

THE TESTIMONY

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

VERSE OF THE MONTH

"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land..." Song 2:11-12

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THERE IS GLADNESS EVERYWHERE

The ships glide in at the harbor's mouth,
And the ships sail out to sea,
And the wind that sweeps from the sunny south,
Is sweet as sweet can be.

There's a world of toil and a world of pains,
And a world of trouble and care,
But, Oh, in a world where our Father reigns,
There is gladness everywhere.

The harvest waves in the breezy morn
And the men go forth to reap;
The fullness comes to the tasseled corn
Whether we wake or sleep,
And, far on the hills by feet untrod,
There are blossoms that scent the air
For, Oh, in this world of Our Father God
There is beauty everywhere.

Margaret Sangster

Selected by
Alice Mae Haney

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EDITORIAL

ACCOUNTABILITY

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6:1

A simple definition for accountability is: "When we make mistakes, (and we all do) we want to know, so that we might fix them." By human nature we don't like to admit we make mistakes. So, when confronted we blame circumstances, or someone or something else, taking no personal responsibility. As a result, we make no change, continuing in error—sometimes to our own detriment.

The purpose of the yearly "deacons' visit" is to take us back to our baptism when we made a covenant with God, joining ourselves to the fellowship of Saints. To help us renew that covenant we are asked, "Are you willing to receive and give counsel according to Gospel order?" We must not take that question lightly. It affirms a willingness to make ourselves accountable to one another in our Christian walk. This level of accountability is extremely humbling. Firstly, we must recognize our fallibility. We make mistakes. We must be willing to put our soul into the hands of someone we trust and love—accountability. Secondly, we are saying that we will humbly assume our obligation to support others in their spiritual walk.

Scripturally, it is essential that this process apply only to those events which biblically endanger

the salvation of souls. Even when applied scripturally, human nature denies that we have made a mistake. Often our first response, when a mistake is brought to our attention (when we are held accountable), is to bristle, to deny, and to attack the one who should have our salvation at heart. In a word, we are refusing to receive counsel. On the second level of this process our tendency is to retreat from our responsibility. In so doing we fail to meet the need of a brother offering himself for accountability. As a result, that brother might continue in error to the detriment of his soul. Both the receiving and the offering of counsel are scriptural obligations. The willingness to do so is humbling, but this may be the reason we shrink from these obligations. Humility is painful to most of us.

The New Testament enjoins upon us the responsibility to receive and give counsel. Scripture instructs us to "caution," "to reprove gently," "warn," "implore," "beseech," "entreat," "pray," "exhort," "admonish," and even to "rebuke" if necessary. Do these words raise our hackles? Or do they humble us, realizing our responsibility of accountability to one another.

We must not neglect scriptural injunctions simply because of past abuses. This editorial is to humbly "admonish" brothers and sisters to feel the obligation laid upon us to humbly "receive and give counsel according to Gospel order."

Marcus Miller

GENERAL

A MODEL FROM JOHN 4*“Give me to drink.”*

As we see the first words spoken by Jesus in the fourth chapter of John, we see unfolding a beautiful example of human interaction for the Gospel’s sake. We see Jesus traveling between two focused points of ministry. Being wearied (vs. 6), He stops to sit by a wayside well. He was in a suspect area according to Jewish stigma, and probably it was a little unusual that a Jewish man would take time to just rest in the area of Samaria. The well, Jacob’s well, of significant use and quality, was frequented by many local people. When a local Samaritan woman came to get water, she may have been surprised to see this Jewish man resting by the well. Whether she was surprised by this or not, of definite surprise to her was Jesus’ injunctive; “Give me to drink.”

I think we can see the correlation to the present day in the fact that this was just a stranger that Jesus was encountering as He traveled. As we observe their conversation, we see the skillful way that Jesus drew out the heart and inner longings for spiritual fulfillment in this woman. When Jesus said, “Give me to drink,” He immediately roused question in the woman’s mind by getting her to think outside of her ordinary box. Her ordinary box would have been the fact that no Jewish man would

have asked a favor of such a heretical, misled, half-Jew as herself. But before we think more about this statement, let’s remember that it was Jesus’ heart of compassion, ready for whatever situation came in front of Him, that enabled Him, in the spur of the moment, to engage this woman. In starting to present the Gospel, Jesus engaged the woman in a way that drew her into the conversation. We do not see Him simply diving into a forthtelling of belief that the woman needed to hear. No, we see Him causing her to think in a way that touched her normal reference points in life. A way that challenged her normal reference points: “Why is this man talking to me?” A powerful point can be drawn from this; Jesus made spirituality relevant to her everyday experience. But He didn’t let it stay everyday. Still intentional in His goal, He draws her in more, by piquing her interest spiritually. “There is a gift from God that you can have and that is living water.” Now she was presented with a quandary that she didn’t understand. Questions that needed answered include: “The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?”

She is now fully invested in the conversation. We see Jesus now giving her words of life that speak to the need of her heart. He is presenting the Gospel to a thirsty soul who did not even know what she needed. Was she sensing life and truth from Jesus at this point? Was she starting to think down a spiritual vein? Her request in verse 15 indicates that she was still very much thinking about this in a carnal manner. But she is desiring whatever this stranger is offering her.

And Jesus will not let her go. With His heart of compassion for her soul, He goes to a practical need in her life. A need of practical holiness. "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." We see Jesus getting closer to her conscience and upon her response we see Him identifying sin in her life. By this point her conscience is piqued and she identifies Jesus as a prophet. Jesus is now able to share with her what true worship looks like, a work in the heart. Ending up with revealing to her that He was the Messiah (vs. 26). All the while the woman was tracking and engaged.

What a tremendous example! As the first chapter of John says, Jesus was full of grace and truth. Able to discern the woman's need, He led her all the way from carnal thinking and surprise of being engaged, to revealing to her that He was the Messiah. And she was receptive to that. There are many lessons we can learn from this.

