



Calvary MESSENGER

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

Galatians 6:14

JUNE 2025

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Calvary Messenger

June 2025

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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A Home Without Jesus

W. C. Martin

A home without Jesus is no home for me,
Where no devout soul ever bendeth the knee,
Where no yearning heart sends to heaven a plea;
Alas, for the home without Jesus.

No songs to His glory, no worship devout,
No faith and no hope, only darkness and doubt;
No love for the Lord Who is waiting without;
Alas, for the home without Jesus.

God pity the home where our Lord is not known,
Where labor is spent for the body alone,
Where no glory falls from the infinite throne;
God pity the home without Jesus.

A home without Jesus is hopeless indeed,
No Lord to provide for the home's deepest need.
No heart in the household His sayings to heed;
Woe, woe to the home without Jesus.

Knock lovingly, Lord, at the door that is barred,
Knock patiently there with Thy hands that are scarred,
Perhaps grace will soften the hearts now so hard,
And open the door unto Jesus.

-Public domain

Our Heavenly Father

This month we celebrate Father's Day. Our heavenly Father is the perfect example for us as we rear our children. In this essay, I make a few comparisons between earthly fathers and our heavenly Father.

Our Father gives life

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

Becoming parents is an awesome privilege and responsibility. I recall holding our first take-home child in my arms and asking myself, "What have I done?" I was responsible for bringing this brand-new human being into this world. This helpless baby has an eternal soul that will someday decide whether she wants to serve God or herself. Eve, the first mother, may have had a similar thought when she said after Cain was born, *"I have gotten a man from the LORD."* Becoming a parent, a father, in my case, should challenge us to

provide and care for their soul and spirit as well as their body.

While bringing new life into this world may be a choice we parents make, we should recognize that it is the work of God's hand and not just a biological process. *"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand"* (Isaiah 64:8). While we realize that only God gives life to these new humans, He uses us fallen humans to make this happen.

Our heavenly Father also gives spiritual life to our children. While it is a personal choice for our sons and daughters, we have an integral part in directing them to God. Fathers can become so enthralled with their responsibility to provide for the physical part of their children that they forget about the greatest call of our heavenly Father—showing our offspring the greatest gift in life and directing them back to Him. *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 6:23).

We should call on our Father to draw our children's hearts to Him.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

Our Father pities His children

It is easy for us to feel that our heavenly Father is unaware of our daily lives. However, that is not true. Despite the fact that He is invisible to us, God, the Son, walked on earth and experienced human life. *“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13-14).* We fathers should realize that our children have not had all of our life experiences, and we should love and care for them according to their ages.

While I may have erred on the side of wanting our children to “grow up,” there have been times when I “pitied” the experiences our children were having. One of our sons had more than his share of car breakdowns and accidents that were not due to reckless driving. While I didn’t look forward to receiving his phone calls during those times, I felt honored that he felt safe to ask me for help. It is always safe to “call” our heavenly Father when we encounter “accidents” in life.

A time when I wished for my Father’s ability to see everything

that we encounter in life was when three of our children were returning home from visiting their sister in another state. Their trip was during a snowstorm. They shared their location with me and I tracked them on Google maps while following the storm. I may have tried to be God by finding highway cameras and checking the road conditions, but I truly wished I could be at the wheel, and “pitied” the experience they were going through. All I could do, and that is really the best we can do, was to call on my heavenly Father to watch over them and protect them. Despite the difficulty and a small mishap, they did make it home safely. But I doubt that our heavenly Father ever regrets that He would have provided “better tires on our cars” as I did while watching my children battle that life experience. He provides us with all of the resources we need for each day.

One of the best ways we learn about life is through making mistakes. We fathers should carefully give our children opportunities to learn by making “safe” mistakes. This learning process can save our children from suddenly being on their own and finding themselves in situations where their decisions could result in “unsafe” mistakes without adequate decision-making experiences.

Our Father chastens

While we prefer to experience our Father's pity, He also chastens us. Sometimes it is because of our iniquity. However, it is evidence that we are His children. *"I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men"* (II Samuel 7:14). God's chastening is evidence of His love. *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent"* (Revelation 3:19).

Often, God's chastening is not punishment, but discipline. *"And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.' Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all"* (Hebrews 12:5-8 NIV).

Our heavenly Father can give us wisdom to faithfully and correctly chasten our children.

Our Father will build our houses

(riches and inheritance)

"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

I suppose all of us fathers desire to leave a rich inheritance for our children. *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* (Matthew 7:11). Many are able to leave extensive material wealth and riches. What are the best riches to give our offspring? What does our heavenly Father give us?

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6:20).

Ultimately, the best father we can be to our children is to instruct, encourage, and then to pray that they will become sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. Being a son or daughter of our heavenly Father makes us co-heirs with His Son, Jesus Christ.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness

with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”

(Romans 8:16-17).

May we be the best stewards we can be with the children that God has given us.

AY



Announcement

Faithful Men Seminar

August 16, 2025

Passionate Purity

Preserving Sexual Health

The Maker's Design For Sexuality- David Martin, Aroda, VA

Why Sexuality Is Sick- Tom Johnson, Plain City, OH

Fighting Porn- Ben Waldner, Plain City, OH

Developing a Next-Gen Mentality for Sexuality-

Dave Snyder, Plain City, OH

Location:

Oak Grove Mennonite Church,

563 Tom Johnston Rd, Aroda, VA 22709

Seating is limited. For more information or to register, please contact

Lynford Bontrager at: 540-717-4200/ bontragers85@gmail.com

Registration for those in VA, WV, NC is open April 1- August 9.

Registration for the greater public is available August 1-9.

Sponsored by Deeper Life Ministries: 614-873-1199

5123 Converse Huff Rd Plain City, OH 43064

Good ideas need
landing gear
as well as wings.

- C.D. Jackson



Announcement

2025 Youth Fellowship Meetings

The 2025 Youth Fellowship meetings in all regions are scheduled for the weekend of July 25-27, 2025.

The hosting communities are as follows:

Eastern - Calvary Fellowship; Blackville, SC

Northern - Trinity Christian Fellowship; Arthur, IL

Southwest - Faith Mennonite Fellowship; Lott, TX

Contact: Clifford Bontrager, 540.717.4220

the bottom line

Restrain and Constrain

Aaron Lapp, Kinzers, PA

Part 1. The Earth = Contain

The first world was created as “the heaven and the earth.” It was a complete unit as the dwelling place for mankind. God made two great lights “to give light upon the earth.” From the waters, God created all sea creatures, and winged fowl to “fly above the earth.” From the earth, God created “cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth.”

“And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish

of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

The earth was created complete and entire, a powerful and most perfect turnkey operation above all others that ever appeared on the earth. God’s earth contains His provision and showcases His purpose for it.

Dominion over the created things is the principal concept about man’s active management over God’s creation upon the earth. God never

gave man dominion over people.

Part 2. The Problem = Restrain

The potential for increase, expansion, enlargement, extension, addition, and multiplication were put in place by God in His creation. Man has tried to discover the limits of height and depth, of length and width, and the speed of sound and movement. And alongside those limits, he also sought to know the usefulness and limits in the concentration of substances, and the miniaturization of man-made inventions. Sometimes how small something can be made and be useful is as significant and newsworthy as how extraordinarily large something can be constructed and also be practical in its use.

While these factors are still being explored and invented, we are made to realize that it seems to also be true in our time as it was in Noah's time. Their vision was to build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven. The project was so gigantic that God came down to visit the blueprint, and said *"This they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do"* (Genesis 11:4-6).

God scattered their intentions and inventions, their notions and motions, their human pride and progressive stride. Where their

making failed to live by the evident principles of God's creation, their imagination overtook them to be self-centered with pride at its core. Making a name for themselves was contrary to God's intention for the earth. Rebellion against God is the continual attempt to live beyond His restraints.

The lusts of mankind are as numerous as the gifts of God given by the earth and upon the earth in all the days of the life of every man, woman, and child. Everything God has made has the potential of a good increase, and was meant for the good of all people everywhere.

