

CALVARY MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

MARCH 2013

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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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Editor: Paul L. Miller
 7809 S. Herren Rd., Partridge, KS 67566
 Ph/Fax 620-567-2286
 paulmiller@bttskynet.net

Assistant Editor: Elmer D. Glick
 P.O. Box 400, Slanesville, WV 25444
 elmerg@frontiernet.net

Associate Editor: David L. Miller
 P O Box 73, Partridge, KS 67566
 620-567-2376

Contributing Editors:
 Simon Schrock, Enos D. Stutzman,
 Aaron Lapp

Missions Editor: Floyd Stoltzfus
 186 Skyline Dr., New Holland, PA 17557

Youth Messages Editor: Ernest Eby
 11558 Hwy. 198, Guys Mills, PA 16327
 ec.eby.ar@gmail.com | 814-789-3209

Junior Messages Editor:
 Mrs. Mary Ellen Beachy
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW
 Dundee, OH 44624

Helpers at Home Editor:
 Mrs. Mary June Glick
 1080 Return Church Rd., Seneca, SC 29678

Circulation Manager/Treasurer:
 Mark I. Beachy
 11095 Pleasant Hill Rd. NW
 Dundee, OH 44624
 markbeachy@icloud.com | 330-852-2982

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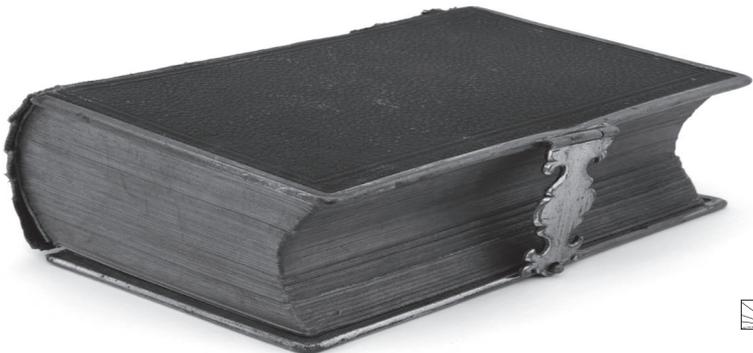
The Family

Author unknown

The family is like a book—
The children are the leaves,
The parents are the covers
That protecting beauty gives.

At first the pages of the book
Are blank and purely fair,
But time soon writeth memories
And painteth pictures there.

Love is the little golden clasp
That bindeth up the trust;
Oh, break it not, lest all the leaves
Should scatter and be lost.



When Emotions Conflict

Sometimes it's confusing to sort out our feelings about life's experiences. Several examples: suffering and death comes to the family; a child is willful and needs discipline; the church is faced with the choice of disciplining a member or tolerating impenitent sin. Such situations can cause us to say, "I almost don't know how I feel; my emotions are in conflict."

Jesus cares deeply about such situations. He Himself faced ambivalent emotions. When He neared the end of His life and would soon be giving His life for us, He spoke of inner conflict. In John 12:27, He said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Then God spoke audibly from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."

We might wonder what we are to learn from Jesus' agonized comment. Why did the voice from heaven say that? Let me ask: Do these things indicate that our perfect Savior experienced conflicted emotions at

times? *I think so.* Does His statement add credibility to the fact that we have a high priest who can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," because He "was tempted [tested] in all points like as we are...."? (Hebrews 4:15) *Definitely!*

Please consider the following:

- My mother, only 58 years old, died in 1960. After some months of suffering from cancer, her suffering intensified, and we feared she would die. We wondered how we could give her up. But when it became apparent that neither the doctors nor we could turn back the disease that was ravaging her body, I think we were finally relieved that she could die. It bothered me to admit that I felt relief at her passing. My emotions were in conflict. I was only 26 and I didn't want her to leave, but submitting to God's right to decide brought peace. Even though I was conflicted, I could actually rejoice with Mother that she could go home to be with the Savior whom she loved.

- Parents notice with deepening concern a young child's willfulness. It bothers them and yet they hesitate.

Their hesitation may come from thinking that the child could interpret their disapproving attitude and disciplinary action as rejection—or even hatred. Granted, depending on how the situation is handled, parental disapproval conveys rejection. But corrective discipline given in private with loving concern does not convey rejection. Not backing off conveys much greater love than letting the child go on unchecked. It lets the child sense the parents' love for him or her. (See Proverbs 13:24.) Blessed is the child whose parents do not hide behind the fearful reasoning that thinks patience is the only virtue in child training.

•The church may realize that a certain member's communion privileges should be revoked. Compassionate shepherds are never eager to take such action. Even though unpleasant, it is not right to absolutely refuse to take that difficult step. Faithfulness requires that we look at the person's response, the seriousness of the situation, how it affects the flock and what will become of the person who strays—if we turn a blind eye. In 1 Corinthians 5:13b, Paul instructed the Corinthians, "Put away from yourselves that wicked person." He was addressing brazen, open sin. Other Scriptures indicate that sometimes less obvious, but

also damaging situations arise that should *not* be ignored: Matthew 18:15-18 speaks of an irreconcilable spirit toward a brother; Romans 16:17 speaks of a contentious, defiant attitude; and Galatians 1:9 speaks of advocating and teaching heresy. All of these are to be addressed with disciplinary action by the brotherhood for health in the body of Christ.

We gain an understanding of this principle by noting how God deals with us. In Hebrews 12:1-13, we see that trials can be God expressing His love to us. He brings into our lives the teaching situations He sees we need. He asks us to consider the Captain of our Salvation, who was made perfect through suffering. His sufferings vastly exceeded any of ours. He deserved none of them and that's more than we can say about ours. God chastens in love, so that we don't become unprofitable to Him. The inspired writer grants that discipline is not pleasant, but necessary. He tells us that if we respond rightly, the result may eventually make sense to us. It is good to know that God's wisdom and strength come to us when we become teachable. Furthermore, we walk straighter when we accept life's trials as *stepping stones*, not as *stumbling blocks*, to holy living.

If accepting God's correction

bestows such rich blessings on the life committed to Jesus as Lord, then let us give our conflicted emotions to our Heavenly Father. Let us act bravely. Let us face hard situations with courage. Let us ask God for wisdom in such times. Paul encourages us with, “Watch ye, stand fast in the

faith, quit ye like men, be strong. Let all things be done with charity” (1 Corinthians 16:13,14). Let us face life’s trials with brave, teachable hearts. When we trust and obey Jesus, His peace settles us and sets us free from paralyzing fear. Hallelujah!

—PLM 

Mennonite Holocaust Perpetrators?

Chester Weaver, LaGrange, IN

Mennonites as Holocaust perpetrators? Did [ethnic] Mennonites actually help destroy Jews? Yes, unfortunately so. Recent research is uncovering this unsavory truth, too long hidden in darkness.

Consider the following quotes from “Mennonites and the Holocaust” in the October 2010 issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. “SS-Hauptfuehrer Heinrich Wiens...had a record of efficient methods in this ghastly business...For his tasks Wiens had the advantage of using ‘gas vans,’ newly arrived from the manufacturer of ‘murder implements’ in Berlin. As in all massacres by the Einsatzgruppen the 800 to 1,000 Jewish people in the area were first ‘registered,’ which took eight days. Then came the command to start the killing process. Jews from the city itself and the surrounding localities...

had until September 5, 1942, to report to the cavalry barracks in Pjatigorsk. At the barracks they were told that they would be resettled and were to prepare themselves for travel. Then they were transported in trucks a short distance to a gravel pit guarded by the members of EK 12...As each truckload of Jews arrived, they were ordered to disembark, deposit their valuables on spread-out blankets and then told to remove all their clothes. They were forced to climb into the ‘gas van,’ which drove back and forth several times before it stopped on the edge of the pit. There several Jewish prisoners were compelled to pull the bodies from the truck and throw them into the pit on the promise that they ‘would be saved’ from such a fate. None of the Pjatigorsk victims survived, including the prisoners unloading the corpses of their fellow Jews, who were killed when

their grisly work was done.”

Commander Wiens went on to systematically repeat the procedure in other places, becoming personally responsible for the deaths of thousands of Jews.

Heinrich Wiens, born March 22, 1906, was the son of a prosperous Mennonite farmer and merchant who lived in the South Russia Mennonite settlement of Molotchna. From 1926 till 1930, he served as a dairy inspector at various Ukrainian locations. On January 10, 1931, he joined the Nazi party in Danzig, Poland, and two days later intensified his identification with Nazism by joining the elite SS. By April, 1939, Wiens was an SS captain.

He described himself as a “Believer in God” while working in the officially atheistic Nazi SS. He left the Mennonite church some time between 1931 and 1939.

For the complete story and much more read Gerhard Rempel’s *Mennonites and the Holocaust: From Collaboration to Perpetuation*, beginning on page 507.

