



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

NOVEMBER 2020

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Calvary Messenger

November 2020

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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Senior Senior's Thanksgiving Prayers

Simon Schrock, Catlett, VA

"The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years" (Psalm 90:10 NKJV).

Many of my friends and I have reached the reason of strength and beyond. Our thanks to God has changed significantly. We thank God for blessings we did not think of longer ago.

Thank you, God:

- For letting me see another day. *This is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*
- For being able to get out of bed,
- not falling in the shower,
- and getting my shirt buttoned.
- Being able to stay upright and get to the kitchen,
- and bring Polly a cup of coffee.
- That I can still enjoy nourishment,
- and that we could go to church today.

Thank you, God:

- For those 2 Corinthians 12:9 touches of grace;
- through phone calls,
- cards and letters,
- and encouraging words from friends.
- Thank you for that promise of hope, *"For we know if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1 NKJV).*

A prayer from my childhood:

- Now I lay me down to sleep,
- I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep,
- If I should die before I wake,
- I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take,
- If I should live for other days,
- I pray thee, Lord, to guide my ways.



Defining Moments in Time

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (Micah 6:8)

On a recent midnight hour on the west side of Indianapolis, a young couple was working to make their trailer travel worthy. In a series of tragic events, a young wife and mother lost her life, the young husband and father was gravely injured, and their young six-year-old son experienced and witnessed events that no one should ever need to experience and witness. In a few short moments in time, a destiny was determined, and many lives were altered.

In the following days after the young father fought for his life, photos of his discharge from the hospital seemed to show some of his struggles with facing the future. He was traveling home to be reunited with his motherless children, to attend the funeral of his wife, and to face the uncertainties of a redefined life.

Fortunately, very few of us face

such traumatically defining moments in our lives. But even in our own close circle of friends and relatives, we can think of sad and tragic moments that changed their lives. A quick reflection on our own lives results in memories that stand out as changing our physical, emotional, or spiritual perspectives and directions.

There are other events that affect whole states or countries. There are wars, floods, hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes, or pandemics that affect large areas and many people.

Some of these defining moments are events that happened through what appear to be pure happenstance. There are other times when our own actions brought us to these defining moments. This discourse will look at the response to these moments rather than what brought these moments to our lives.

We find many examples in the Bible of defining moments. Here is a perfunctory list: Adam and Eve’s

encounter with the serpent, Cain and his response to Abel, Joseph's slavery in Egypt, Moses when he killed the Egyptian, Saul offering a sacrifice impatiently, David facing Goliath, Daniel when he asked for vegetables and water, Peter denying his Lord, Judas betraying Jesus, and Saul being struck down with light on the way to Damascus. I will note the responses in several of these examples.

While there are times when we arrive at these defining moments in a series of life events, many times we are abruptly thrown into situations that require an immediate action or response. We often respond out of our life habits or character. Like a sudden shake of a container of liquid reveals its contents, so a sudden response will often reveal our character.

The unusual events this summer with the continuing pandemic has given us multiple defining moments in our lives. From government-issued lockdowns and mitigating recommendations, we continue to be faced with opportunities that reveal our hearts and characters. While only time will reveal what the best mitigating practices are, there are time-proven responses that are good and right no matter what the circumstances may be. We should never obey man over God's

clear commandments, we can often appeal to our superiors when difficult situations arise, we should repent when we realize we have failed the moment, and we can always be kind.

Joseph's response to his brothers, to his temptress, and to his employer will work in every situation. When his appeals fell on deaf ears, he did what was right. He did not respond in kind or sin against his employer or his God. *"There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Genesis 39:9)?

While Daniel was determined to not sin against His God, he appealed to his master. He respectfully and kindly gave him a suggestion and a timetable for proving his point. When the executioner came to his door after the king's wise men and magicians were not able to tell the king his dream, he appealed and kindly asked for time. And after a lifetime of faithfulness to several kings and his God, he refused to pray to any other than his faithful God, being willing to face the obvious death threat of the lions' den.

When Peter miserably failed his defining moment in the high priest's palace, he recognized that his boldness and human strength had

failed him. He went out and sincerely repented with bitter tears when he realized he had failed his Lord.

In a contrasting response, Judas also recognized his failed moment in time. But for whatever reason, his response was not redemptive.

Saul, the Pharisee, seemed positively sure that he was serving Jehovah. His commitment was complete. His background and training made him sure that this Jesus and His movement was working against Jehovah. I expect he had reasons based on his knowledge of the law and the prophets to do his best to squelch this movement. When the Light met him on his trip to fight for Jehovah, he was dumbfounded. He trembled and was astonished! I can only imagine the battle in his mind to reconcile this very obvious encounter with Jesus with all of the reasons he had to believe that Jehovah had been directing his life. Could he really be wrong? What about all he knew about the law and the prophets? Saul's responses are worthy to note.

When we are faced with obvious contradictions to what we think is right, we should ask questions. Saul asked two of the voice he heard: "Who are you?" and "What do you want me to do?"

There are many voices that speak

contradictions into our lives, and life-changing moments can do that to us. It is very important that we know who is speaking. Obviously, not every voice is Jesus. When drastic events happen to us, and these events shake our foundations, we should carefully evaluate what is required of us. We don't know when Saul believed that Jesus had met him, but he asked the Voice who He was and what he should do. He followed this directive and I believe in the following three days he searched his heart. "Could I really have been wrong? Really?"

Meanwhile, in another part of Damascus, the Voice spoke to another man. Ananias recognized this Voice as his God, but even he appealed with his own question. After an affirmation from his God, he obeyed. *"And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized"* (Acts 9:17-18).

When Saul heard that his visitor's name was Ananias, felt his hand upon him, and heard his prayer for Saul's sight to be returned—things that

matched the vision God had given him—all of the pieces fell in place and he realized he had been wrong about Jesus. In a greatly defining moment of his life, he changed his mind and believed by faith!

This current pandemic is obviously a defining moment in time globally, but also for each one of us. In the cacophony of voices we hear today, may we be able to separate opinion from truth. May our response to directives and mandates, and our responsibility to our fellow men, be based on all of Scripture and the spirit of God's Word. To many people we may be the only representative of God that they will ever see.

Every sincere believer knows that *“we ought to obey God rather than*

men.” While it is good to be sure and convinced that God is directing our thoughts and lives, it is presumptuous to believe that we have the upper hand on God's leading. When we encounter defining moments in our lives, let's follow the time-proven methods of discovering God's will for us. We can always appeal, we should always obey God, we should repent when we realize we have failed, and we should always be kind. May we be humble enough to realize that we can be wrong, brave enough to follow through in our obedience to God's Word, and willing to realize that “obeying man” may well be the man in our own hearts. May the voice that we revere and obey be His and not our own. 

Announcement

Calvary Bible School Clean-up

We are again soliciting help from folks like you for the annual clean-up effort at Calvary Bible School on November 9-11, 2020. This short-term voluntary service opportunity features lots of good old-fashioned work for young (like recent CBS alumni) and old (like less-recent “grandparent” type CBS alumni), ample chance for fellowship while working alongside others, generous helpings of good home-cooked food, and lodging provided in the CBS dorms! Should you and a number of friends from your church or youth group be willing to volunteer or have more questions, please contact **Lowell Swartzentruber** at **864-378-3394**. Thank you very much for your assistance in the past and in the future!

—Lowell for Calvary Bible School 

Assuming Guilt

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

A preacher is not in error when he “shares” about prayer, saying we do not pray enough. Then he also says we should thank God more and come up with less outright requests. We are either too much like beggars, or else we are likened to spoiled children. The emphasis on prayer on Sunday morning is about spending more time in thanking God than in making requests, and moving away from always coming to God and asking for so many things.

Somehow at the mid-week prayer meeting we are expected to make many prayer requests. We seem to need eight or ten requests before we come to prayer. Where are the nine people to give thanks? Surely there are some among us who are more earnest with their giving of thanks than being persistent in making requests to God. Are all of us to blame for being slack in giving God the glory due unto His name? I don't think so.

Why does the speaker to the children assume that all children are naughty? I also don't have the reason for it. Or why is it presumed that all farmers are rich, and wage earners are poor? The opposite

might be more correct these days because some are, while others are not. (Being unclear as to who is that way is intended!)