One, already identified, was that Jesus connected with something in her reality and caused her to question. He related to her in real life, not a "hyper-spirituality" that was disconnected from her experience. Rather, He was compassionate and caring and drew her in. But He still shared the Gospel! And the exciting point about the whole experience is that she was receptive, and the need of her heart was addressed. Jesus had compassion. He was full of compassion. The woman, I am sure, felt this. She was drawn by love that she did not understand. Yet, Jesus still drew her to see her sin and deal with her conscience. In this day where the Gospel and spirituality are separated from our living, breathing, human experience, may we be inspired to see the way of our Savior. Deeply spiritual. Filled with the life of God, and yet relating to someone, who had a completely different paradigm, in an effective way. May we ask questions in our interaction with people. May we truly care. May we enter in their paradigm. May we connect with their real, living, breathing, life. May we share the truth. May we show them their sin. May we be like Jesus.

The disciples were also surprised at Jesus' compassion and interaction. They too were still pretty carnal. In verse 34, Jesus had to correct their thinking about what His food really was. Verses 35 and 36 move our hearts to see the opportunities that are all around us, to let

the life of Jesus flow from us to others. "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." What opportunity! What responsibility! Verses 37 and 38 say, "And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labours." We see a final aspect of Jesus' paradigm of ministry coming out. Let's look for the good already embraced in people's lives and capitalize on that for the Gospel's sake! "Other men have labored" in whatever good is still present in a lost individual's life. Let's take advantage of that good for the Gospel's sake. Let's use the things already existing in people's lives connecting with their reality, and in that way be ministers of the Gospel of Jesus.

As we interact with people, may we remember these lessons. Let's be authentic. Let's meet people where they are and relate with them in a way that draws them into the message of Jesus. Let's remember that Jesus is portrayed to people through living, breathing, human interaction. Where He can be seen and felt through us to others. Where people sense that we truly care about them. May we in wisdom, develop a relationship

with them that causes them to question further and open their hearts truly to the Gospel. May we be compassionate and also speak the truth in love. May we capitalize on the truths that God has already put in their lives. May we be called through the Holy Spirit to enter into work in the fields that are, "white unto harvest"! Lord, help us! Amen!

Jason Mohler

BIBLICAL BEHAVIOR

Part 5

"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" (I Tim. 3:15).

This is a continuation of a previous article. The purpose of this continued 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.

Because the Word of God is quick (living), we will, no doubt, only touch a fraction of the depth and meaning of the verses calling us to a godly behavior. The next verse we will consider is found in I Timothy.

I Timothy 4:12 says, “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Scholars are not united on how old Timothy was when Paul wrote his first letter to him. One thing that we can be pretty sure of, is that he was younger than Paul, who was likely in his early sixties. This verse may imply that Timothy was in a position prone to be despised, and thus the call for godly behavior. The overall call of this verse is that Timothy would be a good example of the true believer. This believer knows how to speak the truth; and behaves in a loving, gentle, faithful, and holy manner.

Since this was to a younger man, I want to apply this to our younger audience. To the youth, may I ask you to consider your behavior? Let’s consider your behavior in three areas. Your personal and private time, your time with family, and your time with young folks.

As you think of the moments you spend in solitude, in your free time, when driving alone, when drifting off to sleep, consider how your behavior stacks up with this verse. How well do you know the truths of the Bible? Could you articulate the themes of Scripture to others? Are you one who sees good in other people, or are you critical in nature? Is your faith strong? Are you afraid to die? How is your purity? Do you find your mind wondering into sensual imaginations? Do you ever imagine and desire harm coming to someone who has treated you ill? These questions are a sampling of what I hope all ages are asking themselves on a daily basis. I realize these are interior concepts, but these themes will surface in behavior.

How about your time with your family? If you were to ask your family if your behavior was exemplary of a believer, what would they say? Are you truthful with them? Do they know you love them? Are you gentle? Does your faith show? Do you seek pure things? Behavior in the family is often less guarded, but may it be reflective of the child of God.

Let’s consider your time spent with young folks. Much could be said about kindness and inclusion.

I have noticed over the last several years, volleyball has become the gauge that determines your worth at young folks. If you are a good volleyball player, you get asked to play. If you are not, you don't get asked to play. It's that simple. Popularity or unpopularity then, is an extension of this gauge. This arrangement, as cruel as it may appear, seems to make for a great arena for I Timothy 4:12 to play out. Examples of the believer will be kind and inclusive to those who may be new, not outgoing, or not athletic. I would encourage you all to be mindful of each person at young folks and do what you can to reflect the characteristics of a believer.

How about when you leave young folks and want something fun to do? Does your mind run to wholesome activities? Or does it run swiftly to mischief? Prank phone calls, tee-peeing, destruction of property, going inside homes and rearranging or disrupting things? I ask if these kinds of activities reflect the behavior cited in I Timothy 4:12? Further, Proverbs 6:16 states that there are seven things the Lord hates. One of these is feet that be swift in running to mischief. May you take seriously the view God has of this kind of behavior.

Until next time, may your behavior be truthful, loving, gentle, faith-exhibiting, and pure.

Grant Fullmer

“GREET ALL THE BRETHREN”

Part 3—The Scope of the Holy Kiss

“Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss!” Part 1 of our study considered the Scriptural Context and Basis for the New Testament practice of the Holy Kiss; Part 2 spent some time reviewing the question of the Contemporary Relevance of the Holy Kiss, a question which we believe can be clearly answered in the affirmative. We now conclude our study with a few thoughts on the SCOPE OF PRACTICE for the Holy Kiss.

What makes this aspect of the “scope” a relevant issue for us today, and what benefit is there in our consideration of it? For those of us who are recipients of a Brethren/Anabaptist heritage and culture, the scope of the Holy Kiss is important specifically because we and our children associate with other churches who are willing to greet us with a Holy Kiss as fellow Christians, but we also interact with other church fellowships who will only greet their own members with a Holy Kiss, and we mingle with Christians who dismiss the literal practice of a Holy Kiss as irrelevant.