Heinrich Wiens was just one individual among thousands and thousands of Mennonites in Germany, Poland, and the Ukraine who identified with Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party. While only a few like Wiens participated actively in destroying Jews, most Mennonites in Europe just looked the other way. They were

mostly silent participants, although some Mennonites did dislike Jews because of Jewish involvement in Russia’s Communist government. They were proudly pleased with their German nationalism. They could be this way because they had already lost the Two Kingdom Concept, and thus their nonresistance by World War 1. These German Mennonites supported German nationalism so strongly that 144 Danzig Mennonites lost lives in combat during the Great War. (2,000 German Mennonites served as soldiers.) The next generation, living while the Holocaust was happening, were willing to rally around Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party. German nationalism had become more important than the eternal Kingdom of Christ.

What happened? A detailed story of what happened is chronicled in Mark Janzen’s recent book, *Mennonite German Soldiers* (2010). The book recounts the gradual, step by step, downward spiral experienced by the Danzig Mennonites. From the principled stance of a persecuted sect, yet recognized and tolerated by the government, the Danzig Mennonites completely lost their recognition as nonresistant people in the space of 100 years. The Danzig story happened in a completely different political and social environment from what we experience in the United States.

Thus the Mennonite parallels are not identical. However, large historical lessons stand out. Human beings face similar situations in all ages and places.

For preservation as a people part of the Kingdom of Christ, we must be realistic with the issues we face. The Kingdom of Christ does not just happen; it is perpetuated by people cooperating with Christ in the building of that Kingdom in the midst of a hostile society. Jesus has been fair to educate us with stories and teaching from the Scripture as well as non-biblical stories of those who lived before us. We have a wealth of information at our disposal. We need interpreters and appliers!

Reading these accounts provided me with quite a bit of food for thought. We are also writing a story that will be read by our descendants (if Christ tarries). I look at the German Mennonite story from a distance of time, geography, and ethnicity and yet some lessons loom large. What will people read about us? What life lessons will those who read about us, make about us? We do not live in a vacuum or in an obscure corner of the world. It seems that Christ has put us close to front and center in the American context.

Following are some of my observations and interpreted life lessons as I try to bridge the gap between the German Mennonites and ourselves. Much more could be included.

- The Kingdom of Christ is separate from the kingdoms of this world. They can never be presumed to be one and the same, no matter what rationalization we try to make. The two operate with two different operating systems. The kingdom of this world centers on “ME,” while the Kingdom of Christ centers on “HIM.” Jesus Christ said, “Love the LORD with your entire being and love your neighbor as yourself.” Such love requires setting “our affections on things above” because naturally we love ourselves.

- The Kingdom of Christ is incompatible with a political system. Participation in politics by voting and/or holding office denies and confuses the two separate systems. Jesus simply said, “My Kingdom is not of this world.”

- When hearts are truly seeking Christ first, His grace goes to work to accomplish what we in our human weakness can never do. We need not worry about having the right strategy or the proper five-year plan. The secret is seeking Christ first; His blessing will follow. Too often the German Mennonites lowered their gaze to themselves.

- If we took three words CHRISTIAN, AMERICAN, and MENNONITE, in what order would we arrange them? Am I a Mennonite Christian American, an American Christian Mennonite, or an American Mennonite Christian? Mennonites who participated in the

Holocaust decided that German was the strongest word.

- The way of acculturation, the way of gradual compromise with the system will eventually lead us to embarrassing places. Jesus tells us to “endure to the end.” The downward pull is relentless, but the availability of grace is limitless! If we surrender to the downward pull, we have only ourselves to blame.

- A vigorous teaching program is essential to reproducing conviction in each succeeding generation. We may spare no effort here because society around us is also attempting to teach our children. The Kingdom’s teaching program must provide solid, satisfying answers to young people who wonder about the issues of life.

- While tradition is right and proper in many areas of life, tradition can become a binding and limiting force which actually sets itself against the movement of the Spirit of God. The Kingdom of Christ cannot be frozen. The German Mennonites agreed with the government to allow no non-family converts into their churches!

- Individualism is a corrosive force. The people of God must remain solidly together. To remain solidly together much *Gelassenheit* (quiet resignation, yieldedness) must happen. Christian community is a wonderful experience—one of the best on this side of heaven.

- Unsound, non-biblical doctrine must be met head-on and exposed for

what it is, either on the leadership or membership level. We cannot press into the Kingdom of Christ while we are ignoring unsound doctrine among the people of the Kingdom. Christ and His message are an integral unit.

- Leadership must know the way, show the way, and go the way. Leadership by default is not leadership. Christ appoints leaders which He then commissions to energetically lead the way into Kingdom fullness.

- The Kingdom of Christ has boundaries. Those boundaries must have substance, not just exist as ideas or theories. The boundaries may differ at different places within the Kingdom of Christ but they must exist.

- The Kingdom of Christ is always expensive; we must lose ourselves in order to be obedient to Christ. That obedience may demand our very earthly lives. But is earthly life the most precious possession we have? No, our faith is! Kingdom Christians with their faith in Christ first have always been misunderstood by their neighbors, often resulting in persecution.

- Rewriting a confession of faith to accommodate a different values system is different from updating a brotherhood agreement. Our church standards must always be relevant and meaningful to the membership. To rewrite a confession of faith is a momentous experience for any group within the Kingdom of Christ; we had better know what we are doing!

- Attempting to construct a bridge between the past and the present when the present is on a different foundation from the past reveals a lack of integrity. The Danzig Mennonites claimed “agreement with our forefathers that every war is a great evil that results from sin.” Yet they also said, “It appears to us to be very difficult to find an absolute prohibition of military service in the Holy Scriptures if such is required by the state of all citizens.” The German Mennonites now claimed that it was their Christian duty to seek the “prosperity, rights, and preservation of the state in which God” had placed them. The leadership claimed that their principles had *not* changed, only their form.

- If families cannot support what is happening on a local level, their only recourse is relocation. In the Danzig area, out of 12,000 Mennonites, 2,000 emigrated, mostly to Russia, with some to the United States. Those emigrating felt the need to remain true to their convictions. Those not emigrating were often tied to their locality by wealth and power.

- Governments get to know their people. Even though the state constantly pressed against the German Mennonites to take up arms, they did recognize that they were taxpayers. Since governments need both men and money, the Prussian government reluctantly lived with just money, always wishing for the men also.

Eventually the state got both the men and the money. Once they got both, they would not consider moving backwards. In America, the Anabaptist people have a nonresistant reputation and liberal concessions from the government. May we never lose our reputation! It is better to remain a thorn in the side of society as members of a separate Kingdom.

- The Kingdom of Christ must educate its own children. To allow the state (the kingdom of this world) to educate our children is serious collaboration with the enemy. No educational system is neutral; education always happens within a context of values. Why would any member of the Kingdom of Christ be content with education by the enemy? The German Mennonites became content with such an arrangement. The rest is history.

- From colonial beginnings, especially with William Penn, the Anabaptist people have been favored with government respect and provision. Recent American Anabaptists have had an easy road compared with Anabaptist experiences in the past. That easy road has too often caused us to be shallow, apathetic, complacent, and materialistic. Too often we have lost our sense of being Kingdom Christians and thus have lost our message. In our day, American society knows and respects Anabaptists to a greater or lesser degree. They are observing the acculturating process

at work among us and are sometimes distressed when they see us succumb. So far the United States government has made liberal concessions to the Anabaptist people because they understand them as a people with a long history of authenticity. Will that reputation continue?

And so, with the freedoms we have, what is to hold us back from being aggressive with the Kingdom of Christ? Only our shallowness, apathy, complacency, and materialism. What would happen if conservative Anabaptists were wholly energized by the Spirit of the Living Christ? 

Annual Ministers' Meetings – 2013

The annual ministers' meetings to be hosted by the Beachy churches of Holmes County, Ohio is scheduled for April 2-4, 2013, Lord willing, to be held at Fairlawn Mennonite Church, 8520 Emerson Rd., Apple Creek, OH, 44606. Committee meetings prior to the larger meetings are to be held at Bethel Fellowship Church, Berlin.

Registration can be done by e-mail. If you did not receive a registration e-mail, please submit your registration along with any changes to your contact information to: baministers@gmail.com While, e-mail registration is preferred, if you do not have access to e-mail, you can register by phone. Contact Philip Beachy at 330-204-5133.

For those wanting time during business sessions, contact Phil Miller (330-495-9704). E-mail: pamiller@truevine.net.

Committees that will be meeting on Monday and Tuesday and for those needing areas for displays and book sales, contact Joe Miller (330-495-2152) or by e-mail: southforklimousinjm@juno.com.

Speakers wishing to have their material displayed on an overhead screen should have their information loaded on a flash drive. Submit to Philip Beachy (330-204-5133). E-mail: philipbeachy@juno.com.

Serving the Lord together, Philip Beachy | Messiah Fellowship Church 

ANNOUNCEMENT

Book Orders: *The Amish-Mennonites of North America*

For those who did not pre-order but would still like a copy of the coffee table style book, *The Amish-Mennonites of North America: a Portrait of Our People* by Cory Anderson (304 pp), they may be ordered individually for \$39.95 USD (Includes shipping) from Ridgeway Publishing, 3129 Fruit Ave., Medina, NY 14103. For bulk or non-USA orders, call 888-822-7894.



