



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

NOVEMBER 2016

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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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O Death

Joanna Stoltzfus, 16, Lancaster, PA

O death, thou vile and vicious brute,
How canst thou in thy vain pursuit
Reduce the lives of peace to gloom,
And order sentences of doom
Upon the innocent?

Who gives thee pow'r to life destroy;
To conquer hearts, to stifle joy?
To ruin friendships, fate ensue,
To crush the lives of fragrant blooms
And still the beating heart?

O death, thou weak and failing tow'r
One drop of crimson, liquid pow'r
Descended, breaking all thy snares,
Breathed life into the hearts of care,
And freed the innocent.

Forever thou art rendered weak,
Forever thou art chained and bleak.
One man, three nails, two rough-hewn
beams,
Were all it took to quench thy steam,
And terminate thy reign. ☀



The Children Are Welcome

If a child is conceived through immorality, we might wonder what is to become of him or her. If a child grows up in a home where cruelty reigns, we could think him unworthy of kindness. Must we predict that he also will choose to live badly? Why, oh why, should we consider ourselves as being better than those with handicaps, especially when we know that the child has had no part in creating his or her handicap? If we look down on them, don't you think we could well offer the Pharisee's prayer, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are"?

Let us note what Jesus said about what we can do for children. Jesus had words of rebuke for the disciples who thought little children stood in the way of more important business. In Mark 10:13-16, we read, "**And they [probably parents] brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them, And when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them** [the disciples who wanted to shoo them away], **Suffer the little children to come unto me, and**

forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

From this account it is clear that we live out the love of Jesus better by not putting certain people (perhaps because of level of accomplishment or of prominence) in a class beneath us. Such situations may have come about by choices their parents made or even by things not brought about by human choice: for example, native intelligence or pigmentation of skin. If we think we belong to a superior race, let's remember, God has made of one blood all nations of men, and if a person needs a blood transfusion, blood type is important, race is not!

But what about things that do rest on human choice? Do they become valid excuses for rejection and discrimination? Not according to God's priorities, for everyone has the same need and starting point! "**There is none righteous, no not one**" (Romans 3:10).

If we note a child care worker or a schoolteacher who makes a positive difference in the lives he teaches and touches, I think we will find that he does not speak to a child as though the child cannot set and accomplish worthy goals. All of us have handicaps that we must overcome if we are to fulfill what God wants *for* us and *of* us.

Suppose we are born into what we might consider an ideal family, we still must face our own need before God. Indeed, **“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”** (Romans 6:23).

- Even if a child is born of fornication, when he grows up he can still reach out to God and experience deliverance from his own sins. He does not answer for his parents’ sin. When he repents of his own sin, he qualifies for peace with his Maker.

- Even if a husband and wife separate, divorce, and marry other partners, their children can still find salvation and peace with their Maker. It may not be easy, but it is possible.

- Even if people overstep and take matters of reproduction into their own hands without due regard for God’s Word, the child born in that circumstance must not be despised. None of us is here by our own choice.

Jesus would take all children—those of good fortune and those of

misfortune—into His arms, put His hands on them and bless them. And so can we!

School teachers teach children with differing levels of ability. Children come to school from various circumstances. If the teacher fails to encourage any child’s spark of desire to learn and to do well, or if he ignores the need for training and correction, he misses doing what his unique opportunity as a teacher affords. Of course, no adult, whether parent, child care worker, or teacher can expect to speak only words of encouragement. These all must have courage to give correction, and corrective measures will be much more effective if they are interspersed with positive words of appreciation and praise.

My main concern for writing this is that we give all children affirmation for their possible future with Jesus—here and hereafter. Our friendliness affirms the fact that we consider them and ourselves to be welcome to equal access for forgiveness of sins. Jesus shed His blood for every man, woman, boy, and girl—**no exceptions!**

May our words to children never convey hopelessness because of their parents’ mistakes. **Don’t forget that Jesus’ human ancestors included persons who had made**

big missteps. We misrepresent the Gospel of Jesus when we convey a message that leaves out the possibility of new life through the new birth that follows genuine repentance and belief in Jesus.

God does not get glory from the life that lifts itself above other people—or their children. Those who do so seem to forget their own helplessness

without God. According to John 9:41, they remain in darkness.

The good news is that Jesus has power to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him. Let us lead boys and girls to sincere repentance and trusting faith. That connects them to the Savior's transforming power. And all glory belongs to God!

-PLM 

Announcement

To accommodate a conflict of schedules between Calvary Bible school clean-up week and the annual Bishop's meeting at Penn Valley, **the committee has changed the bishops' meeting to one week later.** The date for the annual bishops' meeting is now scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2016. there will be a supper and evening of informal fellowship on Monday the 14th, starting at 5:30.

Calvary Bible School Clean Up – Nov. 7-9, 2016.

There is a significant need for volunteers to help with the CBS clean up; we encourage the leadership teams to pass on the notice.

Annual Beachy Bishops' Meeting – Nov. 15, 2016.

For the bishops' meeting, we encourage representation from each congregation. If the bishop's schedule does not permit him to attend, we welcome another minister to represent him.

For the churches that do not have a resident bishop, we invite a minister representative from that congregation to attend the meeting.

Blessings and thanks to you for your consideration.

The Bishop Committee: Tim Miller, Steve Miller, Bobby Miller, Thomas Mast, Roman Miller. 

CASP Announcement

Conservative Anabaptist Service Program (CASP) dates for this winter's two, four-week terms:

Term 1 - January 2 to 27, 2017

Term 2 - January 30 to February 24, 2017.

The work will again be in Hutchinson, Kansas, working with Interfaith Housing, doing home remodeling.

Young men wanting to serve, please contact:

Dathan Stoltzfus

585-259-2098 

the bottom line

The Making of an Agnostic

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Mr. Templeton went to see a heart specialist. He was told, "It is not your heart. You are under stress. Take a vacation." But the symptoms continued. Eventually, he went to another heart specialist for a second opinion. He said, "Mr. Templeton, it is not your heart, it is your head."

From where I sit, I say there was something wrong with his heart. It was doubt and fear and pride in his heart. Not his anatomical heart, the body's pumping organ, but the heart which the Bible refers to being the core and center of life of man. The Bible says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues

of life". (Proverbs 4:23).

We often hear people, preachers and Sunday School teachers included, who pit faith against understanding. In our desire to raise our people's level of knowledge, we push the understanding factor hard, sometimes very hard. We come across with emphasis like, "*We must understand* that what the Bible is saying here is that..."

We allow for a rise in academic awareness of the Word of God, of course. But the burden for this article is about where we intend to guide our people, along with ourselves, in that pursuit. We certainly can appreciate the fruitfulness and expansion of

the understanding that comes from reading, meditation, and the teaching of God's Word. That growth in our own personal lives is nothing of which to glory, but is cause for us to thank God. It certainly enriches life. Our primary emphasis should be more like, "Here is what the Bible says and we should first of all believe it, and trust God for the outcome."

But the lead-off question is: Does the understanding generate faith, or is it faith that supports the understanding? Or, when the understanding becomes satisfied, is faith a standard result? Or, when the understanding of Bible truth can't be reached, is doubt concerning it a permissible conclusion? Our emphasis on understanding is giving rise to some people deciding on the wrong answers to these several questions.

Mr. Charles Templeton was a widely known evangelist, pastor, and writer. He traveled the speaking circuits addressing thousands, up to 40,000 people at a time. He was a mentor to Billy Graham. He was a great speaker, calling people to faith in Christ.

But Mr. Templeton weakened in his own personal faith in Christ for salvation. The day came at last when he resigned as pastor because he didn't believe what he long and often

had preached. He denied the faith. People were shocked. His known world was dismayed.

