



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

Galatians 6:14

JULY 2007

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Purpose of Calvary Messenger is:
 To propagate sound Biblical doctrine;
 To stimulate a deeper study of God's Word;
 To anchor and fortify the faith of Christians;
 To point lost and dying souls to Christ the Savior;
 To welcome prodigals back to the fold and family of God;
 And to help defeated Christians find victory in Christ Jesus.

Calvary Publications, Inc., is a non-profit organization, incorporated in the State of Ohio, for the purpose of sponsoring, publishing, and distributing Christian literature. The board is elected, one member annually, by the ministers of the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, at their annual spring meeting.

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Material for *Calvary Messenger*, marriages, births, ordinations, obituaries, and general articles—send to the **Editor**. Other Material—mail to their respective **Editors**.

Subscriptions, renewals, changes of address, etc.—mail to **Circulation Manager**. **When you move**, please notify the Circulation Manager one month in advance, giving your old and new address in full, so that your mailing label can be properly corrected and your credit be kept in order.

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Calvary Messenger (USPS 767-160) is published monthly by Calvary Publications, 2673 TR 421, Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681. Subscription rates are: 1 year (U.S.) \$7.50, 3 years (U.S.) \$21.00. For congregations using the every-home-plan, \$6.00 per year to individual addresses. Renewal \$3.75 when you also give a 1-year gift subscription at \$3.75. Second class postage at Sugarcreek, Ohio. Postmaster: Send address changes to Calvary Publications, Inc., 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW, Dundee, OH 44624.

I SEE HIM

Lisa Brubaker, Rocky Mount, VA

Behold the Lamb of God...

I see Him as a babe, so tiny and new,
Bringing joy to mother's heart as all new babies do.
I see Him as a lad sitting in the temple;
Questions that seem hard to us, to Him they are so simple.

I see Him—a strong Man to the desert led;
There Satan tempts; He overcame, was then by angels fed.
I see Him as the Teacher, teaching men of God,
Of faith and hope and charity, baptism and the blood.

I see Him in the garden, His sweat—great drops of blood;
His heart wrung out in agony; His cry—“Thy will be done!”
I see the angry mob—with sticks and staves they came;
I see them push and shove and spit upon the Son of Man.

I see Him in the hall, alone, without a friend;
False accused, stripped and mocked, enduring to the end.
I see Him on the road—a heavy cross He bore;
Hurting, aching, bleeding, fainting—bearing this and more.

I see Him on the cross, His hands nailed to the tree;
His arms outstretched, they're open wide—His arms outstretched for me!
I see the empty tomb. Hope is being born—
Hope of life beyond the grave that Resurrection morn.

I see the Father's throne, where Jesus stands beside,
Holding out His nail-pierced hands—“See, for her I died.”
I read about the future when He shall come again.
To take His Bride to be with Him, eternally to reign.

Oh, may I ever live my life in such a way,
That when He comes, His Bride to claim,
I can look up and say,

“Behold the Lamb of God!” 

Nothing In My Hand I Bring

In Luke 18, two contrasting characters approached Jesus. One is not named; the other could not see. Jesus loved them both and saw them both as candidates for salvation. Let us observe how these two approached Jesus so we may learn how to receive help from God. I am adding imagination and interpretation to these two accounts.

1. The Rich Young Ruler

(Luke 18:18-27)

A young man came up to Jesus quite breathless. He was probably used to being recognized as “upper crust.” He opened the conversation with Jesus by calling Him “Good Master” and asked what he might do to inherit eternal life.

Jesus countered the man’s question with another question: “Why do you call me good? Only God is good.” He seems to be saying, *Are you ready to acknowledge that I came from God? Do you believe that I am the Son of God?* Apparently without waiting for a response, however, Jesus proceeded to remind him of five marks of good character given in the Ten Commandments. He said:

1. “Don’t commit adultery.
2. “Don’t kill.
3. “Don’t steal.
4. “Don’t lie.
5. “Honor your parents.”

You would think that would make the young man thoughtful, but instead he quickly utters an exaggeration that violated the fourth point Jesus had just mentioned. He said he had observed all five commandments throughout his growing up years. I hear him saying, in effect, “I like me; who do you like?”

Well, at least in my case, that’s more than I could honestly say. While I didn’t break all five of these commandments, I wonder who could honestly say that he always told the truth or always honored his parents. Wasn’t Jesus the only one that *always* obeyed and honored His parents? The rest of us all come short of that. It seems to me that were it not for our parents’ correction and training, most of us would have even greater problems with ourselves—and with others.

Jesus looked at the rich young man with compassion. Then He touched a sensitive spot in his life by saying,

“Go and sell all your possessions and distribute the proceeds to the poor.” If we had been observing these two men in conversation from a polite distance, I believe we would have noticed something happening to the young man’s enthusiasm. His smile disappeared, his shoulders slumped, and his gaze shifted sadly to the ground. Then he shuffled away, without saying another word.

Jesus took that teachable moment to speak to His disciples, “It is really hard for those who are rich to enter my Kingdom. In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What is impossible with men, however, is possible with God.”

2. Bartimaeus, the Blind Beggar (Luke 18:35-43).

Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, sat beside the road. Several friends had earlier taken him to a spot where the traffic would naturally pass by. He had made himself as comfortable as he could while sitting on the ground. Whenever he heard a traveler approach, he would stretch out his hand and call out plaintively, “Alms, alms! Please, alms!”

Begging was apparently the only way Bartimaeus had of keeping body

and soul together. He had lost his sight as a child and never had the satisfaction of holding a job. When Jesus came through Jericho, the beggar was very poor and often hungry. When he heard that a crowd was coming down the road, he asked what it meant. They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was coming through and that a large crowd was traveling with Him.

Without asking what they thought, the beggar raised his voice and said, “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!” His friends told him to be quiet. He was told that he must not interrupt this important political development, for Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to be the new King of the Jews. Furthermore, Jesus had become so popular that He should hardly take time for people like him. Instead, Bartimaeus raised his voice and bellowed for all to hear, “JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME!”

Jesus stopped and signaled the crowd to stop. Then He spoke to Bartimaeus’ companions, “Bring him here to Me.” The poor beggar got so excited that he shed his outer robe and rushed in the direction of that compassionate voice. Jesus asked him, “Bartimaeus, what can I do for you?”

Without hesitation, Bartimaeus

said what was uppermost in his mind. “I want to see!”

Jesus told him that his great confidence in Jesus’ power made him eligible to have his eyesight restored. Jesus invited him to go into business, or go back to his family, or even to go get a job if he wished.

But Bartimaeus was so excited and grateful that he simply wanted to be with Jesus! The joy in his heart was obvious with every step. He had not only received his sight, he had found his Savior! He wanted to go with Jesus wherever that was!

The Differences

These two men illustrate a profound statement made by Mary, Jesus’ mother. In Luke 1:53, after Gabriel had informed Mary of her assignment to give birth to the Savior, Mary made a comment about God’s wisdom and providence. She said: **“He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.”**

Mary’s insight is shown by what happened when Jesus interacted with the two men in Luke 18:

—The rich, young man was more impressed with himself than with Jesus.

—The beggar was more impressed with Jesus than with himself.

—The rich, young man had almost no sense of need.

—The beggar had an overwhelming sense of need and freely expressed it.

—The rich, young man came to Jesus with lots of wealth and self-importance, and had his “cup turned upside down.”

—The beggar came to Jesus with no wealth or influence, but he had his “cup turned right side up.”

—The rich, young man walked sadly away from Jesus.

—The beggar eagerly followed Jesus with a spring in his step.

How then shall you and I approach the Savior? As those with wealth—*needing nothing*—or as beggars, *having nothing*? “Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling.”

—PLM 

Please note my new email address —
pauillmiller@btsskynet.net

*God still speaks to those
who take the time to listen*

Re: Have We Missed It?

(Jan. 2007)

With grief I can agree with the writer of this article. (Which was reprinted in *Sword and Trumpet*, April, 2007)

My thoughts went to the following Scripture: “Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (1 Cor. 15:34)

One commentator says the world and church have compromised. The world is being Christianized externally, and the church is becoming worldly. We are seeing two extremes. Someone says we must keep in the middle, but how do we know where the middle is if we don’t know where the edges are?...

