



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

Galatians 6:14

APRIL 2010

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

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Evening Skies

Steven Wayne Heatwole, Rosthern, SK

See the colors of the sunset
How they mix and glow and fade;
Wonderful is this creation
Which the Lord our God has made.

Take a look on winter's evening
At the Northern Lights above,
How they dance in brilliant colors
Like a gently flitting dove.

Take a look in yonder heavens,
See that brightly shining star?
That is Mars, a red earth planet;
Its cold rays reach wide and far.

There are many constellations
In a clear bright evening sky;
Take a moment, stop and star gaze—
It's surprising, time does fly.

So on some calm quiet evening
When you have nothing to do,
Step outside and watch the sunset,
View the stars and planets too.

God in heaven is watching o'er you,
He controls the universe.
Gaze into the starry heavens
There with God, you can converse.

[From *The Northwest Ambassador*,
Jan.-Feb., 2010. Used by permission.]



That Bottom Step

The place of my birth is special to me. It is an old farm dwelling in rural Hutchinson, Kansas, where my parents lived for the first ten years of my life. That house on 7305 West Morgan Avenue has a stairway leading to the second story. The bottom step of those stairs juts out into the living room. The stairway door closes on the second step, so the first step makes a neat little perch for a young child. This step was useful to my parents. When this little redhead got too rambunctious, they would sometimes ask me to sit on it for a while to think things over.

Sometimes I was ready to get up and go again before my parents were ready to have me do so. When my pathetic, “May I get up now?” came too soon, it was answered with, “Not yet; we will tell you.” And they did. When they delayed, I suppose they saw the offense as more serious than I did or their nerves were getting frayed.

Now, looking back, I’m glad my parents did not ignore my misbehavior. They are long gone, and I am past the three-quarter

century mark, but perhaps it can be helpful to parents of young children if I describe some of my growing-up experiences.

My parents sometimes spanked me and it was necessary. Did I say *pleasant*? No! But *necessary*. True to Hebrews 12:11, life often seemed better after discipline. Before that, even though I couldn’t quite figure out what was wrong, I sensed that something was wrong. Willful misbehavior is serious and parents must not ignore it. After deserved discipline, “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” usually replaced my troubled feelings.

I think it fortunate that Dad and Mom did not always interpret my childish misjudgment to deserve spanking. They might calmly take the time to explain how what I was doing did not meet their approval. So they sometimes used “time-out” on the bottom stair step to help me be more considerate and rational.

Because my parents usually did not make me feel that I was either a hopeless case or a frustration to them, I think I came through these formative experiences with

a better sense of self-respect and self-acceptance than I would have otherwise. Fortunately, they didn't think they should put up with my recurring self-centeredness.

It Comes Naturally

We come into the world *wanting what we want*. When the diaper is wet, when a pin is pricking, or when hunger is calling, wise parents do not take lightly the urgency their dependent children feel. Children, however, seem to come to this life with a more general and persistent idea that the people around them should make them happy. While life may be blissful at times, those who accept pleasure as *an undeserved blessing* (not a *right*) are happier than those who think they deserve continual happiness.

One man confessed to his minister, "I have been going through a painful experience this past week. I learned to see myself, and it horrified me. I saw things in myself which I despise in

“ Those who accept pleasure as an undeserved blessing are happier than those who think they deserve continual happiness. ”

others.” He was facing an important aspect of reality for, “All we like sheep have gone astray; *we have turned everyone to his own way...*” (Isaiah 53:6, emphasis added.)

It isn't natural to take others' needs and wishes as seriously as we do our own. The Apostle Paul made a comment that clarifies this, “No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it...” (Ephesians 5:29a NKJV). Because children naturally have a primary interest in themselves, parents don't need to teach “me first.” Taking the other fellow's needs seriously certainly requires either great effort or a miracle from God.

The good life is not just about us; it's about God and His will for us. It's about Jesus, who gave His life for us so that we might also have a purpose in life that goes beyond ourselves. (John 10:10b).

Four Classes of Children

The child who is neither treasured nor directed is often inconsiderate and unruly. The child who is *treasured but not directed* is likely to be insensitive and irresponsible. The child who is *not treasured but strongly directed* may be listless or rebellious. But *the child who is both treasured and directed* will likely be secure and enthused about life. He/she must still choose Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. There is

no parental training that replaces the need for repentance, for surrender of the will and a personal commitment to Christ.

The first three classes of children (mentioned above) are more prone to lose in the struggle for a meaningful life. They are more likely to turn to chemical crutches, to lawlessness, and/or to life-wasteful habits in their search for significance in life.

The child who is *loved and accepted*, but also *directed and corrected* has been given the best preparation for a Christ-centered life. The Psalmist acknowledged God's correction as life-giving in Psalm 119:67, 71, "Before I was afflicted I went astray:...It is good for me that I have

been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." God gives grace to us so that we can receive His chastening with profit. Our Heavenly Parent loves and chastens all those He receives (Hebrews 12: 5-11). We can do no better than He. As we respond positively to God's love and chastening, so He would have us prepare our children to respond to our loving discipline.

Please don't short-change your children. Be generous with **love and acceptance** and don't neglect **direction and correction**. God has assigned you to prepare your children for a fulfilled life that gives glory to God and blesses others.


—PLM 

Our Need for Discipline

Ray C. Stedman (1917-1992)

God has a wonderful plan for your life. The problem, of course, is that it is not our plan for our life. If we were given the right to plan our lives we would have no unpleasantness at all. But that would ruin us. God knows that people who are protected from everything [adverse] almost

invariably end up being impossible to live with; they are selfish, cruel, vicious, shallow, and unprincipled. God sends these [unpleasant] things in order that we might be taught.

[Excerpted from *The Power of His Presence*, "Meditations in Ecclesiastes," Discovery House Publishers, 2006, page 51.] 

Confess your sins—not your neighbor's.

To the young person who wrote anonymously about your concerns for good music and to the sister who wrote with concern about the health hazards for those who use birth control pills, we remind you that we need to have your name before we consider publication. We have a policy that submissions for publication shall be signed. We honor a writer's desire for anonymity and have a policy of not publishing someone's name without his/her permission.

By noting these concerns here, perhaps courageous, informed writers will accept the challenge of writing on the above-mentioned subjects.

—PLM

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Re: What Can Youth Do For Their Ministers? December, pages 24-26.

One of the biggest things we can do for our ministers is simply keeping them in our daily prayers and remembering them in prayer before they preach a message, asking the Lord to give the brother the words for the message which is laid upon his heart.

We should encourage our ministers in the work they are doing. It may be

hard for them to accept that this is God's will for their lives. We can also be an encouragement by relating to them what the Lord is doing in our lives, maybe the sermon he preached revealed to us an answer to our questions.

Something else we should do for our ministers is to show our support. I think we don't realize how much it means to him when we join him at another church when he is sharing with their congregation. I think it means a lot to know your fellow brothers and sisters are there for you.

We can share in their financial aid. Another way, which seems of even more value, is sharing in our time: Helping him and his family out in work that might otherwise not get done. Perhaps he traveled many miles in being the speaker for another congregation's revival meetings.

One last thing we can do for our ministers is keeping our attention on what he's saying during the sermon. Sleeping in church is like pouring cold water on the minister's head. Listen to what he has to say. He has spent a lot of time in preparing the message.

Diane Miller, LaGrange, IN 

That Information Curve

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

World population is growing. This growth is interesting, but for many in our world, it is somewhere between astounding and frightening. Some fear our world will some day have standing room only. Perhaps that is offered more to be humorous than realistic.

The world's population grew from two people at creation to one billion in 1850. From there the population increase picks up speed. After we rounded the curve for the first billion, the census rocket really took off.

In 1930 – two billion

In 1960 – three billion

In 1990 – five billion

In 2010 — 6.7 billion:
6,700,000,000!

Note that the pattern with each additional billion always arrived in a shorter interval the one before it. The prediction of 30 years ago was that doubling our world population would cause widespread food shortages. That in turn would make nations fiercely aggressive. They were predicted to resort to armed combat in order to get enough food

to survive.

However, recent wars have been about: (1) crude oil in the Middle East; (2) contentions over Israel as a nation, and (3) human rights. Some of these conflicts have distinctly religious overtones.

Our modern world has succeeded in lengthening people's life expectancy in the industrialized countries. "Third world" countries struggle to reach the life expectancy of industrialized countries who have a much higher longevity.

