



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

Galatians 6:14

MAY 2004

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MAY 2004

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 Saviour;
 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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Which Are You Like?

Lori Ketcham

Ina, IL

Jesus—hanging on the cross
lonely, forsaken, thirsting,
with searing pain through His body!

The crowd, cruel, laughing,
mocking, jeering, joking,
shaming our blessed Lord.

Jesus—hanging on the cross
loving, forgiving, patient,
pleading, “Father, forgive them!”

The crowd, hatefully defiant,
bitter, making fun,
resentful of our blessed Lord!

Which one are you?
Loving still in spite of pain,
Or filled with hate and bitterness?

So Great A Salvation

Although we often learn things the hard way, the simple things our childhood mentors taught us sometimes insulted our intelligence. If we are typical, we got tired of being told things we were sure we already knew.

Even after we got older and received Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord, this idea of exceeding our instructors didn't necessarily leave us. If maturity has been added to wisdom, we no longer carry those weights and sins of childhood. As we grow in Christ, our relationship with the Lord is paramount so we don't need to compare ourselves with our parents or teachers. We now have a Divine Parent and Teacher looking over our shoulder.

Children of God embrace the Lord Jesus for forgiveness of their sins. The heavenly parent, God, becomes Abba (Daddy). That's different from the relationship we had with Him before we received Jesus as Savior and Lord. Furthermore, the divine teacher, the Holy Spirit, not only rebukes us. He also brings God's truth to our minds and energizes us as He leads the way. Thus all three of the triune Godhead are

committed to the Christian's success. But we must cooperate with them. Consider these facts about our new life in Christ Jesus, all of which help us get a better focus:

Our freedom from guilt came at high cost. Jesus Christ "became sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Our wretchedness became more real to us as the Holy Spirit used some truth of God to speak to us about our need. Let us never cheapen God's grace by claiming credit for the good deeds we now can do.

Our release from condemnation likely came after we first tried to blame others for our problems. Some likely blame targets were some aspect of our circumstances: our elders, our peers, our parents, our siblings, our friends, or our church. If we really wanted God's will, we soon realized that were this pattern to continue, we could keep on pointing an accusing finger away from ourselves as long as we live and still not be at peace. We found that repentance included pride-crushing restitution and apology and not just trying hard to be good for a while. It

meant more than keeping up good appearances with man. It asked for honest contrition before God.

Our rescue typically came after we tried “boot strap” measures of our own. We found ourselves helpless to get out of the rut of failure to which we had become accustomed. Sins of the spirit propelled our tongues. Bad habits dogged our work and play. Finally, it dawned on us that we needed a lift from above us. That’s when we “grasped” the “rope” of faith in Christ.

Our sins were washed away by the blood of the Lamb. Nothing else availed. No hopeless hand-wringing, no desperate groaning, no grousing against neighbors, no tabulation of injustices, no comparative righteousness helped us. *The problem*, we came to realize, *is us*. It dawned on us what Isaiah meant when he said, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). At that point, we reached out in faith to the Lamb of God, the only One able to help us.

Our victory came from the Captain of our salvation. When we are beset by many difficulties and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, we are invited to bring them all to the One who faced greater trials

than any other human being ever did, and yet came through victorious. He has promised us victory. We must pray with confidence in God, if we are to continue to see and experience His salvation.

Faith in God is a gift from God. This plan for salvation didn’t start with us. It began in the heart of God. We did not design it. That also explains why we can never be good enough to deserve heaven. It is only by the grace provided by the Lord Jesus, that we can confidently expect to hear the gracious words of welcome invitation, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34). We “are bought with a [high] price, [let us] therefore glorify God in [our] body and in [our] spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20). What blessing His promise and presence brings to our pathway here and now!

What unsurpassable glory we shall behold in the great hereafter! There we shall be privileged to gather around His throne and sing His praises. We will not do so out of a sense of duty. It will be a welcome opportunity. If that prospect is as real to us now as He designed it to be, we are already practicing—regularly. Hallelujah!



—PLM

Dear brother Paul,

Today I read the article by Chester Weaver in the February issue of *Calvary Messenger*. On page 30 he stated “in the 25-year span after 1850, three-fourths of the Amish community in Croghan, New York, united with the Apostolic Christian Church. Why? Read the record.” Since my roots are at Croghan, and I was ordained there in 1961 for missionary service in Costa Rica, I decided I would like to tell what the situation is like 150 years later.

What Brother Weaver stated is true and, in fact, the Amish Mennonite settlement at one time was reduced to eight families. However, today about a dozen congregations in that community identify themselves as Anabaptist. Five of these are affiliated with the Conservative Mennonite Conference, including the largest one in the Conference

with 465 members. Others are part of New York Mennonite Conference, Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, Biblical Mennonite Alliance, and others. The total Mennonite membership of the community is approximately 1500. On the other hand, the Apostolic Christian Church, although made up of some fine Christians, has only one congregation... [and that one has fewer than] 100 people.

Although the schism of 1850 and following was a most painful one, including the departure of a number of pastors in that 25-year period, the Anabaptist movement in that rural community has survived and shows steady growth. Division hurts, but healing and recovery are possible.

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Common sense is . . .

the knack of seeing things

as they are and

doing things that ought to be done.

The Christian's Relationship to the State

Subtitle: Capital Punishment and the Christian

James D. Hershberger

Stuarts Draft, VA

Today's peace-loving Christian living in the United States is challenged with how to relate to the earthly government. An intriguing aspect of the Christian's relationship to the state becomes especially challenging when we consider capital punishment.

To put this into perspective we first recognize that Jesus says there are two kingdoms: 1. The Christian is part of a distinct heavenly kingdom. Our sole loyalty is to the King of that Kingdom, Jesus Christ, and His directives. On the other hand, we as Christians are pilgrims and strangers while on earth and we can appreciate the benefits of being subjects of an earthly country.

2. Satan is the leader in the other kingdom or kingdoms, e.g., Nero, Hitler, and even those who carry a Bible in one hand and a sword or missile in the other. If we consider the temptation of Christ on the high mountain, was Satan lying and not really offering the kingdoms of the earth? He "sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world..." He said, "All these things will I give thee."

If he had been lying, it would have been no real temptation, therefore, he was being truthful at that time. (Mt. 4:9,10) Jesus referred to Satan as the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31). However, Satan has no power unless it is permitted by God. Seemingly because God has granted man freedom of choice to choose for or against Christ, Satan is permitted this power. It is stated in Daniel, however, that God the Creator overrules in the kingdoms of the world. The government of the United States, my earthly authority, then falls into this second kingdom realm.

It would seem to follow that Christians are *citizens* of God's kingdom. On the other hand, we are *subjects* of this land and must obey the laws in the land. That "other kingdom" is present in any country in which Christians reside. Interestingly, Paul in 1 Timothy 2 does *not* say to pray for the leader of *your* country, but that "prayers [should be offered] for *all* men...for kings and for all that are in authority...." Note the *plural* terms and the purpose of the prayer. The purpose of this prayer is not to help a presi-

dent to kill or to overpower another country, but in praying for all government leaders of all the countries of the world and for certain specific results. Two quite different purposes are given: 1. That Christians “may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” because God desires 2. That “all men to be saved.” This completely changes the focus and purpose of praying for government leaders from that of those who do so for patriotic reasons. Those who would be patriotic pray for military victory and power for their country. In contrast and in a nutshell, the purpose of the prayer request for government leaders becomes two-fold: 1) for world peace 2) that Christians may make greater progress in introducing people of all nations to salvation in Christ.

The Christian’s prayer is that God’s worldwide kingdom of Christians continues to make advances under the real king, Jesus Christ. The Christian follower of Jesus Christ then does not support any earthly government except indirectly as an honest, upright follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is willing to be a useful producer and a good steward. He is willing to lead others to salvation. He is obedient to laws which do not violate Bible teaching and principles. Bishop Joe Miller observes, “God and country [emphasis] has **no**

scriptural basis whatsoever.” By following God’s principles, God’s children are productive in any society in which they find themselves.