There is a misunderstanding among our plain people on the issue of assurance of salvation. If we just believed what we sing, our eyes would open. Even in the *Ausbund*, we have songs of assurance. For instance, song 125, verse 34: “Dasz wissen all Gottes Kind, Dasz sie von Gott geboren sind.” (All God’s

children know that they are born of God.) Christ within [us is] the hope of glory!...

Let me close with a verse that John D. Frey would occasionally quote in his preaching: “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4).

—Eli M. Yoder, Millersburg, OH

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Re: A Team is Essential

(May 2007)

In response to this absurd article, let me ask: Where in Scripture is there any foundation for a belief that people who have no access to God can cast spells on people protected by the Holy Spirit? If people are drawn away from the true faith, it is because of their own lusts and desires, not the spells of people who have the spirit of anti-Christ, which includes Muslims. (See 1 John 4:3)

—John Paul Raber, Millersburg, OH



My Birth Story #2

A Student in Flesh and Spirit Class at CBS, 2007

When I was eight or nine years old, my friend became a Christian, and because of her influence on my life, I wanted what she had. In a childlike manner I, too, wanted Jesus to come into my heart. I don't necessarily consider this as my conversion, but rather my heart being opened to a journey of God calling me to Himself.

I was 12 when my oldest brother died which stirred in me a deeper longing for Heaven and a tremendous fear of hell. Through this time and after his death, my life was marked with turmoil, being afraid and having a disturbing lack of peace in my heart. I was afraid I would die. I knew there could be no peace until I would allow Jesus to cleanse me. One evening with both my dad and mom present they led me to sweet surrender in yielding my life to Jesus. That was a beautiful experience for me. Oh, what peace flooded my soul! I was free!

In the years that followed, I had a deep desire to please God and to follow Him. Too often though, I would try to please Him with my good deeds. This brought confusion because by my own efforts I did not always do well.

In the journey during my teen years, God faithfully continued His work in my life with love and patience. At times I felt as if I climbed over a mountain only to enter a valley. I wondered, "Is this how the Christian life will be until my dying day?"

Satan would bring doubts into my mind, trying to have me think that maybe I was not truly saved. I wondered if my experience was genuine. I understood the plan of salvation much better than when I made my commitment in my early teen years. I felt confident that my heart was totally sincere, and I did what God wanted me to do in the best way I knew how. Satan is definitely the




Life is not so short that there isn't time for courtesy.

author of confusion.

There was a period of time in my life when I felt something was amiss but didn't know what it was. I cried out to God to show me what it was in my life that was hindering my relationship with Him. During this period I felt Satan desperately fighting for my soul, but glory to God, I was rescued! I felt so helpless and weak I couldn't even pray.

Others were praying for me during this time, and I believe it was because of their diligent prayers that Satan lost his hold on me. I felt this battle very keenly and after this victory I

gained a new realization of the blood of Jesus, the determination of the devil, the power of prayer, and the support of my brothers and sisters in Christ.

I am continually awed at God's love for me and of his longing to have a relationship with me. In return, the best I can give Him is the remainder of my life to be used for His glory. He has shown me that my faith of years ago is not what I need for today, but for me to continue this relationship I need to choose to trust Him and believe in His power TODAY. 

the bottom line

Giving God Praise All My Days

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Praising God cleanses the soul. The disappointments of life can be like an irritating nail in the shoe, with every step drawing attention to its unwelcome presence. Or like a splinter in your hand, which hurts whenever something touches it.

The remedies for our disappointments may not be as simple as giving the shoemaker five dollars to fix the shoe or easing the splinter out with a needle. Disappointments can often be fixed in some way, if we are willing to bear the expense or the pain.

Forgiveness always costs something, and may cause hurt in addressing the offense effectively so that reconciliation results. Anger, bitterness, and complaint often stubbornly stand in the way of unconditional praise to God. Let us address it in our lives, as David did in Psalm 145. His song of unfettered praise is beautiful!

Remember

(verses 1-4)

“I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name forever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and

I will praise thy name for ever and ever.” (1,2)

Have you noticed how much easier it is to make a “forever” commitment than an “every day” commitment? Newly-married couples do it with flair and exuberance. They are sure of that “forever” love on their wedding day. But the sacrifice and service of love day after day is sometimes a taxing experience and difficult to deliver.

Children have pledged their “forever” love to Dad on his birthday in a special love note, or to Mom on Christmas Day. They specify what they will *always* do. The child also assumes a “forever” feeling, however, doing it on every single day is harder than they expect.

Our high points in life cause us to have those “forever” feelings of love and praise to God. The “forever” commitment cost seems attainable, yet the “every day” performing of our vows has some personal expense attached to it. The reality of holding firm in our faith and praise to God causes some serious internal struggle when faced with less—and sometimes vastly less—than desirable circumstances.

Notice the three forms of “great” in verse three: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his great-

ness is unsearchable.” That greatness should cause us to soar quite beyond ourselves.

If we hold back on these first three verses, the rest of the Psalm 145 cannot be experienced to its full potential.

Generational continuity in God’s faithfulness is dependent on articulating His praise and His mighty acts to our children—and just as importantly—our grandchildren. The story of our lives should highlight God’s goodness and greatness in the midst of our hard times and in spite of major disappointments. “One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts,” is the way it is meant to work, according to verse four.

Respond

(verses 5-12)

Verse five personalizes the obligation of praise: “I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty.”

Verse six sets the call to praise as being communal: “And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts....”

Verse seven expands the idea of corporate praise: “They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.” The chorus of praise rises higher and higher. In some ways, our spirits also rise on the wings of

praise. With a bit of spiritual imagination, let us for a few moments try to visualize the expanding DOME that David expresses in his praise of God. “The Lord is *gracious*, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of *great mercy*. The Lord is *good* to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.” (v. 8-10)

The DOME (canopy) of praise to God from His people and His creation, is a response to God’s vast reaches of grace, His limitless mercy, and the immeasurable scope of His works.

The following three verses highlight God’s *kingdom* and His boundless *dominion*. The suffix “dom” added to the word “king” has DOME as its root. The prefix in “dominion” has the same root.

Follow now in verses 11, 12, and 13 the specific uses of *kingdom* and *dominion* as it pertains to God: “They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.”

The DOME of God’s kingdom and

His dominion are extended over the wide expanse of His fullness in both the matchless realm of His creation and the unfathomable reaches of His salvation.

The preservation in both realms is truly awesome! God’s six-day creation was set in place in a self-sustaining manner. At no time did God *clear the slate* and start over with another creation. He didn’t need to correct flaws in His original creation. Furthermore, at no time did God make corrections to His plan of salvation. The self-evident perfection should inspire us to magnify our Creator God and our Savior God in the most ardent praise we can muster.

Restoration

(verses 14-21)

In the less than perfect world of our experiences are the intermittent low times. We are aware that none of us are always “on top.” The low times of personal failure, the reality of decline in health, or the loss of desired personal social success puts us down more often than up. We may even assume that we deserve better than our lot turns out to be. Unanswered prayer may even make us wonder about God.

David had such times, too. Yet David confidently expresses hope


in God. The implication from this lovely Psalm is that we are also to rest in that confidence. The next verses extol the restorative aspects of God's grace and mercy, in verses 14-19.

"The Lord *upholdeth* all that fall, and *raiseth* up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and *thou givest* them their meat in due season. Thou *openest* thy hand, and *satisfiest* the desire of every living thing. The Lord is *righteous* in all his ways, and *holy* in all his works. The Lord is *nigh* unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will *fulfill the desire* of them that fear him: he also will *hear their cry* and *save them*. (Italics added)

Restoration is God's continuing program to His world of people, and to His family, the church. The things we make break down, wear out, rust out, become obsolete, or deteriorate

from disuse. God's good gifts are refreshing, renewing, and expendable to our personal needs. They may not always be what we wanted, but somehow they work out for our long-term good when we love God

Our seasons of disappointment and sorrow are not miraculously removed in the discipline of giving praise to God. Somehow, though, our tears are not bitter, our heartache is not defiant, our grief does not bring defeat when we learn to praise God even in the midst of sadness.

The Bottom Line is that God is to be praised *every day* by reason of His goodness. He is to be *remembered* for His mercy and grace, and He wants us to allow ourselves to be encouraged and ministered to as God's *restoration* for us is carried out by His loving plan for our lives. By that we can continue to make appropriate response. 

