

"And I, brethren...came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you...

THE TESTIMONY

...of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ..." I Cor. 2:1-2

— VERSE OF THE MONTH —

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest..." Heb 4:10-11

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REACHING FOR REST

O my heart,
How bound to earth thou art.
How strapped to time and place,
Obscuring oft the vision of thy Father's kindly face.
And thus, you dwell with care—
And fear of unknown future scenes.
You cannot rest while striving to be safe by any means.

Rise.

Leave haunting trepidation.
"Earth holds no resting place for thee..."
Nor for thy most beloved.
Search. Diligently seek thy Father's face.
In it, you'll find reward of a most pleasant resting place.
He, Who forms the individual crystals of the snow.
He, Who bends the palm trees in the hurricanes that blow.
He, Who makes the seeds to sprout and summer gardens grow.
He, Who has rained goodness on you more than you can know.
He it is, Who knows and loves you so.
Can He not be trusted?

—Allison Markley, New Paris, Ohio

THE TESTIMONY

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EDITORIAL

THE BIG MEETING

Most Brethren fellowships assemble yearly for a “Big Meeting.” Some call it “The Annual Meeting.” Some call it “The Yearly Conference.” Or simply “The Conference.” In my youth it was often called “The Big Meeting,” a term commonly used among the Brethren until the early 1900s but in some areas until the 1950s.

Some call a big meeting like ours an “Ekklesia” a word not often used among the Brethren. Ekklesia is a Greek word translated in the KJV as “the assembly” or “the called out.” In Bible times Ekklesia meant either a civil or religious assembly. In Acts 19:32–41 (KJV) a civil assembly (Gr. *Ekklesia*) was called when a riotous tumult broke out in Ephesus resulting from the preaching of Paul against the worship of the goddess Diana. All other references in the KJV translate *Ekklesia* as the assembly of the churches. In the Revelation, chapters 2–3, seven individual Ekklesia (churches) are identified by name. Why the Spirit spoke to only seven and not to all assemblies we do not know. Many others existed at that time including Corinth, Thessalonica, Colossae, Rome, Berea, Philippi, Antioch, the church in the house of John Mark’s mother Mary, and in the house of Philemon, and probably many more.

No Brethren fellowship has the exclusive right to the Big Meeting, nor to call themselves the only assembly. The Big Meeting is a blessing that all Brethren assemblies enjoy. Early Brethren were not blessed as we are to travel

comfortably from near and far to a Big Meeting. Most Ancient Brethren could not travel from far off Ethiopia and Macedonia.

Those seven assemblies in Revelation 2–3 were not spotless, nor is any assembly perfect today. All assemblies are to “hold fast and repent.” The diversity of the various Brethren fellowships may be a part of God’s Great Plan. Or maybe not. But as each assembly renders its decisions through its own deliberations, the Holy Scriptures must be their sole and only guide. God alone is sovereign in the Great and Final Judgment.

Sometime there will be a last, eternal Big Meeting. How long will that Big Meeting last and how big? We’ll sing a new song, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation...” And there will be “...angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them [will be] ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...” “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

Will you be ready for that Great Wedding celebration?

Marcus Miller

GENERAL

**FIVE FUNCTIONS OF OUR
RESURRECTED REDEEMER****Part 2**

As we continue in John 21, with the account of Jesus meeting with His disciples for the third time after His resurrection, we continue to see Him doing some things that only He could do, fulfilling functions that only He can accomplish in the lives of His people as our Resurrected Redeemer! Thus far we have seen that He **FINDS** His sheep and **FEEDS** them, and that He desires to **FELLOWSHIP** with them; as we conclude our short study of this account, we will see two more things which only He can do, as He **FORGIVES** His sheep and **FOCUSES** them upon His call to “Follow Me!”

#4 — Our Resurrected Redeemer will FORGIVE His sheep!

John 21:15–17: “So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said

unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”

Back in Matthew 26:69–75, Peter denied Jesus three times after Jesus was arrested; now Jesus confronts Peter three times about his love for the Savior, and as His three questions correspond back to those three denials, it seems like Jesus was giving Peter a chance to deal with his failures. First, Peter had denied the Lord, and then he had attempted to return to the old life he had lived before he met Jesus, but relationships cannot prosper by simply sweeping hurts or wrongs under a rug! Jesus’ question, “Lovest thou me more than these?” used the great haul of fish they had just taken to make this point to Peter, because Jesus wants to know if Peter loves Him more than those fish! He wanted to know if Peter loved Him more than the security, the stability or even the familiarity they could provide!

Peter’s response is “Yes, Lord!” It seems like his sincerity and conviction increased each time he answered it, and we would want to answer the same way, wouldn’t we? All of us have failed Jesus at some time in our life, and yet we serve a risen Savior, a resurrected **REDEEMER**! And He stands today at the Father’s right hand in the courts of Heaven, interceding on our behalf with the testimony

of the precious blood that He shed for us! Romans 8:34 says: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Our resurrected Redeemer stands in Heaven as our "Advocate," the One who pleads our case before God Himself when we fall, offering up His own, sufficient, sin-covering blood. And we rejoice, for there is no sin so black and no transgression so great that our Holy God would turn His back on us when we stand justified and washed in the blood of the Lamb, He whose heart is for the forgiveness and restoration of all!

Hebrews 7:25 says: "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." "Them" is you and me, dear brother and sister, and it is our Resurrected Redeemer Who comes to Find, to Feed, to Fellowship, and yes, even to FORGIVE! Where have we gone "a fishing" today? Do we need to meet with Jesus to be fully restored in some area, and to confess our love for Him once more, just as Peter did that morning by a pile of fish?

#5 — Our Resurrected Redeemer will FOCUS the hearts of His sheep!

John 21:18–22: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou

shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me."

In this beautiful account, we have seen Jesus FIND, FEED, FELLOWSHIP, and FORGIVE His sheep; finally, we shall see that our resurrected Redeemer comes to give us new direction and bring our hearts back into FOCUS! In these final verses, we see Peter receiving renewed direction for his life, as he is commanded to feed the Lord's people, restored to a place of service, given a specific ministry of leadership in the early church, and promised that, not only will serve God for many years but that even in his death, he will bring glory to God. Jesus leaves Peter no doubt as to what he should be doing for the rest of his life, and his call and commission are summed up in two words (v. 19) "Follow me." This is the call of the living and resurrected Jesus for every sheep who needs to have their heart focused upon Him once again!

