

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of...

THE TESTIMONY

...of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel..." II Tim. 1:8

— VERSE OF THE MONTH —

"Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Matt. 2:13

Vol. XVI

December 2025

No. 12

REFUGEE

We think of Him as safe beneath the steeple,
Or cozy in a crib beside the font,
But He is with a million displaced people
On the long road of weariness and want.
For even as we sing our final carol
His family is up and on that road,
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,
Glancing behind and shouldering the load.
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower,
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,
And death squads spread their curse across the world.
But every Herod dies, and comes alone
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.

— Malcolm Guite

THE TESTIMONY

CONTENTS

FRONT COVER	1
REFUGEE	1
EDITORIAL	3
THE WONDERS OF CHRIST'S BIRTH	3
SEASONAL	5
“HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL!”	5
HE'S COMING!.....	7
IN GOD'S LOVE AT CHRISTMASTIME	8
GENERAL	10
THE FREE CHURCH HYPOTHESIS — PART 1	10
NOISE	15
FOR CHILDREN	16
FOUR SMALL THINGS EXCEEDING WISE.....	16
MEDITATIONS	18
QUESTIONS TO PONDER	18
GENERAL ITEMS	19
POEMS	1, 18 19
OBITUARIES	23
2025 INDEX	25



“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger...”

Luke 2:7

EDITORIAL

**THE WONDERS OF
CHRIST'S BIRTH**

Where do we start? The wonders of Christ's birth began many years before His birth with the prophecies concerning it. Moses, Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea all wrote of Christ's coming. They anticipated His coming but did not fully understand it. And many people at that time probably wondered, "What does this mean?"

When the angel, Gabriel, appeared unto Mary, she was troubled at his saying. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God" (Luke 1:30). She certainly wondered about this, for she asked the angel, "How shall this be?" But her wonder was not doubt. It was submission and honor—for she said, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Since Joseph's espoused wife was found with child, he must have been filled with amazement and questions, wondering how this could be and what he should do. So, an angel appeared unto Joseph also to assure him that this was God's work, telling him, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife..."

Then Joseph "...did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him..."

Think about the incarnation of Christ. Was that not one of the greatest wonders of all? When Jesus, the creator of all things, humbled Himself by coming down to earth, and taking flesh upon Himself, and having the same feelings and limitations that we do, it's more than we can comprehend.

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem to pay their taxes, they needed to find a place to stay overnight. Upon checking at the inn, they found no room there. I'm sure they wondered what they should do next. But God provided a place for Jesus to be born, although, not where you would expect the Son of God to be born! It was likely in a stable because Mary "laid him in a manger." Think of the joy, and the awe, and the wonder that they must have experienced as they held "the Son of the Highest"! We understand what it's like to hold a newborn baby, but their feelings must have been overwhelming.

How would you feel if you were outside, tending your sheep at night, and suddenly "the angel of the Lord came upon [you], and the glory of the Lord shone round about [you]"? I believe you would

be like the shepherds—"sore afraid"! After the angel told them of Christ's birth, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God..." What great awe and excitement the shepherds must have experienced, for they hurriedly left to go find the baby Jesus. Then they shared the good news with many others. "And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:18-19).

When His parents brought the baby Jesus into the temple, Simeon took Jesus up in his arms, and blessed God, and thanked Him for letting him see the Savior of the world. What do you suppose Joseph and Mary thought? The answer is found in Luke 2:33: "And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him." While they were still in the temple, Anna, a prophetess, also came in. She "gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (v. 38).

Again, there was probably great "wonder" within the hearts of Joseph and Mary when wise men from the east came to their house one day. When the wise men saw Jesus and Mary, they fell down and worshipped Jesus. Then they

opened their treasures, and presented unto Him gifts—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh! These would have been very expensive gifts for Joseph's family, but they were very appropriate for the "King of the Jews" whom the wise men came to worship. It's another "wonder" how the star that the wise men saw in the east reappeared, leading them from Jerusalem to Bethlehem "till it came and stood over where the young child was." How did a star, high up in the heavens, lead men the short distance of six miles and stand over the house where Jesus was? I wonder...

After Christ's birth, Herod wanted to destroy this new King. But God had a wonderful plan to take care of Him. He sent Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod when he "slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under..." After Herod's death, the Lord brought this family back to Israel again where many more "wonders" happened during Christ's sojourn here. And now, since that time, we experience the great wonder of Jesus living in the hearts of His followers. O, the wonder of it all!

Darryl Filbrun

The author of last month's editorial was Grant Fullmer. Please accept my apology for inadvertently editing his name off the page. DF

SEASONAL

“HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED WONDERFUL!”

Behold the prophetic word, written some 700 years before Christ was born! With clarity and in poetic form the word is written, as from God Himself. We break into chapter 9 of Isaiah, and verse 6 we find this word:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

These titles given by our God through the prophet reveal who the promised Messiah is and establish His Deity. There is no question. The prophet Isaiah is saying, by the inspiration of the Spirit, that God will be coming down to us. Coming down to save. Coming down to rule.

And He will also be coming down as a Son. A little child given to us. Born of a woman. Just like us.

THE GREAT NEEDS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

One of the great manifestations of God's love and mercy throughout the centuries has been the patient calling of His people Israel back to Himself, in the midst of their repeated failures and unfaithfulness. He did not just reject them when they strayed. He

pleaded with them. He called them back again and again. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow...” (Isa. 1:18).

God has had so much to offer His people, and yet their leaning has been away from Him, and toward other lovers. This is idolatry. And yet God has waited, and called repeatedly, and has had long patience for His People for His Name's sake, and often withheld judgment, showing mercy. “...to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. 10:21).

All of God's people, including ourselves, have been so needy. We all are so spiritually weak, it seems. We feel it ourselves, and we hear the confessions of others as well. We need strength. We need guidance. We often need forgiveness. One of the rich discoveries that we find in the Scriptures (both Old and New) is that our God has been working to supply the needs of His people, and laying a groundwork for salvation and full redemption for every soul! Halleluiah! We have a WONDERFUL God!

WHAT SHALL HIS NAME BE CALLED?

Throughout the ages, God has placed a meaning on names. Names have often meant some-

thing special. It was so then and often is that way around the world today. Sometimes names with meaning were given to a newborn child to reveal the mission of the child. At times God told a parent to give a specific name to a child so that He could convey a message to His People regarding their state or condition. Some of the names in the book of Hosea are examples of this.

As we think of God's plan to bring a Deliverer into the world that would be the answer to all of mankind's sins, weaknesses, difficulties, and uncertainties about the future, what kind of a name would best describe the One whom He would send. What shall His name be called?

GOD KNEW OUR STATE

Not only is the Presence of the Lord in every place, but His Awareness of our deep needs is near to every heart. "He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust." He knows our sadness, and our lack of peace. He is aware of our habitual stumblings, and our inability to overcome our great dilemmas. He knew our need of a Mediator, and that we needed a High Priest who could be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We needed a Hand that could reach out and heal, and Eyes of compassion and understanding. Our sins needed to be forgiven, and our guilt taken away. Our straying steps would need to be kept in the way of life, and taught to follow His steps.