To be clear, this study is intended for us to consider ourselves and how we ought to apply this teaching; where others differ, we wish to extend much grace and charity, though not at the expense of truth. Many of us have friends and fami-

ly spread across the aforementioned spectrum of practice, and while we do wish to respond in a kind, Christian manner, it is important that as we seek to honor this teaching as our Father’s command given through His Holy Spirit and apostles, that we also do so with a clear understanding of what the Scriptures teach on this subject and how those same Scriptures call us to put it into practice!

Several questions come to mind as we consider this last aspect in our study of the Holy Kiss, including the following: “With whom do the Scriptures instruct us to share a Holy Kiss?” “Are we to extend it to anyone who claims to be a Christian?” “Should we base it upon shared forms of dress, cultural practices, similar worship formats, or perhaps on the basis of shared denominational membership?” “Is there anybody we ought to withhold it from, and if so, upon what basis should this be done?”

To answer such questions, we return first and foremost to that defining question: “What does the Bible say?” Very few teachings in the Scriptures are so simple and direct as the Holy Kiss, and the authority for its practice rests firmly on the Word of God and Spirit-inspired teaching. Five times the Holy Spirit led the apostles to explicitly instruct Christians to share a literal kiss with fellow believers, instructing them

to use a “kiss of charity,” a “holy kiss,” to “greet one another,” and to “greet all the brethren.” Thus, we exchange it in a chaste and holy manner as an expression of Christian love and goodwill, and we extend it in joyful recognition of another’s profession of faith!

We must never lose sight of the fact that the salutation is inherently defined by the principle of a holy love between brothers and sisters within the Body of Christ! Jesus Himself reminded us in John 13:35 that, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” What a privilege we have to illustrate that love in an extra-vivid manner when we literally greet one another face-to-face with a kiss just as we have been instructed. This kiss gives a counter-cultural picture of agape love through its testimony of a recognition of our mutual faith in Jesus Christ! We also note once more how this action historically went beyond a common greeting, as we saw demonstrated through the testimony of Justin Martyr of how Christians were recognized as fellow believers when they visited other or distant congregations and extended the Holy Kiss to those believers already present.

As we move toward the conclusion of this 3-part study on the Salutation, it behooves us to consider four final Scriptures relevant to this question of scope. The first

of these is John 14, where we read that Jesus told His disciples, “If ye love me, keep my commandments,” and that “he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me...” We are called to demonstrate our love for the Savior through our love toward others, and also through our honor to His Word. Regardless of any changing practices in the cultures (or even other groups of Christians) around us, we never need be ashamed to submit to the teachings which He has given, whether through His own words or those inspired by the Holy Spirit.

A second Scripture worthy of attention here is Jesus’ rebuke in Matthew 5:47: “And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?” There are two important points of note with this account, the first being that the words translated here as “publicans” is technically an inaccurate translation of the Greek word *ethnikoi* from which it was derived, a word meaning “gentiles.” Secondly, the context of the word “salute” (as used here) is admittedly not a specific reference to the Holy Kiss, but a pointed comparison by Jesus against the actions and attitudes of various groups of ungodly men and women as they set themselves or their own ethnicity, nationality, or culture above or apart from others.

Jesus’ warning here suggests that the people of God ought to be different from others, specifically by loving and acknowledging one another even outside their own comfort zones or other identifying lines.

What relevant lesson or principle can be taken from Jesus’ words here as He pointed out how some greeted only their own friends, such as those who might think or act as themselves or who might have shared history of some sort, and thereby visibly ignored or excluded others as less worthy? Is it not that they were engaging in the sin of partiality, something which Jesus and the Apostles soundly condemned? I Timothy 5:21 cautions us in this, as Paul warned to “observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” Similarly, James 3:17 reminds us that “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy!” The principle of avoiding partiality among the people of God seems clear here, and as such, seems directly relevant to the question of to WHOM we should extend the Holy Kiss.

A third Scripture, more explicitly relevant to the question of scope, is found in I Thessalonians 5:26, when the Spirit inspired the

apostle Paul to instruct the churches to “greet ALL the brethren with an holy kiss.” As we read such words, we are sobered by the thought that there is coming a day when each individual must answer to the Lord for how we handled His Word and how we recognized and treated fellow believers!

There is also clear teaching in that Word regarding accountability and mutual discipline among a congregation, teaching that reveals two potential exceptions to the apostolic commands to greet all believers with a Holy Kiss. These exceptions can be found in I Corinthians 5, where we are instructed to “have nothing to do with” those who bear the name of fellow believers yet willfully continue in gross or unrepentant sin, and also in II Thessalonians 3, where Christians are warned to “withdraw” ourselves from individuals who walk not after the “tradition...received of us” (i.e. from Paul). This reference to the tradition received from the apostle directly refers to apostolic teaching, which for the Christian today can be no less than the Word of God. As we receive that Word, we find nothing in the context and plain teachings of the Scriptures which indicates that the Holy Kiss may justly be limited to a local or denominational context; indeed, the Scriptures, when taken in

their simplicity, speak clearly that we are to “greet all the brethren.”

We now live 2000 years after the institution of the Church of Jesus Christ, recipients of a Church history marred by various fractures and splits as men and women have wrestled with the Word of God, seeking ways to apply it in faithfulness. As such, the reality of our world is that we find ourselves surrounded by many other church fellowships and denominations, some of them similar to our own in faith and practice, while others believe and practice very differently. Again, these concluding thoughts are not intended as condemnation of others, but as a call to examine our own hearts and lives, and to consider how we ourselves can walk faithfully before the Lord in a practice such as this; it is also a reality that many of us live in areas where various other church fellowships still practice the Holy Kiss, some only among themselves while others gladly greet believers from other fellowships who are seeking to walk faithfully before the Lord.