One question that arises is, are we citizens or subjects in the country in which we reside? We are actual *citizens* of heaven and *subjects* in the earthly kingdom. Although nominal citizens of the U.S. and thankful for our many present privileges, such as being granted the privilege to carry passports that allow us to travel internationally, provided that we haven’t been a threat to public safety, our focus then should be on being dedicated, active citizens in the heavenly kingdom and only subjects of the one in which we reside.

Historically, when our faith forebears were severely persecuted under one earthly government, they tended to move to another country. Jesus offered us an appropriate response in certain cases of rejection. Matt. 10:23 says, “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another...” Since we are citizens of the heavenly kingdom and follow Jesus and His directives, we thus live above the dictates of a particular country.

Romans 13 states that civil government “beareth not the sword in vain.” Some feel that this proves capital punishment is a must. However, sensing the tenor of the entire passage, would it not seem more

logical to conclude that it is given simply as a matter of fact? Laws are to be followed and there will be consequences for violation. For instance, if we are in town and see a policeman with a revolver in his holster, we might comment to the child at our side, "He bears not the gun in vain." Do we mean that the policeman must shoot with that pistol? No. He may *never* kill anyone. However, simply having it in his possession will likely make it easier to maintain order and he does have the prerogative of using it.

It seems that God has set up governments to maintain order. Here is an interesting sidelight: A number of countries (Canada and some countries in Europe) many of which have a lower violent crime rate than the U.S., who decided years ago not to permit capital punishment and yet they keep order with a crime rate comparable to the U.S. They also do not bear their method of punishment in vain. Be that as it may, the question persists, what is the Christian's role?

Another point to consider is that Jesus nowhere suggests that His followers should kill anyone. Furthermore, if I read Menno Simons right, he did not feel Christ taught the use of capital punishment. In Romans 12: 19, God says the Christian's duty is to "live peaceably with all men"

and to acknowledge that God has reserved vengeance for Himself.

Would it not seem, then, according to New Testament teaching that the Christian's only responsibility is to have a redemptive, evangelistic attitude toward all criminals and offenders? Since government officials are God's ministers (servants) to maintain order in the other kingdom, Christians then give no support to prosecuting criminals. With the possible exception of reporting crime, the Christian's responsibility is evangelism..

I feel a classic example of the Christian's duty is illustrated in the case of the Paul Coblentz family in Ohio in the early 1950's. Paul was a young, dedicated Christian Amish father who was murdered in cold blood. The grandfather lamented that it was not he who had been taken instead of his son, if someone needed to lose his life, since he had lived most of his expected life span.

The state of Ohio ruled that the two murderers must be executed, which was their prerogative, according to Scripture. The Amish begged, "Please don't; we don't want their blood on our hands." Finally the state relented and gave life sentences instead. Mennonites visited the two murderers. One only mocked their efforts at evangelism, but the other after a long time repented and be-

came a Christian. If the Amish had said they simply support the carnal government, both murderers would presumably have been executed and gone to hell. However, the Amish, by living by their biblical-heavenly-Christian-kingdom concept, opened the door of opportunity for the one murderer to yield his life to the Lord and accept eternal life. Thus a life was saved forever.

In summary, there would seem to be two kingdoms: 1. The Christian's only duty becomes that of being a soul winner, faithful disciple and follower of the Lord Jesus whose kingdom is established on righteousness, love, peace, and salvation.

2. Those who are supportive of earthly governments are treading on what God reserves for His judgment, the other "sword-bearing" kingdom whom God uses to maintain order in a fallen world.

May we not be people of force and coercion, driven by desire to control others. Instead may we be heavenly kingdom builders by bringing a better way to others that they may be blessed with seeing the opportunities in goodness, salvation, and following God's truth found in the eternal, heavenly kingdom ushered in by Jesus Christ and ruled by God Almighty.



None of These Things Move Me

Roger L. Berry

***B**ut none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).*

You no doubt recognize these as the words of the Apostle Paul before the Ephesian elders. He reminded them of the struggles and temptations

he had suffered to bring the Gospel to them. He had just concluded that he now had to go to Jerusalem "bound in the spirit" to face more uncertainties.

Of course, Paul had surrendered his life and will to the lordship of Christ on the road to Damascus. He had continued to live in surrender. But he still had to make a daily, deliberate choice to serve his

Master. Being “bound in the spirit” suggests Paul’s own determination to do whatever Christ asked him to do. He allowed the Holy Spirit to dictate the course of his life, trusting God’s will.

Sadly, it often takes less than persecution to “move” modern people. I’m not talking about being moved to serve God either. Instead, they are easily moved to compromise. The allurements of modern entertainment and the “peer pressure” of neighbors or even fellow church members who are “doing it,” is more than most people can take.

Money and the things it can buy tempt us more than we may want to admit. How easy it is to justify buying an item simply because we can afford it. What happened to such Biblical principles as having [something] to give to those that are in need and that have value for the kingdom of heaven’s sake?

Over the years, I have heard many people, especially older ones, express appreciation for the lessons they learned when they or their parents were “poor.” Some of the principles they learned then are still at work in their lives. I’ve wondered how today’s youth, who often have almost everything they want when they want it, will learn these lessons. How will they cope when hard times come?

I have appreciated parents who intentionally restrained themselves and their children from having some things, simply to learn to do without. I’m confident that those youth will live to thank their parents for teaching them lessons that will bless them in future hard times.

So, where do we begin cutting back? It is good to sit down as families (and even as churches) and to evaluate the gadgets and luxuries we have already allowed ourselves. Can we honestly ask ourselves, “Are there some things we can give away for our own good and the blessing of others?” Then, as we face new decisions about material and entertainment items, can we put each to a rigid test of purpose, benefit to our spiritual lives, and the needs in the world around us? Can we honestly evaluate the dangers of compromise that lie in the material values of our society?

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).



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Stewardship

Eli A. Yoder

Stuarts Draft, VA

Stewardship includes giving money to charity. “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him” (1 Cor. 16: 2). We notice it says everyone; we believe it also means every week.

Stewardship should be rendered eagerly. 2 Cor. 9:6 and 7 says, “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” If we give sparingly, we can expect God to bless us sparingly.

Stewardship acknowledges God as the Giver of wealth. “But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth” (Deut. 8:18). Money may bring you food, but it cannot bring you appetite; medicine but not health; acquaintances but not friends, servants but not loyalty.

The tithe was prescribed by The Law of the Old Testament; (Lev. 27: 30; Mal. 3:8-10) and confirmed in the New Testament. (Matt. 23:23)

If we do not make our offering

according to our income, God may make our income according to our offering. According to Luke 12:21, the miserly man is the one who “layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

As we examine our money, we see the word *liberty* printed on it. It speaks of our free country. Perhaps it also suggests that we are at liberty to do with our money what we please. Our coins say, “In God We Trust.” If we trust in God, isn’t it in order to give Him at least one tenth? We pay the tithe because we owe it. We are to render to all their dues. Indeed, we are to “owe no man anything but to love one another” (Rom. 13:8).

When we receive Christ as Savior and Lord, we also become stewards of the Gospel. The highest goal of a steward is to be found faithful. When Philip came to the Ethiopian eunuch, he asked him, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” As a steward of the mysteries of God Philip was faithful.

At one time a farmer could rent a farm for one half of the proceeds. The owner would furnish the fertilizer and seed. That seemed like a fair arrangement.

Everything we have belongs to God. He furnishes the soil, the sunshine, and the showers. He sends light and the darkness and controls the turn of the seasons. Someone estimated that 95% of the energy it takes to produce a crop is given by God. Does 10% seem like too much to give back to Him? Surely what we do with the 90% we retain for our use is also of great interest to God, who owns it all. It may cost something to pay the tithe, but it costs much more not to pay it.

