorious liberty of a creature of flight. A new creation. There it looks down from the heights on what used to give it so much trouble. The rocks and the stones are far below and it's flitting along joyfully and gracefully. Beautifully! It's alive and thriving in the bright sunshine. Brothers and sisters, that's what Jesus wants to do for us. He wants to raise us up and give us a seat with Him in heavenly places where we can walk in the power of the Spirit.

I want to encourage us: Let us cooperate with God. As we read the Word, let's believe the Word. "To God be the glory for the things He has done! So loved He the world that He gave us His Son. Who yielded His life an atonement for sin and opened the life gate that ALL may go in." Praise the Lord! 

marriages

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

Groff-Miller

Bro. William, son of Brad and Grace Groff, Russellville, KY, and Sis. Heidi, daughter of Dave and Laura Miller, Russellville, KY, at Plainview Mennonite Church on Oct. 25, 2013, by Jonathan Overholt.

Kornelsen-Stoltzfus

Bro. George, son of Walter and Tina Kornelsen, Blue Creek, Belize, and Sis. Marnita, daughter of Ben and Marian Stoltzfus, Cayo, Belize, at Countryside Park, for Cayo Christian Fellowship, on Nov. 3, 2013, by Walter Kornelsen.

Kurtz-Troyer

Bro. Milton, son of Edwin and Eunice Kurtz, Breckinridge, KY, and Sis. Ina, daughter of Betty Troyer, Beaver Springs, PA, at First Baptist Church for Summersville Mennonite Church on Nov. 22, 2013, by James Hershberger.

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Jon, son of David and Ruth Miller, Millersburg, OH, and Sis. Emilene, daughter of Michael and Martha Yoder, Shreve, OH, at Gospel Haven Church for Grace Haven Church on Dec. 14, 2013, by David Yoder.

Stoltzfus-Bontrager

Bro. J. Wendell, son of Mahlon and Abigail Stoltzfus, Killbuck, OH, and Sis. Kaylene, daughter of Myron and Ilene Bontrager, Arlington, KS, at Arlington A.M. Church, on Jan. 4, 2014, by David M. Yoder.

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Kendall and Jeanette (Bender), Middleburg, PA, first child and dau., Kayla Marie, Sept. 7, 2013.

Bontrager, Cameron and Monica (Hochstetler), Goshen, IN, third child and son, Aydric Lane, Dec. 12, 2013.

Bontrager, Vernon and Ada (Miller), Shippshewana, IN, fourth child, third dau. (one daughter deceased), Isabelle Laree, Dec. 24, 2013.

Byler, Kenneth and Kate (Knepp), Whiteville, TN, second child and dau., Stephanie Shauntai, Dec. 21, 2013.

Erb, Daniel and Ruthanne (Erb), Wellesley, ON, fifth child, fourth dau., Shaylyn Breanne, July 6, 2013.

Esh, Al and Sue (Helmuth), Aroda, VA, first child and son, Alexander Scott, Dec. 4, 2013.

Gerber, Brian and Emma (King),
Brunner, ON, third child and dau.,
Kendra Rose, May 10, 2013.

Jantzi, Raphael and Amy (Gingerich),
Wellesley, ON, first child and son,
Dominic Ryan, July 23, 2013.

King, Emmanuel and Phoebe (Raber),
New Holland, PA, second child, first son,
Asher Ronel, Dec. 9, 2013.

Kleiner, George and Malinda (Yoder),
Aroda, VA, first child and son, Landon
Paul, Dec. 11, 2013.

Mast, Caleb and Lisa (King), Ronks,
PA, second child and son, Alexander
Daniel, Dec. 26, 2013.

Miller, Vincent and Juanita (Beachy),
Huntland, TN, second child and son,
Klynt Theodore, Jan. 16, 2014.

Nissley, Calvin and Melissa (Miller),
Sardinia, OH, fourth child, second dau.,
Madelyn Katie, Jan. 27, 2014.

Raber, Douglas and Lorene (Shirk),
Bloomfield, MO, sixth child, third son,
Timothy Douglas, Jan. 9, 2014.

Ropp, Jonathan and Marie (Byler),
Monkton, ON, fourth and fifth children,
third and fourth sons, Carlin Drew and
Caleb Dean, Oct. 24, 2013.

Schlabach, Steven and Debra (Troyer),
Holliday, MO, sixth child, fifth son,
Kaden Mark, Dec. 16, 2013.

Stoltzfus, Paul and Naomi (King),
Troutville, VA, fourth child (one
daughter deceased), first son, Austin
Daniel, Oct. 25, 2013.

Troyer, Stanley and Melissa (Miller),
Advance, MO, third child, second son,
Wyatt Jackson, Jan. 25, 2014.

Troyer, Vernon and Mary Ann
(Coblentz), Advance, MO, fifth child
and dau., Arianna Nichole, Sept. 8, 2013.

Wagler, Lester and Lois (Overholt),
Lyndon, KS, fifth child, third son, Isaiah
Joseph, Jan. 18, 2014.

Weaver, Jonathan and Laura
(Schwartz), McClure, PA, first living
child (a son stillborn), a daughter, Chloe
Anne, Oct. 9, 2013.

Yoder, Mark and Martha (Stoltzfus),
Whiteville, TN, seventh child, fourth
dau., Mariah Sage, Nov. 25, 2013.

Yoder, Michael and Sarah (Shank),
Aroda, VA, second child and son, Joel
Elliot, Dec. 6, 2013.