But who could accomplish these

things? The prophet Isaiah said that the Lord looked, "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his [own] arm brought salvation..."

We will never be able to settle in our hearts the never-ending WONDER of the story of redemption, and how it all was accomplished. It is very clear in the Scripture that God did not just "send someone else" to be a Deliverer, but came Himself! "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself..." (II Cor. 5:19).

HIS NAME

But what shall His Name be? As our God, little by little, revealed through the prophets the coming of the promised One, many names are found in the prophetic Word that are attributed to the coming Saviour. Messiah (Anointed One), Prince of Peace, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, Counselor, Immanuel (God With Us), Redeemer, The Branch, The Rock of Israel, to name a few. Also the Hebrew name Yeshua means "Salvation." and in all of these names, the role, mission, and identity of the coming Deliverer are manifest to God's People, giving hope to all who mourn for sin, and who are watching and praying for deliverance.

Added to this Old Testament list of names then is the name WONDERFUL! It means literally "a miracle—a marvelous thing!" "His name shall be called WONDERFUL." It is as if our God

wanted the focus of His People to be first of all on the MARVELOUS MIRACLE that would be coming from the throne of glory to seek and save the lost!

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

As we read the story again at this season, of the baby Jesus being born of a Jewish virgin in Bethlehem, fulfilling the Scriptures, let us look again at all of the details with a renewed sense of WONDER and thanksgiving! Our questions will perhaps never be fully answered. Why would God become flesh? Why would Someone so rich become poor? Why would Someone all-powerful become weak? Why would Someone who can do whatever He wants devise a Plan to save that would cause Him to experience extreme suffering and seeming defeat, and give Himself even unto painful and humiliating death at the hands of selfish, envious, hateful men? It is all such a miracle! It is a marvelous thing!

THE PROPHECY

It is no wonder then that the prophet Isaiah's pen was moved to write these strange and amazing words. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

A promised child was to come. He would be sent to seek and save the lost. He would atone for sin.

He would gather unto Himself all who would come to Him by faith throughout the ages! He would set up a kingdom that would stand forever. He would dwell among men in His coming Kingdom, and be their God, and they would be His People.

And what shall His Name be? Let the answer to this question strike again a melodious chord upon your heart as you read the prophetic Scripture. "His Name shall be called **WONDERFUL**."

Lowell Miller

HE'S COMING!

Soon it will be Christmas time! What does that mean to you and me? The Savior of the world will be coming as a babe in the manger, from God our heavenly Father. He's coming from a place called heaven, with a saving Gospel for all. What an ultimate gift! The greatest gift of all time! As He goes about spreading the word, we must not forget John 3:16-18. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already,

because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

From the star of Bethlehem to His teaching and preaching with His disciples, to His death on the cross, then being risen in three days (many seeing Him).

“Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me” (John 7:33).

“So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:19–20).

After 33 years, His work here on earth was coming to a close.

Are we doing our part in spreading the Gospel with others along the way? There are so many in this world that need Jesus so much! He’s Coming again!

“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Rev. 22:7).

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev. 22:12–13).

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16).

As we anticipate our home in Heaven, we have that lively hope

in His coming! As we look up, are we thinking about what Revelation 1:7 says? “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail [just think] because of him.”

His coming here on earth for you and me began as a Babe in a manger! Thank you, God! Where would we be without Jesus? He’s coming, He’s coming, He’s coming indeed!

So let’s celebrate “He’s Coming Again” together each and every day, and each and every season!

L.D. Flory

IN GOD’S LOVE AT CHRISTMASTIME

I read a story of a family at Christmastime. All of their food, gifts, and excitement were waiting on Christmas Day. Unknown to this family, one carload would not make it.

The Christmas season is upon us, and are we in a rush? Instead of the special food, and “gift stuffs,” how about a quiet evening like the one when Jesus was born?

It actually wasn’t a quiet time, for the inn was filled, and no doubt noisy! All the world was to be taxed, but there was no room for them in the inn. Do we have room at our tables for the “Unseen

Guest"? Oh, yes, we surely do! But do we have room for a stranger? The Salvation Army bells have been ringing. There is much opportunity to give in many places. And all around, we surely are a loving and giving people. There is opportunity also to give in secret. Deep in my heart, at this time of the year, is my ALL on the altar? Or do I become quite distracted?

Oh, to love God, with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my strength! (Mark 12:30).

Has my regular Bible reading continued? Has the song in my heart been "Joy To The World"? Or is it "Jingle Bells"?

Mark 12:31 says, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. In loving others, have I thought that just sending an occasional card would do, or is it possible I could invite others more to my table? I know a family that, while their children were young, tried to invite one or two extra guests often to their Christmas table.

Even any time of the year, can I find someone in need of companionship and a table. Perhaps my refrigerator and freezer does not need to be so full.

Joseph and Mary came from afar. I often wonder if they were offered any food for themselves and their donkey. Had I known the circumstances, would I have been willing to give up my special reserved room in the inn for Joseph, Mary, and Baby Jesus?

In my own life experience, as I shop at Kroger, is it possible that I

was rude to the older lady in front of me, trying to price a jar of gravy? Or, later, did I have grumpy thoughts, and a frown at the check out line, even mentioning to those nearby, "They sure could open a few more registers!" From deep inside of me, what kind of attitude do I have? Am I showing others what a Christian woman should be? Is it clear to all that Jesus walks with me? Is His love, His joy, His peace, and His praise with me? Can others see how special Jesus is to me? Or does my beloved husband need to calmly say, "You're kind of grouchy today" when another telemarketer calls?

Do I remember that first things should come first in the morning, reading a little from God's Word? Or do I just jump right into my "to do list"?

I am examining my priorities and my love for others at Christmastime. Do I remember those who have lost loved ones, and reach out to them? Do I make contact with my children often, making it clear that I love them? We challenge our readers to do special things for others, wherever we go!

May our Father smile on us, and grant each one a special Christmas! May God's light shine around us and through us!

Humbly written to make Christmas last all year!

With prayers for our readers,

Vicki Witmer

GENERAL

**THE FREE CHURCH
HYPOTHESIS****Part 1**

At the close of the Middle Ages, an eastern European astronomer, poet, and physician named Nicolaus Copernicus published an argument that revolutionized the way that we think about the world. His hypothesis changed everything. The earth, he said, was not a stationary body around which the firmament revolved. Rather, the earth itself revolved around the sun. His argument was radical, but his proposal fit the facts, and Copernicus' heliocentric model slowly became accepted.

This paradigm shift was of immense importance, because it allows us to explain so many other natural phenomena. The seasons, the length of days and nights, the movement of stars and planets, the calculation of time and latitude—all of these can be explained by the realization that the earth revolves around the sun.

Germ theory is another hypothesis that revolutionized the way that we think about life. The concept that disease could be spread by tiny living organisms called germs has drastically altered how we approach health and disease prevention. We wash our hands, we cook our food, we boil mountain stream water, we sterilize, we quarantine, all because of these little things called germs, and the

paradigm shift that occurred when germ theory became accepted.