He now ridiculed Billy Graham who was a young preacher about to embark on big city evangelism. It was a crucial test for Graham. Among other things, Templeton became antagonistic besides being agnostic, (some say he was an atheist) saying in strong language that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God. (1)

Evidently that is a very serious and central facet of the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It would be a lengthy study to pursue, if we wished to investigate Jesus' claims to being the Son of God. The Jews were greatly offended, maddeningly so. Several times they picked up stones to kill Jesus on that account. The Jews said if He is God's Son, Jesus is God. And they were precisely correct. The apostles later also preached that Jesus was the Son of God.

It is central to teach Jesus' sinless life, and especially so in regard to His human perfection. By it, He was to be the Lamb of God, whose blood avails for the forgiveness of sin. Those who confess Jesus as their Savior do so in recognition both of His Saviorhood, and also being the Son of God.

We remember that each person who is baptized in our churches confesses with his own mouth,

saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That is more significant than some may realize.

This discussion about faith versus understanding affects every single Bible doctrine. We have been a proponent of saying there are no single issues. All life issues are inter-related and become the whole person of whom we seem to be. So likewise, there is not one Bible doctrine that stands alone. They all stand as one Rock of Gibraltar, as one mighty edifice of truth. If any Bible doctrine is based first and primarily on our understanding, then other Bible doctrine can be excused and refused based on the same premise.

Spiritualizing Scripture has gained more and more traction among us. It allows preachers and teachers to take Bible doctrine to wherever they choose. We have learned to enjoy some of their books, and may enjoy quoting big name authors for our source materials. Do we mean to endorse all that they teach? Of course not! I read one recently that suggested that Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead was simply an allegory to teach a beautiful spiritual truth.

What actually is our view on nonconformity to the world after we are home again from our annual minister's meetings? Preaching on this Bible subject causes speakers

to be labeled as legalists. A moving lighthouse opens a guessing game for sailors.

What is our view on divorce and remarriage, on oath swearing, on voting and non-participation in civil government? Is our faith secure on women's veiling and Christian education? As we rely less and less on church standards as a companion guide to the Scriptures for practical Christian living, will our deviant methods of Bible interpretation serve well enough as an anchor for church administration? It will not be sufficient to resort to a conference level of understanding as an ultimate means of unity for any number of congregations. That understanding is too diverse as a means for unity.

We believe in the blood atonement, not because somewhere we first understood it, and later we embraced it by faith. No, faith comes first. Faith makes it applicable whether or not we understand it. Faith is sufficiently adequate to provide that first major step. Likewise, we were baptized in obedience to Jesus command as a matter of faith and obedience to Christ. Did we understand all that baptism was about? No. Was our request and participation in it valid? Yes. Do we understand everything about baptism now and its significance? No, but enough to

clearly appreciate it as knowing it was God's will for me, even if (or since) I don't fully, in every possible way, understand it.

Mr. Templeton's fall came from reading books that promoted an agnostic and atheistic approach to life, which basically says one can't really know for sure. Agnostics routinely and deliberately apply that to the Bible. What they read in God's Word is met with their own perverted thoughts that it might be true, and it might not. No one can know for sure, they say.

Such reasoning shakes out to being acceptable to believe it if we so choose. But if we choose to not believe it, there might not be any consequence, but no one knows for

sure. We must simply wait and see.

The Bottom Line is that trying to walk the line of being both a strong, selective believer in God's Word in most places, has the risk of being agnostic about the doctrine that is either ignored or already denied elsewhere. It is possible to be a part-time agnostic. It becomes a test of whether we can *truthfully* say, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth" (John 17:17).

• • • • •

(1) *Billy*. Thomas Nelson, publisher 

Beautiful Brokenness

Darlene Miller

Slowly, With Quiet Commitment

Justus S. Drudge

1. Brok - en as bread to be served at your ta - ble, Poured out as
 2. Pure as the gold that has once known the burn - ing, Shin - ing as

wine for Your gob - let, O Lord; Hum - ble in ser - vice as beasts in the
 sil - ver that passed through the fire; Come - ly as ves - sels that lay through the

continued on next page...

...continued from previous page

sta - ble When Beth - lem's peo - ple no room would af - ford; Ground up as
turn - ing; Shaped by the Pot - ters hand, to His de - sire; Use - ful as

grain to be used for the bak - ing, Crushed as the grapes that must give up the
dough that has been through the knead - ing, Ris - en in glo - ry, Your pur - pose to

wine, Brok - en and poured out, my - self all for - sak - ing, Ful - ly sur -
fill; Shin - ing and 'come - ly be - cause of Your lead - ing When I sur -

ren - dered to Your will, not mine! Beau - ti - ful brok - en - ness, ho - ly sur - ren - der...
ren - der to Your per - fect will. Beau - ti - ful bro - ken - ness, ho - ly sur - ren - der...

Lord put your beau - ty where earth left a scar, Beau - ti - ful brok - en - ness,
Where oncce was dark - ness, Lord, please hang a star, Beau - ti - ful brok - en - ness,

ho - ly sur - ren - der... Lord, make me beau - ti - ful just as you are.
ho - ly sur - ren - der... Lord, make me beau - ti - ful just as you are.

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Restoring Christian Solutions

Lester Troyer, Stone Lake, WI

Recently, in Chicago, two men were engaged in a lively street-corner discussion of religion. One was a Christian, motivated with the purpose of promoting the Bible message of salvation. The other hailed from a commune-like setting, where they had a zeal for the practice of yoga. The yoga man took a nonjudgmental stance on religions. He wasn't hostile toward religion, but believed that religions are not to be judged right or wrong. The reason? A lot of conflict and damage result when one religion is exalted above another—holding one to be right and the other wrong.

In contrast to this view of religion, our old *World Book Encyclopedia* (Copyright, 1970), introduces God as follows: "God is the supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, All-Powerful, Infinite, and Ever Present." It also states, "The Old Testament, or the Hebrew Bible, does not concern itself with speculation. It proclaims [God] as a fact...and teaches that He must be

obeyed, worshiped, and loved as the one true God."

We would describe the yoga man's position, based on positive evidence, of three things:

- Credible evidence that God does not exist;
- Evidence that nature functions without design and without order of right or wrong.
- Evidence that people can live out their days with no guiding principles, and this without consequences.

Let's take the last one first. We quickly discover that random acts of "no right/no wrong" do not fit everyday living. We spend our days constantly calibrating our choices on some internal standard of right or wrong (for better or worse). For many of us it begins with whether we heed the alarm, what we will have for breakfast, how much time we allow for getting to work (or class). It includes other mundane decisions—do we heed traffic signals, and look both ways before crossing the street? Or perhaps we board a flight, not chosen randomly, but one actually

destined for Chicago. We also check time and seat numbers on the boarding pass, and whether there is still time for a burger or a latte on the way to the gate. To live as though nothing was right or wrong won't get you through the day. It could also land you in jail, in the hospital, or even in the morgue.

I'm not suggesting that the above are necessarily moral choices. It is not necessarily a sin to miss your flight. The question is: Why would we think we can relegate moral standards (such as the Ten Commandments) to the trash heap of unwanted history, when even the common daily decisions readily become life or death matters? There is something deeper going on as well. Nobody truly lives without concepts of right and wrong. Without God, we merely misconstrue them. That's how cutting down trees for lumber, burning fossil fuels, wearing fur coats, or not baking wedding cakes under certain conditions, become "evil" in godless cultures, even while committing adultery, or cheating to get ahead in business, or taking life in the womb, is considered fair game.

The second point (that nature can simply function randomly), fares no better. There is no end to possible

examples. The one we'll consider is the orbit of the planets in our solar system.