Information in our world has grown, reaching unprecedented levels in the last 20 years, or 10 years, even just five years. Computer capabilities are "off the charts." The quantity is stupendous!

Added to the colossal quantity is the accelerating ease of availability. Computers bring more information into the space we individually occupy—much more than we could possibly comprehend in a lifetime. The ease of availability makes information seem commonplace.

Our minds can only assimilate so much. The "automatic transmission"

that transfers the incoming information load from mind to heart frequently needs to shift down to low range. It is just too much.

The huge increase in the quantity of information may cause a marked decrease in quality. Heavy reading which requires concentration and thought is soon exchanged for the

“ Being flooded with an over-abundance of information can cause us to choose the good instead of the best, the mediocre instead of the excellent. ”

“lite diet” which humors us because it requires little thought, if any at all.

This situation is not new. Many of our choices are not between good and evil, but rather between the good and the best. In this match-up, the good often wins out over the best, and because it is good enough, who could condemn it?

We should cultivate appreciation for excellence in books, magazines, and on-line information. Being flooded with an over-abundance of information can cause us to choose the good instead of the best, the mediocre instead of the excellent.

Solomon intellectually pursued his curiosity and his fascination for new things. His continued experimentation led him to being joined to his foreign wives in soul and spirit. He then resorted to the worship of their abominable gods, such as Chemosh and Molech. “For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods...For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians...Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab...and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon...And the Lord was angry with Solomon...” (1 Kings 11:4-9).

Solomon went from wisdom and riches to experimentation and idolatry. He built up the kingdom of his father, David, who reigned for 41 years. Solomon’s 40-year reign was soon jeopardized by his apostasy. His preoccupation with information and wealth made a deadly combination. In the end, neither of them was used right. His greatest assets were turned into unmanageable liabilities. His devotion of the one true God was derailed.

Our “information explosion” is at times looked upon as a modern-day benefit. Punching a minimum of keyboard keys can bring up

maximum information. But that information might cover the full range of excellence to moral filth.

Information is not neutral. The overload of knowledge and information requires some time out for our minds and emotions. As our bodies need rest, so our minds need rest. God said man should rest from his work on His day. We should also declare a day of rest from computer activity.

We have refrained from receiving the Sunday newspaper and reading secular news magazines on the Lord's Day. We have encouraged school students to keep home work and strenuous games to a minimum on Sunday. Those same ideas could rightly be applied to computer use for both youth and adults.

Added to that is the wonderful cell phones for instant communication and information. For some of us, our minds are in a whirl all day long, seven days a week. The information/communication track becomes fully occupied, making demands of our time, energy and resources. Could there be a danger that it detracts and subtracts from our day of rest? We think it can—and often does. Add to that religious experimentation and moral exploration and the mental circuits get overloaded. Our bodies need rest—our minds likewise.

The possibility certainly exists for a derailment of our worship of the true God, even as it did for Solomon. The physical body is wearied from excessive work. Off-work hours are spent on taking in or giving out information. The increments of overload are added too slowly and subtly to be recognized. We wonder why we are so tired despite taking off one day per week from our work.

Our minds also need rest from computer activity. A tired body is easier to recognize than a tired mind. Our minds need a day of rest. A recent article in *Reader's Digest* points out some problems of burnout just from a physical and mental standpoint. The percentage of Americans in burnout (or on the fringes of it) is alarming. We Mennonites are also Americans. The emotional strain of life in the fast lane wears down our built-in reserves.

More than 50% of workers sense a feeling of burnout at times. We suspect this burnout is not from 40 or 50 hours of work per week, but from the “extra-curriculars” of modern life. God made us with the ability to work. Physical work is not the main problem. Rest for our minds is also essential.

The detrimental effect on our spiritual lives concerns us from a pastoral perspective. The grace to

meditate and reflect about God in a relaxed atmosphere is important. We say we are citizens of the heavenly country. Then why do we try so hard to be above average in our standard of living?

Both mind and body are often tired and stressed out. Consequently, we find it hard to meditate or concentrate. The preacher does our thinking for us and we nod in agreement, either by dozing off, or in an obliging “So be it!” or “So what?”

The Bottom Line is that incoming information for many of us is too much for the information track of

our heads and our hearts. “Lite” reading makes “lite” Christians, barely enough to sustain our information-saturated souls. Consequently, the “meat” intended by God for the mature Christian barely touches our “leanness of soul,” and God considers us backslidden and that we have “become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” (Hebrews 5:11-14). Only serious and sincere discernment in our selection of information will turn the flood of available information into a blessing for us rather than a curse.



observations

John Esau is a retired Mennonite Minister who writes a monthly column for *Mennonite Weekly Review*. His 2-14-10 column is entitled: “Rules for Hospital Visits.” One hundred fifty senior citizens were invited to make written responses to the following: “When I am hospitalized and someone visits me I wish they would or would not do...”

Do:

- Make the visit short. Five minutes is a call. Ten minutes is a visit. More than 10 minutes is too long.

- Relate in a natural, authentic way.

- Be truly interested, eye contact, caring.

- Talk about what’s going on with me.

- Be calm and compassionate, not overly talkative.

- Be natural and caring.

- Let me set the tone and share whatever I am comfortable with.

- Use your eyes, your ears, and then use your feet.

- Pray a short prayer asking God’s care of us.

The “Don’t” list that follows is a condensed version of the original. Esau reports that “Don’t stay too long” was listed 37 times.

Don’t:

- Talk about your surgeries and illnesses.

- Try to be unnaturally cheerful.
- Just talk about yourself.
- Try to talk me into reading a certain thing.
- Sit on the bed.
- Visit if I am in a lot of pain or nauseated.
- Share your hospital horror stories.
- Be too full of suggestions.
- Tell me your problems.
- Ask too personal questions.
- Tell of someone who had a situation like mine and took a turn for the worse.
- Visit the day of surgery.
- Say you know how I feel.
- Play doctor.

The purpose of visiting sick people is to be helpful. Sensitivity and good manners are needful. Sometimes not to visit is the better option.



Dorcas Smucker writes about ordinary family events in an interesting manner. She has written columns that have been made into three different books, available from GoodBooks.com or 1-800-762-7171.

Mennonite Weekly Review is currently printing selections from her writings. The 1-18-10 issue contains several choice quotes about her marriage: “What gave us a framework to work things out was

a rock-solid commitment to this marriage. Not only was our marriage part of a bigger community, it was also a separate entity, somehow larger than the two of us together. We learned that it was worth sacrificing our own wishes for the good of the marriage.

“We took seriously the biblical concept that God-intended marriage is to be for life, and even if the other partner bailed out, we would be stuck with our vows until death, which made a powerful incentive to work things out. Since marriage was God’s idea we knew He wanted it to work even more than we did. This was wonderfully reassuring when we seemed unable to find solutions on our own.”

Author Smucker is married to Paul Smucker, who is a minister at Brownsville Mennonite Church, Harrisburg, OR. Her parents are Amos and Sarah (Miller) Yoder from Grove City, MN.



U. S. Senator Lawrence Burman granted political asylum to a German family who was not allowed to home school their children. The family with four children came to Tennessee in 2008. They said they faced religious persecution and the threat of fines and jail time for not complying with Germany’s compulsory school

attendance policy. (*World*, 2-27-10)

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A person from the United Kingdom prepared an ad wanting employees who are reliable and hard-working. The ad was rejected because it was discriminatory against people who are unreliable. (*World*, 2-27-10)

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Stanley Tam, founder of U. S. Plastics says he felt led to make the Lord his “Senior Partner” almost 60 years ago. He and his wife arranged to have a foundation that owns 51% of his company. Later, after seeing the great needs many people in poor countries have, he gave the entire company to God. The business has generated more than 100 million dollars for Christian ministries. Stanley Tam has written a book entitled: *God Owns My Business*.

Alan and Catherine Barnhart, owners of Barnhart Crane also donated their business worth of several hundred million at the time. They agreed to pay themselves only a middle-class salary. The company has been able to donate \$1 million a month to Christian ministry for the last two years. Alan Barnhart says, “Giving has been great fun. I am convinced that it is much more fun to be a giver than a consumer.” (*World*, 2-27-10)

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I know of no statistics that report the combined wealth of the conservative Anabaptist constituency. Whatever it is, it should be matched with a corresponding level of Christian stewardship. While how well we are doing as a group is not known, each of us can take personal inventory.

