



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 2018

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Calvary Messenger

April 2018

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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Precious Jesus

Elmer Schrock
(1931-2018)

Ephraim Peight

1. Je - sus, Sav - iour, Thou art pre - cious, to my wear - y sin - sick
 2. Search my heart and cleanse my mo - tives, from all self and sin set
 3. Quench my thirst with liv - ing wa - ter, feed me with that heav'n - ly
 4. Teach me Lord, my days to num - ber, wis - dom to my heart sup -

soul. Now to Thee I turn with long - ing, cleanse my heart and make me
 free. Self de - ny - ing, serv - ing Je - sus, in His im - age I would
 bread; That my hung - ry soul and spir - it from Thy ta - ble may be
 ply; Humb - ly serv - ing Christ my Sav - iour till my sum - mons from on

whole. Fill me with Thy gra - cious Spir - it, give to me a Christ - like
 be. Change my spir - it to Thy like - ness, use me as it pleas - eth
 fed. Day by day, to be more ho - ly is my long - ing and my
 high. When in glo - ry, there for - ev - er, love - ly man - sions to ex -

mind. That in all my heart and be - ing I can feel Thy love di - vine.
 Thee; That my life in all its ef - fort to Thy will shall yield - ed be.
 goal; Full sur - rend - er to Thy Spir - it, of my bod - y, mind, and soul.
 plore; With the saints who've gone be - fore us, be with Christ for - ev - er - more.

Music © 2017 by Ephraim Peight 660 725 7262

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Wine Drinking in Bible Times

Aaron S. Glick (1903-1996)

We accept the Bible as the Word of God—the rule for life and our final authority. However, too often we fail to consider that the Bible was not given to Christians living in this twentieth-century culture. Because of this there are various interpretations and strong views that can have a divisive effect, even among brethren. This is oftentimes due to lack of understanding of the culture and the lifestyle of the people to whom the message was written.

The question, “What does this mean to us?” can best be answered by the question, “What did it mean to the people of Bible times?” If we do not understand what the message meant to those to whom it was written, it is hardly likely that we will find the correct interpretation for our day and age.

Perhaps one of the most controversial (and sometimes heated) subjects that we have heard discussed during life could well be the term “wine” as used in the New Testament. As we consider the wine of New Testament times, the question will be: “Was this unfermented grape juice?”

Let us consider the wine used at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, where Jesus turned water into wine (John 2:1-9). If this wine was fermented grape juice, how was it possible that the wedding festivities didn’t end in drunkenness since these wedding festivities usually lasted several days. This study of the term “wine” in ancient times should give us light on the question concerning New Testament wine.

I shall further quote research and facts from an article in Christianity Today, June 20, 1975. I use it with their permission.

“In ancient times wine was stored in large pointed jugs. When this wine was to be used it was poured into large bowls and mixed with water. It is important for us to note that *before the wine was drunk*, it was mixed with water.

“The ratio of water in the wine varied, according to ancient non-biblical records. Homer (Odyssey IX208F) mentions a ratio of 20 to 1—20 parts water to one part wine. Pliny (Natural History XIV) mentions

a ratio of eight parts water to one part wine. The poet Euenos who lived in the fifth century B.C., mentions the ratio of water to wine as 3 to 1. When the ratio was equal parts of water to wine it was referred to as “strong wine.”

It is evident that wine was seen and used in ancient times as a medicine, and of course, as a beverage, yet as a beverage it was always thought of as a mixed (with water) drink.” Plutarch (non-biblical symposiacs III IX) states, “We call a mixture ‘wine’ although the larger of the component parts is water.”

“The ratio of water might vary, but only barbarians drank it unmixed.” The term “wine” in the ancient world did not mean wine as we understand it today but wine mixed with water. In several instances in the Old Testament a distinction is made between “wine” and “strong drink.” See Deuteronomy 14:26; Judges 13:4, 7, 14; and I Samuel 1:15.

“In the Jewish Talmud which contains the oral traditions of Judaism from about 200 B. C. to 200 A. D., it is stated that wine that does not carry three parts of water is not wine. In a most important reference (Pesahim 108) it is stated that the four cups every Jew was to drink during the Passover ritual were to be mixed in a ratio of three parts water to one part wine.”

From this we can conclude that the fruit of the vine used at the Last

Supper was a mixture of three parts water to one part wine. “*In another Jewish reference from about 60 A.D. we read it is harmful to drink wine alone or to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious.*” (II Maccabees 15:39)

In ancient times there were not many beverages that were safe to drink. The dangers of their drinking water was a problem. The easiest way to make water safe to drink was to mix it with wine.

Even today much of the drinking water In the Middle East is unsafe for drinking unless it is boiled. As we visited in Bible lands and Africa, we carried a small bottle of iodine; we added several drops to a glass of water if the water was questionable for drinking. Neglect of this precaution has sometimes placed the tourist in embarrassing circumstances.

The content of wines is nowhere discussed in the New Testament period. It would be difficult, however, for anyone to prove that it was any different from the wine mentioned by the Greeks and the Jews in their records before Christ, as well as the records of the early church fathers.

The writings of the early church fathers (those who lived in the first two centuries after Christ) clearly indicate that “wine” means wine mixed with water. Quoting Justin Martyr (150 A.D.) in describing the

Lord's Supper, "Bread is brought and wine and water..." Cyprian (250 A.D.) stated that the cup of the Lord is not indeed water alone, nor wine alone, unless it is mingled with water." There are others that could be quoted to substantiate this fact.

The people of Bible times were not equipped to preserve their grape juice sweet by canning or freezing as we are in this twentieth century. But they were able to use the fruit of the vine for bodily nourishment without becoming intoxicated.

In summary we must conclude that the wine used in Bible times, even though it was fermented, could hardly have caused drunkenness because of the amount of water mixed with it. We do not need to purify our water with wine; neither do we need fermentation as a means of keeping our juices. (For health sake the body needs liquids.)

But the use of fermented juices as a beverage is inexcusable and contrary to the Scriptures.

"Be ye not among wine bibbers... for the drunkard...who shall come to poverty..." (Proverbs 23: 29, 21.)

The use of wine was the answer to the need in this earlier culture. It was a necessity for the body's need for liquids. "...it is possible to become intoxicated with wine mixed with three parts of water, but one's drinking would probably affect the bladder long before it affected the mind."

[We welcome these insights of a teacher of the last century. Aaron Glick probed deep to provide us with helpful insights. Social drinking is still a big problem. No one is helped to find truth by shoddy interpretation of God's Word. We believe God is honored by total abstinence from alcoholic beverages. -PLM]



reader response

Re: "A Breath of Fresh Air and R. E. Lee," Feb. 2018, p. 23.

I am disturbed by the tone of this article. Make no mistake—the brutality of slavery as practiced in the Antebellum South was a grave moral injustice and spiritual failure. The

current animosity among ethnicities is also ungodly. However, celebrating the removal of Confederate statues smacks of nationalism and ignores the real motives behind the movement.

As citizens of Jesus' nation, we take sides with neither North nor South. Both were earthly governments with fallen ideologies. Across this land is a vast array of statues celebrating their heroes. Many of these men and women lived lives that cannot be reconciled with Jesus' teaching. Northern General William Sherman's "march to the Sea" was a terrible atrocity. Robert E. Lee demonstrated equally inhumane actions. As Christians, our heroes are different. We choose to honor our fellow citizens—those who demonstrate love and forgiveness. Embracing a different set of heroes, we should steer clear of taking sides with past or current politics.

Secondly, I feel that the gentle

breeze of "goodwill and compassion" is artificial in nature. American culture is becoming increasingly permissive and tolerant. This tolerance doesn't stem from Christian love but rather from a free-spirited relativistic movement. It is now in vogue to accept and defend anyone's beliefs, be they white supremacists, LBGTQ, agnostic, environmental, pro-choice, or what-have-you. Relativism erodes truth. It generates an artificial and likely temporary breeze of intolerance.

Let us make it our mission to celebrate and propagate the genuine Christian "good will and compassion" and leave statuary to the world's politicians.

Jason Beachy

Washington County, PA



Announcement

Soldiers of the Cross – 2018

A week of evangelism teaching and training that includes going out into the community and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Timothy 2: 3,4).