The earth (the only suitable habitation of life) orbits around the sun at 93 million miles, just the optimum distance for life on our planet. But the earth doesn't accomplish this feat independent of its fellow planets. A few planets are closer to the sun. It's at least 600° Fahrenheit on Mercury today! Our orbiting company also includes a few really huge ones—Saturn and Jupiter. There are also Uranus and Neptune, way beyond us, and much too cold for comfort. If we think the other planets have no "bearing" on earth's orbit, we are mistaken. The tremendous spin, the gravity, and the velocity of these fellow travelers produce a stabilizing effect for the orbiting pattern for the earth lest we be consumed into the sun on one hand, or take off into an eternal deep freeze on the other. The combined effects, though invisible to the eye, have provided a safe orbiting pattern for the earth from its very creation. This essential balance is so fine-tuned that we can now assume that no single planet could be spared, nor any new major planet could be spared without earth's orbit being thrown out of kilter. There is

no known safe merging into this “freeway” of the orbiting pattern.*

The larger planets, with their greater forces of gravity, also serve as a magnet for stray meteorites or other threatening space debris, mostly keeping earth’s “highway” free of dangerous litter. However, a sure defense has been earth’s legacy from the beginning of time. We’ve stayed the course now for several thousand years in a system that is not evolving upward, but one that is aging and decaying. Once time is up for planet earth, no dreams of men or emergency measures can save it. In fact, changes in climate and more disastrous weather patterns may well be evidence of an aging solar system.

So what shall we say on the first question, the one on evidence for God? The rejected words from the old *World Book* seem a perfect fit: Supreme Being, Creator, Ruler, All Powerful, Infinite, and Ever Present. Every natural system, whether in the universe or in the human body itself, points to an incredible, even incomprehensible level of intelligence. Yet, dare we pretend that there is no evidence for God? Do we blindly believe that it comes from no intelligence whatsoever?

What do we find? Whether it

is ongoing life on our planet or just another day at work, or how to spend our leisurely weekend, truth is narrow by definition, and when violated, truth carries negative consequences. The “no right/no wrong” philosophy doesn’t work. It doesn’t work to keep us living and breathing, and it doesn’t work in holding down a job. More importantly, it doesn’t work in morals or religion.

We have thought to invent our own religions, making Christianity unnecessary. We thought the old moral norms fair game to be swept into the dustbins of history, along with belief in God Himself. We wanted God out of the way, and thought to take His place. We thought to leave no morally binding rules is now the dominant view of the educational and media elite that has engulfed the vast majority of college students. This means that cheating on an exam is a perfectly viable option to getting a better grade. It also means that sleeping around is sensible experimentation, in case you did decide to get married some day. In the meantime, birth control and abortions are necessary gods, providing an alternative to self-control. After all, isn’t everyone entitled to a few mistakes? Finally,

of what avail is partying, if it doesn't include pot smoking and binge drinking?

Now for the greatest woe of the “no right/no wrong” mentality: It yields no motivation or means of correction. In the denial of moral right, we stand by, wringing our hands, engulfed in things going wrong too numerous to mention. Where there is no sin, there is no salvation either. We are arguably among the most privileged, richest, and best-situated nations of all time. But our claimed “freedoms” have made us slaves. There are the nagging problems, dysfunctional governments and economic woes around the globe. But there is also the personal bleakness and heartache that goes with the dismantling of marriage and family. The replacement? Prison cells, domestic and sexual abuse, acceptance of perversions, addictive

drugs, and tons of medications. We weren't afraid to do away with the unborn, but now live in fear of mass shootings, and homegrown terrorism, with no relief in sight.

That's what is left after we have stripped ourselves of the sacredness and dignity of being made in God's image.

In light of the futility of having no moral compass, is it not time then to agree with the God of Heaven, and turn from our sin and rebellion? Is there a better time than now to turn our hearts to God's provision of mercy and forgiveness, found exclusively through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to save us from our sins?

**Acts and Facts, December, 2015, Institute for Creation Research.*

[From Reaching Out. Used by permission.]



***The way to
heaven—turn
right at Calvary
and keep going
straight.***

marriages

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

Beachy-Weaver

Bro. Greg, son of Ken and Diane Beachy, Laurelville, OH, and Sis. Caitlin, daughter of Sylvan and Christine Weaver, Minerva, OH, on May 14, 2016, at Salem First Friends Church for Calvary Chapel, by Sylvan Weaver.

Hoover-Yoder

Bro. David, son of Allen and Delilah Hoover, Burkesville, KY, and Sis. Caryn, daughter of David and Brenda Yoder, Auburn, KY, on Aug. 20, 2016, at Franklin Mennonite Church for Providence Mennonite Fellowship, by Leroy Kauffman.

Jones-Hershberger

Bro. Loren, son of Floyd and Carolyn Jones, Strawberry, AR, and Sis. Julia, daughter of Simon, Jr., and Sue Hershberger, Wolcottville, IN, at Fair Haven Church, Goshen, IN, on Sept. 3, 2016, by Wilbur Yoder.


Kauffman-Alcaraz

Bro. Lavern, son of Daniel and Susanna Kauffman, Commerce, TX, and Sis. Anna, daughter of Seferino and Clara Alcaraz, Commerce, TX, on June 10, 2016, at Crosstrails Cowboy Church for Living Word Believers Church, Commerce, TX, by Marion Garber.

Theus-Lehman

Bro. Hervin, son of Carl and Amelia Theus, Double Head Cabbage, BZ, and Sis. Ann, daughter of Lee and Margaret Lehman, Chambersburg, PA, at Zion Mennonite Church, Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, on July 23, 2016, by Ellis Beachy.

Weaver-Schwartz

Bro. Benjamin, son of Sylvan and Christine Weaver, Minerva, OH, and Sis. Diana, daughter of Amos and Ida Schwartz, Stafford, OH, on July 1, 2016, at Wooster Church of Christ, for Summerfield Christian Fellowship, by Sylvan Weaver. 

cradle roll

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

Beachy, Leon and Edith (Miller), Fredonia, KY, sixth child, fifth daughter, Dorcas Elaine, Sept. 30, 2016.

Coblentz, Luke and Ruthann (Miller), Salem, NJ, sixth child, third son, Tristin Luke, Sept. 14, 2016.

Coblentz, Marlin and Cheryl (Nissley), Taylorsville, NC, first child and son, Cody Wyatt, Sept. 24, 2016.

Gerber, Richard and Wanda (Kuepfer), Brunner, ON, sixth child, third daughter, Evanna Janae, August 26, 2016.

Hamilton, Nathan and Carissa (Edwards), Harrison, AR, third child, second daughter, Melody Savannah, May 24, 2016.

Helmuth, Darrell and Regina (Troyer), Fredonia, KY, third child, second daughter, Amber Rose, Aug. 30, 2016.

Hochstetler, Tyler and Heather (Riehl), Madison, VA, second child and daughter, Bella Madison, Sept. 2, 2016.

King, Shane and Myrna (Stoltzfus), Ephrata, PA, second child and son, Skyler Dre, July 21, 2016.

Miller, Darryl and Mary (Yoder), McConnelsville, OH, first child and daughter, Nevaeh Edith, Aug. 12, 2016.

Miller, Joseph and Lisa (Yoder), Holmesville, OH, fourth child, third son, Gabriel Joshua, August 11, 2016.

Stoltzfus, Abner and Marlene (Stoltzfus), Berezyanka, Ukraine, sixth child, first son, Andre Johann, May 21, 2016.

Stoltzfus, Alvin and Norma (Stoltzfus), Morgantown, PA, ninth child, fourth daughter, Alaina Rose, August 30, 2016.

Stoltzfus, S. Michael and Anita (Beiler), Taylorsville, NC, first child and son, Adrick Michael, Aug. 19, 2016.

Stoltzfus, Shaphan and Barbara (Hochstetler), Taylorsville, NC, first child and daughter, Ashley Grace, Sept. 1, 2016.


Troyer, Jonathan and Alma (Hostetler), Harrison, AR, second child, first son, Thaddeus Nathan, August 5, 2016.

Yoder, Noah and Linda Marie (Miller), Rome City, IN, first child and daughter, Samantha Marie, Sept. 9, 2016.

Yoder, Randall Lynn and Andrea Michelle (Esh), Gordonville, PA, first child and daughter, Brooklyn Elizabeth, Sept. 3, 2016.