A steward is to be faithful. He is to be honest, trustworthy and dependable. The greatest and most priceless treasure that we have is our life. We must care for our bodies, which are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and living sacrifices to be given to God. (Rom. 12:1)

It makes no sense to say that I love my wife, my parents, my children, my Savior, and my church, if I do nothing for them. *Love gives.* Thus love can often be measured by the gifts it gives or the sacrifices it makes. God showed us that. "For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16).

Christian stewardship involves giving of our time, our talents, our devoted service and our possessions.

All we have and are belongs to God. The whole "earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein" (Psa. 24:1).

Our time here is short. The psalmist Moses prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps 90:12). Time cannot be stored up, brought back, hurried up or slowed down. It must be used now or never.

We use our time to sleep, to work, to read the Bible and pray, to relate to the people around us. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," it is said. This does not justify the many who spend time passively watching television. Some play games of chance. How much better it is to play educational games, to visit the sick, the widows, the aged. Nothing we have is wasted more often than time and nothing is more precious.

To be on time on Sunday morning, we must avoid being up late on Saturday night. When we rise on Sunday morning we are given great stewardship opportunities. We clean up, dress up, meet God alone, prepare to meet Him with others, and look for ways to minister to others. "The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).



How Am I Driving?

Eli M. Yoder

Millersburg, OH

[This 86-year-old brother muses on his experiences as a driver. In January he writes, "We are having freezing rain. I still haul people and enjoy it. Yesterday we went on the road but turned around and came home. I have someone for this p.m. but don't know yet if I will go."]

Have you noticed the words of the title on the back of semitrailers? A number is listed to call if the driver fails to drive safely. To my shame, even though I have not driven a semi, I've had far too many citations. All but one were the result of carelessness.

I want to live by Romans 13: 1,2, 5: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

Some years ago, soon after leaving my uncle Manasses' funeral in Hutchinson, Kansas, the Highway Patrol stopped me. I had been

clocked by airplane driving well over the speed limit. Later, coming home from West Virginia, we were also stopped for speeding. That patrolman said, "I've been working this road for nine years and you are the first one of your people I had to stop." Then he mentioned something about my wife's covering. When he left, he said, "See you again, but at 55." Can you imagine how I felt? I had no verbal testimony for him.

One Saturday morning I was on my way to town to pick up my lawn mower. I was in a big hurry, with a big day's work ahead. As I was thinking about why my boys don't have my convictions and don't want to follow my steps, lo and behold, I was stopped for driving 54 miles an hour in a 35 mile zone. One thing for sure, I don't want my boys to follow me in such things.

Once I was caught running a stop sign. My driver's license had also expired. One "ornery" young man commented, "I see you took a stop sign. What did you do with it?" Miserable comforter!

I also passed a stopped school bus once, not noticing it until I was almost past, because there was a

lane between us. That earned me a citation to appear in court. The court room was full of transgressors. A secretary called our names one by one to appear before the judge. It took all forenoon. Finally, I was the only one left, but she had not called my name. I then handed my slip to a man who handed it to her. She looked at it and said, "I would have taken you first if I'd known it."

I felt as guilty as the woman brought by her accusers before Jesus in John 8. However, I didn't fare as well as she did when she heard the words, "Go and sin no more." I was told to go to the Holmes County court and pay \$100. I was learning the hard way, but I certainly desired to go and sin no more.

Just lately a man told me of traveling with a preacher who got cited for driving 90 miles an hour. We both went to hear him and decided that his preaching was better than his driving. Hopefully, he will soon get the two to match better.

I've been thinking that maybe we Christians should have a favorite text displayed on the back of our vehicles. With that we could

print our preacher's phone number for someone they could call if our driving needs reporting. May the Lord grant us the grace to drive lawfully for conscience' sake. "And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and *toward* men" (Acts 24:16).

As I was reading the article "God's Order Within The Church" (Jan., 2004, p. 5), I found myself saying a hearty "Amen!" Then my thoughts went on to stop signs and speed limits. When those red flashers come on behind you, think of them as corrective discipline. This gets the erring one's attention and is meant to correct unacceptable behavior. When we look at it as the Lord's chastisement, it brings "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11).

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20,21).



*Everyone needs to be loved,
especially when they don't deserve it.*

marriages

Miller-Yoder

Bro. Tim, son of David Lee and Marilyn Miller, Garland, UT, and Sis. Heidi, dau. of Glenn and Amy Yoder, Middlebury, IN, March 6, 2004, at Pleasant Grove Church for Rosewood Fellowship Church by Glenn Yoder.

Schrock-Yoder

Bro. Donald Ray, son of Roman and Ruth Schrock, Lincoln, MO, and Sis. Joanna Sue, dau. of Norman and Dorothy Yoder, Paris, TN, at Fairview Baptist Church for Calvary Christian Fellowship on Mar. 12, 2004, by Henry Nissley.

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



cradle roll

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

Bontrager, Matthew and Lacry (Havristuic), Sullivan, IL, second and third children, first son, second dau., Alex Matthew and Alisa Esther, Mar. 15, 2004.

Gingerich, Jason and Angela (Graber), Sarasota, FL, third child, second son, Isaiah Jelani, born Nov. 2, 2001; adopted Dec. 17, 2003.

Hochstedler, Paul and Sarah (Yoder), Martinsburg, OH, second child and son, Trevor Durrell, Mar. 10, 2004.

Hochstetler, Barry and Karen (Helmuth), Hicksville, OH, second child, first dau., Shana Joy, Mar. 12, 2004.

Hostetler, Loren and Berneice (Otto),

Martinsburg, OH, first child and dau., Brooklyn Kierra, Mar. 29, 2004.

Lapp, Dave and Ruth (Lapp), New Holland, PA, second child and son, Justin Daniel, Feb. 24, 2004.

Miller, Joe and Rhoda (Miller), Dundee, OH, fifth child, fourth son, Javan Grant, Jan. 28, 2004.

Miller, Jonathan and Sheri (Beachy), Plain City, OH, first child and son, Alexander Paul, March 15, 2004.

Miller, Marlin and Leanna (Burkholder), Rural Retreat, VA, second child, first son, Jylan Lance, March 5, 2004.

Miller, Ronnie and Anne (Kuepfer), Quaker City, OH, sixth child, fifth dau., Karina Hope, Mar. 3, 2004.

Peachey, Raymond and Michelle (Mill-

er), Lewisburg, PA, second child, first son, Josiah Ray, Mar. 7, 2004.

Schrock, Freeman and Margaret (Peachy), Thomas, OK, fourth child, second dau., Francesca Elizabeth, Mar. 17, 2004.

Schrock, Kevin and Christina (Miller), Thomas, OK, third child, second dau., Teresa Yvonne, Feb. 7, 2004.

Stoltzfus, Chester and Regina (Yoder), Max Meadows, VA, fourth child, (one son deceased), second living son, Derrick Lavon, Mar. 17, 2004.

Wagler, John and Susan (Summy), Leon, IA, third child and dau., Lily Amanda, Jan. 11, 2004.

Wingard, Olen and Emily (Helmuth), Thomas, OK, fourth child, third son, Dallas Jay, Oct. 10, 2003.

Yoder, Ralph and Janice (Nissley), Paris, TN, first child and son, Zachary Matthew, Feb. 28, 2004.

Zook, Jonathan and Mary Ann (Stoltzfus), Rural Retreat, VA, fifth child and son, Carlin Jon, Mar. 15, 2004.



ordination

Bro. Tim Stoltzfus, 35, was ordained to the office of deacon at Little Flock Christian Fellowship, Harrison, AR, Feb. 8, 2004.

Preordination speaker was Elmer

Gingerich, Mt. View. The united voice of the church brought Bro. Tim the call to this work.



May the grace of God be upon our brother as he ministers faithfully. Let us pray for him.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Menno-Hof is accepting applications for Volunteer Host/Hostess plus light housekeeping. Opportunity to share your Christian faith and Anabaptist values with people from around the world!