Men, like tacks, are useful if they have

GOOD HEADS AND ARE POINTED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

marriages

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

Beachy-Lanza

Bro. Kevin, son of James and Mary Ann Beachy, Dover, OH, and Sis. Rhoda, daughter of Mario and Minerva Lanza, Belize City, Belize, at Central Assembly of God for Belize City Christian Fellowship, on Jan. 6, 2007, by Mario Lanza.

Miller-Miller

Bro. Kenneth, son of Andrew and Ada Miller, Sugarcreek, OH, and Sis. Renae, daughter of Mose and Amy Miller, Dundee, OH, at Maranatha Fellowship Church, on April 21, 2007, by Paul Leroy Miller.

Swartzentruber-Petersheim

Bro. Brian, son of Ray and Lorene Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Dorothy Ann, daughter of Fred and Amelia Petersheim, Oakland, PA, at Bittering Mennonite Church for Mountain View Mennonite, on May 5, 2007, by Jerry Yoder.

Yoder-Miller

Bro. Sam, son of Marlin and Julia Yoder, McVeytown, PA, and Sis. Brenda, daughter of Glen and Esther Miller, Middlebury, IN, at Fairhaven A.M. Church for Woodlawn A./M. Church on April 28, 2007, by Steve Miller.

Yoder-Yoder

Bro. James, son of Norman and Dorothy Yoder, Paris, TN, and Sis. Elsie, daughter of Harvey and Nancy Yoder, Paris, MO, at Fairview Baptist Church for Calvary Christian Fellowship, Paris, TN, on May 4, 2007, by Henry Nissley.

cradle roll

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

Almada, Lucio and Sheryl (Stoltzfus), LaBelleza, Paraguay, first child and son, Lesli David, Nov. 20, 2006.

Beachy, Peter, Jr., and Melody (Sommers), Swanton, MD, first child and dau., Kianna Nicole, May 3, 2007.

Bontrager, John Michael and Anna Ruth (Esh), East Earl, PA, first child and dau., Juliana, Sept. 3, 2006.

Kauffman, Danny and Regina (Yoder), Swanton, MD, sixth child, fourth son, Bronson Ray, April 13, 2007.

Mast, Robert and Amanda (King), Montezuma, GA, first child and son, Connor John, April 30, 2007.

Mast, Steve and Heidi (Yoder), Advance, MO, fourth child, third dau., Charity Dawn, April 27, 2007.

Peachey, Johnny and Wanda (Yoder), Rural Retreat, VA, second child, first dau., Amy Dawn, May 9, 2007.

Sommers, Jason and Miriam (Zook), Rural Retreat, VA, third child, second son, Douglas Wayne, May 11, 2007.

Stoltzfus, Myron and Ramona (Overholt), Sudlersville, MD, fifth child, fourth son, Ryan Daniel, April 9, 2007.

Weaver, Michael and Alta (Yoder), Quaker City, OH, second child and son, Benjamin Dale, April 16, 2007.

Yoder, Eugene and Jewel (Hochstetler), Aroda, VA, fifth child, third dau., Laurelle Grace, May 4, 2007.

o b i t u a r i e s

Kemp, Martin, 71, died at his home in Loogootee, IN, on April 28, 2007. He was born in Daviess County, April 12, 1936, son of Chris and Annie (Wagler) Kemp. In September, 2002, Martin fell while trying to strap a tarp on a semi which left him paralyzed from the waist down. Then in January, 2007, he was diagnosed with cancer. In spite of his struggles, he maintained an optimistic attitude which inspired those around him.

He was a member at Mt. Olive Mennonite Church, where he served as minister since 1982 and as bishop since 1991.

On Aug. 9, 1963, he was married to Laura Weldy. She survives. Daughters

and sons-in-law surviving: Angela and Philip Knepp, Odon; Regina and Garry Mullet, Greensburg, KY; Christine Kemp, Leburn, KY; Rhoda and Wayne Miller, Russellville, KY; Carol Kemp, at home; and son and daughter-in-law, Jonathan and Rebecca (Knepp), Loogootee. Also surviving are 18 grandchildren and sisters: Katie Ann (Harvey) Farmwald, Sullivan, IL; Rosie Schrock, Arthur, IL; Lydia (Ernest) Wagler, Odon; and brother, John (Ada) Kemp, Cannelburg, IN.

Preceding him in death were a granddaughter, Katie Eileen Miller; sisters: Leora Kemp, Mary Graber, and Ida Stoll and a brother, Herman Kemp.

Funeral services were held on May 1, with Eugene Eicher, Loren Graber, Ervin Knepp, Clyde Stoll and Stephen Schrock serving. Burial was in the Mt. Olive Cemetery.

Yoder, Amanda (Troyer), 63, of Quaker City, Ohio, went to be with Jesus on April 20, 2007. She was born in Uniontown, Ohio, June 9, 1943, to the late Benjamin and Amanda (Beachy) Troyer.

She was a member of Antrim Mennonite Church. Her uncomplaining attitude during her two-year battle with cancer was an inspiration to many.

On October 24, 1963, she was married to Elmer Yoder, who survives. Other survivors include three daughters: Mary Yoder of the home; Susan (Anthony) Beachy, Grantsville, MD; Alta (Michael) Weaver, Quaker City, OH; two sons: Dale (Lori) Yoder, Cambridge, OH; and Elmer, Jr. (Mindy) Yoder, Fairview, OH;

and seven grandchildren. She is also survived by eight brothers: Abe, Walnut Creek, OH; Noah, Carrollton, OH; Eli, Uniontown, OH; Ben, Coalgate, OK; David, Akron, OH; Mose, Levi and Crist, all of Hartville, OH.

Preceding her in death are three sisters: Lovina, Anna, and Susan; two brothers: Melvin and Joni; and two grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on April 23, with Edwin Weaver, Eli Schrock and Jason Miller serving. Burial was in the church cemetery.

Yoder, Lydia M., 92, died at her home April 10, 2007. She was born March 11, 1915, at Meyersdale, PA, daughter of the late Menno J. and Mary (Tice) Yoder.

She was a devoted member of Mountain View Mennonite Church. Lydia struggled with asthma for most of her

life. In spite of that, she was eager to serve others. She had a heart for the needy and opened her home to strangers and gladly served them a tasty meal.

On Dec. 6, 1936, she was married to Lloyd E. Yoder, who preceded her in death. Others who preceded her were daughter, Irene Tice; son-in-law, Marvin Kinsinger; four sisters, two brothers and a great-grandchild. Surviving are four sons: Menno, Salisbury, PA; Herman, Raymond, and Glenn, all of Grantsville, MD; son-in-law, Aaron Tice, Grantsville; and two daughters, Shirley Kinsinger and Glenda Yoder, both of Grantsville; 19 grandchildren and 37 great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held April 14, with Nephew Menno Yoder, Henry Tice and Keith Yoder serving. Burial was in the Mountain View Cemetery.

observations

The Anglican/Episcopal Church continues to struggle with the issue of homosexual practice. An archbishop, Peter J. Akinola, from Nigeria was planning to visit the U.S. on the weekend of May 5 and 6. He had plans to install a bishop to lead congregations who had broken away from the U.S. church because of their permissive view of homosexual practice.

The presiding bishop, Katherine

Jefferts-Shari in the U.S. church wrote to him urging to reconsider his plans to install Martyn Minns from Fairfax, VA, as bishop of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America.

Jefferts-Shari said such action would violate the ancient custom of the church that bishops generally minister within their own jurisdictions, unless permission is granted otherwise. She also mentioned that such action would not help efforts of reconciliation and would display to the world division and disunity.

Bishop Akinola replied that the caution to which she referred was intended to protect the church from false teaching. He wrote, "I also find it curious that you are appealing to the ancient customs of the church when it is your own province's deliberate rejection of the biblical and historic teaching of the church that has prompted this crisis." (*The Hutchinson News*, 5-5-07)

I decided to report this because I feel there are instructive dynamics to be observed here. Rather than listing them, I encourage the reader to discover them for himself.



World, 5-12-07, reports that the German government has begun to pay women \$12,000 to have babies. They have figured that if the present birth rate continues, in 20 years there will be a shortage of young workers paying into the government-sponsored pension system.

