

# THE TESTIMONY

...of thy mouth." Psalm 119:88

VERSE OF THE MONTH

*"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness..." Isa. 61:10*

Vol. XV

April 2024

No. 4

## REJOICE IN THE LORD!

*Philippians 4:4-9 "... think on these things."*

When my head is bowed in sorrow, and my heart is dull with life,  
And the Christian walk seems listless; little victory in the strife.  
Then with prayer immersed in Scripture I begin to take a look  
At the blessings God has given and the treasures in His Book.

Then my eyes begin to widen, and my tears begin to dry  
And my mind again transfigured to a song and not a sigh.  
I rejoice in God my Savior and His great love for us all,  
For the way He reaches down and lifts us upward when we fall.

For His sweet design in saving through His great atonement plan,  
So that we, hopelessly wretched, can have life and hope again,  
It is quite beyond our cunning—His restoring work in men,  
How He cleanses and redeems us! How He wants to be our Friend.

O, rejoice in God our Savior! He's the lifter of our head!  
He can lift the hands, low hanging, and can raise us from the dead,  
He can cleanse the sin which stains us, wash us daily when we fail,  
Give us peace in troubled waters, and protect us in the gale.

Halleluiah, what a Savior! Lift your heart in praise and song!  
Let the memory of His goodness thrill you as you walk along—  
Meditate on all His favors! Fill your thought-life with His Word,  
Let your countenance be joyful! Speak the things you've seen and heard!

There are those who may be seeking, looking for a way of peace,  
Let them know by word and conduct, that there is a sweet release;  
Full release from every burden, found in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
When we look to Him as Savior, in obedience to His Word.

Give your heart to Him, O People! Full devotion day by day!  
Let Him lift your mind and spirit to the joys along the way!  
Let not burdens take away the joys His Spirit will afford!  
Think good thoughts of truth and virtue! O, rejoice in Christ the Lord!

Lowell Miller

# THE TESTIMONY

## CONTENTS

|                                          |              |
|------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>FRONT COVER</b>                       | <b>1</b>     |
| REJOICE IN THE LORD!.....                | 1            |
| <b>EDITORIAL</b>                         | <b>3</b>     |
| A TIME TO FEAST .....                    | 3            |
| <b>SEASONAL</b>                          | <b>4</b>     |
| AN ANGEL SAT UPON THE STONE .....        | 4            |
| <b>GENERAL</b>                           | <b>6</b>     |
| JOHN 15 .....                            | 6            |
| BIBLICAL BEHAVIOR (PART 4).....          | 8            |
| “GREET ALL THE BRETHREN” (PART 2) .....  | 9            |
| CHRIST—TRADITIONAL OR PROGRESSIVE? ..... | 15           |
| IS ONE THE WORST NUMBER? .....           | 18           |
| <b>MEDITATIONS</b>                       | <b>20</b>    |
| <b>QUESTIONS TO PONDER</b>               | <b>20</b>    |
| <b>GENERAL ITEMS</b>                     | <b>21</b>    |
| <b>POEMS</b>                             | <b>1, 22</b> |
| <b>OBITUARIES</b>                        | <b>24</b>    |



**“Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: Come...”**

**Matt. 22:4**

## EDITORIAL

**A TIME TO FEAST**

Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Solomon goes on to say that there is a time for many things which are opposites. We conclude that there is also a time to feast and a time to fast. Feasting can be taking part in an elaborate large meal, or enjoying some special pleasure, or delight.

When is the time for feasting? Many times, it occurs at a time of celebration or remembrance. Most of us have probably enjoyed a time of feasting with our families and friends during Thanksgiving and Christmas, or other special times. Harvest time is usually another time of feasting—when we can enjoy the fruit of the earth that God has blessed us with.

God instituted seven feasts for the children of Israel—three in early spring, one in later spring, and three more in the fall. All of these feasts fell at some time of harvest—the early spring feasts were at barley harvest, the late spring feast was the beginning of summer wheat harvest, and the fall feasts were at grape harvest. They all remembered some past event, and they all looked forward to some future fulfillment. For example, the first feast, Passover, was to remember their deliverance from Egypt, and had its later fulfillment when Christ gave His life and became our Passover. The

Feast of First Fruits, at the beginning of barley harvest, was a time of thankfulness and to remember to give God the first and the best of that which was reaped. The last feast, Tabernacles, was to remember when the children of Israel dwelt in booths after they left Egypt. These feasts are still enjoyed by Jewish families today as they gather together for meals and family time. And they are all God's feasts, set at His appointed times.

Springtime reminds us of the upcoming Love Feasts. These are usually held in the spring and in the fall, near the time when God's feasts are held. A Love Feast is a joyous time, a solemn time, and a time of celebration. It's a time when the family of God assembles to remember Christ's suffering and death for us. We feel God's love, and share this love and fellowship with one another as we partake of the ordinances of God's house and share meals together.

There have been many, many, feasts since the beginning of time—some to the glory of God, and some not. There is another one of God's feasts to be enjoyed sometime in the future. It, too, is set at His appointed time, and no one knows the time of it. The Bride of Christ is looking forward to that feast, when we will be united in marriage to Jesus, and enjoy that marriage supper with Him. It will be a glorious meal and time of fellowship with the Lord and all

His saints! We truly anticipate that marriage supper of the Lamb, but...

We ask again, "When is the time for feasting?" It is today! Today, and every day! We can have a feast and true fellowship with the Lord any time! Let us partake of that "Bread of Life." We can feast upon His Word. There is so much contained therein; it is like a giant smorgasbord! We can bask in His love, and experience that close relationship of Him dwelling in us, and we in Him. We can rise above the cares of this world and enjoy the sweet fellowship of resting in Jesus! This is the greatest and most important feast—our day-to-day living. "And the Spirit and the

bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

*Jesus has a table spread,  
Where the saints of God are fed,  
He invites His chosen people,  
"Come and dine."*

*With His manna He doth feed,  
And supplies our every need;  
O 'tis sweet to sup with Jesus  
all the time!*

*"Come and dine," the Master calleth,  
"Come and dine."*

*You may feast at Jesus table  
all the time;*

*He who fed the multitude,  
Turned the water into wine,  
To the hungry calleth now,  
"Come and dine."*

Darryl Filbrun

## SEASONAL

### AN ANGEL SAT UPON THE STONE!

*And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.  
(Matt. 28:2)*

Jesus came to earth—  
even as the prophets of God had  
said He would.

He preached the Gospel to the poor, healed the broken hearted, brought deliverance to the captives, healed blinded eyes and hearts, and liberated the bruised and broken—  
even as the prophets of God had  
said He would.

He died a painful ignominious and shameful, disgraceful death,  
a death by crucifixion—  
even as the prophets of God had  
said He would.

They killed Him!

As though that was not enough,  
they drained His life blood.

As though that was not enough,  
they laid Him in a rock-bound tomb.