So why did Peter go fishing at the beginning of this account? Perhaps he thought his service was over, or maybe that the Lord was finished with him forever, especially after he had failed Jesus so badly just a few days before! Have you ever been there? I suggest to you that as long as there is Life, there is indeed Hope! If you have failed the Lord in some way and wonder if He can still use you, remember that our Resurrected Redeemer is also our great RESTORER! It was HE who took a murderer like Moses to lead the Exodus; it was HE who used a past adulterer like David to write the book of Psalms; it was HE who transformed an angry Jesus-hating Jew named Saul and used him to spread the Gospel across the known world; it was HE who took a cowardly, cursing Christ-denier like Peter and used him to declare the Gospel and the Resurrection with boldness at Pentecost; and HE wants to use you and me, his beloved sheep, to reveal Himself to others today!

“Lovest thou me more than these?” Walking with the resurrected Redeemer makes ALL the difference between a life that is wasted and a life that reaps eternal blessings for the glory of God! Can we look at our hearts today and honestly say that we are living our lives fully beneath the direction of the risen Christ? Can we say with confidence that He is directing our path and that at this moment, we

are exactly where the Lord desires us to be? Where are our hearts? Are they seeking the presence of the Lord? Or are we just gone “a fishing”?

We have the promise of our resurrected Redeemer that He has a place and a work for each of us! Psalm 37:23 says that the Lord directs the steps of all of His children, and 1 Corinthians 12:3–31 tells us that He will show us the way to go in life as He gifts us to serve Him. As we trust Him, we can be sure that He will make us able to do WHAT He desires for us to do, He’ll show us HOW we should do it, and even WHERE it should be done. As we heed His call, we can trust that He who FINDS, FEEDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND FORGIVES His sheep can also FOCUS and strengthen our hearts and our lives for His glory!

Chris Filbrun

WILL YOU BECOME A PRECIOUS STONE?

We are impressed that the call to salvation is as urgent today as it was when we were a teen seventy years ago. We remember “old brethren” preaching the Word and urgently, or tenderly, calling young people to repentance and baptism. I suppose personally we struggled as much with the call to salvation as anyone else. I suppose that

struggle hasn't changed today.

While I suspect the temptations and the pressures of the world are greater today, we know that the need for repentance and salvation is just as great today as then. We as youth then were lost and without hope. It is the same today as then—or when our parents and grandparents came to the age of accountability. Every generation, every soul, struggles with the same need.

Reading back in our history, we ran across this article by an Uncle calling the unsaved to become a living stone in the Temple of our God. It is very encouraging to see the same Gospel preached today as in my youth. The Gospel applies the same to all people in all ages.

STONES

According to Webster: "A stone is a small piece of rock (petrol), as a cobble or pebble." There are many varieties, almost innumerable, which are classified as common and precious stones. Some stones are ornamental, while others are essential to industry and building, and are very imposing and beautiful. They fill our specific purposes in our daily way of life on this earth which we consider God's footstool. We find there are millstones, grindstones, whetstones, and gravestones used as memorials. Likewise, there are cornerstones to mark boundary lines both ancient and present, and they

are valuable to owners of property in establishing ownership that is carried down through many generations, and on into the future until the end of time.

Profane history tells us that in King Solomon's reign, precious stones, gold, and silver were in abundance; especially silver which adorned the wayside and lanes and paths during those days as common pebbles do in our present age. Silver was not considered of any value in Solomon's time, as it was plentiful and common along the streets of Jerusalem.

The Holy Bible gives us many references to stones, both precious and common. Stonecutters were in much demand through ancient history. The size and value determined the use of finished stone products since the creation. Stones were used to kill criminals. To this day stones are so plentiful in the Holy Lands where Jesus dwelt more than 1900 years ago.

Cornerstones and headstones were used anciently. In figurative language, Jesus was the chief cornerstone and headstone of the Temple. This idea the Jews rejected, as they did not accept Jesus as their Savior nor His teachings. How sad, when we think how they ridiculed and turned down their best Friend, desiring a murderer and criminal instead! Truly Jesus was carrying Barabbas' cross to the Crucifixion. Four soldiers watched and executed the orders

from Pilate to destroy Jesus, who was delivered to Pilate for envy. After the stone was rolled to seal the tomb which was hewn out of rock, the Jews ordered one hundred soldiers to watch, that the followers of Jesus might not steal the body and say that He was risen from the dead. Just one angel from Heaven was needed to silence those hundred who watched and guarded His Tomb.

Foundation stones were selected with much care in the past, as they are today in erecting valuable edifices and tall skyscrapers. Sometimes they dig down more than one hundred feet to find bed-rock, as they did on Manhattan Island in New York City, and Chicago will have a hundred story building shortly, according to the architects who are planning for more office rooms and apartment housing. [Written in 1967.] When men set their minds to work in unison, there is scarcely any project too hard and difficult for human beings to undertake in this advanced and modern age.

During the next few years, if time permits, there will be discoveries and inventions that are not dreamed of today. Our exploding population will demand so much in modern society, that leaders will be amazed as plans develop during the end of the Gentile years, in this wicked and proud world. Christ's followers will be fewer and more in the minority as

the world advances in wisdom, in commerce, and in factories of industry. It seems we are now just beginning the Utopia that Satan is bringing upon the masses of humanity who love pleasure more than the Almighty.

Here is one sentence the writer wishes all would memorize and hold precious till time shall end. It was copied from a notebook, and the author is unknown:

"The heart of the Christian Gospel is the truth that God is a loving, searching Father-God, seeking through Christ Jesus the reconciling of the world to Himself; revealing in the death of Jesus the limit to which God will go to save a child who has gone astray; and in the life of Christ the type of living which will enable men as brothers of one another and as children of God, to have that eternal fellowship with the Father."

As we are living and going through this life only once, why not be as living stones in the Temple of God, stones who are useful as well as ornamental?

*"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime."*

*Hark the tumult of the nations:
Iron mixing with the clay.
Hark! what means it?
'Tis creation groaning for that
Better Day."*

Thus the poet expresses his opinion of this present age. Our calling is to serve the present age. What we perform for good or evil must be done today! This day will be the yesterday of tomorrow! Why not make our calling and election sure today!

Selected from *The Vindicator*
 May 1967, Pages 136–137
 LeRoy C. Garber
 Deceased.