Other countries with declining population are watching with interest. Author of the article, John R. Erickson, reflects on the position and lasting influence of his own mother. He seeks to recognize the value and dignity of tasks associated with the care of infants and young children.



Ninety-four percent of lawsuits in the world are filed in the United

States. (*Plain Interests*, 2-07)



Daniel Kauffman was born in 1865. He became a county school superintendent in Morgan County, (Versailles) Missouri. He was a gifted young man with a promising career. In February of 1890, his wife was stricken with an acute attack of typhoid pneumonia, which proved to be fatal. This 25-year-old man was suddenly left a widower with a 20-month-old son. Up to this time he was not a Christian. All that summer he struggled between yielding his life to the Lord and enemy oppositions and alternatives.

He had a lively interest in politics. During this time of indecision he was nominated by his party for a position with the circuit court and recorder of Morgan County. This was considered a stepping stone to a higher appointment in the future.

In October of the same year, pioneer evangelist, John S. Coffman conducted a three-week series of revival meetings at Versailles. On the last evening, while the last stanza of an invitation hymn was being sung, Daniel went forward and in his words "gave my hand to the evangelist and my heart to the Lord."

Probably most of our readers will quickly associate Daniel Kauffman as chief author of *Doctrines of the*

Bible. He wrote 20 other books. One entitled *Fifty Years in the Mennonite Church* provided the information shared above.

Because of this man's outstanding gifting and usefulness, I have taken some interest in his convictions and manner of leadership. I have reasons to believe the following:

—Daniel Kauffman was firmly committed to the lordship of Christ and the authority and inspiration of the Word of God. He was theologically conservative.

—He was open to new ideas and methods that he believed would benefit the church, especially young people.

—His manner of leadership (he became a Mennonite bishop) was, on the one hand, gentle and kind, but Kauffman is also remembered as one who was able to take a firm stand when responsible oversight required it.

This book is actually borrowed, but I want to keep it for a while and share various other glimpses of this godly servant of an earlier generation.

• • • • •

Amish Bishop, Manasses Bontrager, lived at Dodge City, Kansas, during World War I. While significant numbers of plain people were yielding to the pressure to buy liberty bonds, he wrote a letter to *The Budget*

calling attention to this compromise of principles. He considered it a serious injustice to CO draftees who were experiencing various levels of harassment and persecution by the military during this time.

The letter came to the attention of the U.S. government. Brother Bontrager was fined \$500.

This seems to be another example where war fervor and patriotism displaced things such things as freedom of speech, freedom of the press and due process of law.

Bishop Melvin M. Bontrager, from Christian Mission Fellowship, Berne, IN, is a grandson of the above-mentioned bishop. Thanks to Marvin Yoder, Dade City, FL, for calling attention to this incident.

• • • • •

I have asked daughter Linda Rose for permission to use some of her correspondence about the tornado at Greensburg, Kansas, (population about 1500) on the night of May 4, 2007. Greensburg is about 75 miles southwest of Partridge.

The night of May 4 there was a series of four tornadoes starting southwest of Greensburg and totaling over seventy miles. The one that hit Greensburg was over 1.5 miles wide.

Farmers affected by tornadoes face an overwhelming situation. The tor-

nado destroyed or damaged houses, outbuildings, fences, pivot irrigation systems, tractor, and so on. In addition, there have been wandering cattle to find. Crops have been hailed on and fields littered with debris.

About 25 households of Bethel Mennonite Church (Church of God in Christ, Mennonite membership; 124) in the Greensburg area now have damaged or destroyed houses, a number of them in town. Lloyd Goossen, whose house and shop were destroyed in rural Greensburg, said, “[We’re] going to be OK. It is either going to make [us] bitter or better. We’ve had more help than we deserve” Their church house had no damage and became their operations center for clean-up.

Russell Stern from Pratt accompanied a bus to Greensburg Friday night after the storm, to help move people from Greensburg. He wrote, “Virtually everything was destroyed. On either side of the street were strewn cars and pickups. Several had lights still flickering and seemed like wounded or dying things... [Before the storm] Greensburg had huge, majestic, old trees... Trees no tractor could have budged were uprooted and strewn about... There was a fire hydrant lying on the ground... What

kind of wind pulls out fire hydrants?”

Kristi Odle worked at Dillons [grocery store] and the hospital which were both destroyed by the tornado. She says, “We’re homeless, we’re jobless. I don’t know how Greensburg is going to survive.” However, at least 50 businesses have announced plans to rebuild, also the school and the hospital.

Jeff Blackburn is pastor of the 90-member Greensburg Mennonite Church. After the storm, he concluded, “most of Greensburg is going to have to be bulldozed... The whole town is in the same situation... We’re really going to need to be patient with each other and not take emotions too seriously. God has really been at work here.”

Executive director of Mennonite Disaster Service Kevin King, was amazed, “It looks like a giant rake came through and raked the town away.”

On Wednesday, May 9, President Bush was in Greensburg for several hours. He said, “I am struck by the strength of the character of the people who live here on the plains. America is blessed to have such people.”

—DLM



How Do I Love My Brother?

Bruce Files, Lyndon, KS

He's Not my Brother; He's Heavy

I have a friend who has been struggling with the true meaning of brotherhood.

Several years ago, he was seriously ill and bedridden for several weeks. During his convalescence, only two couples out of twenty families in his Amish Mennonite community visited and encouraged him and his wife. In addition, one brother visited him at the urging of an out-of-town guest. A minister of his congregation visited him, while his wife waited in the car in my friend's driveway. During his illness, his family received no help with meals, no inquiries as to their well-being, no cards of encouragement, not even telephone calls from well-wishers. Incidentally, my friend and his family had moved into this community only three months earlier.

Of course, the family was hurt by the lack of care, but they were determined not to cause a stir. Rather, they endeavored to forgive their church friends without comment. However, recently the minister's wife, who had waited in the car while her husband had visited for a couple of minutes, told my friend's wife that they had not been visited by the other families (and that she had waited outside for the same reason) because "we (most

of the couples in the church) are uncomfortable with both of you."

My friend, of course, was well aware that not many had visited him, but until the minister's wife made her confession, he hadn't even known of her wait in the car. Understandably, for this reason and others, they became disillusioned, suspicious and distrustful of their church friends.

Another thing they notice is that when other members became ill they receive very strong encouragement, aid, and support. So they wonder if their church friends are "uncomfortable" with them. Maybe they even despise them. They have, after all, no Mennonite background.

This story begs a couple of questions. How should we respond to brothers and sisters who are different from us or even make us a little uncomfortable? Further, how should my friend and his wife respond to this lack of concern and love for them with the brotherhood?

He Isn't My Brother; I'm Uncomfortable With Him

If we are uncomfortable with one of our church friends, do we have to love him, aid him, or even associate with him? After all, it's not my fault that I have so little in common with him. Yes, we must! God's Word is clear. The Scriptures do not give us

a *brotherhood exception*. The Bible does not say ‘love the brethren, except the ones you’re uncomfortable with or have little in common with except Christ.’

In 1 Peter 1:22, we read, “seeing that ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*” Peter continued to teach us in 1 Peter 3:8: “...be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be pitiful, be courteous.*”

Fervent and unfeigned love! We are commanded by God to have unfeigned love with a pure heart and true compassion for our brothers and sisters in Christ. How? How can I have such regard for a brother or sister with whom I’m uncomfortable? Only through having the love of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, can we hope to love each other and care for each other.

“Hereby perceive we the love of *God* because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:15). Listen! Not only are we commanded to have compassion for our brother and love him with fervent and unfeigned love, but we also ought to be willing to lay down our life for that same brother who makes us uncomfortable! Not just visit him, but be willing

to lay down our life for him. What if I don’t want to love my brother that much? It means death! “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death” (1 John 3:25).

Is it not clear? There are no exceptions. No excuses. Because of the love of God, we are to have fervent and unfeigned love and compassion for our brethren—all of them. We can do it with true hearts because He died for us. Then we could say with the Boys’ Town advertisement, “He’s not heavy; he’s my brother!”

If They Don’t Love Me, I Won’t Love Them

What about my friend’s responsibility? Although my friend has not left his church, he has not reacted to his situation in the most Christlike manner. In his hurt and suspicion, he has become angry with his church friends and pulled away from them. Because of this situation and other issues, he’s become convinced that his church despises him and his family. Why doesn’t he leave that church?