Date: May 25 to June 3, 2018

Place: In Holmes County, Ohio

For more information call Jay Stoltzfus (330-473-5145) or email: soldiersofthecross2@gmail.com or go to our website: sofcross.com.

Call for information about couple accommodations.



God's Order in Business Matters

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Farming is the means of a livelihood, but it also is a business. Amish and Mennonites were farmers almost exclusively until the end of World War II in 1945. From there, the churches gradually saw a slow rise in manufacturing and stores with retail sales among us. The secularization of public schools gave rise to more of us starting to arrange for Christian education in our own schools.

The level of aptitude and discipline and life style has been conducive to finding employment, and from there quite a few have initiated their own businesses or manufacturing plants. The opportunity to be a witness for Christ has increased accordingly because of so many people being known through recurring contacts.

But everything has become increasingly competitive, agonizingly so in many cases. It always has been true, that some people do very well financially, and then there are some who seemingly must operate on fragile margins. The slim margins

put on much pressure to survive financially. Those pressures can cause the temptation to be dishonest in transactions and to lie in trying to make deals.

One of those unethical practices (another term for sin) is in not being true to promises made. A man orders a load of hay for next week. Two days before delivery he cancels the order because he can get it cheaper somewhere else. When asked how he can justify canceling his order, he says he needs to be a good steward of his money. If that is not being dishonest, is it then just as important for the seller to cancel the verbal contract when he discovers he could sell the hay for ten dollars a ton more to someone else? Is he not also a steward for God? No, he should not cancel the sale, and, yes, he is also a steward of God.

Being in a farming business of selling agricultural products leads me to believe that the list of these kinds of maneuvers are practically endless. Farmers may experience

incredible pressure to keep up with their peers who are in the building trades, manufacturing enterprises, and retail sales of all kinds. Farmers are in such tight straits that we see too many younger men as being surly, unhappy, and obviously restless. “Feast and famine” have always been a farmer’s plight. Peer pressure from those with an easier life in non-agricultural ventures seem to add to the agitation for those in farming.

The Bible says, *“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay”* (Ecclesiastes 5:4,5). *“The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death”* (Proverbs 21:6). *“Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labor shall increase”* (Proverbs 13:11).

The man was known by me as a very bad boy in school. Then he married. He came to rent a van from me, but then he did not pay his bill. Finally I realized that it will be money lost. But one day he came to pay his bill because, he said, Jesus saved his soul. He said they are having hard times, but he will pay \$5.00 a month. He did just that until at some point I told him I would forgive the balance.

Another man who lived 25 miles distant, also rented a van several times. He paid his bill. Then one time he rented it for a longer time, and from that he had a bill with me of over one thousand dollars. Bills were sent, telephone calls were tried, and I made four trips to his house. There was no response from any of the above. I decided to write it off as a loss.

Quite a while later, he came to pay this bill, including the finance charges. I had not sent any bills for some time. Then he said he wants to tell me something. He and his wife had had lots of arguments, she became sick, their baby had recurring sicknesses. In their deep distress and wreckage of life, they decided to go to Calvary Independent church on Easter Sunday. The pastor gave an altar call. He and his wife went forward and Jesus saved them both. Therefore, he said, he came to pay his bill.

Both of these men were Samaritans, well, non-Mennonite. I wish the Israelites, (the Amish and Mennonites) would get saved and be as honest and upright as they. Is it that serious? Yes, I must say that these situations appear so to us. Being saved makes men and women honest and upright, and makes them keep their promises. It is an inner aspect

of being godly. There are five things that apply here:

1. Nothing is gained by being dishonest.

2. Continual complaining about one's bad luck is less than Christian.

3. Freedom from sin comes by repenting of sin and unrighteousness.

4. Freedom from fear is gained by a renewed faith in God.

5. Freedom from financial bondage is granted by living according to God's principles.

There was a Christian woman who went to see a counselor. She said God has promised to be her Helper, quoting, "*But my God shall supply all your need,*" and "*God is able to make all grace abound to you,*" and that "*He is a very present help in trouble.*" She said God's promises sound great, but it was not happening to her. Then the wise counselor asked, "Ma'am, have you ever considered His commandments?" Obeying God is a valid base for us to wait on God and anticipate the fulfillment of His promises as He chooses.

More and more of our people are traveling to other countries, especially third-world countries. Many of the merchants we see have no Bible knowledge. But they know that when you speak a price for an item, that you are ethically bound to make it good, and to do as you

have spoken. Let's say the souvenir price is fifteen dollars. You decline. They reduce it to twelve dollars. You decline. They say, "What you give?" You say, "Ten dollars." They look so sad, but say, "Okay." Then you say you didn't really want it, you were just playing their game to see how far they will come down in their price. You walk away without buying that item. They will say, "He play dirty." And they are right! But you give him a Gospel tract. To him it is trash—both your tract and your life. Even giving a Bible would not undo the damage done. You go home again to the United States. You have just made the local missionaries' work harder and their witness less effective.

One of our "Israelites" had hard times as a farmer. On the first evening of the Finance Seminar, he told me he had just been putting his bills on a stack for a long time. He didn't even look at them anymore and he had some old bills there. He said tomorrow he will go to all the places where he owes money and make things right. I felt like saying, "Today is salvation come to this house." Yes, I feel that strongly about these business matters.

A local "Israelite" owed me over \$1,000.00 for a van rental. When I sent bills, there was no response. Whenever I stopped in to talk to

him, he said he has a work project (he was self-employed) that will make it possible for him to pay me soon. He made many promises. After nine years, he finally paid the bill.

Cheaters and liars are cut out from the same cloth. Christians should respond in some way to unpaid creditors. An unpaid bill may require the person in business to take out a loan. Let God speak to you in your crisis times. At the very least, go to personally meet the creditor and confess your negligence. If you have sinned in not paying as promised, confess it. Don't just ask for forgiveness. Some of the plain communities are losing their witness by these unethical and sinful maneuverings. By confessing, you take the blame for your failures. By only asking for forgiveness, you

are placing the weight of the matter on the other person. Repentance is more, yea, much more, than weakly and glibly asking for forgiveness.

The Bottom Line is that any crisis (financial included) is one of God's ways of trying to get our attention. *Any crisis* in our lives has these features about it for our character building in righteousness and spiritual goodness.

1. It is used by God to break our stubborn will.
2. It is given to correct faulty thought patterns.
3. It is sent by God to change wrong habits.
4. It is meant to establish constructive change.
5. Responding right will direct us into long term betterment. 

***The Son of God became
the Son of Man, that He
might change the sons of
men into sons of God.***

Christian Ordinances

Luke Bennetch, Fredericksburg, PA

Ordinances are foundational to our Christian faith and practice. Understanding the spiritual meanings and principles of each ordinance is essential to keeping spiritual life and vitality in the church today.

An ordinance is the external, visible ceremony or symbol that God has established with deep spiritual meaning. These “exercises” established by God remind us of spiritual truths that are vital to our spiritual life. Ordinances have been likened to a tree and its bark. The life of the tree is inside. The bark (ordinance) is the external, visible piece that protects the life inside but also shows something of the inner health of the tree. We know the two go together. You can’t have a good tree without bark and you can’t have good bark without the life within the tree. To exercise the outward form of an ordinance without holding its inner meaning will result in dead formalism. But to focus only on the inner meaning without the outward expression is disobedience to God.

There are seven commonly taught ordinances in our branch of the

Christian church today: baptism, communion, feet washing, the Christian woman’s veiling, the holy kiss, anointing with oil and Christian marriage. It is my understanding that it was through the work of Daniel Kauffman’s book, *Doctrines of the Bible* that the seven ordinances we commonly teach today were identified and taught as the seven ordinances of the Christian church.

In the mid-1500’s Dirk Philips listed four other ordinances we usually do not consider. They were: ordination, excommunication and the ban, love, and suffering with persecution. Many Brethren churches observe the following seven: feet washing, the Lord’s Supper (love feast), communion, anointing with oil, laying on of hands, assembling together, and the holy kiss. Many Protestant churches teach that an ordinance must meet three criteria to be an ordinance: (1) Instituted by Christ (2) Taught by the apostles (3) Practiced by early church. With these criteria, they teach only two ordinances: Communion and Baptism.