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Contact: Joseph Yoder, Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565

Phone: (260)768-4117

E-mail: mennohof@tin.net for more information.

obituaries

Hostetler, Dan D., 74, Plain City, OH, died at OSU Hospital following a two-week illness resulting from a stroke. He was born April 20, 1929, to Dan M. and Emma (Frey) Hostetler.

He was a member of Haven Fellowship and was ordained to the ministry May 21, 1961. He enjoyed his occupation of farming.

On October 28, 1954, he was married to Erna Katherine Yoder. Surviving are his wife, four sons and three daughters: John Dean (Karen), Plain City; Pamela Sue, Aroda, VA; Thomas Dale (Delores), Plain City; Ray Daniel (Laura), Plain City; Mary Jane (Mrs. Daniel Yoder), London, OH; Diane Lynn (Mrs. Kenneth Beachy), Plain City; Glen David (Martha), Sarasota, FL; 28 grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Also surviving are three brothers and four sisters: Lester, Katie Ann Kramer, Verna Gingerich, Sam, William, Gertie Miller, and Martha Hostetler.

He was preceded in death by his parents, one daughter-in-law, Wilma Sue (John), two brothers and one sister: John, Eli and Emma.

Funeral services were held at United Bethel Mennonite Church on March 25, with Lonnie Beachy and Raymond Kauffman officiating. Ryan Good served in the committal at the Haven Church Cemetery.

Mast, Joseph A., 96, died Feb. 25, 2004, at the home of his son, Jerome, at Fairview, MO. He was born April 28, 1907, at Middlebury, IN, the son of Andrew J. and Dena (Burkholder) Mast.

He was a member of Franklin Mennonite Church. He was ordained to the office of deacon in 1946.

On April 8, 1927, he was married to Ida Christner. They lived in matrimony 73 years. She preceded him in death.

Surviving are six sons and six daughters: Olen, Charm, OH; Joseph, Jr., (Betty) Delmar, DE; Walter, (Betty), Fairfield, MT; Jerome (Julia), Fairview, MO; Paul, (formerly married to Catherine Stutzman), Sarasota, FL; Ernest (Helen), Melvern, KS; Ruby (Mrs. Daniel Miller), Honea Path, SC; Esther (widow of the late Paul Overholt), Batesburg, SC; Ida Mae (Mrs. Laverne Graber), Batesburg, SC; Mary Ellen (Mrs. Lewis Overholt), Americus, GA; Viola (Mrs. Victor Overholt), Wagoner, SC; Elsie (Mrs. Rudy Overholt), Melvern, KS.

Also surviving are one sister, Elsie Hershberger, Goshen IN; 61 grandchildren, 180 great-grandchildren and 18 great-great-grandchildren.

Four brothers and four sisters preceded him in death.

Funeral services were held in Kentucky on Feb. 28, with Brad Groff, Eli Beachy and Larry Baer serving. Burial was in the Franklin Mennonite Church Cemetery.

Troyer, Clarence, 86, Uniontown, OH, died Feb. 12, 2004, in Aultman Hospital.

He was born March 4, 1917, in Mylo, ND, the son of the late Jonas J. and Elizabeth (Gingerich) Troyer. He was a retired farmer.

He was a member of Pleasant View A.M. Church.

On Nov. 23, 1939, he was married to Katie Troyer. To this union were born eight children, six of whom survive. They are: Martin (Shirley), Port Charlotte, FL; Melvin (Ina), Alliance; Elsie (Mrs. Andrew Helmuth), Sandy Lake, PA; Marvin (Neoma), Hartville; Violetta (Mrs. Joe Troyer), Hartville; and Carol Troyer, Uniontown. Also surviving are 16 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. Other survivors include three sisters: Mary Wittmer, Antrim; Leora Troyer, Uniontown; and Dorothy (Mrs. John Beachy), Uniontown.

Funeral services were held Feb. 15 at Cornerstone Mennonite Church, with Homer Zook and Edwin Weaver officiating. Burial was in the Walnut Grove Cemetery.

Yoder, Fred H., 77, Hutchinson, KS, died at his home March 24, 2004. He was born at Hutchinson, July 22, 1926, son of Harmon and Lizzie (Garver) Yoder.

He was a faithful member of Cedar Crest A.M. Church, Hutchinson

On Jan. 20, 1955, he was married to Mary Yoder. She survives.

Surviving are six sons and two daughters: Harry F. (Susan), Aroda, VA; Wayne F. (Michelle), Valley Center, KS; Wilbur Lee, Carbon, TX; Willard Dee (Gertie), Hutchinson; Calvin Jay

(Rebecca), Hutchinson; and David Leon (Renita), Plain City, OH; Susan Kay (Mrs. Richard Yoder), Hutchinson; Ruth Anne, (Mrs. Keith Hershberger), Shipshewana, IN; and 27 grandchildren.

Others survivors include three brothers: Harley, Topeka, KS; Crist, Hutchinson; Ora, Kingfisher, OK; five sisters, Gertie Yoder, Hutchinson; Edna Nisly, Hutchinson; Fannie Miller, Hutchinson; Orpha Nisly, Clearwater, FL; and Erma Yoder, Pratts, VA.

Preceding him in death were his parents, an infant brother and brother, Roy.

Fred was involved in many community and mission projects. One of his special interests was collecting hand tools to send to Haiti.

He remained active this past fall despite increasing pain. On December 26, he was admitted to the hospital where he was diagnosed with multiple cancers. In late January, he was released from the hospital and returned home, where he was lovingly cared for by his wife. Hospice also assisted in giving care.

As Fred's final days approached, his increasing desire was to be completely surrendered to God's will. He clearly expressed peace with God and assurance that whether in life or death, he would be a winner.

Funeral services were held Mar. 28 at Cedar Crest Church with Paul L. Miller, James Shetler, and Donald Miller serving. Eli J. Yoder conducted the commitment at the burial in West Center Cemetery, rural Hutchinson.



When I was in grade school, I was taught that there are three branches in national government: legislative, administrative and judicial. At the time I memorized the terms, I did so without understanding the philosophy of the founding fathers who put the system in place.

The foundation on which the three-fold system rests is the Constitution. The administrative branch is to carry out the practical operations of government. The legislative branch is expected to enact new laws as needed. The courts can be appealed to to examine new laws or other legal questions to assure compatibility with the Constitution.

The tripartite system was designed to provide checks and balances to allow for orderly operation and growth of government with stability and constitutional integrity.

It is thankworthy that the Constitution reflects an awareness of certain Judeo-Christian principles. However, it is a secular document. Ours is not a Christian nation. It is a kingdom of this world.

The system seems to have worked well. However, in recent decades there is a growing concern that the courts seem to have a tendency to abandon their role as referees of

constitutional law. They sometimes hand down decisions that reflect “political correctness” that compromise the intent of the Constitution.

With reference to *Roe vs. Wade*, 1973, Douglas Johnson, National Right to Life committee legislative director is quoted as follows: “The Blackmun papers show that a group of jurists decided that legal abortion would be a good social policy and set about to make it happen. There was no pretense of trying to enforce the letter and history of the Constitution.... (*World*, 3-20-04)

Harry Blackmun was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1970 where he served until 1994. He died in 1999. He had arranged that five years after his death his personal papers could be made public. These papers show that Mr. Blackmun saw himself not primarily as a guardian of the Constitution, but as one who was in a key position to further a liberal social agenda. He wrote the 5-4 majority opinion in *Roe vs. Wade*.

Regrettably, such philosophy is not limited to our courts. The church also has a Constitution called The Bible, or more specifically, the New Testament. It is the message of eternal life. The central person is Jesus Christ. People who follow Him and His Word are often out of step with the majority. But there is persistent and relentless pressure in

some churches to disregard clear guidelines from the “Christian Constitution.” Such people often favor an agenda that is more popular and compatible with our unregenerate nature.