Unfortunately, by the heart and hands of sinners and wicked people, much of God's resources upon the earth can also be used for evil purposes. All of this also yields to countless ungodly things in the hands of ungodly people, which can also expand and increase. The proliferation of ungodly ideas and programs, experiments and experiences, business and leisure, again in our time, is seemingly limitless. All of which is subject, by the determined insistence of man, to bypass godly restraint.

Besides, how can or will this flood of immoral excesses, human trafficking, transition of sexes, social media that keeps increasing the ways and means,

plus AI and commonplace lies, ever be restrained?

It won't. Because God has revealed that very fact. The prophecy in II Timothy is being fulfilled before our very eyes in increasingly fast-paced ways at all levels. Those 13 verses conclude with saying, "*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*" These evil and ungodly things will once again be a big problem for all of society, not just for practicing Christians, being those who take discipleship seriously. Indulgence often appears to be stronger than restraint.

It has not been difficult to see the increase in ungodliness in each decade since 1950, which can be referenced in my observation and memory. That problem is increasing as we come nearer to the end of the world.

Part 3. The Plan = Constrain

We should be more and more aware of God working in our churches with programs surrounding congregational nurture, local evangelizing here and there in our regions, and viable missionary endeavors where souls are being saved *and* nurtured. There are more church efforts for these avenues of witness than ever. Every decade has more places seeking our support

in various ways, as para-church ministries continue to increase.

This expansion of witness and service currently increases by way of these para-church ministries, rather than by our own mission programs. This intra-church activity has some good things to commend itself. We hope it will not take away from our own church's long-time mission's support; we have some very worthy endeavors that could (and should) be expanded.

The plan by God is where "*the love of Christ constraineth us*" (II Corinthians 5:14) to be actively ready and available in that plan. We love Jesus and all those whom He loves. Jesus loves everyone, even the whole world. That love constrained God to send His Son, Jesus Christ, to demonstrate that constraining love to the world that He purposed and created.

Romans chapter 5 assures us unreservedly how peace with God (v.1) comes by God's grace, mentioned in six verses, plus "*the gift*" is also given in four verses. The grace of God is synonymous to His gift by Christ. That the "*free gift*," which is His magnanimous love, was extended to us, saying, 1) "*for the ungodly*," 2) "*while we were yet sinners*," 3) and "*when we were enemies*." God was not obligated to

save anyone, neither all the ungodly, nor the sinners, nor His enemies. The last verse in chapter 5 wraps it up by saying, *“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Death by sin was terminal; life by grace is eternal.

Every practicing Christian (the term relates to last month’s article), has a witness of the grace of God to being saved from sin, either a small or large witness. The world as a whole, needs both the small and the large witness. The world is more impressed by a consistent and faithful witness than one who jumps off the pinnacle of the temple and lands with a big splash!

The faithful, consistent witness is magnified (sight) and also amplified (hearing) when it is exemplified (as an example) in the reality of living.

The earth, as created by God, contains as a physical example, the goodness of God for man’s survival and physical revival. Every meal eaten is an illustration of that survival, as well as a mini-revival

of our body. The inner man should relate to that example and be duly nourished.

Man’s excesses are generally restrained in some way by God. In excessive food or drug abuses or any other over-indulgence, health is adversely affected. Violations in morals can result in various diseases and/or emotional trauma. Every evil and ungodly trespass has a restraint factor set by God against it, either by the law, by police and the courts, or by the conscience and the Holy Spirit. *“And when he [Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove [restrain] the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment”* (John 16:8).

The Bottom Line is that the unalterable and conclusive restraint upon unbelievers and the wicked will be by bringing the prophesied end against all sin and unrighteousness. That constraining love by God in us and for us will finally secure and establish His eternal home for all those who love His appearing (II Timothy 4:8). Holy Spirit power constrains us to press onward for Christ and the church. Amen!



Prayer is not merely an

occasional impulse

to which we respond when we are in trouble; prayer is a

life attitude.

- Walter A. Mueller

Read the Bible and Blow Your Nose

Carol Nisly, Altamont, KS

I sat behind them that Sunday morning: son beside Dad, who sat next to Mom, and youngest daughter at the end of the pew. Sunday School done, the classes had trickled back into the auditorium. What came next was singing, followed by a public reading of Scripture. Each Sunday, a young man from the front row or two reads an assigned passage for the benefit of the congregation.

A tall 15-year-old strides to the platform, taking his place behind the pulpit. Carefully placing his Bible on the angled surface, he announces where he will be reading and pauses. The whisper of rustling pages ripples across the space as people locate the passage. After repeating the reference, he invites us to stand for the reading, and the benches creak as we rise. As he begins to read aloud, my attention wanders to the family in front of me.

Dad carefully balances his Bible, open to the passage, and it rests on the back of the pew in front of him. At his left side and waist high, the dark head of his youngest son is bent close over the book. The six-year-

old's full attention is given to the task, a stubby forefinger helping him track the words read aloud while his father watches, though I doubt Dad could see the words on the page. Father helps his son read the Bible.

Perhaps half an hour later during the sermon another scene unfolds. Same youngest son. Same Dad helping son. This time a handkerchief is needed, and I note the gentleness of Dad's hands as he offered assistance. After half a dozen hearty efforts on the part of the boy, Dad decides the job should be completed elsewhere, and whispers to his son. Son quietly leaves to honk his horn in another space. Father helps son blow his nose and teaches respect for others.

What's beautiful in that, you ask? The balance! Wise the parent who guides a child to be reverent and considerate of others in the time of public worship. It is important to help our children read the Bible *and* to teach public manners. We should help them locate the passage, follow along *and* gently assist with homely tasks. There should not be an artificial divide between the holy

and the homely, but a blend. While each family has its own flavor, I find the most compelling vision of home to be this: where parents lead by

humble example, with gentle hands and words, in daily habits of respect and reverence. Isn't this a good way to help your son read the Bible?



Heroes of Faith

Jacob Amman

1644-1712?

Ray Shank, Rochelle, VA

Jacob's life was during a significant exodus of Swiss Anabaptists from their homeland. Zurichers had been driven out to the east and west by the mid-1600s. The Bernese Emmentalers had moved to the Jura mountains, Alsace, and the Palatinate (1671). Some of the Bernese Oberlander Anabaptists, including Amman, moved to the Alsace. By the 1690s many of the most devoted Anabaptists had left Switzerland.

Along the Rhine River many of the Anabaptist refugees had been aided and influenced by the Dutch Mennonites. In 1660 Alsatian Anabaptists accepted the Dordrecht confession. In 1693 the Alsatian Anabaptists, who had come from the Oberland, delegated Amman and Nicholas Augsburgur to return to Switzerland to challenge an

apparently apostatizing district there.

The Emmentalers had long resisted the Mennonite influence from Holland. Amman's insistence on the strictness of the Dordrecht Confession and aggressive disciplinary measures caused a rupture in the fellowship. In 1694 the Emmentalers and Palatinate Swiss brethren met and excommunicated Amman and his followers from the fellowship.

Although Amman and his followers tried repeatedly to apologize and mend the breach they had caused, the Emmentalers and the Palatines kept them out of fellowship. Although Amman died within a decade of the split, his name was given to the new group. His ideas lived on among the Amish as well as other groups who moved to America and adopted the Dordrecht Confession.



The Story of Aden Miller (Part 1)

Floyd Stoltzfus, Gordonville, PA

In the late 1950s a group of Amish in Holmes County, OH, experienced a heaven-sent revival. Sins were confessed and new life was found in Jesus Christ. Churches were established in the doctrine of the Scriptures and holy living. Ministers were ordained to preach the Gospel. One of these newly-ordained brethren was Aden Miller, a young man. These new churches became a part of the Beachy Amish Mennonite churches.

Several years passed. Aden and Barbara had five children. Aden took his family to the Church of God in Christ, Mennonites, also known as the Holdemans. Aden backslid in his walk with the Lord, forsook his wife and family, and sank into the world. He was trapped by the devil in a life of sin.

Barbara was faithful to her precious Lord. She raised her family and the children all became members of the Church of God in Christ Church. Aden never divorced his wife. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren were added to the Miller family. Two of the sons are ministers of the Gospel today. Many prayers were sent to the throne of

grace for Aden by the family and others. More than 50 years have gone by. Read more of the story below.

