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A Visit to Amish Country

By James Moriello

Rolling meadows. Dairy farms. Horses and buggies. Peace and quiet. Welcome to Gordonville, Pennsylvania, the heart of Amish country. This past June, my wife Susan and I spent six days and five nights on an Old Order Amish dairy farm. We were very interested in how the Amish people lived out their faith in community. For my part, I was specifically interested in how Amish theology was lived out. My wife has read scores of books set in this area, and she was specifically interested in whether or not they gave an accurate depiction of Amish life. Both of us wanted peace and quiet, a special time to enjoy one another's company. No TV, no phone (the cell phone stayed off), no computer. But we didn't totally rough it. We did have electricity, fans, and a propane stove. We stayed in the guest cottage on the Richl farm, and enjoyed the animals and all of nature's beauty from our little sitting area outside. Gordonville boasted an authentic Amish restaurant, a market, and a Christian bookstore. What else does one need? Some of the Old Order Amish people were friendly, but others, mostly the older generation,



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands" (1 Thessalonians 4:11)

came across as suspicious and standoffish. Perhaps with good reason. The surrounding world constantly barrages their insular religious community with temptations, and like us, they desire to protect their young people from ungodly influences. My main

theological takeaway is that the degree of biblical separation practiced by the Old Order Amish is such that it impedes them from engaging the surrounding world with the Great Commission. But then again, the world comes to them.

Walk the Talk: The Narrow Road

By Scott Lancot

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).

The world's standards are so different than the Bible's standards. Worldly living, for the most part, is thinking about self, money, power, outward appearance, what others think about you, your status, and where you fit into the worldly system. Christian living is seeking to be more Christ centered daily, to fear God more than men, and to not only

be a hearer but a doer of the Word. The Bible gives us clear cut directions. There is a wide gate that leads to destruction, and a narrow gate that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14). Entering by the narrow gate and following the narrow road is no simple task. It is not to be taken lightly. Do you have any issues of life or problems? The Bible has an answer for you. How does one renew one's mind? The simple answer is: Trust in God by faith and read His Word. Let it go from your mind to your heart. Action is important. Before you act, stop and ask the following questions. What would Jesus do? Is this glorifying Jesus?

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Are You Born Again?

By J.C. Ryle

Are you born again? This is one of life's most important questions. Jesus Christ said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

It is not enough to reply, "I belong to the church; I suppose I'm a Christian." Thousands of nominal Christians show none of the signs of being born again which the Scriptures have given us--many listed in the First Epistle of John.

No Habitual Sinning

First of all, John wrote: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (1 John 3:9, KJV). "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not" (5:18).

A person who has been born again, or regenerated, does not habitually commit sin. He no longer sins with his heart and will and whole inclination. There was probably a time when he did not think about whether his actions were sinful or not, and he did not always feel grieved after doing evil. There was no quarrel between him and sin; they were friends. But the true Christian hates sin, flees from it, fights against it, considers it his greatest plague, resents the burden of its presence, mourns when he falls under its influence, and longs to be completely delivered from it.

(Continued on Page 4)

The Armor of Light

By Jim Landry

In writing to the Romans, Paul urges his readers to what I like to describe as "wake up and smell the coffee".

Paraphrasing Paul's message from 2000 years ago; Folks! Salvation is happening all around you and the time to act is now! Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. In other words, forget the trash talking and garbage life of sin and start living a life God designed for you. A life that makes this world better and brighter! What does it look like to cast

off the works of darkness? The works of darkness that come to mind, especially lately in our world today are our own very human behavior. Behaviors like:

- Blaming the victim
- Stereotyping people and pre-judging them aka judging a book by its cover
- Racism
- Selfishness
- Passing harsh judgment on the actions of others whose stories we don't even know; or even
- Telling those who suffer, this is God's judgment.