Yoder, Reuben and Mary Lynn (Smucker), Malta, OH, fourth child, first daughter, Sophia Kate, Aug. 23, 2016.

Zook, Andrew and Yvonne (?), Avella, PA, first child and daughter, Brooklyn Kate, July 8, 2016.

Zook, Anthony and Ruth (Fisher), Georgetown, OH, first child and son, Weston David, Sept. 11, 2016. 



ordinations

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


Bro. Gail Bear, 40, (wife Michelle Smallfoot), Harrison, AR, was ordained as deacon at Little Flock Christian Fellowship, on August 28, 2016. Preordination messages were by Steve Burk, Seymour, MO. The charge was given by Charles Hamilton, assisted by Tim Stoltzfus and Mark Auker.

Bro. Stan Nisly, 47, (wife Carol Yoder), Altamont, KS, was ordained to the office of bishop at Cornerstone Mennonite Church, Oswego, KS, on Sept. 11, 2016. The charge was given by David Yoder, assisted by Oren Yoder and Lee Nisly. Fellow Pastor Ronald Miller was also in the lot.

Bro. Adam Overholt, 29, (wife Gwen Brechbill), Taylorsville, NC, was

chosen by lot and ordained as deacon for Dayspring Christian Fellowship, Sept. 18, 2016. Preordination messages were given by Tim Miller, McKenny, VA. The charge was given by Manfred McGrath. The lot was shared with S. Mike Stoltzfus.

Bro. Melvin Yoder, 40, (wife Amber Bontrager) was chosen by voice of the church and ordained as minister at Cornerstone Mennonite Church, Harrison, AR, on June 5, 2016. Preordination messages were brought by Ronald Miller, Oswego, KS. The charge was given by Clarence Yoder, Jr., assisted by Daniel Miller and Matthew Bontrager.

Bro. Ray Yoder (wife Alina Miller), 37, of Minerva, OH, was called by voice of the church and ordained as deacon at Christian Fellowship, Minerva, OH, on Sept. 11, 2016. The charge was given by Joel Gingerch, assisted by Jonathan Raber, Perry Troyer, and Johnny Miller. 

obituaries

Cumley, Virginia K., 81, of South Hutchinson, KS, died July 27, 2016, at Hutchinson Regional Medical Center. She was born May 10, 1935, to Roger Wolfe and Edith (Nelson) Kahn, in New York.

She was a member of Center A.M. Church, Hutchinson, KS. Virginia had many interests and enjoyed a variety of jobs. Most recently, she was owner of

Virginia's Natural Health.

Survivors include a daughter, Teresa Marie Cumley, Jonesboro, GA; grandchildren, Crystal, Christopher, Charlie, April, and Robert; six great grandchildren; and a host of friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, a brother, and her son, Michael James Cumley. Because of her keen interest in education, and her teaching in bygone

years, memorials were directed to Pilgrim Christian School.

The funeral was held on July 30 at Center Church, with Arlyn Nisly, Julian Nisly, and Dwight Miller serving. David Yoder conducted the committal at West Center Cemetery.

Martin, Janelle Rose, 28, of Lititz, PA, exchanged her cancer-stricken body for her glorious eternal one at her childhood home in Abbeville, SC, on May 9, 2016.

She was born March 9, 1988, in Greenwood, SC, to Samuel and Carolyn (Overholt) Jackson.

On April 13, 2013, she was married to Shannon Martin, who survives. In addition to her husband, she is survived by a son, Dylan Casey Martin, her parents, and four older brothers: Benjamin (Karin) Jackson, Jeffrey (Janice) Jackson, Matthew Jackson, and Evan (Clarissa) Jackson; four nieces and three nephews: Lauren, Sadie, Corey, Mason, Carter, Lindsey, and Leah Jackson, all of Abbeville.

Janelle was a graduate of Cold Spring Mennonite School and a former secretary for Cold Spring Enterprises. She loved the South and especially enjoyed time spent with her family and friends.

Janelle met Shannon, the love of her life while serving with him at Hillcrest Home, a retirement home in Harrison, Arkansas. After their wedding, she and Shannon made their home in Lititz, PA, where she was a member of the Myerstown Mennonite Church.

Not long after giving birth to her

son, Dylan, in May, 2015, and shortly before she and Shannon planned to leave to serve at a mission on the island of Grenada, Janelle was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer in the bile duct/liver. She fought it courageously and was a challenge to many with her positive attitude and quiet acceptance of the trial God chose to allow for her. Her gentle spirit and fun-loving personality will be deeply missed. When she realized she didn't have long to live, she had two requests: First, she wished to return to her childhood home (Abbeville, SC) to sit on the front porch of her parents' home and second, to attend a Sunday morning church service at Cold Spring. Both of her requests were granted two weeks before she died.

The funeral was held on May 13 at Cold Spring Mennonite church, with Merl Beiler and Javan Bender, Abbeville and Jim Weaver, Myerstown, PA serving. The committal at Cold Spring Cemetery was conducted by Wendell Hochstetler, from Abbeville, who is presently serving with his family in Ireland under MIC.


Troyer, Robert Dale, 16, of Advance, MO, died August 29, 2016. He was born at Paducah, KY, April 26, 2000, to David and Esther (Kauffman) Troyer.

Robert was a special child who faced many health issues in his short life. He was very friendly and loved everyone.

Surviving are his parents, David and Esther Troyer; four sisters: Lorraine Marie, Angela Faith, Crystal Joy, and MaryBeth Grace; and four brothers:

David Ryan, Mark Derrell, Virgil Darnell, and Jordan Daryl, all of the home. Other survivors include his maternal grandmother: Norman and Mary Kauffman, Mayfield, KY; paternal grandparents, Elsie Troyer, Texico, IL; and 17 aunts and uncles. He was preceded in death by a brother, Christopher Eli;

his grandfather, Andy Troyer; an aunt, Julia Beachy, and a step cousin, Mathias Beachy.

The funeral was held at Crowley's Ridge Mennonite Church on Sept. 1, with Robert Nissley and Phil Mast serving. Interment was at the Crowley's Ridge Mennonite Cemetery. 

observations

Steve Yoder tells me that there are 38 Old Colony Mennonite settlements in Mexico. Their numbers increase rapidly. New settlements are a common occurrence. The largest colony, Manitoba, has 2800 families.

In Bolivia their population is said to be 6,000. New Order Amish are providing leadership to a congregation of 50 members of former Old Order Mennonites in Bolivia, who are seeking improvement for themselves and their children.

From my perspective it seems that their strong commitment to separation has resulted in an isolationist mentality. One of the symptoms of that is the lack of solid elementary education that resulted in many adults being unable to read. Some of them want to see this changed.

In response to those who want to improve their schools, some Amish

from the states have provided teams of experienced teachers with house parents to live in Mexico and work with these people for short periods of time. The teachers feel well-rewarded for working with the school-age children and their parents.

Another area of need is a serious lack of reading material. Christian Aid Ministries is providing free copies of *101 Bible Stories* that have been translated into German. Pathway Publishers is also involved in providing much needed reading material. Many children are excited about their new learning opportunities.

They had several cheese making facilities that were in serious need of updating or replacement. To build a modern sanitary cheese factory would require major planning and funding. The Mexican government was in favor, but Mexican Mennonites simply did not have the money to do

so.

On March 14, 2001, there was a meeting at Der Dutchman restaurant in Walnut Creek, Ohio. Three Mennonites from Mexico met with several Amish men from several states to discuss the need for funding. Meanwhile a cooperative had been formed in Mexico.

In the end there were 28 Amish brethren who together provided a loan for this major undertaking. The new plant became operational in 2003. Presently this loan and any additional funding have been repaid.

The Mexican government was interested in having a clean up-to-date cheese factory. When the facility was finished, the governor of Chihuahua, Martinez Patricio, came to visit in a helicopter. Before he left, he offered Henry Loewen a ride so he could see the layout from the air. He asked Henry what he could do to get the Mennonites to vote for his re-election. Henry had to tell him that Mennonites do not vote, but that they pray for their leaders. Later there was an assassination attempt on the governor. He received a gunshot wound in his chest. He was hospitalized but recovered from his injury.