When faced with such situations, surely our choices and responses should consistently be defined by the Word of God over any other authority, which brings us to the fourth and final Scripture to consider on this subject, Mark 7:7–9. Here we find more words from Je-

sus Himself: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines commandments of men...And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition"! This offers us a sobering call to humbly consider our own "tradition" in this particular area; whenever any group of believers creates or enforces restrictions on a scriptural practice of which the Scriptures themselves are silent (or imply differently), surely we ought to walk very cautiously lest we find ourselves similarly guilty of transgressing the commandments of God through the enforcement of an extrabiblical tradition or agreement which contradicts His Word! We cannot, indeed we dare not, support anything that Jesus and His apostles condemned, regardless of what underlying principle may be proposed to justify such things, or even how sincere the motives or virtuous the desired goal may seem!

But what does this mean for us as individual believers, as congregations, or even as a church fellowship? And why does the scope of the Holy Kiss even matter? Because many of us are raising future generations among other Christians who will tell them that this teaching is no longer relevant, and still other Christians who consider it relevant but will withhold

it from others; and as parents and grandparents, we have a holy calling both to discern and to teach our children to be faithful to the Word of God in spite of both positions!

The first of these views is refuted simply by pointing to apostolic teaching, as well as the resultant practice of the early churches; however, the second view is significantly more subtle and inherently more dangerous. Whenever any group of believers chooses to limit the practice of the Salutation strictly to their own members only, even if in an attempt to avoid partiality or judgment, such an action creates a distinct change away from the purpose and scope of the Holy Kiss as it has been clearly and simply defined in the Scriptures! Whenever the Holy Kiss ceases to be defined as a "kiss of charity" intended to be extended to "all the brethren," as the Scriptures teach us, there comes a temptation to redefine and implicitly teach the practice as a kiss of denominational unity instead!

There is indeed a blessed sense of unity experienced by sharing the Holy Kiss among faithful Christians, but to place a contrabiblical restriction on the scope of the Kiss (or on any other scripturally defined practice) is rooted in a dangerous interpretative error called "eisegesis," whereby an idea

or tradition is forced upon the original text and intent of the Scriptures. If the Scriptures have not defined the Holy Kiss and its scope of practice in a certain way, then surely no congregation nor fellowship has the liberty to redefine it in such a way either! The Word of God teaches the practice of the Holy Kiss as a recognition of other believers, and as a simple expression of holiness and charity to be shared among all the brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ! Since the Word of God is the absolute and unchanging standard by which every area of our doctrine and practice must be defined, consistency with the Scriptures and their Author tells us that we ought to be willing to not only discern other members of His Body, but to “greet all the brethren” with “a holy kiss.” Are we willing to heed that call?

In conclusion, as we take the Scriptures literally, in context and with the testimonies of faithful believers throughout history, we see once more that the Word of God instructs Christian men and women to greet ALL of the brethren with a literal, holy KISS of love, and every generation will do well to ask: “What is our defining authority on this subject?” Is it sentiment? Fear or embarrassment? Peer pressure from friends or family? Are we tempted by the

constantly changing preferences of contemporary cultures? Are we influenced by the rejection of such teachings by other Christian men and women? Are we intimidated by the contra-biblical restrictions of one church fellowship or another? Or will we ultimately allow ourselves to be led to a humble and joyful obedience through the Spirit-inspired Word of God which speaks to us with such a beautiful simplicity?

Throughout our study, we have seen that the practice of the Holy Kiss was delivered to the churches by the Holy Spirit through the apostle writers and consistently practiced throughout the Apostolic era; then, down through the first several centuries of the early Church, it has been kept by groups of faithful believers down through the ages, and continues to be a precious symbol of brotherly love for many Christians today! We have also seen that the Holy Kiss is much, much more than a cultural tradition or a “Brethren” or “Anabaptist” practice; while we choose to continue to practice it in spite of its contemporary rejection or redefinition by others, we cannot claim to have originated it in any way! We simply desire to accept it and faithfully share it as the early Christians and many believers after them have done, submitting to it as an apostolic

teaching inspired by the Holy Spirit for our blessing. It remains a relevant practice for Christians in every era, and it offers both a privilege and an opportunity to engage in a distinctive and beautiful scriptural witness once delivered for all of the saints in Jesus Christ, one that is worthy to be shared with every brother and sister in Christ Jesus who is willing to receive it! May the Lord bless each one as you continue to heed the call to “greet all the brethren with a Holy Kiss!”

With love for all the brethren,

Christian Filbrun

YOUNG FOLKS ON THE EDGES

Arlene Yoder

As a concerned grandmother who loves all the children in New Conference and beyond, from the youngest to the oldest, I would like to share this article written by a mother who cares as I do for each

of your souls.

Bonita

Last evening we had young folks at our house on our regular summer schedule. As always, we look at the young folks with the vision of the future church. Souls are at stake and the formation period is intense in the teenage

years. It can be exciting if you fit in; it can be very scary if you do not. We would like to consider the little groups or individuals that are “on the edges.”

Whether we like it or not, we have the popular and the not. Sometimes those labels come from who their parents are, or who their brother is, or any number of things that judge a person without even knowing them! Is this what the Bible teaches? “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Lk. 6:37). Learn to know who these young folks are for themselves! Learn to know them with love, not with partiality. So, since we admit we have edges, what can we do to help?

As you young folks drive up our lane, you see rows and rows of mums growing. To you, they look like they are all the same—none are smaller, none are wilting, none are dying. But if you were to walk among them, you would see a different picture. There are some with yellowed leaves; they have a root disease. There are some that are dry; the pot isn’t directly on the emitter or it is plugged and not allowing the water to the plant. Some are even dead because we haven’t caught them in time. If we see them in time, we will pick up the pots and move them to an area where we can watch them closer, and we have called this our “hospital.” Why bother with one

mum? Till the season is over, we may have saved one hundred or more. Yes, it is worth it.

This reminds me of young folks. It won't be long until we will drive past Annual Meeting young folks and we will see twenty-eight volleyballs in the air and we will remark, "Looks like they are having a good time!" But will we see the ones on the edges that aren't included? Will we see the ones being made fun of? Will we see the ones that cry themselves to sleep at night because no one asked them to play? Why do we have to be asked? Can't we all have a chance? All of you are together; all are the same. Right? If that is the story, then why are some not getting fed? Why are there edges that are so lonely? Is it a choice you make to be on the edge? Or is it a forced choice?