As though that was not enough,  
they covered the door to the tomb  
with a stone.

As though that was not enough,  
they sealed the stone fast to the  
door to make it sure.

As though that was not enough,  
they set soldiers to guard the entrance to the tomb.

But they failed to secure the exit!

On First-day morning, at dawn, certain women went to the tomb "to see the sepulchre." They intended to embalm His body, so hastily entombed after the crucifixion. But there was no need for costly spices, for frankincense, for myrrh, and for nard. In the night, as it dawned toward the First-day, there was an earthquake. I don't know if anyone felt it or heard it. I don't think it was necessary for an earthquake to roll the stone away. I think the earthquake was a manifestation of the power of God through the coming of an Angel messenger. In the midst of it all though, a messenger of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and the stone was rolled back from the door. The soldier-watch all fell back as dead men. Pilate's seal was broken. The stone rolled back at the touch of the angel's hand. Instantly the tomb was emptied of its lifeless charge. The body of Jesus Christ was raised from mortality to the Spirit world, back again to its Divine form, but without blood—for the Blood had been shed for the sins of the human race.

Victory! Victory over death on the cross. Victory over Hades, the place of lost and departed souls. (Heretofore all souls were lost.) Victory over the stone-cold tomb. Victory represented by an angel sitting there upon the stone!

In Psalm 98:1 we read, "O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

### **Victory!**

*An angel of the Lord descended.  
Powers of Death and Hell all ended.  
The Grave could not contain the Son  
The Son of God, the Holy One.  
An Angel sat upon the stone.  
Victory o'er sin was won.  
No more could man be lost in Hell.  
For Jesus rose and all was well.*

*Oh, Garden of Gethsemane,  
Where Jesus strove for you and me.  
Oh, Calvary where Jesus died,  
Where Christ our Lord was crucified.  
Oh, rockbound tomb where Jesus lay,  
Oh, dawning of Eternal Day!  
Come, power of Heaven, for sin atone.  
Oh, angel sitting on a stone.*

*His countenance was lightning bright!  
His raiment, as the snow, was white!  
"Fear not! Ye seek the crucified.  
The one who suffered, bled, and died.  
He's risen! See where once He lay.  
But now there dawns another day.  
Go quickly, now. The others tell,  
Of Jesus' victory over Hell."*

*So, when the open door they see,  
And Jesus gone to Galilee,  
They left the tomb with joy and fear,  
To tell the others far and near,  
That Jesus Christ is risen indeed—  
The captives of the grave all freed.  
While Jesus sat upon the Throne—  
An angel sat upon the stone.*

Marcus Miller

## GENERAL

**JOHN 15**

This chapter is in the context of Jesus teaching. All the words are in red, all Jesus' words. It is a rich chapter, precious words of life.

The chapter can be outlined as follows:

- 1) Vs. 1–11: The relationship of Believers to Christ.
- 2) Vs. 12–17: The relationship of Believers to Each Other.
- 3) Vs. 18–25: The relationship of Believers to the World.
- 4) Vs. 26–27 (in the context of 16:1–15): The promise of the Holy Spirit.

The analogy of The Vine and branches is the setting Jesus uses to describe the relationship of the believer to Jesus Himself. He starts out with an “I Am” statement (one of seven found in John’s Gospel) stating that He is the true vine. Jesus uses many pictures and analogies in Scripture: shepherd and sheep, the cornerstone and a building, etc. Jesus states He is the “true vine.” Please read Isaiah 5:1–7 and Psalm 80:1–19. God planted a vine, “a choice vine”—“Israel.” He expected fruit from His beautiful vine, but it brought forth fruit that was unfit and it didn’t ultimately glorify Him. Jesus is the true spiritual authentic vine.

Israel was susceptible to unbelief and disobedience in temptation. When planting a vineyard,

many times the root stock is native to the soil and the branch varieties are grafted into the root stock. So the diseases and pestilences that the native root stock are immune to do not harm the branches. Jesus isn’t affected by “the curse.” He is the genuine and true vine. Grafting is an extremely interesting topic. The vinedresser knows where to cut the vine (root stock) to graft in the new variety. The root stock when waking up in the spring is a tremendously powerful source, bringing moisture and nutrients out of the ground. Often when grafting, the vinedresser will cut into the rootstock a third on each side, leaving a third in the middle, to avoid drowning out the new graft. The cuts of the vinedresser to attach the new scion are interesting as the goal is a good fit and it is wrapped with grafting tape to protect it. Soon, the buds on the scion are pushing forth into shoots on the cane, and the branches start to flourish.

God is the vinedresser. A vinedresser is someone who understands all the aspects of a vineyard. Preparing the soil, planting the vine, grafting the variety, pruning and training the structure, watering, fertilizing, are all a part of His work. Also inspecting

for harm, protecting from frost, pruning for proper spacing for this year's crop, thinking ahead for the future crops, harvesting, and many more tasks are a part of a vineyard's success.

Picture a vinedresser intimately and tenderly working with the vine up close, using wisdom to know how many buds to leave, considering the spacing of the leaves for shade, yet allowing the right amount of sunlight in, and open enough for good air circulation. Our Father in heaven is all wise and experienced in nurturing the vine. He created the vine, He loves the vine. The fruit from this vine glorifies Him!

The vinedresser does the pruning. Only in the hands of the vine dresser are the shears. Verse 2 says "he" takes away and "he" prunes it. Notice verse 2 says the vinedresser "removes the fruitless" and "prunes the fruitful." Only the vinedresser has the wisdom to know the difference. The fruitless are removed, gathered, and burned. The fruitful are pruned to bring forth more fruit and much fruit. The fruit bearing is proof we are attached to the vine. The branch can not bear fruit of itself. We are to abide in the vine. Verses 9–10 tells us how to abide in the vine. Answered prayer is a benefit that abiding brings. Pruning isn't painless, but afterward it yields

fruit. (See Hebrews 12: 5–11; especially verse 11.)

Many more thoughts could be added in the analogy of the vine and branches and vineyards that have spiritual application, but I will leave that for your meditation and prayer.

The fruit from the vine is love. And the taste of the fruit of love is joy! (vs. 9–11) Fruit is pretty to look at, but the flavor is only experienced by crushing. The "wine press" reveals the taste of the vine and the fruit. The fruit of the vine is the fruit of the Spirit. The nature of God flows through the vine to the fruit.

Our relationship to each other is love (vs. 12–17). Jesus here teaches us that the fruit and taste of love is key to our abiding in the vine with each other.

Our relationship with the world is different. The world is not attached to the vine. The fruit it produces is hate which is mentioned several times in verses 18–25. We are to expect persecution but still taste like love and joy in it all. This glorifies the Father, the Vine-dresser! We are not to love the world. But we are to love people and show them (demonstrate) God's love.

May we abide in The Vine.