We have rather frequently indicted a whole group of people as failing without allowing for some exceptions. I remember in years past when the whole congregation was blamed for coming up short on the performance of certain Christian graces. We felt undue embarrassment for the visitors who were present at such times. We felt wrongly accused on those occasions of presumed guilt for the whole congregation; those who do well, overall, in the grace of God, do not go around blowing their own horn. Neither should the preacher at church push the button that activates the siren against sin as though it involves all of us.

A good example is aptly given in Paul's letter to the believers at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 10:1-5. He wrote very well “*how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink . . . But with many*

of them God was not well pleased.” All were blessed and benefitted and credited, but when it came to God’s verdict, it was not said that God was displeased with them all, as though God blamed or indicted all of them. Paul, by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, realistically said, *“But with many of them God was not well pleased,”* allowing that there were those who were exemplary.

Some of us public speakers might need to learn that important facet again, that we should never make the Word of God so severe as to say that we all are failing in any Bible subject. Not that any of us are perfect all the time, but neither are all of us guilty in some aspect of Christian living. While we could, no doubt, do better, that should not give license to condemn us all for certain shortcomings.

It might come as news to some of us church leaders that there are always some young people among us who are sincerely, even earnestly desiring to know and to do God’s will. Some of them have a well-developed conscience that might, in God’s sight, be more mature and perfect than our own. The same could be said for both younger children and young adolescents. It is possible, and even likely, that some children fail because of ignorance, wherein we adults also fail at times against our better knowledge. We have many parents who are doing exceptionally well in

not only teaching their children in righteousness but also training them in noble responses in life. It would certainly be better to credit everyone, even if it is not precisely true to every individual, than to censure everyone present.

We will make more progress in congregational growth by a word of recognition and honor where it can be rightly given than by looking for weaknesses in people whom we think need correction. A piano tuner does not tear out a discordant wire and quickly replace it; he patiently keeps making the least little bit of adjustment until it is exactly right.

Being intentional in publicly and privately commending the good, as a priest, is more powerful than pointing up errors like a prophet.

The Bottom Line is that we ought to thank God more for dedicated young people, who have pure hearts and have a life dedicated to self-denial, who are committed to discipleship to our Lord Jesus and ready and willing to serve God in all sincerity and truth. In tandem with that, we could publicly and privately thank God for the many families who in the past and today are making focused efforts to bless and train their children in the ways of the Lord. And preachers, for a breath of fresh air, let us occasionally remember to bless the children who are trying to honor their imperfect parents and are faithful and honest students in school. 

Work with a High Purpose

Merle Herr, Guys Mills, PA

Are you disillusioned with your work? Do you ache for more purpose in work? Have you ever wondered if your work pleases the Lord? To answer these questions, start by understanding the difference between your work's purpose and its mission.

Purpose is what inspires you to work. It is the reason why you work. Having purpose encourages and motivates you to get going. Lack of purpose depresses you and saps your joy. What in your work is worth giving thirty years of your life to do? A purpose is something which we aspire to and which grips our heart. Purpose motivates us and engages our emotions.

Mission is practical. Mission is what you actually do. It is the specific type of work your hands and mind do on a daily basis. Mission is essentially a description of our products or services. It answers the question of "what." What do you provide or produce? That is your mission.

You can accomplish a worthy mission in life, but you also need to fulfill a high purpose. The ability to find meaning and joy in your work is directly related to the worthiness of the work and the height of the real

purpose. Even a good mission (what you do) will often fail to satisfy if it isn't backed up with a high purpose.

Serving the Work

It is a worthy mission to want to make a contribution to your industry—such as building quality furniture or producing good food—and by showing a better and more ennobling way of doing the work. Satisfaction should be found in work itself, but serving the work cannot be done at the expense of detriment to people.

The only true way to serve people is to emotionally belong to the community and then to willingly work for the sake of people. While the products or services created "serve" the community, the worker serves people. Work has dignity and meaning in and of itself as it serves the good of others. Even serving a cup of cold water has dignity.

The Scriptures mandate and bless work. The Genesis creation mandate to "be fruitful" and "have dominion" is the foundation for a Christian work ethic. Christianity finds its natural expression through work.

However, some work is not worthy. The Scriptures warn about works that are wood, hay, and stubble, and

which will be consumed in the final purging fire. No eternal reward will accompany such useless work. We should reject work that destroys human life, that exploits others, and that destroys and damages the earth. Work should truly serve people with value that is good, true, and lovely. If your work does not hold these values, you should seriously consider redirecting your efforts to work with a higher purpose. Give yourself to worthy work that truly serves the good of people.

On the other hand, if you aim only at serving people, you may forget the dignity of work itself. This can lead to discontentment with menial work, bargaining for reward, seeking for applause, and feeling slighted if you are not appreciated.

Give yourself to worthy work that truly serves the good of people.

The High Purpose of Serving People

We all give lip service to having God as our high purpose for business and work. But the “snake in the woodpile” bites us because our purpose in business is sometimes swallowed up by urgency of the mission. What we do is so large and consuming that we can lose sight of why we do it!

When asked to explain what you provide customers, what do you say? You can likely talk for five or ten minutes describing your product

or service. Can you also talk freely about your purpose? Why are you in business? This is a harder question. Of course the right answer is “to glorify God” or “to love God,” but be more specific. Let’s ask the question this way: “What is the second highest purpose in your work?”

A farmer was teaching his son how to cultivate corn when a neighbor stopped by and said, “George, you’re raising a fine crop of corn.” George replied, “I’m not raising corn, I’m raising boys! Raising the corn is just one of their lessons.” Raising corn was his mission—it was what he was doing; raising boys was his high purpose—it was why he was farming!

The story of ServiceMaster, a company based in Memphis, Tennessee, helps illustrate this point. Their worthy mission is janitorial service—cleaning floors and washing windows. Their mission requires low-skilled, low-paid labor to make a profit. ServiceMaster’s biggest problem was employee turnover. They were spending enormous amounts of energy recruiting and training new employees. Few wanted to stay with them because washing windows did not provide opportunities to advance to higher-paying work. How many people want to mop floors for the rest of their lives? And how could a higher purpose of helping employees

develop be fulfilled if they only stayed a year or two?

CEO Bill Pollard had a passion to help develop people, so ServiceMaster developed a career path for each employee. The company plans to lose each employee the day the employee is hired. They sit down with the employees and help them make decisions about how to achieve career education. They help with training for the next job. Their high purpose was helping people prepare and train for a career beyond ServiceMaster!

When ServiceMaster meshed their mission of washing windows and floors with their purpose of helping people with career preparation, they no longer had as much difficulty in retaining employees.

While the highest purpose of every business is to honor God, the second highest purpose of every business must be people. Jesus said that the first commandment is to love God and that the second is to love people. Mark Nissley from Hutchinson, Kansas, recently said, “Work not only matters to God, but it should matter to us. We are most miserable if the only purpose of our work is the paycheck, or if we have a job that serves our ego and comfort.”

Keeping Our Purpose High

To fulfill a higher purpose, work must truly serve the good of others. Anabaptists are well-known for their

strong work ethic. We believe in the dignity of work. We work hard. Historically, Anabaptists valued farming because of how it nurtured family life. Farming performs the worthy work of feeding the world with milk, meats, and grains, but the still higher purpose is raising children in a Christian environment of grace and work.

But with so many moving off the farm, we may have unintentionally accepted lower purposes in our work. We continue to “serve the work” with a strong work ethic off the farm. However, we have weakened our resolve to “serve the family” in non-agricultural industries. Many industries will not tolerate children at work with their father. Do we have the vision and purpose to enable fathers to spend time at home with family? Are Christian employers willing to reduce profits by paying above-market labor rates so fathers avoid excessive overtime? Let’s ascribe to high-purposed family values similar to those historically achieved through farming. If you increase profits at the price of diminishing the strength of families, you have made a bad and costly bargain.

The more effectively work moves people towards Christ, the higher the purpose of the work. For example, selling a \$1,000 kitchen stove to a family with six children accomplishes

a much higher purpose than selling a \$5,000 stainless steel kitchen stove to a hedonistic couple wanting no children—particularly if this couple’s purpose in buying the high-priced stove is to complement their status-seeking \$100,000 kitchen.

If your products and services subtly move people away from Christ, you must take responsibility for this loss. If your products fulfill lust for riches, you become one of the factors that deepens bondage to sin and the deceitfulness of riches. It makes no sense to pray on Sunday for neighbors who are lost, in part because of their riches, and then sell products on Monday that further alienate them from Christ. Consider our loss of joy and purpose in this type of work—and more significantly—our loss in eternity. There is a lot of money to be made serving the lusts of the rich, but what would Jesus do?