"The night is far spent,
the day is at hand.
Therefore let us cast
off the works of darkness,
and let us put on
the armor of light"

(Romans 13:12)

(Continued on Page 5)

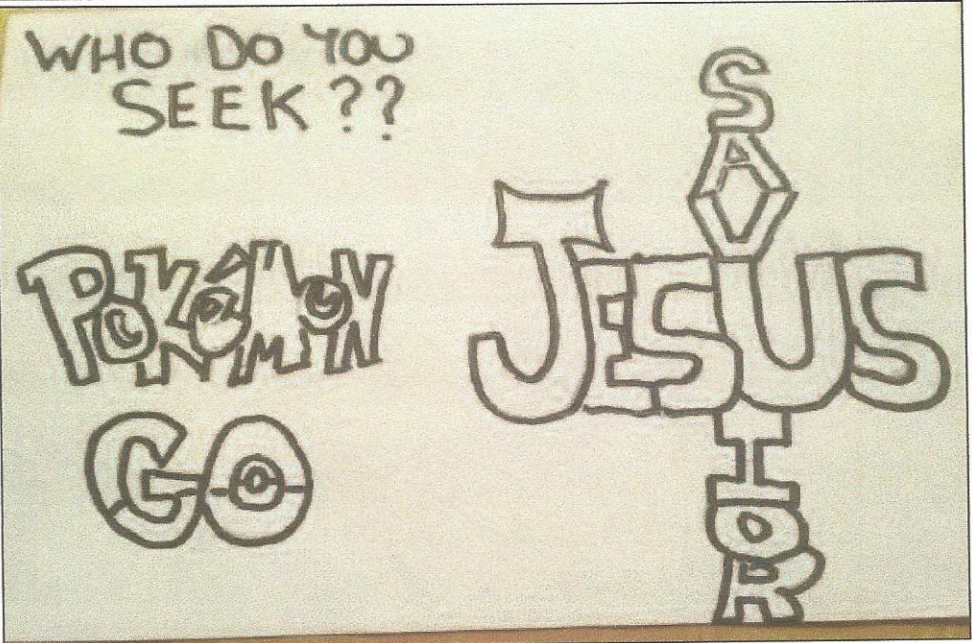
Pray! Pray! Pray!

A Call to Spiritual Arms

By Susan Moriello

Recently, as I was conversing with a fellow sister in Christ, she shared how when she's in a good place with life, receiving many blessings from the Lord, she sometimes gets lax in her prayer life. A few days later, I was speaking to another sister in Christ, and she was concerned about how to pray effectively to Jesus. These conversations provided the impetus for me to write this article.

When you pray, ask God the Holy Spirit to guide your words (Romans 8:26). Ask the Lord to forgive your sins, and then proceed to thank Him for all He has done in your life, and in the lives of



Artwork by Al Hay

"pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

others whom you love. Now you are prepared to offer your petitions before the throne of grace. Be specific. Do not be remiss to pray for others who are going through trials, relationship issues, illnesses, losses and grief, additions, etc... Do not neglect to pray for those in your church

family regularly. Pray for your leaders in city, state, and federal government (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Pray daily, pray nightly, pray at all times (Luke 18:1; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). The more you commune with God, the stronger your prayer life will be! The Lord

is always available and always listening. He answers in His ways and times, not ours. Pray! Pray! Pray!

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes

intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

Networking for Jesus Prioritizing the Lord in the Digital Age

By Cheryl Correia

Social networking is a popular fad, but what happened to spiritual networking? If all that we say and do should glorify God, then how are we doing with staying connected to Him? Having a personal relationship with Jesus is just that, personal and daily. Taking time to read the Bible is critical to our spiritual networking with God. Finding a balance between living in this world and preparing for the next should be a daily challenge. Most people begin their day with facebook, twitter, instagram, etc... instead of nourishment in God's Word. I

propose we reconsider what is truly important.

Computers are an invaluable tool for staying connected, obtaining knowledge, applying for jobs etc... As in many things of this world, computers are not bad. The difference is in what we do with them. How are we investing our time?

Statistics say that 3 hours per day are spent on social networking. Certainly some of that time could be used for spiritual networking. Consider visiting more sites related to Bible reading, Bible study tools, or Bible memorization. People

spend time worrying about how they appear online, thinking about 'friends' and popularity or even photoshopping selfies. This simply glorifies ourselves. Consider using social media as a platform to glorify God. Make sure your posts represent your character as a child of God. Do not hide or get lost in virtual computer life. Redeem the time. Make the most of your days. Remember to glorify the ONE who controls it all. In order to bring glory to our God, let us network for Jesus.