Aaron Garber

## BIBLICAL BEHAVIOR

### Part 4

*“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).*

This is a continuation of an article from last month. The purpose of this article is to provoke thoughts as to how we as born-again believers should behave. In doing so, it is not our intent to lose sight of the basis of behavior, which is belief. Belief dictates behavior. I offer the following axioms:

1. All behavior is based on a belief.
2. Lasting behavioral change always starts in the mind.
3. When people genuinely change, it's because their beliefs changed first.
4. Changing your behavior without changing your belief is not true change at all. This is why Paul says “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

As we mentioned before, the apostles used the word “conversation” to describe behavior. In the Greek it is the word *anastrophe* which means behavior. *Anastrophe* is rooted in *anastrepho* which means to turn, or to turn oneself about. This implies the idea that godly behavior is a turning away from a direction you were once going, and going in a

different direction. This is the essence of repentance—a change of your mind and direction of your life. Turning away from sin, self and the world, and turning toward Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and heaven.

We are continuing to look at some of the verses that call us to godly behavior and give some practical encouragement for your consideration. Because the Word of God is quick (living), we will, no doubt, only touch a fraction of the depth and meaning of each verse. The next verse we will consider is found in Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:22: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...”

Behavior that originates from the old man is behavior that fails to recognize that the old man has been crucified. Imagine you lived a normal life, full of all the normal things humans do. You learned to walk and talk, went to school, graduated, got married, had children, began building a career, etc. When you were 27 years old, you were in a bad accident and fell into a coma. Doctors didn't expect you to live, yet seven months later you woke up and began recovering physically. However, your mind was blank regarding your past. You didn't know your name, your parents, your wife, or your children. You had no idea what your career was about. As you under-

went therapy, you were taught who you were, who your loved ones were, and what your vocation had been. Imagine this. I'm pretty sure you would begin to think about your life in two segments, before the accident and afterward. This is merely an illustration, but it conveys what happened to us at conversion. There was “before” in Adam, and “after” in Christ. When we came into relationship with Christ our old family-identity wrapped up in Adam, was wiped away. In the redemptive operation of God, we were placed into a new family that was wrapped up in Christ. Just as we would need to rely on those who knew the truth to help us relearn everything about our life, we have to rely on the truth of Scripture, to help us learn who we are now. Along with this comes the reality that since our identity has changed, we ought to behave consistent with our new identity. Many of us are familiar with the Royal Family of England. In the recent past, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, have decided they don't want to live in accordance with their identity in the Royal Family. They have purposefully and willfully asked to be excused. This is in the reverse of our illustration but it shows the same idea. Identity affects behavior. The difference between the illustration of the coma and our experience is, that even though our old identity is wiped away, our memories of it

weren't. This is why Paul urges us to reckon, or continue to remember that our identity has indeed changed (Rom. 6:11). Paul also urges us to forget those things that are behind (Phil. 3:13b).

Until next time, may you truly realize your old identity is dead, reminding you to behave in accord with who you are in Christ!

Grant Fullmer

## “GREET ALL THE BRETHREN”

### Part 2

#### Relevance of the Holy Kiss

“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss!” In Part 1 of our study, we looked at the context and scriptural basis for the practice of kissing among God's people, particularly the New Testament teachings for Christians to greet one another with a “Holy Kiss.” We now enter into the question of RELEVANCE and ask: is the Holy Kiss simply a denominational or cultural tradition, or does it remain as a relevant scriptural teaching intended to be practiced among Christians in our day? And if we consider this practice as still relevant, can we explain to others why it is still applicable? Are we giving our own children a clear understanding and an apprecia-

tion for the Holy Kiss, or is the idea of practicing a Holy Kiss somehow embarrassing or awkward for us?

Carnal sensuality among many contemporary cultures around us perverts any real concept of chaste affection; such cultures have no real understanding of Christian love, nor appreciation for the teachings of God's Word! Nevertheless, we are called to walk faithfully before our God, sharing the Gospel of His Son with a dying world; and as we accept that calling to faithfulness, it seems good to ask one another once more: "Is this practice still relevant for our day?" Is greeting one another with a literal Holy Kiss truly still fitting? Or is it a hindrance to our Christian witness to the world, especially since many other Christian people do not practice it? Should we consider a different form of greeting? Let us look briefly at two specific questions; first, how has the practice of the Holy Kiss been viewed by Christian people throughout the history of the Church, and secondly, what are some contemporary objections against this practice?

### **THE HOLY KISS THROUGHOUT HISTORY**

The Church of Jesus Christ is commonly understood to have been established during the First Century, most formally when the Holy Spirit descended with tongues of holy fire on the day of Pentecost;

we shall begin from that event with a very abbreviated review of the practice of the Holy Kiss among Christians down through the next two thousand years of history.

The First Century (comprised of the years 1–100 A.D.) was the era in which the Scriptures were first delivered to the churches, being the time of those events recorded in the New Testament; here we find five instances of Holy Spirit-inspired, apostolic teaching that Christians should extend a literal "holy kiss" with fellow believers. The first of these instances is found in Romans 16:16 ("Salute one another with an holy kiss."), followed by I Corinthians 16:20 ("Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."), II Corinthians 13:12 ("Greet one another with an holy kiss."), I Thessalonians 5:26 ("Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss."), and I Peter 5:14 ("Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity."); from these Scriptures, we find specific instructions regarding a "holy kiss," a "kiss of charity," to "greet one another," and to "greet all the brethren."

From the Second Century (100–200 A.D.), we find records and teachings from among the early churches which detail the practice of the Holy Kiss among the believers, aiding us as we seek to answer the question of, "How did the first Christians and early churches apply this?"

Justin Martyr (150 A.D.) was a Christian apologist who repeatedly addressed the ongoing practice of the Holy Kiss somewhere around fifty to seventy years after the first apostolic injunctions. His writings inform us that the Holy Kiss was commonly extended between believers both after times of corporate prayer and before partaking of communion; he also recorded specific examples of how, as a Christian would enter into a different congregation where they were not personally known, they would extend a Holy Kiss to others present in order to identify themselves as a fellow believer. Thirty years after Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Athenagoras were two more Second Century church leaders who wrote around 180 A.D., warning Christians to use the Holy Kiss in a chaste manner and with closed mouth, specific instructions that would have been irrelevant if the Holy Kiss was no longer continuing to be practiced among the churches.

The Third Century (200–300 A.D.) provides still more evidence for the practice of the Holy Kiss among Christians in locations across the known world of the day, including writings from locations such as Rome, Athens, Alexandria, Carthage, North Africa, Asia Minor, and Syria; similarly, men such as Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian and others recorded how the Holy Kiss was used between bap-

tized Christians, at the end of prayers, in conjunction with communion, at baptism ceremonies, and with ordinations. The Fourth Century (300–400 A.D.) brought some changes to this practice through what is sometimes termed the “Constantinian Shift,” whereby the Roman emperor Constantine found it expedient to legalize the previously marginalized and persecuted Christian faith, eventually seducing the leadership of the Church to gradually move away from the simplicity of early Christian practice and take on wealth, power, and authority as they mingled with the reigning empire. It was during this era that the use of the Holy Kiss began to wane into formality and ritual, though there were still warnings about restricting the salutation to the same gender, warnings which demonstrated that the Kiss was still being practiced among Christians to some extent.

