

"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 —

"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus... He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Matt. 28:5-6

Vol. XVII

April 2026

No. 4

FEAR NOT, FOR HE IS RISEN!

Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus
He is not here! He's risen from the dead!
Seek not among the dead to find the living,
In Resurrected life, He's gone ahead.

Fear not! His sorrow's past, His work is finished.
Go find Him where His feet have often led,
In Galilee, at sea, or times of trial
You'll find that "He is risen as He said."

Don't be afraid, His life will lead you onward
Though difficult the path, and dark the day.
Though adversaries mock, and life resists you,
He'll be with you, though lonely seems the way.

I've found it so, He stands at every portal
And beckons me to come and do the right.
When I step forth in faith to walk beside Him
And do His will, He makes my burden light.

Though often still I'm tempted to seek pleasure
As if it could yet satisfy my soul,
"*Seek not for life among the dead*" still stirs me,
And helps direct my step, and life, and goal.

Don't be afraid, men press with expectation
And criticize the choices you will make,
But step aside and find the **RISEN** Savior,
With faith in Him the empty world forsake.

Fear not, He's coming soon; wait patiently for Him,
He'll come with clouds "as you have seen Him go."
Rejoice as you return to Christian duty,
He'll faithful be; that's all you need to know.

Lowell Miller, New Paris, Ohio

THE TESTIMONY

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EDITORIAL

**ALIVE, ALIVE, ALIVE
FOREVERMORE**

There is something universally exciting; something that has a draw upon every created being in our world. BEING ALIVE. Staying alive, protecting life, treasuring the very essence of living. In Genesis 2 we see God, and He reaches down and scoops up some dust into His hands. He begins to fashion it into the form of a man. The very dust of the ground takes on the image of what we know as these fleshly bodies, and God puts His hands on the face of this body and forms the nostrils. And then with God's own breath, He breathed into this form and man became a living creature. If you are sitting in your chair reading this, it is only because you are alive and have this breath in your body of dust. The living God gave everything that has ever lived the breath of life and it is by His new mercies every morning that we live and breathe and exist. Thank you, Jesus, for giving us life in our bodies!

If your breath is your only life, the Bible tells us you are still dead. Dead in spirit. Dead in relationship to your Creator. There is a universal desire, I believe, for a man to have a living spirit. Feel alive inside. A deep inner desire for direction, connection and purpose for even having breath. Acts chapter 2, with qualifiers, gives us a promise that we can receive the

gift of the Holy Spirit. Being alive spiritually is having God the creator and sustainer living in us. John 6:63 tells us that our body, being alive, is of very little profit, but God offers through His Spirit, life to ours. Quickened by flames of fire, filled with the Spirit of God, we can be alive to God. Thank you, Jesus, for giving us life in our spirits!

There is among the human race a universal curiosity and concern about what happens when these bodies take their last breath and the spirit of man is set free from the body. Men and women have a universal desire to know and believe in an eternal existence. We want to be alive now, we want to be alive inside and we want to be alive in the future. A rich, young man, in the prime of his life, having everything that a man could want in this world, cries out to the Master of the universe, "What is it that I must do that I may have eternal life?" Maybe that is one of the deepest cries within the human breast as our time here vanishes as a vapor before our very eyes. Is there anything I can do to live forever? YES!! In John 10:27-28 we read, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." In I John 2:25 we read, "And this is the promise that he [Jesus] has prom-

ised us, even life eternal.” Thank you, Jesus, for life eternal.

The only way to live is through the giver of life. He breathed into our nostrils, He quickened our spirits, and He has the power to give, as He has promised, life eternal to those that know and follow Him.

Alive and breathing, Alive in spirit, Alive forevermore!

My Jesus is alive!

Sing hallelujah! Sing Hallelujah!

My Jesus is alive!

AND SO AM I!

Rusty Flora

SEASONAL

HE IS RISEN—AS HE SAID!

Eternity turns on the hub of the Resurrection of Jesus Messiah. No event can compare with Jesus’ Resurrection from the tomb, because at that time He broke the bonds of death and rolled back the stone from the door of the deep, dark cave of Satan’s empire.

Those closest to Him did not believe that He could be Resurrected after the crucifixion—nor did they believe even when He was. The first women at the tomb were “affrighted.” Some women when they saw an angel in the tomb, “fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid.” Mary Magdeline was the first to see Jesus. When she told the apostles she had seen the Lord and talked with Him, they did not believe her. “...When they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.” Jesus appeared to two as they walked in the country to Emmaus “and they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.” Thomas

would not believe his own brethren until after he had seen the Lord himself. At one point Jesus “...upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.” When some were first told, “...their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” The two at supper in Emmaus somehow recognized Him by the manner in which He blessed and broke the bread. Later that night as these two told the disciples of their experience, Jesus appeared to them saying, “Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.” Later, when they had gone into Galilee “...into a mountain which Jesus had appointed...some [still] doubted.”

While those nearest Him did not believe, the chief priests and the Pharisees said to Pilate, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.” Pilate then believed enough to set a guard at the tomb. After the Resurrection, “...some of the watch came into

the city and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." They told of the earthquake, how an angel rolled the stone away from the door, and how Jesus had come forth alive. They, no doubt recounted how they fell back as dead men. These men did not doubt in the least the truth of the Resurrection.

Jesus had said, "...as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." And He taught His disciples that "...the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Again, He said, "And they shall scourge him and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." Peter challenged Jesus for these words, the crucifixion and the Resurrection. In the face of all this, there should have been no reason for fear, amazement, and surprise when their Master did in fact rise from the tomb.

The psalmist wrote, "For thou wilt not leave my soul in [hades—the grave or the tomb]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption [which in this case means putrefaction]." Everyone accepted that Jesus was, indeed, dead. They saw Him expire on the cross. But few believed what He had said about His coming Resurrection. It seems the only ones to

believe what Jesus said were the Scribes and Pharisees, the watchmen at the garden tomb, and Pontius Pilate! Is there anyone who does not find that amazing?

After the Resurrection was accepted as fact and believed by the Apostles and disciples it became, as we said above, the hub of their universe. One of the requirements of Apostleship was that a person "must be a witness with us of his Resurrection." Paul claimed the office of Apostleship when he saw, on his way to Damascus, the resurrected Lord in a vision. Under great persecution the followers of Christ were "scattered [and] went every where preaching the word." The Resurrection was a central theme, for Peter in his great Pentecostal Sermon recorded in Acts 2 upbraided the Jews by saying, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Furthermore, "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." As a consequence, they were imprisoned under threat of death, but they continued to preach the Resurrection. Today we believe in the Resurrection. But too often we are not as zealously passionate as were the early Christians. The whole

Christian doctrine revolves on the truth that Jesus was dead and is alive for ever more—as He said!