Some of you grew up on exactly the right "emitter." You had popular cousins to get you started, or you were included in school. Be thankful. Not everyone has that advantage. Everything worked out for you and you just fit in. For some of you, life hasn't treated you exactly "fair" (in your eyes) and you have had to "fight or take flight." Maybe you didn't excel in school, or had an illness, or were poor at athletic games; maybe people made fun of you. Most of the time, there are two choices. We get mad and react, or we cry and get made fun of. Are we really that cruel? These are

things we can't even help! What is the solution to this age-old problem?

We want all of you to be healthy and happy. We want the living water for each one of you. You have to seek the water and maybe even adjust your placement in the "field" to be right on the "emitter" that feeds you. You must want Jesus.

The edges are lonely. Everyone likes to be included, but understand that being INCLUDED and being WANTED are two entirely different feelings. We really all want to be wanted. You can invite someone along but if you don't want them, they will wish they were at home in their safe haven. No one wants to be a "project" that people feel obligated to help. They want to be loved.

To those on the edges: Try harder. You don't need to push yourself in and be a pest, but maybe it is time for you to invite. Keep it simple; have a campfire or a singing. Invite others to play disc golf. If you have invited and the favor doesn't get returned, keep on inviting. It will make you feel good to do something for others. My mother always said, "If you are having a bad day, do something for others." In my young folks days, I had to take that to heart and keep on keeping on.

Don't give up. Be a man! Be a lady! "...quit [behave] you like men, be strong" (I Cor. 16:13). Choose the right and keep on.

Don't try to be noticed by rebelling. You are who you choose to be. Have a vision for who, not what, you want to be in ten years. The choice is yours. You can choose "the serenity to accept the people you cannot change, the courage to change the person you can, and the wisdom to know that person is ME." You can't make others be nice to you, but you can make yourself be nice to them. Don't say, "Poor me," or "It's not my fault." You have a choice to make. If someone asks you to play a game, or come over, or any other wholesome activity, it is your choice to accept. Don't always say, "No" or they will soon stop asking. Be decent and clean in body and in mouth. Learn to rise to higher ground.

To those in the center: Look around. You are not only letting one person down, you are letting their future generations down. This is serious. It only takes one generation to break the connection and it is awfully hard to regain. Are you playing the childhood game of "king on the mountain" and don't want to associate with others, and possibly destroy your own social standing? Why is it that some can reach down to pull others up, and others reach down to push others down so they will make themselves feel more exalted? Maybe we (each one) need to examine ourselves. Get out of yourself and be a friend.

Ask others to play volleyball; don't always ask the same ones. There are times at our house that the same six will play all evening and the same twenty will always sit and watch. The edges are still full—include them. If they feel discouraged and topple off the edge, who is to blame?

There was a story told of a group of boys that teased one of the slower boys until he didn't come to young folks anymore, and his edge crumbled into the big, bad world. With regret, the storyteller asked, "Are we accountable? If we would have tried harder, would it have made any difference?" But it was too late now. That is sobering, because we have all been guilty at some point in our lives. "And be ye kind one to another..." (Eph. 4:32). Reach out to others but don't join them if they aren't making good choices. Try to encourage them to higher ground. We have heard the illustration of wearing a clean white robe while walking down a hall that is wet with fresh, black paint. The white robe will not make the black walls white, but the black walls will make the white robe black.

To the parents: Be aware. It starts early. Children make fun of others before they even start school. If we are able to take care of it then, possibly young folks age will be easier. Who are your

children with, and how involved are you? HOST. HOST. HOST again. Yes, even if you are tired. We fall short much too often because life gets too busy! Keep it simple and be involved in their lives. You may make a big difference. Your window of time is short—be involved. Blend the old and the young. In our homeschool journey, one of our projects has been journalism. Some years we would have a topic of, “Who do you admire?” One of our boys named a brother fifteen years older than himself because, “He always talks to us boys and teases us.” Our young ones notice.

We mentioned Annual Meeting coming to this area. Have you checked who your young folks are inviting? We have heard the comment made by young folks, “We are only inviting the people we like. It is awkward if you don’t know them very well.” Is this helpful to those on the edges? Try to reach out to others. Host as you want to be hosted. “Let brotherly love continue” (Heb. 13:1). A lot depends on how we, as parents, respond and direct our children. On their own, they will only want their best friends. Help to build their love and concern for others. We recently heard a wonderful message on “hospitality” and it was stated that “Hospitality is the outreach of the home.” This should call us to ac-

tion! Hospitality is more than a gourmet meal. It is love. It is caring for others. It is telling someone, “I care about you.” “...let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3).

So, we are back to the mum field. How do we compare mums to never-dying souls? They each need Tender Loving Care. They need individual attention. We must reach out to help them. But one difference is a mum cannot move itself to the water source, and we can. God created us to find the living water. He said, “Come unto me...” He loves our children and cares for them even more than we do! He wants none to be lost. We each need to do all we can to help, and continue to pray for our future church. It should be growing in leaps and bounds if all would come to the true source of living water. If it can help one person to move closer to the center, it is worth it. It is like the little boy lost in the cornfield on a 119° day—link arms together and truly care for each one. Keep searching. Maybe some will find their way away from the edges and set their feet on higher ground.

Selected from the January 2024 *The Vindicator*, and used with permission,

Bonita Hoblit

HOME AND FAMILY

RAISING BOYS TO BE GODLY YOUNG MEN

Years ago, when seeking the Lord for wisdom while raising sons, God gave me this inspiration. Now as a grandmother, my prayer and passion continues for our young families to be intentional about passing on generational faith. Psalm 145:4 says, “One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”

Raising godly sons is a very special blessing, yet an incredible challenge! Knowing that each precious little baby boy is a gift from God, a prescription straight from heaven, in awe we can humbly trust Him to pour out His grace sufficient for each day! Mothers, we have a very high calling to prepare our sons to faithfully serve God as little boys, as young men, as husbands, and as fathers. I had many thoughts to share about “raising boys,” so decided to use the ABC format, realizing that this list is incomplete of itself. “Except the LORD build the house, we labor in vain to build it.”