A respected Amish outdoor furniture maker in Ohio found himself caught on the horns of negative-purpose work. He began selling expensive hot tubs to complement his existing line of outdoor furniture. He told me the story of how the hot tubs drew in rich customers with very low values. The profits were high, but the lack of fulfillment was heart-wrenching! He discontinued selling hot tubs. I challenge you to follow the example of this Amish

brother. Carefully consider if your business contributes to the spiritual strengthening or weakening of your customers. Move away from negative-purpose work and your reward will be great. Put people development ahead of product development, and family values ahead of economic values. Turn away from work that subtly erodes Kingdom values. Make profits a secondary concern after you have met the social and spiritual needs of people.

A friend of mine commented how he found deeper meaning and joy working with displaced Burmese people than he did in building houses in America. Is foreign mission work inherently more worthy than washing floors and windows or building houses? The reality is that both are worthy work in the Kingdom, and God calls each of us to work in different places for the common good of the Kingdom. The more powerfully your work moves people toward Christ, the higher the purpose. Worthy mission and high purpose are the two joy-springs of your heart, and you will be restless until you find your calling in a worthy mission with a high purpose.

[Reprinted from the Stewardship Connections, article 607. Used by permission]



Dear American Church

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

Despite all the good religious works you do,
I have a grievous complaint to state against you.
Although you call me Lord, yet it is quite evident
your moral values depend on the U.S. president.

Now whether he is a Democrat or a Republican,
is he able to do more for you than I can?
Maybe you have the illusion his promises are real,
because he is someone you can see, hear, and feel.

As your Omniscient Savior, I wholly understand
your concern with the low morals of your land.
But remember, the spiritual ills of your society
cannot be fixed by legislating morality.

Hence, I beg you to honestly examine your heart
to discover where these problems got their start.
I see worldly philosophies have invaded your soul,
and compromise has allowed them to take control.

If you would just objectively read My Holy Word,
then you could perceive how incredibly absurd
to divide your loyalty between God and country,
while at the same time professing to follow Me.

You know the ideologies of the political sphere
violate the precepts My Sacred Gospel declares.
Whereas its leaders desperately strive for position,
My faithful disciples diligently serve in humiliation.

To accomplish its goals, it will rise up and fight,
trusting in its military intelligence and might.
Contrarily, My kingdom advances through love,
living in holiness, empowered from God above.

Therefore, if you desire to improve your nation,
you must dedicate yourself to your holy vocation,
fearlessly declaring My message of true salvation
to deliver sinful humanity from eternal damnation.

Finally, I will issue you a reminder: the U.S. Constitution
is not the document I presume to govern My holy nation.
Rather, the Charter I will apply when I call you to account
is found in the Gospels, namely, the Sermon on the Mount!

-as written by Jesus, your Lord and King



marriages

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

Eash-Yoder

Bro. Philip, son of Wanda and the late Dennis Eash, Slanesville, WV, and Sis. Kaitlyn, daughter of Mervin and Rhoda Yoder, Russellville, OH, on June 20, 2020, at an outdoor venue, The Willow, for Stillwaters Mennonite Church, Georgetown, OH, by Markus Yoder.

Gingerich-Fisher

Bro. Patrick, son of Joel and Dorcas Gingerich, Minerva, OH, and Sis. Marilyn, daughter of Marvin and Kathryn Fisher, Woodstown, NJ, on September 12, 2020, at Salem County Mennonite Church by Joel Gingerich.

Martin-Mast

Bro. Joshua, son of Levi and Judi Martin, Edinburg, VA, and Sis. Melody, daughter of Keith and Linda Mast, Honeybrook, PA, on July 11, 2020, at Living Hope Christian Fellowship for Summitview Christian Fellowship by Dave Stoltzfus.

Naidu-King

Bro. Nikolas, son of Pat and Raeleen Naidu, Allentown, PA, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Abner and Mary King, Honeybrook, PA, on September 5, 2020, at Bethel Christian Fellowship for Summitview Christian Fellowship by Dave Stoltzfus.

Schlabach-Kauffman

Bro. Wesley, son of Paul and Martha Schlabach, Holmesville, OH, and Sis. Janae Kauffman, daughter of Nate and Jane Kauffman, Mt Pleasant, PA, on August 28, 2020, at Word of Life Church for Trauger Mennonite by Merv Lapp.

Sollenberger-Yoder

Bro. Benjamin, son of Conrad and Sharon Sollenberger, Shippensburg, PA, and Sis. Laurel, daughter of Tim and Lydiann Yoder, Belleville, PA, on February 22, 2020, at Locust Grove Church for Pleasant View Amish Mennonite Church by David Peachey.

Stoltzfus-Stoltzfus

Bro. Duane, son of Amos and Anna Marie Stoltzfus, Gap, PA, and Sis. Regina, daughter of Wilmer and Emma Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA, on August 29, 2020, at Ridgeview Mennonite Church by Floyd King.



cradle roll

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

Alcaraz, Florencio and Hilda (Miller), Crossville, TN, second child and son, Darwin Ray, July 19, 2020.

Amaya, Samuel and Mim (Miller), McKenney, VA, fifth child, third daughter, Amy Elizabeth, August 2, 2020.

Beiler, Micah and Kendra (Huber), Pittsgrove, NJ, second child and son, Kyson Blake, August 31, 2020.

Bender, Lewis Jr. and Mary Lois (Wengerd), Henry, TN, fifth child and son, Joash Edward, September 13, 2020.

Eash, Gabriel and Heidi (Wadel), Plain City, OH, fifth child, second son, Korwin Lawrence, September 16, 2020.

Funk, Christopher and Karen (Fisher), Chambersburg, PA, first child and daughter, MaKayla Brielle, August 25, 2020.

Hershberger, Chad and Lucinda (Schlabach), Russellville, OH, first child and son, Jordan Leon, September 11, 2020.

Kauffman, Arlin and Orpha (Swarey), Cottage Grove, TN, third child and daughter, Veronica Hope, September 17, 2020.

Kinsinger, Elmer and Saloma (Kinsinger), Garrett, PA, third child and son, Johnathan Elmer, August 29, 2020.

Knox, Cody and Michelle (Miller), Cable, OH, fourth child, second daughter, Eden Promise, September 16, 2020.

Lengacher, Marcus and Glenda (Coblentz), Torrington, WY, sixth child, third daughter, Megan Abigail, May 27, 2020.

Martin, Kendan and Meredith (Troyer), Aroda, VA, third child, second son, Berkley Clay, September 9, 2020.

Mast, Jason and Jessica (Miller), Mountain View, AR, sixth child (one deceased), second son, Jenson Eric, August 29, 2020.

Mast, Quinton and Crystal (King), Torrington, WY, fourth child, second daughter, Chantelle Faith, March 2, 2020.

Miller, Jesse and Lori (Hostetler), Blackville, SC, fifth child, third son, Kaden Reed, September 6, 2020.

Schmidt, James and Joanne (Gerber), Milbank, ON, third child and son, Jaxon Marc, September 22, 2020.

Stoltzfus, Justin and Anita (Hostetler), Mechanicsburg, OH, second child, first daughter, Kate Olivia, September 21, 2020.

Swarey, Maynard and Cynthia (Yoder), Free Union, VA, seventh child, fourth son, Seth Gabriel, September 23, 2020.

Wagler, Anthony and Bernice (Mast), Cottage Grove, TN, first child and daughter, Leslie Beth, March 8, 2020.

Yoder, Duane and Lorita (Chupp), Waterford, Ireland, second child (one deceased), first son, Casper Duane, August 8, 2020.

Yoder, Jason and Amy (Eash), Waynesboro, VA, first child and daughter, Elana Grace, September 12, 2020.

Yoder, Jonathan and Joyce (Miller), Dunmore East, County Waterford, Ireland, eighth and ninth children, fifth and sixth sons, Jorge Paul and Jonah Jack, July 14, 2020. 

ordinations

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

Bro. Glen Chupp, 44, (wife, Katherine Yoder), was ordained as bishop for Believer's Fellowship Mennonite Church, Grove City, MN, on August 2, 2020. Pre-ordination messages were given by Monroe Gingerich. The charge was given

by Melvin Beiler, assisted by Monroe Gingerich and David Yoder. Daniel Chupp shared the lot.