The Catholic Church holds to seven

sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. They teach that a sacrament is necessary for salvation and that sacraments are the vehicles that issue God's grace into the hearts of His people. In other words, a sacrament, they believe, produces a spiritual reality in a believer's life. We believe the Bible teaches that an ordinance is a remembrance of and a reflection on a spiritual reality that has happened in our hearts.

The ordinances generally involve the body of believers. Most of them we cannot do by ourselves. In this way, they are part of our collective experience as the body of Christ. They are part of our identity in the body. The New Testament teaches an "inside" and "outside" in church life. *"For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth"* (1 Cor. 5: 12-13). Ordinances then are shared and experienced by those inside the body of Christ.

Ordinances help us remember the truth they stand for. They bring us face to face with the Truth they represent. They sometimes confront our carnality on the spot! Have you ever struggled greeting someone while holding a grudge against them?

Did you ever want to avoid washing feet with a specific person? God help us to find victory over these struggles. In this experience, we find direction from God. We are prompted to become more like Jesus.

Ordinances also provide a teaching tool for the rising generation. They form "memorials" that stand in the children's remembrances. Psalm 78:5-7 says, "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should rise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." What impact does it leave on our children as they sit in church during a communion service? What impressions are left on their minds as their godly mother, in submission to God and man, puts on her covering every day? What do they learn as they observe a baptism? What a blessing we have to be able to raise our children in churches where the ordinances are kept! We should be teaching them what these things mean even while they are little. The world tries to

captivate their young minds with allurements toward evil How much will we “impress” spiritual life and truths on their minds and hearts?

Ordinances also serve as an inspiration for us. Jesus said, “*If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*” (John 13:17). The forbidden fruits of Satan’s kingdom leave a bitter taste in the mouth in the end. But Christian obedience brings deep settled peace and joy that the world will never know. It is hard to describe this reality to an unbeliever. It must be experienced in sincerity and holiness to really understand this joy.

But Christian ordinances become wearisome to hearts growing cold

spiritually. Casual Christianity waters down the importance of these important expressions of faith and silently lays them aside. It takes spiritual fervor and sincerity to enjoy and experience these spiritual realities. We should each personally test our attitudes toward, appreciation for, and practice of these ordinances. The spiritual life and vitality of each church is a result of the spiritual vitality of its members.

May we improve our practices and gain a greater conviction for the ordinances God has given for our blessing and direction.

*[From Pilgrim Witness, Feb., 2018.
Used by permission.]*



Guard Your Children Well

Amy (Bontrager) Yoder, Goshen, IN

We are busy women. Work beckons us at every side. If it isn’t work at our house, there are lots of good, important things to be involved in at church or in the neighborhood. Often we are so busy doing good things that we neglect the best. We become so involved in doing necessary things at home and elsewhere that we neglect our children. Many a child has lost

his or her innocence and purity while Mom was busy doing good things.

Mothers, do you know what your children are doing? Perhaps it is impossible to guard them so closely that we can absolutely guarantee their protection, but there are things we can do to make their environment safer.

As a starting point, work at building a relationship with each of your

children that enables them to feel safe with you, that makes them feel comfortable sharing their concerns with you. Instruct them to tell you about anyone, child or adult, who tells them to do forbidden things. Teach them the dangers of accepting rides from strangers.

Pray for divine wisdom in educating your children about moral purity before someone else leads them into impurity. Don't think for a moment that ignorance helps ensure innocence or that your child is too young to become involved in undesirable things. Children are curious and they are going to satisfy their curiosity in one way or another. Be sensitive to their level of comprehension when you answer their questions or open this subject to them in some other way.

John Coblentz has written a book, *God's Will For My Body*, that can be a real aid to parents in teaching children about sexual purity. Check with your local Christian bookstore or order it directly from Deeper Life Ministries or Christian Light Publications.

Spend time with your children. Play with them and work with them. Try to be aware at all times where they are and what they are doing. Don't let them play behind closed

doors or in secret places. When they are old enough to stay at home alone, be very careful. These can be times of great temptation for children. Be aware of what they are reading.

Trust your children? Yes, indeed, but don't be careless about allowing situations that contain undue temptation. Never think, *It couldn't happen to our children. They know better.* Remember, they were born with sinful natures and they have an enemy who delights to destroy.

Are you afraid others will label you as being too protective? Ask God what He thinks and let Him give you direction.

Pray for your children. Pray a hedge of protection about them first of all, then cooperate with God by doing all you can to make their environment safe. Do not think for a moment that your children are above sexual temptation. Don't be arrogant. The very "best" can fall.

Far too many adults are dealing with bitter remorse and all sorts of emotional baggage because of unguarded moments in their childhood.

Guard your children well.

(A reprint of "Helpers at Home" from November, 2001, with permission from Amy Yoder.)



marriages

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

Gingerich-Yoder

Bro. Chad, son of Lester and Ruth Gingerich, Marrowbone, KY, and Sis. Lynette, daughter of David J. and Faith Yoder, Oskaloosa, KS, at Town and Country Church for Ebenezer A.M. Church on Sept. 15, 2017, by Mervin Graber.

Overholt-Yoder

Bro. Myron, son of Steve and Kaylene Overholt, Montezuma, GA, and Sis. Danielle, daughter of William and Mary Jane Yoder, Meyersdale, PA, at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church for Mt. View Mennonite Church on August 26, 2017, by Merlin Beachy.

Warfel-Helmuth

Bro. Micah, son of Dan and Esther Warfel, Chambersburg, PA, and Sis. Melody, daughter of Glen and Rosanna Helmuth, Belvidere, TN, at Winchester Baptist Church for Belvidere Mennonite Church, on Jan. 6, 2018, by Stephen Beachy.

Yoder-Sommers

Bro. Steven, son of Leroy and Elsie Yoder, Oakland, MD, and Sis. Katrina, daughter of Reuben and Miriam Sommers, Salisbury, PA, at Cherry Glade Mennonite Church for Mt. View Mennonite Church on Sept. 15, 2017, by Merlin Beachy. 

cradle roll

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

Burkholder, Morris and Karen (Raber), Hanover, IN, sixth child and son, Jaxon Layne, Dec. 15, 2017.

Burkholder, Tony and Joyce (Miller), Warsaw, IN, third child, second son, Evan Jacob, Feb. 8, 2018.

Chupp, Andrew and Michelle (Landis), Eden Valley, MN, third child, first daughter, Alayna Nancy, Feb. 2, 2018.

Chupp, Mike and Rosie (Diller), Paynesville, MN, second child, first son, Colton Wayne, Feb. 15, 2018.

Coblentz, Jonathan and Loretta (Helmuth), Owenton, KY, fourth child, second daughter, Jennalyn Rose, Jan. 18, 2018.

Coblentz, Jonathan and Sara (Wagler), Valley Falls, KS, fifth child, fourth son, Trevor David, Jan. 28, 2018.

Diener, Kevin and Treva (Hostetler), Lovington, IL, third child, second son, Carson Eugene, Nov. 2, 2017.

Eichorn, Gideon and Sarah (Stutzman), Milford Center, OH, first child and daughter, Zaria Sharon Angelica, born April 20, 2016; received by adoption Jan. 16, 2018.

Glick, Tim and Sonia (Castaneda), Cleburne, TX, fifth child, third daughter, Lucia Jane, Nov. 22, 2015.

Hershberger, Titus and Evelyn (Swarey), Staunton, VA, fourth child, first daughter, Eleanor Mercy, Feb. 3, 2018.

Kauffman, Jeremy and Linda (Yoder), Oakland, MD, first child and son, Bobby Lynn, Feb. 7, 2018.

Kinsinger, Milt and Faith (Yoder), Lexington, IN, sixth child, fourth son, Jerrik Rylan, Feb. 9, 2018.

Knepp, Kevin and Sharon (Yoder), Oskaloosa, KS, fourth child, second son, Anthony Cole, Jan. 6, 2018.

Lengacher, Nelson and Krista (Coblentz), Lexington, IN, third child, second son, Carson Grant, Jan. 10, 2018.

Lengacher, Sheldon and Alisa (Miller), Lexington, IN, fourth child and daughter, Krystal Fawn, Nov. 13, 2017.

Miller, Devon and Dorthea (Byler), Centerville, PA, third child and son, Tashaun Isaac, Feb. 9, 2018.