Yutzy, Leroy and Lori (Troyer),
Winchester, OH, first child and dau.,
Liana Joy, Nov. 7, 2013.



ordinations

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

Bro. Dave King, 49, was ordained as deacon at Lighthouse Mennonite Church, Vanleer, TN, on Nov. 17, 2013. Preordination messages were given by Gary Raber, Leitchfield, KY. The charge was given by Lavern Eash, assisted by Jonathan Overholt, and Kevin Yoder. Mark Mast was also in the lot.

Bro. Marcus Lengacher, 27, was ordained as minister for Summersville Mennonite Church, Summersville, KY, on Jan. 12, 2014. Preordination messages were given by Gary Raber, Cedar Springs, KY. The charge was given by James Hershberger, assisted by Floyd Lengacher and Joshua Yoder. Lowell Miller was also in the lot.

Bro. Steven Schlabach, 39, of Holliday, MO, was ordained as minister at Pleasant View A. M. Church, Holliday, MO. Preordination messages were given by Ervin Yoder, Paris, TN. The charge was

given by Marlin Farmwald, assisted by Marvin Yoder and Eli Mast. The lot was shared by Tim Troyer.

Bro. Jadon Yoder, was called by the voice of the church and ordained as minister at Hicksville Christian Fellowship Church, Hicksville, OH, on Nov. 17, 2013. Preordination messages were given by John Mast, Crossville, TN. The charge was given by Lavern Miller, assisted by John Mast, Laverne Yoder (Jadon's father), and Daniel Bontrager.

Bro. Marcus Yoder, 30, was called by the voice of the church and ordained as deacon at Still Waters Mennonite Church, Georgetown, OH, on Jan. 12, 2014. Preordination messages were given by Raymond Fisher, Limestone, TN. The charge was given by Leon Troyer, assisted by Raymond Fisher, Paul Weaver, and Ivan Miller.

obituaries

Beachy, Katie (Yoder), 83, of Sugarcreek, OH, died at Walnut Hills Nursing Home following a period of declining health. She was born March 3, 1930, in Dalton, Ohio, to the late Dan. B. and Mary (Swartzentruber) Yoder.

She was a member of Maranatha Fellowship Church.

On Dec. 8, 1949, she was married to Melvin E. Beachy. He preceded her in death Oct. 10, 2010. Surviving are their children: Miriam (Wayne) Hershberger, Sugarcreek; Willis (Marie) Beachy, Beach City; Frances (Dave) Byers, Aroda, VA; Paul (Stacy) Beachy and Nathanael (Shelly) Beachy, both of Sugarcreek; 10

grandchildren; five great grandchildren; two brothers and a sister: Mary (Eli) Weaver, Millersburg; Jack Yoder, San Diego, CA; and Daniel (Clara) Yoder, Jr., Wooster; sister-in-law, Edna (Bill) Byler, Sugarcreek; and brother-in-law, Andy J. Troyer, Fredericksburg.

She was preceded in death by a son, Roy Beachy, and daughter, Erma Beachy, great grandson, Cody Alan Nissley, infant sister, Edna, three sisters, Fannie, Ida and Ada; and two brothers, Eli and Benjamin.

The funeral was held at Maranatha Church on Dec. 23, with Paul Leroy Miller officiating. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Herschberger, David A., 81, died at Sioux Lookout, ON, Dec. 14, 2013. He was born at Nappanee, IN, on June 25, 1932, son of the late Ananias and Drusilla (Yoder) Herschberger.

On March 21, 1959, he was married to Esther Hochstetler at Goshen, IN. She died when a moose stepped out in front of their car as they came into Sioux Lookout at night on Jan. 19, 1995. Then on August 23, 1997, he married Frieda Bontrager, who was his constant companion and source of strength these last 16 years. The five children are: Jason (Sarah) Herschberger, Kunming, China; Rhoda (Steve) Zook, Canton, OH; Phil (Janelle) Herschberger, Holtwood, PA; Linford (Tina) Herschberger, Houston, TX; and Lowell (Linda) Herschberger, Brooklyn, NY. Also surviving are 15 grandchildren.

In early 2011, David was diagnosed with cancer. His initial progress was promising, but by June, 2013, the cancer had spread and his condition kept deteriorating until he passed away peacefully with his wife and friends at his side.

As a young man, while working the night shift in a mental hospital in Chicago, he became hungry for God and read many Christian books. He traveled to several different states until he found a little band of Christians in Northern Indiana. This led to significant discipleship and his first stint of Christian service at Hillcrest Home in Harrison, Arkansas.

Several months ago, David said he does not consider himself to have been a successful person. He always had dreams far beyond what he felt he got done. His accomplishments were not in buildings, money, or organizations, but in helping people face life with Jesus and not running from shame, hurt, guilt and loss. Beginning with abuse, mental illness, and spiritual emptiness in his childhood, he found life through brokenness and relationship with the Gentle Healer.

David's life was one of service. As a young man, he served briefly in Chicago, Arkansas, Germany, and Austria. He was a resident missionary in Hudson, Ontario, for the last 49 years of his life. He is remembered at Hudson as the pastor with a heart of love and by many First Nation people as "Mr. Herschberger," who brought his little plane loaded with Christian literature

for them to buy.

He was preceded in death by an older brother, Henry; and younger sisters, Laura and Verna Viola. He is survived by a brother, Ura; and sister, Fannie Mae, of Arthur, IL, and brother Omar, Niles, MI.

The funeral was held at Sioux Lookout on Dec. 20, with natives and non-natives conducting the service. Burial was in Evergreen Cemetery in Hudson. "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Miller, Clarence L., 82, of Goshen, IN, died Nov. 1, 2013, at St. Joseph Medical Center, Mishawaka, IN. He was born in Plain City, OH, to the late Lee Roy and Elizabeth (Troyer) Miller.