• • • • •

When the president of Goshen College announced the decision to have the national anthem played at some sports events it created a very large and mostly negative response from the Mennonite constituency. For a Mennonite school, the vocabulary of the “rockets’ red glare” and “bombs bursting in air” is a serious departure from a basic characteristic of what the early church practiced for three centuries (pre-Constantine). Early Anabaptists, who were committed to following the way of Christ, chose martyrdom rather than to compromise this basic principle.

It is noteworthy that this is but one part of the larger issue of separation and non-conformity. History teaches us that when this becomes a single-issue official position, by itself that does not prevent participation in the military to become optional for many individuals.

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Dean Taylor was raised in an evangelical church. At some point,

he prayed the sinner's prayer and became a member of their family's church. He married his high school sweetheart. He and his wife both joined the military.

Since they were a married couple, their living quarters were more comfortable than the usual dorm life of the typical soldier. They were stationed in Germany. The valley in which their cottage was situated was scenic and quiet. It was an ideal setting, but they did not anticipate that the valley's location would make TV reception impossible. This was a new experience. What now? They decided to spend time reading the Bible.

They were startled to discover that the Sermon on the Mount included teaching that was contrary to what they were involved in. His contact with the military chaplain was not helpful. Additional study revealed that the apostolic church practiced Christian non-resistance for 300 years before Constantine brought church and state together in an illicit marriage. Their growing awareness led Dean Taylor and his wife to kneel down and give their hearts to Jesus, with a fervent desire to faithfully follow Him. They were able to overcome the obstacles to be released from the military.

Dean Taylor is now a pastor in a conservative Anabaptist church in

PA. He says that he has joined the Anabaptists entering through the back door. He regrets that so many others are leaving through the front door. The foregoing is excerpted from a taped message available from Calvary Cassettes. (Phone: 717-264-2595)

• • • • •

S. Truett Cathy is the founder of Chick-fil-A, a quick service chicken restaurant chain with more than 1,400 outlets in 37 states and Washington, D.C. Mr. Cathy was born in 1921. This chain was started in 1967. He has taught Sunday School for more than 50 years in the First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Georgia.

An unusual feature of this business enterprise is that the outlets are closed on Sunday. He says that if he can't make a living in six days, he needs to find something else to do. The chain invests heavily in community services, especially for children, teenagers and scholarships. The company's official statement of purpose says that the business exists to glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence to all that come in contact with Chick-fil-A. Net worth is reported at \$1.2 billion. Several sons and grandsons are also involved in the business. (Courtesy Ernest Hochstetler, Abbeville, SC)

—DLM 

A Blessing on Food, after Tears

Wilmer Swope, Leetonia, OH

At this memorial time
We are at sacred peace.
The earthly pilgrim's life is done;
Acceptance must increase.

We now had time to think,
This sojourn to recall.
The pilgrim's witness unto us
We must avoid a fall.


A precious time to share
The blessings of that life.
A saintly life—it will not fade,
Of goodly faith in strife.

We have a sharing time
Of food for life and strife;
Partaking of this food today,
To think of pilgrim life.

The symbol of the wheat,
Bless each one homeward bound.
Love teaches us to humbly pray
Christ's words on wheat be found.*

Is not the bread we eat
Composed of love and wheat?
Communion fellowship we need.
Obedience now is sweet.

Amen.

*(Written for use as a poem or hymn to be read or sung before partaking of food at a meal after a funeral service. I feel that at such a time a spiritual emphasis is needed to comfort the attendees. * A reference to **wheat and death** is found in Christ's words in John 12:24; to **wheat and life** in Matthew 26:26. -WS)* 

marriages

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

Hostetler-Martin

Bro. Christopher, son of Edwin and Esther Hostetler, Auburn, KY, and Sis. Donna, daughter of Lowell and Laurie Martin, Auburn, KY, at Franklin Menonite Church on Dec. 12, 2009, by Lavern Eash.

Jantzi-Overholt

Bro. Darren, son of Marvin and Nina Jantzi, Wellesley, ON, and Sis. April, daughter of Rudy and Elsie Overholt, Melvern, KS, at Lyndon Amish Menonite Church on Jan. 23, 2010, by Rudy Overholt.

cradle roll

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

Beiler, Conrad and Lydia (Stoltzfus), Cross Hill, SC, second child and son, Kaden Phil, Jan. 15, 2010.

Bontrager, Clifford and Krista (Martin), Aroda, VA, first child and son, Bryan Clifford, Nov. 26, 2009.

Brenneman, Joseph and Michelle (Yoder), Aroda, VA, first child and son, Elliot Chad, Jan. 29, 2010.

Byler, Linnford and Amber (Martin), Whiteville, TN, first child and son, Bruce Linnford, Sept. 14, 2009.

Graber, Keith and Mary Anna (Swarley), Odon, IN, second child, first son, Drew Marlin, Jan. 15, 2010.

Helmuth, Micah and Natalie (Overholt), Abbeville, SC, third child (one deceased), first son, Wyatt Caleb, Feb. 25, 2010.

Kuhns, Vernon and Christina (Gingerich), Lovington, IL, third child, first son, Judson Abraham Grant, Feb. 12, 2010.

Kurtz, Michael and Elizabeth (Brubaker), Henderson, NY, third child, second son, Shevaun Mark, Nov. 26, 2009.

Miller, Glendon and Lisa (Yutzy), Huntsville, AR, second child and dau., Lindsey Nicole, Jan. 15, 2010.

Otto, Marcus and Nancy (Miller), Crossville, TN, first child and son, Kyle David, Feb. 11, 2010.

Sommers, Jason and Miriam (Zook), Rural Retreat, VA, fourth child, third son, Kody Edward, Feb. 12, 2010.

Stoltzfus, Mahlon and Abigail (Miller), Killbuck, OH, eighth child, fifth dau., Keri Michelle, Feb. 2, 2010.

Yoder, James and Anna (Hochstetler), Middleburg, PA, fourth child, third dau., Charity Rose, Jan. 4, 2010.

Yoder, Loren and Mary Ellen (Yoder), Belleville, PA, seventh child, third son, Jeremiah Loren, Feb. 3, 2010.

Yoder, Ray and Alina (Miller), Minerva, OH, second child and dau., Jenna Grace, Feb. 3, 2010.

Yoder, S. Wayne and Clara (Bender), Wytheville, VA, fourth child, first son, Bradlyn Wayne, Feb. 15, 2010.

Yoder, Victor and Marlene (Summy), Belvidere, TN, seventh child (one deceased), sixth son, Clayton Victor, Feb. 21, 2010.

o b i t u a r i e s

Byler, Sharon Diane (Garber), 59, of Somerset, OH, diagnosed with brain cancer, died peacefully Jan. 25, 2010, at her residence. She was born Sept. 18, 1950, to the late LeRoy and Viola (Garver) Garber, at Hutchinson, KS.

She was a member of Calvary Bible Fellowship, Mt. Perry, OH.

On July 27, 1973, she was married to Enos W. Byler, who has served as bishop at Mt. Perry since 1991. In addition to her husband, she is survived by five daughters: Michelle (Andy) Schwartz, Frankfort, OH; Elizabeth (Norman) Miller, Mt. Perry; Hosannah Byler, Elida; Phoebe Byler, of the home; Josephine

(Ben) Petre, Somerset; three sons: Andre (Janet) Byler, Elida; Laban and Naaman Byler, both of the home. Ten grandchildren also survive her.

Besides her immediate family and church family, she had varied interests. Seven years ago she took up scenic painting. In addition to vegetable gardening, she was an avid flower gardener and collector of cookbooks.

The funeral was held at Calvary Bible Fellowship on Jan. 28, with Dwight Troyer, Dan Byler, and Dave Troyer serving. John A. Miller conducted the committal at the church cemetery.

Gingerich, Edward Elias, 62, of Kokomo, IN, died Feb. 7, 2010, at St. Joseph Hospital. He was born Jan. 9, 1948, in Howard County, son of the late Eli and Abby (Kinsinger) Gingerich.

He was a member of Bethany Fellowship Church. He enjoyed being a dairy farmer, gardening, yard work and playing with his children and grandchildren.