Bro. Roman Kauffman, 51, (wife, Ruth Peachey), was called by the voice of the church and commissioned as bishop for Greene Mennonite Church, Chuckey, TN, for the duration of Raymond Fisher's time of service in Kenya, September 6, 2020, by Raymond Fisher, assisted by John Beiler and Floyd Graber.

Bro. Jonathan Martin, 41, (wife, Lavonna Yoder), Free Union, VA, was called by the Lord through the voice of the church and was ordained to the office of bishop for Faith Mission Fellowship on September 27, 2020. Ben A. Stoltzfus, Morgantown, PA, preached the pre-ordination and ordination messages. The charge was given by Ivan Beachy, the retiring bishop, assisted by Ben Stoltzfus and Tim Weaver, Fincastle, VA. 

obituaries

Hershberger, William L., 80, passed away Monday, September 7, 2020, at his home in rural Hutchinson, Kansas. He was born August 30, 1940, in Middlebury, IN, to Levi E. and Lydiann (Miller) Hershberger.

William loved his life with family and friends. He was a "foodie," mechanic, farmer, an avid reader, and woodworker. He built his own sawmill, and in his last years he built beautiful furniture and

toys for his beloved grandchildren. He volunteered for Hands of Christ for many years, building wheelchair ramps and making house repairs for people without other resources. He liked work and he loved solving mechanical problems. William was an Offender/Victim Ministry Mentor at the Hutchinson Correctional Facility. He was a member of Center Amish Mennonite Church. He loved Christ. He loved the church.

On October 27, 1960, he married Mary Elizabeth Yutzy in Buchanan County, Iowa. They shared almost 60 years of marriage.

William is survived by his wife, Mary Elizabeth, of rural Hutchinson; children: LeRoy Hershberger, Partridge; RoseAnna Nissley (Mark), Haven; Miriam Joy Derstine (Mark), Sanford, NC; David Alan Hershberger (Luann), Melvern; Regina Kaye Derstine (Trevor), Culver, OR; Michael Jon Hershberger (Jolene), Hutchinson; Paul Brian Hershberger (Cynthia), Partridge, KS; Joseph William Hershberger (Leanna), Nickerson; Charity Elizabeth Hershberger, Harrisburg, OR; siblings: Mervin Hershberger (Sarah), Augusta, WI; Mary Stutzman (Perry), Delhi, IA; Viola Lambright, Hazelton, IA; brother-in-law, Roman Raber, Fairbank, IA; 43 grandchildren, and 21 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a sister, Emma Raber, and a great-granddaughter, Molli Beiler.

The funeral service was held on September 11, 2020, at Center Amish Mennonite Church with Dwight Miller and Paul Yoder officiating. Burial was at West Center Amish Cemetery.

Miller, Lester E., 83, Holmesville, OH, died peacefully at his earthly home on April 26, 2020. He was waiting for his eternal home after a short illness. Lester was born on May 18, 1936, in rural Dundee, OH, to the late Eli S. and Mary (Erb) Miller. On August 2, 1958,

he married Miriam Bontrager. They were married 61 years.

Besides his wife, he leaves his children: Marlyn Ray (Mary), Burns, WY; Glenn Roy (Arlene), Millersburg; Matthew Bryan of the home; and a foster granddaughter, Tiffany Yoder, Shreve. He was a cherished and loved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

He became a Christian in his youth, living a dedicated life for Christ and the church. He was a faithful member at Peniel Amish Mennonite church since 1984, after moving to the area from Martinsburg, OH. He was a dairy farmer for 26 years, then was a mechanic until his health failed.

Lester's siblings were Anna (Ammon) Yoder, Amos (Leona), Aden (Amanda), Christena (Ray) Miller, Mary (Norman) Troyer, and Francine (Larry) Troyer. Today, only his sisters Mary and Francine are still living.

Many people felt blessed with Lester's willingness to help where needed while health permitted. He is remembered by his smile if not by name.

The private service and interment were held on April 29 at the Peniel Church Cemetery. A public memorial service will be held at Peniel Church on November 1, at 9:30.

Miller, Robert S., 83, passed away on September 17, 2020. He was born November 13, 1936, in Yoder, Kansas.

Robert attended the Shadylawn Mennonite Church. He loved working

in his garden, farming, working on tractors, and woodworking. But most of all, he loved spending time with family and neighbors.

Robert was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, whose memory will be forever cherished by his loved ones.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Bertha I. (Yoder) Miller, whom he married on June 4, 1957; parents, Sam and Betsy Miller; an infant son; and several brothers and sisters.

He is survived by his sons, Jason, Sam, Danny, Lavern, and John; daughter, Marlene Miller; brothers, Sammy, Johnny, Floyd, and Raymond; sister, Esther Miller; as well as 26 grandchildren and 27 great-grandchildren.

The funeral and burial were held at Pine Grove Cemetery, Floral, AR, on September 21, 2020, with Michael Mast officiating. Brian Schlabaugh conducted the committal.

Otto, Alvin, 82, of Crossville, TN, went to be with the Lord after a short illness on August 19, 2020. He was born March 31, 1938, to Samuel and Katie (Kemp) Otto.

He leaves behind his beloved wife, Mabel (Hershberger), of 61 years; children: David (Miriam), Crossville; Mary (Ray) Landis, Middlefield, OH; Steven (Rhonda), Sparta; Philip (Teresa), Hartwell, GA; Deborah, Crossville; Ruth (Steve) Fisher, Honey Brook, PA; and Esther, Greenwood, DE. He was preceded in death by a son, Joseph.

He enjoyed being with his children, 32

grandchildren, two step-grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren.

He followed God's call to Paraguay, South America, in 1970-1983 where he served with his wife, Mabel, and six children. Alvin was ordained deacon in 1979 in Paraguay. Upon his return to the USA, they moved to TN, where he founded Otto Builders and served as deacon in his local church. He loved his family well and served the Lord faithfully.

Alvin's siblings are Anna (deceased) (Melvin) Slabaugh; Sylvia (John) Erb (deceased); Amos (deceased) (Mary) Otto; Louise (Ervin) Yoder; Lester (Miriam) Otto.

The funeral service was held August 22, 2020, at Mt. Moriah Mennonite Church.

Troyer, Jonas N., 95, of Plain City, OH, passed away peacefully at his home on September 11, 2020, surrounded by his family. He was born August 23, 1925, to Noah and Tena (Farmwald) Troyer.

He married Elma Hostetler on November 23, 1954.

He is survived by his wife, Elma, of 65 years; 11 children: Freeman (Melinda), Henry (Terri), Danny, Milton, Mark (Charlene), Howard (Tracy), David (Teresa), Norman (Renee), Jonas Jr., Esther Beachy, Martha (Travis) Engle; 31 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by two brothers: Andy (Emma), and Alvin (Sara Mae); three sisters: Ada Yoder, Mary Hershberger, Esther Troyer; and a sister-in-law, Fannie Troyer.

He was predeceased by his parents, Noah and Tena (Farmwald) Troyer; two brothers: Eli and Abe; and two sisters: Katie (infant), and Sarah Troyer.

Jonas was a member of Canaan Fellowship Church.

Dad was a man whose faith was in God. He taught us many things, more by example than by words. After a struggle, he would gratefully say, "God's been good to me."

The funeral was held September 15, 2020, at United Bethel Church. Services were conducted by the Canaan ministry team. Burial was at the Canaan Fellowship Cemetery.

Yoder, Beulah, 68, of Montezuma, GA, passed away peacefully in her home on April 19, 2020. She was born December 27, 1951, in Thomas, OK, to Clarence and Malinda Wingard.

She accepted Christ in her youth and was a faithful member of the Montezuma Mennonite Church.

On October 21, 1971, she married Irvin Yoder, and they enjoyed 48 years together. God blessed them with six children. Beulah poured her life into teaching her children, embraced the art of homemaking, and faithfully supported her husband in ministering to the church. She used her God-given talents of delicious cooking and attention to detail to bless many people. She is remembered for her welcoming manner and friendly personality.

Beulah suffered from respiratory illness along with other health challenges.

In the last two and one-half years, as her condition worsened, she endured pain and was mostly housebound as her breathing became more difficult. She still looked for ways to serve others as she was able to.

Beulah expressed a desire to be with Jesus. This became a reality as her loving family witnessed the miracle of her release into bliss.