The Challenge of Economic Disparity

Tim Weaver

Most visitors from North America soon notice that the economy of Guatemala is not like the economy of their home countries. In official terms, the 2008 World Almanac lists the per capita gross domestic product of Guatemala as \$4,900, while that of the United States is listed at \$43,500. In a practical sense, most men in the United States are able to find a job that will yield them \$100 per day. In Guatemala common labor can be found for Q50 per day, and skilled workers can obtain Q100 per day. For ease of consideration in this article, we will consider the money units the same since a worker in either place can earn 100 per day. Thus, the figures that follow reflect *dollars*

when speaking of North America and *quetzales* when speaking of Guatemala.

To compare the buying power of those earnings, we will consider the case of a worker named John in North America, and of his counterpart, Juan, in Guatemala. When John goes grocery shopping for his family, he can purchase 20 pounds of potatoes for 6, while Juan will pay 50 for his. John can buy five pounds of dry beans for 7; Juan pays 25. For five pounds of rice, John pays 3; Juan pays 23. If they decide to take a box of cold cereal home, John pays 2.50; Juan pays 20. A pound of ground beef will cost 3 from John's pocket and 18 from Juan's pocket. For a gallon of milk, John pays 3.50; Juan pays 24.

John may consider ice cream to be a once-a-week treat and pays 3 for a half gallon, while Juan considers it a treat twice a year and spends 40 for his half gallon. A family-size bottle of shampoo costs John 3; it costs Juan 30.

If John wants transportation, he can likely find a small economical pickup truck for around 4,000. Juan has good options for traveling by public transportation, but if he decides to purchase a small economical pickup, he will need to spend at least 20,000 for a mechanically dependable model, though not as new as that of his northern counterpart. If John buys a pickup, he will still need to purchase a family vehicle. Juan's pickup will meet all his transportation needs. At the gas pump, John spends around 4 per gallon; Juan spends 38 per gallon. If they buy used bicycles, John's costs 20; Juan's costs 400.

For housing, John can perhaps purchase a satisfactory three-bedroom house on a few acres for 150,000. He can finance it at 4% or 5% interest. Juan would need to spend between 150,000 and 200,000 for a similar house, though smaller and less comfortable. His interest rates would easily reach 24%. His lot would consist only of the land that the construction covers, perhaps 1,500 square feet of land. When buying land from a neighbor, John may invest from 5,000 to 10,000

per acre. If Juan buys land, he will find it available for anywhere from 125,000 to 250,000 per acre. So our two friends look very differently at land ownership.

If they decide to rent the three-bedroom home, John may spend 500 to 700 per month on rent, while Juan will spend from 2,000 to 3,000. John would never think of living with his parents or his in-laws, but Juan likely would.

We can recognize that Juan faces a much more difficult economic environment than John. Is there another side? Yes, let us consider it, too. If John decides to start his own business, he may be able to double his earnings. If Juan starts his own business, he can likely triple or quadruple his earnings. If John hires workers for his business, he can hire them for around the same rate that he formerly received. Juan's workers will work for half of what he did.

If John's personal enterprise prospers, he will most likely be honored in his community and in his congregation, assuming that he has been diligent, thrifty, and honest. If Juan's personal enterprise prospers, it will cause suspicions. Why? Because too many businessmen in Guatemala get ahead through wrong means—dishonesty, mistreatment of workers, illegitimate trade, and such things. Many rich people inherit money. Thus they know little of the sweat

that goes into earning money. Others survive because they have relatives living in John's back yard who work hard, save, and send money south to help them out. For these reasons and more, Juan's community looks at his prosperity with suspicion. In general, two classes of people exist in Guatemala—the rich and the poor. The middle class is now slowly emerging.

Also, if Juan's business prospers, he will find no shortage of individuals who would do what they can to get a piece (small though it may be) of his profit pie. Relatives will expect him to loan them money, and they will expect him to help care for the elderly and the sick in the extended family. His employees will expect him to forward money on their pay checks and to loan them money when they get into a bind. Thieves will notice his success and will devise a both simple and complex plans to get their hands on his goods. He will become a target for extortion. If he is honest, he will need to pay high taxes, since the tax system expects the average taxpayer to lie and to cheat in any way possible. Juan will invest more of his profit in ways and means to protect his business—anything from walls and locks to additional employees. Our comparisons could go on and on.

If John is a conservative Mennonite, he may live in the upper half of the middle class of his economic

environment.

So what is it in all of this that presents a challenge to our efforts to build faithful congregations in Guatemala? Let us assume that John has relocated to Juan's area, and he is trying to help establish churches there.

First, it is hard for John to stoop low enough to really understand Juan's economy. Likewise, it is hard for Juan to stretch high enough to really understand John's economy. When John buys his weekly box of ice cream, he sees nothing amiss. When Juan eats meat three times a week, he doesn't either. John drives to town, and he fills his gas tank every time it gets empty. Juan goes to town on the bus, and if he drives, it is because he has a payload to pick up or to deliver. He puts 50 or 100 worth of gasoline in his gas tank, unless he plans to go on a longer trip. John wonders why Juan struggles so much when the neighbor takes advantage of him and moves the line fence one meter. Juan wonders why John is irked when he frequently asks him for a ride to town or to pick up items for him while he is there. Thus, if patient communication and understanding is lacking, these two brethren will begin to misunderstand each other.

John's background induces him to assume that people in Juan's economic state are there through lack

of initiative; he figures that Juan may be a bit lazy, may lack self-discipline, and/or has not fully developed his entrepreneurial skills. Juan looks at John's success and his background induces him to assume that John does not need to work. He figures John has his money handed to him from his father, his government, or from somewhere. He may also assume that John got ahead by pushing others down, by taking advantage of them, or by covetousness and misplaced priorities. If, as someone so aptly put it, "Assumptions are the termites of relationships," there is real potential for decay and erosion in their relationship. Thus, as John and Juan relate together, in the same congregation, they must deal aggressively with their assumptions, and they must enter into each others' lives, patiently working until they find common ground in Christ from which they can both prosper.

These disparities can also create difficulties in their evangelistic efforts. John assumes that visitors at church are seeking truth. He assumes that economic advantage is not their motive for coming, since [good] conservative Mennonites are pilgrims and strangers in this

world, and if someone really wanted material advantage, he would go elsewhere. Juan may well assume that his neighbors are coming for "the loaves and fishes." He knows that John's pilgrim-and-stranger lifestyle is still a good bit above many of his neighbors' subsistence level existence.

But finally, John and Juan are brethren. They are both trying to obey the Scriptures in the fear of the Lord, and both mean to make it to heaven with the help of the Lord and of each other. They love the church and they are willing to spend and be spent for the good of the cause. The disparities diminish as they seek the common ground of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Indeed, He is the One who spanned the greatest gap of economic disparity ever known to mankind—that vast difference between the glorious riches of heaven and the self-induced poverty of earth. His noble example spurs John and Juan on toward greater love, humility, self-denial, and understanding as they press together toward that eternal city whose Builder and Maker is God.

[From *The Harvest Call*, April/May, 2012. Used by permission.] 

Think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends, and always of Christ.

marriages

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

Eash-Swartzentruber

Bro. Jeremy, son of Lonnn and Leona Eash, Lexington, IN, and Sis. Carmen, daughter of Daniel R. and Karen Swartzentruber, Huntsville, AR, at First Assembly of God for Lighthouse of Faith Fellowship on Sept. 29, 2012, by Dan Byler.

Graber-Beachy

Bro. Joshua Joel, son of Mervin and Betty Graber, Oskaloosa, KS, and Allison Joy, daughter of Joseph and Joanna Beachy, Auburn, KY, at Plainview Mennonite Church for Providence Fellowship on August 25, 2012, by David Yoder, Jr.

Graber-Lapp

Bro. Dustin, son of Paul and Julia Graber, Brooksville, MS, and Sis. Gina Marie, daughter of Mel and Ann Lapp, Dundee, NY, at Crystal Valley Church on Oct. 13, 2012, by the bride's father, Mel Lapp.

Loewen-Youngman

Bro. Jonathan, son of Wilbert and Kathy Loewen, Neepawa, Manitoba, and Sis. Marissa, daughter of James and Sarah Youngman, Dundee, NY, at Crystal Valley Mennonite Church on Dec. 1, 2012, by Pete Peters.

Ortiz-Ysaguirre

Bro. Justin Allen, Scotland Halfmoon, Belize, son of Mr. and Mrs. Simeon Ortiz, and Sis. Janelle Sheryl, Hattievville, Belize, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Giles Ysaguirre, at Pilgrim Fellowship Mennonite church in Hattievville, on Dec. 25, 2012, by Bishop Louis Ysaguirre.

Zook-Weaver

Bro. Kevin, son of Mark and Fannie Mae Zook, Burgettstown, PA, and Sis. Jen, daughter of Noah and Becky Weaver, Logan, OH, at Hocking Hills Mennonite Church on Jan. 12, 2013, by John Brunk.

cradle roll

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

Byler, Joel and Veronica (Weaver), Lexington, IN, second child and son, Shawn Titus, Jan. 15, 2013.