He was married to Barbara Irene Kauffman on Nov. 27, 1971. She survives. Also surviving are three sons and nine daughters: Lavern (Ernie) Gingerich; Lisa (Marcus) Miller; Angela Gingerich and her fiance, Rodney Miller; Tracy (Jeremiah) White; Rhonda (Moine) Martin; Regina (Jeffrey) Walker; Roxann and her special friend, Lee Lewis; Marlene Gingerich; Anita Gingerich and her special friend, Dennis Otto; Crystal Gingerich; Christopher Gingerich and Ryan Gingerich, all of Kokomo; and 15 grandchildren. Other survivors

include four brothers and four sisters: Freida and Myrl Sauder, OH; Roman and Virginia Gingerich, Kokomo; Elsie and John O'Brien, Amboy; John and Barbara Gingerich, Topeka, IN; Orval and Sharon Gingerich, Kokomo; Edna Rankins, Kokomo; Claris and Wayne Burkholder, Goshen; and Jerry and Katie Gingerich, Kokomo, and mother-in-law, Nancy Kauffman, Kokomo.

He was preceded in death by a sister, Nadine Kauffman and three brothers, Freeman, Henry, and Steve Gingerich.

The funeral was held Feb. 10, with burial in the Christner Cemetery.

Gingerich, Mark Alan, 49, died Feb. 13, after fighting chordoma, a rare cancer, for nearly four years. Mark was born Feb. 4, 1961, son of Mary Ada and the late Joseph Gingerich.

He was a member of Haven Fellowship Church. He will be remembered for his generosity and willingness to serve in a number of ministries. He was president of Gingway Products, Inc.

On June 5, 1993, he was married to Mary Lou Hochstetler. In addition to Mary, Mark is survived by four sons: Luke Anthony (15), Wynn Andrew (12), Justin Mark (10), and Eric Joseph (8); his mother, Mary; four brothers: Philip (Ruth) Gingerich, Plain City; James (Rhonda) Gingerich, Greenfield; Tim (Charlene) Gingerich, Plain City; and Joseph Gingerich, Plain City; and two sisters: Karen and Beth Gingerich, both of Plain City; and 17 nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, a nephew and niece, Anthony and Tonya Gingerich.

The funeral was held on Feb. 16 at United Bethel Church with Lonnie Beachy officiating, assisted by John Dean Hostetler, Mark Beachy, and Nate Yoder. Burial followed in the Haven Cemetery.

Stoltzfus, Emma (Miller), 86, of Taylorsville, NC, died Dec. 26, 2009, at the Brian Care Center in Hickory, NC. She was born Jan. 3, 1923, at Hartville, OH, daughter of the late Michael and Barbara (Yoder) Miller.

She was a member of Faith Mennonite Church in Lott, TX.

On Dec. 19, 1946, she was married to Enos Stoltzfus. He died in 1981. She is survived by eight children: David (Mabel) Stoltzfus, Dundee, OH; Mark (Miriam) Stoltzfus, Franklin, KY; Simon (Joyce) Stoltzfus, Taylorsville, NC; Philip (Ida) Stoltzfus, Free Union, VA; Ruth (Marvin) Miller, Suceava, Romania; Rachel (James) Miller, Lott, TX; Rebecca (Matthew) LaRaviere, Hillsville, VA; Rhoda (Mervin) Hochstedler, Lott, TX; 49 grandchildren; 32 great grandchildren; and one brother, Dan Miller, Middlebury, IN.

She was preceded in death by a grandson, Paul Miller; six brothers: John, Andrew, Joseph, David, Lester, Milo; and eight sisters: Malinda, Fannie, Elizabeth, Ida, Verna, Sylvia, Mary, and Ada.

The funeral was held at Christian Fellowship, Minerva, OH, on Dec. 31, with

Johnny Miller officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery.

Wagler, Nathan J., 44, of Cross Hill, SC, died of brain trauma at Palmetto Richland Memorial Hospital, Columbia, SC. He was born Jan. 7, 1966, son of Joel E. and Mary Catherine (Graber) Wagler, in Washington, IN.

He was a member of Cross Hill Mennonite Church, where he served as school teacher.

On April 30, 1994, he was married to Connie Schrock. She and two daughters and five sons survive: Tinslie (14); Caroline (12); Andre` (10); Benson (8); Triston (5); Braydric (3) and Logan (10 months). Also surviving are two brothers: Titus (Donna) Wagler and Charles (Donna) Wagler, both of Cross Hill; and two sisters: Cynthia (John) Miller, Utica, OH; and Marta Wagler, Cross Hill.

He was preceded in death by two brothers: Wendell and Paul and by a stillborn son, Trevor.

The funeral was held at Laurel Hill Baptist Church for Cross Hill Mennonite Church with Ernest Hochstetler, Wayne Nisly, and Tim Miller serving. Interment was in the Cross Hill Cemetery with Wendell Hochstetler in charge.

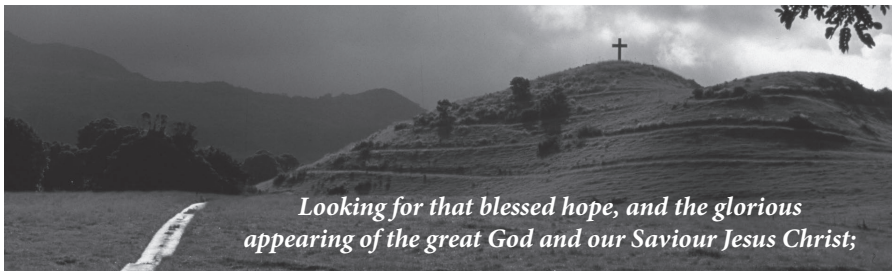
Yoder, Amanda (Hochstetler), 99, died January 7, 2010, at the home of her son, Owen (and Erma) Yoder, Pratts, VA. She was born May 25, 1910, in Nappanee, IN, daughter of the late Jacob and Mattie (Miller) Hochstetler.

She was a member of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Aroda, VA.

On Jan. 25, 1936, she was married to J. Elmer Yoder. He died in 1990. God blessed them with nine children, eight of whom survive: Marie (David T.) Yoder, Stanardsville, VA; Leora (Mervin) Overholt, Russellville, KY; Owen (Erma) Yoder, Pratts, VA; Elmina Yoder, Pratts, VA; Roy (Mary) Yoder, Harrisonburg, VA; Viola Yoder, Pratts, VA; Omar (Esther) Yoder, New Holland, PA; and Eldon (Paula) Yoder, Pratts, VA; son-in-law, Wilmer Zook, Greenwood, DE; 25 grandchildren, and 50 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by a daughter, Treva Zook, two grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

The funeral was held on Jan. 10, with Tim Miller, Jonathan Overholt (grandson), and Mark Webb serving. Burial was in the Oak Grove Cemetery, with Wayne Overholt (grandson) and David Hochstetler serving in the committal.



Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Minister's Meeting Messages — 2009

This is a condensation of two messages given at the annual ministers' meetings, hosted by Sunnyside Mennonite Church on March 24-26, 2009, at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Florida. The complete set of cassette tapes or CDs is available from SON Recordings, 10100 Piper Lane, Bristow, VA 20136, for \$45, postpaid.

11. Proper Conduct in

Administration

David M. Yoder, Partridge, KS

We have heard a very moving song, "Wounded Robin." I am sobered to think that there may be some "wounded robins" who have been wounded by co-ministers. If that is the case, and if you are one of those wounded robins, and if I have in any way have been a "wounder" of a "robin," may God smite me.

According to Ephesians, Christ sees the church as His fullness. He and the Church are married so inseparably that it is a source of amazement and blessing. Is it any wonder that the Apostle Paul writes so much in the Pastoral Epistles about responsible leadership? In general, bishops are considered overseers and deacons are ordained men who are assigned the task of meeting the needs of the congregation in a different way.

I believe that the way we administer reveals our view of God and His

expectations. The important thing is that we have a proper view of God and His expectations. Can we see this as His Kingdom and not ours? Can we see ourselves as useful tools, but not indispensable? Can we see that a major part of what He wants to do is shape us, not just others? In working through difficulties, it is comforting to know that if I don't waste this situation, I shall actually benefit from it.

You have, no doubt, noted how the Lord worked with you as you worked with problems in others. I find that some element of surrender is at the heart of problem situations God brings me into. When God asks us to make a response we tend to make it a responsibility.

In Philippians 2, the mind of Christ is portrayed. Our supreme example is in Jesus' response. It first took a response from Him to the Father's will.