Miller, Justin and Rosanna (Brenneman), Rochelle, VA, first child and son, Jackson Emmit, Feb. 4, 2018.

Miller, Philip and Jessica (Graber), Oskaloosa, KS, fourth child, second son, Adriel Cole, July 22, 2017.

Overholt, Jamison and Jessica (Yoder), Whiteville, TN, third child, second daughter, Megan Elise, Feb. 2, 2018.

Overholt, Patrick and Brittany (Burkholder), Warsaw, IN, third child, second daughter, Aubrey Beth, Feb. 28, 2018.

Ropp, Michael and Connie (Bontrager), Kalona, IA, second child, first daughter, Keila Diane, Jan. 24, 2018.

Schlabach, Joseph and Naomi (Miller), Cochranton, PA, first child and son, Winston Joel, Feb. 7, 2018.

Shrock, Jonathan and Dorothy (Schlabach), Lexington, IN, seventh child, sixth daughter, Beth Lynette, Oct. 5, 2017.

Stoltzfus, John and Melody (Ebersole), Parkesburg, PA, first child and daughter, Josephine Dawn, Nov. 24, 2017.

Stoltzfus, Joseph and Anita (King), Parkesburg, PA, second child and son, Caleb Daniel, Nov. 25, 2017.

Wagler, Lamar and Amy (Miller), Auburn, KY, second child, first daughter, Chloe Lynette, Feb. 2, 2018.

Weaver, Ernest and Patricia (Miller), Grandview, TX, fifth child, second daughter, Mahala Fern, Dec. 19, 2015.

Yoder, Chris and Charla (Funk), Oskaloosa, KS, second child, first son, Dawson Grant, Dec. 17, 2017.

Yoder, Cornelius and Delores (Shetler), Grandview, TX, fifth child, first son, Johann Cornelius, Jan. 4, 2016.

Yoder, Terry and Rachel (Wagler), Lexington, IN, fourth child, second daughter, Karisa Margaret, Dec. 29, 2017.



ordinations

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

Bro. Marcus Kauffman, 53, (wife Susan Miller), of Virginia Beach, VA, was ordained as bishop of Kempsville Mennonite Church on Oct. 22, 2017. Preordination messages were given by Ivan Beachy, Free Union, VA. The charge was given by Donnie Brenneman. Sharing the lot was Daniel Brenneman.

Bro. Timothy Miller, 25, (wife Deborah Yoder) of Holmesville, Ohio, was ordained as minister of Peniel Fellowship on Aug. 20, 2017. Preordination messages were given by Wayne Miller, Lebanon, MO. The charge was given by Nathan Yoder, assisted by Paul Chupp and David Nissley. Sharing the lot were Adrian Weaver, Titus Yoder and Joseph Miller.

Bro. Titus Miller, 37 (wife Joann Beachy), was ordained as bishop on Dec. 3, 2017, at Suceava Mennonite Church in Romania. Preordination messages were given by Jonathan Raber and Bruce Jantzi. The charge was given by David Raber, assisted by Jonathan Raber and Reuben Beiler. Sharing the lot was Andrew Miller.



Beiler, Lena (Esh, Stoltzfus), 92, of Gordonville, PA, died Jan. 2, 2018 at Fairmont Homes. She was born Aug. 19, 1925, at Gordonville, the daughter of the late Jacob and Rachel (Smoker) Esh.

She was a member of Weavertown A.M.Church.

On Nov. 14, 1944, she was married to Crist Stoltzfus. He died Jan. 14, 1979. She was then married to Omar Beiler on May 3, 1981. He died July 10, 1999.

To the union of Crist and Lena six daughters were born: Rachel (Emanuel) Smucker, Gap; Lydiann (John P.) Lapp, Leola; Anna Ruth (Leon) Lapp, Gap; Rosa Marie (Gideon) Stoltzfus, Honey Brook; Mary Jane (Jonathan) Lantz, Atglen; and Lena Mae (Samuel) Riehl, Gap; 44 grandchildren and 176 great grandchildren. Four of Lena's siblings survive: Samuel Esh, Daniel Esh, Anna Mary Esh Lapp, and Barbara Esh Lapp.

The funeral was held at Weavertown Church, officiated by a grandson, John Lewis Lapp. Interment was at Simmitview Christian Fellowship cemetery.

Glick, Anna S., 71, of Woodstown, NJ, died Feb. 19, 2018. She was born July 22, 1946, daughter of Henry U. and the late Mary (Zook) Stoltzfus.

She was a member of Salem County Mennonite Church, Bridgeton, NJ.

On Nov. 10, 1966, she was married to Abner Glick. He survives. Also

surviving are their children: Mary (Richard) Miller, Woodstown, NJ; Henry (Rebecca) Glick, Spencer, WI; David (Aurelia) Glick, Hayward, WI; Hannah (fiancé Jason Burkholder) Glick, Spencer, WI; Allen (Judith) Glick, Elmer, NJ; and 18 grandchildren. Other survivors include her father, Henry U. Stoltzfus; four brothers and five sisters: John (Linda) Stoltzfus, Lewisburg, PA; Priscilla (Benuel) Stoltzfus, Morgantown, PA; Jacob (Sylvia) Stoltzfus, Deansboro, NY; Linda (Jonathan) Stoltzfus, Hooversville, PA; Henry (Anna) Stoltzfus, Somerset, PA; Elsie (Jonas) Stoltzfus, Hooversville, PA; Vernon, NY; Jemima (Daniel) Stoltzfus, Munnsville, NY; Luke (Ruth Ann) Stoltzfus, Waterville, NY; and Mary S. Stoltzfus, Munnsville, NY.

Anna was preceded in death by a daughter, Martha, her mother, Mary, a brother, Chester and a granddaughter, Nicole.

The funeral was held on Feb. 24, with Marvin Fisher, John Esh, and George Stoltzfus serving. Burial was at Salem County Mennonite Church cemetery with Lee Stoltzfus conducting the committal.

Helmuth, Enos J., 93, of Arthur, IL, died Nov. 28, 2017. He was born in Arthur, IL, Dec. 26, 1923, to the late Joe P. and Katie (Beachy) Helmuth.

He was a faithful member of Pleasant View Church in Arcola, IL:

On Dec. 6, 1945, he was married to Clara Helmuth. She died April 25, 2001. On April 25, 2003, he was married to Ida Mae Overholt. She survives. Other survivors include three sons: Floyd Joseph (Katie Fern Yoder) Helmuth, LaGrange, IN; Raymond (Verna Hershberger) Helmuth, Arthur; Allen (Betty Wagler) Helmuth, Arthur; three daughters: Mary Anna (Edgar) Petersheim, Humboldt; Shirley Kay (Elva) Herschberger, Arthur; and Ellen (Gene) Lockwood, Sarasota, FL; 26 grandchildren, 64 great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild; one brother, Johnny J. Helmuth, Millersburg, IN, and one brother-in-law, Christy D. Schrock.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Clara, two brothers: BJK Helmuth and Atlee Helmuth, one infant sister and three great grandchildren.

The funeral was held at Pleasant View church on Dec. 1, with Wesley Yoder, Brian Petersheim, and Howard Kuhns serving. Burial was in Pleasant View Cemetery.

Schrock, Elmer S., 86, of Stuarts Draft, VA, died Jan. 29, 2018, at his home following a brief illness from lymphoma. He was born July 9, 1931, in Kempsville, VA, to the late Simon and Sadie (Yoder) Schrock.

He was a faithful member and minister of Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, Stuarts Draft. His was the first ordination for

Pilgrim Christian Fellowship on Dec. 22, 1969. Elmer was retired from the pastorate, but conducted Bible studies at the local prison. He also served as a pastoral advisor to Penn Valley Christian Retreat in PA. He was well-known in the larger Augusta County community as the owner and manager of Schrock Electrical Service and for his many years of repair and maintenance services. He immensely enjoyed his family and church and his many long-time acquaintances in the area.

On April 23, 1953, he was married to Ida Miller. She preceded him death on August 30, 2003. Survivors include eight children: Sadie Schrock and Simon and (Ellen Miller) Schrock of Stuarts Draft; Twila Schrock of Amherst, VA, Ruth (Mark) Miller, Belvidere, TN; Cathy Schrock, Mendon, MI; Delores Schrock, Amherst, VA; John (Iva Miller) Schrock of Safford, AL; and William (Brenda Kinsinger) Schrock, of Amherst, VA; 12 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Other survivors include two brothers: Alvin Schrock, Stuarts Draft, and Noah Schrock, Costa Rica, and a sister-in-law Edith Schrock, PA.