The Chip Man

Sharon (Miller) Lehman, Kidron, OH

Before my dad was in the Holmes County Home in Millersburg, OH, he was in rehab in Orrville, OH, for two and one half months. When Bert, my husband, and I would go see him, we started seeing signs that someone was visiting him. There was a gift bag with a bunch of small bags of chips and a book of finding peace with God. We asked Dad about it.

"Oh," he said, "There's this man who comes and brings me chips and prays with me. He is really a nice man."

We wanted to know his name. Dad did not know. I asked the staff at the Home if it is the pastor who comes to visit him, but no one knew who I was talking about.

Chips became Dad's "new food love." The day I moved him to Holmes County Home, I asked him if I should stop and get some Utz chips. "Oh, could you?" he asked.

"Sure," I said, thinking it may make the transition to the new nursing

home a little easier for him. When I got back to the car, he was delighted to see the chips and tore one bag open and chewed them down on the way to the Home. The mysterious chip man kept coming to the Holmes County Home. I told one of the nurses we would love to know who this man is. I got a guest book and wrote on the front cover to please sign Aden's guestbook. I was hoping the chip man would sign it and we would learn his name.

Yesterday, while visiting around Dad's bed, I was telling my mother and brothers that I am beginning to think that the chip man is an angel. I hadn't heard anything about him for a while from Dad, and so I began to wonder if he was still visiting him? We talked to Sheri, the nurse on duty. She was such a nice lady! She had been a hospice nurse for 25 years.

Then Sheri said, "You know, there is this man who keeps coming to visit your dad and husband and prays with him. He is the one who brings him chips."

We were all astonished, "WHO IS THIS MAN?"

She answered, "I think maybe he told me his name, but I cannot remember it. But yes, they sit here in the dining room, and he just talks to him and prays with him. This man told me that he believes Aden is ready to die."

That was a balm to my soul and such peace came over me. I was with Dad the night he died. Even though I was by myself, I was calm and not afraid. The staff at the Home were very kind and gave me a recliner to rest on. A nurse came into the room at midnight and gave Dad a dose of morphine. Soon after she left the room it sounded like Dad's breathing was more heavy. I went over to his side. He breathed a few more times, and I asked, "Dad, is Jesus coming for you? Just go with Him." He took one more gasp, winced a little, and was gone.

Nurse Sheri had told us that she has seen many people die, and you could tell he was at peace by the way he was approaching death. She said you can tell if they are not ready spiritually to meet God. I ran to call the nurse. She came in, checked his pulse, and said, "Yes, he is gone."

After Dad passed, I found a sealed envelope in the nightstand drawer beside his bed. In the envelope was a card. On the card the mystery was revealed: the name of the Utz Chip Man and his address. It was a Christmas card with an encouraging note inside which ended: "In His love, your friend and brother in Christ, Edward, or the Utz chip man."

[Used by permission and to be concluded]



marriages

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

Gerber-Adams

Bro. Austyn, son of Richard and Wanda Gerber, Brunner, ON, and Sis. Karissa, daughter of Steve and Donna Adams, Millbank, ON, on March 15, 2025, at Donegal Mennonite Fellowship for Fairhaven A. M. Church by Arnold Jantzi.

Hochstetler-Swartzentruber

Bro. Darius, son of Wendell and Sheri Hochstetler, Abbeville, SC, and Sis. Rachel, daughter of Glen and Gina Swartzentruber, Abbeville, SC, on February 28, 2025, at Cold Spring Mennonite Church by Merl Beiler.

Peachy-Petersheim

Bro. Harold Jacob, son of William and Linda Peachy, E. Waterford, PA, and Sis. Rosanna, daughter of Abner and Katie Petersheim, Mifflin, PA, on April 18, 2025, at Shade Mountain Christian Fellowship Church by Daniel Fisher.

Schrock-Miller

Bro. Larry, son of Ervin and Dorothy Schrock, Kokomo, IN, and Sis. Rachel Miller, daughter of David and Verna Miller, Millersburg, OH, on April 19, 2025, at Messiah Fellowship Church for Grace Haven Fellowship by Jeremy Miller.

Yoder-Wingard

Bro. Jordan, son of Timothy and Lois Yoder, Lewisburg, PA, and Sis. Sonya, daughter of Faron and Roselyn Wingard, Montezuma, GA, on March 22, 2025, at Montezuma Mennonite Church by Morris Yoder.



cradle roll

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

Beiler, Glen and Angela (Ropp), Brooklyn, NY, fifth child, fourth son, Malachi Everett, March 28, 2025.

Coblentz, Jeremy and Carolyn (Lambright), Hadley, PA, sixth child, first son, Collin Jeremy, January 13, 2025.

Fisher, Ryan and Jennifer (Petersheim), Greeneville, TN, third child, second son, Cade Mitchell, April 12, 2025.

Jantzi, Jotham and Zhenya (Kimlach), Lashkivka, Chernovtsi Oblast, Ukraine, first child and son, Andrew Arnold, April 3, 2025.

Miller, Daniel and Rachel (Nisley), Warsaw, OH, sixth child, fourth son, Brayden Lee, March 23, 2025.

Miller, Joseph and Lisa (Yoder), Coolville, OH, seventh child, sixth son, Keith Arlin, December 18, 2024.

Miller, Josh and Olya (Bernik),
Millersburg, OH, fourth child, second
daughter, Koral Serena, June 27, 2024.

Reinford, Roy and Becky (Rettell),
Keystone, IN, third child and son,
Klayton Everett, March 23, 2025.

Schrock, Anthony and Rani (Nissley),
Haven, KS, fourth child and daughter,
Agnes Bird, April 12, 2025.

Sommers, Jolan and Emily (Miller),
New Philadelphia, OH, second child
and son, Nicholas Joel, February 6, 2025.

Stoltzfus, Marcus and Dawn (Knepp),
Abbeville, SC, third child, second
daughter, Rio Dawn, April 8, 2025.

Yoder, Scott and Jackie (Brechtbill),
Whiteville, TN, second child, first
daughter, Selah Kate, March 23, 2025.

Yoder, Shane and Nancy (Hostetler),
Mifflintown, PA, first child and daughter,
Summer Appalachian, March 31, 2025.



ordinations

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

Bro. Merle Fisher, 34, (wife, Stephanie Byler), Lott, TX, was ordained pastor for Faith Mennonite Fellowship on February 23, 2025. Preordination messages were brought by Michael Mast. The charge was given by Lee Fisher, assisted by Brian Bontrager and Michael Mast. Owen Kauffman shared the lot.

Bro. Luke Wagler, 43, (wife, Martha Gerber), Warren, ON, was ordained bishop for Pinehaven A.M. Church of Warren, ON, on April 6, 2025. Preordination messages were given by Junior Bender. The charge was given by John Byler, Larry Ropp, and Junior Bender. The lot was shared by Jonathan Gerber.



The *heart*
is happiest when
it *beats*
for others.



obituaries

Beiler, Noah K., 93, of Narvon, PA, passed away on November 23, 2024, at his home. He was born on July 7, 1931, in Ronks, PA, to the late Jacob N. and Rachel (King) Beiler. He was the husband of Lydia Zook with whom he celebrated 67 years of marriage.

Noah was a member of West Haven Amish Mennonite Church.

Surviving besides his wife are children: Susie Beiler, Narvon; Ivan (Susie Stoltzfus), Marion Center; Anna Beiler, Sara Ellen Beiler, both of Narvon; Reuben (Naomi Stoltzfus), Gap; 24 grandchildren, and 22 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by a son, John (Katie Stoltzfus), Port Royal; two

grandchildren: Malena Faith and David Michael; three brothers, and five sisters.

The funeral service was held at West Haven Amish Mennonite Church on November 26, 2024. Interment took place in the adjoining church cemetery.

Miller, Calvin Jay, 85, of Lott, TX, died March 24, 2025, in a Waco hospital. He was born on August 13, 1939, in Kalona, IA, to Daniel and Catherine (Gingerich) Miller. He married Ada Miller on January 10, 1960.

He moved to the Lott area in 1985. He worked as a farmer, truck driver, and taxi driver for the Amish. He was a member of Faith Mennonite Fellowship.