ABC’S FOR PARENTS OF SONS:

A – AFFIRM your sons: Speak words of love and words of life! It encourages them when we verbalize, “Well done!” or “I really appreciate your help,” or “Thank you

for not complaining.” Affirm our unconditional love. Tell them, “Son, you are fearfully and wonderfully made—a gift from God.” Affirm them with God’s promises written on the blackboard to read daily.

B – BELIEVE in your sons: Give them something to live up to! Look for the good, and be a builder. Mothers, let’s believe like Eve did in Genesis 4:1, “I have gotten a man from the LORD.”

C – COMMUNICATE often: Keep hearts open, and be willing to listen, as well as talk. Sharing our hearts with our sons when young, will make the teen years more “open” when sensitive issues surface. Plan a special time to share—maybe when they are a little older, take them out for breakfast and let them know you really care. Boys love to eat, so this will be a winner every time! When they get a little older, ask them how you can pray for them. This is not the time to discuss confrontational issues. Boys also love back rubs, so a perfect time to visit with your son is at the bedside as you give him special attention.

D – DISCIPLINE with love: Boys can have very strong wills to subdue! They respond to loving and kind correction, but never to an angry, forceful parent. Always pray together after discipline, so

they will feel your love and God's love. Remember to discipline in privacy, and consistently.

E – EXPECTATIONS: “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him...” (Ps. 62:5, 8). Expect God's Spirit to work mightily in their hearts with their daily choices. Each son is different from the other brothers, so please don't ever compare. We mothers can't expect every son to be gifted alike. Accept them and love them as God made them.

F – FINANCES: Stewardship of God's money is so vital for our sons to learn. Earning money, saving money, giving, spending, and investing are all areas to teach them what God says in the Bible about finances. Go to the Proverbs for wisdom. Jesus taught us, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Our sons must learn that they really don't own anything! They are only managing these possessions and money for God. They need to learn to be faithful in the least before they can be faithful with more.

G – GROOMING: Sometimes it's hard to teach boys to be clean when they love to dig in the dirt and help Daddy with chores or greasy shop jobs. Yet they can be taught to keep their hair shampooed and combed, their nails clean and trimmed, clean body and clothes, daily use of tooth-

brush, and plenty of deodorant as they get older! When personal cleanliness suffers, so does self-respect. When self-respect suffers, so does their grooming. When grooming suffers, their personality, popularity, and witness for Christ falls flat! Daily “soul grooming” is even more important: Ask “How is my heart groomed for God?”

H – HABITS: Warning! The devil whispers a lie in every boy's ear, “I can stop a habit anytime I want to. This will not hurt me.” Good habits formed early in life will be a blessing to a boy when he becomes a man! Habits such as lying, cheating, using tobacco or alcohol, dirty talking, or pornography turn into bondage. Show them in the Bible why these habits are displeasing to our Creator God.

I – INFLUENCE: Remember that these little eyes and ears are watching and listening at all times. Are we parents setting a good example, and are their friends having a godly influence on their lives? It would be better for our boys to be alone, than to be in bad company.

J – JOYFUL atmosphere and attitudes: Joy radiates to our sons in different ways—greeting them with a big smile and friendliness when they arrive home, making positive comments and don't criticize or complain to them. A song in the car or kitchen lifts the attitudes and creates a happy home, one with love, joy, and acceptance.

K – KINDNESS: Boys should be taught to be very kind and gentle to their family, friends, and animals. Boys also respond very well to kindness! We parents must speak and discipline boys with much kindness, instead of a controlling attitude that closes a heart. "...in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Prov. 31:26). The mark of a true gentleman is kindness.

L – LOVE, unconditionally: This means I purpose to love my sons like God loves me. We don't always love what they've said or done that we disciplined them for, but we love their soul unconditionally. They need to hear our commitment to them for life, of our love and affection. Regularly use words of affection like, "Son, I love you," and "You are a very special son we thank God for every day." Never tell them they were a mistake, or not wanted. Jesus loves them and has a purpose for their life.

M – MANNERS: Manners show courtesy and respect to others. Boys need to be taught table manners; how to treat girls, women, and the elderly; how to make introductions and be friendly to visitors; how to use courtesy words (such as please, thank-you, excuse me, and may I?). When our boys were younger, we would practice at home how to shake hands before company came or going to church meetings.

N – NOTES of appreciation: Boys like to be noticed and appreciated.

A little note from a parent, affirming them, goes a long way! Tell them you appreciate them making their bed, or keeping their toys and clothes picked up, or how nice they've been treating their sister, etc. The list is endless!

O – OPEN hearts: Parents can close their son's hearts by expressing anger at them, or nagging or criticizing them, or not finding quality time for them. My husband took each of our sons on a "special outing" on each birthday, to keep communication and hearts open. Take photos for the child's album to build relationships through the years.

P – PURITY: Holding a son accountable to his moral purity will communicate love. Encourage your husband to be honest and open with his sons in the area of moral purity. Look together in the Bible at the high cost of low living. Areas of modesty, guarding our sons from evil influences, and guiding them safely toward deeply ingrained convictions and habits of purity as they grow up is so vital!

Q – QUIET and meek spirit of mothers: This quality in mothers is very attractive to the boys and young men in our lives. I Peter 3:4 says, in God's sight, this ornament is of great price. They respect us more when we are gentle and peaceful. A quiet spirit is more than a mother who does not talk. She is at peace with God, herself, and those around her. She lets Jesus control her life and chooses

not to fret or worry, but calmly trusts in the Lord. Boys do not respond well to loud talking or rough actions in a mother. If we live our Christian faith quietly and peacefully in our homes, our sons and husband will see Jesus in us. "A foolish woman is clamorous [full of noise]; she is simple, and knoweth nothing."