He was a member of Woodlawn A.M. Church. He was a retired dairy farmer, enjoyed woodworking, and worked part-time for Miller Brother Builders. Some pastimes were fishing, gardening, being with family and friends and spending winters with his wife in Sarasota, Florida.

On Nov. 25, 1961, he was married to Anna Mast. She survives. Also surviving are three daughters: Carol (Lavon) Bender, Goshen; Meribeth and Suann (Clete) Miller, both of Sarasota, FL; a son, Jay Mark (Chanelle) Miller, Myakka City, FL; six grandchildren, three step granddaughters, six sisters, Emma (Raymond) Kauffman, Susie Miller, Fannie (Abe) Troyer, Mary Gingerich, all of Plain City, OH; Arie (Daniel) Hochstetler, Goshen; and Katie (Alvin) Yoder, Plain City, OH; four brothers: Eli (Wilma) Miller, and Ralph (Cathy) Miller, both of Plain City, OH; John

(Mary Ellen) Miller, Sturgis, MI; and Alvin (Fannie) Miller, Crossville, TN.

He was preceded in death by three granddaughters.

The funeral was held on Nov. 5, with Elmer Miller, Steve Miller and Dean Miller serving. Glen Miller conducted the committal at the church cemetery.

Miller, Harry E., 91, of Goshen, IN, died Dec. 23, 2013, at Maples at Waterford Crossing in Goshen. He was born April 8, 1922, in Sawyer County, WI, son of the late Eli and Elizabeth (Miller) Miller.

He was a charter member of Woodlawn A.M. Church. He was a woodworker and retired carpenter.

On Nov. 28, 1946, he was married to Ida Weirich. She died Feb. 19, 2004. Surviving are three daughters: Frieda Borntreger, Middlebury; Norma (Wayne) Schrock, Millersburg; Marilyn (Homer) Miller, Goshen; a son, Floyd (Linda) Miller, Middlebury; five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by three sisters, Anna Miller, Fannie Gingerich, and Mattie Gingerich, two brothers, Joe and Ezra Miller, and a son-in-law, Ervin J. Borntreger.

The funeral was held on Dec. 27, with Elmer Miller, Steve Miller and Dean Miller serving. Glen Miller and Arlen Borntreger conducted the committal at the church cemetery.

Troyer, Leora, 94, of Hartville, OH, died Jan. 5, 2014. She was born April

14, 1919, daughter of the late Jonas and Lizzie (Gingerich) Troyer in Mylo, ND.

She was a member of Pleasant View A.M. Church, Hartville, OH.

On Sept. 4, 1938, she was married to Abe Troyer. He died in July, 1985. Their children are Calvin (Sadie) Troyer, Quaker City, OH; Elizabeth (Homer) Zook, Uniontown; Leona (Ed) Overholt, Mary (Laverne) Raber, Nancy (Dave) Sommers, Erma (Jesse) King, and Edna (Ray) Coblentz, all of Hartville; Al (Debi) Troyer, Uniontown; James (Miriam)

Troyer, Quaker City; Ruby Troyer, Uniontown; Abe, Jr., Hartville; and David (Regina) Troyer, Uniontown; 48 grandchildren; 111 great grandchildren; one sister, Dorothy Beachy, Uniontown; and three sisters-in-law, Katie Troyer, Uniontown; Mattie (Wallace) Byler, Belle Center; and Amanda Sommers, Uniontown.

The funeral was held at Hartville Conservative Mennonite Church, with Homer Zook officiating. Burial was in the Pleasant View Cemetery. 

observations

Parenting by the Bible by John Rosemond is a very insightful book on Christian parenting. The author has formal training in psychology, but feels most modern psychology is in conflict with much Bible teaching, as well as common sense.

He teaches that a child is entitled to the security of firm and loving discipline. While corporal discipline is sometimes necessary, he recommends other loving and creative ways that make spanking a rather small part of successful parenting.

Author Rosemond feels that the turbulent 1960's have had a serious destabilizing effect on the American family. Irresponsible moral behavior resulted in many single parent homes and many cases where neither parent assumed responsibility for parenting.

A more recent development is the presence of electronic media. Families with both parents present can be servants affected by this destructive monster. It is abundantly clear that Christian families and churches urgently need to recognize the seriousness of this threat and respond accordingly.

Amish people are seen by many others as leading lives that are needlessly restricted. Author Rosemond claims that a common and growing problem in modern society, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) seldom exists in Amish families.



An article on this subject has come from an unexpected source. It appeared in *The Hutchinson News*, written by Caitlin Sherwood, a senior high school student from Buhler, Kansas. Caitlin claims that technology claims the minds of young and old alike. She asks what could be accomplished with the three hours a day spent looking at a screen, focused on something worthwhile. She confesses her former wasteful fascination and entertainment for herself for as much as six hours a day with gadgets whose names I do not recognize.

A survey of 150 students at her high school showed that 69% spent five to eight hours a day on their phone. This and other surveys “prove that we are prisoners to technology,” she says. Also, “The hunger of the next new device has imposed itself on our society too long, and it is slowly decaying our common sense. Our wants have become more important

than our needs.” Caitlin asks this final question: “Will you become a zombie to your phone or a survivor of the living?”

To hear this level of concern expressed from a practical and secular perspective should say something to those of us who want to subscribe to a higher standard than the world. One thing it says is that failure to apply principles of biblical separation to this issue has very serious implications. Let us faithfully follow the One who is Victor over sin and Satan.