Heliocentric theory and germ theory are both examples of a hypothesis that has tremendous power to help people better understand the world in which we live. By grasping a simple concept, the universe suddenly becomes more understandable.

This article is intended to advocate for another explanatory hypothesis that may be similarly helpful to us. It does not deal with nature, but rather with faith, as we try to better understand who we are, and what we stand for. It is not original with me, but I have found it to be helpful. For lack of a better term, we will call it the "Free Church Hypothesis." It is especially helpful as an aid for engaging seekers who we encounter and in answering the common question: "Why is your church so unique?"

It is commonly said, in trying to explain our beliefs to outsiders, that we take the Bible literally. This is of course true, but is an explanation that is unlikely to resonate with a seeker. There are many other believers, especially in the Evangelical Protestant world, who also take the Bible very seriously. They would often also say that they literally apply the Scriptures, yet have sometimes come to very different conclusions than we have come to. Why is that?

The intent of the following essay is to elaborate on this simple an-

swer: The foundations for Protestant thought were laid by men who did not believe in separation of Church and State. Reformers such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Cranmer¹, were men who believed that the Church and State should not be separated. Although brilliant men, even truly heroic men, they could not see any other way. They accepted with little question the concept of what has been called a sacral society. Leonard Verduin, in his excellent but obscure² book, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren*, defines this term as “society held together by a religion to which all members of that society are committed.”

This religiously homogenous society was, of course, the common experience for most members of the ancient world. If you were a Phoenician, you served Phoenician gods, such as Ashtaroth. If you were an Ammonite, you served Molech. If you were Nebuchadnezzar and wanted to maintain power over a wide range of people, nations, and languages, you required all your officers to worship the same graven image and risk a fiery furnace if they did not. This same paradigm was held by Reformation-era Europe. If you were

Spanish, you were Catholic, and you expected all the citizens of your town to be Catholic as well. If you were Dutch, you were Reformed, and expected all your neighbors to be the same—with the possible exception of a few Jews, whose existence was often tenuous. This is strange to us, but to Europeans of that era, this was normal and any alternative would be anarchy. Christianity was seen not as a small group of pilgrims and strangers influencing the culture by being salt and light to them. Rather, the culture at large was to be Christian. Furthermore, this “Christian culture” was to be achieved and maintained by force of law. Under this paradigm, the Protestant thinkers developed their theology, and the impact of their ideas continues with us unto this day. Reformation leaders such as Martin Luther and John Calvin are still routinely read and quoted by today’s mainstream Protestants, and the Protestant persecution of religious dissenters, such as our Anabaptist ancestors, is still routinely glossed over.

The Anabaptist movement was so problematic for the reformers because it was fundamentally different. When the Anabaptist movement began (January 21, 1525,

¹ The case of Thomas Cranmer is especially interesting, because he so strongly believed that the monarch should also be the head of the church that he rationalized a recantation of his Protestant beliefs when Protestant Henry VIII was replaced with Catholic Bloody Mary. Finally, the night before his execution, he took back his recantation and went to the stake reaffirming his Protestant beliefs. The “unworthy hand” that had signed his original recantation he held in the fire so that it would be burned off first.

² Leonard Verduin’s work is not well known, but remains in print thanks to Christian Hymnary Publishers. Part of the reason for the neglect of his work may be the fact that he strongly connects the Anabaptist movement to pre-Reformation underground believers who maintained Gospel principals throughout the Middle Ages. This theory of Anabaptist origins is not currently well accepted, and may have contributed to the author’s obscurity. Also, Verduin, as a scholar within the Christian Reformed Church, did not find his pro-Anabaptist message welcomed.

500 years ago this year) they radically altered the way that we think about church.³ Church is not something that we are baptized into as infants who do not have any choice in the matter. Church is composed of volunteers, who choose to be baptized when they are old enough to “count the cost.” Logically, if the church is to be composed of volunteers, there will be some who do not volunteer. In fact, according to Jesus, the majority of mankind will choose the broad way over the strait gate. As a result, the Anabaptist movement rejected the concept of a sacral society and would pioneer the separation of church and state that we know today. While most churches today have come over to endorsing the separation of church and state in practice, the deformities brought about by the church/state synthesis can still be seen around us. Today’s Protestants would still look to the Reformers for the foundations of their theology.

It is important that we not be judgmental toward other denominations. While the Reformers were definitely very wrong in their stance on the Church/State synthesis, we cannot judge their hearts. One of the Reformers whose writings we will cite in this article, Guido de Bres, even died for his faith at the hands of the Catholic rulers. It is said that he was pushed off the hangman’s scaffold while still urging the crowd to be faithful to the Scriptures.

However, it is also important that we understand that our church fellowship exists for very good reasons. The mainstream Protestant model, while containing many apparently sincere believers, was fundamentally flawed by its acceptance of a sacral society. The Protestants, in their efforts to make the Church/State synthesis work, were obliged to wrest the Scriptures in several important ways, as they strove to apply the directives of the New Testament within the confines of a sacral society. The Anabaptist movement was a very necessary corrective to the Reformers—a corrective that the Reformers strongly resisted, sometimes with physical force. Thus, once again, was fulfilled Jesus’ chilling prophecy “the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” (John 16:2)

The following is a very brief but broad look at some examples of how many of the unique characteristics of the Anabaptist movement can be traced back to the rejection of a sacral society. This survey could be described as a mile wide and an inch deep. The intent is not to be complete, but to demonstrate the wide applicability of the Free Church Hypothesis.

In this first installment, we will start with some of the more obvious examples, and look at the three points that we agree to at our baptism: nonswearing, nonresistance, and nonconformity to the world. I do not believe that our forefathers thought that these

³In this article, I am choosing to avoid the discussion of whether or not the Brethren are truly Anabaptist. While it may be an oversimplification, mainstream historians would generally include the Brethren within the Anabaptist movement. For the purposes of this article, it is not necessary to elucidate a difference between the Brethren and other Anabaptist groups.

three points were the essence of Gospel, or an all-encompassing code of Christian conduct. Rather, these three points are the primary areas where the Free Church found themselves in public conflict with the more sacral society around them.⁴ Although I cannot prove this, it seems likely that this is the reason why our forebears saw these as key distinctives to be understood and committed to at baptism. In the second installment, we will move on from these primary distinctives to some of the lesser recognized distinctives of the Anabaptist movement, and see how these too can be explained by the Free Church Hypothesis.

NONSWEARING

We will start with this example because it is so straightforward. The New Testament seems so clear that Christians should not swear an oath. “Above all things my brethren, swear not!” Furthermore, early church history appears unanimous, the early church did not permit the swearing of oaths. And yet, if you mention to your mainstream Christian friend that you would not take an oath in court, he will likely be puzzled and confused. Why the discrepancy?

Let’s see if we can use the Free Church Hypothesis to explain this paradox:

In Reformation-era Europe, the oath had an important function within society. People had a fear of God, and when asked to swear an oath that they were telling the

truth, they would be less likely to tell a lie. Thus, society at large relied on the oath in order to frighten people into telling the truth.