R – RELEASING our sons: As Hannah said in I Samuel 1:27, 28, "For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent [given] him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD." Releasing our sons into God's hands is not easy to do! Trusting God for our own lives is easier than trusting God for our children's. To watch our son's gradual separation from our protection and care radically tests our faith. Fear makes us cling to them. Faith lets go.

S – SING and SMILE often: A singing and smiling mother is very contagious in the home. The boys will pitch in and sing along if taught from little up to express a happy heart. A smile lightens any boy's spirit if he's had a rough day at school or work. There's no room for negative thoughts or words when the heart is singing, and our faces are radiant with a smile.

T – TIME: Quality time spent with our sons is never time wasted. It is an investment for the future. Fathers especially need to

plan activities the son has interest in. Is it riding bikes? Fishing? Hiking? Camping? Making a wooden toy together? Building relationships takes time. Another way to spend quality time bonding is for parents to get old photo books out and reminiscence family memories over their younger growing up years. They will see how precious and meaningful their lives are, and how God was at work in each stage to mold them into a godly young man—only one touch at a time.

U – UNDERSTAND them: Proverbs 24:3 says a house is established by understanding. Listen closely to your sons, to be able to understand what they really are saying, or what is really bothering them. Thank them for telling you how they feel.

V – VISION: Visions are born when the Spirit of God takes the Word of God and makes it alive in our hearts. What is your vision for your sons? Write it down and share it with them sometime. It will bless them and give them a goal to live up to. The Proverbs are full of instructions (23 verses) for "My son." Read and write out these verses with your sons. As they get a little older, we had our sons write down their vision or goals for their life, also. "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Prov. 29:18).

W – WORK ethics: As a mother of sons, we felt it was important to teach them not only the outdoor chores of caring for animals, lawn,

and garden maintenance, helping Daddy, etc. but also helping Mother with kitchen jobs, laundry, and keeping the house clean! Many times, our boys pulled up a chair to help fry the hamburger or crank the applesauce through the strainer. This little boy will grow up to be a wonderful husband someday who knows how to assist his wife. Ecclesiastics 9:10 says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might..."

X – eXALT: Exalt Jesus Christ as the perfect example of manliness and strength. Remind your sons that at 12 years old He was already about His Father's business, increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Y – YES to Jesus: We pray our sons will learn to agree with God and say "Yes" to Jesus in their daily choices. May each son learn to love "Family Worship" where singing, reading God's Word, and praying is instilled in their young hearts. Let them take their turn at praying, choosing a song, and reading the Bible, also. Seeking God's will for their lives, is agreeing with Him and saying "Yes" to Jesus when confronted with peer pressure.

Z – ZEAL: Share ways with our sons that they will be blessed by being zealous for the things of God, such as giving time or money, quiet time, putting the Word in their heart, singing, helping those in need, and fellowshiping with other Christians.

If Jesus tarries, today's boys will become God's men of tomorrow! It is amazing how quickly these little boys grow up, get married, and are blessed with their own precious children to raise. We need men to become spiritual leaders, inspire and encourage others, speak the Truth, become loving husbands, build Christ-honoring homes, and raise solid families so that future generations may be strong and upright in the Lord. We are training someone to share God's Word, or minister to the poor and needy, to further the kingdom of Christ, and do damage to Satan's kingdom! It takes a boy with a strong will, a pure heart, and most importantly, a strong belief in God through Jesus Christ to become an ideal man. Every boy needs even more than the help of a faithful family, if he would resist the temptations that are certain to meet him. He must live in Christ, and pray for help from God all the time, day and night. A faithful boy is the foundation for a faithful man! We pray mightily for godly wisdom to be faithful to the task entrusted to us. Mothers, may we lock arms with our husbands as we seek God's face together, to savor every moment with our precious sons. The only treasure we can take with us to heaven is our children!

For the glory of God,

Judy Flory

WEEKLY WORSHIP OF THE CHRISTIANS

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together into one place, and the memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks has been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do and are willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who through any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need.

Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.

Justin Martyr (100 AD–166 AD)

MEDITATIONS

Some men contend harder for falsehood than they do for Truth.
 If my “church let me down” my trust was in the wrong place.
 Like every house, every person’s life has a junk drawer.
 God is so big that sometimes I don’t even see Him.
 If God doesn’t answer, that may be the answer.
 Pride is the burden of the fool.
 Let God be the judge.

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 topic of young people and their direction and spiritual welfare is spoken of throughout the Scripture. It is given great importance and priority.

Questions:

1. As a father, does **the time I spend** teaching my children in spiritual things declare that I un-

derstand this great importance?

2. Am I concerned that they are socially happy most of all? Or that they receive spiritual direction?

3. Can their spiritual training be “delegated” to others?

4. Am I being a spiritual father, or spiritual mother to my children?

5. What if I fail in this responsibility?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

- Feb. 25, 2024; Cutler Ridge, IN
Elle Wolf
- Mar. 3, 2024; Bear Creek, OH
Jacob Stoner
- Mar. 24, 2024; Cascade Valley, WA
Brooke Holsinger
- Mar. 30, 2024; Cutler Ridge, IN
Leslie Skiles
- Apr. 7, 2024; Pleasant View, OH
Shem Markley
- Apr. 9, 2024; Morning Star, OH
Kylee Brunk
- Apr. 10, 2024; Lower Twin, OH
Mary Kate Brubaker
- Apr. 11, 2024; Bethel, OH
Simeon Hess

COMMUNIONS

- May 26, 2024 AM, Cedarville, OH
- Jun. 22, 2024 Mission Valley, MT and
Mountain View, ID held jointly in ID
- Sept. 28, 2024.....Pleasant View, OH
- Oct. 12, 2024Lower Twin, OH
- Oct. 19, 2024 Clearwater, IN
- Oct. 26, 2024 Maple Grove, OH
- Oct. 26, 2024Stillwater, OH
- Nov. 2, 2024 Bethel, OH
- Nov. 2, 2024 Columbia River, WA
- Nov. 9, 2024 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, 2024Covington/Sugar Grove, OH
- Aug. 18, 2024Salem, OH
- Aug. 25, 2024 Stillwater, OH
- Sept. 22, 2024 Bear Creek, OH
- Oct. 12, 2024 Zillah, WA
- Nov. 28, 2024 Pleasant View, OH