One question is how we behave in the pulpit. What is our manner and method in the pulpit? I appreciate

that in these meetings we see quite a variety of pulpit styles. I have enjoyed every one of them. That is also a blessing in having a plural ministry. We don't all have to be what we call dynamic to keep our people coming back to church.

When Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, He was drawn into their needs and He drew them in as He taught them. His manner invited these inquirers. We, too, are to minister to those inquiring. Our people come to church with questions. They may not even know what those questions are. I too come to church with questions. God blesses me with answers, if I pay attention, if I'm prepared, and if I stay awake.

It has been said that there are two kinds of people in the world. One kind says, "Well, here I am!" The other kind says, "So there you are!" We can use that approach when we preach. Let's invite people to hear the truths of God in such a way that they are blessed and take answers home with them. The first work in preaching is usually accomplished in the preacher himself. We don't have much to give unless we've received something.

We should preach what comes from personal experience, but we don't have to preach ourselves. Let's preach the Gospel!

Let's not neglect or despise the gift that God gives us. He gives us all different ways of expounding the truth. Let us be faithful in the way that God has given it, because we don't do well when copying others. We should not be proud of our gift in speaking. 1 Corinthians 4:7 speaks about how we are to receive the gifts of God graciously and not as though we hadn't received them. If you receive something, you really can't take credit for it. God tells us through the Apostle Paul, not to overrate ourselves or our abilities. God's gift is good and it is always an unearned gift.

Foundational to proper conduct in the exercise of our ministry in administration is a proper view of our ordination. How do you see what God has given you in your ordination? It also affects how we expect that God will reward and judge the things we do. What is the balance between being responsible shepherds and lording it over God's heritage? It is difficult to lord it over God's heritage when we continue to focus on the work that He wants to do in us. Notice that He does not call the church our heritage. He calls it God's heritage.

What authority does the church have? The church is expected to cultivate a brotherhood conscience. That becomes evident in Scriptures

like Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Romans 14 is almost entirely dedicated to how brothers ought to relate to each others' consciences. The Corinthians passages both speak to the same question. All three passages would have us guard sensitive consciences.

Conscience is the way that we connect or disconnect from God. When our conscience is not right before God, we disconnect. When our conscience is right before God, we connect. Does that mean when the heavens seem like brass and our prayers seem like they're locked up, that we have a soiled conscience? Not necessarily. What I am saying is that for a person to believe in God, the conscience must be at peace. Our conscience and belief are inseparable. One of the challenges of ministers is to inform the consciences of their people biblically.

Romans 14:6 says, "The man who regards the day, regards it to the Lord, and the man who regards not the day, regards it not to the Lord." The man who is committed to worshiping God and does it differently from another presents a very different problem from the person who says, "I can do this and nobody should mind. It's none of their business, because I don't feel bad before God about it and no one else should either."

Romans 14:23 says, "He that doubteth is damned if he eat. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." This is why it is so important that we help our people develop biblically-guided consciences.

1 Corinthians 8: 12 says that when we violate a brother's conscience, we sin against Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:24 says, "Let no man seek his own, but another's wealth." This underscores the fact and value of your conscience and your brother's conscience working together in finding God-honoring, God-gratifying solutions. I grant that in brotherhood discernment not everything will be crystal clear. Some things will be ambiguous. We cannot always find a "Thus saith the Lord!" Let us be careful how we handle those things lest we make light of a brother's conscience.

The church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth. It is to be the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. One of our tasks is to interpret Romans 12:1, effectively. We are to render a reasonable service to God. Service and worship are closely related. As we walk with people, let us help them understand how their actions comprise part of their worship to God. As we bring these concepts together, it raises questions like, "What are we doing? Is this actually worship?" Our

“ *The church is to be the pillar and ground of the truth.* ”

effort must be to try to bring, as much as we can, our people to oneness with Christ and to worshipping Him.

We probably all struggle to enhance compliance to the things in our brotherhood agreements. It is a challenge to know how to do that. I think we should attempt to discern whether non-compliance is from rebellion or whether he may be coming from a phase in life in which he/she is asking honest questions in his/her search for God. There is a big difference between the two. We owe it to our people to stop long enough to discern that question before we make hasty moves that could damage a wounded robin.

I opened this topic to our home congregation for suggestions. One that was handed to me was, “Let young people ask questions without being threatened.”

Is the church a democracy? I’m assuming that by democracy we mean that the majority rules, that church leaders become vote counters and people pleasers, that there are different factions vying for power and influence, that in the end, how we are to live is a matter of popular opinion,

that it is a church of the people, for the people, and by the people and that we are all free to pursue life, liberty and happiness. If that’s democracy, then the true church is not a democracy. Our country is secular; it is not Christian. The Founding Fathers had some good ideas. We have enjoyed many of their ideas about good government, but the founding fathers were not describing people obedient to Christ.

A theocracy is what the church needs to be. It recognizes its head. We’re dealing with unchanging truth, not just what feels good or right. Some day we pastors will give an account to that truth. Since the truth is unchanging, it is also universal. Being universal it touches every member. So the difference between a theocracy and a democracy is that one serves the truth and the other merely serves people and their tastes. That’s what a democracy is for, but it is not what the church is for. The church is to bring us into submission and surrender to Jesus Christ.

I think change must always be weighed against what is unchanging. A fellow minister of mine says, “Some people have a policy of no change; others have no policy of change, but it is best to have a policy of needed change.” For us to have a policy of “no change” does not work

well. We ought to find ways to make needed changes that work.

In considering change, I believe we need to interact with people and to let them know that they are heard. When you let somebody down, one of the first things we hear is: “We weren’t heard.” Or when a church makes a decision that displeases some people, they can feel like they haven’t been heard. Sometimes it is hard to know how to answer those people. About the best I can say is that we must hear from more than half a dozen people. If we simply keep bringing an issue up until it gains enough support to pass, we are not on a good path. We need to build consensus as much as possible. I don’t believe we can insist on absolute consensus, because there come those times when there must be some “give and take” on either side. We move through it as peaceably as we know how, emulating the mind of Christ.

Anyone who works and serves on a team of ministers knows that mature thinking people will sometimes differ. And that’s OK. In fact, if we didn’t, we would probably be of little help to each other. Differences shouldn’t shake us. How we handle our differences is the important question to consider.

It is a blessing to pass work around on the ministerial team. Different

kinds of work can be assigned to different people. Depending on the situation we face, I tend to reach for one brother on the team and with another need, another brother.

One member gave this suggestion for me to pass on, ministers should have frequent meetings. You must decide what that is. Once every six months isn’t enough. We usually meet at least two or three times a month. I count the security I feel within my ministers’ team a blessing. We have the agreement that no one is exempt from being pulled back on our team. So once in a while, we need to talk. There is a lot of security in that.

All of us deal with a certain amount of insecurity. We may not like to admit it, but we do. If someone comes to me with a concern about my fellow minister, my goal is to say right up front, I will tell him what you tell me and that you told me. May I encourage you, don’t settle for anything less! I have found that it isn’t wise for me to always be the one who carries the report to the one who is being accused. It is much safer and wiser to get other people involved, because when people can anonymously criticize, it may be partly true, but it’s not very helpful.

Here’s something we heard yesterday that I thought was too true to be

good. The speaker asked how well we find reverse gear. That is a sobering question and it is not peculiar to us as a Beachy constituency. I ask you, What kind of things have you put in reverse for yourself? What are some of the disciplines that you and I have taken upon ourselves? Have we stepped back from something that we enjoy? Is there something that you or I ought to step back from?

As we guide our people in these challenging times it is important that we model a teachable spirit. That begins with how we relate with our team members. No one, regardless of his office, should enhance my performance as an undershepherd. True, it is not necessarily pleasant. When it benefits the body and the Kingdom of our Lord, personal feelings should take a distant second place.

May God grant us grace to live out the mind of Christ as we administer the stewardship He has given to us.

12. Developing Faithful Leaders

Ivan Beachy, Free Union, VA

The goal of this message is to encourage all church leaders to make building strong homes a core part of their ministry. Though many things call for our attention: the homes—your home and the homes of those in your congregation—is one of the

most important.

About a year ago, our youngest son came downstairs, having packed his bags into his car before leaving for Plain City, Ohio, to claim his bride. As he was leaving, he said, “I’m leaving. It’s harder than I thought it would be.” After he left, we sat down thinking, *It’s over. Our job’s done. There’s nothing more.* Soon, however, we recovered and realized it’s not over. An Old Testament writer gave us a principle that says it well, “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks...” (Proverbs 27:23).