Quite some time ago I received a surprise letter from a reader who was writing from prison. He was responding to something I had written about Christian counseling. His history apparently included unbridled fantasizing that led to illicit conduct and ultimately to illegal behavior and imprisonment.

One burden of his letter was that there is far more of this kind of problem within our congregations than we realize. His plea was that congregations, especially leaders, cultivate an atmosphere that makes it easier for persons who are struggling to reach out for help.

This is the sort of thing that should not once be named among us, but to consider it a non-issue is not realistic. An experienced counselor told me that both victims and perpetrators need help. We should want to help them.

—DLM

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In 2012, a monument of the Ten Commandments was placed outside the Oklahoma Statehouse in Oklahoma City. Since then, a variety of organizations have registered their disapproval in various ways. Among them was the American Civil Liberties Union which filed a law suit against the state, alleging a violation of the constitution with the monument. Other groups also moved to promote their own religious monument outside the Oklahoma Statehouse. These include Hindus, The Atheist Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, and a Satanist temple based in New York.

The Oklahoma capital Preservation Commission responded by implementing a temporary moratorium on new monuments. State representative Earl Sears of Bartlesville commented this way, “This is a faith-based nation and

a faith-based state. I think it is very offensive that they would contemplate or even have this kind of conversation.”

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Steven Gove, a 56-year-old man from Manitowoc, Wisconsin, was riding his bicycle home from delivering newspapers at about 8:30 one evening in January when he was struck from behind by a motorist. The impact propelled him through the windshield into the car, with his knees, calves, and feet protruding through the windshield. He turned to the motorist and said, “Hello! How do you do? I’m the guy you hit on the bicycle.”

The driver didn’t respond and continued another block to his home where he parked the car and locked it from the outside. Only then did the 20-year-old driver, whose name wasn’t released, notice his “mysterious passenger,” who by this time had crawled the rest of the way into his car. He asked who he was and how he had gotten inside the car. The unintentional passenger recounted very briefly what had happened, unlocked the car, got out and walked away.

He’s still puzzled why the motorist

was unable to see him, since his front and back flashers were operating on his bicycle and he was wearing his neon reflective vest. I suppose the driver will have an opportunity to explain his impaired perception to the authorities who are investigating the case. Meanwhile, Mr. Gove who wasn't seriously injured, says he bears no ill will toward the person who hit him. "He is young and deserves another chance. God is good. He had His hands on me that day."

• • • • •

Tim Bowers, age 32, a farmer and transmission mechanic from Decatur, Indiana, went to his tree stand to hunt deer on Saturday afternoon, November 2. He stepped on a dead branch and fell about 16 feet to the ground, crushing three vertebrae, partly paralyzing him. His bride of last summer became concerned when he didn't return and notified family members who found him about five hours after his fall.

He was hospitalized and was put on life support. In preceding months, he had told his wife and two other persons, that he would never wish to live his life in a vegetative state. His medical prognosis included being a

quadriplegic and using a ventilator for the rest of his life. His brain was fine, but his body was irreparably broken. His spine could be fused into a sitting position, but he would never be able to hold the baby they were expecting in April, or use his arms. His family requested that he be brought out of sedation so he could hear his own prognosis and make his own choice. When they did so, he emphatically responded that he did not wish to continue on a ventilator. He was told that there wasn't really a good way to predict how long he might live after they removed the ventilator.

The next day, Sunday, about 75 family and friends gathered around Tim in the hospital and they had five hours of time with him, after they had removed life support. They prayed and sang songs and said their good-byes. The family said that during the five hours he had spent at the base of the tree he had made his peace with God. "I've lived a good life. I'm ready to go," he said. The family was willing and eager to make whatever adjustments would have been needed to provide for his ongoing care, but was not critical of Tim's choice to not use medical

intervention, to artificially prevent his body from dying.

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The ability to prolong life, in some cases almost indefinitely, brings with it a host of difficult questions. I don't remember who said this, but I agree with the principle of this statement. "If a body wants to live, let's do all we can to help it live. But if a body wants to die, let's not try to evade the inevitable." Andy Crouch, editor of *Christianity Today*, was quoted in a recent article in *Time* magazine. He referred to a well-known fact in medical circles that people of faith are the most likely to pursue heroic medical procedures and are the most reluctant to accept the inevitability of death and remove life support. Two of our biggest fears related to death and dying are that we will die alone and that our life won't have been meaningful. As Christians,

those fears have been addressed. The believer's relationship to God and his security in Christ should provide reassuring and sturdy balance to the strong desire to live that our Creator has stamped on us, His creation.

The story is told of a lady who died after a long illness and was buried with a fork in her hand. When people filed past her casket, they were puzzled about the fork she was holding. She had told the pastor to give this explanation when asked about the fork: "When I was a little girl at the end of the meal, when the big people came around to gather the plates, they often told me to keep my fork. I have many warm memories of delightful desserts at the end of mealtimes. Whenever I was told to keep my fork, I knew that the best was yet to come. Tell all the people at my funeral that when I died, I knew the best was almost here!"

—RJM 

***Emotion makes the world go
round, but common sense keeps it
from going too fast.***

It's Just Culture

David L. Miller, Partridge, KS

A trusted non-local minister brother has suggested that this subject be addressed in *Calvary Messenger*. Is this really necessary? After all, I doubt that the word culture is found anywhere in the entire Bible. It, however, is very much a part of current vocabulary.