The following 1,000 years are variously known as the Dark Ages or the Middle Ages, a time when scriptural practices like the Holy Kiss lessened as the mingling of Church and State increased. This era also bore witness to the rise of the feudal system and an increasing gap between the wealthy and common people, resulting in a rise of ignorance and superstition whereby church leaders were able to limit the Scriptures to languages like Latin and Greek,

thereby maintaining control over the uneducated populace; nevertheless, there are still references from across this time period referring to the use of the Kiss among various Christian groups, such as the Albigenses, Waldensians, and others.

Around the year 1440, a German named Johannes Gutenberg invented a moveable type printing press which, over the next two centuries (commonly referred to as the Reformation era), allowed Bibles to begin to flow back into the hands and hearts of the common people. As many began to read the Scriptures in their own languages, often for the first time, conviction and revival began to break out in various areas! As many rediscovered and recommitted to a literal, simple obedience to the teachings of that Word, one of the things which began to be taught once more was the practice of a Holy Kiss, particularly by such movements as the Anabaptists and Radical Pietists from whom church fellowships, such as our own, have originated. As a result of the willingness of such men and women to stand faithfully upon the Word of God and its teachings, even to the point of exile or martyrdom at times, various Plain/Anabaptist churches, Apostolic churches, and even some Baptist groups, as well as many Orthodox churches and some Catholics (though more commonly

in a formal setting among their leadership) continue to faithfully practice a literal Holy Kiss in some fashion.

## CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN OBJECTIONS

From this brief review, we see how the Holy Spirit-inspired, Apostolic teaching of the Holy Kiss has continued among Christians in one form or another since the First century, yet we also recognize that the majority of Christian churches (especially in the West) no longer engage in this practice. In view of this variety of practice among different churches today, it behooves us to soberly consider some of the objections given by sincere Christian people who have long been taught that the Holy Kiss is no longer a relevant or beneficial practice for churches in the Twenty-First century.

**Objection #1** — The first and perhaps most common objection we encounter, not only against the Holy Kiss but about various other literal scriptural teachings as well, is the claim that “the principle is all that matters.” Generally speaking, this seems to be the default position found among the majority of American churches and Bible teachers, as well as many Bible commentaries, study Bible “notes,” podcasts, sermons, and other media used for teaching. From this context, the New Testament practice of the Holy Kiss is

often described as having simply been a First Century Middle Eastern form of greeting which can (or should) be discarded/replaced with contemporary forms of greeting, such as friendly handshakes, warm hugs, or other contemporary means.

However, if we believe that all Scripture has been given by Divine inspiration, that the Apostles wrote nothing carelessly or without purpose, and that the Scriptures specifically instruct Christians to greet each other with a literal Holy Kiss, rather than simply to embrace or extend greetings to one another (for there are other generic terms used in the Scriptures), and we also have the witness of the Holy Kiss among different cultures, countries, and across the centuries, then we understand that the Christian Salutation is intended to be practiced with a literal kiss, rather than by whatever forms of greeting are currently in vogue with the predominant culture around us! Certainly, we ought to keep the principle, but this does not grant Christians the liberty to lay aside literal practices as delivered in the Word of God.

Again, we ask the question: is the practice of the Holy Kiss still relevant for Christians in our day? Are there other forms which might fulfill the intent of the apostles' teaching? Certainly, there must be genuine love and sincere inten-

tion, yet such things do not make handshakes or hugs stand out from the normal greetings of society; in fact, unbelievers commonly greet one another in the same way: enemies shake hands, political opponents shake hands or hug one another and then promptly ridicule or demean one another! The Scriptures define the Christian mutual greeting as a literal “holy” kiss, suggesting that it is indeed something more distinct than common or contemporary forms of greeting.

Ephesians 5:10 speaks of proving (testing, showing) what is acceptable unto the Lord; do we desire to prove what is acceptable unto the Lord, or are we willing to alter or lay aside this simple practice wherever it does not fit with the whim of contemporary culture? After all, the issue laid before us is not a question of extrabiblical traditions or applications, but rather one of a simple, black-and-white, scriptural practice that transcends culture.

**Objection #2** — A second contemporary objection offered against using a literal Holy Kiss between Christians is that it is potentially offensive to others, particularly the unconverted! This is often a common reason given, not so much by those who have never used a Holy Kiss, but instead by others who wish to justify laying aside this practice! On the surface, the concern is not a wrong one, for we

should indeed be discerning as we seek to reach out to others; nonetheless, should the criteria or preferences of an unregenerate culture (or even that of other contemporary Christians) determine what makes us comfortable or how we submit to the Word of God? We never need to be embarrassed for choosing to faithfully teach and submit to the Scriptures; we read Jesus' words in John 14, where He told His disciples that if they loved Him, they would keep His commandments. In this, we are reminded that our loving obedience to Him offers a witness to a world that desperately needs to meet Him; nevertheless, we ought to be similarly conscious that, should we continue to submit to biblical practices like the Holy Kiss yet remain unconvinced of its relevance, then our children will fail to value it, they may eventually cease to pass it on, and some of the fault will lie with us!

**Objection #3** — The last objection we will consider is the claim that using a Holy Kiss is not a “salvation issue.” There seem to be two common reasons behind this particular (and often passionate) objection, the first one being that someone simply doesn't wish to submit to something for one reason or another; the logic behind this sort of refusal reduces the Bible down to a list of “Do's and Don'ts,” defining its precepts by criterion like “I Have To Do” or

“Only If I Want To Do.” This objection rests upon a serious misconception of the scripturally defined relationship between obedience and justification (that which we often call being “saved”), versus how our obedience relates to recognizing and honoring the One who has loved and saved us! Truly, He deserves our obedience out of love, honor, and gratitude, rather than from the concept that we can somehow obey Him well enough to gain sonship or Divine “brownie points!” Ultimately, is my obedience actually rooted in fear, or is it an honest result of love and gratitude for the Savior and what He has done for me?

I shall not answer the question here of whether or not a teaching such as the Holy Kiss is a “salvation issue”; I only offer this parting thought: were I to ask my son to feed the dog or perhaps to take the trash out, and he refused, because I love him and my acceptance of him as my child is not contingent upon his obedience in those particular actions, his failure to complete his chores may not cause me to reject him as my child, but it does speak a message that he is willing to place his own desire above his love or honor for me as his father.