He was preceded in death by one brother, Harvey Schrock, four sisters: Barbara Beiler, Amanda Summy, Amelia Beachy, and Mary Schrock, and two infant grandchildren.

The funeral was held on Feb. 1, at Pilgrim Christian Fellowship, with Duane Weaver and Benny Byler serving. Jonathan Miller officiated at the burial in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Adlai E., 93, of Sullivan, IL, died Nov. 19, 2017. He was born Aug. 6, 1924, the son of the late Eli D. and Katie Ann (Mast) Yoder.

He was a faithful member of Pleasant View Church, Arcola.

On Nov. 30, 1944, he was married to Lena A. Miller. She died on March 15, 2011. He is survived by seven children: Katie Fern (Floyd) Helmuth, LaGrange, IN; Larry (Pat) Yoder, Glen (Carol) Yoder, Clifford (Kathy) Yoder, Leona (Ed) Kuhns, all of Sullivan; Linda (Merle) Plank, Arcola; Wayne (Corina) Yoder, Sarasota, FL; 27 grandchildren, and 51 great grandchildren. Also surviving: one brother, Daniel Yoder, Elkhart, IN; and four sisters, Edna Otto, Leonard, MO; Sovilla Gingerich, Elsie Schrock and Susanna Herschberger, of Arthur.

He was preceded in death by his wife, two brothers, Willis Yoder and Willard Yoder; two sisters: Mattie Yoder and Verna Miller and three grandsons.

The funeral was held on Nov. 22 at Pleasant View Church with Matthew Bontrager, Paul Plank, and Wesley Yoder serving.

Yoder, Katie E. (Swartzentruber), 82, of Kalona, Iowa, died Aug. 29, 2017. She was born Dec. 17, 1934, daughter of the late Enos C. and Katie (Bender) Swartzentruber.

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

Survivors include her 96-year-old husband of 36 years, Tobias B. Yoder; two step daughters, Patsy of Indiana and Linda of Florida, one step granddaughter, Rachel, a brother, Eldon (Katie) Swartzentruber, of Harrisonburg, VA, a sister, Sadie (Moses) Mast, of Spencer, OK, 35 nieces and nephews, 176 great nieces and nephews and 183 great great nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were two sisters, Barbara and Lovina, two brothers, Chris and Paul, and a step daughter, Karen.

The funeral was held at Sharon Bethel Church on Sept. 1, with Delmar Bontrager, Gabriel Beachy and Elwyn Stutzman serving. Burial was in the Peter Miller Cemetery. 

*Many times it's not that the
load is too heavy, but that we
try to carry it alone.*

Billy Graham died this past February at 99 years of age. He was born in 1918 near Charlotte, South Carolina, and raised on a dairy farm. At 16 years of age he experienced a personal spiritual awakening while listening to a series of revival meetings where Mordecai Ham was the speaker. He studied at Bob Jones College and Florida Bible Institute and was ordained in 1939. It's difficult to estimate how many millions of people heard him preach in the 185 different countries he visited over the years. He was affectionately referred to as America's pastor, but he is better known for his preaching than for other aspects of pastoral care. Some preachers preach in such a way that is confusing, some in a way that the listener gets the point, but Billy Graham preached in such a way that the listener oftentimes couldn't miss the message. He was a very gifted communicator who spoke with arresting clarity while using a commonly accessible vocabulary. Here are several of his quotations:

"Being a Christian is more than just an instantaneous conversion; it is like a daily process whereby you grow to

be more and more like Christ."

"God has given us two hands—some to receive with and the other to give with. We are not cisterns made for hoarding; we are channels made for sharing."

"Life can grow sweeter and more rewarding as we grow older if we possess the presence of Christ. Sunsets are always glorious. It is Christ who adds colors, glory, and beauty to man's sunsets."

"I've read the last page of the Bible, it's all going to turn out all right."

•••••

The revivalist movement that swept America contributed to the formation of the Beachy church in ways that we still experience today. I've heard stories about the Brunk revivals, followed by evangelists more specific to our church background whose message played an important role in our collective story. In my lifetime in churches where I circulate, I've observed a shift in emphasis away from evangelistic appeal to a "teaching all things" approach in the special meetings we plan and host in our congregations. Is this shift positive or negative? Here are a

few musings that might help us sort through our answers to that question.

We understand that our faith is a journey and not an event. However a journey doesn't exist without a beginning point. Decisions to follow Christ that are based on humanly generated emotional pressure, tend to dissipate when the pressure is removed. But on the other hand, genuine Holy Spirit conviction is oftentimes an emotionally charged situation. God's children are those who choose to belong to Him. Coercion is not an appropriate evangelistic tool, but invitation is. Sometimes we should reacquaint ourselves with the difference. An evangelistic revival meeting campaign assumes that there are persons present who have not been converted. Do we assume that those who gather in our church walls have been converted? If so, is that accurate?

In general, I applaud the emphasis on teaching and discipleship that we enjoy and benefit from in our churches today. Is it possible that we've shifted further away than we intended, from a lifestyle and message with a clear evangelistic appeal that both invites and assumes a response? God's Kingdom is built when people are converted, and believers mature in Christ. A well-

rounded approach recognizes the importance of both.

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Vence, a startup company from San Diego California recently raised \$2.7 million from investors to roll out a product they feel will be a boon to cattle ranchers. With the idea of creating a virtual fencing system, they are marketing a device that would fit over the ear of cattle that could be programmed to emit an electric shock in such a way that would confine the cattle to certain areas. They feel that this product should compete favorably with the performance and cost of traditional fencing, especially in intensive grazing applications where fencing is moved frequently.

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We know that not having enough money to pay the bills can be highly stressful. A study in which the Department of Psychological Sciences at the University of Virginia and the Department of Psychology at Purdue collaborated, tried to explore the relationship between income and happiness. Generally speaking the happiness of people increased along with income up to the point where the people were satisfied that they had enough. But beyond that point, there was no increase in happiness with added income.

Of course, people who have had their deepest longings satisfied through a relationship with Christ already know that money was just one item in a long list of things that don't ultimately bring true happiness. But this study reminded us again of the importance of cultivating an awareness of the concept of "enough".

Those who experience "enough" don't need to earn more, buy more, eat more, grow more, travel more, play more, etc. I'd hate to work as a salesman trying to sell something to someone who already has enough of whatever I'm peddling. Sales resistance and financial freedom are closely tied to the sense that I have "enough". Paul reminds Timothy of the high value of a godly oriented sense of "enough". In I Timothy 6:6 he calls it contentment: "But godliness with contentment is great gain."

.....

I recently read a report of another study at Florida State University that attempted to understand some of the factors related to faithfulness in marriage. One strong indicator of marital fidelity that the study identified was the ability to turn attention away from a person who might be considered a romantic option. Sometimes we just need to chuckle inwardly when secular

research "uncover" things that Christians should know all along.

I can't really tell how good the marriages in our churches are, but the divorce rate is low when compared with the incidence of divorce in the general population. I'm hopeful that part of the reason is that we have better marriages. One of the reasons we have better marriages is that quite simply, we don't believe that divorce and remarriage is an option for the Christian. That premise profoundly shapes how we approach the inevitable relational bumps and surprises that are part of the marriage package. Imagine how different it would be if we went into marriage with the idea that if it doesn't work out we can always try again!

.....

One of our friends related an interesting story about their daughter and grandchildren. A mom and her 5-year old son took the little boy's big sister to school for the day. This occurred during a time that the big sister was working hard at school on subjects that she found stretching—and maybe even a bit frustrating. After big sister disembarked the little brother called her back to the car to share some encouragement for the day. He told her, "Be filled with the fruit of the Spirit."

I suspect that the parents of these little folks have worked pretty hard to point their children to the fact that life's difficulties are times when Spirit fruit should be evidenced, rather than the "works of the flesh".

Furthermore, it's a good reminder that children often echo what they hear at home. This little fellow's admonition wasn't likely something he just "sucked out of his thumb."