As a result, we see Protestant writers doing all kinds of explanatory gymnastics in order to maintain use of the oath. For example, we can look at the Heidelberg Catechism, one of the foundational documents of the churches who follow the Reformed tradition. Regarding the oath, it says this:

“Such oaths are approved in God’s Word and were rightly used by Old and New Testament believers.”

Where, you might ask, did a New Testament believer ever use an oath? The Heidelberg Catechism cites Romans 1:9 and II Corinthians 1:23.⁵ This is, of course, nonsense. Paul was not swearing an oath to tell the truth in the passages cited. Why would such learned men use such a flimsy argument to defend the taking of oaths? Because they needed the oath to maintain society.

To be sure, while the Free Church Hypothesis provides a simple and concise explanation of why the Anabaptists stood virtually alone in their rejection of the oath, the hypothesis is impossible for me to prove conclusively. No Reformer was going to admit that his defense of the oath is rooted in his need to maintain the social order. However, they get very close to admitting it when they portray the Anabaptists as being destructive to the fabric of society. Let’s move on to another clear example.

⁴ Even in the New World, the sacral paradigm would continue to some extent. Only four of the original thirteen colonies (Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Delaware) would be founded without a state church attached. Massachusetts even hanged four Quakers for refusing to leave the colony, and did not formally separate church and state until 1833. As late as 1877, the Constitution of New Hampshire required that all members of the state legislature be Protestant!

⁵ Heidelberg Catechism Question 101

NONRESISTANCE

Nonresistance is a hallmark of the Anabaptist movement. All Christians will tell you that they are in favor of peace. However, despite a preference for peace, most professing Christians do not reject state-sponsored violence. In the Western World today, the Anabaptists are unique in their refusal to wage war or participate in law enforcement.

The Free Church Hypothesis explains this perfectly. The maintenance of a worldly kingdom requires the right to bear the sword. If all members of the state must also be church members, it logically follows that allowances must be made, not only for military, but also for local authorities. If the pastor of a Protestant church did not make allowance for the local sheriff and the city executioner to also be a church member, his city might find itself without sheriff or hangman—an unsustainable situation that would almost certainly lead to anarchy.⁶

The Belgic Confession of Faith, the oldest doctrinal standard of the Christian Reformed Church, shows clearly how the Reformers regarded the Anabaptists as dangerous to society. The last paragraph of Article 36 states:

“Wherefore we detest the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates and would subvert justice, introduce community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God has established among men.”⁷

NONCONFORMITY TO THE WORLD

The primary foes of the Christian are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. On that subject all Christians agree. However, the Anabaptist movement has maintained a much more robust understanding of what “the world” is. Nonconformity to the world tends to have more emphasis within our settings, and many more practical applications. This too can be explained by the Free Church Hypothesis.

For a member of a sacral society, it is almost impossible to bring the concept of “the world” into focus. If you are a Lutheran living in one of the German states during the 1500s, or an Anglican living in England, who, or what, exactly, is “the world”? The concept of being strangers and pilgrims would seem almost absurd when all of the people that you encounter on your daily routine are also members of the church. Perhaps the heathen Turks might be “the world,” or the detested Irish Catholics, but, on a day-to-day basis, being nonconformed to the world has virtually no practical application. There is no realization that true Christians are actually a minority in your culture, that friendship with the prevailing culture is enmity with God, and that which is highly esteemed by your peers may actually be an abomination in the sight of God.

To be continued...

Thomas Bauman

⁶ The violent society before the Flood (Gen. 6:11) is an example of what can result without the capital punishment mandate, which was not given until after the Flood.

⁷ It may be that the author had the rebellion at Munster in mind when he equated Anabaptism with sedition, but the Anabaptism of Munster was not typical.

NOISE

Ruth Ellen Allgyer

The first cry of a child. The song of the morning dove. The coyote's howl echoing through the hollow below. The wind and the rain. The crackling fire beneath a starry night. These are the noises of nature. These are the noises portraying our marvelous Creator. How majestic and divine is His creative touch. I wonder how heaven must sound with the flutter of angelic wings, the choir of worshippers lifting their voices in praise.

But in contrast, this is the noise of the modern world today—a relentless, unforgiving noise we say. A noise where true, restful silence is difficult to find. We close our eyes to sleep at night, yet our brain refuses to fully recover from the clamor of the day. We hear noise everywhere—not only by sound but by information. It is the silent noise of our time, labeled as “silent noise marker.” The news headlines, the materialism publishes, the gossiping tongue, the overload of information. The flood of “should”—I should do this, I should try that, I should go there, and I should read this. An overstimulation of noises pulling us in every direction. We become anxious. We give in to discontentment. We compare our lives with the lives of others. Admittedly when we search our hearts, we find a darkened empty spot with a deep craving for silence. A silence that is true. A silence that restores. Now I wonder, do we still hear the still, soft whispers of the Lord's Spirit? Or has the noise of the publisher, the world, and our daily dozens become the voice, the noise in our minds?

Noise is defined as sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired. Silence, on the other hand, is the stillness of being, or

keeping still and quiet. God's truth teaches us the beauty and dire necessity of silence. Remember, it is a silence that is restful, and intensely true. “My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him.” This verse quoted from Psalm 62 (NKJV) binds the revealing truth. Don't you think King David quoted this because silence was something he mercifully craved and desired?

We may not be King David's tackling the daily grind of being ruler over land. But we are still a part of God's design, just as David was. In the deepest recesses of our hearts, God plants this unavoidable desire for peaceful, restful silence. This silence is marrow to our bones and health to our minds.

Oh, the glorious beauty of resting silently in God's presence. The marvelous beauty as we block out unnatural noise to listen to the songbird melody. The sound of the brook flowing, the rain drops on the roof tin. The child singing a tune from the nearby room. The waves crashing on the seashore. This is the “silence” kind of noise. Why, because it brings restfulness to the soul. It connects us to our Creator, the creative God.

Oh, dear folk, let us choose today to intentionally create this beautiful atmosphere of true, restful, and peaceful silence. May this silence ignite a spark within us—one that spreads like wildfire, installing in our hearts, minds, souls, homes, churches, and workplaces, cultivating peace and rest in our relations with others. Let us act today—by being still and fleeing from “unforgiving” noises and embracing the quiet where His voice can be heard.

Selected from New Light Health by

Greg and Julie Shellabarger

FOR CHILDREN

FOUR SMALL THINGS EXCEEDING WISE

As Father and Mother and their two children, John and Mary, gathered in their living room for their Bible study, they had all agreed that their lesson this time would be taken from Proverbs 30 about the small things that were exceeding wise.

- Father agreed to consider the small spider.
- Mother agreed to consider the ant.
- John agreed to consider the coney.
- Mary agreed to look at the locust.

THE ANT

There are thousands of different species of ants, according to science.

Some ants are millimeters long. Others could be two and one-half inches long. Some ants fly, and some do not. Ant colonies can go as deep as 20 feet, such as the “fire ant.” Ants are wise and harvest their food in the summer to last all winter.



When an ant dies, there are other ants called worker ants that will carry the dead ants to their burial grounds to keep the colony clean and disease free.