“Culture” is a neutral word. It is quite simply a way of life. It makes no difference who we are. We all have a lifestyle that can rightly be called our culture. The fact that a distinctive lifestyle can be over-rated, does not make it a non-issue. “Right” culture does not make anyone Christian. But when we take our Christian life seriously, it does affect the way we live.

The social climate in which we live is becoming increasingly permissive and vocal. To speak out against immorality and perversion is to incur the risk of being labeled as hateful and misguided. This is an extreme example of being wrongly influenced by a culture that has abandoned God’s standard of right and wrong. Their perceived standard of human rights are, from a Christian perspective, very wrong.

I am well aware that mentioning

such an extreme example may seem far removed from the needs of conservative Anabaptists. But there are things to be learned from a process that leads to wrong outcomes.

We are all aware that the righteousness of Christ is not in the clothes that we wear. Nor is it the absence of radio and television in the home. Of course, this list could be expanded a great deal. One response to such awareness is simply to drop any such cultural practices. To become a non-cultured person or people is impossible. However, to assume that our cultural practices need not reflect our identity with a Christian body of believers is misguided.

I do not want to be understood to teach that there is only one right expression and application of Christian principles. But sound doctrine and practice are never obsolete. They do not become feeble with age.

It is helpful to remember that the Chief Shepherd is still building His church. His building blocks are people who have repented of their sins and have become faithful followers of the One whose name is

above every name.

At the same time there is an enemy who is actively involved in wanting to hinder faithfulness to the One Who will finally crush his head. His “roaring lion” approach is persecution. This is often heartless and uncivilized. But his other tactic personality is “as an angel of light.” Misguided enlightenment is visual impairment. It can lead to spiritual blindness.

In the course of my lifetime, I have observed many changes. In the secular world inventions and changes have accelerated in recent decades to a degree that is truly mind-boggling. The fact that our first parents were not only told to replenish the earth, but also to subdue it, suggests new inventions are not inherently wrong.

But some inventions are potentially addictive. To become addicted to an invention is the opposite of subduing it. Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State, who is now 90, has said that electronic media has changed the way our young people *think*. Or perhaps, it would be right to say, the way they *don't think*. The secular community is aware that the wrong use and overuse of the internet is unfriendly to a healthy attention span and reflective thinking.

Since change is not always wrong and sometimes necessary, one could

reason that it is important to abandon all Christian distinctiveness. It is more likely that this happens gradually. It may begin with perfectly good intentions. The basic question is whether such intentions are God-given or whether they originate with the one who poses as the angel of light, working through persons who are essentially self-centered, persons who are more concerned about the present than ultimate outcomes, persons who fail to see that numerous small changes add up to significant trends.

A fairly common first step is *minimizing* the importance of a Christian culture. Since it is not all-important, it could be reasoned that it is not important at all.

A second step may be that of *rationalizing*. Since the Christian life has issues far more weighty than cultural issues, one can rationalize that they are not worthy of serious attention.

This may lead Christians to *compromising* to the point that non-Christian cultural pressures result in a lifestyle that blends in unnoticed by its non-Christian surroundings.

This has often happened. But it is not God's fault when it does. Persons for whom Jesus is Lord and who embrace God's Word of truth, want to firmly stand against such unfaithfulness.



Book Review

Wellspring of Liberty— America and Religious Freedom

James D. Hershberger, Stuarts Draft, VA

Have you heard the cliché? “America’s founding fathers were Christians.” I would ask, “Were the founding fathers religious, but not necessarily Christian?”

You may enjoy an engaging and scholarly, yet very readable recent book, *Wellspring of Liberty*, by John A. Regosta, 2010, Oxford University Press, 261 pages.

The first permanent English settlement in what was to become the United States of America was established in 1607, at Jamestown, Virginia. These settlers were required to attend the Anglican Church services or face a fine. This Church of England was the established church. Anglican church taxes were to be paid by all settlers. How could that be called religious freedom?

By the end of 1774, just prior to the American Revolutionary war, more than 30 Baptist ministers had been jailed for preaching in America since they were considered dissenters. Who was the prosecutor? The Anglican Church, which included

some founding fathers who sat in their judicial vestries. The Anglican Church would be renamed the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Severe intolerance reigned. Baptist ministers on numerous occasions were horse-whipped. One Baptist minister who had his arms outstretched in prayer through the jail cell window had his arms cut with a knife. “Black attendees at meetings—whether slave or free—were subject to particularly savage beatings.”

So what did the harassed Americans say about having a Christian nation? Author Regosta writes, “most generally, dissenters (such as Presbyterians and Baptists) were adamant that making the country a Christian nation was beyond the ability of the government, both as a religious and civil matter.” In addition, he states, “Virginia dissenters rejected...declaring this a Christian nation...”

How refreshing to read this fresh “take” and documentary, that runs counter to the “God-and-Country” people on early American history. It is good to note that our Amish

and Mennonite fathers were also persecuted by early, so-called Christian America. It is also interesting that 16th century Anabaptist reformers are credited with re-introducing the concept of separation of church and

state, undoing what Constantine had done in 313 A.D., when he made Christianity the state religion.

[We thank Bro. James for writing and invite comments on this subject. -Editor]



Where Do You Draw the Line?

Melvin L. Yoder, Gambier, OH

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12).

Where you draw the line, there is where the battle will be. When the speed limit is 55 miles per hour, many people have a real battle keeping their speed under 65. When they arrive at where the speed limit is greater, the battle still rages. The only difference is another five or 10 miles per hour.