After we have experienced the Resurrection ourselves, and have been received into Glory into the presence of God and the Lamb, then we shall realize the words, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

There we shall gather 'round the throne, as we read in the Revelation, “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...” And we shall sing with Saints and Angels, “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” It shall be exactly as He said. And that is not the end.

It is only the beginning!

Marcus Miller

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESURRECTION

As we approach another EASTER season, (one of the most important times of our Christian experience) our minds have been drawn to the thoughts of our title.

First we will define the words **Perspective** and **Perception**. Perspective is where we are viewing from, and Perception is what we are seeing from that point of view.

Next, we'll cite the Scripture our thoughts are drawn from, which is **Colossians 3:1**. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” This Scripture caused us to see that Christ, by parables and natural examples, helped us to see the spiritual lesson. We find no fault with those who have had a desire to experience a trip to the Holy Land to look into the tomb and stand by Golgotha. Our hope is just to turn our thoughts a little higher.

We want to turn our minds from the bodily resurrection to a resurrected life.

The question then is, “How do *we* live a resurrected life?” The very first word in our text verse could well be “**If**.” This should cause some self-examination. (I marvel how the **INSPIRED WORD OF GOD** just flows to the next thing.) So after the first comma in this verse, we move right into the “how to do.” We are to **seek** or **look**. Where do we look? Up, or above. What do we look

for? After the next comma it says, "...where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." So we are to look to Christ. And to His example. What was Christ's example? Jesus said that He did only those things which please the **Father** (John 8:29).

Verse 2 "*Set your affection on things above...*" should prompt a **self-examination** question. Where are our affections centered? On things above? Or are they tethered to things below (earthly things)? If the latter is the case, we may find our **SELF** so anchored to the **world** that when the time comes for the calling up of the church, those who are alive and remain will rise to meet Him in the air, but we will not be able to rise!

Then verse 3 flows right on to the heart of the resurrection issue. For there to be a resurrection, there must be a death.

What does it mean to be dead? In the natural there is this mortal body. Now this is where in the weakness of the flesh we may not get this to come out just right, but we will give it our best effort. This is a process that begins when we realize something is missing. By God's grace we know that this mortal life will end. What then? One place it says "Ye have no (eternal) life in **you**." How do we reconcile all of this? The end of verse 3 tells us. "...your (eternal) life is hid with Christ in God." It begins to appear that we need a transformation or translation from natural life to a spiritual or eter-

nal life. Romans 12 tells us we need a changing of mind or a renewing. As said above, something has to die. What? **SELF**. How do we kill self? Verses 5 through 9 tell us, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds..." (Col. 3:5-9). Verse 10 then tells us, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him..."

Get your Bible now and read verses 11 to the end of the chapter to see how this renewing takes place.

In conclusion, we will go to Matthew 16:24, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Follow Him where? To be crucified. This Jesus, who was God (representing spirit) and Man (representing flesh) wants us to follow Him to have our fleshly man killed so we can rise to walk in newness of life. Romans 6:6 says, "...Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body

of sin might be destroyed, that on which the second death hath no
henceforth we should not serve power.
sin.” Read also Romans 6:3–10.

Doug and Mary Peters

May we all prepare our souls to
have part in the first resurrection

GENERAL

THE CURIOUS SHARED HABITUS¹ OF THE BRETHREN LOVE FEAST

The Brethren love feast, as historically held in our tradition, is a now-growing ancient custom of beautifully rich, Christ-centered liturgy. Ordered to invoke reflection on one’s Savior and oneself, it provides opportunity for repentance in the measure most needed and for the inward satisfaction of spiritual renewal we long for.

It is a most lovely refuge found in a most unusually cruel place: the Divine tragedy of the crucifixion of Christ our Lord, the place where our salvation begins. A quiet break for a few sacred moments from the chaos of the world, experienced both externally and internally.

A crescendo of thoughts, prayers, hymns, actions, and Holy Scriptures invites us to ascend the surprisingly not-so-unreachable hill of the Lord. We ascend mentally, spiritually, and even physically, as we take of the cup of the Lord and the bread of the Lord.

He must die, we must die.

He must rise, we may rise.

He must live, we will live.

As we seek life in Christ, He gives.

As we hunger for life-giving sustenance, He feeds.

As we thirst with a seemingly unquenchable thirst, He gives drink.

The most holy echo of grace reverberates through the feast.

The most holy sound of prayer rises through the feast.

The most holy hymns resound communally through the feast.

Communally—the precious thought of it:

We pray not alone.

We sing not alone.

We feast not alone.

In a modern world sliding into the lonely abyss of **nomadic singularity**,² we sit with brethren. Brethren, a peculiarly welcome thought indeed. We feast not alone: a brother, a sister, a shared Savior, a shared inheritance and now, in this feast, a shared experience of Christ.

Among a people with many observable distinctives, this nearly unnoticeable distinctive of the Brethren love feast acts quietly. It is life-giving and life-shaping, forming a Christocentric people with a **shared habitus**. Together, this love feast shapes our shared experiences, instincts, and communal identity.

¹Shared habitus: “The deeply ingrained patterns of perception, instinct, posture, taste, and behavior cultivated and transmitted communally over time, forming shared identity.”

²Nomadic Singularity: “A modern phenomenon of social and spiritual isolation, where individuals drift without rooted community.”

As one prone to wonder (as one ought to do now and again), we ponder this brotherhood of churches, for which we hold abundant brotherly affection in Christ. We reflect on the shared habitus, the cultural beauty, trust, and mutual shaping that such a habitus fosters—and often consider how we, along with you, might contribute constructively to personal and communal Christ-like growth and maturity.

We also wonder if our propensity for historical amnesia obscures the invitation of this simple, inherited Love Feast. Its historical significance, as a distinctive of our tradition, is integral to the story and growth of our church. Experienced not alone, but together, this feast promotes Christ-centered personal and communal meaning, cultivates shared ecclesiastical instincts, and builds strength and equity of brotherly love across congregations.