• • • • •

Charles Colson, writing for *Christianity Today* (April, 2004) expresses some of the concerns above from a slightly different perspective. He quotes a conservative columnist, David Brooks, who has concluded that Evangelicals no longer put a high value on doctrinal orthodoxy (soundness). They prefer to be accepted by the cultural mainstream. To fill their pews, pastors emphasize the upbeat and play down the business of God’s wrath. He says that Moral Majority and Christian Coalition are now husks of their former selves.

Here are several additional excerpts from this provocative article: “Many compartmentalize their faith. God is for Sunday. Secular culture shapes the view and lifestyle the rest of the week...When it comes to the culture there is no such thing as peaceful coexistence for Christians...Truth can be sacrificed on the altar of mainstream secularism...Mainstream means getting along. To get there all we

have to do is to abandon biblical responsibility...God will judge us harshly if we stand around enjoying the warm glow of our culture’s approval while the culture crumbles.”

• • • • •

Back to Jerusalem, by Paul Hattaway is the title of a book about a vigorous evangelistic movement in China. *Christianity Today* (April, 04) also reports on this notable development. Remarkable features of this movement include the following:

- The movement is carried on by a network of unregistered house churches.
- There is a minimum of structure and usually no formal training.
- The chief characteristic is a passion for souls.
- Persecution is severe. It is viewed as God’s training ground and God’s furnace of affliction to make them effective in their evangelistic witness.
- They look to the Lord for their financial support.
- They do not see miracles and signs as essential to their work. They report that God does provide such phenomena as a witness to the lost.
- Many evangelists in the rural areas greet each other with the question: “How many people have you led to Christ today?”

· They refer to their work as the “Back to Jerusalem” movement.

· Their burden is to take the message of salvation to the whole world, ultimately back to where it started. The awareness that this seems to be a precondition for Christ’s return provides a strong motivation.

When China fell to communism in 1949, foreign missionaries had to leave. They assumed that their efforts were wasted, crushed by an atheistic regime. Contrary to their expectations, the church went underground and flourished under the heavy hand of persecution.

Reliable statistics are not available, but it is estimated that there are from 80 to 100 million Christians in China today. And the numbers are growing.

Thanks to Bro. Ernest Hochstetler for calling attention to this soul-stirring example of Christ building His church.

An American Christian presently in China reports that many Chinese Christians, including church leaders, do not have ready access to Christian literature or Bibles. Let us pray that God would anchor our Chinese brethren in His Word. and bring clarity to their understanding of godly principles.

• • • • •

Despite declining crime rates in Kansas over the past decade, the prison inmate population has grown by 45% during the same period, apparently due to more stringent sentencing guidelines. Prison facilities in the state are full. Some inmates are being transferred to Texas prisons to comply with court-ordered mandates against overcrowding. Under present sentencing guidelines it is estimated that the prison population could double within 10 years. It costs the state about \$28,000 per inmate, per year.

There is a growing sentiment in the state that there are surely better solutions than simply building more prisons. Considerations include better rehabilitation and review of sentencing guidelines.

It is out of our field of responsibility to operate the criminal justice system. But to introduce inmates to the One who can make them free indeed is a continuing opportunity, making an important difference to the system and to the people in it.

—DLM



.....

If a sermon pricks the conscience, it must have good points.

Fatima

The Conversion of a Moslem woman

Oswald J. Smith

In this day of toleration when some evangelicals are compromising the truth of the Gospel, especially where Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6), this is a refreshing account. May we echo Paul's words, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

Do not pressure the person to whom you are witnessing. Allow the seed of God's Word to take root. It takes time for seed to germinate. Furthermore, it is a mistake to dig into the ground and expose the seed to see if it has sprouted.

Another error to avoid is to fail to speak a word for Christ. Peter has sound advice for us in his first epistle: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (3:15). —FS

Zarouhi, please tell me more. Explain it again. It is so hard for me to understand."

It was Fatima who spoke. Zarouhi had often talked to her of the Christian faith, but Fatima's mind was so dark that she seemed unable to take it in.

"Well, now," replied Zarouhi, "let us start at the beginning. Here, I will read from Romans 3:23 first: 'All have sinned...' You understand that, don't you? You know that you have sinned."

"Ah, yes, Zarouhi, I know it well enough. My heart is full of sin," answered Fatima.

"Now in Ezekiel 18:4, it says, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' And in Romans 6:23, 'The wages of sin is death...' Is that clear, Fatima?" continued Zarouhi, looking inquiringly into her sad face.

"But everyone dies," responded Fatima, "the good and bad alike."

"Yes, but this death means eternal separation from God, Fatima," explained Zarouhi. "You know I have told you already about Heaven and

Hell. Death to the sinner means missing Heaven and going to Hell.”

“Oh, I see! That then is what it means to perish and be lost,” said Fatima. “Do you remember? You read about it yesterday.”

“Yes, Fatima. But it says here in 1 Corinthians 15:3, that ‘Christ died for our sins....’ And in 1 Peter 2:24, it states that He ‘bare our sins in his own body on the tree.’ You see, ‘For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ It was for you, Fatima, that Jesus died on the cross. And now He says in Matthew 11:28, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.’ Can Mohammed do that for you, Fatima?”

“Mohammed! Oh, no, no, no! There is no rest for a woman in Islam. Can it be possible that there is rest in Christianity?” asked Fatima looking into the face of her instructor.

“No, Fatima,” replied Zarouhi, “there is no rest in Christianity any more than there is in Islam. But, Fatima, there is rest in Christ.”

“Oh, I see!” cried the woman. “It isn’t your religion, after all, any more than ours; it is your Christ.”

“Now you have it, Fatima,” responded Zarouhi, “Would you like to come to Jesus?”

“Oh, yes!” exclaimed the woman.

“But tell me how. Oh, it’s so dark. I don’t know how.” And she began to weep.

“Why, Fatima,” explained Zarouhi, “you must come just as you are. Just pour out your heart to Him. He will hear you, for He is right here now, waiting to save you.”

“May I? May I come at once? Will He take me now and give me rest? Oh, Zarouhi, tell me truly. Can I pray to Him now?” And she laid both hands on the girl’s shoulders as she spoke.

And in a moment, with her eyes closed, tears flowing freely, face turned upward, the Turkish woman began to pray: “Oh, Jesus, I come to Thee. I have sinned many times and I must perish. I have no rest and no peace. O God! My heart is heavy. My burdens weigh me down. I am so unhappy. But Jesus, O Jesus, Thou didst die for me, poor sad Fatima. And I come to Thee now, just as I am. Save me, oh, save me, my Lord Jesus. Forgive Fatima all her sins. Come into my heart, and give me rest, O my Lord Jesus.”

There was a moment of silence, and then—“Oh, Zarouhi, it is gone, it’s gone, it’s gone! Oh, Zarouhi, Zarouhi, my load is gone! Don’t you see it? Oh, how light I feel! Oh, my Zarouhi, I love you, sister! Jesus has come.”



—*The Evangelical Alliance Mission in Venezuela*

Are You Holding The Ropes?

Selected by Floyd Stoltzfus

[The following story fits with the burden of the article in Calvary Messenger, February, 2004, entitled, "How To Pray For Missionaries." This true account highlights the importance of holding up the arms of those who go to the "regions beyond."]

This story takes place long before the days of fax machines and electronic mail.

It is important that missionaries make known their needs so that people at home know how to pray for them.

Let us not fail our men and women on the front lines of Gospel endeavor!]

At a farewell meeting for Jonathan Goforth, before he went to China, the following story was related:

A young missionary couple was bidding farewell to their little country church as they were about to leave for an African outpost that was an extremely difficult place of service. In fact, so many had lost their lives in previous endeavors there that the section became known as the "White Man's Grave."

The husband said, "My wife and

I have a strange foreboding as we go. We feel as if we are descending into a pit. However, we are willing to take the risk for Jesus' sake, if you, our home circle, will faithfully promise to hold the ropes!" One and all solemnly declared that they certainly would. Less than two years had passed when the wife and the little baby the Lord had given them, both succumbed to a dread tropical fever. Soon the husband realized that his days, too, were numbered.