He is survived by his wife, Ada, and children: Vernon (Liz Chupp), Fairplay, SC; Sharon (Scott) Burns, Cuba, MO; Darrel (Ruth Friesen); Rosemary (Daniel) Friesen, both of Lott; Wanda (Terry) Yoder, Athens, TN; Linda (John) Yoder, New Paris, IN; Byron (Carmen Ropp), Etowah, TN; Catherine Miller, Big Timber, MT; 32 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; brother-in-law, Daniel Miller, and sisters-in-law: Barbara Helmuth, Edith Kuhns, Anne Williamson, and Ruth Kuhns.

He was preceded in death by his parents and siblings: Mary Elizabeth Yoder, Edward F., Clarence D., and Elva Mast.

The funeral service was held on March 28, 2025, at Faith Mennonite Fellowship. Burial followed in Clover Hill Cemetery in Lott.

Miller, John C., 93, of Millersburg, OH, passed away peacefully at his home on April 22, 2025, after a period of declining health. He was born on May 7, 1931, to the late Christ S. and Elizabeth (Miller) Miller. On November 19, 1959, he married Rebecca Yoder, who survives.

John served as a minister in the Fryburg Beachy Church from 1973 to 2024 and was a current member of Grace Haven Fellowship. He was employed as a rural mailman for many years and was known locally as the "Amish Mailman."

In addition to his wife, Rebecca, he is survived by his children: David (Ruth), Millersburg; Wilma (David) Yoder, Winesburg; Robert (Rosy), Sugarcreek; Merle (Lillian), Penrose, CO; Karen (Dan) Sharp, Belleville, PA; daughter-in-law, Rachel (Larry) Schrock, Millersburg; 32 grandchildren; 55 great-grandchildren; five step-grandchildren; 21 step-great-grandchildren; sister, Betty (late Andrew) Schlabach, Sugarcreek; brother-in-law, Joe E. (late Anna) Miller, Millersburg; and sister-in-law, Betty (late Christ Jr.) Miller, Millersburg.

He was preceded in death by his son, Gerald; great-grandson, Zachary David Miller; brothers: Sam, Eli, Henry, Edwin, Christ Jr.; and sisters: Lydia Miller, Sarah Coblentz, Anna Miller, Katie Mast, and Freida Mast.

The funeral service was held on April 26, 2025, at Messiah Amish Mennonite Church with David Yoder officiating. Burial followed in the Grace Haven Cemetery.

Mullett, Wilma H., 71, of Greeneville, TN, passed away at her home on April 6, 2025. Wilma was born on November 18, 1953, in LaGrange, IN, to the late Henry and Lydia Stutzman.

Wilma is survived by her loving husband of 53 years, Eli Elmer Jr.; children: Matthew Jay (Joann Ruth), Wellington, CO; Mark Dean, Corvallis, MT; Naomi Jean (Ray) Brubacher, ON, Canada; Martin Lee, Eugene Louis (Judy Nicole), both of Greeneville; Joanna Marie (Joshua Lynn) Yoder, Powell, WY; James Elmer (LeeAnn Renea), Greeneville; Phillip Andrew (Elizabeth), Afton; 24 grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her two brothers: Ray (Kathy) Stutzman, High Point, NC; and Dan Stutzman, Delta, CO.

Wilma was preceded in death by a son, Neal Ray; two grandchildren: Grayden Lee and Maxton James (James and LeeAnn Mullett); two brothers, and a sister.

Wilma was a loving dedicated wife, mother, and grandmother. She was also the face of Mountain View Furniture for 20 years. She was a member of the Greene County Mennonite Church in TN. She enjoyed fishing and gardening.

A celebration of life was held on April 9, 2025, at the Greene County Mennonite Church with interment in the church cemetery. Her sons Matthew, Mark, Martin, Eugene, James, and Phillip served as pallbearers.

Yutzy, Katie Alberta, 92, Plain City,

OH, peacefully passed away in the home of her niece, Sarah, on February 9, 2025. She was born to Jacob and Katie (Troyer) Yutzy on August 23, 1932.

She was preceded in death by her parents, five sisters: Edna (Dan) Helmuth, Amanda (Ralph) Kramer, Mary (Andy) Miller, Sarah, Emma Yutzy; and three brothers: Gideon, Jonas, and Eli.

Katie is survived by her nieces and nephews.

The funeral was held on February 12, 2025, at Canaan Fellowship Church. Burial following at the church cemetery.

Stutzman, Ada Mae, 83, passed away at Riverside Methodist Hospital in Columbus, OH, on March 21, 2025, following a heart procedure. She was born on January 14, 1942, to Alvin M. and Annie Miller in Topeka, IN.

Ada did voluntary service as an aide at Hillcrest Home in Harrison, AR, and Mountain View Home, Aroda, VA. She continued to work as an aide in IN.

On May 3, 2008, she married Henry Stutzman and moved to Plain City. They enjoyed spending winters in FL. Henry passed away on January 2, 2015. Ada volunteered at the Country Closet Thrift Store until her death.

She was a member of Canaan Fellowship and enjoyed her time in Plain City among the community and church friends.

She is survived by three brothers: John Henry (Irma), Mt. Eaton; Omer, Ligonier, IN; Floyd, Morrison, CO; four sisters: Viola, LaGrange, IN; Nancy, Susan,

Mary Ruth, all of Ligonier, IN; four nieces and two nephews; stepchildren: Barbara, Jonas (Renna), Noah, Reuben, stepdaughter-in-law, Edna Stutzman, step-grandchildren: David, Devon, Leanna, Abigail Stutzman; and 11 step-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her

parents, sister, Elsie Miller; three sisters-in-law: Viola Miller, Billie Miller, Priscilla Miller; and two stepchildren: Andrew, and Rachel Stutzman.

A funeral service was held on March 24, 2025, at Canaan Fellowship Church. Interment followed at the church cemetery.



observations

Last year I had a delightful encounter in an airport eatery where I stopped to get a bite to eat. Ryan, the man I met, was inquisitive and friendly. The conversation we had over food was comfortable as we shared pertinent details related to our travel, our families, and on to matters of stewardship and faith. As we prepared to leave our table the gentleman whom I had only recently met, informed the wait staff that he would be paying for my meal. My new Catholic friend's explanation was that during his confessional that morning, Ryan and the priest he'd addressed had decided together that Ryan would do some unexpected act of kindness that day. So, his decision to pay for my supper was my blessing because of what had happened when Ryan went to confessional that morning.

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While we could debate the benefits and the limitations of the Catholic Church's tradition of observing confessional, I don't see that debate as being particularly helpful since conservative Anabaptist churches don't do this. However, there is one evangelical and Anabaptist practice with some functional overlap. I'm referring to what we often call "accountability groups" or "accountability partners."

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Samuel D. James wrote an article that appeared on Digital Liturgies, "Why Christian Men Need Friendship, Not Just Accountability." The author opened his article by referring to the time when an elderly gentleman offered to meet with the author to offer accountability for the struggles he was facing. He gladly accepted this offer as a tool to help him become the person he wanted to be. Here is his description of the

interactions that characterized this arrangement.

“We met. I wish I could say I remember more about our time together, but mostly I remember the feeling of dread that would set in roughly 24 hours before our scheduled time. Had it been a good week? Had I slipped? How much detail would he ask for? Did this or that moment in the past week count as something I needed to confess? Even as I knew this accountability was for my good, it felt more like an annual dentist appointment than a meeting of friends.

“We didn’t end up meeting that often. Life rhythms changed and eventually zip codes did too. I wish I could say those coffees were the beginning of a rich mentorship that continues to this day. But they weren’t. And frankly, I’m not sure that was ever really the point. The point was accountability, not necessarily friendship.”

Relationships are quite varied in how they are designed to function and what they accomplish. On one end of the spectrum, we have the example of extreme accountability. These are relationships where the interaction leaves no room for anything besides cooperation and are usually pretty controlling and lopsided. The extreme illustration of

this relationship is demonstrated by the relationship between someone who is incarcerated and the people who work in the prison. There is a relationship, but it revolves around each party doing what he or she is expected to do. The ones who are jailed are accountable and those who work there enforce that accountability.