-RJM



Thoughts from Jerusalem—the Sacrifice

Daniel Miller, Dayton, VA

On a windy Wednesday afternoon this past week, we made our way up an ancient mountain to a place of sacrifice. Leaving Jerusalem, we traveled by foot and taxi and finally arrived at the top of Mt. Gerizim, sacred site of the Samaritans. The occasion was the Samaritan Passover, a time of celebration and remembrance for the 700 remaining members of this ancient faith. On the mountain, for several thousand years, the Samaritan people have commemorated the Passover by performing sacrifices at their holy site.

To students of the Bible, the Samaritans are well known. The book of 1 Kings relates how the inhabitants of Israel's northern kingdom were taken into captivity by the Assyrians, after which the Assyrian king repopulated the land

with foreign inhabitants. When they encountered calamity because of their polytheistic practices, the king sent an Israelite priest back to teach them the ways of God. It seems that thus was born a new Samaritan religion which mixed Jewish religious thought with remnants of earlier religious belief.

The Bible continues to tell how the returning Israelites experienced opposition from some of the Samaritans during the time of Nehemiah. After the Jews had returned to their homeland, a rivalry seems to have developed between the two groups based on religious and ethnic rivalries. This rivalry was clearly embedded by the time of Jesus, during which time Jews avoided passing through the Samaritan territory and considered Samaritans to be unclean and unworthy of

association. The Samaritans, however, figure prominently in the life of and teachings of Jesus who used them to illustrate that all people can be participants in the present-day kingdom of God.

Today's remaining Samaritans have a somewhat variant version of their history. The Pentateuch that they use as their sacred text differs slightly from the five books of Moses that Jews and Christians use. Samaritans believe that God established Mt. Gerizim and not Jerusalem as the place of worship. They believe that a large number of Israelites remained in Samaria and were not taken captive to Assyria and thus they as Samaritans are direct descendants of those who remained.

Throughout the centuries, the fate of the Samaritans has risen and fallen. Numbering more than a million at one point in history, their numbers have steadily declined due to warfare, assimilation, and forced conversions. For the few who remain, however, the Samaritan heritage defines who they are and how they live. They follow strict religious practices. They live in two communities within historical Israel, one near Tel Aviv and one outside the West Bank city of Nablus on the top of Mt. Gerizim.

Most of the time, the outside world sees or hears little of the Samaritans,

but during their annual Passover sacrifices this changes. Although they are the sole participants in the ritual, the Samaritans allow onlookers to observe their ancient tradition. When we arrived at the site of the sacrifice on Mt. Gerizim, we found it packed with visitors. Due to circumstances, we missed part of the ceremony and found it a bit hard to see when we did arrive. I understand, however, that in the days preceding the Passover event, the sacrificial sheep are selected and guarded for fourteen days before the slaughter. Based on the current number of Samaritans, approximately forty-five sheep are killed on the night of the sacrifice. On that evening, the Samaritan men are all dressed in white. At a given signal the sheep are killed by a quick slash of the throat. Fires are lit in a series of pits and the skinned animals are placed on long poles which are placed into the pits to be cooked. After several hours of cooking, the meat is removed and families return to their homes to eat the meat together along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Any meat that is not eaten is burned.

As a Christian, observing this event provided opportunity for reflection. A sacrifice, with its spurts of blood and smells of burning, is not a beautiful thing. It is a reminder,

however, of the whole history of sacrifice on which our present faith is anchored. Through the lives of Abel, Noah, and Abraham we see man entering God's presence through the shedding of blood signifying deliverance. With the giving of the Mosaic law, the blood of animals became the standard medium of atonement. But it was not enough. The yearly sacrifice of those animals only brought to mind the inescapable scourge of sin, because "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:3,4).

But the sacrifice we commemorate

is different. God who became man offered His blood for us and with that sacrifice everything changed. There is no need for more sacrifices, ever again. Our sins were not merely covered—they were removed. The blood that was shed is effective not only to wash away sins, but to change us into new creatures. This is THE sacrifice to remember.

[Used by permission of Daniel Miller.]

(Written while Bro. Daniel was on assignment with Christian Aid Ministries in Jerusalem some time from 2008 to 2011. This was found in the files of the late David L. Miller.)



A Diverse Unity

Aaron Stoll, Caneyville, KY

The Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century was wildly diverse in both doctrine and practice. The only common thread that distinguishes them from the other reform movements of their day is—as suggested by their name—a focus on adult baptism. Beyond that, they differed on about everything on which it was possible to differ. Some of them were even militant.

Although we shrink from any suggested association with these, the Muensterites are generally considered Anabaptists. Even some of the heroes we hold in high esteem, like Anna of Rotterdam (*Martyr's Mirror*, pages 453-454), had connections with the arm of the Reformation that was attempting to establish the kingdom of heaven with force.

Anabaptism today has few overarching features to separate it from

Evangelical Protestantism. Ironically, our defining belief is no longer our focus on believer's baptism, but our commitment to non-violence. A few years ago, I discovered to my consternation that the Mennonite church I was visiting was pastored by a lady, accepted converts who had been baptized as infants without re-baptism, and was tolerant of "alternative" lifestyles. Their only claim to Anabaptist identity was their commitment to non-violence. (Don't even ask about divorce and remarriage and head coverings.)

The more "liberal" the Anabaptist group becomes, the less affinity I feel with them. I must admit that once the women no longer wear head coverings, I begin to lose fraternal loyalty. Ironically, the head covering is usually the last trace of distinctiveness in dress to be lost; the men often shed theirs a generation before the women let go.

Is it fair to judge people by their dress? Fair or not, there are a lot of things that seem to coalesce in

packages. As dresses become fuller and longer, and men's pullover sweats are replaced by solid-color shirts and suspenders, we'll see smart phones give way to landlines and phone shacks. The list could go on and on—at one end of the spectrum we have large families consisting of six, ten, or twelve children and Grandma and Grandpa living in the Dawdy [Grandpa] house next door: the ultimate in assisted living. The other end of the Anabaptist range of life style is where the average family size is reduced to three or four children and "assisted living" means the same to them as it does to the average American: a nursing home.

[From Plain Things, Vol. 5, No. 6. Address: 1000 Choncie Lee Road, Caneyville, Kentucky, 42721. Used by permission. Caneyville and Brownsville, KY, are sister settlements that practice a community of goods. In 2016, Martha and I made a brief visit both settlements. We enjoyed it. I think it is right to ask, "What can we learn from each other?"

-PLM] 

***Before God can use us,
He humbles us.***

History of Haynes Street Mission, Belize City

Floyd Stoltzfus

It was in the 1970's when some of the national church members from the Amish Mennonite Aid missions in Double Head Cabbage and Isabella Bank found jobs in Belize City. In that era it was not feasible to make daily trips to and from the city (approximately sixty miles) by crossing the Belize River twice (one way) on ferries, then traveling the miles of dirt road.

Gilbert Stevens was pastoring the Mennonite church in Hattieville at that time. He and his family lived in Belize City operating a business of building furniture. They conducted a mid-week Bible study and prayer meeting at their house for these Christians from the inland missions, including some from Hattieville, who lived and worked in the city.

This Bible study stirred a growing interest among the AMA mission personnel and the national believers to purchase a building and establish a mission in Belize City. Prayer was

offered to the Lord of the harvest to lead us to a needy section and to find a building suitable for this purpose.

One of the AMA school teachers at Isabella Bank kept sending letters to her family near Quarryville, Pennsylvania. The post master noticed these letters from Belize. He knew his pastor, Ramon Martinez (formerly from Belize) had a building for sale in Belize City. This building was eventually utilized as a Christian mission to reach out to city children as a day care center.

The postmaster found out through the parents of this school teacher who was sending the letters and under what mission organization she was serving. He was thinking, maybe this group of people would be interested in purchasing his pastor's property. Meanwhile the churches in Belize were praying that God would open a door of opportunity for a further witness in Belize City.

The parents whose daughter was

in Belize teaching school told their bishop brother about this building that was for sale. This brother contacted the mission board. Mr. Martinez made a trip to Belize. Three missionary brothers (Paul Kauffman, Paul Beachy, and Floyd Stoltzfus) met with Ramon at his house. This property was along a gravel street with open sewage in the ditches along the street in the southern part of Belize City. We toured the house. It seemed like the structure was well-built and solid. Ramon purchased shrimp dinners for us. We sat on the inside stairway and joyfully discussed how God in His all-wise providence brought this all together. Mr. Martinez was praying that this building could be used as a mission outreach in that poor community.