Not wanting to send word home of his condition, he started back at once, and arrived at the time of the Wednesday prayer meeting. He was able to slip in unnoticed—taking a far back seat. At the close, he went forward while a strange silence came over the people, for death was already written on his face.

Turning to the audience he said, "I am your missionary. My wife and child are buried in Africa and I have come home to die. This evening as you prayed, I waited eagerly to see if you were keeping the promise you made to us but I listened in vain. You asked the Lord for everything connected with yourselves and your own enjoyment here in the home church, but you completely forgot your mis-

sionary. I see now why we failed so often in our endeavors, and why our work there seemed to have been unproductive. We had really hoped you would hold the ropes!”

Do we pray for our missionaries by name? Or do we sin in saying we will, when scarcely an earnest word of petition ever ascends to heaven on their behalf?



—Life Messengers newsletter

Missionary Etiquette: 15 Tips

C. Dadson

Nappanee, IN

They were in West Africa—an eager group of mission-minded Christians. After an exciting evening service in the village, the children surrounded them, touching their arms, wanting to be held—amid an endless stream of adult natives shaking their hands. Suddenly, a cluster of “white people” broke away and made for the vans. They were followed, of course, by the crowd that had surrounded them. Digging around in their backpacks, they pulled out small bottles of antiseptic gel. The onlookers stared at the flurry of cleaning that followed. I wasn’t there, mind you. No. It was a native brother himself who was there and saw. He recounted to me the humiliation and degradation he felt as he watched the white people “wash” away all their germs—his germs.

The last thing these Christians wanted was to offend their brothers and sisters. They had come to build bridges, not walls. With indiscreet behavior, however, they had effectively built walls.

A short-term missionary does not have the luxury of strong native relationships; thus, mishaps like this can undermine and deteriorate one’s effectiveness in sharing the humble and tender love of Jesus Christ. First impressions are vital to that message; the short-term missionary cannot afford to be ignorant.

Culture exists in the inner city and across the sea; to ignore its presence is presumptuous and will certainly handicap one’s ability to connect well with those we are called to serve. For this reason, the following tips are offered for the sincere

short-term missionary who wants to make the most of his time in another culture, whether it be two weeks or two months.

Tip One Examine your motives.

Some want to do short-term work for the experience. Others simply want to serve. If you are going for the “experience,” you will be inclined to be a spectator. If you are going to serve, you will be a participator. The natives intuitively know who is there to love or to look.

Tip Two You are an extension of the local mission.

What you bring to the people will reflect the mission. Your behavior and spirit will either enhance or damage the work of the local missionaries.

Tip Three Allow the natives to give to you.

The most they may be able to do for you is give you their best seat, a special dish, or a free taxi ride; accept graciously and peacefully.

Tip Four You are the visitor.

Accept that world on its own merits. This is how *they* travel. This is what *they* eat. This is how *they* keep house.

Tip Five Be discreet in maintaining your own culture,

such as the antiseptic gel mentioned at the beginning. Take the antiseptic gel along, yes! But administer it to

your hands in privacy, not in public. Odors in the marketplace may nearly overwhelm you, yes, but don’t cover your nose with a handkerchief for all to see. A naked child may shock you, but instead of staring in horror, smile at the child and act as if it were common in your experience.

Tip Six Be sensitive about pining for home in front of natives.

It is easy to form the habit of saying, “In America...” or “In my home...”

Tip Seven Relate to the natives on an equal level.

Yes, they will enjoy your candy, but short, meaningful conversations or warm, gracious greetings may touch their heart more than many pieces of candy, which may actually be too sweet for their taste buds.

Tip Eight Ask questions about common practices in that area.

Before you go, become knowledgeable about local customs and social practices. Do they consider the left hand unclean? Are certain styles of dress offensive? Are certain topics taboo for discussion? The best people to ask are those who have been there long term; take advantage of their experience.

Tip Nine Give them more of Christ.

Take every opportunity to communicate that it is *Christ* who is giving to them in their need. Deflect

their praise and thanksgiving to the One who enables you.

Tip Ten Acknowledge to natives that problems are common everywhere, whether in Africa or America. I remember a time I was sitting under a mango tree with several of my students when one of them asked, “Are there houseflies in America?” They doubted me when I said, “There are—everywhere!” Yes, dear ones in Haiti, Asia, Africa, and the world over; troubles surround us like flies wherever we are.

Tip Eleven Prepare beforehand for sensitive situations. How will you respond if offered food you find distasteful or contaminated? How will you respond to inappropriate overtures from men or women? How will you inoffensively say “no” to a native? An African native told me that, in the matter of food, they appreciate if a guest at least tastes the food, whether or not he is a foreigner; if he does not care to finish, they understand. This is useful information to me because it *frees* me to enjoy the cooks even if I couldn’t enjoy the dish.

Tip Twelve Speak slowly and simply if the natives have an accent or different language. Do not assume that they understand your slang words or metaphors. “Cell phones

are exploding all over America” takes on a new image if you say this to a struggling student of English.

Tip Thirteen Learn to relate like the natives relate to each other. This may require you to become comfortable with silence (as with Indians in the North) or with bartering (common in many third world countries). Learn new things for the sake of sharing Christ.

Tip Fourteen Use discretion in photography. If photographing is offending the ones you are trying to serve, then put the camera in a bag and capture the moment in your heart.

Tip Fifteen Do not make promises. In the high emotion of a new experience, many well-meaning Christians have made promises of money or friendship or travel. Not keeping their promises, they leave behind a disappointed brother or sister; worse than the bewilderment is the temptation to distrust the local mission efforts. “Do not promise to write letters,” they told us when we were oriented for prison ministry. How thankful I have been for that small bit of advice!



From *Midwest Mennonite Focus*, March-April, 2004. Used by permission. Bold-face added.

Easter

Daniel Kauffman (1865-1944)

From *Gospel Herald* April 9, 1913

We are not deceived with the idea that the celebration of Easter is a custom handed down to us by the apostles. There is no record that the apostles kept any festivals outside of those authorized by Jesus Christ. In the language of Chrysostom, the early church fathers were inclined to think that "the whole of time is a festival unto Christians because of the excellency of the good things which have been given."

In the language of another, "the apostles had no thought of appointing festival days, but of promoting a life of blamelessness and piety." The fact is fairly well established that this great festival was of heathen origin; but that the Christian Church early seized the opportunity of turning it to good account by keeping the day in memory of the resurrection of Jesus.

We do not condemn the keeping of the day in sacred memory of the risen Christ. In fact, we are glad that Christendom arose and changed this event from a heathen festival to a day of thanksgiving and joy because our Savior rose again and opened the way out of the dismal grave.

It is a most opportune time to impress the mind with the importance of the event which should never be forgotten. Meditating upon that eventful time when apparent defeat was turned into a glorious victory, our minds are carried forward to that still more glorious time when grave and sea will give up their dead and all the blood-bought sons and daughters of God will meet the Lord to be forever with Him.

Our only regret is that Christendom did not make a complete conquest when the day was claimed for God. Like the children of Israel we have left some Amalekites and Philistines alive, and these seem to be gaining ground on us.

Why these "Easter rabbits" and colored eggs and dress displays and "social functions" and other follies? Pleasure, do you say? Why more pleasure in these things at this time when all the world should be rejoicing over the Lord's triumph over death and hell than at other times? Is it not a fact that as these things are given prominence, the real joys arising from the fact of the resurrection are dimmed and the great lesson of Easter lost?