The call, the warning, the plea goes out still, as it has for years. I have labored in the Vineyard of the Lord for over 70 years. I am encouraged to see young folks coming to Salvation at an earlier age. They seem to be more earnest, more sincere, more genuine in their walk with the Lord.

We have come to a time when, as the prophet Joel and the Apostle Peter said, "...your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions..." Yes, Satan is working harder for he knows that his destruction is imminent. But the Holy Spirit of God is also increasing in strength, for He too, knows that time is short.

May sinners be warned. May Saints be encouraged. And may souls be saved.

Marcus Miller

THE LITTLE FOXES

Barry Grant

We find an account in Numbers 25, where the children of Israel lament the judgment of God before the tabernacle, when one of the children of Israel brought a Midianitish woman into the camp in front of all his brethren. The Bible says that when Phinehas saw it, he sprang into action. Rising up, he took a javelin in his hand, went into the tent, and thrust both of them through.

Here's some background on this account. The children of Israel were camped in the valley of Moab. King Balak of Moab was extremely afraid when he saw such a large number of soldiers camped in his valley. He knew he couldn't defeat this mighty army because they were much stronger than he. He saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, and the Bible says Balak was very afraid. Like the enemies of the church today, Balak devised a plan. He went to the soothsayer Balaam and offered him great wealth and position if he would simply come with him and curse the children of Israel. The Bible says that Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness, so he was all game. He consulted with God, but God told him not to go. Then King Balak sent wiser, more dignified men to ask Balaam again. Once more, Balaam asked God for direction. It's interesting that one would ask God again for

something that He had already clearly spoken about. God knows our hearts, and He is likely to give us the desires of our hearts, even when it will cost us our very lives. So, Balaam went with Balak's men, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against him. God's angel blocked Balaam's way. He did not see the angel, but his mule did. He got angry at the mule, even threatening to slay it. God then opened his eyes, and he saw the angel and turned back. Balaam ended up going to meet the king, but he could not curse the children of Israel. Every time he opened his mouth, blessings came out instead! This seemed to be the end of the story as told in the book, however, it is not. We can glean from other accounts in Scripture that Balaam devised an evil plan with Balak to have the Moabite women go into the camp of the children of Israel and commit whoredom with them. The power of the Israelite's strength would leave them, and ultimately they could be defeated, even by Balak's smaller army.

We read in Revelation 2:14, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

What we can glean from this verse is that Balaam knew that

God would not allow him to curse His people. However, they did have a problem. Balaam knew that sin would curse these people, because sin would separate them from their God!

It is interesting that this same plan is being used today in the church. However, few people see it. Balaam knew that if the children of Israel allowed sin to enter their camp, God would leave them. Then they could be defeated. When God leaves a person or people, they are no match for the enemy! We see this clearly in the case of Samson. Nothing could defeat him—not chains, lions, soldiers, armies, or anything else! But only because the Spirit of God was upon him. As soon as Samson's hair was cut (which he knew would sever him from his power) a woman was able to capture him and turn him over to the Philistines. Oh, that men would see their need of God!

The Christian who has been cleansed by the blood of Christ receives power. The enemy cannot overthrow him. The enemy can come at him with everything he has, but he will only fall short. The spirit world knows a Christian who is right with God is too powerful for the enemy. The enemy is sore afraid. However, he is not okay with defeat. It is Satan's goal to destroy the church of Jesus Christ, at whatever the cost. He devises a plan to cause the Christian to sin. "But your iniquities

have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:2).

One morning in Haiti, a group of neighbors came to my door quite alarmed. "The witch doctor is trying to kill you!" I remember smiling, which caused them all the more distress. "You must not understand. This is serious!" They brought me outside the gate, where a substance on the ground was burning. "When this burns out, you will die!" I approached the burning substance, and as the group shrieked and jumped back, I stomped on it, extinguishing it in an instant. I then explained that the devil has no power over me because I am a child of God.

Over the next several years, it became very clear to all the neighbors that the missionaries' God is more powerful than the witch doctor's. The devil also knows this. He knows that he is no match against a blood-washed saint. This is why he is trying harder than ever to cause people to fall into sin! I believe he is doing an even greater work in the church of our day. The enemy of our souls hates repentance. When he causes you to sin he has control of you. When you repent, he loses that control he desires so much. So he has devised the greatest plan of all: to deceive Christians into thinking it is okay to sin. If Satan can cause believers who have been cleansed from all sin to believe they still are in sin,

then, of course, believers will not repent when they do sin, because sin seems normal. If he can cause Christians to think that everyone sins, then when they do fall into sin, will not seem to be an exceedingly terrible thing, ultimately causing them to continue in sin.

This is a true saying: If the Christian knew the great consequences of sin in his life, he would make it an utmost priority to stay free from sin.

The children of Israel didn't notice what was happening. In all of their battles, they were completely victorious. Their enemies feared them greatly. Then, without them even knowing it, the enemy devised a plan to cause them to fall into sin. It worked and, eventually, it became commonplace. The Israelite slain with the Midianitish woman, Zimri, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites, waltzed right into the camp with this ungodly woman, in the sight of Aaron, Moses, and everyone in the congregation.

Oh dear reader, do we truly realize what sin does? It causes us to become dull to reality. We become insensitive to wickedness, worldliness, and evil. Eventually, we don't care who sees us. We dress like the world, talk like the world, enjoy pleasures just like the world, and we do it right in front of everyone. We lie and lust, we envy and hate, we love the world, and commit whoredom as the Bride of Christ right in front of everyone. If



there's sin in the camp, why do we wonder that our churches are struggling?

We see a similar account in the book of Joshua. When the children of Israel defeated the great city of Jericho, God had told them they could not take of the spoil. We read that one man, Achan, did not obey this command. He took some spoils home and hid them under his tent. The children of Israel then went to take the next city, a small one called Ai, and were surprised to be defeated. What did Joshua do? Did he go back to the war books and find the problem? Did he confess his fault of underestimating the enemy? Maybe he called a meeting with the leaders of war? No, Joshua fell on his face and asked God why they were defeated. Joshua knew God was his

strength and if they lost a battle it was because there was a problem with their relationship with God. God answered, "Israel has sinned." Because sin entered the camp, the presence of God left. The days of victory were over.