Byler, John and Barbara (Erb), Brunner, ON, fifth child and son, Jamin Paul, Dec. 13, 2012.

Coblentz, Willis and Becky (Yoder), Greenfield, OH, sixth child, fifth dau., Lindsay Rebecca, Dec. 10, 2012.

Eicher, Norman and Emily (Miller), Belvidere, TN, third child, first dau., Andrea Dawn, Jan. 10, 2013.

Garber, Lamar and Kimberly (Yoder), Clarkson, KY, second child, first son, Kenan Jon, Dec. 14, 2012.

Graber, Kenny and Genny (Wagler), Amboy, IN, (serving in Canon City, CO), third child, second son, Zachary “Dane,” Dec. 14, 2012.

Helmuth, Lyndon and Kelly (Overholt), Whiteville, TN, first child and son, Skylar Reece, Dec. 5, 2012.

Kanagy, Kenneth and Susanna (Stoltzfus), Blackville, SC, second child and son, Kendall Marc, Jan. 5, 2013.

Kauffman, Ervin and Edna (Yoder), Mannsville, NY, third child, second dau., Megan Lashae, Nov. 7, 2012.

King, Calvin and Lin (Esh), Kinzers, PA, sixth child, third dau., Sarah Gabrielle, Jan. 23, 2013.

Knepp, Jerald and Jennifer (Stoltzfus), Middleburg, PA, second child and dau., Olivia Jade, Dec. 16, 2012.

Lapp, Kent and Maryanna (Zook), Lakemont, NY, second child and son, Jackson Grant, July 24, 2012.

Lapp, Matthew and Gina (Miller), Himrod, NY, second child, first dau., Alliana Joy, Aug. 10, 2012.

Lehman, Christopher and Shari (Stoltzfus), Woodward, PA, first child and dau., Mariah Kate, Dec. 17, 2012.

Mast, Mark and Lynette (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child and dau., Alyson Jade, Jan. 1, 2013.

Miller, Bill and Jolene (Farmwald), Clarkson, KY, third child, first dau., Abigail Joyce, Jan. 11, 2013.

Miller, Brandon and Yvette (Otto), LaGrange, IN, third child, second dau., Mahala Joy, Dec. 30, 2012.

Miller, Brian and Rosie (Gingerich), Grove City, MN, third child, first dau., Eva Rose, Jan. 17, 2013.

Miller, Dale and Myra (Hershberger), Uniontown, OH, third child, first son, Micah Seth, Jan. 5, 2013.

Miller, Devon and Dorothea (Byler), Centerville, PA, first child and son, DeAndre` Dawson, Dec. 19, 2012.

Miller, Marlin and Judy (Troyer), Millersburg, OH, fourth child, third son, Cody Jackson, Dec. 6, 2012.

Nisly, Wayne and Sharon (Brenneman), Hartselle, AL, seventh child, fifth son, Benjamin Paul, Jan. 13, 2013.

Stoll, Eric and Frieda (Smoker), Pularski, TN, first child and son, Howard Anthony, Sept. 6, 2102.

Stoltzfus, Clayton and Naomi (Stoltzfus), Gordonville, PA, third child and son, Kordell Grant, Dec. 29, 2012.

Stoltzfus, Nelson and Martha (Zook), Narvon, PA, second child and dau., Shae Adele, Dec. 25, 2012.

Swartzentruber, Rodney and Amy (Weaver), Denmark, SC, first child and son, Benson Durant, Jan. 24, 2013.

Troyer, Dwight and Dorothea (Lapp), Dundee, NY, fourth child, third son, Andre Lane, Nov. 22, 2012.

Wagler, Leonard and Denise (Slaugh), Lincoln, MO, second child, first son, Cody Tyrell, Nov. 11, 2012.

Weaver, Ryan and Rebecca (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, second child and dau., Adalynn Rose, Dec. 8, 2012.

Yoder, Aaron and Debra (Yoder), Montezuma, GA, third child, second dau., Natasha Jewel, Dec. 6, 2012.

Yoder, Conrad and Rebekka (van Ammel), Hutchinson, KS, third child, second son, Yotam Jesse, Jan. 23, 2013.

Yoder, Marlin and Virginia (Schwartz), Lincoln, MO, first child and son, Trevette Lain, Jan. 12, 2013.



ordinations & commissions

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

Bro. Merlin Mast, 39, Bolivar, TN, was ordained as deacon at Whiteville Menonite Church, Whiteville, TN, on Dec. 9, 2102. Preordination messages were given by Wayne Overholt, Franklin, KY. The charge was given by Kevin Yoder, assisted by Lavern Eash and Jonathan Overholt. Mark Yoder was also in the lot.

Bro. David Edward Nisly, 46, was ordained as bishop of Faith Christian Fellowship, Catlett, VA, Nov. 4, 2012. Preordination messages were given by Ivan Beachy, Free Union, VA, and Bill Mullet, Sugarcreek, OH, The charge was given by Simon Schrock, assisted by Wayne Schrock and Ivan Beachy. An expression of encouragement was given by David's father, Daniel Nisly, Partridge, KS.

Bro. Freeman Yoder, 48, Arlington, KS, was ordained as minister at Arlington A.M. Church, Jan. 13, 2013. Preordination messages were given by Ray Stutzman. The charge was given by David Yoder, assisted by Willis Nisly. Others in the lot were Greg Bontrager, Sam Miller, Brent Oatney, and Jerry Yoder.

Bro. Kenneth Yoder, 34, was ordained as deacon at Trinity Christian Fellowship

Church, Arthur, IL, on Nov. 18, 2012. Preordination messages were given by Eugene Eicher, Grabill, IN, The charge was given by Wilbur Gingerich, assisted by Wilbur Yoder and Eugene Eicher. Darrell Herschberger was also in the lot.

Bro. Reuben J. Yoder, 61, was commissioned as a minister for International Missions at Light of Hope Christian Fellowship, Wytheville, VA, on Dec. 13, 2012. The charge was given by John Beiler, assisted by Jake Bender, Ray Miller, and Wayne Yoder.

obituaries

Helmuth, Fannie (Nisly), 88, died Jan. 2, 2013, in Somerville, TN. She was born in Hutchinson, KS, on Jan. 16, 1924, daughter of the late Daniel M. and Lizzie (Borntrager) Nisly.

She was a faithful, contributing member of Center A.M. Church, Hutchinson.

On Aug. 29, 1950, she was married to Eli B. Helmuth. In mid-life, he became afflicted with multiple sclerosis, requiring much care which Fannie provided for many years. He died in 2000. Five children survive; three daughters: Lorene Helmuth, Pratts, VA; Wilma (Richard) Graber, Hutchinson; Beth Helmuth, Hutchinson; two sons: Raymond (Esther) Helmuth, Somerville, TN; and Willard Helmuth, Hutchinson; 11 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by a great granddaughter, Emily Sue Helmuth, two sisters: Clara and Barbara Nisly and three brothers: Roman, Perry, and Mahlon Nisly, and a sister-in-law, Edna Nisly.

The funeral was held at Center Church on Jan. 6, with David Yoder and Dwight Miller serving. Nephew Arlyn Nisly conducted the committal at West Center Cemetery.

Weaver, Truman M., 88, of Brookfield, MO, died at home on Jan. 8, 2013. He was born July 14, 1924, at Middlebury, IN, son of the late Mose and Dora (Schlabach) Weaver.

He was a member of Locust Creek Mennonite Church, Linneus, MO.

On Feb. 21, 1946, he was united in marriage to Lydia Ellen Miller. Surviving are two sons: Clayton (and wife Anna) Weaver, Bastrop, TX, and James (and wife Fannie) Weaver, Brookfield, MO; 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Lydia, April 1, 2003; grandson Timothy, granddaughter Angela, brother Alvin and sister Beulah.

The funeral was held at Locust Creek Mennonite Church on Jan. 11, with Devon Miller, Ervin Hostetler, Titus Hostetler, and Elvin Schrock serving, with burial in the church cemetery.

Swarey, Allen J., 88, of Allensville, PA, died July 19, 2012, at his home. He was born Sept. 6, 1923, son of the late David M. and Anna M. (Peachey) Swarey.

He was a member of Pleasant View Amish Mennonite Church. He was founder of Sunset Welding, Allensville, where he worked as a machinist and welder. He was also fond of gardening and cutting wood.

On Dec. 11, 1947, he was married to Mary E. Byler, who preceded him in death. He is survived by three children: Benjamin R. (Bertha) Swarey, Mill Creek, PA; Catherine M. Zook, Moravia, NY; Amanda N. (Rudy B.) Yoder, Allensville, PA; sisters: Elizabeth B. Yoder, Allensville, PA; Annie M. (Stephen) Kanagy, Belleville, PA; Sarah (Ben D.) Peachey, Beaver, OH; Mary M. (Mose) Peachey, Belleville, PA; and a sister-in-law, Nancy Swarey, Allensville, PA.

He was preceded in death by three brothers: John D., David R., and Stephen F. Swarey; and a son-in-law, Jacob K. Zook.

The funeral was held on July 23, 2012, at Pleasant View Church, with Bishop David Peachey and Minister David Byler serving.