There lies before us a series of opportunities which we should be glad to improve. "Passion Week" should not be remembered at all unless it is remembered in a way that God is thereby glorified and the souls of people enriched with His grace. It is a most excellent time to meditate upon Jesus as the model Man, upon Christ as the anointed of the Lord, upon the crucifixion as the means for our deliverance, upon the resurrection as the glorious triumph of Christ in behalf of the Church. How opportune the time, then, when "Good Friday" comes, to walk reverently to the house of the Lord and there worship Him, in loving sympathy with Him who suffered so much for our sakes, in grateful remembrance of him who lifted the shadow of death and purchased us with His own precious blood. That was a time of inexpressible sadness—and we fear that many who profess the name of Jesus are not in close enough sympathy with that phase of the Christian life to share in the triumph that is to follow. It has well been said that there is no way to the throne except by way of the cross. A general turning out to the house of the Lord on Good Friday to worship "in spirit and in truth" would mean an enriched experience for the Christian Church.

Another opportunity that none should miss, if possible, is the spiri-

tual uplift afforded by the services at the house of the Lord on Easter Sunday. The more we enter into the spirit of triumph in Christ as we meditate upon this event of surpassing interest and importance, the more fully we are prepared to live the overcoming life.

We understand that we should not make too much of the **day**. Each day is alike sacred before God. There is no heaven-approved sanctity to surround such days with a halo of glory (making idols of them) while the rest of the time may be spent in sinful indulgence.

One of the important facts that we should never forget is that religion is not superstition. All that we claim for such days as Christmas and Easter is that circumstances have made them times of great opportunity which Christian people will be wise to use to the glory of God and the strengthening of His cause among men.

With a prayer to God that He may so direct that we will at all times make the best possible use of our opportunities, with hearts filled to overflowing joy and gratefulness that Christ makes it possible for us to look with hope beyond the grave, let our praises ring out to observe Giver of all good and the coming Easter day marked by a real, spiritual, soul-refreshing service in all our churches.



Coincidence?

Enos D. Stutzman

London, OH

*“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”*

—William Cowper

Do the words of this hymn reflect reality or merely wishful thinking? Does God really involve Himself in the affairs of men? We tend to think that everything that occurs does so because of the decisions of man and the processes of nature. We forget that God works in and among those decisions, actions and processes.

Once in a while something happens that reminds us of God’s working behind the scenes, or even right in the midst of them. The recent episodes of shooting at vehicles by the sniper of central Ohio is such a situation.

Over a ten-month period, someone was taking occasional potshots at freeway traffic in the southern end of Columbus. It had been happening for several months before authorities noticed a pattern of shootings and linked them together. Actually, only one person was killed. But the whole area was traumatized.

A week ago, the suspect was identified by a relative and reported to police. At the suspect’s house guns were found that matched the bullets found in some of the shootings. Newspapers all over the country carried pictures of the suspect and his car, including the license number. Many were watching for him.

At a diner in Las Vegas, Nevada, a man offered a slice of pizza to someone sitting near him. When the person looked his way, the first person recognized him as the sniper suspect. After the suspect left, the man gathered things from his table in order to have fingerprints taken. He called the police and reported everything. What he did not know was that the man identified was not the right person. It happened to be another person who looked much like the suspect.

Not realizing this, of course, the man went through the motel parking lots looking for the the suspect’s car. Sure enough, he found the car. Police determined which room had been rented by the car’s owner and staked it out. They arrested the suspect when he returned to his motel room.

It was only later that the man who had been offered the pizza came forward and identified himself. Then it became clear that he and the suspect had an uncanny resemblance to each other. The irony of the situation is astounding. Think about it: Someone picks the wrong man for the suspect, goes to look for his car, and actually finds it.

We could rationalize that it was just a coincidence. But we know better, do we not? It is as if God had declared, “The time is here for the suspect to be taken.”

Let us not forget that God is working His will in our midst, in and through the decisions and actions of men, and in the ordinary events around us.



The Freedom of Contentment

Carol (Yoder) Nisly

Altamont, KS

I remember the joyful countenance of a Central American mother of five. Surrounded by her sons on the porch of her cramped, dirt-floored home, “Margarita Gonzalez’s” contented smile illuminated her face. Fourteen years later, my heart is still warmed with the memory of her joyful spirit.

Then I think of “Mary Troyer.” Her stateside colonial house is new and spacious, with gorgeous oak trim throughout. But “Mary” seldom smiles. She is frazzled by debt load and child care and strained relationships.

And I ponder the mystery of contentment.

Paul, the Apostle, understood how little our surroundings have to

do with contentment. He could thank God for meeting all his needs even in a dank prison cell.

Too often I have fallen for the “if only” lie that says contentment is a result of creature comforts, instead of personal choices.

Contentment is more dependent on gratefully accepting what I have than having what I want. A contented heart changes what I think about my work. It affects how and how often I shop. A contented heart enlivens relationships. A contented heart is grateful with enough, instead of impatiently grasping and longing for more.

The Great Provider loves to satisfy the discontented heart that yields its needs to Him.



A Heavenly Message

As Precious Star Miller might have sent it to his mother on earth

I wish you would not be so sad
Each time you think of me.
For I am happy, Mother, dear —
As happy as can be!

Up here, it is so beautiful!
In Heav'n all things are fair.
And JESUS is so close to me —
Close as to you down there!

Why, just today (I guess “today,”
Time has no limits here)
I thought I was by myself
But found the Lord so near!

I'm never lonesome, Mother, dear!
The angels play with me.

They often cut such capers that
I have to laugh with glee!

The singing is “out of this world,”
As you on earth would say;
And Mother, you have never heard
How angels' harps can play.

Of course I miss you, Mother, dear,
And all the others, too.

Though that was such a little time
I was on earth with you.

Pray our Lord Jesus will come soon
He will not come too late!
And bring you here to be with us.
Be watching, Mother! Wait!

(Written for parents of a stillborn child. Submitted by Donald and Donna Miller, Hutchinson, KS, parents of Precious Star.)

DON'T FORGET THAT APPRECIATION IS ALWAYS APPRECIATED.

Five R's for Mother's Day

Mary June Glick

A Time to Remember

To remember is to bring back, to recall, to hold in our memory. I have many fond memories of my own mother, of her love for her family. As a child I never had to wonder if she would be there when I arrived home from school. She worked hard on the farm and in our butcher shop, but I knew I was important to her. I can't send her a card that says, "I Love You," but I can honor her in my memory and thank God for a godly mother.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection is a thought, idea or opinion formed as a result of meditation. My role as a mother has changed from a busy nurturing mother to a more relaxed role of a friend, encourager, and a grandmother to our children's children. It's a good time. I reflect on the mother God calls us to be—godly women who teach Bible principles, strengthen marriage and family values, and prepare our children for a life of commitment and Christian service. He calls us to be mothers who daily pray for our children and grandchildren.

A Time of Responsibility

Motherhood brings responsibility. From the minute we first hold the new baby in our arms, until the day we release him or her into adulthood, we are responsible to see that this child is cared and provided for, loved and protected, taught and trained. No, motherhood is not an easy calling. At times, it seems overwhelming. Many tasks need to be performed day after day. But the God who gave this child to us, will also give us grace and strength for each day, one day at a time.

A Time to Rejoice

Psalm 113:9 says, "He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a **joyful** mother of children." I believe God wants us to have joy and rejoice in our role as mothers. Proverbs 17:22 points out that "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Have you ever noticed how you can set the mood and atmosphere in your home? Focus on the ways that you can bring laughter and happiness to your home. Some things like spilled milk and dirty boots don't matter as much as we think they do. As you

develop a grateful, happy spirit, your children will catch it, too.

A Time of Reward

Three Scriptures that speak of reward are, 3 John 4, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” Proverbs 31:28, “Her children rise up and call

her blessed: her husband also and he praiseth her.” Proverbs 31:30, “Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

If you love your mother, remember her with with a note of appreciation or telephone call this Mother’s Day.



junior messages

The Price to Pay

Anita Yoder

Ligonier, IN

Miraculously, the Mennonites had reached the other side of the Amur River just as dawn spread its fingers across the eastern sky. The faint outline of the blue mountains of China bordered the horizon before them.