Those left to cherish her memory are her loving husband, Irvin Yoder, of Montezuma; their children: Troy (Matilda) Yoder, Montezuma; Joe Allen (Glenda) Yoder, Rural Retreat, VA; David Lee (Heidi) Yoder, Montezuma; Lynette (Mark) Mast, Troutville, VA; Teresa (Leroy) Whitt, Montezuma; and Janelle (Jason) Knepp, Somerville, TN. Also surviving are 19 grandchildren, one brother, Freeman Wingard, and one sister, Emma Yoder.

She was preceded in death by her parents, one brother, Earl Wingard, and one sister, Mary Ellen Wingard.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a private graveside service was held on April 22, 2020. The memorial service was held on June 14, 2020, at the Montezuma Mennonite Church. Officiating were Morris Yoder, Faron Wingard, and Donny Swartzentruber.

Yoder, Dorothy Emma, 65, of Paris, TN, passed away on August 14, 2020, at her home. She was born on July 26, 1955, to Joni and Lydia Miller.

She suffered from Fahr's syndrome and had been bedfast for nearly eight months

before her passing. Prior to that, she had been wheelchair bound for more than four years.

She leaves behind five sons: Olen (Charity) Yoder, Mt. Olive, MS; James (Elsie) Yoder, Paris; Eugene ‘Gene’ (Caroline) Yoder, Southaven, MS; Philip Yoder, Macon, MS; Dennis (Rose) Yoder, Franklin; three daughters: Joanna (Donald) Schrock, Green Ridge, MO; Keturah ‘Kaye’ (Galen) Schrock, Paris; Phyllis (Ethan) Mast, Lincoln, MO; and 23 grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Norman Daniel Yoder, and mother, Lydia Miller.

She is survived by her father, Joni Miller, of Roodhouse, IL; three brothers: Herman (Ellen) Miller, Belleville, PA; Perry (Ruth) Miller, Mt. Sterling, IL; Nevin Miller, Olive Hill; and three sisters: Sue (Wilmer) Byler, Mt. Sterling, IL; Elizabeth (Lavern) Yoder, Marion, KY; and Barbara (Norman) Yoder, Roodhouse, IL.

Visitation and funeral services were both conducted on August 18, 2020, at Calvary Christian Fellowship, where she was a member, by Henry Nissley and Michael Yoder. Burial was in the church cemetery with the committal service conducted by Henry Nissley. 

observations

A couple of months ago a local man, whom I will call Mark, did some work at our house. Mark has lived in the Four State Area of southeast Kansas, southwest Missouri, northeast Oklahoma, and northwest Arkansas for several decades now. But he was born and raised in a state east of the Mississippi River. He loves this area and feels at home here, but he acknowledges that he misses the manicured approach to landscaping of the people who live where he grew up. He said it looks like all the neighbors “back home” get out a scissors to trim the hedge and make sure that everything is

perfectly neat. He never was part of an Anabaptist church group but grew up in an Amish and Mennonite community. He is familiar with us conservative Anabaptists in a variety of contexts. His comments on landscape grooming were not exclusive to his Anabaptist neighbors, but he hinted that they raised the bar in this area rather than lowered it.

• • • • •

Several years ago, a brother in our home congregation treated us to a wonderful evening in an Amish home in rural Chouteau, Oklahoma. The main event of the evening was an elaborate Amish-

cooked meal served up on long tables in the basement. We were not their only customers that evening. The decorations and ambiance were simple and unpretentious. But the food was remarkable in its presentation and taste. Indeed, it was a delight to various senses, including smell, texture, taste, and sight. It's no wonder that some people call cooks and chefs culinary artists. These down-to-earth Amish folks certainly displayed some high-quality culinary art on their tables to a receptive public who seemed willing to pay handsomely for the experience. So much so that people drove hours to enjoy this experience.

• • • • •

On our way to supper that evening, we stopped at two other businesses in the Chouteau area. One of them was a very attractive retail establishment that seems to enjoy robust foot traffic. "Amish" cheese is a prominent emphasis in their marketing effort. The store was clean, attractive, and offered a large selection of artfully arranged product to enhance the shopping experience. I don't remember if we bought anything or not, but we enjoyed visiting the store.

• • • • •

The other place we visited was called Amish-Crafted Furniture Outlet. The proprietors were pleased to converse

with us in Pennsylvania Dutch despite the fact that they had discarded personal visible features that would identify them with their own Amish childhood. But the furniture that they sourced from Amish craftsmen in Indiana to stock the store was truly marvelous to behold. It was beautiful! These furniture craftsmen displayed remarkable artistic ability in transforming wood to functional beauty.

• • • • •

The older I get the more questions I have about our approach to beauty, function, art, and excellence. I'm speaking for us who identify as conservative Anabaptists. While I do not offer many conclusions, I would like to offer a few observations for our mutual pondering.

Generally speaking, we "plain people" profess a priority of simplicity. But our tolerance for the pursuit of art and beauty feels a bit uneven in its application. I am not pointing out the uneven application in an effort to discredit what we do well but hoping that it infuses a bit of humility into our stance that we live simple and plain lives. I propose that it would serve us well to admit that our appreciation for non-functional beauty is part of who we are alongside our appreciation for simplicity. I prefer to think of

these two elements as balancing and humbling factors rather than competing and debilitating factors.

We seem to enjoy preparing and eating complicated, beautifully presented, calorie-dense food—sometimes to our own physical detriment. We rightly consider prideful, expressions of ostentatious possessions to be inappropriate. But the fruit of that teaching and philosophy is often more noticeable in wardrobe choices and church house design than it is in vehicle choices and how our homes are built and furnished.

Some artists paint pictures. While there aren't many in our circles who make their living producing this sort of art, we seem to feel it is OK for us to acquire tasteful art and hang it on the walls of our churches, offices, and homes. When we broaden our understanding of art to include architecture, wood craftsmanship, culinary and domestic arts, I propose that we have some of the finest artists on the planet in our midst. You may wish to add those who are skilled in music, whether writing, playing, or singing, to your list of Anabaptist artists.

It has been stated that artists are some of the loneliest people in our circles. Would that statement be more accurate by adding this

qualifier at the end of that sentence, “unless, their art genre involves producing functional beauty?” Is our enjoyment of beauty, art, and excellence a result of us bearing the stamp of our marvelous Creator, the authentic Origin of beauty? Is the embrace of functional art and suspicion of aesthetic art and our estimation of those who produce each justifiable? Does order and beauty draw our hearts and spirits to God or to the artist?

When we, who are God's creation, create order, beauty, and art, this is an appropriate stewardship of what God has entrusted to us. We are free to enjoy beauty as part of God's marvelous plan to enrich and delight us. However, the temptation always exists to draw our attention to the artist, builder, cook, craftsman, or what the artist has made, rather than to God behind it all. For the artist, the temptation exists to see his ability and his work as something to be proud of rather than something to steward as a reflection of our Creator.



In a recent column I lamented the deterioration of civil discourse in the public arena, particularly among the appointed and elected civil authorities. One kind reader reminded me that this has been going along a LOT longer than I gave it

credit for, and that we tend to forget how hostile it really was. He said I should study what the opponents of Abe Lincoln said about him. I did not research this, but do take the comments of this trusted brother pretty seriously given his awareness of history.

It reminded me of a story I heard about an exchange between two political opponents that took place 36 years ago. Ronald Reagan, age 73, was running against a younger man, Walter Mondale, for president in 1984. At a presidential debate Reagan was asked to respond to those who wondered if voters should be concerned about his fitness for office given his advanced age. He quipped, "I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience..." Mondale chuckled in appreciation of his rival's wit.



COVID-19 continues to leave its tracks on the health of those it touches. In addition to the difficult health effects, the ongoing disruption of various supply chains continues to be felt. In some cases, the pandemic has hampered both production and delivery of products. In other cases, an increased demand has left suppliers struggling to keep up.

When all these factors converge, things can go haywire pretty quickly.

People became concerned about a meat shortage. This summer I learned that the earliest open dates available at our local custom slaughterhouses was sometime in the fall of 2021! Lumber supplies are tight, and some prices have increased sharply in recent months. A local man who does construction work told me that he had bid a job with about \$7,500 dollars' worth of lumber in June. In September, that lumber would cost him double what he quoted in June. This story is typical of others I've heard. Time will tell if these and other supply issues normalize themselves with time, like the famous toilet paper shortage this spring. Or maybe these problems are a new normal going forward. If this is normal, it will require ongoing adjustments for those of us who are used to being able to buy what we need when we want it.