For some the problem is material possessions. Their first farm is bought with only one thing in mind: to make a living by farming. Then the chance arises to buy a neighboring farm. The investment seems quite large, but a real opportunity. They decide to move the line: two farms are enough. But when a third farm comes up for sale, it is such a good deal that they decide to move the line once more. The battle goes on.

In the book, *The Amish in their Own Words*, the account is given of a couple

who struggled with the changes they felt they needed to make to keep farming. They slowly kept moving the line, but the battle continued. First, they changed church districts; then, church fellowships. By then, he was doing long distance trucking. Finally, they felt they could serve the Lord better by joining a fellowship where he was permitted to drive truck on Sundays.

Churches, like individuals, lower their standards, but the battle goes on. Nonresistance, nonconformity, moral purity, and a host of other issues have been abandoned, but the battle rages on. The issues now concern gays, same-sex marriages and whether or not to install women into the ministry. The battle definitely does not get any easier.

This morning as you and I confront the issues we are faced with, let us face the facts. Lowering our standards does not help. It only moves the battle lines to another place. Or have you perhaps decided that the battle is too great? Do

you at times consider surrendering as an option?

Sit back, relax, read 1 Timothy 6:1-21 and enjoy fellowship with God. Especially enjoy verse 11: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness,

faith, love, patience, meekness."

At the end of life, may we be able to say, we have fought a good fight; we have kept the faith.

[From *Beside the Still Waters*, October 16, 2003. Used by permission of the author.] 

Zion Sings

"The Lord shall comfort Zion;...joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" (From Isaiah 51 51:3).

"For Christ and the Church" let our voices ring,

Let us honor the name of our own blessed King.

Let us work with a will in the strength of youth,

And loyally stand for the kingdom of truth.

"For Christ and the Church" be our earnest prayer,

Let us follow His banner, the cross daily bear;

Let us yield, wholly yield, wholly yield, to the Spirit's pow'r,

And faithfully serve Him in life's brightest hour.

"For Christ and the Church" willing offerings make,

Time and talents and gold for the

dear Master's sake;

We will render the best we can bring to Him,

the heart's wealth of love that will never grow dim.

"For Christ and the Church" let us cast aside,

By his conquering grace, chains of self, fear, and pride;

May our lives be enriched by an aim so grand;

Then happy the call to the savior's right hand.

For Christ, our dear Redeemer,

For Christ, who died to save;

For the Church His blood hath purchased;

Lord, make us pure and brave.

[By Eliza E. Hewitt (1851-1920)]

"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be on their head..." (Isaiah 51:11a).

An Introduction to the SALT Program

Floyd Stoltzfus, New Holland, PA

The following article (based on a Christian Aid Ministries brochure) describes an exciting alternative to simply giving hand-outs. This program has proven to build dignity, a healthy self-worth, and ultimately, in many cases, has brought glory and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father, the great Provider of every good and perfect gift. I can recommend this program because one of the most difficult challenges for aid organizations is providing lasting solutions for the poor. Despite the millions of dollars that pour into impoverished countries each year, poverty continues to grow in many countries that have become dependent on continual foreign aid. We believe it is scriptural to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, supply wood and heating stoves for those who suffer in frigid temperatures, and in giving our time in cleaning up or rebuilding after natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes,

and tornadoes. The goal of Christian Aid Ministries SALT Microfinance program is to provide a Christ-centered path out of the endless cycle of poverty. There are other Christian organizations that also provide this type of a plan about which we may write at some other time.

SALT (Shared Accountability Lending and Teaching) Microfinance Solutions

“CAM’s SALT Microfinance Solutions provides training and opportunities for people in developing countries who are dealing with chronic poverty. The goal of this program is to help needy people become self-supporting. Combined with that is the overriding desire to help men and women find salvation through Jesus Christ. Many people long for opportunities to earn their own living and this program helps make it possible for them to put their God-given abilities to work.

“As clients develop small business

enterprises, they often find that their increased income enables them to afford regular meals, improve housing, and provide a good education for their children. As their micro businesses expand, the effects spread beyond their families into the local economy, as they learn to be givers and contributors to their communities and churches.

“In addition to the business teaching that SALT Microfinance program provides, clients also receive spiritual teaching. Even though many of them claim to be Christians, at times there is little difference in the lifestyles of professing believers and unbelievers. The SALT Microfinance program addresses this problem through lessons which specifically address basic scriptural doctrines that need to be strengthened in these communities.

“The SALT Microfinance program accomplishes its goals through three distinct approaches. The approach used depends on the particular needs of the population being served. Each of the approaches is saturated with biblical teaching. Following are brief descriptions of each:

MICROLOANS

“This program provides loans that enable individuals to start or expand very small businesses. Clients are placed in small groups where they

learn to work as teams. Individuals within these groups are mutually responsible for loan repayment. If all team members are faithful with payments and meeting attendance, they can receive larger loans to enable continued growth of their businesses.

“Before receiving a loan, each client is required to complete an introductory course. This course ensures that the clients understand the biblical path to salvation and assists them in devising their own business plan. After the loan is issued they are required to save small amounts of money on a regular basis. The goal is for them to save enough to eventually graduate from the program, using the savings they have accumulated to advance their businesses further. CAM’s clients have responded very well to this program. The repayment rate since the program began is more than 98 percent.

SAVINGS SOLUTIONS

“Clients form savings’ groups which meet frequently and each individual contributes a small amount of their own money. The savings program has proven to be very effective! As the group’s savings accumulate, clients can borrow from this fund to start or expand businesses or to help provide for their needs during times of the year when survival is difficult.