First, he believes he shouldn’t leave the church without some peaceful resolution. Second, there’s nowhere for him and his family to go locally. Finally, he appreciates an Anabaptist church and he doesn’t care to find out if there’s another Amish Mennonite

church whose members may or may not be comfortable with him and his family. Now he has a problem: He's angry, suspicious, distrustful, and distant toward his church "friends."

What should he do? What must he do? He should be open and speak with his brethren, He should pray for them and for himself. He should ask God to give him forgiveness, unfeigned love and compassion for his brethren. Even if his church friends never respond to him in Christian love, God's power and Christ's love for his brethren is available!

He's Not Heavy; He's My Brother

Ministers' Meeting Messages—2007

This is a condensation of a message given at the annual Ministers' Meeting, April 3-5, 2007, at Hutchinson, KS. The set of eight cassette tapes or CD's with 10 messages (plus three sermon responses and a men's and women's session on Tape 9) is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA, 20136, for \$45, postpaid.


2. The First Commandment

—Jason Gingerich, Sarasota, FL

This evening I would like to inspire us to truly love God deeply and completely. I hope there's part of you that's saying, "I'm already doing that." I'm not here to question that. You probably

Our brotherhood should be true and not something we merely talk about or preach in church. Our brotherhood must be "blind." Blind to race, culture, background, personality and any other difference upon which Satan would have us focus.

We are same under God. Members of one body. Brothers and sisters in Christ. Love the brethren fervently with a true heart. No excuses. No exceptions!

Next time you don't want to visit, aid, pray for, or speak with your brother, remember, "*He's not heavy; he's my brother!*" 

will not hear anything new, even as John said that he didn't give a new commandment, but rather an old commandment, which they had from the beginning.

This first commandment is both deceptively simple and frighteningly all-encompassing. Here are a few questions I would have you help me answer:

Is love defined in the Scriptures?

It is beautifully described, for instance in 1 Corinthians 13 and 1 John. Love is extravagantly illustrated many times in Scripture. The crown jewel of this is Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. Love is forcefully commanded in both covenants.

What is the opposite of love?

Some say it is hate. Others say it is indifference. Perhaps it is selfishness.

What is acceptable proof of love?

What is it in your life and mine that would cause God to say, I accept that as proof of your love for Me. Jesus said that on this commandment hangs the whole law and everything the prophets said.

Let us look at three points: 1. The command to love. 2. The attitude of love. 3. The evidence of love.

In Mark 12:28-34a: “And one of the scribes came and having heard them reasoning together and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked Jesus, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is Hear o Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou has said the truth, There is one God and there is none other but he and to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the soul and with all the strength and to love his neighbor as himself is more than all whole burnt offerings

and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”

The roots of this commandment are found in Deuteronomy 6 and this truth grows out into the tree of grace, the new covenant ratified in Christ’s blood. The scribe came with an honest question. While Jesus often responded to questions with another question, He didn’t do that here. Furthermore, He used the same terms in His answer the scribe had used in his question. Jesus said that loving God is the most important thing you and I will ever do. Everything else in the law and the prophets hangs on this prescription. One preacher calls this commandment “the panacea for all ills.”

Loving is not natural. Perhaps that’s why it’s commanded and not just suggested. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, in about 1090 A.D., gave four degrees of love:

We begin to love because we are told to, even though it is against our nature.

We love for selfish reasons, yet we receive some blessings out of that love. It suits me and it pleases me because it brings pleasantness to my life.

We receive those blessings from God or from others and out of that we begin to develop a respect

for this God who loves us with His everlasting love.

Out of that respect comes that deepest affection and delight for loving God for who He is.

Where are you in this process? Where are your fellow church members? Is our love mostly selfish and carnal? Is that why we are often vulnerable to peer pressure or have too great an attraction to the world of sports or whatever symptom of lovelessness for God that exists among us? Or what about the carelessness and casualness so common about pursuing God—in others, but also in our own lives? 1 John 2:15-17 says, “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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

Out of that love come behavior, actions, and pursuits. We all love someone or something. We are programmed to love. Johann Goethe said, “We are shaped and fashioned by what we love.” We must grow in love for God and that growth comes by obedience. In 1 John 2: “For whoso keepeth his word, verily, in him is the love of God perfected. Hereby know

we that we are in him.”

Even when we don't feel like loving, that doesn't mean we don't need to follow through in obedience. There is an infinite difference in *knowing* what is right and *doing* what is right.

A pastor named George Crane told of a wife who came into his office complaining and full of hatred toward her husband. She said, “I do not only want to get rid of him, I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he's hurt me.”

Pastor Crane came up with an ingenious plan. He said, “Go home and act like you really loved your husband. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be kind, considerate and as generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him, make him believe you love him. After you have convinced him of your undying love, and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that you're getting a divorce. That will really hurt him.”

She did so with enthusiasm, acting as if she loved him. For two months she showed love and kindness: listening, giving, reinforcing, and sharing. When she didn't return, Pastor Crane called her and asked, “Are you now ready to go through with the divorce?”

“Divorce?” she exclaimed, “Never! I discovered I really do love him!” That illustrates in a small way God’s request that we love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are not told to love Him because we always feel like it, but because it’s for our good. And out of that germ of life and truth can come the blessing of God in our lives.

In his book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote, “Do not waste your time bothering whether you love your neighbor. Act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets of life. If you’re behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.” We are commanded to love God, whether or not we feel like loving Him.

The attitude of love is spoken of in Luke 7:47. There a woman came and washed Jesus’ feet with tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed His feet with ointment. Jesus was criticized for allowing this to happen. In partial answer to that criticism, Jesus commented: “Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven. For she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

We do not gather in little huddles to see who has the most sins, thus to determine who loves Christ the most. How could we count them? It is not a matter of quantity. It’s the attitude

about the forgiveness and grace He offers. Simon had sinned many sins just as the woman had sinned many sins. He may not have been aware of it, or if he was, he seems not to have cared very much. It didn’t matter much to him. The woman—because she felt the weight of the sins she had been carrying lifted from her—loved Jesus very much.

We love God for one reason, according to 1 John 4:19. It’s out of our gratitude for His love for us. “We love him, because he first loved us.” When we begin to forget how much God loves us, we become selfish and carnal; then tensions build up in relationships, and we begin to fight and bite and devour each other. We must never forget what we have been forgiven! An old Portuguese proverb says, “Ingratitude is the sepulcher of love.”

Agape love is self-sacrificing love. 1 John 3:16 illustrates that. It’s not really love unless it’s a sacrifice. King David modeled that for us in 2 Samuel 24:24. Does that mean we must lie on a bed of nails? Not at all! But I notice that the more selfish I am the more painful it is to give sacrificial love. I’m also learning that the more I practice sacrificial love, the more I die to self. The more I die to self, the less painful it is to love sacrificially. Thus when I practice it consistently, it becomes enjoyable and rewarding.

The weight of the responsibilities

you ordained men (and spouses) carry and the yoke you're pulling require commitment. My two-year-old may kiss me on the cheek and say, "Love you, Daddy!" That's not because of who I am, but because of who she is. She has a genuine, affectionate delight and her kisses are so sweet! But when my wife gives me her affectionate responses, I know it represents more. Her expression of love represents a commitment to walk with me, even when I make it less than comfortable for her. She puts up with my failures and selfishness. Commitment is something we must offer back to God.

God doesn't belittle us, step on us to hurt us; but he does give us "spankings" to draw us to Him. He is the perfect Father, the perfect Husband and He's looking for our faithfulness.

This attitude includes putting on the Lord Jesus. Romans 13:14, I learned just recently, has a word picture in the Greek about a person who represents another so completely that he speaks not only the words he should speak but also portrays the attitudes and outlook of the one he represents. Putting on the Lord Jesus means that we put on the attitudes, the motives, and the desires of Jesus Christ. He flows through us to others. Romans 13:14 speaks of a pleasing surrender of friendship to a friend

and of losing my identity in God's.

Out of that surrender comes the evidence of love. Romans 8:28 and 29 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son so that he might be the first among many brethren."