After his recovery, he notified the colony that he wanted a meeting with them to make a special announcement. The Mennonites did

not know what to expect. They were a bit uneasy. The governor told them that he remembered what Henry had told him. As he lay in the hospital, he realized that he needed their prayers more than their votes. He said he felt that their prayers led to his recovery. He said, "I am here to thank you."

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The above was mostly gleaned from a book, entitled: *Called to Mexico*.

Copies are available through your bookstore or:

Old Colony Mennonite Support
P.O. Box 150
Nappanee, IN 46550
Phone: 574-773-2565

-DLM

The focus of the thrifty consumer is on good "value." Value depends on both the cost and the quality of the product being negotiated. The lowest cost isn't always the best value and a savvy shopper knows it.

Christian stewardship looks enough like thrifty consumerism that we run the risk of confusing the two. Thrifty consumerism tries to get the most for the least. Christian stewardship doesn't wish to spend frivolously. While it might look on the surface like a Christian steward is a thrifty consumer, it's important to understand the differences.

Stewardship begins with the

awareness that what we have is really not our own, but we are custodians. A steward will want to take good care of God's things and use God's money like He wants it to be used. This applies to both saving and spending. Hence the focus of business transactions is not so much to save the most we can, but to honor the wishes and priorities of the owner—God himself. Sometimes this will mean that we cheerfully pay more than we would have needed to so that local businesses can operate, so that people understand that relationships are more important than dollars, and that our neighbors see that God's children are gracious and generous.

Lynn Miller, while teaching about stewardship, challenged the listeners in his audience to burnish the reputation of our generous Heavenly Father, by paying more than the asking price for something we are buying from an individual if we feel it is under-priced and we can afford to pay more. The person who finds this exercise impossible is probably more of an accumulator than a steward. But a steward remembers that what is in his pocket isn't really his own. I haven't done this as often as I should, but the degree of difficulty this exercise causes can be an uncomfortable indicator of my stewardship awareness. Try it sometime.

Stewardship awareness profoundly

affects business dealings within the body of Christ. I heard a story of some 25-30 years ago where one brother was selling his old pickup to another brother in the church. The buyer related that the seller thought it may be worth about \$600 but the buyer thought it should be worth at least \$1500. The brother who made the purchase summed up his version of the transaction by saying, "\$900 was a high as I could make him go."

Our mail carrier brought an envelope to our box addressed to me and Cornerstone Mennonite Church, which is the name of our congregation. It contained an attractive ball point pen engraved with the church name and our mailing address. The enclosed material was designed to entice me to purchase more of these pens. My guess is that the appeal was similar to any business who was sent a pen, but just tweaked a bit to target the recipient. Here is what it said:

Use your National Pen Customized Pens to Grow and Maintain your Congregation

Here are some time tested ideas to increase your attendees and maintain members.

Promote Engagement on Sundays...
Place some pens in the front of the church for members to use while taking notes during the sermon.

Increase your Church's Image...

Customized pens with your personal ad message will bring added prestige to you and your church.

Attract New Members...Simply hand the pens out to your prospective members and you will immediately see the smile of gratitude and signal a bond of fellowship.

Pens Make Great Evangelical Tools...Attendees will appreciate having your contact information when they are deciding on a new church.

Use Your Pens as Advertisement... Pens are always welcome. Drop some off to families in the area. They will appreciate the high quality pens. You will appreciate the increased visibility of your church's name around town! "

This sales pitch reminded me of what the pastor of one of our neighboring churches said a number of years ago. He was disappointed that his board of deacons seemed focused on gimmicks to attract new people. He commented, "I don't want a church that is more user-friendly. I want spiritual commitment."

Certainly we should be concerned that our churches provide nurture for the members and growth through retention and outreach. But it takes more than pens to build a church.

• • • • •

Cyneatha Millsaps pastors Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Illinois. She wrote

a meditation about Lot's wife published in the September issue of *The Mennonite*. Among her concluding comments she wrote, "I feel sorry for Lot's wife. I think much of the story has been left out and leads us to make judgments on why she was punished." She wondered at possibilities as to why she experienced what she did, including that she might simply not have been able to run fast enough. She went on further to say, "I don't believe Lot's wife was being disobedient. I think she was simply confused and full of anxiety."

However, the text in Genesis 19 includes the clear instructions to Lot's family from the heavenly messengers to not look back. God judged what Lot's wife did by turning her into a pillar of salt when she looked back. To ascribe what happened to her as simply a consequence of confusion and anxiety rather than clear disobedience has implications that are pretty serious. Is God one who treats legitimate confusion and anxiety this way? I think not!

I too have some questions about what all went on that day. But our questions and admitted incomplete understanding of Scripture and the events recorded therein dare not undermine what the Scriptures make clear.

-RJM 

Practices of the Kingdom-Focused School

Gerald Miller, Guys Mills, PA

It has been demonstrated from several vantage points that the habits and practices of an individual create a certain kind of person. Our habits and practices inform beliefs and values. In fact, our habits and practices form belief. In other words, what we do in large measure determines who we become.

This is true for an individual. It is true for a church. And it is true for a school.

We are accustomed to the concept of a church standard in congregational church life. A church standard, a way to practice our beliefs (our lifestyle), has historically been a very helpful part of discipleship of the members of our congregations. While this concept has in recent years fallen out of vogue (the author believes this to be a significant disadvantage), it seems like a cursory look at history bears out the validity of the power of brotherhood agreements rather than each person making these decisions on his/her own. It seems like *gelassenheit* is

very difficult to practice without it. These brotherhood agreements of life and practice have shaped us so significantly that it seems to be virtually transparent to us.

Culture has pressed in on the church in unprecedented ways as technology has created a global picture of our world. Have our churches adequately considered how the school can help our congregations with some of the cultural issues and pressures facing us today? What practices do our schools have in place, whether planned or by default, that are shaping the loves, desires, and the hearts of young people? What are the implications of these practices? Let's look at three practices that bring significant influence: curriculum, relationships, and singing.


What curriculum are you using? This question is often glossed over as we enjoy the colorful pages of God-and-country curriculum. Curriculum matters because of the stories that get told in curriculum. Both the stories that are told, as well as the stories

that are omitted all have a bearing on who students become. Is George Washington more important and revered by our children than Dirk Willems? Are the stories about Native Americans told accurately, or are the “white men” always in the right as they took land from these people? The philosophy and worldview of a curriculum bleeds into the content of the material, and ultimately becomes a part of the student.

Students, teachers, parents, and pastors all relate to each other. However, the approach and way these relationships work have significant impact on the school and church. When students walk into the school every morning, are they greeted with a “good morning”? Do students respond by looking the teacher or principal in the eye and responding in kind? Are words of life and affirmation normal? Is bullying tolerated? Do teachers use sarcasm to make their point? Are cliques a normal part of relationships? Do birthday parties that students host include all but one or two of a group? Are group games as exciting as other games? How do students and teachers talk about the church? These practices and habits leave an indelible mark on young people as they develop emotionally and relationally. Indeed, the church will reap the harvest of relationships in

the school as students relate to each other and work under authority outside of the family structure.

Singing is a powerful practice that binds individuals together and embodies and models the body concept of brotherhood. Do students sing together? Is music an emphasis? Do students get the impression that music class and singing in school is connected to congregational singing? Is music “cool”? Do the young men in the school lead out with energetic and quality singing? What kind of music is celebrated? Singing is a vital component of working together, and its practice is significant in shaping students’ worship and loves.

There is tremendous power in the Christian school to influence young people, shape the character of young people, set the priorities of young people, shape the thinking and worldview of young people, and to offer a lifestyle that fits the gospel message of Jesus Christ and not the culture. In many cases, we have failed to adequately tap into the synergy that can come from the connection of the church and the school. The school has an amazing opportunity to shape the vision, values, and beliefs of our students as we thoughtfully establish habits and practices in our schools that assist families and churches in our quest for becoming lovers and worshippers of God. 