The truth of the matter is that none of us love and honor our Heavenly Father as fully as we ought to, yet how blessed we are that, in His great love for us, He

patiently continues to call us to love Him more than we love ourselves! Choosing to dismiss (or to require) something like the Holy Kiss simply on the basis that it is not a “salvation issue” ultimately dishonors the One to whom all honor is due—our Father! So, one last time we ask the question: is the practice of the Holy Kiss still relevant for Christians in our day? On the basis of the Word of God, and from the history of faithful obedience history among His people, we can confidently affirm that it does indeed continue to be a relevant scriptural practice for Christians in the Twenty-First Century; and not only is it still relevant, but it bears a powerful testimony and offers us a tremendous blessing as we continue to submit ourselves to its practice in a spirit of humble and brotherly Christian love!

To be concluded in Part 3...

Christian Filbrun

## CHRIST—TRADITIONAL OR PROGRESSIVE? CONSERVATIVE OR LIBERAL?

Inside of Religious, Social, and Political circles, these terms are often used to describe personalities, directions, choices, or mentalities. While some negate using this terminology, I propose that these traits can be useful or destructive.

Since humans often come in combinations that don't fit into any one person's ideals, and churches tend to divide and regroup around certain combinations, they end up with two social circles constructed around certain combinations and be lacking (yes, I meant lacking) the other types. These combinations help explain why church members have very similar lifestyle choices and even dress similarly but may have different emotional responses to issues. It also explains why congregations can be strong in some areas, and weak in others.

Why consider one trait better than another? Why do we perceive one tendency as positive, and the others negative? Let's look at different areas of our lives regarding traditional, progressive, conservative, and liberal ways. I use these terms, not because they are all found in the KJV (only two are), but because they are all used in the Bible in a practical sense. Let's start with a simple definition of these terms as used for our purpose.

**Traditional:** Fond of the old ways before his/her lifetime, either in lifestyle or belief. Prefers continuity.

**Progressive:** Seeks solutions that may include innovative and new ways of doing things. Prefers novelty.

**Conservative:** Follows the “higher” conserving standards known within his/her own lifetime. Prefers security.

**Liberal:** Charitable, candid, out-

side of narrow views and prejudices. Open to see the other perspectives. Prefers beauty.

NOTE: I will not be using these terms as titles. These are thought patterns and behavioral tendencies.

If we're discussing values, would Jesus have us be traditional, or progressive? If it were obedience, would Jesus have us be traditional, or progressive? Perceptions affect our answer, so let's use examples. When Jesus was asked about marriage, He refers to Adam and Eve in Eden (Matt. 19:8). This is the traditional position. We don't get to be progressive or "update" the definition of marriage. If slavery is the topic, would Jesus be "OK" if we took the "traditional" position? Maybe progressive would be better in this case (I Cor. 7:21). I should here add that the biblical text shows us God's heart, in the Old and New Testament, as slaves were to be set free every seven years, the year of Jubilee, Paul's commands with masters and slaves, etc. Slavery was a practice the Christian church would progressively walk away from (just like polygamy), and they obey Christ better in doing so. If we're talking about charity, would Jesus have us be conservative, or liberal? Jesus said, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of

thee turn not thou away" (Matt. 5:42). Giving time, money, love, and ourselves, should be liberal. But if materialism is in question, perhaps conservative should be our choice (Luke 12:15).

The Brethren phrase, "all things in moderation," is a conservative, yet liberal, term. This explains why the Church has been accused throughout history for being too strict and too loose, too open, and too closed, very much to the right, and far too much to the left. This is why American "Christians" have never been exclusively Democrat (liberal) or Republican (conservative), and "two-kingdom" Christians aren't even political. Christianity doesn't fit into any box when lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps a few more examples would help us sort out the terminology. Concerning our values—truth, love, non-violence, marriage, family, modesty, Church ordinances (baptism, anointing, communion, etc., etc.)—shouldn't we be traditional (as defined by Christ and the apostles)? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," (Heb. 13:8). That's why these don't need innovated or "updated." Jesus declared these values all through the Gospel accounts. He was traditional. The strength of traditional types is loyalty to time-

less ways that work, be it in family values or the church. If it has always worked, it will always work.

What should we be progressive about? This would include (not limited to) loving our neighbors (or enemies) as ourselves, washing each other's feet without discrimination of race, age, nationality, social status, etc. (Acts 13:14), eating with Jews and Gentiles alike (Acts 10:28), ministering to the poor, outcast, orphan and widow (Jas. 1:27), starting new congregations, all for Jesus Christ as Lord. Progressive obedience applies to specific areas that we feel directed to obey within our own generation whether at home, church, work, or play. Christ ministered to a Syrophenician and a Samaritan, both non-Jewish women (this was taboo in "holy" Jewish tradition). He commands the Disciples to "go into all the world." Peter struggles whether to eat "unclean" meats, but God says, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). Jesus was progressive. The strength of progressives is their honesty with past mistakes and recognizing that they live in real time, not the past. They always desire improvement.

Conservative is an excellent term when considering use of the material world, like resources and technology within a consumeristic society of throwaways. Accumulation of wealth (Matt. 19:21), Mil-

waukee cordless tools (or DeWalt), phones and computers (Luke 12:15), vacations, clothing, fashion (Matt. 6:25–29), how many shoes (Mark 6:9), recreational activities, (Luke 15:13, 14), sports, hunting, sweet foods (Php. 3:19), alcohol (I Tim. 3:8), single-use plastics, etc. etc. These are some specifics where restraint or conservation would be advisable. The strength of conservatives is moral purity and abstinence from sinful, wasteful, and degenerate works and ideologies.

The liberal trait opens the possibility to see, hear, and feel our need for the Gospel and obedience to Christ. The religious (conservative) elites condemned Jesus for eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, the "scum" of society, but Jesus was a liberal in loving people (Luke 5:31, 32). For most of Christian history, liberal was the preferred choice of description used for Christ's followers by secular people. They liberally distributed their goods everywhere there was need (II Cor. 9:13), gave one another the holy kiss, loved as brethren, believed in miracles, preached the resurrection from the dead, claimed to eat and drink Christ's flesh and blood, touched lepers, ate "unclean" meats (I Tim. 4:3–5), etc. In Matthew 11:19, we see Jesus was liberal. The strengths of

the liberal include creating beauty for everyone else, charitableness with those in the wrong, and seeing people as works in progress.

These different dimensions within the church can work together in wonderful harmony, creating beauty. If clothing is conservative in modesty and traditional in practice, we will be both modest and united in witnessing. That is beautiful. Starting new districts (and baptizing any ethnicity) is both progressive and liberal, and it is beautiful! Choosing to live in simple houses and hosting our friends and neighbors without partiality is both conservative and progressive, and that is beautiful! Always having an open hand to share our resources and time with those inside or outside our church is both liberal and progressive. And that is beautiful! Choosing to be married, have children, and raise them for God is traditional (matrimony), liberal and progressive (having children) and conservative (rearing them to abstain from worldly lusts). And that is beautiful!