(Editor's apology: I'm sorry, but I had mislaid the preceding obituary. PLM)

Weirich, Harry, 93, of Middlebury, IN, died on Feb. 22, 2012. He was born in LaGrange County, IN, the son of the late Daniel E. and Elizabeth (Kauffman) Weirich.

Harry was a charter member of Woodlawn Amish Mennonite Church and a retired farmer.

On Oct. 28, 1948, he was married to Orpha Miller, who survives. Also

surviving are two sons: Marvin (Sharon) Weirich, Middlebury; and Darrel Weirich, Middlebury; two grandsons: Caleb (Sheryl) Weirich and Joel (Stephanie) Weirich and two great granddaughters. Other survivors at the time included two brothers: Harley (Fannie) Weirich, Middlebury and Ora (Katherine) Weirich, Goshen; two sisters: Anna (Eli) Chupp, Shipshewana and Katie Weirich, Sarasota, FL. (Harley passed away on Nov. 26, 2012).

He was preceded in death by two brothers: Joe Weirich and Eli Weirich and two sisters: Ida Miller and Nona Yoder.

Before he was married he served in Civilian Public Service in various units from 1941-1946. In 1946 and 1947, he worked in Puerto Rico under Mennonite Board of Missions, a time he fondly remembered. After Harry and Orpha were married in 1948, he farmed. He also drove a public school bus for 23 years, developing many friendships for sharing Christ. He took part in the formation of Mission Interests Committee, serving on its operating board near the time of the beginning. He became involved in jail and prison ministries and continued to go monthly with a group to a part of Indiana State Prison until 2007.

Since then, he suffered from congestive heart failure and on Oct. 31, 2011, he fell at home and broke his hip. After surgery to repair the hip, his health gradually declined until his death. The funeral was held Feb. 26, 2012, at Woodlawn Church. Burial was in the church cemetery. 

According to an Associated Press article reported in *The Hutchinson News* (1-10-13), the United States has the lowest life expectancy of 17 developed countries included in the study. Contributing factors cited include gun violence, accidents involving alcohol, incidence of HIV and AIDS almost nine times the average, drug-related deaths, both illicit and legal use of prescription drugs, and average daily calorie consumption that at 3,770 was higher than any other country in the study. Also mentioned was obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

For the church to prescribe specific dietary guidelines; would be seen as over-regulation. To cultivate an awareness of the foods that are conducive to good health is compatible with the larger stewardship principle.

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Mitch Daniels was the governor of Indiana for eight years. His performance was such that some would have welcomed his becoming a candidate for the U. S. presidency. But his family was strongly opposed. He says he is at peace with having decided not to run.

Columnist Michael Gerson refers to Daniels as “the one that got away.” (*The Hutchinson News*, 1-19-13) His record includes balancing a series of budgets without raising taxes. He left Indiana with a \$500 million yearly surplus and \$2 billion in reserves. During his eight years in office, he eliminated 6,800 government jobs, 19% of the total. He passed legislation ending mandatory union dues. It is easy to see that many voters would have welcomed such a philosophy of leadership in Washington.

Mitch Daniels has accepted the presidency of Purdue University in Indiana.

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Mennonite World Review (1-21-13) reports that there continues to be a decline in membership of MC-USA. In 2001, there were 120,381. In 2013, there are 97,737. This amounts to nearly a 19% loss in 12 years, when the number of congregations dropped from 1,063 to 839.

We can be confident that God has methods other than membership numbers to determine the spiritual health of groups who call themselves Christian. Growth in numbers and spiritual health are worthy ideals.

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Norman Hahn and his family own Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp of East Earl, PA. A federal judge had denied their request to be exempted from the obligation to provide contraceptive services to their employees. Their current plan does not cover contraceptives or drugs used to abort a pregnancy. According to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the Hahns plan to appeal (MWR, 1-21-13).

My further inquiries show Norman Hahn as a Weaverland Conference Mennonite brother with 950 employees at seven production sites, located in a number of different states.

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Hobby Lobby with 22,000 employees has filed a lawsuit of objection against a federal ruling that clearly goes against Christian conscience. I assume the Catholic community would also find such a requirement objectionable. It is not surprising that the courts are already confronted with this issue that has very serious moral implications.

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It is nearly time that our editor wants this column. I am reviewing back copies of MWR in search of suitable material. The 5-28 issue has the unusual feature of four articles dealing with noncompliance of

Mennonite Church-USA stand on traditional marriage. The articles contain support of this stand and serious concern for non-compliance. But the greater emphasis is the plea for reconciliation in spite of homosexual lifestyle.

To me there are two prominent features of this position. The matter of biblical authority is not part of the discussion. A second observation is that women leaders are involved in the non-compliance cases.

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I have now discovered two additional articles in the 5-28 issue that are about the same subject. Despite emotional protests, Methodists are standing firm in their position that homosexual lifestyle is incompatible with Christian teaching. Another article emphasizes the Golden Rule—the human relational discussion aside from God’s Word.

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Central Livestock is an auction barn located in South Hutchinson. Livestock sales are held regularly on week days. But since December 2, Sunday meetings are held there regularly. There is no livestock involved at these Sunday meetings. Crossroad Christian Church in Hutchinson is the sponsoring body.

The aim is to reach people who, for some reason, do not feel comfortable

in a regular church setting. They try to reach people who simply need spiritual help. It is called a cowboy church. Cowboy hats and blue jeans are pretty standard attire. The first meeting drew about 20 attendees. At a recent meeting an estimated 85 were present.

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A non-local church leader asked me whether I thought that Satan confronts persons in a tangible manner. He recounted a personal experience as follows: On evening, he told his wife he feels a heaviness and depression he doesn't understand.

After he was in bed, he was confronted with a foreign and fearful presence of darkness that made him declare his identity with the blood of Christ. He instantly felt free from the presence of darkness and depression.

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The U. S. constitution is often mentioned as supporting separation of church and state. I was surprised to hear that 45 of the states mention God in their preamble. North Carolina's constitution says they are grateful to Almighty God

for civil, political, and religious freedom. While acknowledging God with many different names, their expressions reflect the unapologetic awareness that God is the author of good government and peaceful and orderly society. (Gleaned from *The City*, Winter, 2013.)

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This is being written on January 28. The first Conservative Anabaptist Service Program (CASP) group is in its fourth and final week of operation in Hutchinson. We anticipate Term 2 to begin next week. Staff couples presently are Jerry and Rhoda Yoder, house parents and Alvin Beachy is project director. His wife, Elsie, their daughter, Julia, and Rhoda with various duties essential to the orderly operation of this temporary family. In Term 2, Marcus and Lois Overholt, Dwight and Katie Kratzer and daughter, Katrina, are the leadership team.

The German Baptists want to do a third project in March. We are grateful to God for having provided volunteers and leadership for this service opportunity.

—DLM 

***No one can make you feel inferior
without your consent.***

Reasonable Answers

Stephen Ebersole, Myerstown, PA

We as an older generation are passing off the scene. We sense that we have been blessed above measure. We have been given a priceless heritage of seeing the New Testament as a book to be lived out in everyday because of our love for the Lord Jesus. We have no greater joy than to see that vision embraced by younger ones coming on.

There is a new generation filling our ranks, replacing us in energy and in resource. No doubt the qualms we have as we give them the reins are similar to the feelings of each preceding generation. One of the reasons for concern is that we understand more than ever how important convictions are, convictions that are based on eternal principles.

The Apostle Peter instructs us to give an answer to every man, *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear”* (1 Peter 3:15). Giving answers to the rising generation and to the seekers who come into our midst is certainly part of obeying Peter’s admonition.

The word which is translated

“reason” is, according to Strong’s *logos*. We receive the word “logic” as somewhat of a direct transliteration of this word. We also find the word is often translated “word,” as in “the word of God.” These are the two strong pillars our answers should be based on. One is the unchanging Word of God. The other is the logic or reason that links practices to their underlying principles.

How do we convince a rising generation of truth and its practical outworking? How can we help them appreciate the separation we have found so satisfying and fulfilling in our own experience?

Our children must be taught to hearken to admonition in the days of their childhood. There is something in our human nature that rebels at the thought of being told what to do. We do not like to be corrected, given direction, or to be instructed because we have a basic pride in ourselves. Out of three types of individuals who are not prepared for life, Proverbs identifies the fool as one who has not been taught to hearken. The simple one has not been instructed. The scorner has been told, but chooses immediate gratification. The fool despises correction.

From the days of toddlerhood we

must obedience train our children. They first must be conditioned to respond to simple commands without question. Later they will need to respond to more complicated directives and finally to internal voices which call them to duty or Christian discipleship. It is not easy to bring appropriate consequences, even painful correction, to our little ones. But it is of absolute necessity.

If we sense we were not made to obey as a way of life in our childhood, we need to be suspicious of ourselves and any friction we may have with authority. Perhaps our “very good reasons” for conflict or disobedience are really nothing more than a rebellious nature. A will guided in childhood goes a long way to producing a heart sincere in finding the truth in adulthood.