These little creatures show wisdom even if they are small. They teach us many important lessons. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Solomon was considered to be a very wise man. But Jesus said, “A greater than Solomon is here.” Jesus knew Solomon before Solo-

mon was born, and was much wiser than Solomon.

We need to be diligent in our youth, and learn from the ant, because the day will come when we’ll not be able to work. And we know not when that day will be.

THE CONEY

Now we’ll hear from John with his lesson on the coney.

Coneys hide in the rocks to protect themselves from predators. Coneys live in cracks of the rocks in the mountains. They are located in Africa and Saudi Arabia. They are very much like a badger, and some weigh from twelve to twenty-four pounds. They feed on grass and sometimes lizards.



Back in Moses’ day when the tabernacle was built, some badger skins were used to help cover the tabernacle.

God is our Rock and we need His protection as the rock protects the Coney. Psalm 104:18 states, “The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the coneys.”

LOCUST

Now we’ll hear from Mary on her lesson on the locusts.

The locusts go forth in bands and have no leader. They are wise because they stick together. They live in the ground and they eat most anything that is green. The Egyptians experienced the plague of the locusts. We need to take a

lesson from the locusts. We are encouraged to stick together and worship with brethren, like the locusts stick together.



Locusts and grasshoppers look alike but are totally different. Grasshoppers have spiny legs and locusts do not. Some feel they are very good to eat and are very nutritious. John the Baptist survived on locusts and wild honey (Matt. 3:4).

THE SPIDER

Now we'll hear from father on his lesson on the spider.

Spiders are known to live in kings' houses. Henceforth they can be found almost anywhere. Scientists have identified over 40,000 varieties of spiders in the present day.

Spiders are very beneficial. They eat bugs, and other insects, and some of the bugs that they eat are in the ground. Sometimes their webs are destroyed, but they are quick to rebuild, and never tire of doing so.



As a boy a memory comes to mind of crawling under the house where my family lived and I would

find a species known as the "Black Widow Spider."

These spiders like it dark, and they have very strong webs. They are very poisonous. My favorite method of exterminating them was taking a very strong stick and squashing them.

Another experience I had as a boy was seeing a spider build a web from our apple tree to a post in our yard about 40 feet away! Perhaps the spider created a type of filament that a breeze could carry for the purpose of catching other insects.

Spiders can make webs that can look like delicate doilies. They are so beautiful!

The lesson we can learn from the spider is they even live in kings' palaces! But they will not be in the palace in the New Jerusalem!

We recommend that we be like these four exceedingly wise creatures.

Work hard like the ant.

Take refuge like the coney in the "Rock" Jesus Christ.

Be like the locust and consume God's Word.

Learn from the spider and be found in God's House. Beware of any who enter God's house except through the door. These are the same as a thief and a robber (John 10:1).

Father said, "Children, you have certainly done a good job on The Four Wise creatures."

In Proverbs 30 it also says "There are four things too wonderful for me: an eagle, a ship on the sea, a snake on a rock, and a man with a maid. There are also lessons to be learned from these four wonderful things.

We close our devotion with prayer.

Marshall and Rosalene Dutter

IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

It came upon a midnight clear
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace to the earth, good-will to men
From heaven’s all-gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.
— Edmund Hamilton Sears

MEDITATIONS

Wise men who see Jesus never return back home the same way.
Don’t fault the innkeeper if there is no room in your heart.
A neglected closet is the beginning of Spiritual decay.
As a Christmas gift, give God your whole heart.
Husbands, hold your wife and pray for her.
Wives, pray for your husband in return.
Thank God for the year of 2025.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

This section offers some questions to think about, or for Sunday afternoon discussions, or to prompt future articles from our readers, etc. Readers are encouraged to offer questions.

The article in this issue, **“The Free Church Hypothesis,”** points to the very real difference between being compelled to be a “Christian,” (which many have experienced) or recognizing that the Christian faith is for “whosoever will.”
“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).
Questions regarding the free

choice the Gospel offers:
1. What are several blessings that I have received by being given free choice?
2. What affect would it have on me if my faith and service to God were *commanded* by earthly rulers?
3. Does God receive more glory when I serve Him voluntarily?
4. What am I doing with my spiritual life? With my “free choice”?

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL NOTICE

We are making our call for subscriptions for the year 2026 at this time. The subscription price for each subscriber continues to be \$30.00 per year, and should be received by December 1, 2025, from the District Agents. **Each District Agent should include an updated list of their subscribers, with their current addresses, highlighting any changes.** Individual subscribers’ subscription payments should be received by December 1, 2025, as well, if possible, for the 2026 subscription year.

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Nov. 3, 2025; Shiloh, OH
Chase Filbrun

MEMBERS RECEIVED

Oct. 24, 2025; West Modesto, CA
Ryan and Abigail Cover

COMMISSIONS

July 11, 2025; Fair Haven, KS
Darwin Fisher (with wife Beth)
Advanced to the second degree
of the ministry.

Patrick Hirt (with wife Lindsay)
Advanced to the second degree
of the ministry.

Oct. 23, 2025; Sugar Grove, OH
Wes Sprenkel, (with wife, Debra)
Ordained to the Eldership

COMMUNION NOTICES

Jan. 31, 2026 Pinegrove, FL
Feb. 7, 2026 Living Epistle, NM
Feb. 28, 2026 West Manchester, IN
Mar. 14, 2026 Dallas, OR
Mar. 21, 2026 Mt. Zion, PA
Mar. 21, 2026 Sugar Grove, OH
Apr. 4, 2026 Modesto, CA
Apr. 11, 2026 Cascade Valley, WA
Apr. 11, 2026 Cutler Ridge, IN
Apr. 11, 2026 Fair Haven, KS
Apr. 11, 2026 Salem, OH
Apr. 18, 2026 Olive Branch, OH
Apr. 25, 2026 Bear Creek, OH
Apr. 25, 2026 Caldwell, ID
Oct. 31, 2026 Bethel, OH

THE TESTIMONY

FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024–2025

Balance 7/1/2024 \$13,805.90
Income \$38,530.00
Expenses \$43,026.74
Balance 6/30/2025 \$9,309.16

POEMS

THIS IS THE ONE

Do you see the babe in the manger lies?
In swaddling bands, born in the night?
This is the One who fills heaven and earth!
This is the One clothed in unapproachable light!

Listen! Is He keening a wee cry?
Needs mother love comfort, her warm embrace?
This is the One who thunders the heavens!
This is the One who's abounding in grace!

Come, speak to the Word in the manger.
Come with simplicity, fall down before.
This is the One who owns the angels,
This is the One shepherds praise and adore!

Gloria Wright
Ellensburg, Washington

A CHRISTMAS POEM*Philip King*

'Twas the night before Christmas, when
all through the inn
There lay silently slumbering, the souls
of men.
With not so much as a thought, that this
was the year
Their Messiah, long promised, was
about to appear.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when
out under the sky
The sheep with their shepherds did so
silently lie.
The flocks were all snuggled, secure in
their beds
While visions of green pastures danced
in their heads.