I don't relish the idea of reliving the experience of not meeting for church with the local congregation like we did during the pandemic. I'm confident that none of us idealize this sort of arrangement. But I was encouraged by stories of families who tried their best to make the most of the situation. Some families had family church services in which

various children filled a variety of roles. Another family I heard about had a family “fellowship meal” for Sunday lunch in which each child contributed a menu item of their own making. We do well

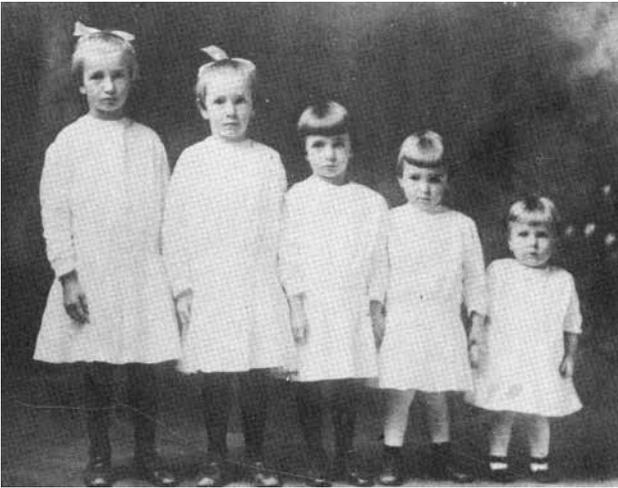
when we recognize that undesirable situations often present us with unique opportunities we might have missed if everything would always be like we wish.

-RJM 

The Stair-step Orphans

Janis Good

[While we are facing a very unusual year, this story reflects the fact that there have been other times in history when the world faced pandemics. May we be grateful for the many changes in healthcare and communication that have made this year less traumatic. -AY]



The Shank orphans are arranged stair-step in a row: five little girls are dressed in white and the youngest, a boy, sits in a small rocking chair. The orphans are Velma (9), Naomi (8), Pauline (6), Emma (4), Grace (3), and Aaron Shank (1).

The parents, Daniel and Abbie Shank, had been married twelve years and had lived in a white framed farmhouse south of Broadway. Daniel was a farmer and a bee-keeper and Abbie was a busy mother.

Dressed in their best, scrubbed and combed, the Shank family

attended Zion Mennonite Church near Broadway where Daniel was Sunday school superintendent. Once when he asked a class of children to say a memory verse, one of his children piped up and said, "See my new shoes?" Mama Abbie was quite embarrassed and likely Papa was too.

Then one day the dreaded influenza invaded the Shank household. Daniel and Abbie and children took to their beds with the severe sickness World War I soldiers had brought home after the war. This virus took lives! Fear of the dreaded illness limited casual visits between friends and neighbors, and sometimes schools and public meetings were closed when the illness ran rampant. Overworked doctors tried their best to care for the sick and save lives. Still, thousands of all ages died.

Daniel Shank had never been sick in his life, yet he lay in bed with the notorious illness. The whole Shank family was sick except for four-year-old Emma, who carried water to the sick ones. She pulled the stool to the medicine cupboard and got the medicine her mother asked her to bring for the family.

Grandma Blosser (Catherine Shank Lahman Blosser, known as

Kate) came on the train and walked to the Shank's house to care for the sick. Then Emma also became sick with influenza and double pneumonia. Ten miserable days passed in the Shank household.

On February 17, 1920, at 7:00 a.m. Daniel Shank breathed his last. As Abbie neared death, someone asked her what to do with the children. "The Lord will take care of them," she said. Just two-and-a-half hours after Daniel's departure, Abbie and her unborn child entered eternal rest. Both Daniel and Abbie were thirty-three. It was said that the couple were deeply devoted to each other and had hoped, in the event of death, to go together.

With Emma not expected to live, the doctor prevented her from seeing her deceased parents. Grace, aged three, especially attached to her father, expressed intense grief when she saw him in the casket. When one of the orphans wished to keep the parents at home, the compassionate funeral director declared, "Those children will have candy as long as I live."

As the mourners made their way to the cemetery at Zion, the train stopped to allow the procession to cross the tracks. Daniel and Abbie were buried in a double grave after a

short graveside service. A memorial service followed in April once the epidemic was over.

What happened to the children who became orphans 100 years ago? Various relatives—grandparents and uncles and aunts—took the orphans to live with them.

Velma, Pauline, and Emma became wives of ministers. They were Mrs. Maurice Landis, Mrs. Samuel Strong, and Mrs. Earl Delp. Grace became a patient in Western State Hospital. Aaron hoped to become a pilot and gain a career debt free by joining the army. He was married shortly before he was killed in action in WWII at

age twenty-three. Naomi married Harry Brunk, history professor and author of several books.

Though the sisters tried to relate to Grace and Aaron, they wished they could have accomplished more. The Shank tragedy speaks deeply to family and community, even one hundred years after it happened.

The resource for this article and photo was Six Little Orphans: My Story, by Emma Shank Delp with Harriet Delp Miller, 1990.

[Reprinted from the January-February 2020 issue of Life Lines. Used by permission.]



mission awareness

Light to America

Compiled by Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

Duane Stoltzfus, Millersburg, OH

“I weep tonight for the sorry condition of America and the evil we encounter,” stated one of CAM’s Billboard Evangelism phone team members. Despair. Guilt. Hopelessness. Anxiety. Fear. Daily, our phone team speaks with many passersby, giving us a window into

the spiritual temperature of our nation. As the morals of our country decline and people face a sense of hopelessness, many don’t know where to turn. The recent spread of coronavirus has added a new level of uncertainty. Americans are anxious about the future and many

are seeking answers.

Billboard Evangelism sees the year 2020 as a special year of unusual opportunities to proclaim Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, to confused and tense people. With increased tension in our government, a controversial presidential election on the horizon, and “wars and rumors of wars” abroad, the year 2020 is set to be a year of much anxiety and confusion.

What can we do? As followers of Jesus, we belong to another Kingdom—the kingdom of God. As Jesus our King taught, His kingdom is not of this world; therefore, His servants do not fight. Jesus taught His followers to honor those in authority over us and pray for them. Jesus also taught us to be a light to the world and make disciples for the Kingdom of God. This is accomplished by proclaiming the truth in love. As followers of Jesus we want to present Jesus as our trustworthy King.

An Update on the 2020 Light to America Project

Jay Stoltzfus, Millersburg, OH
(Billboard Evangelism Operations Manager)

The COVID-19 crisis is well known in nearly all corners of the world. Has anything like this, since

the worldwide flood in Noah’s day, affected the entire world at the same time? God had warned Noah about the coming flood, and Noah prepared an ark to save his family and anyone who wanted to join them. In II Peter 2:5 Noah is called “a preacher of righteousness.” No doubt Noah warned people of the coming flood and pled with them to enter the ark.

God has also told us about an even greater upcoming event—the return of Jesus Christ to claim those who are faithful to Him. Luke 17:26 says, “And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.” Could it be that God is using this time of uncertainty to give the world another opportunity to make peace with Him before Christ returns. Our goal for the **2020 Light to America** project is to faithfully preach Jesus Christ and point people to Him as the ark of safety and refuge.

Some months ago, Adam* called from New York City after seeing one of the billboard messages, *Anxious? Jesus offers rest*. “I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders,” he said. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, Adam had a lot of fear and had trouble sleeping at night. He worried, not only about the uncertainties, but about his spiritual life. Our team member explained

repentance to Adam. The instruction was just what Adam was seeking. After our team member prayed with him, Adam prayed also, confessing his sins and committing to live for God. At the end of the call, Adam said, “We in New York have been spoiled. This is humbling to us. We are usually the city that never sleeps, but now it’s like the whole world is sitting still, especially New York City. At 11:00 at night when it is time to go to sleep, usually there is a lot of noise. Now you can hear a pin drop.” In the midst of this quietness, God was able to speak to Adam’s heart. Pray for him!

The **2020 Light to America** billboard project was born from the desire to share the message of Jesus with Americans during a time of turmoil and confusion. This year has held far more uncertainty than we anticipated. First came the COVID-19 pandemic with widespread lockdowns, causing the economy to plummet. Later, massive protests in a number of America’s large cities turned violent, bringing fear and instability. These ongoing events are followed by a heated presidential election that is causing uncertainty and anxiety in many hearts.

As believers in Jesus, we know

where to go when times are difficult.

We understand that hearts will not be changed, and peace will not come by protesting or voting the right person into office. We know that Jesus is our refuge when times are difficult. We recognize that true change will only happen as people surrender their lives to Jesus.