We lift our hearts in humble petition:

- May we continue to pursue with anticipatory gladness this curious gathering of the gathered church, the Brethren love feast, where Christ is adored, and the people adorned with divine grace and fellowship.
- May we remember our Lord and our brethren together often, longing for the communal sweetness of basking in His life-giving grace, life-shaping and habitus-forming, individually and communally.
- May it promote mutual deference among brethren, devoid of tyranny of position, place, or opinion, a shared calling to humility before one another and the Lord.
- May we wash the feet, however modernly countercultural it may be, of our dear co-recipients of our Lord's grace.
- May the sweet communal feasting in simplicity be a place of abundant blessing in this world, and even in our own lives, so often shrouded in excess.
- May faithful travelers from this brotherhood of churches come, listening, speaking, weeping, sweeping, bearing and dreaming with us. May they lift up our hands (which occasionally must need to hang down).
- May we feast on Christ, and may our children, friends and brethren see that we long to feast on Christ more than anything else the world has to satiate us.
- May both young and old partake in that one bread, for we read in I Corinthians 10:16–17: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”
- May we feast together often, both near and far, and continue to be formed together as a people who do not feast alone.
- May God receive glory intergenerationally among our churches, world without end. Amen

Thane Boone

THE COMPASS OF THE WORD

On the morning of August 8, 1914, a 3-masted schooner named the *Endurance* sailed out of Liverpool, England, bound for the southern continent of Antarctica; led by explorer Ernest Shackleton and having 28 men aboard. She headed southwest into the Atlantic Ocean, stopping first in South America and then continuing southward to South Georgia Island. The goal of Shackleton and his crew was that they might be the first men to cross the Antarctic continent and South Pole, and after a month of preparation on South Georgia Island in November, they set off once again, not knowing that most of them would not see land again for two years!

The *Endurance* came within 30 miles of land before she became trapped in pack ice in the Weddell Sea, where she remained trapped in the ice for nine months, eventually being crushed by shifting ice and sinking. The crew abandoned ship, taking to their lifeboats and finding themselves trapped on the ice for over a year; having eaten their sled dogs and running out of options, they finally reached and made camp on the deserted Elephant Island situated on the north edge of Antarctica, where they made a desperate decision. Their only hope of being saved was for six men to take a 22½-foot lifeboat named the *James Caird* and set out for Stromness Whaling Station back on South Georgia Island, located some 800 miles away across one of the roughest stretches of ocean in the world—the Drake Passage!

At the helm of the *James Caird* sat the captain, veteran seaman

and navigator Frank Worsley, with nothing by which to guide them but a map, a watch, a sexton, and a compass! They were all he needed IF he used them well, but even the smallest of mistakes could cause them to miss their destination, and then all would be lost. Knowing this, six men set off for the Drake Passage on the morning of April 24, 1916, in their 22½-foot lifeboat, intended to cross a section of ocean where the sea swells could reach more than sixty feet in height and the speed of waves could exceed fifty miles per hour! Constantly cold and wet from waves drenching their boat, the six men worked in two 3-man shifts to man the helm, the sails, and bail water out of the boat. They also took 1-minute turns breaking ice off of the lifeboat, which nearly capsized more than once. Operating with only the most meager of rations, the trip they had calculated to take several days ended up lasting nearly 2.5 weeks!

The most sophisticated tool Frank Worsley had was a simple compass. Yet, with just a few limited sightings of the sun and stars, he managed to accurately navigate the lifeboat 800 miles to the shores of South Georgia Island, where they landed on May 10, 1916, eventually reaching the whaling station and sending another boat by which the entire crew of the *Endurance* was saved! While Frank Worsley was considered one of the wisest navigators in the world, all his knowledge would have been useless if he had not trusted his compass to guide him! Which brings us to the question of the believer's "compass," and what it is that we have to guide our way through the storms of life—the Word of God!

This compass that we possess is both a privilege and a blessing, and even more so when we realize that it is actually illegal to possess a copy of it in more than 50 countries today! How we view this blessing is important because all of our beliefs about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the church, salvation, holy living, and even the return of the Lord come straight from this Word; what we believe about the Bible and its message determines, without exception, everything else about our lives! For a little encouragement, I would like to suggest that there are three things about this “compass” that it will benefit us to clearly understand if we hope to find it effective in our daily walk: first, it was breathed into (or inspired) by God Himself; second, it is truly profitable for the believer; and third, it will equip and enable us as we seek to serve Him!

Second Timothy 3:16–17 tells us that, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Paul begins his thought above with the words: “**ALL** Scripture”; what this tells us is that everything else he may say about the Bible will apply to the whole Bible, not just to a few parts! When the Bible says that all Scripture is inspired by God, then **all** Scripture is God’s breath entered into it; when the Bible says that all Scripture is profitable, then **all** of it is profitable; and when the Bible says that all of Scripture is furnishing (or equipping) for the Christian, then **all** of Scripture is equipping! There are not varying levels of importance in the Scriptures; rather, **all** of it

(the Old AND the New Testaments) is important and stands as the Word of God. Some men have suggested that the historical parts of the Bible are not reliable or true, but that the doctrinal parts are true; however, if the Author of Scripture had lied to us in Genesis and other historical accounts in the Bible, why would we have any reason to believe the magnificent truths found in passages like John 1:1 or John 3:16? If some parts of the Bible were not true, then it would stand to reason that none of it could be taken unquestionably as reliable or trustworthy, but because we can trust that the Word of God is not only inspired, but profitable and able to equip the saints, we can trust it to reveal His will as we go forward in life!

1. The Scriptures Are Inspired (II Tim. 3:16a)

“All scripture is given by INSPIRATION of God.” The Scriptures are not inspired in the way a poem or song is, but in the sense that its origin is from God, or from within God Himself. The Greek word for inspired (meaning “divinely breathed in”) is *theopneustos*, and this is the only occurrence of this word in the Bible. Literally, the Bible is God’s breath, God’s wind, God’s words; just as when you, your words are “you-breathed,” for it is your heart pouring out speech as you breathe out your words, and they reflect your inner self.