At an AMA mission board meeting the item of purchasing the house along Haynes Street was brought to the table for discussion. The five members of the board decided that each would find a quiet spot and pray alone. After prayers were offered, they voted. The vote was unanimous. Settlement for the house and property was made in 1982.

Sunday school was conducted by the Hattieville church and mission personnel in the basement of the house. The attendance was quite high those first years. A couple from

Indiana was sent to serve at Haynes Street. About twelve couples and a number of single staff served at Haynes Street since the early 1980's, some for short terms and others longer terms.

In 1993 a cement house was constructed on the property for Miss Nancy Coblentz because the AMA mission at Hattieville closed. Miss Nancy was willing to live in the city. This house also provided more space for the many guests that stopped for overnight lodging.

Through the years revival meetings were conducted. Sometimes a tent was erected so more people could attend. Souls were saved and baptized after a period of Bible instruction. Community visitation was a vital part of Christian service in Belize City. This involved conducting Bible classes, singing for the elderly and praying with them, walking the streets and passing out Gospel tracts, or simply caring for the sick in the hospital. To this day several age groups of children's ministries are held on the mission compound. For a long time, every Thursday, we visited inmates at the Belize Central Prison. Lots of Christian literature (especially *Beside the Still Waters* devotional guides and Bible Correspondence courses) were given to prisoners and prison staff. Summer Bible School for

children has been a highlight for the mission. Many people died in that section of Belize City. Often funerals were conducted in the church and people heard the gospel.

A Christian bookstore was built and stocked in 2010. A number of dealers come to purchase Bibles and books at an affordable wholesale cost. Bookracks have been erected in various sections of the country. This is a rewarding ministry!

In 2002, a church house was constructed across the street from the mission. In 2004, Mario Lanza was given the charge of being lead pastor of Belize City Christian Fellowship. Brother Mario from Isabella Bank was one of those young men who came to Belize City to find a job in the 1970's. He has been faithful in the

same job for more than forty-three years, and more importantly, to Jesus Christ and the church.

Since those early days, Haynes Street has been paved and underground sewage has been installed. Electricity and telephone services have greatly improved. But we are saddened with the many lost souls in the community who continue to reject the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. However, we are rejoicing for those who are faithful to the Lord! To God be all the glory!

We welcome more stories of beginnings and current happenings of various missions from our home communities and abroad. Send the articles by email: floydmarilyn43@gmail.com or to my address as it appears on the inside front cover.



The Gift of Your Story

Anita Yoder, Guys Mills, PA

Humans are wired for story, for intrigue, wonder, and resolution. We don't think or talk in lists or bullet points. We say "He said, then I said," and "That was when." We describe scenes and conversations without thinking about how it seals impressions and lessons in our minds.

Jesus knew what form of communication would connect best with His listeners. He told them stories.

How should today's women respond to His example? Since Jesus taught by story, what would happen if women would teach each other with stories?

An example: I was talking with my mentor one day and she asked me what I'm looking for in a marriage, so I listed a handful of things. She thought a bit, then said, "So tell me about _____'s marriage." Later, it hit me: the things I'd listed were all about me. Hearing myself tell the story, I heard my selfishness more than I wanted to admit. She could have given me a list of phrases to

remind me that if I marry, it won't be all about me. Instead, inviting me to tell a story gave me color, depth, and real people to show me what I needed to think about. That's the power of story.

The power of story is that it fleshes out theoretical ideas and illustrates what is wise or foolish, loving or thoughtless, Christ-like or selfish. Stories set the moral compass of the listener, and tell us what direction to walk toward. Stories don't shout, but we can't tune them out.

The Elements of Your Story

Basic story ingredients are a character, her desires, her conflicts, and resolution. The best stories have a hero leader who steps into the conflict to solve the problem. Your life is one story, with a million little stories forming the main story line.

In your story, you're the main character, but you're not the hero. You will live differently depending on who you choose to be your hero.

The desires in your life story often

feel messy and inconvenient. But the minute you turn off your desires, your story stops.

An active, pulsing heart filled with the passion Jesus gives will run into some kind of suffering. You want to avoid them, but the conflicts in your story actually make your story. Think about Joseph. Without the conflict with his brothers, he would just be Joseph in the field, not Joseph saving Egypt from starvation. Don't go around looking for conflict, but don't try to escape it.

Living a good story is not about you muscling through and making things work, but it's about keeping in step with Jesus because He has the best solutions. Your hero leader changes everything, able to turn the hardest problem into the best thing. How is it possible? No one knows. No one can do what He does, like when He turned the most unjust, cruel death into eternal life for all the world.

Sharing Your Story

The next time another woman asks you for advice, you might think about one of your longings or conflicts, and say "That reminds me of," or "I remember when..." Honesty opens the door to deeper understanding and care for everyone. When you tell your story, you let the next lady feel safer in telling hers.

Your story is most effective when you tell it gently and humbly. It's not about you, you know. You will want to respect boundaries. Your heart has rooms. You meet some friends on the porch, and others in the living room. Dignity and sensitivity and confidentiality keep you from telling everyone what you should only share with those closest to you. But love for your hero frees you to be quick to tell a story about Him.

Why You Might Hesitate

The fantastic thing about stories is that everyone has them. Feeling shy? Ordinary? Plain? If you have desires, some difficulties, and a hero in Jesus, you have a story. God uses Miss Ordinary and Mrs. Misfit to display incredible stories. Queen Esther comes to mind, as a misfit Jewess in the palace. She told a story of conflict and desire and the telling saved her people! She encased that drama in the ordinary task of a meal invitation!

A deep fear for women is that we are alone. Sharing our stories takes away that fear by letting us see that someone else feels the same longings and questions that we have. Some of the most freeing, healing words are, "What? You too?" The gift of your plain, ordinary story has the potential to comfort your sister and let her feel she's not alone.

Inviting Another's Story

Gossip is story telling gone wrong, but women give life to each other when they draw out the stories of each other with care and respect. Start with "Tell me about," or "I'd like to hear..." We are wired in such a way that an experience is rarely complete until we talk about it. Valuing another's story and listening to her words is like giving a gift to her.

Partnering with Jesus

There is much about Revelation that I don't understand, but the scene in chapter twelve with the woman and the dragon gives me pause. The voice in heaven announces that the accuser of the brethren was overcome by the "blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." Could it mean that something happens in the spiritual

realm when our Hero lets us partner with Him? That He conquers conflict with His own power combined with the power of our story?

When a woman says "This is what happened and this is what God did," something happens beyond our sight. It is a mystery and a wonder, but I believe living and telling good stories can change the world.

Join me?

(Anita Yoder kindly consented to write this month's article as a prelude for future articles – from all of us – about our personal stories. If you feel God's Spirit nudging you about something in your life story that glorifies the Master Author, I invite you to communicate with me about it. Susan Schlabach skschlabach@gmail.com)



junior messages

Hometown Kindness?

Mary Ellen Beachy

It was a freak accident really. I had just run outside to cut a few pine boughs to brighten the season at our cabin. While breaking some fragrant green boughs, another branch

somehow seemed to reach out and scratch my eye. It felt uncomfortable. At least I could see. But, back in the house, when I looked in the mirror, I was shocked to see a dark red

bloodshot stain on the white of my eye. I went into the office and showed Mark my injured eye. He was concerned.

The beginning of this week I had an infected swollen thumb, so after prayers and soaking in Epson salts, I wrapped it up in a drawing salve overnight. The next day I pressed out pale, yellow pus. Finally, it was nearly well. But now, my eye.

After lunch we decided I better would call an optometrist. After all, we had plans to fly to Kenya in two days. What would I do if my eye got infected?

Dr. Yoder was very kind and congenial. He thought I should have an antibiotic salve to ward off infection. “The Sugarcreek druggist is my friend,” Dr. Yoder informed me. “I will quickly call him before they close, and will call you back.”

My phone soon rang. Dr. Yoder informed me that I could go pick up the eye drops. The drug store would close at 2:00.