We are to give ourselves back to God out of gratitude as a living sacrifice. Jesus did that and prayed, "Not my will, but thine be done," in His soul struggle in Golgotha. He also said, "I do always those things that please him." Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:9, (paraphrased) "We make it our goal to please Him." So then in serving it soon becomes unbearable, unless it's done for God. Whether it's your family, your congregation, your co-minister, your community, or other congregations, the weight can become too much to carry, unless the love for God is underneath all of it. If it is, then come freedom, energy, enablement and grace. W. R. Alger said, "Love makes obedience lighter than liberty."

We get in trouble when our love for God goes slack. We begin to show our selfishness. At the bottom of every inter-personal relationship problem that I have is a core shift of my heart from truly loving God to loving my-


self. Love to God is the foundation of all true serving.

In Revelation 2: 2-4, we see that you can serve, carry, struggle, obey, and witness—and do all of them well. But without love, it will all go wrong.

Someone has said, “If you yield your mind to God, you will become an intelligent Christian. If you yield your heart to God, you will become a devoted Christian. If you yield your will to God, you will become a

powerful Christian. If you yield your passions to God, you will become a dynamic Christian.”

Let us together read the words in Mark 12:29b-30: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.”

Prayer: *Lord God, teach us to love you for Christ's sake. Amen* 

Financial Support for Ministers—Part 1 of 3

Howard Bean, Tavistock, ON

[These articles first appeared in The Midwest Focus, January-February, 2004. They are being reprinted by request of several lay brothers, who wish to remain anonymous. “Prove all things. Hold fast to that which is good.” —Editor]

What is the most awkward subject for a preacher to talk (or write) about? Possibly it is financial support for preachers and church leaders. Two things make it easier for me.

First, I have the support of George R. Brunk, Sr., who wrote, “Ministers are to declare *all the counsel of God* and must not because of natural modesty neglect to teach God’s plan in this matter. Because it has been

so much neglected in the past, it not only works a hardship upon the undershepherds but greatly hinders the upbuilding of the church and the spread of the Gospel.”

Second, I receive ample support from my home congregation. At one congregational business meeting, the subject was brought up by a lay member and the members encouraged one another to give generously. From the bi-monthly offerings, my fellow pastor and I each receive about \$7,000 annually (the Canadian version of Monopoly-style coloured money, mind you, but significant for a congregation which has an average attendance in the 50’s). In addition, the congregation gives us a grocery shower every Christmas as well as

gifts from individuals throughout the year. In view of the teaching of Scripture, they would be astounded if I told them that some conservative Mennonite ministers receive *no* financial offerings from their congregations.

Numerous questions can be raised on the subject of pastoral support. Do the Scriptures teach financial support for ministers of the Gospel? Should ordained brothers receive a salary? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a salaried ministry? What amount of financial help should be given to ministers? Why has the conservative wing of the Mennonite church been reluctant, or opposed to, salaries to ministers? How often should pastoral support offerings be lifted? How should level of support be determined? What if a minister is a relatively wealthy man—should support be given to him?

Ministerial Support in Principle

I wish to consider, first, the Old Testament principles and practice, and then, the New Testament teaching and example. In a second article, I plan to consider aspects and issues of pastoral support in the twenty-first century.

Old Testament Principles

The priests and Levites of Israel

received their livelihood from certain parts of the sacrifices and from free will offerings and tithes. (See Numbers 18:8-32). The sons of Levi were not assigned a landed inheritance although some private ownership was possible such as the 48 cities, 13 of which were for Aaron's sons, the priests (Numbers 35:1-8, and Joshua 21:4, 19). Leaders who did spiritual service received material support. They received a wide range of offerings and tithes—such as firstfruits of the field, first born of clean animals, and redemption money paid for first-born sons. From offerings, the priests received the bread of the presence, the majority of the meal offerings, and the sin offerings, the breast and thigh of the peace offerings, etc.

(If you want to look at it more thoroughly, consult *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia* under "Priest: Sustenance").

Old Testament Precedents and Examples

Not always in Israel's history were the tithes and offerings given. In Nehemiah's day, he "perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field" (Nehemiah 13:10). Nehemiah taught and arranged for the spiritual leaders to receive money so that the house of

God would not be neglected (v. 11-14). Elisha received support from the woman of Shunem and her husband (2 Kings 4:8-10).

The Old Testament also gave warnings about the love of money. Ministers shall take warning from Baalam who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and from Gehazi, who was eager to receive financial gain from the miracle of God performed in Naaman's body.

New Testament Principles

(a) Matthew 10:10 When addressing the twelve, Jesus basically said, "Don't take money along, for the workman is worthy of his meat."

(b) Galatians 6:6 "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." The word *communicate* means *share*. Phillips says, "The man under Christian instruction should be willing to contribute toward the livelihood of his teachers." The teacher of the Word shares spiritual riches; those taught should share material riches.

(c) 1 Timothy 5:17, 18 This passage teaches increased support for quality and quantity of spiritual service. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture

saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." Therefore, I conclude that financial support to leaders is in order. Also, a good job of effective administration deserves more support.

(d) 1 Corinthians 9:4-15, 18 This passage plainly teaches full financial support for a minister who spends his time preaching and doing spiritual service. As verse 14 puts it, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Paul gives four reasons for financial support. First, the apostles did. Paul asks, "Or I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?" (v. 6). He implies that the other apostles received sufficient support; they didn't work for a living.

Second, common sense indicates support. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?" (v. 7). Interestingly, a minister is a soldier (2 Timothy 2:3), a vine dresser (1 Corinthians 3:6-8), and a shepherd (1 Peter 5:2-4).

Third, the Scriptures taught it. Paul draws an analogy from oxen. "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the

ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?" (v. 9). Then he asks a rhetorical question, "If we have sown into you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (v. 11).

Fourth, Paul points to the precedent of the Old Testament priests. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" (v. 13). As the priests were supported by tithes and offerings, so should Christian ministers be reimbursed (v. 14).

In summary, the New Testament clearly teaches ministerial support. If a person devotes significant time to preaching, teaching, evangelizing, he is entitled to finances. The Mennonite Church has commonly provided a salary or support (albeit often quite minimally) to missionaries, writers, and Christian school teachers. So what about preachers?

It is interesting that Paul, having justified his claims to financial help, promptly abandons them. He writes in verse 15, "But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me." His example suggests that there may be some overriding considerations which make total support unwise.

New Testament Precedents and Examples

Although Paul did receive some financial support (Philippians 4:10, 14-17 and 2 Corinthians 11:7-11), he also worked with his hands to make a living. On his third missionary journey, he employed his tentmaking craft and preached every Sabbath (Acts 18:3, 4). He wrote to the Thessalonians, "ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:9). Concerning his time at Ephesus he testified, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20: 33-35).


Jesus didn't charge for His preaching. There is no record of offerings being taken for Him. But He did accept financial support (Luke 8:3).

In the Early Church, the clergy were supported. Tertullian wrote, "The stipends of the clergy were at first from voluntary offerings at the

Lord's supper. At the love feast preceding it, every believer according to his ability offered a gift; and when the expense of the table had been defrayed, the bishop laid a portion for himself, the presbyters, and deacons, and with the rest relieved orphans, confessors, and the poor generally."

Cyprian wrote, "The stipend was in

proportion to the dignity and merits of the several bishops, presbyters and deacons."

In the next issue, I wish to consider *Ministerial Support in Practice*, looking at the pros and cons of significant support as well as ten guidelines for support. 

mission awareness

Intercessory Wireless Communications

Floyd Stoltzfus

Some of our readers remember when the telephone was attached to a wall in the home. The short cord limited how far one could walk while talking. A small crank extending out of the right side of the wooden box was turned to call the operator. When making a call, you gave the number to the operator at telephone central. She was a real person and not just some computerized, mechanical voice. The operator would connect you to the party you wished to reach. Sometimes you needed to wait to make a call until another party on your line was finished using the phone. In some cases, as many as six families shared a party line and you could hear neighbors who happened to be using their phone when you picked up the receiver.

"Twenty-five years ago someone with a burst of imagination made this prediction: 'I can visualize a day when phones will be small enough to carry in your shirt pocket. There will be no wires attached to them. You will be able to stand beside your car or truck and call anywhere in the world.' What sounded like science fiction is now reality." (Harry Erb, "Harnessing the Cell Phone," *Eastern Mennonite Testimony*, March, 2007, p. 6)

We as Christians, however, have a far superior means of communication available to us. Our omniscient Creator is always ahead of science with its technological discoveries and inventions.