Our capacity for stable, truthful, and beautiful brotherhood is equal to our capacity to receive and give counsel with a brother/sister from a different perspective than ourselves. We also can change and become more balanced in our thinking and behavior. Often our default position is shaped by our

past experiences and current environments. But Christ can change us into His beautiful image.

What we really should want is all four of these at the top of their energy, in the proper place, and guided by Christ and His Church. We should appreciate the brother or sister in our church who contributes their specific strength to the Body, and learn, “moderation in all things.”

Paul Dickerson

## IS ONE THE WORST NUMBER?

The worst number in business, it seems, is the number one. That is one of the first lessons I learned in business, and I learned it well since everything was one when I started. There was only one employee and, worse than that, only one kind of customer. While we had multiple pieces of equipment, there was only one of each and it didn't take long to learn that when the machine broke down, I was out of options until it was fixed. If the only employee took a vacation or a sick day (we usually worked sick so sick days were rare in those days) then we were also out of business until I returned. Although I usually only had one dollar extra so vacations didn't inter-

fere much with the business.

This is a lesson that I have tried to remember as life has gone on! But of course, due to necessity, or the way things are, we all find ourselves with just one of something from time to time. A few years ago, we bought out a very small company that pumped septic tanks. Once again, we were reminded that one is a bad number. The truck's transmission went out and we were out of the pumping business until it was fixed. The lesson was learned again!

I was reminded of this again recently on a Friday when my coworker asked if we should brew a second pot of coffee before our morning meeting. I said, "Absolutely! I try to follow biblical principles as much as possible in the workplace!" He, a Bible scholar whom I pale against, looked a bit puzzled and sensing a joke, he said, "Is there a commandment that thou shalt be caffeinated in there somewhere?" I told him that there wasn't, but it does say that two are better than one in Ecclesiastes 4:9–12. Maybe I take the lesson that one is the worst number in business a little too seriously, but it is very comforting to know that there are two pots of coffee when entering into a long meeting.

That brought on a discussion about how awful the number one is in a business. He said there's an old prepper saying that "one is

none, two is one, and three is two!" But as we discussed this together, we agreed that there is one God who is absolutely all that we need. He is all sufficient, never sick, never on vacation, and He never grows old! Isaiah 40 compares us to grass and the flower of the field that soon withers away, but God and even His Word will last forever! Think about that. Our words soon vanish but the Word of God will outlast everything physical around us! God asks, "Who will you compare me to? What likeness can you compare me to?" This makes me think of walking into a police station and setting down in front of a sketch artist. "Can you describe him?" they ask?

But how would you start to describe our God? Could any of Him be captured by the imagination of man in its fullness? No. When it comes to our God, He is indescribable—a true one of a kind! In fact, it takes three Persons to get a sense of His essence! Truly, when it comes to God, He is all we ever need. Yes, even when we only have one old pumper truck and we are the only employee!

Now the question to ponder: When God is the head of our lives and our business, is the number one still the worst number in business?

Curtis Wray

Quote:

Saint Basil the Great (330–379 AD):

“Fling wide your doors; give your wealth free passage everywhere! As a great river flows by a thousand channels through fertile country, so let your wealth run through many conduits to the homes of the poor. Wells that are drawn from flow the better; left unused, they go foul... Money kept standing idle is worthless; but moving and changing hands it benefits the community and brings increase...”

MEDITATIONS

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem—and Gaza—and the whole earth.  
God pours in His blessings, if only we will open the windows.  
Jesus permitted Zacchaeus to keep 50% of all his increase.  
It is easier to ask for permission than for forgiveness.  
God’s purpose may be the exact opposite of mine.  
So, now do you believe God is still in control?  
Wherever we go we travel with a shadow.

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.*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Jesus prayed to the Father (John 17) that those that the Father had given Him would be kept from the evil that is in the world (vs. 15).<br/>Questions come to mind:<br/>1) How separate should I be from the evil that is in the world?<br/>2) Are there specific measures that I should take for me and for my family, to cooperate with God in this? What is His desire for us?<br/>3) Can I attend places of entertain-</p> | <p>ment and amusement? Will God think I am cooperating with Him?<br/>4) If I am entertaining myself daily with media and videos from the world’s supply, can I say that I am in agreement with Jesus’ prayer?<br/>5) Do I give thought daily to engaging in battle against evil in thought and life?<br/>6) Is the evil of the world creeping into my life little by little?<br/>7) Jesus prayed. Should I also engage?</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## GENERAL ITEMS

### BAPTISMS

Mar. 3, 2024; Bethel, OH  
Kade Denlinger

### NEW MEMBERS

Feb. 17, 2024; West Manchester, IN  
Jared and Alyssa Whitaker

### COMMUNIONS

Apr. 6, 2024 ..... Cascade Valley, WA  
Apr. 6, 2024 ..... Fair Haven, KS  
Apr. 6, 2024 ..... Mt. Zion, PA  
Apr. 13, 2024 ..... Salem, OH  
Apr. 20, 2024 ..... Caldwell, ID  
Apr. 20, 2024 ..... Shiloh, OH  
Apr. 27, 2024 ..... Bear Creek, OH  
Apr. 27, 2024 ..... Cutler Ridge, IN  
Apr. 27, 2024 ..... Sugar Grove, OH  
May 26, 2024 ..... AM, Cedarville, OH  
Jun. 22, 2024 ..... Mission Valley, MT and  
Mountain View, ID held jointly in ID  
Nov. 2, 2024 ..... Bethel, OH  
Nov. 2, 2024 ..... Columbia River, WA  
Nov. 9, 2023 ..... West Modesto, CA  
Nov. 9, 2024 ..... Shenandoah, VA

### HARVEST MEETINGS

July 14, 2024 ..... Lower Twin, OH  
July 21, 2024 ..... Bethel, OH  
July 28, 2024 ..... Shiloh, OH  
Aug. 4, 2024 ..... Maple Grove, OH  
Aug. 11, 2024 ..... Covington/Sugar Grove, OH  
Aug. 18, 2024 ..... Salem, OH  
Aug. 25, 2024 ..... Stillwater, OH  
Sept. 22, 2024 ..... Bear Creek, OH  
Nov. 28, 2024 ..... Pleasant View, OH

### 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Date and Location:** The date for Annual Conference is May 25–28, 2024, and will be held at Cedarville University, 251 N. Main St., Cedarville, OH 45314, Lord willing.

**Online Registration:** Online registration is available at [www.ogbbc.org](http://www.ogbbc.org) website. If you are planning to attend, please fill out the online registration form by March 31, 2024. If you decide to attend after this date, please submit the online registration form as soon as possible. All information will be available to pick up at check-in.

**Check-In:** Lodging committee will be available for check-in at the Stevens Student Center Friday, March 24, 2024, starting at 1:00 P.M. All who plan to stay on campus, whether staying in dorms or RV, will need to check in at the Stevens Student Center upon arrival. There will be no early check-in.