2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Date and Location: The date for Annual Conference is May 25–28 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 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, May 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 may be listened to at a later time by dialing the Playback Number (712-432-8774) using the same Conference ID# (201262#) and proceeding as follows: Instead of pressing 0 and # as instructed by the recording, type in the date of the Worship Service (2-digit MONTH, 2-digit DAY, 2-digit YEAR) followed by the sequence number of the Worship Service for that date, followed by pressing #. For example, to access the Monday May 27, 2024, 10:00 A.M. Worship Service at a later time, dial the Playback Number, enter the Conference ID, then enter 0527242#. This is simply entering the Conference ID (201262#), the date (052724), 2nd service of the day (2), and #.

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

SEEK MINISTRIES

We would like to explain SEEK Ministries for those who are not aware of the group or how it works. SEEK stands for Serving Emmanuel's Eternal Kingdom, and we plan and organize various events throughout the

year. SEEK Ministries began in the Ohio Miami Valley area around 2010 with a rotating group of 8 young folks, and two couples. One of our main goals is to provide opportunities for young folks to do meaningful Kingdom work. Our big event each year is the bus trip to a big city, which usually involves serving at Operation Christmas Child. Other events include fundraisers, kit packing, museum trips for preteens, parents' nights out, yard cleanups, etc. We usually host several events per year. If anyone feels to donate, funds can be sent to BCF, marked for SEEK Ministries. Current members are:

Dallas Filbrun, Megan Fullmer,
Jacob Flora, Shiloh Hess,
Brooke Balsbaugh, Kaylee Flory,
Levi Brubaker, Rhett Emig,
Ted and Crista Layman,
Ben and Joy Bayer

POEMS

A MOTHER SINGS

I wish I had a golden voice to sing my Maker's praise,
With perfect tone and time and pitch, my voice I'd ever raise.

But as I scrub my floor today, my heart is full of love,
And thanks for home, so I will lift my *tuneless* hymn above.

And while I sing, my little girl will crow with rapt delight;
She thinks her mother's voice is like an Angel in its flight.

Perhaps my Maker listens too with those same ears of love;
And just the tones *I mean to sing* reach to His Throne above.

Lois Duffield

SAFELY HOME

I am home in heaven, dear ones, all's so happy, all's so bright!	And with Jesus' arm to lean on, could I have one doubt or dread?
There is perfect joy and beauty in this everlasting light.	Then you must not grieve so sorely, for I love you dearly still;
All the pain and grief are over, every restless tossing passed;	Try to look beyond earth's shadows, pray to trust our Father's will.
I am now at peace forever, safely home in heaven at last.	There is work still waiting for you, so you must not idle stand;
Did you wonder I so calmly trod the valley of the shade?	Do your work while life remaineth— you shall rest in Jesus' land.
Oh, but Jesus' love illumined eve- ry dark and fearful glade!	When that work is all completed, He will gently call you home;
And He came Himself to meet me on the way so hard to tread;	Oh, the rapture of the meeting! Oh, the joy to see you come!

Author Unknown

OBITUARIES

CABLE — Norman Lavern, 94, died on February 15, 2024, at the home of his son Merideth (Rhonda) Cable of Nappanee, Indiana. He was born on May 21, 1929, in Carroll County, Indiana, to Ralph L. and Dorothy E. (Keller) Cable. On August 22, 1948, he married Floretta E. (Oyler) Cable, who preceded him in death. They began their married life near Flora, Indiana, and in 1979 they moved to Elkhart County, Indiana. They enjoyed 64 years of marriage.

Norman was a devoted and caring father and grandfather. He accepted his Savior and was baptized in June, 1946.

Surviving are three sons and one daughter, Merideth (Rhonda), Martha, Ronald (Faythe), and Lar-

ry (Liana); two sisters, Linda Lou (Ronald) Koble, and Diana (Michael) Cable-Whitworth; 21 grandchildren, 47 great-grandchildren, and 8 great-great-grandchildren.

Norman was preceded in death by his parents; father- and mother-in-law, Charles and Maudie (Filbrun) Oyler; and infant great-grandson, Lemuel Cable.

Services were held on February 19, 2024, in the Yellow Creek Old Brethren meeting house near Wakarusa, Indiana, with burial following in the Old Brethren Cemetery.

We wait in hope for the promise of the glorious resurrection day, when all the saints shall rise to meet the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ.

The Family

FLORA — Loretta Faye, daughter of Elmer and Margaret (Kinzie) Miller was born on August 18, 1940, in Lafayette, Indiana.

She peacefully passed away in their Florida home on January 25 at the age of 83 years, 5 months, and 7 days.

Loretta was united in marriage with Gerald Flora on September 20, 1959. They were baptized on May 13, 1956, becoming members of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church.

Mother attended Rossville High School. She was a homemaker and cared for her family and supported her husband on the family farm for 50 years. Her family will remember her for her quiet strength and her heart for helping others.

Loretta is survived by her children, Julia (Bruce) Deaton, Jeffrey (Marsha) Flora, and Janell Flora; siblings, Judy (Max) Welk, Joyce (Rick) Root; brother-in-law, Dave

(Millie) Flora; seven grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter.

Along with her husband of 63 years, Loretta was preceded in death by her parents; brothers-in-law, Doran Hufford and James Brovont; sister-in-law, Nancy Brovont.

A funeral service was held at the North Fork meetinghouse on February 3, 2024, by John Hess and Brian Skiles. Thoughts were taken from I Corinthians 13:12 and I Peter 1:3–5.

Burial followed in the adjacent church cemetery with hymn 461 and closing comments by Donald Shively.

We are left with many precious memories and look forward to that glorious day when we shall meet again.

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.

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