Our youth must witness that the Gospel is the answer in our own experience. The Bible promises that God’s grace is able to see us through every challenge in life. It promises that there is specific fruit for those who are led and filled by God’s Spirit. It proposes that prayer does bring heavenly resources into our experience. If our way of life has to be propped up by artificial comforts or indulgences, the rising generation will see right through the emptiness of our faith. We will never be able to convince others that we have genuine New Testament discipleship when

our lives do not express the soul rest that Jesus promises.

Likewise, our youth will not believe an inconsistent gospel. If we major on minor commands but neglect the great identifying features of the Gospel, this will be obvious. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples” must be in place and visible as the main tenet of our faith. We will not be convincing when mammon or pleasure is the mainstay of our belief system as we hold to an empty culture.

Our youth should be encouraged to bring their doubts, struggles, and questions to us. In Deuteronomy 6:20-25, parents were instructed to expect questions and be ready to with honest answers. The wise father in Proverbs 23:26 begged for the heart of his child, that he could guide him in the choices of life. He wanted his life to be an example, but he also wanted to know the doubts and questions with which his son was wrestling.

When Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to guide the disciples into all truth, He kept his promise. They received the entire body of divine truth. Likewise, the disciples fulfilled their responsibility in writing these “*all things*” into the pages of God’s Holy Word. What is written has a back cover; the body of Truth is complete.

Can generations of church life discover extra truth? We are not

equipped to add to the Word of God. We may discover ways to apply the Truth from generation to generation, but we cannot create more truth. Can we avoid the temptation to find ways to contradict the Bible? Will we simply trust in its trustworthiness?

Our answers will be kept reasonable as we are forced to see their strengths or weaknesses through the eyes of those who have not come to accept them just because “we said so.” It is a blessing to the church to have a constant stream of new “outsiders” coming into the church. It is a blessing to have a rising generation who articulates these doubts about practices of the past. These force all of us to evaluate our norm, our status quo, to bring it in line with eternal truth.

Finding answers together will bond our hearts in closer unity. It is no secret—people will bond with those who give them answers. If they come to us and we give pat answers or intimidate them with a “just because” answer, they will feel alienated in their hearts. If they go to a secular counselor and find answers that make sense, a bond will be created. They will naturally believe and adapt to the other philosophies the counselor believes in.

In short, let us all rise to the challenge from the Apostle Paul so many years ago... *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (1 Thess. 5:21).

[From *The Pilgrim Witness*, Oct., 2012, with permission.] 

On Decisions

Musings on the 21st century Anabaptist community

Michael L. Overholt, Franklin, KY

I wonder what informs their decisions.”

The statement hung between us in the cool autumn air as my friend and I sat around a gas lantern while visiting in his second-story apartment in downtown Nashville. Choices, decisions, and the results of those decisions were on the table as we shared heart-to-heart that day.

Our hearts inform our decisions. Simplistic but true. Choices are not made in a vacuum. Even simple choices such as when I arise in the morning, what I have for breakfast, and how to spend my Saturdays have their roots in my overall value system. And my choices in those areas reveal my values.

So do other choices—choices of

how I will raise my family, what church group I will align myself with, and what visible symbols of my allegiance I will display. These are not minor decisions and are not made in a vacuum. Our hearts influence these decisions. And only a heart that has God and His Word as its first love will make wise choices in these areas.

Not only do our hearts inform our decisions but these decisions in turn inform our hearts. It is commonly believed that liberal theology precedes liberal practice, but perhaps the opposite is true. Liberal practice develops a love for liberal lifestyles. And when our conscience calls us back, we either hearken or explain. So it is that we may find ourselves using Scripture to justify the flesh. Each decision that runs along the edge of our convictions sets us up for the next decision, the next choice in the same arena. Small choices build a monument that becomes our past and directs our future. As someone has said, “Man makes his choices and those choices make the man.”

You see, the heart eventually believes what the hands do.

Take clothes for example: Our clothing choices not only reflect our hearts, but also influence our hearts, so that every time we choose to dress on the edge, perhaps just a bit immodestly, or a bit after the latest fad, we are influencing our hearts, so that with time the line moves and now

we get the feeling of “freedom.” Then we ride once more on the edge of our conviction, only this time the line of conviction has moved. What once felt edgy, no longer feels edgy. Our decisions have influenced our hearts. With time we come to accept more and more ungodly dress patterns and also come to accept the values associated with those clothing choices.

Financial choices run along the same line. The chance to purchase the second farm, or to invest in the next venture makes us pause. “Is this really what Christ wants for His children—this amassing of more stuff?” But the purchase is made, the investment secured, and time doesn’t bring the feared repercussions. No lightning strikes, no thunderclap proclaims us heretics, and our children are still in the church. Suddenly what seemed edgy is no longer edgy. It is comfortable. When the next opportunity comes along we don’t hesitate quite so long, or agonize quite as hard over how Scripture should be applied. Our decisions have influenced our hearts. And somewhere, sometime, at a point undefinable to man, we go beyond meeting legitimate needs and cross the line that separates the pilgrim from the parabolic rich fool.

The social media also demands our attention. We now have at our fingertips vast technology, bringing into our homes and businesses the latest update in world news as well as

the latest events in our friends' lives, be that news important or ever so trivial. This constant influx of media not only influences us, but also drains our time and energy, demanding our time at the expense of those people at our elbows. In the prologue of her 1967 book, *40 Acres and No Mule*, Janice Holt Giles describes the change that came to the Appalachian people through television. "But the strangest change in the ways and habits of our people has come about through a strange medium—television: almost every home has a television set nowadays, and its visible, tangible impact has been greater than a hundred years of preaching and teaching. Not all of its impact is good, but it has helped change diet, habits of dress, it has brought a different kind of speech and music into the homes, even a different concept of religion. Bought for entertainment, television is a most subtle and powerful educator. In one decade, ten short years, I have seen our people changed more by television than by any other medium."

Perhaps conservative Anabaptism stands poised on the same brink. Just as the pink flamingo gets its color from its diet and the bitter monarch butterfly gets its bitter taste from the milkweed it consumes, so God's people, if they drink too long from the same fountain as the worldly wise man, will surely acquire the same color and tastes as they.

Every choice regarding one's heritage, whether that be a good heritage or an ungodly heritage, has its roots in the love of the heart. Some choose to leave an ungodly heritage because of their love for God and His Word. Others choose to pass on a godly heritage because they love God and His Word. Still others choose to set aside godly principles one by one, choosing to give their children a mere shell of what was once a godly heritage, a shell no longer fleshed out with the applications that work, a mere shell of a religious past that is like the shell of those clams and other mollusks we find on the beach, typically found and honored only as a relic to be placed on a shelf or in some museum. Very little value is there except possibly in guiding some future generation once again to flesh out their lives with Christian applications.

The time has come for us as God's children to take note of our decisions. The heads that once shook dubiously at spacious mansions, investment portfolios, and expensive recreation, all too often borrow money from the bank or from God's work for the same. The clothes that once spoke eloquently to us of ungodly values must not be put on the backs of our children. Sports figures and compromising music groups invade our homes. Little by little, the applications of God's Word that fleshed out our experience with God

will be set aside. How long will it be until we are left with a mere shell, brittle with age, set on a shelf to be discussed at our reunions, and honored in our museums? If indeed our heart informs our decisions, as I have alleged, then we have heart trouble. And if our decisions further inform the heart, then these decisions will further inform our hearts to evil.

It is time to strengthen those things that remain. Let us hold on to our community values, insisting on helping each other build our barns and pay our medical bills and raise our families. Let us press forward with a family-friendly life style, complete with family-friendly occupations, round table mealtimes, and evenings

at home. Let us continue to evangelize, calling those whom God has chosen to join us in building God's Kingdom on earth. Let us continue to base our beliefs on the Word of God rather than on the experiences of others. Let us continue to call our pastors and leaders out of the hay fields and carpenter crews rather than out of the seminaries. And let us continue to honor obedience above explanation, life style above theological jargon, and lifetime servanthood above the American dream.

Let us make informed decisions informed by a love for Christ and His Word, tempered by the lessons of history, and let those decisions inform our hearts. 

ISRAEL REPORT

Donnavon Graber, January 12, 2013

The worst storm to hit Israel in the past 20 years has now subsided, leaving lots of water, snow, and damage in its wake after having persisted for six days. The greater storm system is responsible for the deaths of at least 17 people in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Israel. We recorded 6.5 inches of rain. The Sea of Galilee rose about 30 inches over the course of the storm and will gain another estimated 20 inches as the drain-off

continues into the sea.

The most impressive thing about the storm was the six inches of snow that blanketed Jerusalem, briefly turning it into a sparkly white New Jerusalem. Not having seen such snow in 20 years, Jerusalem residents turned into giggling children as they cavorted in the fresh snow. The main roads in the city were closed and public transportation ground to a halt while everyone enjoyed the feeling of time standing still. This

being our sixth winter in Israel, we certainly had not seen anything like this. Until this storm, the most snow we had seen in Jerusalem was last year when the ground briefly took a tinge of white and we were able to scrape together enough snow to make a midget snow man about a foot tall.