Chapter 5

The Mennonites reached the village of Kani-fu, where their guide had prepared lodging for them. Each sled actually made it across. They could hardly comprehend their good fortune. All that had happened seemed like a dream, or was it reality? They knew the Chinese government could still send them back to Russia.

Klaas sat on the floor, while

Heinrich sprawled beside him. Jacob Siemens gathered his people to negotiate payment with their guide, who now demanded a horse from each family. For Father and Heinrich that meant they had no way to pay for their families’ passage to Germany.

“Did God bring us here to let us sit,” demanded Klaas angrily, “and to have the others go without us?”

“Klaas,” Heinrich sighed, “it seems like that doesn’t it? But think of how God so miraculously brought us here. Do you remember the story in the Old Testament when God told Israel to stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord? They responded by praising God for what He would do. I’m awed at what God has done for us thus far. Do you realize that

while we all made it across, one family is grieving? Aaron Warkentin's little daughter suffocated. After they brought her inside yesterday, they saw she had not survived. Wouldn't it have been terrible if Anna and I would have lost Valentina? Our family arrived safely. Wouldn't it be more appropriate to thank God for what He will yet do for us?"

"Yes, Heinrich," Klaas answered, hanging his head. "I didn't know about Aaron's daughter."

"God has proven Himself to me. If we get left behind, I will still trust Him," Heinrich said decisively.

Father brought better news as he rejoined his family. "Heinrich, you and I need only to pay with one good horse for the two of us." He continued, "I'm so glad it will be easier for us now. The guide suggested we could get to Harbin, Germany, before long to join other refugees."

"Refugees?" asked Klaas, with raised eyebrows.

"Yes, son, refugees; that's what we are," affirmed Father.

Just then Klaas spied Peter, his good friend, striding through the crowd toward him. "Here you are, Peter, it's good to see you. How did everything work out for you?"

"Not good. Did you see us hit the ice on the river?"

"I saw someone had trouble and I watched as long as I could see. Was

that you?" asked Klaas.

"Yes, Father and I couldn't hold back the horses. We came down the bank too fast. We pulled the sled aside to fix the runner. Our hands got so cold we only fumbled with the tools. Finally, in desperation, we knelt and prayed that God would control our frigid fingers. We ended up being the last sled to cross. My fingers are frost bitten; Father's fingers are worse. He might lose several of them. I guess it could be worse for any of us. At least, our family all made it safely across."

Jacob Siemens asked everyone to stand. He thanked them for their cooperation and suggested they have a time of thanking and praising God. They raised their voices in worship and wept tears of joy for God's care and provision.

The Mennonites soon left for Harbin, Germany, where they joined other refugees. They stayed there till passage was found for them to journey to America and Canada.

• • • • •

You might think that such a dramatic experience would grant a happy-ever-after ending. Sadly, history doesn't tell us that. God's people must hold the banner of faith high. What will the pages of history tell about your life?

The end


A Prayer for Revival

Josh Bechtel

Faith Mission Home

Free Union, VA

***M**y people, go ye out of the midst of [Babylon] and deliver every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD (Jer. 51:14).*

“Father, You draw those away from the world that you want to bring near to your heart. You refuse to let your own rest easy in Babylon. It is a divine restlessness that causes me to haste from the foolish, stupid nothings that my flesh and my peers pursue.

“Babylon must not reside in me, or I in it, even though it is a popular stomping ground of those who profess to know You. Or, as it may be, their ancestors have known You. Babylon allows her children to put on an act without turning their hearts toward You. As long as my heart is in Babylon, I may do obeisance to any system of life or belief, as long as it does not involve a close walk with my Father of Lights. Certain suburbs of Babylon even require ‘correct form’ that wows the watching world and is applauded by those

who think they are the church and True Christianity.

“This self-proclaimed entity worships itself and presumes to call its counsels the word of God. Father, does such as this bring a nausea to You that drives You to unrelenting, albeit long restrained anger? The first commandment it to love You from the heart. If ‘churchianity’ worships itself, it must confess that to be idolatry.

“Father, thank You for refusing to allow some to remain comfortable in Babylon. Prevent me from falling in step with a system that is so ‘regulations correct’ that it loses its relationship with You.

“Father, all fulfillment is found in You, through Christ. Grant me grace to heed your call to flee Babylon. Receive me into your bosom that I may abide at your heart.”

You will arise and have mercy and loving kindness for Zion, for it is time to have pity and compassion for her; yes, the set time has come. For your servants take [melancholy]

pleasure in the stones [of her ruins] and show pity for her dust”(Ps. 102: 13,14 AMP).

“Ah, Father, some of us can see traces of Zion’s former glory. But others are content with the beauty of the dust. They say, ‘These things are easy to maintain and control.’ But there is no glory in ruin, even though a strand of gold may remain amid the rubble. Ah, raise us up, get our faces out of the dust. Lift our sights above the ruins and allow us to gaze on your vision of what was and has passed and what ought to be.

“Grant us to level the rubble so it can be rebuilt, to ignore the cries of those who bid us use feather dusters

where shovels and picks are needed. Ah, bid our soft, selfish, senseless flesh keep silence when confronted with the thunder or whisper of your voice. And above all, grant us to distinguish between your voice and those that would pose as your spokesmen, but have neither your voice in our behalf, nor the authority to block the enemy’s work.

“Abba, forbid us to be at ease in Zion, when it sits in mournful ruin. Take away this soul slumber from us until Zion be restored to her former (aye, and FUTURE) beauty and power; and the King of Glory establish his throne there in eternal righteousness.”



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Lord willing, the Youth Fellowship Meetings will meet in their respective districts on the fourth weekend in July. This year those dates are July 23-25, 2004. The communities hosting them are:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Northeast | Stuarts Draft, VA |
| 2. North Central | Plain City, OH |
| 3. Northwest | Shipshewana, IN |
| 4. Southwest | Thomas, OK |
| 5. Southeast | Sarasota, FL |

Elmer Gingerich, Mt. View, AR
870-269-8764

Chairman of Ministerial Committee for Youth Fellowship Meetings

WORKER NEEDS

at Mountain View Nursing Home

Nurse Aides—2 in May; 2 in July

Orderlies—2 in May; 2 in July

Kitchen—1 in June; 1 in August

Maintenance—July

Housekeeping Aide—NOW

Activities Aide—May

Please contact:

Mark Webb

1776 Elly Road

Aroda, VA 22709.

540-948-6831

e-mail address:

Markwebb4@juno.com

at Hillcrest Home

We are seeking dedicated young people to fill these urgent staffing needs. Young person, if you are serious about your walk with God, are committed to your home congregation, and desire to “present your body a living sacrifice, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1), please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Nurse Aides: 7 immediate openings,

7 more through September

Orderlies: 2 immediate openings, 6 more through September

Kitchen Workers (Ladies or Men) 3 immediate openings

Janitors: 2 immediate openings

Floaters: 2 immediate openings

Please contact: **Jason Miller** or **Ken Kauffman**
at 870-741-5001 (any time).

E-mail: goyetherefore@characterlink.net

Hillcrest Home
1111 Maplewood Rd. · Harrison, AR 72601

THOUGHT GEMS

Keeping clean *between* the ears may be more important
than keeping clean *behind* the ears.

• • • • •

Some women suffer discomfort because they buy shoes
to fit the occasion instead of the feet.

• • • • •

A committee commonly keeps minutes of the way it spends hours.

• • • • •

Horse sense is often shown in the courage to say, “neigh.”

• • • • •

The yoke of God will never fit a stiff neck.

• • • • •

The best way to compliment your spouse is frequently.

• • • • •

Compliments are like perfume: to be inhaled, not swallowed.

• • • • •

The fellow who blows his horn the loudest
is probably in the densest fog.

• • • • •

Character is never erected on a neglected conscience.

• • • • •

Happy is the man who renounces everything
that places a strain on his conscience.

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Periodicals