When we accept the lukewarm theology of accepting sin, we learn how to live in defeat. We even expect to be defeated by sin. Suppose a college or university were looking to hire a new coach for their football program. The administrators have narrowed the choice down to three men. The athletic director devises a plan. He calls the three men into his office separately and asks them all the same question: "How many games do you think you will win this season?" The first man responded with some doubt, "I be-

lieve we will win about half of the games! We have a young team and a new coach.” The second man is asked the same question. “I believe we will win several games. We have a good team, although we are young, I believe we will only lose some of the toughest games.” The third man is also asked the same question, but his response was a bit different. “We will win every game. We will practice and study film and playbooks. Sir, give me the job and we will win every game!” Can you imagine which man was hired? You’re right, the third man.

When the director is asked why he hired the third man, this was his response. “If I had hired either of the first two men, what would have happened after they lost a game? They would not have thought anything about it, because they were expecting to lose. But the third man will respond differently, because he is confident that he will not lose. It is not about whether we lose a game or not, it’s about how we respond after losing a game. The third man will not accept losing. If he does lose a game, he will be devastated. He will do everything in his power to find out why they lost a game. The team will study the recordings until they figure out and fix the problem. They will confidently go back out to the next opponent.”

As Christians, when we expect to sin, we will not think much about it when or if we do. Howev-

er, if we realize that God can keep us from sin and keep us in fellowship with Him, then if we do sin, we do whatever it takes to figure out why. Maybe we started slacking on our personal devotions, or maybe we started hanging out with the wrong crowd, or we allowed the enemy to get us discouraged. Whatever the problem, we fix it and go on to fight another day!

Back to our opening account—Balaam’s plan worked perfectly. The foreign women came into their camp and the children of Israel committed fornication, disobeying God. God not only left them, but sent a plague. Thousands of Israelites died. Then a man of God, zealous for God’s people, eliminated the sin. It was ugly and probably difficult. I’m sure he was questioned about his methods, but the plague was stopped. God’s people were restored to victory. We read many accounts in Scripture about how sin is to be dealt with in God’s church.

Dear readers, whether it’s sin in your personal lives, sin in your family, or sin in the church, let’s be zealous and defend the faith. Let’s remember, the little foxes spoil the vine. Let’s rise in unison and sever the sin. Let’s welcome back the supernatural power of God in our churches and once again turn the world upside down!

Selected from *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*, Autumn 2025.

by the Editor

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Molly Lavy

My beloved son, my precious daughter, please think about this.

I could have placed you in a home in Afghanistan. You could have been the child of Muslims, living a life of darkness, poverty, and hopelessness. The one and only source of energy that propelled you in life—a seething all-consuming hatred for Jews and Americans. Perhaps your highest hope was just to kill yourself—to blow yourself away and others with you, all in the name of Islam.

I could have placed you in India. There, cows roam the streets, and the rats run freely. There, you would have been so distressed if you killed even a bug—it may have been an ancestor, they believe. There, many young girls end their lives because of their miserable marriages to men chosen for them by their godless parents. Yes, you could have been the child of some in India, raised in a Hindu home.

I could have placed you in New York City. Your father: a gang member. You never saw him. He was shot before you were born. Your mother: a single wisp of a girl. She loved you and she tried; but really, she loved herself the most. It's all she knew to do. Your mother might have turned to drugs to fill the dark and empty void in her soul. You might have been often hungry, left alone, forgotten. Fear and loneliness could have been your constant companions.

I could have placed you in China. You would have been an only child. Had your mother conceived a brother or sister for you, they would have been murdered, at the decree of your evil government. You might have lived in extreme filth and poverty, your parents working like slaves to assemble cheap trinkets for the consumption of the wealthy Western nations. I could have placed you in a Chinese home. But I didn't.

No, your life was touched greatly by me. How tremendously you were blessed. For you were born into an Old German Baptist Brethren home. Or, if you weren't born into one, you have at some time joined yourself to these people and the blessings of their heritage have become yours for the taking.

Oh, I know, your father wasn't perfect, was he? He failed sometimes to reflect my Son like he should have. He wanted to do right, but sometimes the pressures of the farm or business overcame his good intentions, and he failed you, and he failed me. I'm still working on him, too, you know.

And your mother—well, mother wasn't perfect either. She wanted to be like Jesus. Oh, how she wanted to be, but she would fail sometimes. She would get riled up and her voice would become sharp, instead of kind.

Perhaps father and mother, in their zeal to raise you up right, portrayed to you just a lot of do's

and don'ts. Do this, and don't do that. Maybe when you were young you even became just a little confused. And as you looked on at the church, perhaps in your immature mind, doing certain exact things in certain exact ways became synonymous with salvation.

No, things weren't perfect for you. My desire is to build strong Christians, and to receive all the glory for Myself. And this would never happen in perfect circumstances.

But this you did have:

- ◆ Your mother was a good cook. You didn't grow up on T.V. dinners. You grew up on real food prepared by a keeper-at-home.
- ◆ Almost without exception, your father and mother remained married to each other. In the rare event that you did come from a broken home, you were at least surrounded by many, many examples of successful, lifelong marriages.
- ◆ You were taught about my Son, and my Word.
- ◆ You were taken to my House, where my Word was read and preached.
- ◆ You were not discouraged from being in my Word. You were encouraged to read and know the Bible.
- ◆ At least once, maybe twice or three times a year, you were taken to a Love Feast. A Love Feast, where for two days you were exhorted and encouraged

to go back to the Cross. Back to the basics and focus on my Son and what He did for you.

I wonder—can you fully comprehend what a tremendous blessing your Love Feasts have been for you and your people? Can you grasp it?

Every day my eyes rove to and fro across the whole earth. I see billions and billions of people, souls for whom my Son died. I see them and love them all. I see terrified, quivering children who are molested and beaten by their drunken fathers. I see tired, worn mothers who every day go out and gather sticks of firewood. Every day is a desperate struggle just to survive.

I see my people in Eastern Europe. Many of them in large families. There is never enough clothes and food to go around. They live in such poor homes, and they are often cold. But oh, how they love me! Their hearts are mine.

And then, I see you. You are warm. You are well fed. You are well-dressed. You are in a community of people who love you and who will do anything for you should you ever need help or suffer loss. All around the house where you live are scattered copies of my Word. You can read it whenever you want to.

I see you, and I love you. I love you so much—you are so precious to me. I have blessed you above, far above, most of my creation.

Materially and spiritually I have poured out my abundance upon you without measure.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH MY BLESSINGS?

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR LIFE?

Will you be drowsy, sleepy, careless, lazy? Floating along on the blessings your foreparents struggled for? Taking them for granted?