On the other end of the spectrum are relationships that we could think of as mutually nourishing—deep, constructive friendships. Those who are part of these relationships find joy, courage, blessing, and other benefits. The main point of this type of friendship is mutual enjoyment. But the effect is that the participants of this type of friendship encourage the friends to be the best person he or she can be.

In between these two extremes is another type of friendship that is essentially transactional in nature. These are mutually valuable but are designed to benefit both parties. Life is full of examples of this type of relationship. The transactional relationships of manufacturer and client, salesman and customer, food service and diners, etc., are the type of relationships that drive the economic systems of most of the world today.

The utilitarian relationships

centered around accountability and transaction are valid and useful relationships. Some accountability relationships are successful in behavior modification. Many transactional relationships can even be quite satisfying and enjoyable. But both of these are distinct from friendship, because this isn't what they are designed for. Many people, particularly men, tend to focus more on relationships that are utilitarian than friendship.

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Maybe it would be helpful to give a bit of thought to each of our relationships and see if they are more focused on accountability, give-and-take, or friendship.

For instance, is my relationship with my brothers in the church primarily about how I can serve and be served? Or is it because I love being with my brothers? How about drinking coffee with a business associate? Is this to cultivate sales and connections, or is it because I enjoy spending time with my friend? How about taking my family on a picnic? Do I do this because I wish to spend time with them or is my focus that this is because it is my duty to provide for them and this is a reward for good cooperation? How about my marriage? How about...?

As I think about it, most of

my relationships are the types of relationship that are more utilitarian than friendship. To be fair, many of these are necessary and good, even if they aren't all about friendship. And most of our relationships do not fit neatly into one category, exclusively. But I am still a bit wistful, as I think about this. The main question for me here is, "Is the balance of relationships appropriately represented by friendships?"

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I remember a counselor told me one time that when he is asked to provide accountability for someone else, he has learned to respond something like this. "Yes, I will help you be accountable. But we will define accountability as you coming to me when you fail. It is not centered on me asking the right question at the right time to figure out if you have been successful in meeting your objectives." What this wise brother was doing was placing the weight of accountability where it belonged. A system of accountability that is inverted has some elements of investigative work that is more like a lawyer, policeman, or detective. All these are legitimate, but are usually less effective than if the accountability is voluntary rather than being ferreted out by the diligence of the investigator.

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Another counselor remarked in another conversation that people struggling with patterns of sinfulness need structures of support around them. He said he prefers to think of what is needed as being support rather than accountability. What he was alluding to was the fact that healthy friendships and support militate against isolation. This isolation is the fertile ground where sinful patterns sprout up and root down in an effort to fill the void that isolation brings. Accountability often springs up spontaneously in relationships where

mutual friendship is experienced. Iron sharpening iron is the result of this sort of friendship.

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Ideally, accountability is freely offered rather than coerced. I know of one brother who installed a tracking device on his phone so his wife could see where his phone was at any time she wished to do so. This was freely offered by him, not demanded by her and is available at any time. This is the type of accountability where trust can flourish and relationships can be nourishing.

RJM 

What Is a Father?

Verlin Garber, Paynesville, Liberia, West Africa

I once was a boy...

I thought my father was an amazing person: a big he-man with unbounded strength, unflagging courage, and unmatched abilities. My dad was so big there was nothing he couldn't build, or fix, or figure out. He built houses—big, nice ones—and did all sorts of neat stuff with papers at his desk late at night while I lay in bed and watched him. I loved being with him and following him around. Someone once criticized the song “Daddy’s Hands.” They said it was not accurate or clichéd or something, but I grew up thinking it must have

been written about my daddy. His hands were always “soft and kind when I was crying” (even if his hanky wasn’t always). And he sure could lay it on with steely hands when I disobeyed! As I grew older, he taught me so much about life, farming, and God—I realized that a father is strong and wise.

Then I was a teenager...

I thought my father was an amazing person: a spiritual giant with deep insights, an ability to do everything that needed to be done, and a life that practiced what he preached. My teenage years were busy years for

my dad: running a farm, starting a business, raising his family, learning to be a preacher. Probably only PKs understand exactly how busy a preacher dad can be. But he was never too busy for the important things: he is the one who led me to Christ, he disciplined me and taught me by word and example to crucify the flesh and live a committed life of obedience to Christ and the church, he safeguarded my purity by regular checkups, he counseled me during a time of church trouble and disappointment. I felt sorry for my peers who didn't have the dad I did. I felt privileged to follow in his footsteps. I realized that a father is a teacher and a shepherd.

Then I was a young man...

I was still amazed by my dad. I was amazed that his vision was so small, that his focus was so narrow, that he didn't understand so many things! You see, I was on my own, charting a course for my new bride and myself. He had taught me well, and I had learned so many things that my own insights amazed me at times. But I couldn't understand why he didn't realize that the passage of time brings change and yesterday's answers won't suffice for today's problems. I still respected him for the godly man he had always been, but it seemed he was stuck—stuck in a rut somewhere, somehow. I thought I couldn't exactly

follow him anymore, that it was time to pass him up. And I realized that a father is human and failure-prone.

Then I was a father...

I was amazed again—this time with the realization that a father is just an overgrown boy! There was no way I measured up to my memories of my father when he was my age—how did he manage to make me think he had it all together? And in recognizing my own weakness and foolishness, in seeing how hard it is to take the time to teach and shepherd my own children as I should, in understanding my own humanity and failures, I shake my head. Today I sit here writing this, as a father of four wonderful children. This morning, at the breakfast table, my place was festooned with cards. Cards that said Happy Father's Day on the front and had childish marker drawings (that needed much explanation) on the back. And as I read what they wrote inside their homemade cards, I was amazed and humbled as I understood that they believe what I believed as a seven-year-old. They love to follow me just like I followed my dad. I realized that a father is a man who leans on God.

The old saying is that a child's concept of God is shaped by his father. I have found it to be true, both in my life and in the lives of others I have observed. But how can God

be seen correctly through a failing father? God is light, brilliant and revealing. And just as light shines through the dingiest window pane, so God's light shines through our imperfect human efforts. I saw in my dad a pure heart, an open life of walking in the light, and a passion for the things of God above all else. The smudges of his humanity barely showed up in the blaze of the holy light of God that he directed into my life. And what about the dirt I saw on his window pane when I was a young man? It was mostly a reflection of the dirt in my own life. Was my dad perfect? No. But he washed his window every time it got smudged. And eventually I admitted that my answers weren't all right, followed his example, and cleaned my own window pane. I realized that a father is a man who does a lot of cleaning.

Today, I feel closer to my father than ever before. Not in location—I'm living 5,000 miles away and in a foreign culture. But as my children stress-test my character with the same tests I remember seeing my dad face with me, I am coming to understand the brotherhood of fatherhood. In the past few years, we've both had cherished dreams and plans upended. We've both faced closed doors and stared discouragement and disillusionment in the face as

we cried out to God to show us His way forward. We've both experienced that unsettling feeling of having more questions than answers. And of having someone we trusted to have good answers gone unexpectedly. We cried together at that funeral—of his brother, my uncle—for the gaping hole the family patriarch left. But in that experience, I came to realize something more about fathers. I realized that fathers call their children home.

Today, my cousins are facing Father's Day without their dad. Mine is still here. This tribute is for you, Dad. I could say thank you for many things; I could say thank you for everything. But what I want to say thank you for today is for showing me my Father. Because of you, I realize that a Father is strong and wise, that He is a teacher and a shepherd, that He waits patiently until I see my own needs and come to lean on Him and let Him clean my life. And I think we're both learning, as sons of the same Father, that He never betrays, that He opens doors that no man can shut, that He has more answers than we have questions. And I think we'll all understand it better when our Father calls us home and wipes all our tears away. I'm following you there.

With love and thanks,

Your son



Migration

Tim Miller, McKenney, VA

While execution of Anabaptists in western Europe was largely over by the 1570s, the threat of property confiscation, galley slavery, and banishment continued into the 1700s. This pressure kept many Anabaptists on the move into areas where they were tolerated for the assistance they could give particular lords in restoring their lands. The Dutch Anabaptists, however, had become accepted as part of Dutch society by the 1600s, so religiously, economically, and socially, their push to emigrate was absent.