This is what Paul is talking about when he says the Scriptures are inspired by God: he is saying that God has breathed His heart and character into Scripture! After all, if the Bible wasn’t inspired by God, there would be nothing special about it; it would simply be helpful literature, a carefully

crafted book of history, poems, and lessons; but it is so much more than that! The Bible is inspired by God, and it has actual power from a Divine Source. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that, “the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

So, if Scripture is actually, literally God’s breath which entered into it, what does that mean for you and me? If it is truly inspired by our Creator, then surely it is the most valuable thing we possess! It is the compass through which God speaks to guide us to Himself, just as Frank Worsley understood how to use his compass in order to find South Georgia Island so he could save his own life and those of his friends. As he was wholly committed to relying upon his compass, are we similarly compelled to value and to use that which we have been given? To value it, to pursue it, to study it, to seek to see our God in it, to hear His voice within its pages, and to meet Him in the Word which He has inspired?

2. The Scriptures Are PROFITABLE (II Tim. 3:16b)

“All scripture...is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness!” Not only are the Scriptures inspired, but like a compass, they are also profitable (i.e., useful), which makes sense if they truly are the revelation of God for His people! And if Paul says they are useful for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, what does this look

like as we apply them to our lives?

a. “Profitable for doctrine”—for teaching! This is one of the most basic, fundamental uses for Scripture, and we read in Romans 15:4 (ESV) that the Scriptures were “written for our instruction.” This use lies in the very nature of what the Scriptures are, the Word which God breathed into, to direct His people! As our primary (and indeed, only) source of doctrine and truth, we are taught by them how to live; in fact, “doctrine” is another word for “teaching,” and we see this in the way that what we believe about our God, ourselves, the world around us, and even eternity are each informed by the revelations of Scripture. On the other hand, neglect or ignorance of the Word of God can lead us to believe that certain things are true when they are actually unscriptural. If the Word is not part of our daily life and our life together with other believers, how can we expect to recognize teachings that are unbiblical? Hebrews 5:14 reminds us that “strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Discernment can come with a consistent study and application of the Word—this is the first use of the Scriptures, and perhaps the most fundamental.

b. “Profitable...for reproof” Paul lists reproof as a second, fundamental usage of the Scriptures. “Reproof” is defined as the pointing out or criticism of a fault. Paul likely included reproof with the thought to discern and rebuke false teaching and doctrinal error, though it equally applies to the sometimes-needful rebuke of the Scriptures upon our personal lives and failures. In John 17, Jesus

prayed to the Father on our behalf: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." To be sanctified is to be set apart, and we know that our flesh struggles daily to submit to being "set apart" from sin in our lives, but this is exactly what Jesus prayed for us, that through Divine power, we might be set apart for God! How is this accomplished? Through the Word, just as Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth"! It is never pleasant to be reproved, and yet this is one of the effective functions of the Word of God, and like a compass, we do well to trust its judgment!

c. "Profitable...for correction"

Paul offers correction as another purpose of this compass of God's Word. The Scriptures not only rebuke our wrong behavior or thinking, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, they can also point the way back to godly living by correction. Herein lies the key difference between reproof and correction: one points out where we need to change, while the other shows us how to do so! Once the Scriptures have rebuked and convicted us, then they aim for the goal of recovery; after the Bible reveals our sin and the deep things of our heart, then it can effectively move to renew and build us up again as it calls us back to the things of God. Once again, the flesh never enjoys correction, but how blessed are we that the Word not only reveals our need but also shows us where to turn for healing and restoration! When I am convicted of sin, do I search the Scriptures for direction in overcoming it? Do I allow God's Word and His Spirit to search me and to correct me when I am in the wrong?

d. "Profitable...for instruction
(i.e., training) in righteousness."

Finally, Paul says that the Word of God is useful for training in righteousness. "Training" refers to teaching to acquire a particular skill or type of behavior; the idea is that Scripture, by its teaching, rebuking, and correcting functions, trains us to live "in righteousness." The Word leads us to conduct in our lives in a way that doctrine comes alive, because in one sense, it calls us to continue growing in the image of God who first breathed it! Just like Mr. Worsley's compass, the Scriptures are useful, but only if we are willing to use them. Psalm 119:11 says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"! Colossians 3:16 calls us to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly..." Ask yourself, do I gladly turn to the Scriptures? Do I humbly permit the Word of God to teach me and correct me?

Just as the clouds so often obscured the light of the sun from the six men aboard the *James Caird*, there are times when it seems that we see the SON more clearly than other times. Yet, as we hold fast to the Word, as we seek to see our Father there, as we listen for the gentle voice of His Holy Spirit, we will find ourselves moving closer to where He desires us to be and growing more in the image of Jesus every day through the ministry of the Word. It is only as we study His Word that we can fully experience that "breath" of God, for it is only in His power that we can experience victory over sin! It is only through Him that we learn to recognize His truth/doctrine/teachings, as opposed to the distortions/lies/temptations in the world around us! How great our need when we consider the weakness of our own

hearts, and perhaps even the temptations of our past, pushing us to find security in things other than our God and His Word! As we hold fast to the compass of His Word, we will find it to be useful and profitable for our souls!

3. The Scriptures Are Equipping (v. 17). "...That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"! What have we seen so far? That the Scriptures are inspired by God, for we meet Him in them, and that they are profitable in at least four valuable, vital ways! Finally, how do they "equip" (or furnish) the saints for the things which God calls us to? Paul says all of these uses for Scripture serve one chief purpose: for the man or woman of God to be complete and equipped! The Word of God offers reliable direction for the spiritual maturity of every child of God and is instrumental in our walk of sanctification as we seek to grow ever more into what Peter and Paul call "the mind of Christ"! It helps us to walk in those things to which we are called, and like Frank Worsley's compass, it directs us as we move toward being complete in Him and equips us for His purpose for us in this life! Within its pages, we are equipped (or furnished) with all we need, not only to walk in faith and to love as He calls us to love, but to humbly submit to His commands and to tell others about Him; and as we do so, to experience His power and comfort and guidance every day, as we learn to see Him more fully for who He truly is: a Father who loves us and is guiding us home!

May 10, 1916, seventeen days after the 22½-foot *James Caird* left Elephant Island, six men set foot

alive on the shores of the South Georgia Island, having traveled over 800 miles through the roughest of seas; and in time, the entire crew of the *Endurance* made it home safely as well, all because Frank Worsley had trusted his compass! The saints of God are on a journey too, just like Shackleton, Worsley, and the crew of the *Endurance*. Like them, we have but one hope, and one hope only, and like Frank Worsley, we have a compass that can safely guide us there if we will trust it and use it: the Word (and indeed the very breath) of God! "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"!