There are grandchildren, but it’s not only for them. There are presently homes in our churches that need our help. Notice that God gives us strength for ministry (1 Timothy 2:1). This is more than being of strong opinions and preferences; it is being strong in the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus was full of grace and truth and we are to minister out of the grace He pours into our hearts and lives.

God gives us sufficient grace as we need it. As it was with manna in the wilderness, so we cannot gather for the future. We are to serve out of the abundance of grace. We are probably never more like Christ than when from purely unselfish motives, we serve others. Such service may address a physical need, an emotional

need, or a spiritual need. If this theology is not right, correct me.

Amy Carmichael says it this way: “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” Let me change that to say, “You can serve without loving, but you cannot love without serving.” We must first learn before we can teach. We are called to be transmitters. We are not the message; our calling is to be the messenger.

To be a transmitter requires dual relationships. Our '97 Buick LeSabre has a well-used engine, a transmission, and wheels. Which one of these would you want to do without? We say we need them all. The transmission is important because it connects the power to the wheels. We as ministers and servants of Jesus Christ are to be “transmissions” (transmitters) to others.

In 2 Corinthians 4:7 we read, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.” The treasure has been poured into us through the grace of Jesus Christ which allows us to pour it out to others.

What are people learning from your life? Do they see the grace of God flowing out of your life? A most important thing for church leaders to do is help build strong homes. When God began the human race, He began

with a man and a woman. Family is the core element of any civilization, any community, and any church. If the families are not strong, the churches will not be strong.

One evening, my oldest son came to my study door and asked, “Dad, when can *we* talk?” It was like he had to make an appointment to talk to me. I hung my head and said, “Right now.” Another time a phone call interrupted a visit from a married son and his family. He said, “We came home to see Dad; now he’s on the phone.” I have not always had right priorities. You can correct your mistakes, too.

Can we build relationships that allow us to help others? My hat is off to brethren and sisters who serve in administrative roles in our service units: Hillcrest, Mountain View, Faith Mission Home, Calvary Bible School, and other places. You have a tremendous opportunity to impact lives. This says something about and to the local church. Working, sleeping, socializing with the same people “24/7” is an education in learning how to get along with people. Domestic service units offer an opportunity for singles who would find service abroad intimidating. Time spent in a VS unit allows youth to serve others in a way they typically do not or cannot in their day jobs. In

many ways it enriches the Christian faith and experience of the young person.

The success of VS units in transmitting a vision of living sacrificially leaves room to grow. Learning to live within their means and not over-extending themselves is valuable. Perhaps the current recession helps us in that.

Service is a lifestyle, not something we do on occasion. How do you view your ministry? Is it a lifestyle? We teach by example, intentionally or unintentionally. Unit life prepares youth for living with others from a variety of backgrounds. One person who participated in my research reported that only 41% of the young people serving from 2004 to 2009 were from the Beachy constituency. The others came from other constituencies: Maranatha Fellowship, from unaffiliated church groups, Pilgrim Mennonite, Weaverland Conference, Southeastern Conference, Hope Mennonite Fellowship, Nationwide Fellowship, Remnant groups, Bethel Fellowship, Midwest Fellowship, Mid-Atlantic, Old Order Amish, Old Order River Brethren, Western Conservative Fellowship, conservative Mennonite churches of Ontario, Cumberland Valley, Eastern Mennonite, and so on.

Wouldn't it be interesting to have a

ministers' meeting like that? It really would be. We have more in common than we think we do. Young people seem to blend these things together in a way that is powerful. We are called to help them in that. There can, of course, be some loss in such exposure. But from my limited perspective, the advantages far outweigh the weaknesses. One administrator notes that young people can exchange notes about differences, not be swayed, and still hear each other very well. They remain faithful and constant to what they have been taught. I think our VS units are doing a wonderful job.

A VS unit gives young men an opportunity at developing leadership skills, conducting Bible studies, having staff devotions, and moderating other staff activities. When a congregation grows in size, the lay brethren tend to have less and less to do. So they have more and more time to go fishing, hunting, golfing or whatever they find to do. But if you get them involved in ministry, it helps to keep them focused on Kingdom interests and activities. It is not true that the more you preach, the more you give yourself to the Word?

Before we baptize, we ask the young men, "Are you willing, after your baptism to be involved in public ministry?" We try to be careful to not

overdo the things we ask of them, touching base with Dad before we give the young man an assignment. If Dad has misgivings, we ask, "What do you think he could do?" There is a great blessing in serving for the sake of serving.

How well are the local congregations doing in preparing for involvement in VS units? Feedback on that question included this: The affluent life style that many are accustomed to has hindered the life style of service and tends toward this attitude: "I have served, now I can go on with my life." When one was asked to consider serving, he responded with this, "I thought I did my service." We have not done our service. Jesus said, "When you have done everything, you have but done your duty."

Youth would feel a greater sense of call to service if the home-church ministers would make the first contact, recommending youth for a role in the VS unit.

Too much financial assistance to the VS'er hinders them in learning to live within their means. Encouragement from the home church leaders is very positive to youth. Distant relationships with church leaders has disillusioned many youth. Some don't want to return to their former church settings because of bad experiences. It's sad when they don't want

to go home. They may not be sure of what they should do when they get back home.

What are the **current weaknesses** in the youth coming to your unit? The biggest shock is the number of staff that come from dysfunctional homes. One administrator says he estimates that 50% come from such homes. He said, "I mean dysfunctional in a very general sense of the word, such as: 'My Dad wasn't unfaithful, but Mom and Dad just don't get along.' 'I don't have a good, open relationship with my parents.' 'My dad doesn't respect church leaders.' 'Mom runs all over Dad.' 'I don't know how to relate to the other gender (the opposite sex), because I have not had a good model to follow.'"

Another problem is not **taking responsibility for their actions**. Such young people have not been used to taking responsibility for their actions at home. "Considering policy and those in authority their conscience" is not a good foundation for effective service. This easily goes to, "If something is not prohibited, it is approved." I think we need to address issues like these in our homes and churches.

"Not knowing **how to be OK with not being able to take in everything** that is going on across the country" is another weakness administrators

work with.

Here are others: “A lack of integrity.” “Cell-phone addiction.” We now communicate faster now than ever before, but we don’t communicate better. “Not knowing how to live within their means.” “Assuming it is OK to violate the rule if you’re not caught or observed.” Some home church standards are not enforced, so they are surprised that unit standards are enforced. One youth observed: “Youth are not being taught to think for themselves. They don’t know how to stand on their own two feet.” In many families: “Pursuit of pleasure more than of God.”

Parents that are too busy to handle a child or youth’s question, should consider this: Effective ministry is in the present, with a clear view toward the future.

Now **some of the positives:** “Wanting more from life than the preceding generation may have had.” I say, “Let God teach, challenge and motivate you. Go beyond what you have seen in us.”


“Support for their home church even though others in the unit come from churches that do it differently.” “A sincere desire to do what is right.” “A teachable spirit.” “Talent, creativity, knowledge, respect for authority, how to appeal to authority, a giving spirit, good work habits, solid young

men with godly values, flexibility, desire for growth.”

How many of the former VSers are ordained or are married to ordained men? From one unit, they reported 80, with 40 others having served in missions. A second unit reported: At least 56 of 870 workers. A third unit reported 50 ordained and 50 spouses, and not necessarily couples. These are not all in the Beachy constituency. They are impacting other church groups, as well.

Let us conclude on the note of vision. In Acts 18, Apollos is introduced. Aquila and Priscilla helped him fill in blank spots in his message. Our homes should be Aquila and Priscilla kind of homes. In such a home, we see the needs around us and we bring them in and instruct them “in the way of the Lord more perfectly.” Aquila and Priscilla did not say, “Apollos, you have it all wrong. You can’t minister. You just step aside. Let’s get somebody else.” Instead they took him home. They saw the gift that he had and the impact he could have on others. So they instructed him in the privacy of their home and prepared him for ministry. I appeal to us a body of ministers that we take the Apolloses among us and instruct them in the way of the Lord more perfectly, preparing them for ministry.