Ken Miller Shares at His Mother's Funeral

On October 2, 2016, Ken Miller's mother, Salina (Kanagy) Miller, 76, died. Ken could not attend her funeral, which was held on Oct. 5. Bro. Ken wrote the following meditation, which was read by Bro. Simon Schrock at the funeral. Because Ken has been unwilling to testify against someone who enabled an ex-lesbian take her child to an undisclosed destination in Central America, Ken is incarcerated in Virginia. His sentence ends in March, 2018, unless he is given additional time behind bars for his continued stance against testimony that could confuse and distress an innocent child. -Editor

My dear dad, my dear wife and family, my dear brothers and sisters—Charlotte, Ruth, Joe, and Lavern—my dear nieces and nephews, my dear Pilgrim family, Milmont family [greenhouse], friends, and neighbors: I greet you with much affection in Jesus Christ who said to Martha, “Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

Yes, my dear family and friends, we believe this. Yes, Lord, we believe you are the Christ, the son of God, who is come into the world. Isn't it wonderful to believe this? Mom didn't really die. All of us who knew Mom, knew her faith in the Savior, and her love for Him. From the time we were little she taught all of us children about Him. Her Bible is worn, and she spent many hours at that old oaken desk praying for us. She loved the old hymns, she loved nature, she loved life, she loved good food, but most of

all she loved Him. She didn't die. She's now beginning to fully live. Mortality has been swallowed up by life (II Cor. 5:4). Three days ago as she lay there in the hospital bed, working hard to draw her breath, Charlotte asked her if she wanted a drink of water. Her reply through parched lips: “I want - living - water.”

Praise God for eternal life in Jesus! Let us look to him today; that's how she would want it. He's the author and finisher of our faith and everything in between. He said these precious words, which are very dear to me right now: “These things I have spoken to you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

As the “master seeder” for Milmont, Mom planted seeds for many years. She'd get up at 4 A.M. to plant geraniums, impatiens, marigolds, petunias, snapdragons, tomatoes,

peppers—countless seeds. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of seeds. Her quiet influence went out all over central Virginia. She literally helped change the landscape of Augusta County, and helped put food on many a table. Quiet influence describes her life. She moved to Stuarts Draft as a three-year-old. She never moved off the home place. At the time of her death, she lived in the same house she lived as a teenager. She always wanted to travel, but never got to do much of it because she was too busy caring for her family and her parents, including her mother-in-law. Was it only 20 years ago that we buried her own mother, for whom she had cared many years? She wasn't so very outgoing but was loved and cherished by all who knew her. Mom, I love you dearly still and greatly anticipate meeting you over there.

Can we imagine her now? No more asthma, no more congestive heart failure. She's freely drawing in the pure air of heaven, exulting in the glory and beauty. Can we imagine her, perhaps caring for the flowers she loves, straightening her back to her full height? Can we see her smile as she sees us?

As I thought of her quiet influence, the idea of kingdom seeds came to me. Mt. 13:31-32 says, "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took,

and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

Quite a few years ago, a dear brother preached a message on this passage. I've never forgotten it. He painted a picture of the mature mustard tree full of seeds. The birds come and sit in the tree and eat the seeds. Then they do what birds do—they fly away. What happens to the seeds inside the birds? They get deposited somewhere, perhaps far away, along with the fertilizer. And then a miracle happens. A little sunshine, some soft rain, and a few warm days and that seed begins to grow. Eventually, you have another mature mustard plant, and the cycle repeats itself. Isn't this a good picture of how the kingdom works? Almost since the beginning of the church you see this same cycle. A movement of God springs up over here and the church flourishes for a time, then seems to die down. Over there, in another place, in another time, another movement of the kingdom rises up and flourishes for a time, until it too matures and seems to fade away.

Isn't it true that the influence of a godly mother is a lot like that mustard tree? As a mother surrenders to Jesus in the midst of her often harried life, as she fellowships with him while

raising her family, her life bears kingdom seed. Eventually that seed may be carried far and wide. Some of it is blown away by the winds of adversity that often buffet her. Much of it is carried away by the little birds that live in her branches, grow up and fly away, carrying seed along. Many guests come and rest for a while in the shade of her tree and partake of her goodness, then they fly away and their influence goes further than she could ever imagine. Much of the seed falls to the ground around the mother plant and new kingdom seedlings begin to grow up around where mother used to be. The power of the mother's kingdom seed is great.

The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. An ounce of mother is worth a pound of preacher. We should never underestimate the influence of a godly woman, single or married, children or no children. My mother is only one of many seed planters in this room right now.

Let's look at some specific kingdom seeds a godly woman plants in her life. Titus 2:3-5 says, "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be

not blasphemed."

There are potent qualities in this passage—characteristics of a godly woman that go against the ideals modern society holds up for a woman. But that's the nature of Jesus' kingdom. It's quietly subversive—counter cultural. Here's a list of the qualities in this passage. Number one, reverence in behavior. Two, not slanderous. Three, self-controlled. Four, a teacher of goodness. Five, lifelong love for her husband. Six, sacrificial love for her children that puts family ahead of career. Seven, discretion—godly wisdom. Eight, chastity. Nine, commitment to homemaking ahead of outside interests. Ten, goodness. Eleven, obedience to her husband.

In embracing this lifestyle wholeheartedly, my mother planted countless kingdom seeds. She's one of many in this room who are participants in a quiet revolution in this land, raising their families counter-culturally for this kingdom. The power of kingdom seeds and the influence of a mother—what can your children do for God? Remember that Jesus changed the world with a few men whom he had trained for the kingdom.

My mother taught us the fear of God, the love of God, the importance of a clear conscience, study of the Bible, and prayer. She taught us how to work, and to work hard in countless practical disciplines. Of course, Dad

had a lot to do with this, too.

Dear older sister, married or single, please hear this from my heart: your influence is powerful. Let us never underestimate the multiplying power of a single seed. A kind word, an encouraging note, or a prayer in the night could change someone's world.

I know my mother would want me to speak of judgment, of eternity, of heaven and hell, and of the Savior who came to rescue us all from the just wrath of God. Jesus taught in the Gospels that there are just two ways. One way is wide and pleasant at the beginning and multitudes are on that road. But in the end it leads to eternal punishment in hell under the just judgment of God. The other way is narrow, very narrow, and few there be that find it. But it leads to life in Jesus Christ and a home forever, a glorious new heaven and earth. The choice is before us. Here are just a few of the Scriptures which show us the two ways, and the end of both:

- *Jn. 3:18: no condemnation vs. condemnation*
- *Jn. 3:36: everlasting life vs. the wrath of God.*
- *Mt. 25:34,41: the inheritance of the kingdom vs. everlasting fire.*
- *Rev. 21:6-7: the water of life, the inheritance of all things and the family of God Vs. the lake of fire.*

In the back, in the counsel room, there is a picture depicting the two ways. Multitudes are heading off to

the left. It's the easy way of pleasure, wealth, self-preservation. There's a path which seems to go down the middle. It's the road of religious compromise, but if you look closely, it veers to the left in the end and joins up with the broad road. That broad road and the road of compromise begin with a promise, but the promises are empty. It ends under the storm clouds of God's wrath. But to the right is a very narrow path, winding up a steep mountainside. It seems to be fraught with hardship and trials. One must leave self at the gate of surrender. Only a few figures are on this path. At the very top you can see the outlines of the glorious city of God. And the choice still remains: choose the road and accept the destiny or choose the destiny and accept the road. Perhaps there's someone here this morning who is at the fork in the road. In a sense, all of us are that fork in the road every day. Whom shall we serve? Our own interests? The god of this world? The pipe dreams of American society? Or shall we choose the savior, self-denial, and the pilgrim's road of obedience and sacrifice?