Christian Filbrun

WE BE BRETHREN

Lloyd Wagner

"Love and union, Zion's basis..." begins #253 in our hymnbook. Of whom is this hymn speaking? Surely it is God's children—fellow believers lovingly uniting together in following Jesus Christ. Brethren. A name: no, more than a name. Much more. These are whom we love, and among whom we find what the world can never provide. In the midst of turmoil—peace. In the face of danger—security. In times of discouragement—hope. When temptations press—worship. When we stray—direction. Love and union are here, among the brethren. Or so it should be.

There was strife in the camp. Tension was high. Words were

sharp. Accusations flew. Traveling together, both Abraham and Lot had large herds of animals, and with limited resources, trouble ensued. Realizing the unsustainable situation, Abraham proposed parting ways, graciously giving Lot, his nephew, first choice of the available land and pastures. His reason for not escalating the strife into a bitter fight? Abraham gently pled with Lot, "Let there be no strife...between me and thee...for we be brethren" (Gen. 13:8).

"We be brethren." Yes, Abraham was Lot's uncle, and they were physically related. However, is there a deeper meaning? Can those three simple words apply to us as a congregation? A brotherhood? And, can those three simple words motivate us to avoid strife and seek peaceful solutions? Yes, they can—if we truly understand and apply what this simple sentence means.

Used 231 times in the New Testament, "brethren" is a name applied often to the followers of Jesus, both men and women. "And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12:49–50). Paul reminds us, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them brethren..." (Heb. 2:11). We are brethren of Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures even use "holy brethren" to address Jesus' followers. As such, our conduct will mirror that of our Savior.

In addition, "brethren" denotes a special bond between believers. We love each other. Respect one

another. Want the best for each other. Sacrifice for each other. The Apostle Peter reminds us: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently..." (I Pet. 1:22). John adds: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (I John 3:14).

A special part of being brethren is being part of a brotherhood. Working together as congregations from different localities, we can strengthen, encourage, and help each other, if we will. It is not the responsibility of the ministry only to visit, communicate, and share. Each member should feel an obligation to visit other congregations, attend communions in other districts, and build relationships across the brotherhood. While each district has its own peculiarities and minor differences of practice, a congregational mindset should be avoided; we are a brotherhood.

So then, how do we solve problems? When strife arises, what do we do? Permissiveness, accommodations, tolerance, allowances, exceptions, and compromises can end in disaster. The quick cure of rules and regulations results in legalism, which in turn requires compliance or punishment. There is a better way: that of patience, submission, love, and union. We be brethren. We talk. We discuss. We agree. We decide. And we move forward—together. We be brethren. Let's prove it.

Selected from

Light for the Way (Old Brethren publication—January 2026)

by the Editor

AN ACCEPTABLE LIFE

Janice Etter

My sisters and I are dismantling a household, the accumulation of ninety-two years. We divide the things we want and ask our children what they might use or enjoy. All that remains, we sell or give away. "Here are more keepsakes," we say to each other, "More files of papers; the papers are probably irrelevant but what if they're not? Here are her diaries; should we read them?" We empty drawers, wipe out cupboards, clear the shelves. We fill tables for the garage sale and trash bags for disposal. Every day I take things home with me, telling myself that this is the last.

We've done this before, for our parents; this time we do it for a special aunt, our mother's only sibling. She was single all her life and lived alone for much of it. Many of the things she leaves us had been left behind for her. Besides the heir-loom quilts, we find stacks of fancy-work: crocheted doilies, patchwork potholders, embroidered linens, appliqued tablecloths. All were crafted, not by our aunt but by her aunts, years and years ago. We marvel at the workmanship as we divide the quilts. We take a few of the other things and wonder who will want the rest. It turns out that many people do. Women of our own age buy them and we think of what we've taken home ourselves. Most of this will be left behind again.

I like the idea that I will leave my children the things my family has left to me. Yet, does it matter if century old quilts wear to shreds or the irreplaceable curved glass of a cabinet is shattered? If my great-

grandmother's dish falls to the tile floor, the next generation will not suffer by that. I appreciate the material things I inherit from my aunt, but she left us something I appreciate even more.

My aunt was not a writer as I think of writers. Her grandfather, O. C. Cripe, wrote books on church doctrine; her mother wrote family stories and personal memories; my aunt did none of that. She leaves us no *Vindicator* articles, no stories or poems. She did not write a memoir. She had shelves of cookbooks and a file drawer crammed with recipe cards but never compiled a collection of her own favorites. Yet she valued the written Word. She owned many Bibles, some of them passed down; two of her own well-worn. There were books in every room and in some of the closets; she wrote letters; she kept diaries; she copied poems. She took notes in church and kept them all. She made lists.

We found lists of birthdays she wanted to remember; a list of cousins, checked off as they died; lists of quilts and who had made them; a roster of out-of-state ministers present at her local communion, dating back for decades. There were lists of improvements she wanted to make, to her home and to her farm. She made lists of chores and lists of items she hoped to acquire. "Try for a full set of *Vindicators*," she wrote on that one, and she bought most of them.

In the kneehole drawer of her desk, I found my favorite list, a list of goals. By its placement, my aunt could have recently referred to it, although it was dated 1972. This was no impulsive scribble; it

was neatly written and carefully laid out on the back of a blank receipt. There were three headings, each one underlined: **Lifetime Goals**, **Next 5 Yrs.**, and **If Only 6 Mo. to Live.**

Although my aunt was a private person, although one goal was written in code, I think it would be no betrayal to share her lifetime goals with you. Here is what she wrote:

1. Live a life of acceptance in God's sight.
2. D. D.
3. Successful, profitable, beautiful farm enterprise.

I'll take the third goal first, that of stewardship. My aunt saw herself as a business person. She owned farmland and managed it as long as she was able. She achieved her goal of financial success. I think her femininity is evident in the final adjective: beautiful. A well-run, well-maintained farm is a beautiful thing.

We cannot know for sure what my aunt meant by the initials D.D., but we noticed, shelved among other books on the same subject, the title "Defeat Depression." I wish I could tell you that she was as successful in this as she was in her stewardship, that she overcame her depression in the 1970s and was never bothered by it again. Instead, she struggled with it all her life. Few people who knew her would have guessed that she fought a particularly hard battle in her final year. She usually appeared cheerful and contented. I cannot say that she defeated depression, but depression did not defeat her.