These young men are like arrows in the hand of a mighty man. They will go beyond where we have been if we prepare them, lead them, challenge them, and help them to think clearly. This not an “automatic, hands-free car wash” type of situation. Jesus gives us a bowl and a towel, where there’s relationship and washing of the water with the word. When I

wash dishes, my hands get clean, too. We need that. Sometimes it’s the feet that need washing. When we wash feet, the hands get clean, too. That speaks of mutual relationship. We take care of the spots and wrinkles. Paul gave us a beautiful prayer, fitting for the challenges we face in Ephesians 3:16-19. 

An Open Letter to Working Women

Name withheld by request

Dear Young Mother,
So you and your husband have decided you need to get a part-time job to pay off some of your debts? You can’t see any other way? Well, this letter is to encourage you NOT to get a job outside the home. I speak from personal observation.

There are many things you should take into consideration before taking a job. The first thing to consider is financial. How much will it help out financially? Many times there is very little financial gain. Baby sitters, extra clothes, gas, added vehicle expense, and eating out more often take up most of the extra money. Our sovereign God can easily allow extra medical or other bills to occur.

Of greater importance is the effect it

can have on your children. Especially young children need their mother at home. They need you to share those special times and also to hold them when they get hurt. You may think you can make it up later with “quality time,” but moments of need can happen at any time.

There was a family that decided the mother needed to get a job. Her youngest daughter often sat and cried a while when her mother left for work in the evening. After a time, the mother started working more hours, including Saturday when the father was home with the children. Today those children are scattered theologically and many have thrown aside their conservative Anabaptist heritage. So please consider the strain this will put on your children.

Please consider also, the strain this can put on your marriage. When the husband's position as the bread winner is threatened, many things can happen. He may, without realizing what the motive is, start doing things to get his wife's attention. Costly medical conditions sometimes arise.

There is also the moral issue to consider. The workplace offers many temptations that [husbands and] wives don't face at home. When your husband doesn't feel that he has your complete devotion, he may look elsewhere for attention. You may think, *But that won't happen to us*. It can happen without your realizing what is happening until it's too late. This husband and wife suffered the pain of infidelity on both sides, some of it directly attributable to the wife's job.

May I suggest that you lovingly support your husband and try to live on less. That new car may have to wait. Good stewardship, contentment with what you have, and simple, nourishing meals will go a long way. A garden and canning can help a lot on grocery bills. Bring your financial needs to God. He can provide above and beyond what you expect. Good,

“ *Good, sound financial management will go farther than that extra money.* ”

sound financial management will go farther than that extra money.

I'm glad my wife and I decided before we got married that she would not get a job even before we had children, and certainly not after we had children. Although the money gets tight sometimes with a large family, we wouldn't have it any other way.

Spend time in prayer for your husband and children. This is a much more rewarding occupation than you will find out there. It will change you, your outlook on life, and possibly affect your children's and grandchildren's eternal destiny.

If I can spare one family the pain that this family endured, and the bitter harvest of wrong choices, it will have been worth it. You see, *I am one of the sons*.

“I will therefore that the younger women marry, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (1 Timothy 5:14).

***God's part we cannot do;
our part He will not do.***

Responding to Critics

Simon Schrock

President, Choice Books of Northern Virginia

Catlett, VA

Reading through the book of Acts, it becomes clear that when Jesus and the Scriptures are preached the response is generally either **repentance** or **reaction**.

Through the apostles' preaching, thousands repented of their sins as they put their faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, multitudes reacted with violent unbelief. Stephen was stoned to death for preaching Jesus. Peter and Paul were cast into prison by people who reacted to the preaching of the gospel. Paul experienced the reaction of unbelief by being whipped, stoned, put on trial, in chains, and in prison. Has much changed since then? Humans still respond in similar ways. One person rejoices with a message from God's Word, while another responds with anger at the same message. That has become very evident in the ministry of Choice Books.

We have been offering a book

entitled *Emergency Prayers*. According to Marvin and Mildred Yoder, this little red book averted a suicide. "One day as we began servicing a book rack in a Publix supermarket in the Miami area, one of the employees walked by and stopped to express appreciation for the rack and books. This happens occasionally and encourages us in our endeavors. However, this was not the ordinary commendation. 'I bought one of these books for my nephew who was considering suicide. It was a little red book,' she said as she began turning the rack. 'There it is, that one!' and she pointed to *Emergency Prayers* by Deborah Smith Pegues. 'It was an emergency! But after reading the book, my nephew gave up the idea of committing suicide.' We were much encouraged by this encounter, realizing that we might have placed that book on the rack. God is saving lives, both spiritually and physically, through the ministry of Choice Books."

On the other hand, some shoppers

in New York City reacted negatively to the same title. These shoppers are openly gay and took offense that there were books on display that contained several paragraphs relating to what the Bible says about homosexual behavior. The 140-page *Emergency Prayers* had a page with a prayer, entitled: "My Son or Daughter is Gay." A news release posted on the Chelsea Now web site on July 6 featured an article, "At Chelsea Drug Stores, Christian lit not opiate of the masses." The article cited *Emergency Prayers* and quotes to which these shoppers reacted. "Lord, according to your word, homosexuality is detestable in your sight...Please extend your mercy now, Father. Do not turn my child over to a reprobate or debased mind as you did the Gentiles who engaged in same-sex intercourse." They took offense at these sentences.

Another title was *500 Questions and Answers from the Bible*. It appears to me that the editors of this book took extra care to represent the teachings of the Scriptures. Even so, the complaints registered against Choice Books were that "these texts could validate dangerous actions by those with more literal interpretation. It provides unhinged, bigoted people some sort of justification to cause violent crime." Choice Books is

accused of promoting bigotry, negative hate rhetoric, and neo-Nazi propaganda.

The complaint began at a CVS store where a gay couple shopped. The article states that they "didn't rejoice when they found some of the explicitly Christian-themed texts, the two women discovered passages denouncing, among other things, homosexuality and gender bonding, and even going so far as to equate gayness to a deadly disease."

The article was not written to give Choice Books a positive spin. CVS personnel were contacted for information for the article and are aware of the complaints. While such reaction to finding Jesus in the local drugstore should not surprise us, it does give us deep concern. Choice Books are on display in around 2,000 CVS stores across the nation. John Bomberger, CEO/Director of Choice Books Central Office expresses the concern in a call to prayer. "Pray for God's leading and direction as CVS and CB make decisions. Also, pray that this situation will not negatively impact CB's relationship with CVS, and that CB can continue to serve CVS stores across the country with the 'Good News.'"

After reading this article I thought of the explanation Joseph gave his brothers who sold him into slavery.

“You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.” The article features a picture of a Choice Books display and refers to having “even a special edition of the King James Bible” which is clearly visible. It quotes our mission statement, “to share the good news of Jesus Christ in the general market place.” It draws attention to “Jesus’ clinic for sexual sin” found in the book, and “it is better to limp into heaven... than leap into hell.”

This article is a little like Joseph’s brothers; it is not meant for good. However, Choice Books got some free exposure. We are fearful for what this could mean. However, there is another angle to keep in mind. My imagination sees the complainers inspecting our books. What are they doing? Reading portions of our books which contain words from the Scriptures, which is our word from God. God’s Word says, “For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”

(Hebrews 4:12). Isaiah indicated that the word “shall accomplish that which I please.”

The critics examining our books for objectionable statements will be reading the word that can pierce the heart of a hardened unbeliever. Saul was confronted with the Word as he was on the way to Damascus with “threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.” The Lord brought a dramatic change into his life. The Spirit of the Lord is still alive in this present age in which God is “not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9 NAS). Can we be glad that folks are examining our books, getting parts of God’s Word? Can we earnestly pray that the Spirit of Jesus will draw them to Himself? Critics in these times are still coming to faith while trying to disprove God’s Word. Join in prayer for these people as they search our books to find criticism. Jesus said, Pray for those which spitefully use you, and persecute you.” And pray for our staff as we respond to our critics.

[From *MIC Newsletter*, June-July, 2009.]



Some things are ruined when broken, but the human heart may be improved when broken.

Preparing Your Child for Marriage

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

Recently, I heard about a young girl from a plain setting who was anticipating marriage. However, when she talked to her parents, her mother said, "Please wait one more year because I have so many things I would like to teach you." The daughter responded positively and together she and her mother worked on homemaking skills that would assist her in her role as wife and mother in the future. Now this young wife has already prepared a church dinner, which included baking 40 pies at her house, with her mother's help.