What is our goal in the end? At times like this, the mists of this life lift and we can see more clearly. It's a time of facing the realities of eternity and the very fragile nature of this life—and the brevity of it. Man is like the flower of the grass, the Scripture says, the wind passes over it and it

is gone. What will you do with your short life? I'm sure this is a question my mother would like to gently ask, first of all of each of her descendants, and to all of us. What you will do with your life and what you do with Jesus is the most important question any of us will face.

Remember, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth, that will a man also reap. He who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption. He who sows to the spirit will of the spirit reap life everlasting. We're standing at the junction: which way will we choose? A song comes to mind that I'm sure my mother used to hear.

*Which way shall I take? shouts a
voice in the night,
I'm a pilgrim awearied, and spent
is my light;
And I seek for a palace, that rests on
the hill,
But between us, a stream lieth sullen
and chill.*


Refrain

*Near, near thee, my son, is the old
wayside cross, Like a gray friar
cowed,
in lichens and moss;
And its crossbeam will point to the
bright golden span,
That bridges the waters so safely for
man.*

That song has the answer. If you're not sure which way to take, look at the

cross, look at the savior hanging there, who gave his whole life for you. What have you done for him? Mother would have us follow the way of the cross.

Mom planted her last seeds for Milmont long ago. She has now finished planting kingdom seeds on earth. She is now a seed herself, waiting for the final resurrection of the body. Jesus said this of his own approaching death: Jn. 12:24-26 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." And also I Cor. 15:42-44 says, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

As I gaze in my mind's eye on that glorious city of God, it seems I can see a figure climbing up the golden heights. As she turns and beckons, I imagine her saying, "Come, children, come. Together let us drink of the water of life freely." 

What Do Guns and Worship Have in Common?

Daniel R. Horst, Altamont, TN

“If guns are outlawed, will worship be next?” says a local church sign. As one who is accustomed to the understanding that the church and state are sharply separate institutions, the sign’s message presents a strange mixture to me. What does the controversy on the right to own guns have to do with worship to God? But to someone who has wedded national patriotism and “Christianity,” the message is clear; the privilege to own guns and the privilege to worship as one pleases are both civil rights which he will fight to defend.

The mixture, however, is not compatible with Scripture or with true worship to God. Jesus taught and established a kingdom that was based on the principle of meekness, service, and love, instead of aggression and the lordship of the strongest. “It shall not be so among you,” He taught His disciples, “but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Matthew 20: 26-28). He pointedly instructed His followers to “resist not evil,” to “turn the other cheek” when abused, to love their enemies, and do

good to those who hate them. Why would one who is devoted to this lowly Master demand the right to own a gun? Of what use is this “carnal weapon,” (2 Corinthians 10:4) to one who is a part of a kingdom which does not operate on the principles of aggression and defense of personal rights?

“My kingdom is not of this world;” Jesus said, “If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36). The kingdoms and governments of the world are based on civil law and physical force. But Jesus’ kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It is not built or strengthened with earthly weapons, physical aggression, or standing for personal rights. It grows by the life and power of truth in the heart and operates on the principle of Christ-like love for every soul of every nation and culture.

The disciples of Jesus followed these principles, and, like their Master, taught the path of meekness and surrender of personal rights to display the sacrificial love of Jesus. We are taught by the apostles to leave vengeance to God and to return

good for evil (Romans 12:19-21) and to follow Jesus, “who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (2 Peter 2:23). They, as well as the true Christians throughout the centuries since, practiced this defenseless way of life, willing to die for their faith rather than to fight for their rights. They were not worrying about the right to own swords or guns; much less lobbying about the right to own swords or guns; and/or fighting for such rights. Any such weapons owned by true followers of Jesus then or now are never for use

against fellow men.

Guns and worship might both be outlawed. But the right to have guns and the right to worship are in no sense equal. The right and desire to defend ourselves with earthly weapons comes from the camp of the world. The true worship of God takes place in a separate camp. Those who have chosen to follow the meek and lowly Jesus love their enemies, do good to those who harm them, and are willing to give up their earthly rights, possessions, and even life itself, rather than resort to physical violence.

[From The Timely Truth, May, 2016. Used by permission.]



helpers at home

Thanksgiving Musings

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

During the Thanksgiving season, we often speak about the Puritans and Pilgrims. Recently, I was made aware of the journey of the Puritans even before they migrated to America. After facing persecution by the state church of England, they traveled to Holland. The women and children became separated from the men along the way and were reunited a year later in Holland. They spent 12 years in Holland. The Puritans hoped to reform Holland, however, with

their efforts rejected they decided to set sail for America. Two ships were waiting for them, but one ship proved not to be sea worthy so only half of the original group set sail with their beloved pastor staying behind. For three months, the 102 passengers braved the harsh elements, finally arriving off the coast of Massachusetts in late November of 1620. The first winter in this new land was bitterly cold. Many of the mothers died. By the following fall, only 53 people

remained. However, they did have a bountiful harvest including wild game. The governor called for a three-day harvest celebration. They were joined by 90 people from the Wampanoag tribe. They were deeply thankful for God's blessings to them.

I am sure their Thanksgiving celebration looked much different from our annual Thanksgiving feast. However, I am thankful our government allows and promotes a day of thanksgiving. I hope as we celebrate this year, we can experience thanksgiving from our hearts with a deep appreciation for the many ways God has blessed us in the past year.

This year has been a difficult year for some of you. You may have experienced the loss of loved ones; perhaps a spouse or son or daughter. Maybe you are living in a new location away from those you love or you may have experienced financial difficulty or failure in some area. Perhaps you are lonely. You may be going through a health crisis, either your own or someone in your family. Celebrating may be the farthest thing from your mind. You wonder if you will ever enjoy holidays again. May I encourage you to give yourself time to grieve whatever your loss may be? Avoid stress. Accept your emotions, talk to someone about them. Find new

ways to celebrate. Concentrate on God's love, He does love you and He cares. Thank God for what he is doing in your life through this trial. For the rest of us, let's do all we can to bless those who are hurting this holiday season. You can be an answer to their prayer.

Studies have shown that thankfulness can improve our physical and especially our emotional health. Feelings of thankfulness boost our immune system and increase the blood supply to our heart. Thankful people experience less stress and depression.

Allow me to share a few thoughts from one of my earlier Thanksgiving articles.

How can I develop an attitude of thankfulness?

Remember to refuel.

We need to spend time in God's Word and develop a meaningful prayer life so our spirits can be renewed and refueled. Taking time to study and applying the Word to our daily problems and concerns enables us to meet the challenges of the day. Interceding for others in prayer not only blesses those we are praying for but changes our attitudes and gives us a spirit of gratitude for our blessings.

Stay Focused.

Many times we become so bogged down with all that we have to do each

day that we forget to focus on why and for whom we're really doing it. First, we can do all for the glory of God and secondly we can do it for those we love and those God has entrusted in our care. Oftentimes thinking about our workload is worse than actually doing it.


Count Your Blessings.

Try thinking positive thoughts. Make a list of your blessings, look at the list whenever you are tempted to be negative. Compare with those who have less than you do. Sing as you work. Write out verses of thanksgiving, The Psalms is full of them. Express

your thankfulness to others.

Regain the Wonder

Look at life through the eyes of a child. Regain the wonder of life. There is so much to enjoy. Learn to find pleasure and contentment in your daily work, your home and in those you love. Tell them you love them. Enjoy what you are doing and do things you enjoy. Learn to relax even if not everything is perfect. Be yourself.

May your Thanksgiving celebration be the expression of a heart overflowing with gratitude. 

junior messages

A Special Little Girl

Mary Ellen Beachy, Kisumu, Kenya

Three little children were sitting in the warm sunshine in front of the thatch-roofed hut. Two of them ran off to play, but one girl stayed sitting there with a “laso” (a pretty printed African cloth) wrapped around her legs. I wondered about the child sitting in sunshine—why were her legs covered?

Later I asked Mary, a neighbor lady, about Dickson and Janet’s children.