I drove to Sugarcreek. The drug store looked dark. Thankfully the door was not locked. I walked inside and found the druggist in the back, a short elderly man with a pony tail and owl glasses. He handed me the small box with the eye drops, and informed me that since they are closed I can call in on Monday to make payment. I thanked him profusely. He was pleased to be able

to show small town kindness.

They had closed earlier than I knew, but he had allowed me to come in. I was grateful for their kindness.

Kindness In Church

I asked many of the ladies in our church to pray for me on our three week trip to Kenya. I requested prayers for protection, health and wisdom.

One Sunday after we returned I was having a nice chat with Susan after church. Susan is older than I am. We are friends. We care about and appreciate each other. Friends from many age groups are such a blessing! She inquired about our time in Kenya and told me she had often prayed for me.

Her words just blessed my heart. God heard her prayers. God answered so many prayers. Prayer is a great kindness we can do to bless each other. If you are a child, if you are elderly or anywhere in between—pray. Tell people you are praying for them.

What is your job? Who do you see each day? Ask God. He can help you with ideas for being above average in kindness and thoughtfulness. He can help you to brighten days and be a ray of sunshine for Him.

Kindness is a perfume that brightens every day. God’s children are known for kind words and kind deeds. 

Does the Size of Our Vocabulary Matter to God?

Gideon Yutzy, Dunmore East, Ireland

The email came about two years ago, I think. Long enough, in any case, that my initial indignation has worn off now, and I can write about it somewhat objectively.

The reader was responding to an article I had written on being open-minded when discussing controversial issues. Interestingly, his disagreement with my article was not about the content; it was about some of my word choices. He said I wrote “above my intended audience’s heads,” that words such as “demographic” and “conundrum” would be unintelligible to the average plain Anabaptist.

The tone of the letter was respectful, and I thanked him (though I think I included some rather pert remark about there being a reason most homes have dictionaries). And that was the extent of our exchange: his well-meaning note of concern, and my affable, if somewhat self-

justifying, response.

But I have not forgotten his letter. In fact, I have periodically been mulling it over since the day I read it. Here are some of my thoughts.

I want to say in the beginning, I am all for stating things clearly and simply. To say, for example, “It rained last night,” is usually more effective than saying, “Prior to regaining our consciousness after our nocturnal respite, precipitation cascaded through the stratosphere.” So please know that whatever I say in the following paragraphs, my goal is not to bash simple, concise language.

What I am saying is that neglecting to learn how to use words well is not a virtue. Yes, we have all heard Moses praised for how he led the Israelites even though he couldn’t speak very eloquently; or the men in Acts, even though they were “ignorant and unlearned,” others perceived that “they had been with Christ.”

Yet in neither of those passages (or

any other passage of Scripture that I know about) does it suggest that a good grasp on language is a sin.

Certainly, God often works through people's weaknesses. In this way, it reinforces in everyone's mind that the power and inspiration for any good accomplished in the world comes from God, not from people. We are co-laborers with God, but we are not the main heroes of that work. Take for example, Fannie Crosby. Although she was blind, she wrote thousands of hymns, many of which are still sung today. God worked in spite of, even because of, her blindness. In this way, people could recognize more easily that it was really God at work composing the hymns and not just Fannie Crosby.

Yet it would be absurd to take Crosby's story and say that everyone with healthy vision is somehow less pious. On the contrary, God's intent for most of us is to use and protect our sense of vision.

In the same way, God created us—at least the majority of us—with the miraculous, under-celebrated capacity to excel at language. Of course, some people are born with speech impediments. Other people, such as nearly half of the adults in Mali, lack opportunities to read and develop their verbal skills. But what about us? What obstacle,

besides perhaps some sort of self-imposed false piety, is keeping us from learning how to speak?

And by learning to speak I don't mean merely learning to enunciate the different sounds of English, although it's always nice for the listeners if people can do that. What I have in mind is the more advanced stages of speaking—the ability to speak with freshness, with sensitivity, with wisdom, and so on. What I have in mind is the ability to speak in a way that is appropriate for each different situation. "*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt,*" wrote Saint Paul, "*so that you may know how you should answer everyone*" (Colossians 4:6). There you have it, a command in the Bible: hone your speaking abilities!

Several of Christianity's crucial, time-honored truths are under attack these days. The first of these is our foundational belief that man is made in God's image. Humans have, I would submit, greater inherent value than meerkats; and to return to the focus of this article, one of the main ways humans have greater inherent value than meerkats is their ability to use complex, evocative language. Our ability to speak with other humans as well as God Himself is an awesome indicator that we are, in a way that is unique among all species,

made in God's image. "*You crown him [humans] with glory and honor*" (Psalm 8:5).

Here is the other important truth of Christianity that we must not allow the enemy to obscure. By learning to speak effectively, disciples of Jesus can actually create the reality of God's kingdom on earth. And this is really the crux of why it's important to use words well. Recall the times someone spoke hope—or kindness or encouragement or instruction for some new skill—into your life. Perhaps it was your teacher, your parent, or your spouse. Do you not agree that their words helped create a reality in your life?

Perhaps, if you're finding it hard to accept that the tongue can create realities, it might be helpful to think of the unpleasant realities it regularly creates. How many of today's emotionally-charged political issues, such as racism or differing income levels, were created through people's insensitive words! Or consider the destructive speech patterns that are often present in our homes. We accuse our loved ones, for example, instead of asking them questions to gain deeper understanding. We make blanket statements instead of speaking with nuance. Surely we all agree that the tongue can create negative realities. Can we embrace

fact that it can also, by extension, create positive realities?

So will we commit to cultivating effective communication skills? Cultivate, because they will not be handed to us on a silver platter. Yes, this cultivating should consist of much more than merely acquiring a large vocabulary. It is, after all, the simple words that often communicate all the old virtues we value most, such as kindness, empathy, encouragement, and the ability to bring good cheer. I am sure the man whose letter set off this whole article would agree.

But if I may again justify myself ever so slightly, acquiring a larger vocabulary is not an enemy to any of these virtues. In fact, it can complement these virtues. Who should be more interested than Christians to learn new words, celebrate words of all kinds, and experiment with our words to bring heavenly realities into a fallen world? And yes, I am including plain Anabaptist Christians in that.

So I leave you, dear concerned reader of two years past, as well as any readers who dislike less commonly-used words, with a proposed deal. I agree to refrain from wordmongering (using words pretentiously and inaccurately) and sesquipedalianism (the tendency to use words with many syllables), under one condition:

you agree to join me in growing our vocabulary, and not only our vocabulary, but more broadly, our ability to use language effectively.

Regardless of how you feel about expanding your vocabulary, it is my hope that we can all link arms for the following values:

1) In a world where sound bites and catchy graphics rule the day, may we and our children quietly hone our ability to speak forth the awesome realities of God's Kingdom. Jesus Himself was a master of language. He did not shy away from using various rhetorical devices such as parables, hyperbole, humor, and imagery. To emulate Him, we will unapologetically read books, study foreign languages, and—yes, even this one has a place in Kingdom Christianity—value correct grammar.

2) In a dominant culture that slings mud and slanders at every turn, may we learn to disarm people by

speaking gracious words, seasoned with salt. *“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver”* (Proverbs 25:11).

3) In a time when material reality is often thought to be the only reality, may we find ways to tell the spiritually blind of unseen realities—the realities that will never pass away (2 Cor. 4:18).

In the end, it doesn't matter whether our vocabulary numbers 5,000 words or 50,000 words. It only matters that we honed our God-given ability and, humbly yet confidently, used our words to make a difference.

Go forth and speak life.

Writers for Thinking Generation wish to generate, above all else, greater involvement in God's Kingdom—especially among today's thoughtful young Anabaptists. Did this month's column evoke a response from you? Contact the writer at gideonutzy@gmail.com



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Those who spread sunshine have fewer dark days.

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For better health, look on the bright side of things;
sometimes it's the surly bird that gets the germ.

• • • • •

Every soul winner believes in hell.

• • • • •

Cleaning the house while the children are still growing may
seem like shoveling the sidewalks while it's still snowing.

• • • • •

A humble man never blows his "knows" in public.

• • • • •

Is "hate" the exact opposite of "love"?
No, "indifference" is a better definition.

• • • • •

The toughest kind of climbing is getting out of a rut.

• • • • •

Life by the yard seems hard, but by the inch it's a cinch.