“In a savings group, all the money

comes from the clients themselves. Savings groups can be powerful, because they can show individuals in developing countries how to better utilize the resources God has placed into their care. Many of these people believe they can never succeed by themselves, and savings groups show them that they are capable of providing for their families without depending on ongoing foreign aid.” (In some cases, savings groups write up their own constitutional laws of operation which include entrance rules and penalties if there is lack of compliance. -FS)

AGRI-PLUS

“In some communities, the SALT Microfinance program focuses on agriculture. This Agri-Plus approach teaches improved farming techniques, helps farmers find better markets, and provides funding to help purchase equipment or fertilizer. By making better use of the agricultural resources around them, people are able to provide for their own families. This program also allows families to provide work

for their children and gives them opportunities to model and teach excellent work ethics.

“Juliana Duncan is a widow with four children in Ghana. After her husband died, she had no way to provide for her little family. But with a SALT loan, she now operates a small bakery which provides for their needs.

“Miguel in Nicaragua has experienced tremendous changes in his life. His neighbors knew him as the man who was always drunk, but today through the SALT microfinance program he is learning a new way of life. ‘The Bible teaching I received is very good,’ Miguel said recently. ‘I have felt a change in my spiritual life and have learned responsibility toward God and my family. I used to drink a lot, and without the teaching and accountability of this program, I would have probably gone back to drinking.’ Miguel feels blessed to be taking care of his family in a responsible way.”

Glory be to the Lord!

[Used by permission.]



***A small child with a hammer
sees many things as a nail.***

Affirming Cultural Distinction

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

We are women, either married or single, who have come from varied backgrounds. Most of us reading this have found our way into the Anabaptist faith. Many of you, as myself, were born into this culture or could I say this background of practicing our faith. Our parents and grandparents have chosen this lifestyle.

However, some of you are new to the Anabaptist way of life and may be grappling with the differences you have seen and experienced. God wants to bless each of us and make us a blessing to others. As I share my thoughts, I will try to address a few issues that may help you to adjust to the changes that will confront you. I would also like to share some ideas for those who have grown up in the Mennonite faith and lifestyle and want to welcome those who want to join us in this journey.

First of all, what does God require of us?

He requires the new birth (John 3:3).

He calls us to discipleship, not only in appearance, but also in our daily walk and conversation.

A special blueprint for a godly woman is found in 1 Peter 3:4.

A meek and quiet spirit displays submission in every area of our life. This refers to a quietness within our heart—a quietness that is at rest even when there is turmoil and unrest around us.

Let us look at some of the blessings of being a part of an Anabaptist church:

Fellowship, which should be a part of any congregation.

We find identity within the body as we identify and fellowship with others.

Caring for each other.

We learn to care for each other in physical ways, helping each other in time of sickness, when there is a new baby, and so on. We care for the aged and the widows. At times, we will help financially. We reach beyond our own congregation to those in our community.

We are taught the importance of a daily walk with God.

Bible reading and prayer are important aspects of our walk with the Lord. We encourage each person to have a daily quiet time alone with God.

The Christian woman's headship veiling is an important tenet of our faith and practice.

As we practice the head covering, we signify God's order in submission to man, who is our head under Christ. The Bible also teaches that the woman should have her head covered to pray. I have found that covering my head has given me many opportunities to witness for Jesus as people ask me questions.

We focus on the family.

The husband/father is to provide leadership. He will love and care for his wife and his children. The Christian home brings security and protection to the family; it is their haven from the storms of life.

Is the Mennonite or Anabaptist way a cultural thing?

Let me say that it needs to be a biblical experience. Only in that way will it have meaning in our lives and give meaning to others. However, it has often become a cultural thing and we will need to look at some of those hindrances to those who would become a part of the Anabaptist faith.

I have gathered many of these ideas from speaking to people who have tried to adapt to the Mennonite faith and way of life.

What are some of these hindrances?

Some communities are made up of large families that live and worship in the same area. I have seen where these families are a blessing to others who may not have family members living in the same area. Families or friends need to beware of becoming a clique excluding others from their dinners and holiday gatherings. New people may feel intimidated by such groups if they are left out.

Mennonite Name Games are played unconsciously.

We seem to delight in finding someone who can identify with our family name or may know someone that we know. What about those among us with unusual Mennonite names, where are they to enter this game? Let us be very careful and conscious of making everyone feel that they are one with us.

Affluence in our homes and vehicles may make others feel uncomfortable with us.

We must admit that God has blessed us richly with a heritage that has taught us how to work and to provide for ourselves. At the same time, we

realize that many people have not been taught in this way. As others come into our fellowship, we must be careful to help them feel comfortable and at home within our standard of living. Our homes should speak of peace and love and a sense of WELCOME and Christian fellowship.

We must teach our children to include and welcome strangers to our midst.

Our Mennonite children have on occasion turned people away from us. Parents have a great responsibility to teach respect and kindness. Let us help them to include the new children in their circle of friends.

[To be continued next month, addressing differences in our way of life and positive ways to relate to each other.]



junior messages

El Salvador's Children — Who Will Love Them?

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu (Nyagondo), Kenya

We were visiting Joel*, a small charming deaf boy who attends CICS, a Christian school for deaf children. The dirt yard in front of the house is framed by graceful, green banana palms. Large hangers of green fruit were growing well. The palms were beautiful!