She told me that the girl, Whinney, had polio when she was only two. Until then, she had happily walked and run, but when the disease struck her, it crippled her legs very badly. Sweet Whinney does not expect to walk again until she gets to heaven.

We became good friends with that African family. Dickson is a hard-working country man. He raises crops and does his best to feed his

growing family.

When visitors came to their house, Dickson used to be ashamed of his crippled daughter and would put her in a dark corner of the house, and tell her to stay there. I can imagine the poor little girl crying brokenheartedly, all alone in the dim corner.

It brightened Whinney's life when someone cared enough to hire a teacher for her. God provided a fine Christian neighbor lady who came three days each week to teach the ten-year-old girl who had never been to school.

Whinney loves to sing. Her voice is sweet and clear. Her father said her songs touched his heart and helped him come to Jesus for salvation. Sometimes in the evening, he helps his daughter with her lessons.

It was a happy day for me when I saw Dickson carrying Whinney to church. No more was he hiding his daughter in some dark corner.

Whinney does not have a wheel chair, but she still gets around. She can move along by pushing herself forward on her hands.

At first, this little girl would not look at me. Since she has a teacher, her life is happier. Now her face lights up with a sweet smile.

Once when we were there she came in and led a sincere prayer for a snack we were served. She helps care for her


baby sister. She can wash dishes for her mother.

Markus and I went to visit them one afternoon when she was having class. Whinney came scooting into the house for school. I was blessed to see her teacher say a quiet prayer with her before they started working in the school books. I was pleased to see her read. Before we left, Whinney led a traditional African song. I love to hear her singing.

I told Dickson and Janet that years ago, my mother's sister had a child named David who never walked. He also never talked. He was the youngest of seven children. His parents cared for him faithfully for many years. They took him to church where he sat on a special wheel chair.

We cannot understand the ways of God and why some children suffer and are crippled. My aunt and uncle knew though, that David was a blessing in their home. They loved him. All the family gathered around him. A sister said it was safe to tell him their secrets.

God wants us to love all children. Each one is special in His eyes, no matter if they cannot walk or talk.

Why was Whinney struck with polio? Only God knows. God has a heart of love for her and for all children. He has a purpose for the life of this small, crippled girl. 

Our Problems Are Not the Problem

-Gideon Yutzy, Hutchinson, KS

When I was a boy, my family would attend our church's monthly song service. There we sang songs whose prevailing sentiments were about leaving this sad world of care, about flying away and meeting in the sweet by and by. Wonderful, just wonderful. Unfortunately though, the songs told us only the bare minimum about living in *this* world. And as we were to find out the next day, the grind of life in rural Missouri hadn't gone away.

The New Testament writers, more than once, took strength from thinking about our glorious future. There, we will finally be with Christ. Sight will replace faith. A new heaven will come down to meet a new earth (Revelation 21).

Yet when taken as a whole, the New Testament focuses on the here and now. And no offense to America's rich gospel music heritage, but Jesus didn't teach us to "fly away" from

life's problems. Instead He taught us well-being even in the face of trouble (If you want more details, I refer you to a certain outdoor sermon He preached once).

Why then have problems often turned out badly for us? Why do they still get a bad rap? Here might be a few reasons:

We turn to the wrong sources for solutions. In fact, far too often we turn to Public Enemy Number One: to our own selves. When someone wrongs us, we allow our anger to take over. When we see our neighbor's faults, we yield to gossip. When we have financial stress, we allow worry to paralyze us. All these responses come from the flesh, from the part of us that is out of tune with God.

In Romans Paul makes it clear that no good thing dwells in our flesh. Yet the flesh, because we obey it, cheats us of abundant problem-solving resources.

Once a friend was offered the job I wanted. He accepted, as he should have. Overwhelmed with jealousy, I heard the flesh whisper, *Defame him. Make his life miserable.* Then the Holy Spirit, in a counterintuitive idea, gave me the idea to email my friend and wish him well. I obeyed. Only days later, I was surprised to discover that I really did, in my heart, wish him well. Because I discounted my first instinct, the problem was solved. God wants to solve our problems but our part is to crucify the flesh.

Like Naaman, we scorn the resource God provides to solve a particular problem. For the uptight, God created humor. For the sad, God created music. For the lonely, God created friendship. God, who doesn't seem too keen on waving magic wands, created something for every problem—something set in real time and space.

There is a folk tale about a neighborhood that was experiencing heavy flooding. As everyone else hurriedly evacuated, one man planted himself on the roof of his house. "I have faith God will save me," he declared.

The flood grew worse. Various rescue parties tried unsuccessfully to

help the man, and soon he drowned. In Heaven, the man asked God, "Why didn't you save me?" God's reply: "Son, I sent a car, then a canoe, then a motorboat, and then, at the last, even a helicopter. What more were you looking for?"

Philip Yancey, in *Reaching for an Invisible God*, points out that God is not opposed to using everyday events to help us solve problems. Sometimes I wonder if it isn't His preferred method.

We forget that patience is crucial. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1). It's possible for Christians to overcome problems—and even to do so with grace and skill. This will only happen, however, through a lifestyle of systematic observation and adjustment. The child who is toddling today should not expect to do headstands tomorrow.

I am reminded of a wry quote I heard once: "Experience is that marvelous thing that enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again." Though intended to be humorous, it is reality for far too many people. But as disciples of the Master Teacher, we are not doomed to continue making the same mistakes. "All men make mistakes,"

said Winston Churchill, “but only wise men learn from them.”

To borrow yet another popular quote: “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” Jesus promised us abundant life; if that isn’t our experience, we must consult with Him and see what needs to be adjusted. Also: we should expect to ask Him again. And again...

We admire strong people but don’t take note of how they became strong. (And yes, it was through learning how to solve problems.) An athlete was preparing to perform in the Olympics. One evening he came home very excited. “I found a problem!” he told his wife.


“Why are you excited about that?” she asked, and her husband explained. Finding a problem was a chance for him to improve, to inch closer to mastery. As an Olympic-caliber athlete, he had found all the cliché sayings to be true: *No pain, no gain. There are no shortcuts to success.* Problems, the athlete had learned, can be our friends or our foes. He had made them his friends.

Recently I interviewed a few Christians who, for decades, have been serving others as

pastors, teachers, farmers, and homemakers—pillars of the church, in short. Many of my readers would recognize at least a few of their names.

To each of them, I came with a simple question: *What has helped you grow spiritually?* Then I compiled the results, hoping to find a common thread in their answers. I was not disappointed. For some it was taking on leadership roles, for others it was losing a loved one. Yet it always boiled down to this: something difficult had helped them grow.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4). For people learning a lifestyle of dependence on the greatest Miracle Worker ever, problems are no longer the problem. In fact—as all mature Christians could tell us—to bypass them is to bypass growth, character, and ultimately eternal reward.

The writings in Thinking Generation, all previously unpublished, attempt to address the issues today’s Anabaptist young people are (or ought to be) wrestling with. Submit your comments, as well as proposed material for the column, to gideonutzy@gmail.com. 

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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

He who carries a tale makes a monkey of himself.

• • • • •

When growth stops, decay begins.

• • • • •

A young man's prayer: "Lord, give me a wife that loves Thee,
for then I can expect her to love me."

• • • • •

It is better to marry to share happiness than simply to seek it there.

• • • • •

Sin has many tools, but a lie is a handle that fits them all.

• • • • •

Those who suffer from loneliness are probably just sitting instead of serving.

• • • • •

It takes great listening as well as great preaching to make a good sermon.

• • • • •

Let us not add to our mistakes by doing nothing because we can do only a little.

• • • • •

Misdeeds and missed deeds are sins of commission and omission.

• • • • •

An honest heart prepares one for a clear vision.

• • • • •

Holiness is living in touch with God in a way that pleases God.

• • • • •

Praising your self to the skies will not get you there.

• • • • •

Those who gossip are likely to get caught in their own mouth traps.