'Twas the night before Christmas, in a
stable prepared
Two tired, yet thankful, young peasants
appeared.
There was clean, dry straw and a man-
ger, even;
It was humble indeed, yet strangely like
heaven.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when
in heaven above
The hosts were all gathered nearly burst-
ing with love.
The excitement grew tense as the angels
yearned
For the impending moment that Christ
would be born.

To man, all sickened and blackened by sin
God selflessly was giving His Son to him.
In unmeasureable love, in an effort to win
Fallen man back into favor with Him.

Suddenly in a moment the sky flashed bright
And the shepherds rebounded, with
terror and fright,
While a gentle young virgin, truly pure
and good
Tenderly embraced the Son of God.

Those shepherds stood trembling, fully
wide awake
And absorbed every word that the angels spake;
They listened with wonder, yea, utterly amazed
At the hosts of heaven who thundered
with praise.

The young virgin pondered so much in
her heart;
It had been so amazing right from the start.
The angelic announcement, the over-
shadowing of God,
Then the conception of the Son of God.

She pondered those moments, how
she'd break the news;
She feared she'd be believed, by oh, so few.
Then the revelation came, adding joy to life;
The angel told Joseph to take Mary to wife.

Though the anxieties were real, God was
good,
To Bethlehem they'd come as best they
could,
The Lord had woven a political decree,
Into His efforts to present His Deity.

Then that inn so full, it was safe to assume
It would be impossible to acquire a room,
But God used this all—a means to enable
The Lamb of God to be born in a stable.

His Name shall be called Jesus,
the angel had said,
A Name to make millions exceed-
ingly glad.
Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty
Prince of Peace,
The name that in time will cause
evil to cease.

As many folk came, and returned
 most glad
 With a hope that before they never
 had had.
 Old Simeon beheld Him, and be-
 lieved in his heart
 And said, "Now lettest thy servant
 depart."

The wise men arrived and responded
 with joy,
 And gave gifts royal to that pre-
 cious small boy.
 But King Herod reacted, Oh so
 vicious a plan,
 Oh terrible judgment for that cruel,
 cruel man.

Let us see those hands and behold
 those feet
 So tiny and perfect; so sinless and
 sweet.
 Hands that in time would beckon
 the world
 To drink of the love of God, unfurled.

Hands that would never do an un-
 kind deed,
 Hands that would minister to those
 in need.
 Lips that would speak only right-
 eousness,
 Feet to be shod with the sandals of
 peace.

Ears that listened to only the good.
 Eyes that revealed that they un-
 derstood.
 A heart brimming over with eternal love,
 The express, true image of the
 Father above.

Again behold, those hands and
 those feet,
 Nailed so cruelly to a rugged tree.
 The result of the power of human sin,
 Yet providing redemptive provision
 for men.

For Christ was born that He
 should die,
 To reconcile me to the God on high.
 That I might live for eternity,
 By inviting this Christ to be born
 in me.

Oh so precious is that night, when
 it all began
 God's personal involvement for the
 saving of man.
 Tenderest and best, it was God's
 gift to all,
 His tiny hand reaching out from a
 bed of straw.

Yes truly indeed, it was the best
 He had;
 May our hearts this night be ex-
 ceedingly glad.
 To one and all we say, in eternal
 light,
 Blessed Christmas to all, and to all
 a good night.

Selected by,

Kevin and Lori Jacobs
 Bringhurst, IN

HEART-BREAK

I have lost my Love today,
 Lost Him in the crowded way,
 While I turned aside to see
 Life in its festivity.
 Oh, to look into His face
 And to find His pard'ning grace!

Ah, my heart, how fair this world
 When its beauties are unfurled,
 How they glitter, dazzle, blind,
 How they snare the heart and mind!
 Tell me, and oh, tell me true,
 Has my Love been seen by you?

— Henry W. Frost

THE LITTLE STAR

A little star shone singly in the night,
And thought, "How very feeble is my light!
There's not a traveler who will see his way,
Who will be guided by my tiny ray.
But I will not go out—the more will I
Attempt to shine in this vast, darkened sky."

Down in the world there was a weary soul
Striving alone to see the clouded goal.
Full of despair, she wrestled all the night,
But saw no shining of a guiding light.
She said, "There is no moon, I am so sad,"
And lost the very little hope she had.

But through her narrow window did she see
A point of brightness gleaming fervently.
It was the single star. She cried aloud,
And hoped anew for passing of the cloud.
When morning came, with all its golden light,
She said, "I found the Saviour in the night."

"I found Him through a star—it must have been
The Star of Bethlehem that I have seen,
For to the Lord it led—and so I came
And saw the hills of Heaven all aflame,
All shining with the glory of that star,
Whose small but steady light had called afar."

O little star! be not afraid thy light
Will be too feeble to be seen at night.
However small, if steady, it will be
Lighting the roadway to Eternity.
They know in Heaven, where the angels are,
A soul was lighted by a little star.

— Vivian Jameson

OBITUARIES

ANGLE — Mark William, son of David and Betty Angle, passed tragically from this life to eternity on June 17, 2025. Mark was born on July 26, 1972, in Richmond, Indiana, and lived with his family in Preble County, Ohio. As a young child he moved with them to Rocky Mount, Virginia, returning to Ohio in his late teen years.

Mark joined his life together with Barbara Jean “BJ” Rutrough on May 26, 1995, and journeyed side by side with her through 30 years of marriage. Working as a team they turned a house into a home that he helped to fill with his craftsmanship of both wood and words. He treasured their daily working together, and as a team they began the Red Barn Cabinet company. Enjoying conversations of faith, work or pleasure with his wife and partner in their back yard or at the cabin in Tennessee was a valued pastime.

A loving dad, Mark valued having his son Joseph by his side whether in the shop, the garage, at the table, or “out and about.” Their banter and fun-loving, humor-filled, conversations deepened their relationship into one of mutual respect and understanding. They enjoyed going to car events and working on rebuilding classic vehicles in their home garage. Much wisdom and many life lessons were given as they pursued their shared love of classic automobiles. As each year passed, the

joy they found in each other’s company was easy for all to see.

Mark was a talented man and craftsman who enjoyed the creative process of building elegant pieces of furniture. He would thoughtfully craft his vision; working patiently with wood and finish to humbly create masterpieces which will be treasured for many years to come.

Well-read and a skilled conversationalist, Mark crafted his words into witty and thoughtful dialogue that has left an impression on the hearts and minds of many. He would happily engage in conversation for a few minutes or a few hours. Time spent with his siblings and nieces and nephews was especially precious to him, and along with his wife and son he extended hospitality to many local and traveling family and friends.

Mark’s deep love for the Lord was evident in every aspect of his life and he faithfully took his family to worship at Old German Baptist Brethren, New Conference.