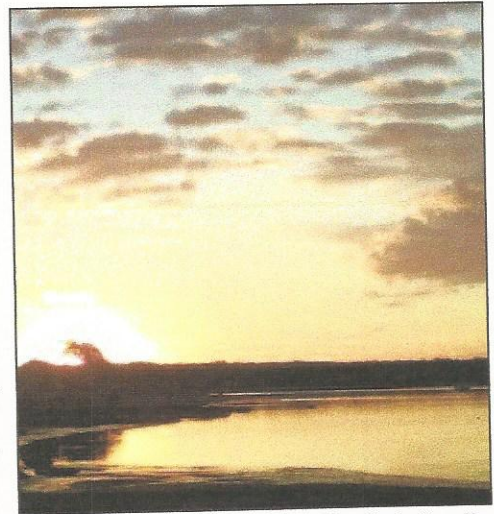


Photo Credit: Tanya Hay

"whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)

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James Moriello, Editor
Phone: 401-765-0107
Email:
firmfoundationri@
verizon.net
Website:
www.firmfoundationri.com

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Firm Foundation Christian
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Cumberland Street,
Woonsocket RI, on Sunday
mornings at 10 am and Friday
evenings at 7 pm. Our TV
Bible Study airs in Northern
Rhode Island on Tuesday and
Saturday mornings at 10 am,
on Cox Channel 18 and
Verizon Channel 23.

Our mission is the Great
Commission, to preach the
Gospel of Jesus Christ by any
and all means possible. Please
call us or email us with your
comments or questions.

What I Learned About Prayer

By Tanya Hay

I recently completed a study on prayer. Have you ever listened to yourself pray? Does it make sense? Do you ever wonder how to pray? Here's what I learned about prayer:



Detach from things that keep you from praying. Matthew 6:16-18
Be thankful when praying. Philippians 4:6
Pray with a forgiving spirit.

Mark 11:25-26

Pray in Jesus' name (John 16:23-24, 26) and abide in Christ & His Word (John 15:7).

Let the Holy Spirit teach you. We have a weakness when it comes to praying. Romans 8:26-27

Pray with a generous spirit rather than with a selfish spirit. James 4:3
In fact, be a generous Christian.

Proverbs 19:17

Repent! Having sin in your life hinders prayer and breaks our fel-



Artwork By Arianna Hay

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14).

lowship with God. Psalm 66:18

Pray for God's will and not your own. 1 John 5:14

Pray with faith! Matthew 21:22,

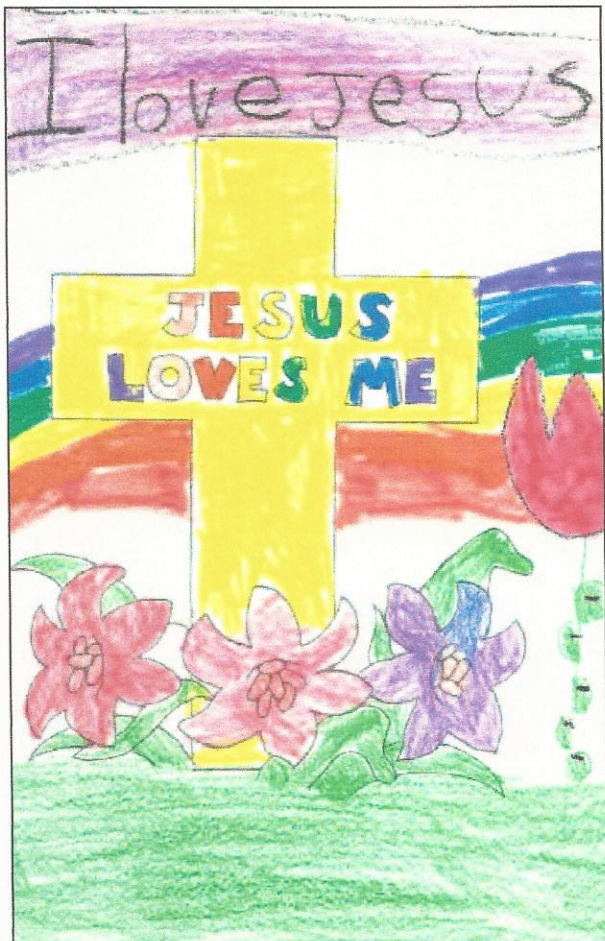
Mark 11:22, Romans 14:23

Real prayer is spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6:12

Prayer is so important in your personal relationship with God. Pray often. He is lovingly awaiting to hear from YOU!