During our recent furlough in the states, we saw lots of snow in Indiana and Pennsylvania. But, of course, the highlight was getting somewhat caught up with our families again. The last bit of our stay some of us caught the flu and now the last of us are in its throes. We are glad to be back to the closest thing to home we have on this planet.

It was pouring down rain and the evening darkness was settling over Jerusalem as my good friend entered the door, dripping wet, like a duck. It's been nearly two months since we talked so there was a lot of catching up to do. He was on his way to do a good deed for someone with whom he had just talked on the phone. She had been shivering so much from the cold that she had difficulty talking. He was on a mission to purchase a heater to provide some relief from the damp, bone-chilling cold. A few weeks ago he had found her and her young daughter a small place to rent and found some money to buy a few items of furniture and blankets. They

were both sleeping without blankets in a child's bed, their only piece of furniture. The Good Samaritan in this case himself is separated from his family because of his faith. He has very few resources and barely enough money for the heater.

She is a woman who has already sacrificed a lot for her faith. She began following Jesus as a young lady, at first keeping it secret from her husband. When she packed her bag to go to the hospital to give birth to their first child, she included her beloved New Testament, along with other things she knew she would need during this exciting and trying time. Just after the birth of their daughter and before entering the room to see the new bundle of joy for the first time, the husband rummaged through her bag, discovering her New Testament. When he should have been rejoicing at seeing his daughter for the first time, he asked his wife about the Bible. She couldn't deny her faith, but confessed Jesus. With cruelty beyond words, he told her that he was divorcing her and disowning their child. He stomped out of her life, leaving her abandoned and vulnerable.

Pray that God's grace would lighten the days of this woman and her daughter and that God's people would replace the family that she has lost.



Book Review

To Have and to Hold

To Have and to Hold (hope restored for SINGLE WOMEN), a 257-page book written by Sharon Yoder, was published in 2012 by Faith Builders Resource Group. It can be ordered from Christian Learning Resources by calling 877-222-4769 or e-mailing clr@fbep.org. The retail price is \$10.99, plus tax and shipping where applicable.

Reviewed by Dorris Miller, Partridge, Kansas

Salt and pepper shakers, a sword and sheath, shoes in the closet...these are among a myriad of things designed to work well in pairs. By God's design, people fall into this category, as well. But obviously, and for varied reasons, many people are not paired, they are "single." In her book, *To Have and to Hold*, Sharon Yoder addresses issues facing single women. She entertains hard questions and endorses heart-searching concepts in the contest of three important categories: God's Purpose, His Plan, and His Pattern.

God's purpose for mankind is discussed from the premise that "He is the center" (17). We need some understanding of His plan, implemented in love and power, to avoid living "shallow and disappointed lives...whether single or married" (17). Yoder does speak to married women as well as singles,

pointing out that our questions, and the answers to them are surprisingly similar. From basic questions that lead us back to the Garden of Eden, Yoder carefully constructs the framework of God's purpose for Adam and Eve, as singles joined in a union of connection and completion. Marriage helps us understand the relationship He longs for with His people, the Church. "God began the world with a marriage, and He will end the world with one as well!" (48)

But the question remains, "Why in the world are there singles?" This leads into territory that is not easily navigated. Yoder courageously guides through a variety of considerations, avoiding the shortcut of quickly and piously calling it God's will.

Adam and Eve's failure to follow **God's plan** has had consequences and lessons for us. One of the lessons Yoder draws is the importance of

listening to the council of “primary men”—those in key positions of authority. We learn, too, about shame and its effects. Though shame hits the realm of desire, we are encouraged that “Contentment...has everything to do with desire. Contentment acknowledges that the heat of desire is present, but willingly surrenders that desire to the purposes and timing of God” (99).

An attempt to explain the purposes and plan of God for our femininity includes holiness in body and spirit. What do healthy relationships look like for singles? Yoder spends some time defining and analyzing emotional/soul intimacy. One conclusion she draws is that “emotional bonding is right and good if it is in the context of a committed, pure relationship” (129).

God’s pattern for singles can be better understood through exploring the various levels of friendship. Yoder

explains these, and gives candid insights and practical advice for the “lady-in-waiting.” One of the last chapters raises the question of whether a single woman can have a home, and speaks of having a “heart at home.”

Sharon Yoder doesn’t pretend to have all the answers. But she does bring a wealth of resources to her writing, including her own faith and experiences, the Word of God, the works of other authors, and her wide interactions with women. While not afraid to tackle questions related to God’s purpose, plan, and pattern for singles, she also leads readers to the brink of mystery and lets us draw our own conclusions. I think her desire is to help others lift their eyes from baffling and disappointing circumstances to where life is found: “in opening our hearts to the Lover of our souls, who walks with us in all of our relationships.”



God’s disapproval stands against what is done that should not be done, but also against what is not done that should be done.

Think Spring

Mary June Glick, Seneca, SC

I love springtime. There is new life, new energy and new hope in the air. I realize that spring comes at different times, depending where you live. Here in the South, we already see a few signs of spring as I write this at the end of January. Tiny shoots are popping through the ground and we look forward to daffodils blooming by Valentine's Day. Spring comes gradually in the South and lasts for several months.

I remember when we lived in the North, it felt like spring would never come, but when it did, everything erupted in a special display of color and beauty. In Belize, we did not go by seasons like spring and fall, but rather by rainy and dry season, and yet those spring months brought cashew fruit and mangoes which created their own season. God has such a delightful creativity with mankind regardless of where we live. We only need to look for it and enjoy it. I was impressed with the realization that even the most destitute person can find beauty in nature.

When we lived in the North, I enjoyed the winter months as a break

from the busy life of gardening and housecleaning. It was always nice to catch up on sewing, craft projects, and reading while enjoying the cozy warmth away from the snow and howling wind. However, here in the South, even though winter doesn't last very long, I always look forward to being outdoors again as the weather gets warmer.

I realize that the ages of those who read this varies greatly and your methods of doing things may be vastly different. Some of you are in the springtime or summertime of your lives as busy mothers. Your house never stays clean and the work never gets done. Then there are others like myself in our autumn or winter years. We find more time to do those things we enjoy as well as the things that need to be done, however, we also find that our work takes longer and we don't get as much done in a day as we used to. We have learned to cut corners and not do all the things we used to do. For instance, spring housecleaning is something I can't tackle anymore. Sometimes I offer to pay one of my granddaughters to clean for me. At

other times, I just do a little extra weekly cleaning and call it done!

This brings me to some practical aspects of springtime for you busy mothers. Do you fret about the housecleaning, the gardening and yard work—does it appear like a mountain of work, just waiting for your attention?

Spring Cleaning

No, there's no verse in the Bible that says, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." However, I believe a godly woman will want to keep herself and her house as clean as she can. If your house is reasonably clean throughout the year, spring cleaning may not be necessary and will not be a major job.

I suggest cleaning the bathrooms and kitchen by dusting, running the vacuum cleaner, and mopping the floors once a week. It does not have to be done in one day. You can clean the kitchen when you are cooking supper or by doing one job a day. Pick up toys and clutter (or have the children do it) every evening. Wash dishes and clean up the sink immediately after each meal. Make your bed when you get up in the morning. It is amazing how much a clean house contributes to your attitude. Housecleaning can be as simple as thoroughly cleaning one or two rooms each week with your weekly cleaning by washing windows, cleaning blinds, and

cleaning out closets, getting rid of things you don't need or use.

Organize your drawers and closets using divider boxes, file folders, loose leaf notebooks for papers you want to save, etc. Cleaning can be a special time if you do a little redecorating. This can be as simple as adding a candle or centerpiece on the table, like flowers in a vase or rearranging the furniture, unless your husband is like mine and does not enjoy finding something in a new place!

Gardening

I enjoy the outdoors and would rather be working in my flower beds than in the house. However, each springtime I find myself planting more than I can take care of properly. So my Number One Suggestion is to plant as much as you know you will be able to care for in vegetables or flowers. If you plant more than you can handle, you may become discouraged with all the work that is involved. This is especially true for first time gardeners.

I like to promote gardening for the joy of eating fresh vegetables, and the experience it gives to the family. It definitely saves money to go out and pick fresh tomatoes off the vine, along with other veggies rather than buying them at the grocery store. There is work in preserving food, but there is joy and fulfillment in the finished product.

We may be forced to go back to processing our own foods, because of the economic conditions we live in. What a blessing if our children learn how to live with less and make do with what they have. There may be times in your life when you cannot handle a garden, perhaps a new baby, sickness or whatever, that's okay. There are other methods of saving on your grocery bills.

More important than cleaning your house or planting a garden is cleaning out the filth that may accumulate in our hearts, the specks of dirt like unkindness, lack of forgiveness, an unthankful spirit, a critical attitude. Allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse your heart. Then He will plant seeds of love, gentleness, kindness, temperance, and long-suffering. This is the fruit that pleases God.



junior messages

My Friend, the Thief

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

Nancy Coblentz is a long-time missionary in Belize. She has lived there for over forty years. She is an amazing servant of God, who at 81 years of age continues to faithfully serve the Lord with gladness, in the warm, tropical land to which He called her. She loves the Belizean people.