Intercessory Wireless Communications (IWC) never fails. The waves are clear if the person on the earthly

side has obeyed the Instruction Manual. “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jer. 33:3). “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:2). “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

Is it important to use IWC for our brothers and sisters in other places? How do we intercede for them in prayer? What difference does it make, anyway? Here is how one missionary used IWC in behalf of his brothers on another continent: “Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi...I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy” (Phil. 1:1-4). Let us apply Rudyard Kipling’s “golden text” to this Scripture.

1. Who? Paul and Timothy send greetings to all the saints, with the bishops and deacons.

2. Where? From Rome to Philippi.

3. What? Paul thanks God for these dear saints and prays for them.

4. When? Whenever he thinks of them. Paul remembers how the

church began: Lydia, the seller of purple, received the Gospel gladly and was baptized with her household; the poor, demon-possessed slave girl was delivered; the illegal arrest; the severe beatings; the earthquake; the conversion and baptism of the jailor and his household; the gentle washing of his wounds by the penitent jailor.

5. How? Sometime later Paul received a financial gift from these dear brothers and sisters. He was miles away in a cold, lonely prison in Rome. No wonder he offers these prayers with joy. He not only thinks of these people, he holds them dear to his heart as partakers of God’s marvelous grace. He prays fervently that their “love may abound more and more and extend to its fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight and more comprehensive discernment” (Phil. 1:9 AMP)

6. Why? Paul thanks God and these believers for their sympathetic, loving fellowship. He delights in their partnership with Christ. He prays that they learn what is the best, approve what is excellent and of the highest value in light of the Lord’s return. Because of Paul’s joyful spirit and regular prayers—even in prison—many brethren were bolder to preach Christ fearlessly, thus spreading the Gospel yet more.


How can we make our prayer life

more effective? Use the IWC system! Mingle it with lots of thanksgiving and praise. Pray for your church families, including the children. Pray especially for the ministers. See Colossians 4:2-4.

Pray for revival fires to burn in your home community, but keep traveling on your knees around the world. Jot down names of Christian workers. Intercede for those whom the Spirit leads you to talk to God about. You might use a daily or weekly schedule. Pray for the mission organizations and boards, especially those in the conservative Anabaptist spectrum. Focus on those of a biblical persuasion which you can conscientiously

support financially. We would not, however, discourage praying for believers of other fellowships. (See Mark 9:38-40)

Paul's commendation of Epaphras is heartwarming. He was "always laboring fervently" for the church in his prayers. This zealous prayer warrior not only models when and how to pray, but also establishes goals for every member in the congregation "that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12).

One of the greatest gifts God gives His people is the privilege of prayer. And one of the best gifts man can return to God is a life of prayer. 

helpers at home

Seasons of Change

Mary June Glick

Releasing My Child
Psalm 1:3 says, "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;..." Even as nature changes with each changing season, so we experience CHANGE as we go through life's seasons. God's desire for us is to be fruitful in every season.

Face reality—change is inevitable. It will come. Choose to accept change

as a challenge. Read Isaiah 43:18 and 19. These two verses have been my challenge through some of the changes in my life. God wants to do a NEW THING in our lives. Leave the old things behind and press forward to new opportunities and goals. Don't waste your time wishing for the past or worrying about tomorrow. Accept the changes and grow *or* resist them and struggle.

One of the seasons of change in

a mother's life is LETTING HER CHILDREN GO. God gives us children for a time to teach and train, then release them back to Him. These changes often begin in the parents' 40's. Not only is the family changing, but our bodies are also changing. This can be a difficult season of life, but it can also be a joyful time, as we CHOOSE joy.

Women like security. We like the normal, the routine. We are nest builders. We are wise if we prepare to release our children from the time they enter kindergarten or first grade. These are the years to build relationships with them, to spend quality time with them by simply being there for them, to listen to them and prepare them for the teen years. Adolescence and teen-age years prepare us to cut the "apron strings."

In our Mennonite communities, 15 or 16 is usually the age when our children begin to attend youth activities and spend more time with their friends. I realize that this varies with families. This is a time for parents to decide how much and where they go, when, and how much is enough. This will strain a good relationship if children are rebelling against parental authority or are questioning parental advice.

Listen to your teenagers? They need you to be their parent first,

but also their friend. As your teen becomes older and more mature, he may leave home for a term of Bible school, then later voluntary service or college. With each separation, a mother's heart naturally grieves at the changes, as she realizes that the family will never be the same again. But this is all a part of how God prepares us to LET GO.

Next will be marriage for our children, unless God has a different plan for their lives. Our children's marriage puts our mothering instincts to the test. We must release our child to someone else. The child we have loved, cared for and protected, now leaves home to begin a home of his own. He or she will cleave to a life companion. We are no longer first in his or her life.

We are now known as mother-in-law. There is no room for jealousy or competition. I don't appreciate mother-in-law jokes, because I believe God planned for this to be a beautiful relationship. This is the time to really enjoy friendship with our children and their spouses. Our responsibility is to pray for our child's marriage, to support that relationship and to be an encouragement to both of them.

Joy is a choice. Choose joy even in change.

Next month: "Older Years, a Season of Joy" 

The Ugly Cobra

Anita Yoder

December 26, 2004, was an unforgettable day! We heard horrible news about an earthquake that began under the ocean floor resulted in a horribly devastating tsunami. Harvey Yoder interviewed many survivors and wrote the book, *Tsunami*, published by Christian Aid Ministries, after CAM began rebuilding in Indonesia. Of the many stories coming from that gigantic tidal wave, Hendra's is truly remarkable.

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Hendra lived in the town of Banda Aceh with his family. The night of December 25, he had a very disturbing dream. He dreamed that the earth shook so badly that it lifted in the air. After he woke the next morning, Hendra couldn't forget such a frightening dream, so he told his father about it. His father said that definitely he had dreamed about an earthquake but that he couldn't remember ever witnessing such a bad one, and so Hendra and his father continued their morning coffee together. They had hardly finished when the ground actually started shaking beneath them!

"Just like my dream!" Hendra shouted, amazed and frightened. Father told him to hurry outside while he gathered his mother and baby sister. His older sister had left the house earlier.

They all stayed outside as the earth heaved and rocked. They watched in horror as the houses and buildings tumbled in heaps around them. Hendra couldn't believe that what he had dreamed about was actually happening! People milled about too stunned to know what to do next. The earth still rumbled with smaller tremors. He heard his mother crying and begging Allah to save them while she rocked his baby sister in her arms.

Hendra wondered what he should do. What would others do? Would they rebuild their house? He saw that his aunt's house was still standing.

Thirty minutes after the first shock started Hendra looked out at the street filling with screaming people. Then he looked out to the sea. There behind the people was a mammoth black wave with an ugly head like a cobra coming toward them higher than any buildings. He joined the crying mob, running as fast as he

could. He ran faster and faster, his fear giving him more strength as he ran. Then the huge wave overtook Hendra and all went black.

Hendra survived and so did his sister, the only survivors of their family. They are living in an orphanage that is supported by Muslim aid. While

thousands died they, with many others, relive this horrible nightmare.

Why did Hendra have the dream? Why did he survive? Who will tell him of Jesus?

Will you pray for Hendra and other orphans who lost their parents in the tsunami? 

youth messages

Dear Youth,

How is life for you at the present? Do you find life to be enjoyable or are you finding it really hard? Did you know that pleasant and unpleasant experiences have the potential of either driving us closer to God or away from God? When life is hard, we can “curse God and die” or our hearts can

be enlarged as we go to God for comfort and healing. When life is going well, we can “forget God” or we can worship God with a heart of gratefulness. The Israelites complained when life was not pleasant and they forgot God when life was pleasant. What do you do? —EE

This Month's **QUESTION**

What is God's purpose in allowing us to experience things that are both pleasant and unpleasant?

r e s p o n s e f r o m o u r r e a d e r s ...

The experiences of life can often be categorized as being pleasant or unpleasant. We often think about our unpleasant experiences and we tend to be negative people.

The Bible describes situations that were unpleasant but were a way of drawing people to God. In Genesis 22:1-3, 9-19, we have the story of Abraham offering his son Isaac.