Left to mourn his passing are his wife and son, along with his father David Angle; sisters, Karen (Ben) Bowman, Priscilla (Rex) Austin; mother-in-law, Maxine Rutrough; brothers-in-law, Robert (Freda) Rutrough, Ronald (Melinda) Rutrough; nieces and nephews, Cody Bowman, Torie Bowman, Tyler (Jasmin) Bowman, Kurt (Madelyn) Austin, Chloe (Vince) Mohler, Eli Austin, Will

Austin, Jared (Rebecca) Rutrough, Chelsie (Marcus) Bauman, Nicole Rutrough, Shaina (Jeshua) Peters, Kristen Rutrough, Breanna (Elwin) Flory, Kelly (Randall) Hege, Gracie (Josh) Beery and Sadie Rutrough; great-nieces, great-nephews, relatives and numerous friends. He was preceded in death by his mother, Betty Jane (Deaton) Angle and father-in-law, John Rutrough.

On a very warm June day a large crowd of family and friends gathered at the Pleasant View meeting house to pay their last respects to one they loved so well. Joseph took his dad on one last ride from the church to the cemetery in the truck on which they had worked side by side for so many hours. He was then laid to rest by loving hands in the Pleasant View Cemetery. Trusting that our loss is his eternal gain, we leave him in the hands of a merciful and loving Father.

The Family

BARTON — Michael Lynn, son of Wilmer C. and Sarah (Garber) peacefully exchanged time for eternity July 20, 2025, at the age of 79 years. His health journey began in December 2024 when a routine check-up revealed a significant loss of blood platelets. During one of his hospital stays in March, he called for the anointing. With this, he openly shared the great relief it brought and his readiness to be with the Lord. After many transfu-

sions and a blood condition unable to be diagnosed, the Lord mercifully closed his eyes in the quietness of the early morning hours at his home near Hughson, California.

Mike was born October 9, 1945, in Modesto, California. His childhood was spent growing up in the Modesto countryside. At 14, he found himself taking care of household responsibilities with his dad. This experience instilled in him a deep appreciation for daily life, which he often expressed through gratitude—always thanking his wife after every meal, a gesture fondly remembered. He graduated from Modesto High School in 1963. In 1965 he began spending time with the love of his life, Naomi Bauman. On December 25, 1965, he publicly made a confession of his faith in Jesus and was baptized into Christ. He was a faithful member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, New Conference. In January of 1966, he was called to participate in Civilian Public Service at the Camarillo State Hospital, in Camarillo, California. He continued his long-distance relationship with Naomi, marrying her on June 4, 1967. After starting their home in Camarillo, they returned to Modesto and began their family on North Avenue. In 1970 they purchased and moved to a walnut farm near Ceres, California. He was known for his hard work and dedication, and continued farming walnuts up until his passing. In 1973, he started Barton Overhead Door out

of his barn in Ceres, moving it to Carpenter Road, Modesto, in 1984. Where others hesitated, Mike created. His unique ability to see things in his mind and build them removed obstacles, allowing his work to flourish. Yet through this, he always gave the credit to the Lord. Mike was known for his straight-forward personality and kindness toward those in need. He possessed more charity and compassion than he felt he had, often humbly expressing himself as inadequate.

Mike is survived by his wife of 58 years, Naomi; his children, Heather (and James) Fultz of Ceres, California, Michael (and Lisa) Barton of Modesto, California, Heidi (and Aaron) Young of Mesa, Washington, and Jennifer (and Zane) Shellabarger of Arcanum, Ohio; 15 grandchildren, Paxton Fultz, Josie (and Justin) Flora, Tilly Fultz, Wesley Fultz, Jamin (and Laina) Barton, Landon (and Chloe) Barton, Jenessa (and Luke) Domecq, Estee (and Jesse) Jenkins, Ely Young, Sophie (and Regan) Balsbaugh, Cephas Young, Asher Young, Estella (and Cavin) Baker, Lillie Shellabarger, and Eva Shellabarger; five great-

grandchildren, Declan Barton, Kai Flora, Quincy Barton, Reid Barton, and Margot Domecq; two sisters, Karen (and John) Gilmore, and Claudia (and Rod) Flory; a brother-in-law, Vance (and Jan) Bauman; a sister-in-law, Laurel (and Brian) Balsbaugh, and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Wilmer and Sarah; parents-in-law, Weston Bauman and Lois (Dunlop-Bauman) Flory; step father-in-law, Howard Flory; brother-in-law, Ollie Johnson; and nephews, Willie Balsbaugh and Jesse Flory.

Visitation was held Thursday, July 24, 2025, at the Modesto Meeting House. On July 25 the funeral service was held at the West Modesto Meeting House, conducted by Elders Mark Grover, John Fall, and Phil Gish. The first song in the service was "Power in the blood." Immediately following, the burial was held at Wood Colony Cemetery with a few remarks shared by Elder Aaron Young. Songs were sung while the grave was being filled and ended with "God be with you till we meet again."

The Family

2025 INDEX

EDITORIAL

	<u>No.-Page</u>
Are You a Pilgrim?.....	11- 3
Compassion, An Attribute of God.....	8- 3
For Such A Time As This.....	2- 3
Is There Really Anything New?.....	1- 3
Our Identity.....	9- 3
Our Standard Of Living.....	7- 3
Summer Fruit.....	6- 3
"Time Of The Singing Of The Birds Has Come, The".....	4- 3

"Wind Ceased, And There Was A Great

Calm, The".....	3- 3
Wonder of Harvest...Again, The.....	10- 3
Wonders of Christ's Birth, The.....	12- 3
Worth Of A Soul, The.....	5- 3

FOR CHILDREN

	<u>No.-Page</u>
Four Small Things Exceeding Wise....	12-16
Meeting God.....	11-19