“Miss Nancy,” as she is affectionately known, lives in Belize City, in a neighborhood that is dangerous and bad. Some of her neighbors are people who do drugs, and youth who join gangs—the Bloods and the Crips.

The mission house was quite full of company one day. Miss Nancy, who

loves visitors, was very happy. It was a special treat that some of her relatives had come to visit. Cooking for visitors can take a lot of time, so that night the visitors suggested a treat, “Let’s go out to eat.”

“Oh, yes, why not? The papusas are inexpensive and a tasty treat on a Saturday evening.” As they locked up the house, Miss Nancy noticed three, ten-year-old neighbor boys hanging around the compound, but they left when the yard gate was locked.

Everyone had a good time at the restaurant and enjoyed the corn tortillas, filled with beans, cheese or sausage, made on a hot camile. It was

relaxing to sit down and eat together. It was a blessing to hear about friends and relatives back home in The States.

When they got back to the mission, Darren, Miss Nancy's great nephew had the keys to open the house, but when he put the key in the lock, he didn't even have to turn the key to open it. The door swung open. What could that mean? They soon found out. Someone had been in the house.

The suitcases were rifled through, the contents of one was dumped in disarray on the floor. The suitcase was gone! The mission computer was gone as well. It looked like the thieves were in great haste and left in a hurry. They had not even found the money in the office desk. Had God blinded them or what? They could have taken so much more than they did.

The visitors and Miss Nancy all gathered around and prayed, asking the Lord for wisdom to know what to do next. Oh, what a strange feeling it is when someone has been in your house, gone through your things, and helped themselves.

Ed and Judy Beiler, the unit leaders, were not at home. Miss Nancy decided to call Ben Stoltzfus and ask him for advice. "What should we do?"

Ben thought it would be a good idea to call the police. "If you don't call them," he said, "the boys will likely come back again." They decided

to call the police but would not file charges. Doing that could have the thieves locked behind prison bars. So the police were called. They could not come right away, but said they would come soon.

Nancy went out the gate and some of the neighbors came over to talk. Olive told her, "I saw three boys jump your fence from the back. They were teenagers."

The three little boys came around again, "Miss Nancy," they stated, "We did not do anything." One of the boys came and hugged her. "Fa true," he said, "We do nothing!"

Then eighteen-year-old Aaron came riding by on his bike. "I know him well; he has helped me a lot already," Miss Nancy told us.

"What's going on?" Aaron drawled.

"What's going on?" Miss Nancy retorted, "Aaron, maybe you can tell me." Aaron didn't tell what he knew, so Miss Nancy told him the computer was gone, and also that the police were called and would come to his neighborhood.

"Well, how did they get in your house?" Aaron queried.

Miss Nancy said, "You probably know."

Aaron biked away. A while later, he was back, drove in past the gate, and up to the house. He called for Miss Nancy. This is what he told her. "I

think I know where your computer is. I'll do my best to bring it back. Not right now though, too many people would see me. I will see what I can do."

Miss Nancy and some of the others drove back to Aaron's house. Aaron told her, "My mom is so mad, she will beat me. I will bring your computer back. I have to go get it."

Miss Nancy prayed with Aaron. She prayed that Aaron would have the courage to do what is right. They went back to the mission and the police drove up. "Madam," they addressed her respectfully, "Are you not afraid to live here in this neighborhood?"

"No," Miss Nancy shared, "I am not afraid. God is right here. Thank you for coming out tonight. You are ordained of God to take care of people. I heard they are likely bringing the computer back"

The police went through the house. They said, "You mean the thief will bring it back? What kind of thing is that? You know the druggies that live near here? And you are not afraid? Will you file charges on these boys?"

"Afraid? No, I am not afraid. God is with me. God is with me all the time," she said, "I do not want to file charges."

Then Aaron came back. He sat outside with the suitcase. How amazing! What an answer to prayer!

The police and Miss Nancy went to talk with him. When asked how he got the suitcase, this is the yarn that Aaron spun: "I was walking down the road and a car with a police right behind went speeding by. They threw this out of the car and it landed in the ditch."

The police examined the suitcase. There was no mud on it. They opened the zipper and the computer was not broken. "Do you believe this story?" they asked.

"No," Miss Nancy said, "I do not believe it, but praise the Lord, they brought it back!"

"Will you file charges?" they asked.

"No," Miss Nancy replied, "No, these people—this young man—they are my friends. I do not want to file charges." The police were amazed. Aaron was relieved, though his face remained expressionless.

How amazing that the stolen computer was so quickly returned! How amazing and awesome is God! Truly God is the highest power of all! Prayer is powerful. Prayer touches the heart of God! Prayer touched the sinful heart of a thief and prompted him to return the suitcase and the computer. How great is God!

Miss Nancy and the visitors had another prayer meeting that night. A prayer meeting of praise to God! 

Ten Ways I Can Influence My Siblings For God

A Youth from Ohio

One of the most important things I can do to draw my siblings to God is to pray for them. I can pray that God might reveal Himself to them. I can pray for their spiritual and physical health, and I can pray that God might direct their future. If I know of something they are struggling with or something they are sad about, I can pray a special prayer for God's strength and comfort to bless them. I know that God hears and works through our prayers for others. Also, praying for my siblings helps me to love them more.

2. I can be open in sharing what God is doing in my life. Simple things like praising God for all the little blessings He pours into me day can point my siblings to God. Singing good music can be an influence. I can be bold about reading my Bible and praying. When things go wrong, I can stop and pray! I want to show others that my walk with God is the most important thing in my life.

3. I want to let God teach me to love them for who they are without a critical attitude. I want to show confidence in them and lift them up.

I think it's amazing how just knowing that someone is lovingly expecting you to do your best helps you to do and be your best! I want to help them to realize by my attitude that they are worth something, that they are a valuable part of our family. And more than that, I want to communicate by my words and actions that I know they have an important part to play in the Kingdom of God.

4. I think siblings can be influenced by a servant heart. When I serve them, I am showing them God's love. I know my family is really appreciative when I take the time to do things for them. It often takes attentiveness and a keen eye to notice things that they like. One sibling may appreciate when I help clean out the garage, and another is thrilled when I find special coins. Every sibling is different and I want to learn to know what they enjoy and make a special effort to please them.

5. A big challenge is knowing how to direct my siblings, when necessary, without being a "bossy big sister." I think much depends on my attitude. If I am critical and harsh, my attempts to reform my siblings will be a bitter

pill. However, when my voice and actions communicate love and a desire to help them, it might be easier for them to accept my directions. I know that many times it's best for me just to keep my mouth shut, because I don't have full authority to direct them. Also, I want to remember all the times throughout my life that people have extended grace and forgiveness to me in my immaturity and poor choices.

6. A cheerful, happy attitude does so much for the atmosphere in a home. When I choose to look on the bright side and be happy when things don't go my way, it will be a powerful testimony. My contentment and joy in life can be a tremendous blessing and challenge to my siblings.

7. It also influences my siblings when I honor my parents, grandparents, and the church authorities God has placed over me. Siblings can really pick up on my attitude towards authority. Either my appreciation and respect toward leaders in the home and church, or my complaining, rebellious spirit can have a tremendous impact on those observing my life. Siblings notice when I obey or disobey. My choices have a powerful effect on them.

8. My speech can have a big impact on my siblings. Either I can be grouchy

and criticize others, or I can look for and commend others' strong points. It really comes down to my heart and my attitudes: Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Mt. 12:34). So I need to let God give me a heart of love, and let that love overflow in kindness and grace.

9. Encouragement is another big aspect of good relationships. If I notice my sibling's wonderful character qualities, how they've changed, the great job they've completed, I want to tell them! I know it's so special when someone encourages me and appreciates my life. I want to give the same gift to my family.

10. I think one of the biggest things I can do to influence my siblings for God is simply to spend time with them. Rather than being "buried in a book" or busy with my own hobbies, I want to take time for them and do special things together. I want to learn to delight in the spontaneous! It doesn't have to be much, but just the act of taking time shows them better than any words how special they are to me. In taking time to talk and listen, I can by my words and actions seek to point them to Christ. 

Next Month's
QUESTION

"How can youth "grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man"?"

—EE

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Calvary Messenger
2673 Township Rd. 421
Sugar creek, OH 44681

Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

Seen above a check signature: “The money is really God’s; I just steward it.”

• • • • •

The Gospel is a delicious meal—not a bitter pill.

• • • • •

A man with a hardened conscience is a poor security risk.

• • • • •

If we have too many irons in the fire, some of them will cool off.

• • • • •

A pessimist is a person who takes life’s hard knocks with a grain of *sulk*.

• • • • •

A *reckless* driver should not expect to be *wreckless*.

• • • • •

A large part of being smart is knowing what we’re dumb at.

• • • • •

Zeal without knowledge is like fire burning out of control.

• • • • •

Make sure that what you’re living for is truly worth dying for.

• • • • •

A poor workman finds it easier to blame his tools than himself.

• • • • •

If we’d sleep over what we plan to do, it may prevent lying awake wishing we had.