The front of the house has a well and a *pela* (a large concrete sink) under a tin roof. It was all littered and in dirty, dismal disarray. A gaunt kitten wandered across the porch. A

fat guinea pig happily chewed some green vines in the corner. Joel's little sister peeked out of the one-room house at us. Her unkempt hair was matted. One of the teachers helped her find some clothes, then she came out. Joel suddenly raced out the door, darted across the yard and out the gate. He had gone to find his brother and let him know that the teachers had come to visit. These children seemed neglected; yet their parents loved them. They wanted to serve us soft drinks. First, they had to wash

some glasses so they would have clean ones to serve us.

Carlos is a strong, charming thirteen-year-old deaf lad. His parents had intentionally abandoned their curly-haired son in a housing development when they moved away. For a while this forsaken five-year-old lived on the street. He ate whatever kind neighbors gave him. The police found him and put him in an orphanage. He often ran away. Today he attends CICS. Weekends and during vacation he lives at Strong Tower Children's Home. Carlos has not been easy to care for and teach. Praise the Lord, there are godly people who care about his soul.

Aguilares is a busy town. The road is full of noisy cars, buses, and trucks zooming by. Beside the street are shops with vendors selling colorful fruits, hats, clothes, and more! A small lad wandered around the one shop. It seemed no one was watching him. What if he darted out into the street?

Another tiny child napped on a newspaper on the hard sidewalk amidst all the noise, while her mother sold her wares. What would become of this dear, innocent little one?

The staff at Strong Tower Children's Home were recently asked if they would accept two baby girls. Imagine how shocking it was to find a baby

with her mouth taped shut, lying on the ground in a coffee field. The other darling baby girl was abandoned at the hospital after birth. These dear babies are now so loved and cared for. The caretakers at the home are hoping and praying to be able to keep the precious baby girls.

In contrast, there are Christian homes in El Salvador where God's love is shining brightly. We attended church in the village of Las Delicias. A charming little miss from a happy Christian home sat with her mother. Her hair was neatly combed. She seemed secure and loved. I was blessed when we sang to hear her clear sweet voice ringing out above the others, singing out glad praises for the Lord.

If you have parents who love you, parents who care for you and teach you about the Lord, you have so much to be thankful for! You are, indeed, very richly blessed!

You might wonder what you can do. Can you help the children in El Salvador? You can pray for those who live at CICS. You can pray for Carlos. You can pray for all the children from Strong Tower Children's Home. You can pray that the children will grow up to be men and women for the Lord. Oh, yes, prayer is a powerful work for the Lord!

*[*Names have been changed.]* 

Nearer Still Nearer

Ernest Eby, Guys Mills, PA

I'd like to be near somebody." We have heard this phrase scores if not hundreds of times in the last six months from our two-year-old. This winter when our family was going through a bout with the flu, we heard it quite often throughout the day and night. Being two feet away was not close enough. She wanted to be right beside somebody.

This is not a phrase that we typically hear from adults, youth or even older children. We don't generally verbalize such things if we feel them, and we are generally quite particular about who sits close to us. We are quite sensitive to people invading our personal space.

Someone has observed that children and the elderly are the ones in our Western culture who are "allowed" to express their emotions, their desire for closeness, and their desire for connectedness. They are the ones who squeeze our hands and find it hard to let go. They are the ones who can appreciate interest

and love from a wide variety of people. They are the ones who are allowed to ask others for things. Everyone in between these two age groups is expected to show signs of independence, self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and other "self" words.

In his book, *When People are Big and God is Small*, Ed Welch writes: *We live in a culture that emphasizes the individual over the corporate. Americans often use variations on the phrase "self-reliance." This phrase is a notorious problem for translators. For example, in Latin America, the closest they can come is a word more like our independence in that it is political and social, not personal. In some Asian countries the phrase makes no sense, or it is a sign of mental instability. The person should never be self-reliant, according to most Asian traditions. The person should be interdependent.*

Somehow many people in America have bought into the mentality that people experience the most happiness when they are "achieving our full

potential.” As Christians, we must ask the question, “How do we achieve our full potential?” Do we achieve our full potential by giving full attention to developing and maximizing our strengths (even if it makes us self-absorbed and even if it causes strained or severed relationships)? Or do we achieve our full potential by living in the will of God? Think of it. Most people in the world today do not have the opportunity to “fully develop and maximize their strengths.” The resources are simply not available to do so. Are these people truly dwarfed for life? Does a lack of training or formal schooling automatically restrict a person from being spiritually alive and fulfilled?

I suggest that all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential if they avail themselves of the grace of God for the situation in which they find themselves. In fact, the Apostle

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:26, that not many mighty, wise, and noble are called of God.

It seems to me that many people who are attempting to achieve their full potential are neglecting friendships and heritages in order to pursue the next stage of their personal development. There simply isn't time for them to do everything that could be done and relationships are what tend to suffer. Somehow the “I'd like to be near to somebody” of childhood is lost and it is replaced with thoughts of “I am becoming somebody!” When this happens, life becomes a self-centered, me-oriented existence. Many people who take this path don't realize their poverty of heart and soul until they are no longer able to care for themselves. Many of these people have found themselves in a nursing home with no one to be near—not even God.



***If a problem is too small to be made
into a prayer, it is too small to be
made a burden.***

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Hot words never result in cool judgment.

.....

The dog wags his tail and not his tongue. Is that why he's man's best friend?

.....

Where there is no money, half is gone; where there is no courage, all is gone.

.....

One thing children seem to save for a rainy day is lots of energy.

.....

A man should give a lot of thought to a sudden decision.

.....

A clear conscience is worth more than a dozen character witnesses.

.....

He who talks without thinking causes more trouble than he who thinks without talking.

.....

Character does not reach its potential until it is controlled, harnessed, and disciplined.

.....

A poorly-informed person may give more advice than a well-informed one.