Unfortunately, many people in our nation do not understand this. They search desperately for meaning and answers but do not know where to turn.

Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). Jesus is the light our country needs! He also told His disciples, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Jesus is depending on us as His followers to shine light into the darkness around us.

Thank you for your help in shining the light of Jesus through hundreds of billboards all over America. We shared our vision for the **2020 Light to America** project with you and your response was overwhelming.

With funding for this project, we were able to put up an *additional* 320 Gospel billboards across the U.S. These billboards have special messages of hope, rest, and peace, to

point distressed Americans to Christ. In addition to the **Light to America** billboards that you sponsored, we posted the same messages on most of our other billboards.

An estimated 19 million people are seeing the **Light to America** messages each day. Our prayer is that lasting change will come to many hearts as the light of Jesus's message penetrates the darkness and confusion that permeate our country.

Although the **Light to America** project spans only four months (July through October), we sense a great need to continue reminding as many Americans of God as we can. With moral decline and increased unrest, we recognize a need to work because "...the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). We plan to continue posting Gospel messages in the country through the Billboard Evangelism program.

Thank you again for your support and may the Lord richly bless you!

Stories from callers

The response to the 2020 **Light to America** billboards is encouraging. Here are a few stories.

Linda* called after seeing the billboard, *Disillusioned? Jesus offers hope*. She said she was raised Jewish but is not religious at all now. The events of the past year really got her

attention. Many things in her life are completely different than they were at the beginning of the year. Linda asked many questions about Jesus, how He could have created the world, and His relationship to God. She seemed open to learn as our phone team member responded to her questions.

Renaë* called while driving through the rain and asked for prayer during the storm. She had been struggling with an anxiety attack and then she saw the billboard, *Anxious? Jesus offers rest*. Our phone team member prayed with her and she was much calmer. Her father professes to be a Christian and her mom is a Jew. Renaë is not sure what is the right way for her. She asked where she could find a church that would guide her in the right way.

The many calls from these billboards are only a small window into the impact that the **Light to America** billboards are having on America. May the Light of the world continue to shine into many needy hearts in our nation.

**Names of callers have been changed to protect identities.*

[Reprinted from various CAM 2020 Light to America reports. Used by permission.]



Enter into His Gates with Thanksgiving

Bethany Eicher, Quaker City, OH



[Bethany (Gingerich) Eicher remembers when her mother used to write monthly articles for this column years ago. This month, Bethany, now also a mother who finds joy in expression and words, in the tradition of her mother, Lavina, blesses us with her story about God showing her thankfulness. Susan Schlabach]

There's a small, black journal on the floor by my bed—yes, I know you probably keep yours neatly in your nightstand; some of us make stacks on the floor. Anyway, there's a small, black journal, and in it is scrawled *Diaries of the Coronavirus, March 2020*. For nine long weeks I kept a daily record of one of the most surreal times of my life. Days when time seemed to stand still and accomplishing any task felt like pushing your way through a sea of sticky peanut butter. Days when the only way to survive was putting one foot in front of the other and snatching chances to hide in some dark corner with a large box of tissues.

My life before March was an easy one. I'm the wife of one, a stay-at-

home mother of five. My oldest is a high school graduate, now working with his dad, and the rest ranged from tenth to first grade. My days were spent cleaning, cooking, doing laundry (so much laundry!) and having ample time alone to nourish my introverted soul. If I wanted to accept outside activities, like volunteering at a local thrift store, I usually could. If I wanted to stay at home and do my own thing, that was usually a valid option. March 2020 changed all of that.

"*Sunday, March 15,*" the first entry in that black journal reads, "*The first day of canceled normality.*"

In one fell swoop, during that fateful week in March, my world turned completely inside out. Church was canceled, school was

closed, and we welcomed our first foster placement, a four-year-old little girl. In one weekend's time, my days went from seven hours of alone time to zero; from many hours of independence to high alert 24/7. To say it was an adjustment would be the biggest understatement of the year.

I don't know how you deal with life when it throws you big challenges. Maybe you are the kind who enjoys them—I live with a man who seems to. The bigger the challenge, the more optimism and determination to solve and conquer exudes from his person. You would think that nineteen years of living with that attitude would somehow transmit at least a small portion of it to my soul. Sadly, it hasn't. My instinctive modus operandi when big challenges appear is to run as far and as fast as possible. But sometimes there's nowhere to run. Sometimes the challenge must be faced and walked through, even when it feels impossibly hard.

So, I walked.

I walked into homeschooling using A Beka videos with only cell phone internet and four students who all needed to watch Math and Phonics and be in a Zoom meeting *now*. I walked into coaxing a first grader through his work who, when asked if mom is just that bad of a teacher, replied promptly and adamantly,

“Yes!!” And I walked into the heart of a four-year-old with whom the “honeymoon stage” lasted about one week. Essentially, I walked into a life so out of my control that every day became one more vat of peanut butter to wade through. I dreaded getting up in the morning and starting a new day.

Added to the stress of everything else was the fact that underneath it all I was sure that I was not cut out for foster care. I never dreamed of doing this, see? I never really wanted it; never longed for it. I probably should have said no long ago, and we never would have gotten to this point. “Foster care isn't for everyone,” said all the wise people. Why couldn't I just be one of those and stop feeling guilty? Why couldn't I just ignore the fact that we had prayed about a ministry opportunity for our family, and because the need was great, we felt led to make ourselves available?

Every morning I would lie in bed and beg, “*Please* God, give us a good day. *Please* help me be patient. *Please* let school go smoothly. *Please* make the children play nicely. *Please* help the four-year-old not to have a tantrum; *please* help me know how to handle it when she does.” I knew there was no way I could do this on my own, so I turned to the One who had strength to give away. Somehow

it didn't really make me feel that much better.

Oh sure, if the day went well, I felt better. If the sun shone, the schoolwork got done, and the time-outs were minimal, then the begging felt helpful. If my kind husband brought pizza for supper or spent his precious after-work hours taking the youngest members of the household to the park, then I felt much, much better! But on the inevitable days when things didn't go well, I lived for bedtime and wondered if the energy expended begging was really even worth it?

I don't remember exactly what brought me to the Sunday where I looked my choices squarely in the eye. I only know I had been wallowing in self-pity and constantly thinking how much easier all this strange life would be without a four-year-old yet too, and I realized that it had to stop. Somewhere in the process that day of choosing repentance and joy, the verses in Psalm 100 became a word picture in my mind.

“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name” (Psalm 100:4).

In the days that followed, I began picturing the start of my day as *entering into His gates*. Making a conscious choice to *enter those gates*

with thanksgiving changed my prayers from frantic begging into grateful praising, “Thank you, Lord, for the gift of this day! Thank you for Your faithfulness! Thank you for answered prayer yesterday!” This adjustment in perspective changed nothing in my situation but the resulting peace and joy made an astonishing difference. Almost without realizing it, my focus imperceptibly shifted from inward to outward, bringing a change in my own heart that spilled over into the struggles and challenges of each day.

It would be completely dishonest to leave the impression that this practice of gratitude turned me into a bubbling fountain of perpetual joy. All you would need to do is ask my husband and family to find that to be untrue! However, there is no denying that the practice did make a difference. The idea of *entering into His gates with thanksgiving* is jotted down in the little black journal on the floor beside my bed. When I look back on those nine dramatic weeks of quarantine, I will remember many things. I will always remember the fear and the turmoil, the challenges and the enormity of change, and the days of struggle and putting one foot in front of the other. But I hope that in my memories I will also recall the gem of truth that I learned from *Psalm 100:4*.



Where is the Witchdoctor?

Markus Beachy, Dundee, OH

My adopted grandpa, David Lorah, served as a missionary in Africa for many years. He taught school and lived among the natives in various countries. Here is one of his stories from Zambia from the 1970s. MB

The African tribe that occupied the territory across the river from our mission was known for its powerful witchdoctors. These men often came to our villages, bringing with them devastation and despair. On one occasion, one of these visitors set up camp about three miles south of us. Daily, I watched as dozens of villagers walked past the shop where I trained young men in carpentry. They were headed to the witchdoctor's camp. Anyone who did not show enthusiastic support and take a gift to the witchdoctor was not looked on favorably. Such a person could easily be branded as a witch.

To the African mind, the witch is the bad one and the witchdoctor is the good one. By this, I mean that

the witch is the one who casts spells and kills its victim, whereas the witchdoctor "smells" out the killer by the use of trickery and some supernatural power (certainly not God's).