The push for German-speaking Anabaptists, however, was multifaceted. Their ties to the German lords of the Palatine and Alsace regions they fled to were tenuous. They could not own their land, and their rental agreements could, and did, get terminated when it was advantageous to the owner. Most had generational ties to their communities in Switzerland going back centuries, so the disruption and disconnection of life not tied to land was enormous. Their identity

had been tied to that land, and their desire for reconnection to that identity led them both east to Poland, to what is now Slovakia, and Russia, as well as west to the New World, in search of a homeland. The Amish, a much smaller subgroup, for the most part, headed west to America.

Another push for emigration was the toleration but not acceptance of Anabaptist religious expression. There were usually restrictions on the number of people who could gather for church services at one time and on their evangelistic efforts. (The typical size of an Amish church district seems tied to those restrictions.) In many areas, Anabaptist marriages were not recognized by the state, so their children, considered illegitimate, could not claim rights of inheritance, etc. In many other ways, the opposition of the governments and state church kept Anabaptists marginalized and separate from society. A poor economy, disasters, and the threat of war also made staying in Germany difficult.

Dutch Mennonites had prospered greatly once persecution stopped for

them in the late 1500s. Since they quickly became prosperous ship owners and tradesmen, the economic possibilities of the New World were immediately apparent to them. The first Mennonites in North America were Dutch who came to New Amsterdam (now New York City) as early as 1652. What happened to these folks after the English takeover in 1664 is unknown.

There were at least two other attempts by Anabaptists to settle in the American territories. A group of Dutch Mennonites, maybe as many as 25 families, started a settlement near what is now Lewes, DE. A historical marker there reads in part, “Here was also a communistic settlement established in 1662 by Mennonites from Holland under Peter Cornelis Plockhoy. Sir Robert Carr in 1664 ‘destroyed the Quaking Colony of Plockhoy to a Naile.’” The destruction was by the English during the Dutch-English War of 1664.

In September 1710, about 50 Anabaptists, likely Amish, were part of a larger group of Palatinate refugees who landed in North Carolina and established the colony of New Bern. About a year later, in response to mistreatment by a later group of settlers, Indians attacked the settlement and killed about 60 English settlers and “many more”

Swiss and Palatines. We don’t know what happened to any Anabaptist survivors.

With persecution continuing in Switzerland and with war and hardship in Germany, the desire of the English to grow their colonies across the Atlantic gave an opportunity for Germanic people to relocate not seen in centuries. The larger, more permanent Anabaptist migration to English territory responded to the pull of religious freedom offered by Quaker William Penn in his colony of Pennsylvania. Quakers and Anabaptists shared many values, including nonresistance. Shared family ties between some Quakers and Anabaptists in Holland and Germany smoothed the way for Penn’s land agents to influence the German-speaking Swiss refugees who were ripe for emigration.

Jacob Telner, a Mennonite-turned-Quaker, visited Penn’s colony and, with two others, bought 15,000 acres of land north of Philadelphia. He went back to Europe and brought back a mixed group of Quakers and Mennonites to settle the land. The group landed in Philadelphia on October 6, 1683, and established a settlement they called Germantown. By 1707, 16 Mennonite families had settled there. William Rittenhouse, also the first papermaker in

America, was ordained as the first Mennonite minister in 1690, and the first Mennonite meetinghouse was built in Germantown in 1708. The Dortrecht Confession of Faith was adopted as their statement of faith at the first church conference in 1725. Interestingly, in 1712, the Dutch Mennonites funded an English translation of the Dortrecht Confession for distribution to English-speaking neighbors, possibly the first Gospel tract ministry in America.

The first Amish families, the Melchior Detweilers and Hans Seibers, arrived in Philadelphia on September 16, 1736. Melchior Detweiler's story is an example of both the struggles and success in the New World. His wife had died in 1735, and he, with his five sons, joined a group of "Palatinates" who sold their possessions and traveled down the Rhine to Rotterdam. There they purchased farming tools, kitchen utensils, household items, cloth, and clothing to carry with them to Pennsylvania. They boarded the ship "Princess Augusta" which stopped in Great Britain for inspection before proceeding across the Atlantic. On arriving in Philadelphia, all the goods they had purchased in Holland were confiscated because they had not been bought in England. This left

them, according to a petition for their property's return, "reduced to very great straits" with the clothes on their backs and one comb and one handkerchief each. The goods were never returned, but Melchior settled on a 200-acre tract of land just across Northkill Creek from where the Jacob Hochstetler family, along with several other Amish families, settled the next year. The first Amish bishop in America, Jacob Hertzler, arrived in that community in 1749, so it was likely about 12 years before they participated in a Communion service or had a baptism. Melchior would have lived there for over 20 years and been age 58 on September 20, 1757, when the Hochstetler massacre occurred. He stayed in the community until his death about 1791. A stone house he built to replace his original log home is still used as a rental property today.

Mennonites and Amish initially settled primarily in Pennsylvania because of the religious freedoms promised. They were also concerned that the land they settled on had been properly purchased from the Native Americans, which William Penn had been careful to do. The latter helps explain in part why the Northkill Amish did not completely abandon their settlement after the 1757 Hochstetler massacre.

Many of the Anabaptists emigrating to America were extremely poor. The Dutch Mennonites had established their Commission for Foreign Needs in 1710 to assist displaced Swiss Anabaptists. This soon included financial assistance, help, and information for emigration to America although the Dutch tried to discourage leaving. Passage for a family to travel to America cost the equivalent of one year's wages for a laboring man. Some emigres were wealthy enough to pay for their own family's passage, and others, usually single men, paid for their passage by indenture on their arrival. As American Mennonite and Amish communities became more established, men would meet the passenger ships from Europe to purchase the indentures of fellow believers so they could begin their new life within church communities. Some of the Commission's assistance was in the form of loans to be paid back to the alms fund of churches in America as debtors were able. At least some of these alms funds were then used to buy indentures of new arrivals. It seems like the Amish were more often able to pay their own passage, likely because their communities were more close-knit, and they would assist each other

in accumulating funds for the trip. About 500 Amish migrated in the 1700s and another 3500 in the 1800s. The Amish who remained behind in Europe eventually assimilated into the Mennonite or Protestant churches around them.

Another hardship of emigration was the high death rate on the ocean passage. Those rates seemed to average about 10% with a majority of deaths being children under age seven. Overcrowding on ships led to disease and even starvation. In 1737, Hans Kauffman, traveling on the "Charming Nancy," recorded the deaths of 22 children and two adults among the Amish on board. Four of those children were his own, leaving him and his wife with one surviving child.

The Amish and their descendants continued migrating throughout the Colonies and then the United States in their search for land. Only recently has there been movement more motivated by a desire to influence communities with the Gospel. While we bless God for the opportunity provided for our ancestors to come to America, and we bless them for the courage to make such a drastic move; let's make the "*preach the Gospel to every creature*" part of the Great Commission a more significant part of migration than our forefathers did.



The Bible Teaches Men

Alfredo Mullet, Chilton, TX

The Bible teaches men, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and died for her!” This is the most important directive in a man’s life for it is perhaps the best test of our true character.

But what does it mean for me to epitomize Christ? And what does it actually entail in being her head? Must I constantly give myself up as a living sacrifice before I am qualified and ready to effectively lead?

To women, emotional security is central in a marriage, and this cannot be transmitted through mere words. Indeed, for men this takes so much spiritual courage, for sitting speechless can make us feel very awkward.

The tendency is to break the quiet spell by speaking and pressuring an answer for what is on her mind. This is especially true whenever she starts crying. In our uneasiness, we can come across as unkind.

We do well to realize that she is emotionally intuitive; this means that she senses deeper than words convey. If we sincerely desire to become more sensitive, we may be more adept at reading what she cannot say.

However, even in this we must be extremely careful to not formulate quick responses to our observations. For to be able to discern her spirit we must be tactful in articulating well-meaning, contemplative questions.

What we really should aim at from the very start is to enter into her realm of emotional perception. This is to be an honest effort to hear with our hearts, instead of utilizing our heads for an instant solution.