In this example we see that God tests our affections to make sure that, above all, we love God the most. Through this unpleasant situation God was testing Abraham to see where his affections were—whether his love was still true to God or whether he was pouring it all out on his son. Sometimes God asks us to give up those things that are dear to

us to draw us closer to Him.

In Job 2:7-13, we have the story of Job going through terrible difficulty. God uses unpleasant situations to test our faithfulness, to strengthen us or to purge our lives. In the beginning of the book of Job, he seems to be a perfect man. Yet at the end of the book we read that God wanted to see some things changed in Job's life.

In Acts 16, we read about an unpleasant situation for Paul and Silas. They got whipped, put in prison, and then—to make it worse—were put in stocks. God sometimes sends unpleasant circumstances to help us witness to others. This passage gives us an example of how to rely on God and trust in Him through situations that are hard and difficult, and how this can be a real testimony to the world. Through this unpleasant experience, the jailer and his whole house came to know Christ.

Our challenge is to allow God to use unpleasant situations to make us better.

—Al Eash, Pratts, VA

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Isn't it interesting how both pleasant and unpleasant things can make us long for heaven? Maybe that is why we experience them. Sharing, singing, and praying with friends gives me a longing to know God better and to

serve Him more fully. I think it also makes us realize how empty life would be without Him.

On the other hand, if life were always a breeze, I think we would lose our desire to walk completely in Him. We need unpleasant things to strengthen our faith and be drawn closer to Him. Unpleasant things make us keep our reason for being here on earth in the right perspective. Take the challenge of life and go with God!

—Cynthia Kauffman, Weldon, IA

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It seems to me that this question has been asked for many generations, probably since the fall of man, and it will continue to be asked as long as the earth remains. I'm not sure that anyone can precisely define God's purpose for allowing both pleasant and unpleasant experiences. However, I think it is beneficial to think about this question, for by doing so, we may gain a better understanding of God and of how we should respond to circumstances in our lives.

In my experience, I have found that I learn and grow through both pleasant and unpleasant situations. As humans, we would rather learn by pleasant methods, if we had a choice. But God allows us to experience things that are unpleasant as well. Sometimes unpleasant times may

be punishment for disobedience to God. At other times, we may simply need the jolt of being taken out of our comfort zone in order to grow. Routine causes us to become lax. When we are comfortable, we don't instinctively try very hard to move on from that situation. We naturally want to stay in a position of comfort. Since the Christian life is a process of growth in which we never arrive at a "coasting altitude," so to speak, we need unpleasant times to urge us forward and strengthen our faith in God. God understands our human nature much more fully than we do, and He knows exactly what experiences we need to go through in order to grow closer to Him. The choices we make during those experiences define our spiritual growth.

—Anthony Glick, *Gap, PA*

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Victory in defeat

*Defeat may serve as well as victory
To shake the soul and let the glory
out.*

*When the great oak is straining in
the wind,*

*The boughs drink in new beauty,
and the trunk*

*Sends down a deeper root on the
windward side.*

***Only the soul that knows the
mighty grief***

***Can know the mighty rapture.
Sorrows come***

***To stretch our spaces in the heart
for joy.***

—By Edwin Markham
(Used by permission)

I sometimes wonder what God is up to in my life. It seems there are so many hard and painful things. Why is he allowing them? I cry out to Him again and again. I look up to heaven and wonder what He's trying to tell me. Has He forgotten me? Does He remember that I'm down here on earth, struggling through life? Then He sends me a "rainbow," a promise that He'll never forget about me—a friend calls me and asks me what's going on in my life. I get an e-mail that reminds me somebody is praying for me today. I look outside and see the bright blue sky. I think God is trying to teach me to trust Him. He allows me to experience unpleasant things so that I can learn to lean on Him and trust Him more fully... and then he sends me little expressions of His love to remind me that I'm very special to Him and He cares about every detail of my life.

—Rachelle Chupp, *Stuarts Draft, VA*

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*Because we believe our God is a God
of love, it's easy for us to answer why*

He allows pleasant things to come into our lives. It is because He loves us and wants the best for us. Unfortunately, because we humans are afflicted with tunnel vision with a very narrow scope, what we see as being best and the reality of excellence are often two different things.

*As Peter Dyck once said as he cracked a rock-hard piece of bread against the pulpit, “Old bread is not hard. No bread, **that is hard!**” When the people heard the bread crack, many of them thought to themselves how awful it would be to have to eat that bread. Once Mr. Dyck had drawn the contrast, however, they viewed that bread differently. I believe one reason God allows unpleasantness into our lives is so we are more grateful for what we perceive as good that He allows into our lives. Another cliché, but true, reason that God puts unpleasant circumstances in our lives is for our personal spiritual development.*

All of us can think of times in our lives which we thought were “perfectly horrible,” and that no good could possibly be gleaned from our tragic circumstances. Viewed through the lens of the passage of time, however, many of us point to these times as being the most definitive in our spiritual journey. So I think God does give us pleasant things and circumstances because He loves us and wants the best for us.

Although they seem diametrically opposed to each other, I think God puts unpleasant things in our lives for the same reason—because He loves us and wants the best for us.

—Shane Iwashige, Partridge, KS



In pleasant times through the rush of a waterfall, the beautiful sunset, or the healing of a long-time illness, we are drawn closer to God. Our minds are drawn to our Creator, the one who controls all things and creates such awesome beauty for us to enjoy. God allows us to enjoy and experience these things for His own glory. But beware! It is easy for us in times like these to relax and bathe in the success of our lives and to forget the Creator of our lives.

Perhaps this is why God sometimes allows unpleasant situations in our lives; the death of a loved one, a temptation, or an illness. It is in times like these that we are made aware of our depravity and we turn to the all-powerful One who supplies us with strength to move on. Just as trees develop strong roots and sturdy trunks by withstanding hard weathering, so may we as Christians dig our roots deep so that we can be strong for Christ and give Him the glory He deserves. God also gives us unpleasant experiences to prepare us

for heaven. Let's prepare our souls so we can enjoy the rewards of a perfect eternity.

—Bethany Gerber, Brunner, ON

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When I look back over my life, on the many times I have experienced things that were not what I would call “pleasant,” I am somewhat ironically thankful that God would allow those things to happen. I must admit that at times of unpleasant experiences I did not always have a spirit of thankfulness toward God for taking me through these alleys of life, but now as I look back I can clearly see the hand of God working in my life to teach me specific lessons—such as: (1) I, of myself, am absolutely nothing, and (2) God wants me to completely rely upon Him.

I have definitely been stretched and challenged by the unpleasant circumstances that have occurred in my life, and some challenging questions are: “Do I believe that God ordains all the circumstances in my life?” “Does God direct every little detail that goes on

in my life?” God sees even the sparrow fall. How much more then will He look after me and the events of my life, if I only trust Him? If I complain and fret at what God has allowed in my life, I grieve the Holy Spirit and prevent the work that He desires to perform in me. It is through these unpleasant experiences that I can be strengthened in both my faith, and in my spiritual walk with God, but only if I allow God to mold and shape me into the person He wants me to be.


In looking at the unpleasant things that God allows in our lives, I firmly believe that God wants us to enjoy life to its fullest potential. We as Christians have the number one reason to be excited about life and the purpose for living. I believe God allows pleasant things to happen in our lives to give us courage and joy on our journey through life.

We must always thank God for whatever circumstances He allows in our life whether pleasant or unpleasant. God ordains every single little detail in my life—and in yours.

—Jethro Hochstetler, Aroda, VA

Next Month's
QUESTION

Our current financial situation in America gives youth more reward for their labor than perhaps any other time in history. In light of this, **“What advice would you have as to how youth should invest their time and their money?”**

Please respond by July 15. 

THOUGHT GEMS

Kind words never die, but without
kind deeds they do sound mighty sick.

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Trouble seems to come from workers who don't think,
as well as from thinkers who don't work.

• • • • •

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.

• • • • •

Inflation is what makes balloons bigger and candy bars smaller.

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The kindness we resolve to show tomorrow cures no headaches today.

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It is easy to misconstrue the actions and words of people we dislike.

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Education should include knowledge of what to do with it.

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Sometimes the best command of language is to say nothing.

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A hearty laugh is good medicine whether you are sick or not.

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These times are especially trying for those who aren't trying.

• • • • •

Some people insist on having the best of everything—except manners.

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