**Awareness:** For safety/liability purposes, Cedarville asks that NO ONE bring ripsticks, skateboards, roller blades, bicycles, roller skates, etc. to Conference. Note: Please use caution and diligence around the POND.

**Call-In:** The call-in number for worship services is 712-432-8773, and the Conference ID# is 201262#. This number is posted on the OGBBC website and in the Information Packet.

**Worship Services:** The first worship service is scheduled to begin at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, May 25. There will be 1–2 hymns sung prior to each service to quiet and draw the congregation to their seats. We also look forward to holding a communion service for OGBBC—New Conference members on Sunday, May 26 at 4:00 P.M.

All of us from Ohio are anticipating coming together with the brethren, friends, and all who desire to attend. We look forward to a season of fellowship, worship, and praise to our Lord and Savior, to whom be all the glory.

On behalf of the 2024 COA,

Craig Peters, Secretary

## POEMS

**FOLLOW ME!**

“Child, follow me,” the Master said,  
As He knocked full loud at my chamber door;  
But the morn was fair, and my heart was gay,  
“I’ll dally a while on the primrose way,  
And I’ll come” said I, “when the morning’s o’er.”

“Child, follow me,” the Master said,  
As He lingered patiently at the gate;  
Gray shadows were falling, the night was near;  
“Life’s joys are so sweet, and my friends so dear,  
“I will come,” said I, “when the night is late.”

“Child, follow me,” the Master cried,  
As He walked away through the darkness deep;  
And the night had fallen, and the birds were still;  
“Linger,” said I, “at the foot of the hill,  
And I’ll come when the world is hushed in sleep.”

“Master, I come,” I cried at length,  
“Heart weary to serve at thine own dear side,  
Thou hast called me long, but I come at last,”  
(But his eyes were dim and his strength was past,  
And not long could he follow the Crucified).

— Author Unknown

**AGE IS A QUALITY OF MIND**

Age is a quality of mind—If you have left your dreams behind,  
If hope is lost,  
If you no longer look ahead, if your ambitions’ fires are dead—  
Then you are old!

But if from life you take the best, and if in life you keep the jest,  
If love you hold—  
No matter how the years go by, no matter how the birthdays fly,  
You are not old!

— Author Unknown

**SUNDAY'S COMING**

She kept her quiet vigil  
In the shadow of the cross,  
A youthful, sad-eyed woman  
Weeping softly for her loss—  
**It was Friday—and her son was going to die—**

The infant she had cradled  
To her heart in other days,  
Looked down upon her anguish  
With compassion in His gaze.  
**It was Friday, and her son was going to die—**

The toddler who had laughed  
And played beside her in the sun,  
Was suffering now before her eyes,  
And nothing could be done—  
**It was Friday—and her son was going to die—**

The young boy who had brought her  
So much joy throughout the years  
Was dying as an outcast  
While she watched Him through her tears—  
**It was Friday—and her son was going to die—**

The man who hung above her  
Had done nothing wrong, she knew—  
He'd been a loving son,  
A kind and gentle person too,  
**It was Friday—and her son was going to die—**

Her mother's heart was shattered,  
But she managed to forgive—  
For she had the Father's word,  
That in three days her son would live—  
**Sunday's coming—and her son is going to rise!**

Selected by  
Susan Bowman

## OBITUARIES

**BAUMAN** — Emily Louise (Reavis) was born March 9, 1932, to the late Roy and Leona Reavis of Carroll County, Indiana, living most of her younger years in this area. She passed from this life to eternity on January 15, 2024.

Mother was baptized into Jesus Christ and joined the Old German Baptist Brethren fellowship in 1950. She shared life with five siblings: Richard (Bonnie) Reavis, Clarence (Ardis) Reavis, Morris Earl Reavis, Mary (Harley) Helmuth, and Ruth Elaine Reavis. Morris Earl was taken to Heaven on Christmas Day at the age of 15 months.

Mother married Gerald Bauman in 1951 and moved to Modesto, California. Together they raised four children and were married over 55 years until Dad's death in 2007. Mother was a teacher of various grades at Brethren Heritage school for nearly 20 years, which she greatly enjoyed. She had a gift for creativity, including writing children's stories, poems, and just recently had published her own childhood memories in a children's book she wrote. We children heard many of those memories as we were growing up. She also had a heart to encourage others and did this with a card ministry for many years. Mom prayed fervently for all of her extended family, and in her mind, would also walk through the benches at church and pray for each of the dear members there that she missed greatly.

She is survived by one son, Larry Bauman, and three daughters, Jerilyn and Rodney Schaurer, Gail and Zane Denlinger, and Merry Ashley.

In addition, there are eight grandchildren, Katie and Jeff Miller, Koby and Myron Long, Neil and Shelly Schaurer, Natalie and Rex Trogdon, Cameron and Kyrston Denlinger, Autumn and Marcus Root, Heather Denlinger, Mareena and Nick Kaufman; 25 great-grandchildren, Blake and Camryn, Clark, Regan, Luke, and Logan Miller, Reid, Anika, Bennett, and Elise Long, Alec, Klein, Eston, and Aspen Schaurer, Callen Trogdon, Pierce, Shakira, Morgen, Creed and Paisley Denlinger, Zaiden, Petra, and Grayer Root, Fenner, Willow and Huxley Kaufman; and a great-great-granddaughter, Quincy Miller.

Preceding her in death were her husband, Gerald Bauman; her parents, Roy and Leona Reavis; one sister and brother-in-law, Mary Helmuth and husband, Harley; and one brother, Morris Earl Reavis.

Mom longed for heaven, and entered her eternal home Monday, January 15, 2024, at the age of 91 years, 10 months, and six days. Her visitation and funeral were held on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at the Modesto District of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, with a burial service that followed at Wood Colony Cemetery.

Her requested topic for her service focused on Hebrews 6:18-20: "That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither

the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever..."

Her heartfelt plea was written on her memorial program: "That all would accept Jesus as Savior and know your salvation is sure." Matthew 24:44: "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." And one of her favorite hymns, "Great is Thy Faithfulness," sustained her throughout her life, especially in her final years of debilitating health.

We and our children knew we had a precious prayer warrior in our mother and grandmother. She will be greatly missed, but because of Jesus, our loss is with thankfulness her eternal gain.

#### The Family

**BOYD** — Jonathan E., 66, of rural Delphi, Indiana, passed away January 31, 2024, at IU Health Arnett Hospital, Lafayette, Indiana. He was born July 28, 1957, in Lafayette, to the late B. Wayne and M. Joan (Vore) Boyd.

His marriage was to Carmen Boyd at her parents' home in Twain Harte, California, on Jul. 28, 1978. He graduated from Mt. Baker (WA) High School in 1975. Jonathan attended Seattle (WA) University for one year. He worked in the construction industry, and was in cookware sales. He also looked forward to making and selling salsa each year. Jonathan was an avid reader and interested in learning new things. He never knew a stranger and enjoyed engaging people he would meet in conversation.