GENERAL

No.-Page

Acceptance 7- 9

Appreciation Of Plain Dress..... 5-14

As We Grow Older 10-20

Being With Jesus..... 10-20

Biblical Behavior—Part 12..... 2-10

Biblical Behavior—Part 13..... 3- 8

Biblical Behavior—Part 14..... 5-12

Biblical Blessings..... 5-20

Butterfly, The 8-20

Capital Punishment 11- 9

Catastrophe And Eucatastrophe..... 6-14

Christ-Centered Courtship, A—God’s
 Plan—Part 1..... 1- 7

Christ-Centered Courtship, A—Satan’s
 Snares—Part 2 2- 4

Christ-Centered Courtship, A—The Prepa-
 ration Sleep—Part 3..... 6- 4

Christ-Centered Courtship, A—The Pro-
 cess—Part 4..... 8-13

Climbing Higher 2-17

Clouds Are God’s Creation, The 8-21

Common Salvation 11- 6

Compassion, Which Is Pity and Mercy . 10-12

Danger of Social Media, The 10-18

Debt of Love I Owe, The 7- 7

Evil Imagination..... 11-13

Finding Hope For Living 6-18

Finding Hope For Living (Cont’d) 7- 4

Five Minutes In Hell 5- 4

Four Ancient, But “Woke” Traditions .. 1-16

Free Church Hypothesis, The—Part 1.. 12-10

Glorious Local Church, The..... 3-10

Godliness With Contentment 7-16

God’s Calling On Your Life..... 2- 1

Gossip 1-14

He Walks With Us..... 2-16

Hebrews: Who Is The Author? 5-16

I Corinthians 11..... 4- 6

Importance Of Daily Bible Reading And
 Prayer, The..... 2-14

Insanity of Sacrifice, The..... 9- 9

Joy No Man Can Take Away, The..... 3-18

Learning To Walk..... 1-18

Let Your Song Be Heard..... 8-10

Letter To Count Charles August..... 7-13

Little Black Prayer Book, The..... 6-11

Living In Liberty And Preventing
 Offense..... 2-12

Many Rescuers—One Savior..... 1-18

Master’s Plan, The..... 9- 4

Message, The 3- 4

Noise 12-15

Noble Thoughts..... 9-17

Nonresistance—How Anabaptists Respond
 to Evil—Part 1..... 8- 4

Nonresistance—How Anabaptists Respond
 to Evil—Part 2 9-10

Nonresistance—How Anabaptists Respond
 to Evil—Part 3 10- 4

Persuading Men 5-18

“Please, Let Me Stay!” 4-13

Salmon Cakes And Two Cups Of Tea ... 7- 9

Seeds 6-16

Smallville 11-16

Spiritual Significance of the Number
 Eight, The 9-16

Stories On Our Past History 10-10

These Meetings 10-16

True Thankfulness..... 3-20

What About the Widows?..... 9-18

What Would We Ask Jesus? 7-17

SEASONAL

No.-Page

Another Year..... 1- 6

He’s Coming 12- 7

“His Name Shall Be Called
 Wonderful!” 12- 5

In God’s Love At Christmastime 12- 8

In The Year 2025..... 1- 4

Thanksgiving 11- 4

Who Is Your Hero? 4- 4

POEMS

No.-Page

Abandoned..... 4-24

Angels In The Night..... 1-23

Baptism 2-21

Builders..... 7-24

Charity 9-23

Christmas Poem, A 12-20

Cup, The..... 4- 1

Days Like These..... 10-24

Death To Life 4-23

God 9- 1

God’s Love vs Worldly Love 7-22

God’s Surrounding Love..... 8-24

God’s Word As Water..... 5-23

Heart-Break 12-21

Home 6- 1

Hope 6-22

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say 10-24

In The Carpenter’s Shop..... 7-24

It Came Upon A Midnight Clear 12-18

Kneeling Camel, The..... 9-22

Little Star, The..... 12-22

Living For Others..... 3-22

Manna 11-22

Moment In The Morning, A 3- 1

My Heart Is Fixed 11-24

Nation’s Independence, A 7- 1

Only One Life 1- 1

Our Share In Calvary 7-23

Path Ahead, The 5-24

Peace	8-24
Prayer.....	8-23
Prayer for General Peace.....	11- 1
Profit Or Loss.....	7-25
Real Joy, The.....	2-21
Refugee.....	12- 1
"Rise Up and Build"	9-22
"Rock of Ages," The	8- 1
Sixth Sunday After Epiphany	2-20
Sowing And Reaping.....	7-23
Stepping Ashore.....	3-24
Success	11-23
Take My Life, And Let It Be.....	7-22
Tears In Heaven	5-23
Tenant, The.....	4-25
The Tongue	3-23
This Age	11-23
This Is The One.....	12-19
Tomorrow's Way	7-21
Truth (from "The Battlefield")	10-24
Unseen Bridge, The	8-24
Watch The Lamb.....	4-22
We Plow The Fields	10- 1
What A Day That Will Be.....	7-23
What Is A Mother?.....	5- 1
When We Get To Heaven, You And I ...	3-24
Words	11-23

OBITUARIES**No.-Page**

Angle, Mark William	12-23
Balsbaugh, Donald Dean	7-26
Barnhart, Norma Jean	3-27
Barton, Michael Lynn.....	12-24
Benedict, Marlin David.....	11-26

Boone, Marlene Kay	10-26
Boone, Ralph King.....	2-22
Boone, Samuel Mordecai.....	7-26
Bowman, Eldon Lee.....	1-26
Bowman, Evelyn Ilene	4-26
Boyd, Lynette Sue	11-26
Brubaker, Gary L.	5-24
Cook, Ralph Clarence.....	8-25
Cover, Leslie Eugene.....	6-23
Denlinger, Thomas Arlen.....	1-24
Edgecomb, Russell Owen	9-27
Flora, David E.	4-25
Flora, Eula Jane.....	3-26
Flory, Howard dean.....	9-25
Garber, Ray Meyers	4-26
Gish, Roger Lee	2-25
Haney, Roger Lee	9-24
Hess, Rachel Mae	6-27
Hubbard, Leonard Samuel.....	2-26
Kelley, Irene Louise	3-25
Lavy, Carl Elvin.....	11-25
Lavy, Reta Kay	10-25
Metzger, Ellen Josephine	6-25
Miller, Charles David.....	2-24
Miller, Curtis Lynn	6-26
Miller, William "Bill" Charles	5-25
Mohler, James (J.D.) David.....	2-24
Mohler, John Martin	5-26
Root, Richard "Rick" Eugene	8-26
Rumble, Phyllis Liana.....	8-26
Schaurer, Raymond Lee	10-25
Shellabarger, Stanley Dean	11-24
Sprenkel, Nancy Eleanor	9-26
Yoder, Doloris Mae.....	1-26
Yost, Janette Mae.....	2-22

Terms

Subscriptions should be made through the congregational contact or through *The Testimony* office. Subscription price is \$30.00 per year. New subscriptions should be paid (prorated) through the remainder of the current year. All renewals begin at the first of the calendar year. Newly married and those unable to pay for a subscription may receive a free subscription through the agent of their local congregation.

Contributors

Authors of essays, devotionals, poems, etc. are asked to review the Statement of Purpose on the back page of this periodical. Articles should

be based on Scripture. References are appreciated. Shorter focused articles are more desirable than articles that move from one topic to another. Selected material will be considered. Original writings are preferred. It is recommended that writers submit themselves to the Spirit, which reveals the will of God to the Church in every age, according to the varied needs and circumstances.

Written articles should be legible. Typed material is preferred and should be double-spaced. Electronic transmission or CD will be accepted. The author's name and address must be included on all material. An attempt will be made to contact the author of articles that are not accepted.

Old German Baptist Brethren
Church—New Conference

THE TESTIMONY

353 Billman Rd.
New Paris, OH 45347-9102

The Testimony is a Christian publication intended for those who desire nourishment in their spiritual walk, and for writers who wish to express witness to the Truth of the Gospel as experienced in their own lives. It holds the Holy Scriptures to be its only Creed. Its purpose is to bear witness to the Truth of God's Word as it is applied in the daily life of committed Christians. It supports the anabaptist and pietist foundations of the Brethren of Schwarzenau, Germany (1708) including the biblical principle of the community of believers bound by a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus confirmed by adult immersion baptism (Mark 16:16). It strives to promote a life of true living piety among all who confess Jesus as their Lord. It seeks to restore and maintain

a fellowship of true primitive Christianity through the communication of all good things.

Send all communication to:

The Testimony

353 Billman Rd.

New Paris, OH 45347-9102

Phone: (937) 604-9464

thetestimony@emypeople.net

The Testimony Committee

Lowell Miller, Editor

Phil King

Tim Deaton

Grant Fullmer

Rusty Flora

Associate Editors

Marcus Miller

Darryl Filbrun