This particular witchdoctor had decided to show the mission a favor. According to him, there were some bad people (obviously witches) in the congregation. He informed us that he would be coming to the mission on Thursday to help us "smell out" and get rid of the bad persons. He aired his accusations to all who would listen. He also named four persons from our congregation, three men and one woman, as potential witches who would need to be dealt with. Each of these were elderly and had been Christians a long time. By accusing them, he placed those individuals in tremendous danger. Doubtless, they would be harassed, and their property vandalized, even as far as the burning of their homes.

Cases were on record of victims being hounded to death.

Tension was in the air at the Wednesday afternoon Bible Class. I changed my message and instead focused on the greater power possessed by the believer in Christ as compared to any power of evil. They all fully agreed with me that the witchdoctor's power was satanic. I mentioned the four who were being victimized and said that I intended to claim protection for them in the Name of the Lord Jesus. We prayed and claimed victory over the power of Satan. We planted a hedge of safety around our three brothers and one sister.

Through the shop window the next morning (the day when the witchdoctor was expected to show up), I noticed that no one was heading along the road leading to the

south. I turned to the young men and remarked that it was odd that no one was going to the camp.

"Didn't you know?" the young men replied.

"Know what?" I responded.

"He's gone."

"Who's gone?" I asked.

"The witchdoctor," they answered. "The villagers from that area told us this morning that when they went to his camp, he was gone."

No one seemed to know where he had gone or why. But I knew. I could have told them why he was no longer around. God had shown His mighty power. We were so grateful Jesus heard and answered our prayers. He protected the four Christians the witchdoctor had accused.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10). 

AN UNGRATEFUL PERSON IS LIKE
A HOG UNDER A TREE EATING
ACORNS BUT NEVER LOOKING UP
TO SEE WHERE THEY COME FROM.

Blessings in Service (Part 3)

Josh Kooistra, New Concord, OH

In thinking about going into service, I talked about the need for the support of your church and your parents. If we push ahead without that, we endanger ourselves spiritually, and we make it difficult for God to bless our labors. I asked some administrative personnel a question that goes hand in hand with that kind of behavior, **“What are some behaviors and attitudes that can be a detriment to a place of service and can possibly lead to termination of the service worker’s term if not corrected?”**

Here is a compilation of the answers received:

- Negative attitudes toward the policies and being critical of administrative decisions
- Forming or being part of cliques, which are detrimental to unity among staff
- Sowing discord by gossiping or spreading negative thoughts about what is asked of them
- Slacking off while on duty or doing only what’s needed to get by

- Neglecting the residents whom they are called to serve
- Lack of moral purity
- Lack of integrity
- Unhealthy relationships; these unhealthy relationships can be cross-gender, but can also cause challenges in dorm life
- Not being gracious with people of differing viewpoints, backgrounds, values, or personalities

Several of these points are what we would term “no-brainers.” Of course, neglecting those we are helping isn’t acceptable. We wouldn’t THINK of being involved in moral impurity! Aren’t we ALWAYS gracious to people whose ideas or backgrounds differ from ours (at least to their faces)? Sadly, it’s easy to be unrealistic about how I actually conduct myself in those areas. Some of the other points fall a little bit into a gray area. What I consider a negative attitude and what you consider a negative attitude may be two different things. Cliques and

unhealthy relationships are a little harder to define. What one might consider just a good friendship, looking at it from the outside, may be inappropriate or divisive.

Problems come up wherever people are working and living in relationship. Here are some ways to combat the pitfalls listed above:

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10a). The formula for successful preparation for service is simple. Be faithful right where you are. God uses people who are faithfully using their talents for Him regardless of where they are or whether they may receive recognition from it. If we wait until God calls us to something great before we begin to cultivate habits that lend to effectiveness and availability in God’s kingdom, then we will wait a long time. We’ve all heard the old argument of “Does God call the equipped, or does He equip the called?” I have concluded that God equips the called. Are not all our talents from Him? If He calls us to something that suits our talents, He already did the equipping!

In looking at our future and our desire to serve God, we need to make sure we don’t try to limit God. We humans with our finite minds cannot see the whole picture. He

can. God doesn’t make mistakes! God does not call all of us to the same thing. Service for you and service for me may be two vastly different things. My call to serve may be in a foreign country while yours is right at home. In no way should anyone who hasn’t felt called to “go” and serve feel like they are lacking or not in tune with God. Not all are called to go. Service doesn’t mean going. Service means serving. Be it at home or abroad, faithfulness where God has placed you is the absolute best gift that you can give to the kingdom of God.

If you do feel that going into service is something you’d like to do (whether in six months or three years from now) start thinking about that as you make decisions now. Consider your future goals and plans when you purchase that first car, buy that pet, or make a business investment or commitment. What seems like an insignificant decision now could become a potential hindrance later. For example, as a young man I purchased a vehicle on payments. I was halfway through paying it off when I was called to teach school in Belize. What do I do with the vehicle now? Thankfully, God made a way. I was able to work out something with my parents, and I was able to get out from under that debt before going to serve.

That brings me to an important point: Never forget or downplay the sacrifices of those who stay at home. Some of those who stay at home sacrifice far more than those who go. Someone must fill the shoes you leave empty. Whether it's at work, at home, or at church, someone is picking up your slack. Those who keep the home fires burning are just as essential as those who go. May we never take those people and their sacrifices for granted.

If you do feel called to go serve, you want your time there to be enjoyable. One aspect of your time in service can define and will influence all your time in service—relationships. Getting along with people is paramount to being effective in service.

I asked a few people in service now what character traits they appreciate of a fellow service worker:

Humility, workability, and flexibility. It also helps if they have a great sense of humor :)

-Melody Lapp

A willing, unselfish, jubilant, easy-going, and peaceable person!!

-Jill Wenger

Compassion, a servant heart, openness, and communication.

-Janelle Eby

People who have their identity and security in Jesus and who are already

grounded in what they believe. People who came to serve and aren't just here for selfish reasons. People who respect authority.

-Miranda Miller

Attentiveness, not just being able to listen to someone and then do it, but also to be aware of how people are doing and encouraging them where needed.

-Bryce Raber

A servant's heart (unselfish), doesn't get angry easily, good communicators, kind.

-Aaron Lapp

Although similar, a lot of these responses are unique and yet they are all attributes that we should strive to cultivate in our own lives. Did you notice the thread of humility, workability, willingness, unselfishness, a servant heart, came to serve, being aware, and encouraging? A willingness to serve and a surrender to God's will are all we need to be effective in serving. Recently I heard the question asked, "Are we satisfied with where we are right now?" Might I take it a step farther and ask more importantly, "Is God satisfied with where you are right now?" That question is the same now as it was 120 years ago when Elisha Hoffman penned the words, "*Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?*"





Then It's Fall

When you hear the wild geese calling
And up in the sky you see
That they all are flying southward
In a long and straggling V,
When the woolly caterpillars
Crawl along the porch and wall,
And your kitty's fur gets thicker;
Then you know that it is fall.

When the mornings are so frosty
That you put a sweater on,
While the leaves in gay, bright colors
Hold a party on the lawn;
When the friendly black-eyed Susans
Fill the wayside with their cheer,
And you hear the school bells ringing,
Then you know that fall is here.

When the children gather pumpkins,
And the chipmunks bury seeds,
When the squirrels carry walnuts
To be stored for winter needs,
Then it's time to say, "I thank You,"
To the One who made it all,
For of all our changing seasons,
None is lovelier than fall.

-Ada L. Wine (Public Domain)

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• • • • •

Thanksgiving is a duty before it is a feeling.

• • • • •

If we pause to think, we'll have cause to thank.

• • • • •

If you can't be thankful for what you receive, be thankful for what you escape.

• • • • •

We are the objects of God's grace; let Him be the object of our gratitude.

• • • • •

If a man needs praise—give it to him. He cannot read his tombstone.

• • • • •

Anything scarce is valuable—thanks is an example.

• • • • •

A great mind is always a generous one.

• • • • •

If you could turn back the clock, where would you stop?

• • • • •

Time is life—don't kill it.

• • • • •

When a man gets up against time, he is taking on an adversary who wins battles with only one pair of hands.

• • • • •

Ordinary people think how they can spend their time; a man of intelligence tries to use it.

• • • • •

Live as if Christ died yesterday, arose today, and is coming tomorrow.

• • • • •

Life is a canvas—you fill in the picture.