Will you be negative, or be a complainer, always finding fault with the little things that aren't quite right? Gripping about your authorities instead of praying fervently for, and graciously submitting to them as my Word teaches? I tell you, my anger is kindled when I see my children, to whom I have given so much, murmuring and complaining.

Make no mistake—you will not be allowed into my Kingdom on the merits of your foreparents. Your ancestors were men who loved me. Who revered my Word, and who sought my face. What you have today is the result of men who were mine; who fervently sought, and prayerfully thought—and were moved and compelled by my Spirit. So often you just take it for granted. But you won't enter into my Kingdom on their coat-tails. No, you must take up My Cause for yourself. You must love and heed my Word. You must adore my Son!

I've seen many fellowships like yours just fade away. It's nothing new to me—I've seen it many

times. One generation takes their eyes off Me and my Word, and focuses a little too much on something else. Then the next generation comes along and says, "Wait a minute! Something's wrong here—we've got to get rid of all these externals so we can be free and have our liberty in Christ!"

They think they've become free and rarely realize they've become entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

Please understand—I will build **MY CHURCH!**

I will have **MY PEOPLE!**

My Son will have **HIS BRIDE!**

The question is you. You.

Will your heart grow cold? Will your service to Me become lukewarm? Will portions of My Word become optional to you?

What will you choose? The answer lies within you.

Selected by

Cindy Hess

THE CHURCH, YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

Recently we listened to a sermon from a brother whose primary question after reading from Acts 2:43–47 was, "Is this your church experience today?" It was a rather soul searching question. Realistically our local congregation hadn't sold their houses and weren't living with all things in

common. In fact the concept seemed pretty radical probably because there have been many governments fail at having all things in common. We know that never goes as expected.

How about eating with the same group of people every meal? We can do that for a few days and then most of us want to take our sandwich off to a quiet place. We almost always sat down for at least one meal together as a family growing up or when we had children at home. We enjoy any meal with company—around our table or theirs. But I recall a sister saying, when asked if her family was going to the carry in dinner after church, that she wasn't feeling "social" this time, and we have probably all had a day like that. At least she felt worshipful.

How many of us make a daily journey to the meeting house? Somehow this Acts thing wasn't looking so idyllic. Why not?

If you have ever visited the Old City of Jerusalem and stayed for a length of time in a house you would understand why the church does not live like this today. We are far too separated, both with respect to doctrine and space. Raise your hand if you have professing Christian neighbors the next door over by a few steps that you commonly share a weekly meal with. Even growing up in a neighborhood where we did, separated by a few yards, I can't say I

definitely ate a meal in all of about a dozen brethren homes and certainly not regularly. We don't have to ask about the fellowship part. There were places to go and people to meet and work to be done. Who had daily time for it? Why, most Sundays who of us doesn't opt for a day of rest so we can do it all again the next week?

How did we get so far from what the early church had at Jerusalem? And why? That is easy to answer. We live in a fallen world. We live in a world where the devil is making every effort against the people of God, with his time growing shorter. It wasn't long until the Christians at Jerusalem were suffering need. If you have seen a famine you know that without help from beyond there are two choices, move or starve. When the wise move, particularly the godly, then the ungodly, and any who cannot move suffer yet more. Jerusalem is no stranger to this.

Well, maybe if we did like they did—paid more attention to doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer, things would be different. In some ways, yes, they would be, but we are forgetting a few things. The first is that God is not insular and hasn't been in a particular way since man fell. There was a problem the first time Adam decided to not fellowship. God, like any father wants to be with His children at least daily. Neglect fellowship

and there is bound to be suffering on a scale no one wants to consider, and prayer is right along side it in our day.

Adam and Eve didn't want to leave Eden. Noah was ordered out of the Ark. Everyone had to be forced out of the Plain of Shinar, Abram from Ur, The children of Israel wanted to return to Egypt instead of enter the Promised Land and all it involved. We could go on and on right up to the early 1700s and the Brethren leaving the old country for the New World. Why is this? It is because God says, "Go," and He has a good reason. This world is not a land of rest—it is a land of warfare. We can camp, but don't be building a continuing city and certainly not your own palace and moat. Time is wasting, and however you may look at it, the Gospel will go out into all the world before the end comes. If you don't go, God will get someone who will.

We often bemoan running to and fro. There are days when we just want to sit by the fire and spin, or at least sew. It seems the older one grows the less one goes until the Body has to go after the hands or feet. We understand there are things that can hinder church attendance, but if we find those hands and feet doing other things on other days of the week then they can go with the Body on Sunday. Seldom should the church have to make an effort to find will-

ing hands and feet.

If you aren't doing the first century church things with your neighbors then you may as well be sleeping in your armor. This world is not becoming more friendly or godly and you don't have to go far to carry the Gospel.

Let us consider just one of those things—fellowship. There are varying degrees of it from a friendly greeting to a Communion weekend. How do you think your two-generation unchurched neighbor, whether next door or working beside you daily, is going to respond if you invite them to a "love feast" not to mention Sunday "worship service"? What would be their vision at the mention of either? Wide eyed at best and taking a few steps back. You have to start somewhere and most people know our sisters can cook. Few will turn down a good meal. Granted, we will feel like Jesus when He fed the multitudes—they are just here for the food, but actually they will observe much more than they eat.

Well we remember, the wistfully soft comment from a gruff boss when he beheld a table set with a home-cooked meal. "It looks just like my Grandma's." Grandma was from France and had passed many years ago, but in that moment her hospitality, maybe even her faith, touched a soft spot in a young boy that had grown hard and older over the years. Did he see her after his family immigrat-

ed? I don't know, but if a year goes by and he doesn't put his feet under our table we will lose all we've gained, and a practicing faith today might well become once again a distant memory.

Some years later this man wanted a sewing machine repaired for his wife, and finding a shop, related the skill and machines of the owner. Now it was my turn to get wistful and I remembered my Grandma's sewing machine. One evening after a business event I found an old box on the hood of the car. Inside was a machine like Grandma's worth far more than a homecooked meal.

Brethren and sisters, the same Holy Spirit of the early church is alive, well, and very present today. We would also say that He is oft quenched and grieved. We may think it takes a lot to quench the Spirit. A light can be extinguished by pinching the wick of a candle or pulling a plug from the wall. It probably takes even less to grieve Him.