Now this is not to say that we agree with everything she is verbalizing, without considering life-reality. But what we are intent on doing is demonstrating that we intend to validate her feminine sensitivity.

We should realize that generally women feel life; they perceive and process conditions emotionally. Thus, Peter tells us men as we relate with our wives that we do so by honoring her female vulnerability.

Our Creator has designed that the marriage union is where His love for the Church is best exemplified. For as we tenderly and humbly relate to our women, the holy and loving nature of Jesus Christ is glorified!

Another reason this caring listening is often difficult is because she may incriminate us for her troubles.

Our self-defensive posture creates negative results that can compound the existing relational struggles.

Because we too naively have preconceived notions that we are rightly executing this biblical injunction, we so often quickly jump to masculine conclusions in an attempt to circumvent the aspect of emotion.

It is good for us, when she is unburdening her soul, to try to not take every seeming attack personally. She may simply be feeling her life is out of control; what she really needs now is some sense of sanity.

Being her closest associate, she feels very secure and assumes that we have a somewhat thick skin. Thus, she trusts that we are emotionally self-assured enough to absorb her distress and process it within.

Continued on next page.

Generally, as men, we tend to think more rationally; this drives us to imagine it is our male responsibility to come up with some obvious solution very quickly. “Isn’t this why she is pouring out her troubles to me?”

Maybe so, maybe no, but of one thing we can be sure, she presumes we can be more empathetically astute. If we expect to ever become more spiritually mature, we must be willing to journey on her emotional route.

As married men we may be thinking, “This is tough! Perhaps literally dying for her may be much easier? I did not expect loving a woman could be so rough, I assumed liking her would make life run smoother.”

In pondering on all this matrimony-bond correlation, I am led to think of Christ’s patience toward His wife. As I assess my prideful male ideas, I bow in humiliation; “I am her boss so she should concede to me to end strife!”

We do well to realize that marriage is not for the weak; it is indeed the best man-character building institution. In surrendering to our Lord, we actually learn to seek Kingdom of heaven responses for our nuptial relation.

In the final analysis, I realize the biblical command to cherish my spouse is my individual responsibility. In the New Testament I do not find any right to demand that my wife falls in line before I fulfill God’s will for me.



*“Choose a **good reputation** over great riches,
for being held in **high esteem** is better than
having silver or gold.” Proverbs 22:1*

God and Weighted Blankets

Susan Schlabach, Ripley, OH



Whether you're familiar with them or not, weighted blankets can offer some intriguing advantages. The benefits are more about comfort than warmth. The gentle heaviness of a blanket that offers more-than-usual weight, whether stuffed with glass beads, sand, grain, pebbles, or other, exerts uniform pressure on the person sleeping under it. Its steady presence signals to the body: *you're safe, you can let go*. My unscientific explanation is that the weight basically convinces your body it's easier to lie still than to keep flipping from side-to-side, over and over again. Caregivers who support individuals with developmental, emotional, or behavioral challenges find that weighted blankets offer just the right measure of tranquility to a troubled body, enabling them to rest more calmly at night.

Psalms 46:10 is the *weighted blanket* for our restless hearts. "*Be still, and know that I am God*" is surrounded by words that tell about a Sovereign Who—though waters roar and

mountains shake—is a Rock that will not be moved. He is the River. He speaks and the earth melts. When nations rage and kingdoms totter, He is a high tower, a refuge, and a stronghold.

We have all tossed at night. In bed or out, we all live days of varied crises. The ache takes on many forms. Harsh words from a loved one. Wrong thinking patterns. A son or daughter's choices. Sharp rejection from those we love. Death. Infertility. Geographical or emotional separation. Illness.

We must command ourselves to be still. Let be and be still. Know, recognize, and understand that God is God. We must notice and behold the works of the Lord. With that understanding it becomes crystal clear that we are *not* God. With this holy exercise, our will to toss and turn diminishes. The weighted blanket of Who the Holy One is, mighty and unmoving, rests on us like holy weight. Not to crush, but to calm. Not to burden, but to anchor. To still the chaos within and

say, “*You’re not in control. And that’s good news.*”

He is our only security. This calm is not found through a short-lived rush from a retail object or orderly formula. It is not by positive thinking, nor essential oils. It doesn’t come through will power or manipulation. It is not found in trying harder. I cannot be my own savior. My coping strategies are broken cisterns. My own lies imprison me. God’s Truth sets me free.

A preacher suggested that as Anabaptists we tend toward a weak understanding of God’s sovereignty. Perhaps the preacher meant that in our hard-working culture, we make things happen and, in that sense of empowerment, we minimize God’s role. Our intentional *doing* grows a self-sufficient focus, instead of a God-reliant focus.

What does *being still* look like? The noisy world’s chatter and multitude of voices show us what being still *is not*. If our personality is black/white, hurried, and fix-it-now, stillness frustrates us. As wives or daughters, our men’s silence annoys us when we want prompt answers. Think of these scenarios as *small* practice times for a right response to God when He seems silent. May we learn to be still, and see God in our men. To all of us chronic, to-do-list performers, the

word is to be still and stand in awe. If we are not being awed by God, we are in awe of ourselves.

The more deeply we experience God, the quieter we become. After an intense time in my own life, followed by a fresh revelation of God, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that I wanted all the noisemakers around me turned off.

Psalm 4:4 (AMP) says: “*Be angry, [or stand in awe] and sin not; commune with your own hearts upon your beds and be silent* (sorry for the things you say in your hearts).” Verse 8: “*In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You, Lord, alone make me dwell in safety and confident trust.*”

Frank Reed* teaches from Psalm 4, that we face life crises over and over where we face two options, to turn in awe toward God, or to sin. To turn to anything but God in our pain, is sin.

Standing in awe of God is a response to pain. Turn in the direction of awe. There’s a reason for the hard thing. We may not know the reason, but God is asking us to turn toward Him. We don’t fix these things on our own. As we begin to choose God at every turn, eventually as we return to this path time after time, painful though it be, it will begin to look like a path. We allow the pain to happen, but it turns us to God. It’s not about fixing, but about turning

toward God.

As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs...

They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.

(Psalm 84)

What is it worth to turn toward God and be still?

The Rock, the Fortress, the Consuming Fire, is our Gentle

Shepherd.

Be still and know that *we* are not God.

Be still and know that *He* is.

Under the weight of that sacred reality... we rest.

**Anabaptist Perspectives, Frank Reed, Developing as a Servant, Episode DS17*
<https://youtu.be/XnHzKh9zyTw>



junior messages

Safe or Not?

Mary Ellen Beachy, Dundee, OH

It is such a privilege for youth to serve the Lord. It is rewarding at any age to live for Jesus.

It was nighttime in El Salvador. In December of 1979, the workers and the orphans at the New Light and Hope Orphanage were wrapped in slumber. Everyone in the village seemed asleep, but one man, bent on mischief, was awake. In the distance a dog barked. Then all was quiet.

At 3:50 a.m. Mark awoke with a start. He had been in El Salvador only 20 days. What was the noise he heard? He strained to listen. He heard it again, a grating, cutting noise. Mark reached to pull back the curtain. His roommate, Oswaldo, awoke at the same time. He jumped out of bed and snapped on the light.

The young men saw the screen of their bedroom window had been cut, and a hand was reaching through the window slats—a hand that held a knife. The light scared the would-be robber. Quickly, he jerked back his hand and fled into the darkness.

Mark went to Daniel Yoder's bedroom and woke him. Daniel thought they should go see if they could find the robber, so they dressed and went out in the moonlit night and searched through the neighborhood. There was no trace of the man.

This was quite a different experience from getting up early in the morning to milk cows in OH. Mark was grateful that all was well, and they were safe. He went back to bed and slept. The next morning he was

reading a chapter in Proverbs. His goal was to read a chapter daily for the month of December. He thought of a verse he had read earlier. *"It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom"* (Proverbs10:23). It made him think about the man in the night, trying to get into their bedroom.

Mark was rather mischievous days later when he badly frightened Emma and Becky by sticking his arm through their window at dusk.