Perhaps that hard-fought battle,

even if unwon, helped her to achieve her primary goal, to "Live a life of acceptance in God's sight." She must have anticipated a struggle; her first goal on the **Next 5 Yrs.** list was D.D. The rest of that list was filled out with farm and home-improvement projects plus two important trips, all of which she eventually completed. More than fifty years after she made her lists, she came to her last six months; she appeared to face that time submissively and cheerfully, just as she had written in her goals.

To live a life of acceptance is a worthy aim for anyone. My aunt enjoyed and appreciated the gifts God gave her, and she wasted little time pining for those He did not give. No one gets all the gifts. We are all our lives opening what He sends us day by day, and sometimes He sends little gray packages. But some are gold. And some of the darker packages have gold inside, if we only have the courage to unwrap them.

Few *Vindicator* readers would have recognized my aunt's name in the obituary column. Like most of us, she did no great things. She was an important figure in a few lives, but the generation that follows mine will be the last to remember her. It doesn't matter; she has done what she could. I believe God has welcomed her as a good and faithful servant: a soul who loves Him, a woman who tried to live a life acceptable in His sight.

Selected from

The Vindicator (January 2026) by

Kevin Jacobs

THE CROSS

is not a sign of the church's quiet, suffering submission to the evil powers-that-be, but rather the church's revolutionary participation in the victory of Christ over those powers.

— Author unknown —

MEDITATIONS

He said, "If any thirst, come unto me." Then He cried, "I thirst."

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive.

A basic tenant of humility is an admission to being wrong.

Man's greatest need became God's Son upon the cross.

Maintain personal holiness with a passion for souls.

Preach profound Truth, always with simplicity.

Think seriously about what you think about.

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.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16–17).

This Scripture, and this Truth, has been pressed into our hearts by reading and by teaching all of our lives.

We believe it. We have embraced this as truth. It is our salvation! We rejoice in it and gather

to commemorate this often, and to worship our Savior because of it.

Questions:

1. Why then do I seem to allow the circumstances of life to dampen my rejoicing?

2. Why is His death and resurrection not at the front and center of my thoughts always, and able to stave off all sadness and discouragement?

"Oh, Lord, please help me see through the clouds of this misty lowland. Reveal to me the glorious details of thy great salvation as I dwell here in the present!"

GENERAL ITEMS

BAPTISMS

Feb. 15, 2026; Fair Haven, KS
Graham Wray

NEW MEMBERS

Feb. 1, 2026; Mt. Zion, PA
Daniel and Liz Kegereis
Jason and Sandy Noll

COMMUNION NOTICES

Apr. 4, 2026 Modesto, CA
Apr. 11, 2026 Cascade Valley, WA
Apr. 11, 2026 Cutler Ridge, IN
Apr. 11, 2026 Fair Haven, KS
Apr. 11, 2026 Salem, OH
Apr. 18, 2026 Olive Branch, OH
Apr. 18, 2026 Shiloh, OH
Apr. 25, 2026 Bear Creek, OH
Apr. 25, 2026 Caldwell, ID
June 7, 2026 .. A.M. @ I.W.U., Marion, IN
June 27, 2026 Mtn. View Brethren, ID
Sept. 26, 2026 Pleasant View, OH
Oct. 10, 2026 Lower Twin, OH
Oct. 10, 2026 Zillah, WA
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

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 CONFERENCE NOTICE

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:

- Youngfolks 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 and the Conference ID have yet to be confirmed. That information will be published as soon as it is available.

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

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2028

The selection of the Committee of Arrangements for the 2028 Annual Conference took place at a ministers' and deacons' meeting at the Salem meeting house on Wednesday, January 21, 2026.

The organization of the COA took place then on February 10, 2026. The committee brethren were organized as follows:

Steve Garber, Foreman
 Terry Boone, Assistant Foreman
 Thomas Miller, Secretary
 Chris Denlinger, Assistant Secretary
 Belden Bowman, Treasurer
 Dusty Balsbaugh, Assistant Treasurer
 Chuck Brunk
 Reuben Beery

In Christian Love,

Thomas Miller, Secretary

POEMS

CHRIST, THE REAL SOURCE OF FRUIT PRODUCTION

The love¹ of Christ;
 Propels me to extend grace.
 The joy² of Christ;
 Prompts me to proclaim.
 The peace³ of Christ;
 Gives me comfort.
 The patience⁴ of Christ;
 Encourages me to endure.
 The kindness⁵ of Christ;
 Motivates me to do good.
 The Goodness⁶ of Christ;
 Leads me to godly integrity.

The Faithfulness⁷ of Christ;
 Inspires me to trust.
 The Gentleness⁸ of Christ;
 Produces in me, more humility.
 The Self-Control⁹ of Christ;
 Disciplines me to do His will.
 The fruit produced in Christ;
 Receives no condemnation.
"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:24-25).

The list of fruits from Gal. 5:22-23 are as follows: ¹Agapē ²Chara ³Eirēnē ⁴Makrothymia
⁵Chrēstotēs ⁶Agathōsynē ⁷Pistis ⁸Prautēs ⁹Enkrateia.

The English here follows most of today's translations of these Greek words, which I have used here for understanding, flow, and prose.

Trent Boone, Covington, Ohio

MORE LOVE TO THEE, O CHRIST, MORE LOVE TO THEE!

Elizabeth Prentiss—1856

More love to thee, O, Christ, more love to thee!
 Hear Thou the prayer I make on bended knee;
 This is my earnest plea,
 More love, O Christ, to thee,
 More love to thee, More love to thee!
 Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest,
 Now thee alone I seek, give what is best.
 This all my prayer shall be,
 More love, O Christ to thee,
 More love to thee, more love to thee!
 Let sorrow do its work, send grief and pain,
 Sweet are thy messengers, sweet their refrain.
 When they can sing with me,
 More love, O Christ, to thee!
 More love to thee, more love to thee!
 Then shall my latest breath, whisper thy praise,
 This be the parting cry my heart shall raise,
 This still its prayer shall be,
 More love, O Christ, to thee,
 More love to thee, more love to thee!
 (Hymn 700 in *Songs of Faith and Praise*)
 Selected by Karen Filbrun, Lewisburg, Ohio

WHO WILL?

Bethany Weaver

There's a rock in the road, and it
catches your eye,
As you're hurrying feet take you
scurrying by.
It should really be moved, but
you've so much to do,
And some other could do it as
easy as you.
It isn't your problem, but still...
If you do not move it, who will?