While we wonder why we can't have exactly what we think our forefathers had, we neglect what we do have, and we fail to strengthen what remains. Shame upon us. Do we see those two words in the 46th verse? "And they, continuing daily..." Herein lies the whole mission. Unless we have the vision of what the church will be tomorrow (and some tomorrow it will be) with "...one accord in the temple, and breaking bread

from house to house..." then we will never continue daily to go to our neighbors, our acquaintances, our fellow labors, the stranger in the way, even our family. And "Go" we must. Why? Because we are called. If you don't think so then draw the latch, sit by the fire and spin. Your mind will go in circles, and in about a week it will make you dizzy.

Daily continue to go. If your feet can't, write a card or letter. If your hands can't, call. Go today because the time is short. You were called yesterday for tomorrow, and while you may not know what you will be doing today, whatever it is, it won't get done unless you continue daily.

*Come Holy Spirit, heav'nly Dove,
With all thy quick'ning pow'rs;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.*

*In these last days, so dark and drear
When many fall away,
May daily we continue here
And with thy Spirit say,*

*Daily thy church their bread did break
All things in common need.
Oh may thy people all partake
And to thy ways give heed.*

*Come Holy Spirit, heav'nly Dove,
With all thy quick'ning pow'rs; Re-
new our hearts with thy dear love
Thy Holy Spirit be ours.*

Rachel Brubaker

THE GREATEST MAN IN HISTORY

Author Unknown

The greatest man in history was named Jesus. He had no servants, yet they called Him Master. He had no degree, yet they called Him Teacher. He had no medicines, yet they called Him healer. He had no army, yet kings feared Him. He won no military battles, yet He conquered the world. He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him. He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today.

Selected by
Ron and Caroline Holsinger
1010 Estate Lane, Brookville, OH 45309

MEDITATIONS

Fish out of water are not free. Horses out of harness are of no use.

To be on the receiving end doesn't set well with most of us.

Tell me more about this God you say you don't believe in.

After Job lost everything, he fell down and worshipped.

Waiting is a time of growth. It's putting down roots.

While you're planting, keep harvest time in view.

Consider yourself both a sinner and a saint.

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.

In the world in which we are living, it may be sometimes difficult to be able to discern how much we are actually trusting in our God.

We have all, and abound. The needs we have that cannot be taken care of in some way are very few.

It may be easy for us then to become lax in our prayer life, and our petitions to God may become less fervent.

Questions we may want to ask:

1. When was the last time I had a need for which there was no reme-

dy other than crying out to God?

2. If there appears to be no earthly answer to my dilemma, do I lose my peace? Or am I able to simply wait and rest in God's timing?

3. What Scriptures should I seek out to give me direction when I am in need?

4. Has God promised to supply all of my needs?

5. When Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you," what kind of things was He speaking of?

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Apr. 18, 2026; Lower Twin, OH
Alissa Brubaker
Apr. 19, 2026; Cascade Valley, WA
Braelyn Wise
May 8, 2026; Morning Star, OH
Simon Brubaker

NEW MEMBERS

Apr. 18, 2026; Caldwell, ID
Darin Buckingham

COMMISSIONS

Apr. 21, 2026; Morning Star, OH
Steven Deaton (with wife Brandy)
Advanced to the Second Degree of
the Ministry.
Apr. 21, 2026; Morning Star, OH
Addison Emig (with wife Ellie)
Called to the Ministry

COMMUNION NOTICES

June 7, 2026 A.M. @ I.W.U., Marion, IN
June 27, 2026 Mtn. View Brethren, ID
Sept. 26, 2026..... Pleasant View, OH
Oct. 3, 2026..... Providence, IN
Oct. 10, 2026..... Lower Twin, OH
Oct. 10, 2026..... Zillah, WA
Oct. 17, 2026..... Clearwater, IN/WI
Oct. 17, 2026..... Maple Grove, OH
Oct. 17, 2026..... Western Kansas, KS
Oct. 24, 2026..... Stillwater, OH
Oct. 31, 2026..... Bethel, OH
Oct. 31, 2026..... Columbia River, WA
Nov. 7, 2026..... Covington, OH
Nov. 7, 2026..... Shenandoah, VA
Nov. 7, 2026..... West Modesto, CA
Jan. 30, 2027 Pine Grove, FL

HARVEST MEETINGS

June 28, 2026 Pleasant View, OH
July 12, 2026 Lower Twin, OH
July 19, 2026 Bethel, OH
July 26, 2026 Shiloh, OH
Aug. 2, 2026..... Maple Grove, OH
Aug. 9, 2026..... Covington/Sugar Grove, OH

Aug. 23, 2026..... Stillwater, OH
Aug. 30, 2026..... Salem, OH
Sept. 20, 2026..... Bear Creek, OH

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Date and Location

Lord willing, the Annual Conference is scheduled to take place from June 6 to June 9, 2026 at:

Indiana Wesleyan University
4201 S. Washington St.,
Marion, IN 46953.

Worship Services

All friends, neighbors, and attendees are warmly invited to join in glorifying and praising GOD together. The first worship service will begin at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, June 6. Prior to each service, one or two hymns will be sung to help gather the congregation, quiet our minds, and prepare for worship. We also anticipate a communion service for OGBBC—New Conference members on Sunday, June 7 at 4:00 P.M.

Registration Form

All persons planning to attend Conference must register. Registration for the Conference will be available exclusively online this year. The electronic registration form must be completed at www.ogbbc.org. A paper Registration Packet will not be available.

Registration is required to plan for complimentary meals. Lodging fees for Dorm or RV accommodations will be calculated online and may be paid by credit card to finalize the form. Registration cannot

be processed without acceptable credit card information. If you do not have access to the internet or have trouble with the form, please seek assistance from someone in your district. Those lodging offsite must still register for meals, but no fee will be charged.

Check-in

The Lodging Committee's Information Center will be open on Friday, June 5, from 2:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. in the Piazza Terrace room, located in the Barnes Student Center. This year, on-campus guests will check in as follows:

- Young Folks will sign in and receive their keys and packets at their dorm common area.
- Campers will sign in and receive their packets as well as their parking assignments as they arrive at the camper lots.
- All others will sign-in at the Information Center, located in the Barnes Student Center.

Additional information will be provided at check-in.

Awareness

For safety and liability reasons, COA requests that attendees do not bring rip sticks, skateboards, roller blades, bicycles, roller skates, or similar items to the Conference.

Call-in

The call-in number for worship services is 717-908-1961 and the Conference PIN is 6883602. This information will be posted on the OGBBC website and in the Registration Packet.

Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will move among His people, encouraging the saints, mentoring the youth, convicting the unsaved, and that together we may bring praise and glory to God.

On behalf of the 2026 COA,

Dean Brovont, Secretary

MT. ZION DISTRICT Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

We at Mt. Zion have been making progress on our building project. We are nearing completion of the addition and beginning remodeling of the existing building. We have been having workdays a couple of Saturdays a month and an evening or two a week. Anyone is welcome to come and join in on the work.

With current funds and projected costs we estimate that we need about \$250,000 of additional funds to complete the project.

We would like to thank everyone for their continued prayers and support. If any feel to contribute financially to this project, please send donations to:

Mount Zion Building Fund
c/o Keith Garber
2890 Guilford Springs Rd.
Chambersburg, PA 17202

We desire your prayers that the Lord would continue to bless and build our district both naturally and spiritually. May all we do be to His Glory and the building of His Church.

On behalf of the Mount Zion District

Leslie J. Bowman
Building Committee Secretary

POEMS

HE LEADETH ME

John F. Chaplain

In pastures green? Not always; sometimes He
Who knoweth best, in kindness leadeth me
In weary ways where heavy shadows be,
Out of the sunshine warm and soft and bright—
Out of the sunshine into darkest night,
I oft would yield to sorrow and to fright,
Only for this—I know He holds my hand,
So, whether led in green or desert land,
I trust, although I may not understand.

And by still waters? No, not always so;
Ofttimes the heavy tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go;
But when the storm beats wildest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, "Lo, it is I."
Above the tempest wild, I hear Him say,
"Beyond the darkness lies the perfect day;
In every path of thine, I lead the way."

So whether on the hilltops, high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys, where
The shadows lie—what matter? He is there;
And more than this, where'er the pathway lead
He gives to me no helpless, broken reed,
But His own hand, sufficient for my need;
So where He leads me, I can safely go,
And in the blest hereafter I shall know
Why in His wisdom, He hath led me so.

Selected by Alex Bowman, Fletcher, Ohio

OBITUARIES

NEWSOM — Nicara Lee was born October 12, 1985, in Los Angeles, California. She died April 11, 2026, at home in Anderson, Indiana. She testified of her faith in the blood of Christ for salvation by being baptized June 13, 2007.

Nicara attended Pendleton Heights High School. She worked as a caregiver and rehab assistant while in high school and later while at Ivy Tech College. At Ivy Tech she was preparing for a health care vocation. Nicara was married to Stephawn Newsom while in school. She worked as a caregiver and rehab assistant while Stephawn was in college. They were parents of Skylur, now 20; Cailen, 16; and Gavin (12/13/2003–12/13/2003).

She remained committed in love and support of her sons throughout what was ahead. In February of 2011 she secured her boys, then age one and five, in their car seats, left her grandparent's house and slid on the icy road in the path of an oncoming car. Nicara suffered traumatic brain injury, left-side paralysis and other life-threatening injuries.

She required around-the-clock caregivers. Her boys were not injured. After recovering from a coma, she spent 9 months in hospitals and rehab facilities. Her Aunt Jennifer took a leave from her nursing clinicals to care for her during this fragile time. She moved in with her grandparents', Stanley and Dovella Boyd, for her care in December of 2011.

She remained there until her passing. In 2021 her mother, Catherine, moved in to help guide her care. Nicara's comprehension was mostly intact, although speech communication was limited. The family was assisted with dedicated caregivers also. The heavenly Father supplied just the right support!

Nicara had a sense of humor and found enjoyment in interacting with

family, church friends, and neighbors. She enjoyed attending church services and was loved by those who knew her. She was unable to eat by mouth for the last 16 months which compromised her quality of life. While she worked hard to exercise regularly and stayed engaged in the activities she could do within her limitations, her recurring desire was to "go home."

During Friday evening, Nicara had no unaddressed medical issues. Grandpa had to be away and called the caregiver at 9:30 P.M. to let her know he wouldn't be back until after 11 P.M. The caregiver said that Nicara was tired and wanted to go to bed. Nicara thanked her for assisting with her transfer from the power chair to the bed. Then the caregiver said, "She's still awake. You can talk with her." When I told her I wouldn't be home till later, it was ok if she went to sleep, Nicara said, "I'll wait." When I got home at 11:30 she was fighting sleep. I asked her if I could put her ventilator mask on, per our routine. She nodded and raised her head. Early Saturday morning, when it was still dark, I came into her room to take the mask off. She was sleeping peacefully. I explained what I was doing but she didn't respond. She was warm to the touch but didn't awaken when I called out to her. Her vital signs showed no evidence of life. Her Lord Jesus had called her home near that time.

Aside from her mother and her sons, Nicara leaves two brothers, Kasian (wife Alexandra) and Joseph Granville. She also leaves a host of relatives, church family, and friends that loved and supported her throughout this journey.

A memorial service for Nicara was planned for April 26 from 2–5 P.M. with a short devotional at 4 P.M. This was held at Humble Life Farms, Anderson, Indiana.

Stanley Boyd

COOK — Benjamin Joseph peacefully left his earthly home for his eternal one at 4:15 A.M. on April 22, 2026. His pilgrimage here was 33 years, 2 months, and 1 week.

Born on February 15, 1993, in Dayton, Ohio, Benjamin was joyfully received by his parents, Joseph Alan Cook and Lora Sue (Landes) Cook along with his older sister, Amanda. He was their first-born son and the second of seven children. His siblings are Amanda, Ethan, Weston, Austin, Nathan, and Alena.

Benjamin spent the first 13 years of his childhood in Ohio. He enjoyed many hours with his parents and siblings since he was homeschooled, and many fond memories were made. He especially enjoyed taking things apart to see how they were made, as well as building things that would work. His room was often a collection of parts and pieces. At the age of 12 he built a wooden snowplow that attached to his old riding mower so that he could clear snow in the driveway. Also, at the age of 12, Benjamin realized his need of a Lord and Savior. He repented of his sins, and after placing his faith in the power of the cleansing blood of Jesus he was baptized. He took the Lord's calling out of childhood into spiritual manhood seriously, and though he still needed God's forgiveness from day to day, he blossomed in his walk with the Lord and love for Him.