We may think, *My daughter will not be required to learn such things;* which is probably true. Nevertheless, ask yourself these questions, *Would my daughter be capable of baking two pies for a church dinner or preparing a dinner for her in-laws, or could she sew on a button for her husband's shirt or plant a garden?*

The list of possible scenarios is endless and you can fill in the blanks. We have gone from only an eighth-grade education to high school

graduation, in many cases. I believe this is a step in a good direction for our youth today. However, may we not neglect teaching a good work ethic.

Many times a young girl picks up a job immediately after high school and then either gets married or begins a career or takes a voluntary service assignment. Maybe it would be better if mothers kept their girls at home for a year after high school to train them in the valuable art of homemaking. Homemaking has become a lost art in many circles today. Let us look at the two following areas:

Homemaking Skills

Before marriage, your daughter should know the basics of keeping a clean, tidy house. She should know how to do laundry. Teach her how to sort clothes so she does not dye her husband's white shirt to red. Show her how to fold clothes neatly and put them away; how to iron if necessary, and even how to hang clothes on the wash line.

Teach her thrifty little tips to make life easier for her hard-working

husband. She needs to know how to prepare a good nourishing meal with food from “scratch,” not just how to use “instants” or things from a box. Men typically enjoy good food.

Teach her to bake. There are cooking and baking tips we pass on to our children that become family legacies. Your daughter also has to learn that your way is not the only way; she may learn to do new things that please her husband. My mother never baked her own bread. When we got married, Mel preferred homemade bread, so I was determined to learn how. I guess I was too proud to ask his mother to teach me, so I learned the hard way, by trial and error—but I learned. However, I am sure his mother would have been pleased if I had gone to her house and spent a day baking bread with her.


Gardening, along with canning and freezing, are definitely ways to save on those weekly grocery bills. Gardening is also a special time of togetherness for young couples as they observe the miracle of seeds and the fulfillment of providing for their own table. Teach your daughter how to be a wise shopper, to balance her checkbook, to tithe, to be responsible with her finances.

Relationship Skills

How do we build a good marriage? First, we must build on a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. Many other areas contribute to a good marriage. I believe parents can play a part in preparing their children for marriage. Example plays a large role, as your children observe your own marriage, your response to difficult times, your demonstration of love to each other—these will form ideals for their own marriages.

Teach your child the art of communication, to be able to talk or know when to be quiet. Teach unselfishness, not to demand one’s own way in marriage, to remember that the spouse’s family and his interests are just as important to him as yours are to you.

Release your child physically and emotionally. Help your child to respond in a grown-up manner to disappointment or conflict; to forgive; not to hold a grudge and not to “let the sun go down” on a misunderstanding. Teach your daughter to support her husband in his job and in his other responsibilities and teach your son to love his wife and to nurture her.

Mothers, you have a big job to do as your prepare your child for life beyond your borders. 

What Can I Do?

Jason Yoder, Ligonier, IN

Miguel's mellow voice blended with the voices singing around him. He loved these sincere friends who met every Sunday to sing, pray, and fellowship.

They met under the fruit trees in Miss Eliza's back yard. Today Miguel felt excited because Miss Eliza said she had an announcement to make after story time.

He listened eagerly to Miss Eliza. She always told such wonderful stories. "Our story today is about a boy who gave his lunch away. He gave it to Jesus who, with His mighty power multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed many other people," she started her story.

Would I give my lunch away? Miguel wondered.

Finally the story was done and Miss Eliza made her announcement, "You know that the rainy season is coming soon. We will not be able to meet out here in the open anymore. Could you please help me find a place to have our little service?"

"Yes, we will help," they answered together.

Miguel walked home in deep thought. How were they going to find a suitable place to meet? They couldn't meet in their house. His father would object to that.

As he neared the back door, his eyes fell on the chicken house, if you could call it that. It was a typical Nicaraguan hut. Suddenly, he had a bright idea!

Somehow, he'd need to get his father's permission. Quickly he hurried to find Father. "Father, can I use the chicken house?"

"Use the chicken house? It's already in use by...ah...the chickens," he laughed loudly.

"We can't meet under the trees in Miss Eliza's back yard any more, because of the rainy season coming. Will you allow us to meet here?" Miguel asked timidly.

"It's only a shabby hut."

"But we'll clean it good and the chickens won't do anything to us," Miguel persisted.

"All right," Father agreed, "but you will need to clean it."

Miguel ran to tell his friends about his good idea. They all agreed that it might work, if they patched the roof and cleaned it out.

All through the week Miguel and his friends worked taking out the rubbish and patching holes. On Saturday they visited Miss Eliza. "Come, we want to show you our surprise." They led her to their chicken house.

"Oh, this will do; and it looks like you finished just in time. Look, it's starting to rain."

Integrity

Integrity. Does God know you as a person who speaks the truth and avoids all forms of lying and cheating? Do the people with whom you rub shoulders know you as a person who refuses to compromise biblical principles? Could it be written that you are “perfect and upright—one who fears God and eschews evil—one who holds fast his integrity?”

As the moral fabric of our towns and communities continues to crumble

around us, it is extremely essential that our neighbors have the opportunity to interact with Christians who reflect the nature and character of God. After all, Christians are the only “Bible” that many people read.

God’s blessing on you and your friends as together you get “better and better” while the world gets “worse and worse!” Thanks to this month’s writers!

—EE

This Month’s QUESTION

Integrity in America appears harder to find as each year goes by. This blight on our society can easily rub off on Christians who are not alert.

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

What integrity tests come to those near your age, and how can youth help each other pass these tests?

Integrity in this world has become a rare and precious find. Many people are living in the moment and not realizing or caring that their choices are hurting others. The root cause of lack of integrity seems to be selfishness and lack of care for those around them.

Even some “Christian” leaders lack integrity. This obviously has an effect on youth. Youth today face many

tests and challenges. Remaining pure, speaking the truth, and speaking well of others are just a few.

Ways that youth can help each other in these areas are to have wholesome relationships, correcting and encouraging in the truth and refusing to take part in conversations that are intended to hurt and lower another person.

“With integrity you have nothing to fear, since you have nothing to hide. With integrity you will do the right thing, so you will have no guilt.

With fear and guilt removed, you are free to be and do your best.” (Quote by Zig Ziglar)

Cynthia Fisher, Lott, TX



There is a saying: “A man’s character is measured by what he does when nobody is looking.” Integrity seems to be one of those things that you know what it means, but don’t know how to describe it.

As I discussed this with a few others, we came up with a few examples: The main one was negative peer pressure. Negative peer pressure is one of the biggest integrity tests for most, if not all of us. It is so much easier to go along with the crowd even if you know it’s not right.

One way to help each other pass this test is by encouraging each other by letting them know how much you appreciate their stand on certain things and how they are not swayed by what other people say or do. We need to encourage each other before the tests come or we won’t be able to stand strong as easily. Like another saying goes, “An integrity breach in one compartment of your life quickly spills over to another until your entire life begins to sink.”

Melva Baker, Floral, AR



I think one of the biggest tests that faces youth of our day is the test of using the time that God has given to us in a wise manner. There are many glamorous things out in society that are vying for our attention. I think we would all be quick to admit that one of the biggest time stealers is technology, in the many forms it comes in.

I think we need to be on our guard and realize that, as powerful a tool as it can be, technology can be used as an instrument of Satan to distract us from our real purpose on earth. I believe true worship and true gratitude for this gift will be expressed in our increasing involvement in the work of the Kingdom of God.

We as youth can encourage each other by using our time together wisely. If we keep the big picture in mind, and keep what will be important in eternity in mind, we will view our times together as opportunities that God can work through us to advance His Kingdom. What an awesome responsibility and privilege!

Kelley Kauffman, Marshallville, GA



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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Quitters in church are like engines—they sputter before they miss and they miss before they quit.

• • • • •

Freedom is a choice and it comes when we choose to accept God's discipline.

• • • • •

Babies all over the world coo and cry the same.

• • • • •

Blessed is the man who can laugh at himself, for he will never cease to be amused.

• • • • •

Some people are like fences; they run around a lot without getting anywhere.

• • • • •

People are like foghorns; they toot the loudest when in a fog.

• • • • •

We can do great things for God by doing little things for others.

• • • • •

Want the best? Give your best!

• • • • •

A fanatic tends to increase his speed when he loses his way.