At the age of 20, Jonathan accepted Christ into his life, was baptized, and

remained faithful. He was a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church in the Deer Creek district near Camden, Indiana. As his health declined, his relationship with Jesus grew stronger and his desire for heaven increased.

Surviving are his wife and family, Stephen and Angie, Heidi and Stephen Sink, Michael and Abby, and Rebekah and Joseph Kessler; 12 grandsons, Keir, Kidren, Asher, and Klein Boyd, Kayde, Reece, Brant, and Heath Sink, and Dré, Preston. Bentley, and Tristan Kessler; sister, Melanie and Andrew Albers; brother, Martin and Brenda; brother-in-law, David Bowling; half brother, Dennis and Joretta Boyd; sisters-in-law, Rachel and Lany Salter, and Linda and Mike Crawford; and brother-in-law, Calvin Boyd.

Jonathan was also preceded in death by a sister, Anita Bowling; a brother, Michael Boyd; and a sister-in-law, Barbara Boyd.

Funeral services were held at the Deer Creek meetinghouse on February 5, with Titus Hess, Richard Skiles, Richard Cottrell, and James Bauman officiating. Hymns 453, 457, and 384 were used and the theme of "rest" was carried throughout the service. Burial was in the North Fork Old German Baptist Brethren Cemetery with Stephen Sink officiating. During this service and while filling the grave, "I'll Fly Away," hymn 260, "It Is Well with My Soul," "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be," and hymns 499, 40, and 539 were sung.

With loving hands we cared for you;  
with loving hands we released you;  
with loving hands we carried you to  
your final resting-place.

The Family

**DEATON** — Esther Louise, age 101, of West Alexandria, Ohio, passed away peacefully on Saturday, February 3, 2024. She was born October 30, 1922, in Palestine, Ohio to the late Arthur and Blanche (Sink) King. Her mother passed away when she was three years old and she was raised by her uncle and aunt, Algernon and Elizabeth (King) Wagoner. She was baptized in October 1942 into the Old German Baptist Brethren Fellowship and was a faithful example of a godly sister in Christ until the time of her death. She was married to Omer Deaton of West Alexandria on May 22, 1943, at her parents' home in Greenville. The early years of their marriage were spent in C. O. work in Maryland. They raised their family of 7 children on the farm on Jordan Road: Lloyd and Karen, Sheryl and Lila, Linda and Glen Dale Knaus, David and Linda, Barbara and Dennis Brunk, Gerald and Bonnie, and Rita Sue. She was a help meet to her husband on the farm, loved sewing and quilting, and always had her home open to those in need. After Daddy's death in 2002 she lived almost 22 years making the best of her life as a servant to others and cheerfully being a light wherever she went. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Omer; one son, Sheryl; a daughter-in-law, Linda Deaton; seven siblings, and two great-grandchildren, Jonathan Strike and Connor Frantz. She is survived by 19 grandchildren; 56 great-grandchildren, 16 great-great-grandchildren; two sisters-in-law, Dorothy Brubaker and Ruby Deaton; and numerous nieces and nephews.

The funeral services were held in the Upper Twin Meeting house on February 9, 2024, with the home brethren officiating. Words of comfort and encouragement were taken from

Revelation 21 through 22:4 with a theme of "A Home in Heaven." She was laid to rest at the Sugar Grove Cemetery, West Alexandria, Ohio.

The Family

**DENLINGER** — Lowell Edward Denlinger, son of Ramon and Esther (Landis) Denlinger, was born on February 28, 1952, in Montgomery County, Ohio. He peacefully departed this life at Ohio's Hospice of Miami County on February 11, 2024, to his heavenly home at the age of 71 years, 11 months, and 14 days. He was united in marriage to Diana Sue Avery on June 26, 1971. They enjoyed 40 wonderful years together until Mom's passing on December 7, 2011.

On December 2, 1973, answering the call of the Spirit, Dad was baptized, receiving Christ as his Savior. He was a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church—New Conference, Maple Grove congregation.

On September 16, 2012, Dad was united in marriage to Rebecca Irene Brunk. They were blessed with 11 years together.

In June of 2021, Dad was diagnosed with bladder cancer which he courageously fought for the next 2½ years. Just before his bladder surgery in November 2022, Dad received the anointing, from which he received much comfort, resigning himself to the Lord's will. He patiently endured the many physical trials that came with his illness, always displaying a positive attitude and hopeful spirit.

He was preceded in death by his father and mother; his first wife; his father-in-law, Jim Avery; and his sister, Barbara Boyd. He is survived by his wife, Rebecca; his two daughters, Lori Bowman and husband Belden, Tara Cottrell and husband Rex; seven

grandchildren, Brandon and Sydney Bowman, Regan Bowman, Kristin Bowman, Lani and Clayton Rapp, Payton and Forrest Shellabarger, Lexie and Zach Brubaker, and Hunter Cottrell; six great-grandchildren, Barrett, Ronan, and Kolton Bowman, and Amity, Arlo, and Freeman Shellabarger, who brought him much joy and happiness. Also surviving are his mothers-in-law, Betty Avery and Wilma Brunk; two brothers, Roland and Janet Denlinger, and Randy and Paula Denlinger; brother-in-law, Calvin Boyd; sister, Leann and Norman Trochelman; two sisters-in-law, Peggy and Gary Sattlemeyer and Dixie and Mike Denlinger; brothers-in-law, Mark and Kim Brunk and Levi Brunk; sisters-in-law, Helen and Paul Barton and Esther Brunk; and many other nephews, nieces, cousins, and special friends.

Dad was a very hard worker and his love of construction led him to starting Dalo Construction in 1974, retiring in 2021. He spent many winters on the Florida Keys, enjoying fishing and warm weather, and traveling many places in his motorhome. He

loved the little people in his life and enjoyed making doll houses and barns for them. Dad was a giver in many ways and was always willing to help where needed. He was a very social person and enjoyed making new relationships wherever he went. He was known for his love of life, his energetic spirit, and touched many people with his friendly personality.

Dad will be greatly missed by his family, friends, and neighbors. While we were not yet ready to let Dad go, the Lord answered our prayers for release from pain and for a perfect healing. We will praise the Lord for His perfect plan.

Visitation was held Wednesday, February 14, 2024, from 1–5 P.M. and 6–8 P.M. at Trostel, Chapman, Dunbar and Fraley Funeral Home in New Carlisle, Ohio. The funeral service was held Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 10:00 A.M. at Maple Grove Old German Baptist Brethren Church by elder Larry Bower and the home brethren. Burial followed at the Maple Grove Cemetery.

The Family

## 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](mailto:thetestimony@emypeople.net)

---

### **The Testimony Committee**

Lowell Miller, Editor  
Dean Kinsley  
Phil King  
Tim Deaton

### **Associate Editors**

Marcus Miller  
Darryl Filbrun