You've a friend who is faced with
a burdensome load,
And dark storm clouds enshroud
his rough portion of road.
How he needs a kind friend to
come walk by his side!
Go then, share in his grief and
the burden divide.
It isn't your burden, but still,
If you do not share it, who will?

Do not selfishly sit in a corner
and wait
For the chance to do deeds that
are noble and great.
Simply open your eyes and find
purpose in living!
There is always a way to be lov-
ing and giving!
Your gift might seem little, but still,
If you do not give it, who will?

Originally printed in
My Health—Spring 2024
Selected by

Lori Balsbaugh
Brookville, OH 45309

HOW OLD OUGHT I TO BE?

"Dear Mother," said a little maid,
"Please whisper it to me.
Before I am a Christian,
How old ought I to be?"

"How old ought you to be, dear child,
Before you can love me?"
"I always love you, Mother mine,
Since I was tiny wee."

"I love you now, and always will,"
The little daughter said,
And on her mother's shoulder laid
Her golden, curly head.

"How old, my girlie, must you be,
Before you trust my care?"
"Oh, Mother dear, I do, I do—
I trust you everywhere."

"How old ought you to be, my child,
To do the things I say?"
The little girl looked up and said,
"I can do that today."

"Then you can be a Christian, too,
Don't wait till you are grown.
Tell Jesus now you come to Him,
To be His very own."

Then as the little maid knelt down,
And said, "Lord, if I may,
I'd like to be a Christian now."
He answered, "Yes, today."

—Author Unknown

TOO BUSY

Forgive me, Lord, that I allow
My days and hours to be
So filled with trifling tasks, that oft
I find no time for Thee.

My thoughts so oft are occupied
With countless earthly things,
When Thou wouldst have them
 mount on high
By faith with eagle wings.

So many duties round me press,
That rob me of the time
I fain would spend with Thee, my Lord,
In fellowship divine.

Too busy, O forbid, dear Lord,
That I should ever be
Too much engrossed in worldly tasks
To spend an hour with Thee!

That I should let the din of life
Drown out Thy voice of love,
And, groveling in the "sands of time,"
Lose out on things Above.

O, help me, Lord, to take the time
To set all else aside,
That in the Secret Place of prayer
I may with Thee abide;

To hear what Thou wouldst say to me,
And hold communion sweet;
To praise Thy precious worthy Name
And worship at Thy feet.

To hearken to Thy holy will,
To feel Thy cleansing power.
O may I ne'er let aught deprive
My soul of this blest hour!

—Avis B. Christiansen

THE END

There is an end to all things here
Upon this transient rolling sphere,
When all that live beneath the sun
Will find their earthly mission done.

Long were the days of ancient men,
But now their years three score and ten.
And like these men of great renown,
We all must lay our bodies down.

The oak which long the storm defies
Completes its course, decays, and dies.
It turns to dust from whence it came,
And mortal man must do the same.

As warmth of Spring ends Winter's blast,
So Summer cannot always last.
The shortening days soon bring to mind
The passing state of all mankind.

There is a time when time will end,
When sun and moon will cease their trend,
When all the stars that shine by night
Will no more shed their rays of light.

There is an end—death brings release
The ransomed soul will rest in peace,
And while eternal ages roll,
No thought of end disturbs the soul.

The holy seers of old foresaw
There'd be an end unto the Law,
That types and shadows all would cease,
Then came to earth the Prince of Peace.

There'll be an end in every place
To mercy's reign—the age of grace.
The Lamb Himself will close the door,
And men may enter in no more.

—Author Unknown

OBITUARIES

GISH — Harold Eugene, son of Ilden and Vivian (Marconett) Gish, was born September 24, 1926, in Modesto, California. He passed away December 28, 2025, early in the morning at his home in rural north Pasco, Washington. He was 99 years, 3 months, 4 days when he departed this life for eternity.

Dad accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior and was baptized at the early age of 14 yrs, becoming a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church. He was married to Mae Catherine Garber, of Dayton, Ohio, on August 28, 1948. He met Mom on her first trip to California, but it wasn't until her second trip, two years later, that he convinced her he was old enough for them to fall deeply in love. In that interim, he had completed his alternate service in forestry in the Sierras and left California for the first time, traveling via ship to Italy, transporting livestock to Europe for relief after the war. They lived their younger years in Modesto where they were blessed with three children whom they raised there.

In 1967, Dad and Mom moved our family to Delphi, Indiana, for a year and a half, where we all enjoyed Dad's sister, Charlene's family, renewing old acquaintances and making many lasting friendships before returning to California. Then, in 1981, Dad and Mom were the second family to move to Pasco, Washington from their Modesto Church district; a move they never regretted. It gave Dad and Mom much joy to be an early part of a growing church district and community.

Starting out farming in California as a young man with his father, they trucked farm commodities locally. He soon bought his own truck after they were married, and that was the beginning of his trucking career. He hauled bagged feed up into the foothills, and one winter early on, Dad trucked in the East and they lived in Ohio close to Mom's parents. Over the years he made sure our family got to Ohio regularly to be with our grandparents and Mom's family there. Dad tried other jobs as a young married father, including selling trucks in Modesto, construction work, and several years working for the U.S. Postal Service. He always ended up back behind the steering wheel, either driving for others or as an owner operator. He sold his last truck and gave up cross-country hauling at age 73, due to some health issues, but soon went to work for Enterprise car rentals. He delivered vehicles around the state of Washington, and surrounding states, finally retiring at age 91.

Truly a professional truck driver with millions of miles under his belt, Dad received numerous safety awards. He believed in getting his load delivered on time and treating others the way he wanted to be treated, and drove in the era where truck drivers stopping to help stranded motorists was common. To Dad, shifting gears was an art and he loved to drive and teach others to drive. He enjoyed taking whoever would ride with him places far and near. We loved going with Dad!

Dad had many stories to tell

and life lessons to share, and he made many friends by helping people along the way. He believed in hard work to support his family, which he did generously. Dad never met a stranger and loved to share his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with whoever would listen. He had a big, warm, engaging smile and all who knew him will remember it.

Dad was a wonderful husband and father who taught us the meaning of love by example. He wasn't perfect, but none of us are. He asked for forgiveness, and he easily forgave. In his latter years, Dad would start his prayers at the table by addressing God as "Our kind Heavenly Father." He would always pray for the unfortunate and for his children, grandchildren, and "little great-grandchildren" of whom many are not little anymore. Dad had been ready to go Home for some time, but his concern was for leaving his dear wife alone. And he said he wanted to take us all with him! He loved God and God's Word, his immediate family, his church family, and the body of Christ worldwide. He loved mankind. There is a Christian school named after him: Gish International School in Makeni, Sierra Leone, West Africa, where 500 students will continue to honor him, and many friends fondly called him Father Abraham.