Caring for small orphan boys and taking two hours of Spanish classes in the morning and two in the afternoon kept Mark busy. The little boys were his best Spanish teachers! Trying to communicate with them helped him pick up many Spanish words.

One day he and the six boys picked oranges most of the day. There was an acre of orange trees planted years before by Roman Mullet. It felt like a slow job to get all the oranges off the trees. People came to the finca* to buy the tasty oranges. People came at night too and oranges disappeared. They sold 500 oranges and 50 eggs one evening.

After the boys were in bed, Mark often spent an hour or two studying Spanish. At times he felt alone and rather depressed when it seemed he understood Spanish less than ever.

He recorded in his journal, "I thought the devil was sorely tempting me, but God reassured me that I am His, and He will help me."

Four cows needed to be milked each morning. Well, Mark knew how to milk cows. One ornery cow wouldn't let her milk down until the calf was brought in. Henry Brenneman and Daniel Yoder took turns with the chores as well.

Work was plentiful at the finca. Mark and the boys helped clean out the big chicken house by hand with shovels. It took muscles to unload a ton and a half of chicken feed.

Henry caught a woman and a boy in the chicken house one evening, stealing chickens; a man outside fled. They spent a long time talking with the lady and then drove her home.

Mark helped with the upkeep of the place. If something needed to be fixed, he was good at figuring it out.

They harvested coconuts. One of the boys shinnied up the palm trees, grabbed the brown coconuts, and dropped them down. Opening a hole in the coconuts and drinking the coconut water was refreshing. They worked together chopping the coconuts, digging out the white flesh. The women grated the coconuts for desserts and granola.

The boys loved riding bicycle. They called on Mark to fix burst inner

tubes.

It was a new experience for Mark to go Christmas caroling in warm weather, wearing short sleeves and walking to neighbors' houses. He used a flashlight and a songbook to get the words correctly in Spanish. It was so warm he got sweaty!

The highlight of some days was going with the staff to Aguilares, the local town, and eating fresh, hot pupusas, a much-loved food in El Salvador.

On some evenings, energetic staff would play soccer with the children. In those days the orphanage had a flat concrete roof, and at twilight the staff and the children enjoyed singing up on the roof top. The neighbors heard lovely Spanish songs float over the

breezes as they got ready to retire.

Mark had devotions with his boys at bedtime. He could easily read Spanish even if speaking was difficult. He hoped to influence those dear orphan boys for Jesus.

On December 31, the neighbors heralded in the New Year with loud firecrackers popping through the neighborhood, and then it was 1980. There was much to learn and do in a foreign land and new culture.

No matter what happened in those days, whether robbers in the night, someone stealing chickens, or thieves in the orange grove, Mark knew God was with them.

Proverbs 21:31: "*Safety is of the Lord.*"

**farm or property*



youth messages

The Sirens' Song

*Lowell Miller, Nickerson, KS**

Ulysses strained at the ropes that bound him. He pled and cried to his men to loose him. The most enchanting and beautiful sounds he'd ever heard were falling on his ears. The songs were borne on the lips of the enchanting sirens. The sirens lured sailors to their deaths as they turned their boats to the enticing strains. They were met

with rocks and ultimate shipwreck. Ulysses had been warned about the sirens, yet he still wanted to hear them. He plugged the ears of his crew with wax and had himself tied to the mast of the ship so he couldn't steer the ship. Yet his ears remained open so he could hear the enchanting melodies. In the moment of trial, as the strains held him captive, he

struggled to get closer to them. Had he been able to act on his passions, he would have brought himself and his crew to destruction. Only by his earlier resolve was he spared the destruction of the enchanting sirens. Though this is only a story from ancient Greek mythology, it holds parallels for us today.

Temptation is real. How do we face it?

Several young men were walking in the park of a foreign city. As they walked, they met an attractive young lady. They struck up a conversation with her. Soon they asked if they could take her picture. She consented but first wanted to go home and change clothes. The sirens were singing in the park that evening.

Three fellows were traveling in the western United States. They decided to stop at Las Vegas, NV. They just wanted to see what the glitter and glamor was all about. They played the gambling machines with the enticement money the operations gave to newcomers. The glitz of the sinful city was a far cry from the conservative rural setting these Mennonite boys were used to. The sirens were calling as the youth walked the city that night.

I'm assuming Eve had no intention of eating the forbidden fruit on that fateful morning as she arose to face

the beauty and perfection of another of Eden's mornings. Everything was in place as God had created it. It is hard to imagine anything more complete, more wholesome, or more perfect than the dawn of a new day in Eden. Yet by nightfall, Eve had fallen. Eve was soiled. Her husband had joined her. Innocence was spoiled. Life was ruined. Death entered. Man had fallen. Adam and Eve would never be the same. The whole world would never be the same. They started the day in purity and fellowship with God and ended it having given in to the subtlety of the serpent.

Youth tend to be adventuresome and curious. They may have no intention of falling into sin but still want to hear the song of the siren. Satan aroused a doubt, and I assume a curiosity, in Eve's mind about the forbidden fruit.

The devil doesn't necessarily start with a blatant invitation to sin. This seems too obvious. He may instead come to you with a "healthy" curiosity. He gets our minds to turning: "I wonder what's going on out in the world?" "How would it be like to make a few runs up and down main street with the crowd on a weekend evening?" "How about a cold beer on a hot day?" or "Surely, a little physical contact is alright in

courtship,—of course, nothing too radical.” His suggestions go on and on.

The first indulgences in the devil’s “healthy” curiosity won’t automatically lead to spiritual shipwreck. But we make ourselves so vulnerable and so susceptible!

The young person may have had no intention of ending up in the main-street crowd but that is where time found him. Most alcoholics start “innocently” enough but find out they just can’t handle alcohol. The fine young couple had no intention of falling into sin. Increasing freedom and carelessness took them down back roads where the devil robbed their purity and left them soiled. He took their joy and left them tears.

Ulysses thought he was proving a steadfast resolve as he faced the sirens. Yet in the hour of trial he would have brought himself and others to shipwreck if he would have been able to act on his passions. Did he prove his manhood by staring straight into the face of temptation?

The story is told of an employer who subjected his two recruits to a potentially dangerous situation. The one showed his skill by driving as close as he could to the danger without falling in. The other one stayed as far from the danger as possible. The second one was hired.

It is inevitable that young people will face temptation. But not all temptations Christian young people face are necessary. Do we entertain temptation or do we flee it? Peter says, *“Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”* Hebrews tells us to *“exhort one another daily,”* to prevent being *“hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”* Paul tells us to *“Flee fornication.”* The believer’s body is the *“temple of the Holy Ghost.”* Paul tells the Romans, *“I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”*

In these last days, the siren songs are numerous and persistent. Let’s not overestimate our own ability to combat them. The devil likes to see us curious about the dainties he has to offer. As we exercise our curiosities, the devil wants to take our hand and lead us farther than we had any intention of going. Remember, *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.”* Let’s purpose in our hearts to resist the siren’s song in the power of the Lord. But let us go one step further. Let us purpose together to resist the situations that could lead us to hearing the song in the first place.

“Lead us not into temptation.”
Amen.

*[Reprinted from the January 1995
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Periodicals

THOUGHT GEMS

The person who sows seeds of kindness will have a perpetual kindness.

• • • • •

A kind word picks up a man when trouble weighs him down.

• • • • •

Joy is the feeling of grinning inside. *Dr. Melba Colgrove*

• • • • •

It's nice to know that when you help someone up a hill you're
a little closer to the top yourself.

• • • • •

Offering good advice may be noble and grand, but it's
not the same as a helping hand.

• • • • •

The roots of happiness grow deepest in the soil of service.

• • • • •

Advice to fathers over fifty: Keep an open mind and a closed refrigerator.

• • • • •

To really know a father, observe his behavior with a lady, a flat tire, and a child.

• • • • •

Happiness is not perfected until it is shared.

• • • • •

Do your giving while you're living, so you're knowing where it's going.

• • • • •

You only keep what you give away. *R. E. Phillips*

• • • • •

He who walks in when others walk out is a true friend.

• • • • •

The world needs more warm hearts and fewer hot heads.

• • • • •

Friends are God's life preservers.