When almost 14, Benjamin moved with his family to Myerstown, Pennsylvania. From the ages of 15–20 he worked at cleaning chicken barns, mowing lawns, working at an office supply store, helping his dad to sell indoor and outdoor furniture and storage sheds, taxiing Amish, helping with sound systems in church related meetings, and beginning his own I.T. business to help those without internet with their computers. He also enjoyed a mission trip to Nicaragua when 17 to help build a house for a Christian family, and to Ghana, Africa, when 20 to help reroof a mission house.

In early 2014, at the age of 21, Benjamin moved west, to North Idaho, with his family. He soon spread his wings with the blessing of his parents and moved to Ellensburg, Washington, for a job doing pest control, tree, and lawn care. He thoroughly enjoyed all the time with the young folks there, hiking, off-roading, singing, playing volleyball, and studying the Bible together.

Benjamin went to young folks camp in July of 2015, in the mountains of California and met Heidi Jenkins. He was quite intrigued with her and how she loved deep theological discussions, and how she enjoyed entering the conversations he had with her brother Caleb. They had their first date on Thanksgiving in 2016, soon after Heidi moved to Idaho. Many more special times were spent together, and they marveled how God wove their lives together, making it very clear that God wanted them to marry. Ben always said he wanted God to pick who he married so he wouldn't make a mistake. Their dating was marked by God's miraculous work in their lives. They were married December 15, 2017, in Modesto, California, where Heidi grew up.

The two of them started their new life together in Ellensburg, Washington, where Benjamin had already been living. After leaving Arbor Care, he worked for Wise Automotive a few months before his dream job of working as an estimator for Central Paving. Then he moved to the field as a traffic control supervisor. He also spent some time managing a 500 unit self-storage facility and was involved in many aspects of building it before the units were ready to be rented.

God blessed Ben and Heidi with their first-born daughter about a year after they were married. Elsie Joy was born February 17, 2019. Thirteen and ½ months later they were blessed with a second daughter, Katie Grace, on March 27, 2020. These two little sunbeams brought much joy and energy to their home.

Though very healthy all his young life, Ben soon began to experience some puzzling health issues during the summer of 2022. Testing was done; and on January 16, 2023, he received the diagnosis of Large B-cell Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma Cancer. Ben almost didn't even flinch when he heard the news and told Heidi that they were going to trust the Lord, no matter what. His deepest desire was that God would be glorified either by his life or by his death.

For 2 years they had prayed about relocating to North Idaho and waited on God's timing to move. Ben had wanted to move back closer to his parents to help his dad who was also struggling with serious health issues. God opened the door quickly for them when they learned their rental house was to be burned down because the house was full of mold. It was in the middle of this moving process that Ben received his cancer diagnosis.

After Ben and Heidi moved with their girls to North Idaho, Ben and his dad worked at carpentry jobs together periodically as they were physically able. They joined Ethan, who had already been doing carpentry jobs in the area for several years. They had worked together building houses in Ohio when Ben was a boy, so it was special to get to work together again. During this time Ben and Heidi's faith was stretched when he didn't always feel well enough to work, and they needed to trust God to provide for them.

Ben and Heidi battled the cancer with all they had, even traveling to Germany four times for treatment. Thousands of prayers went up for them, for which they were deeply thankful! Ben had a strong will to live, desiring to be a husband to his dear wife and a daddy to his precious little girls. But God had a higher calling for him and called him to Heaven after a little over three years. Over the course of his cancer, Ben was anointed three times, which brought much comfort.

Ben's life calling was to care for hurting people. Especially those who were outsiders, on the fringes, unpopular, or had a hurtful experience in church and were misunderstood or pushed away. Ben had several of his own personal experiences with this, and it deeply affected his life. He chose to follow Jesus no matter what it cost him. He would forgive and say, "Why would it not be me who gets the short end of the stick?" As a couple it seemed God was systematically taking them through the suffering of various trials in order to comfort others in painful situations with the comfort God was comforting them with. He allowed God to use the experiences to deepen his walk with the Lord, and as a springboard to care for people even better. Ben would say, "Love always wins!" He was passionate about knowing the truth of God's Word and the truth about current events in the world so as not to be deceived in these last days. He also desired that others would not be deceived but be spiritually watchful.

Ben loved people and enjoyed helping them in many practical ways. If he didn't know how to do a job, he would figure out or ask for advice. He sometimes neglected his own needs so that he could help someone. He took a special interest in children, taking time for them also.

Other interests Ben had included singing hymns in 4-part harmony with others, exploring forest service roads, hiking, and camping. He was a first responder at heart but didn't pursue it much due to the time it would take away from his wife and daughters. His family was more important to him than any job or hobby. He became a ham radio operator, built computers for several people, almost finished a solar generator to power his family's home, and always wanted to manufacture some much-needed product in the U. S.

Ben lived life to the fullest and did everything at 200%, including fighting

cancer. God's grace overshadowed Ben and Heidi's journey through his illness with many blessings. After a while into the cancer journey, they began to see the good God brought from having cancer. There were lots of times together as a family, healing of relationships, miraculous financial provision, and a shift of life purpose as they wondered if God sent them to Germany and many hospitals to share the Gospel with people who needed Him. Many new relationships were made, and old ones were strengthened. Some Bible references which became very dear to them were Psalm 118:17, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD."; Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."; and Psalm 127 and 128 with a focus on the verse saying, "Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it..." They found they had to surrender their hopes and dreams to the Master Builder Who builds for eternity and allow God to write the story of their life.

Preceding him in death were his

grandpa, Marvin Cook; an uncle, Rodney Landes; and grandparents Ralph and Ruby Jenkins and Esther Huffman.

He is survived by his wife, Heidi; and daughters, Elsie and Katie; parents, Joseph and Lora Cook; siblings, Amanda Cook, Ethan and Virginia Cook, Weston Cook, Austin and Cassie Cook, Nathan Cook, and Alena Cook; in-laws, Randy and Sarah Jenkins, brother and sisters-in-law, Kevin and Rosanna Root, Levi and Abby Jenkins, Caleb Jenkins, Jesse and Estee Jenkins, Reuben Jenkins, and Esther Jenkins; 12 nieces and nephews; grandparents, Eileen Cook, Russell and Arlene Landes, and Alfred Huffman.

Ben was a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church—New Conference, Mountain View district, and was buried in the Pack River Cemetery, near Sandpoint, Idaho.

Ben will be greatly missed by his family and friends, but we rejoice that he is safely Home with his Lord and that God answered every prayer for complete healing of his cancer! May we also be faithful followers of Jesus and join him some day in Heaven where no pain or sickness will ever be.

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.
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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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