Dad had many bouts with health issues starting in his early 70s, but he always came back fighting against adversity and counting his blessings. His knees started giving out soon after he retired in 2013, but Dad kept on getting up every day until he literally couldn't stand. He was bedfast for only ten days, with his mind still good for

his age, when he peacefully passed on to Heaven. His wife Mae, being 101 years old, and his three children were by his side.

Dad and Mom had over 77 years of marriage together, loving God and each other and showed their affection to the very end of Dad's life. God blessed Dad, and Dad blessed others. Our loss is his eternal gain!

The brothers and sisters of the Columbia River districts and surrounding areas have been so kind and helpful to Mother and Dad, especially in their later years. Our parents have loved them and they have shown their love to our parents. We want to thank all, everywhere, for their prayers and support.

Surviving are his beloved wife, Mae; children, Fred and Carol (Johnson) Bauman Gish, Christine Gish, Catherine and Keith Bowser; 12 grandchildren and their 8 spouses; 28 great-grandchildren; 2 sisters-in-law, Eva Boone and Janet Garber; and many nephews, nieces, and friends.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Ilden and Vivian; a baby brother Curtis, who sadly drowned at 19 months; a daughter-in-law Gail (Frantz) Gish in June 2018; infant grandchildren, Laelle Byler and Benedict Bowser; his sisters and brothers-in-law, Marleta and Roger Haney, and Charlene and Carroll Kessler, with three of their sons at early ages. Also, his wife's parents, LeRoy and Cleo (Balsbaugh) Garber; all of his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law and their spouses on his wife's side, except Eva and Janet.

Services, with a focus on "our lively Hope" in Christ Jesus (I Pet. 1:3-9), were conducted Saturday, January 3, 2026, at Columbia Riv-

er District, New Conference meeting house (burial following) with the home brethren presiding.

He is deeply missed and will always be remembered with love.

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116:15).

The Family

COVER — Joan Sandra (Wagoner), youngest child of Alva and Virginia (Patrick) Wagoner, was born March 15, 1941, in Lafayette, Indiana, and grew to adulthood on the family farm near Mulberry, Indiana. Joan was thankful to be raised in a godly home and recognized early in life the importance of confessing Christ as her Savior. She was baptized on July 27, 1958, becoming a member of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church, Middle Fork District.

After graduation from Mulberry High School she worked a variety of jobs including clerking at Purdue University. Joan enjoyed traveling with a special highlight being a trip to California with a few of her friends. She soon developed a long distance relationship with Raymond Earl Cover of Modesto, California. On the snowy evening of February 15, 1964, they were joined in Christian marriage.

Marriage brought Joan from Indiana to California where she became part of the Modesto District. To this home were born three sons and one daughter. They became charter parents in the formation of Brethren Heritage School. Joan was often found volunteering as an aide in the classroom, exercising her gift of teaching. As her children starting reaching maturity, Joan drew on her prior work experience as she helped her sons with office work, first helping Jacob at B&B Truck-

ing and Harvesting, then later helping David at Rumble Spray-California.

After forty-one years of married life in Modesto, Raymond and Joan felt called to move to the young congregation of Zillah, Washington. Life in Zillah brought new experiences as they moved from among the middle aged in a large congregation to the oldest members of a small congregation. Here they continued their practice of offering hospitality to family and friends from near and far.

On September 29, 2014, after fifty years of marriage, Joan faced a life-altering transition when she suffered a massive stroke resulting in her left side being paralyzed. In one moment she went from being an active servant to one being served. With her servant heart, Joan gracefully bore this transition by resting in the fact that our God makes no mistakes. After a hospital stay and several months of rehabilitation, Joan was able to return to her home in Zillah where Raymond lovingly cared for her until his sudden passing on October 31, 2016.

Following Raymond's passing, Joan continued in her own home with the help of various caregivers until the spring of 2019 when she moved to Jacob and Renie's, and lived there until her death. Joan spent these last years seeking to stay busy with tasks that she could do from a wheelchair. These activities included continuing to be a grader for Gospel Echoes and sending many cards and text messages to encourage others.

Joan's physical limitations became more apparent following subsequent strokes in 2019 and 2023. Recognizing her declining

health, she entered Hospice care in December of 2024. She experienced the comfort of the Anointing Service several times with the last time being the day before her passing. Joan passed from this life into the presence of our Savior in the early morning hours of January 30, 2026, at the age of 84 years, 10 months, and 15 days. She was a member of the Zillah District of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church—New Conference at the time of her passing. Her faith was not loud, it was lived.

In addition to her husband, Joan was preceded in death by her parents; father-in-law and mother-in-law, Earl and Lois (Rumble) Cover; sister and brother-in-law, Ruby and Ralph Jenkins; brother, Harris Wagoner; Raymond's sisters and their husbands, Ruth and Sam Yost and Cora June and Lowell Eller.

Left to mourn her passing are her 4 children, Jacob and Irene (Renie) Cover, David and Beth Cover, Jonathan and Chris Cover,

and Rachel and Martin Holsinger; eight grandchildren, Aaron Cover, Dinah (Holsinger) and Leon Baumgartner, John Cover, Titus Holsinger, Sarah Cover, Andrew Holsinger, Stephen Cover, and Austin Holsinger; one great-grandson, Benjamin Baumgartner; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Funeral services were held on Saturday, February 7, 2026 at the Zillah meeting house. Dennis Brubaker opened with brief thoughts from Psalm 23. Following prayer, Vince Tye brought a message from Philippians 1:21 with emphasis on "For to me to live is Christ." Russ Rumble followed with closing testimony from John 11:25–26. After the funeral, burial and a graveside service took place in the adjoining Zillah Brethren Cemetery where Dale Bowman spoke words of comfort from I Thessalonians 4:13–18.

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15).

The Family

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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

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Send all communication to:

The Testimony

353 Billman Rd.

New Paris, OH 45347-9102

Phone: (937) 604-9464

thetestimony@emypeople.net

The Testimony Committee

Lowell Miller, Editor

Phil King

Tim Deaton

Grant Fullmer

Rusty Flora

Associate Editors

Marcus Miller

Darryl Filbrun