(Artwork Below Left: Alexandra Hay)



Firm Foundation Christian Church, 84 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI invites you to join us as we celebrate 7 years of God's faithfulness on Sunday, September 11th, at 10 am. There will be a free luncheon to follow. For more information, please call 401-765-0107 or visit www.firmfoundationri.com.

My Dearest Friend: A Poem for the Singles

Author Unknown

Why must I live a single life
And face each day alone;
While all my friends are married,



And live in happy homes?
It seems they find completed joy,
While I, still empty, roam.

Together now they can face life,
Together plan

each day;

They share together all their needs,

Together read and pray;
Life for them fulfillment found
Throughout each passing day.

But with me though, it's different,
For with whom can I share
The things that mean so much to me?

And who my load will share
When sore trials press upon me
And the burden's hard to bear?

Oh I must look, beyond myself,
And to my God above;
Who's waiting now to undergird
Me in His arms of love;
How it must grieve His tender heart
That I should doubt His love.

Oh, would my Savior ask of me
More pain than I can bear?
For living now a single life,
Would I judge God unfair?
And is there really no one,
My burdens that will share?

Has Christ not promised in His Word
My earnest Friend to be?
And does He not desire the best,
In all of life for me?
He has a special plan for me,
Beyond what I can see.

So may I cast aside my pride,
And be content to live;
The life my Savior planned for me,
So He can surely give
His blessings rich and full and free,
And all my doubts forgive,

Help me, O Lord, to trust in Thee,
And in Thy will to rest;
For You will make my life complete,
And give me what is best,
To draw me nearer to Thy side
Where I am truly blessed.

Is Every Sin the Same in God's Eyes?

By James Moriello

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches that the commandment against adultery is violated by a lustful look, and the commandment not to murder is violated by an angry thought or outburst. Yet, in other places in the Bible, we find that there are different degrees of sin, with some sins being called "greater" than others. So how

do we reconcile the seeming contradiction? I will concede that just as there are degrees of rewards in heaven, there may also be degrees of punishment in hell. However, this is a moot point with regard to sharing the gospel with unbelievers, or those who are trusting in their works for salvation. Our goal in sharing the gospel is not to get people punished less in hell than they otherwise would be. Rather, our goal is that they "shall not come into judg-

ment", but pass from death (hell) into life (heaven) (John 5:24). "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Those not under grace will be judged by the law. According to this verse, one sin disqualifies us from heaven, unless we have the Savior. Every sin, great or small, has the same effect of separating man from God.

Are You Born Again? (Continued From Page 1)



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God"
(I John 5:1)

By J. C. Ryle

Sin no longer pleases him, nor is it even a matter of indifference to him; it has become a horrible thing which he hates. However, he cannot eliminate its presence within him.

If he said that he had no sin, he would be lying (I John 1:8). But he can say that he hates sin and that the great desire of his soul is not to commit sin at all. He cannot prevent bad thoughts from entering his mind, or shortcomings, omissions, and defects from appealing in both his words and his actions. He knows that "in many things we offend all" (James 3:2). But he can truly say, in the sight of God, that these things cause him grief and sorrow and that his whole nature does not consent to them. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Believing in Christ

Second, John wrote: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (I John 5:1).

A man who is born again, or regenerated, believes that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour who can pardon his soul, that He is the divine person appointed by God the Father for this very purpose, and beside Him there is no Saviour at all. In himself he sees nothing but unworthiness. But he has full confidence in Christ, and trusting in Him, he believes that his sins are all forgiven. He believes that, because he has accepted Christ's finished work and death on

the cross, he is considered righteous in God's sight, and he may look forward to death and judgment without alarm.

He may have fears and doubts. He may sometimes tell you that he feels as if he had no faith at all. But ask him if he is willing to trust in anything instead of Christ, and see what he will say. Ask him if he will rest his hope of eternal life on his own goodness, his own works, his prayers, his minister, or his church, and listen to his reply. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Practicing Righteousness

Third, John wrote: "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (I John 2:29).

The man who is born again, or regenerated, is a holy man. He endeavors to live according to God's will, to do the things that please God and to avoid the things that God hates. He wishes to continually look to Christ as his example as well as his Saviour and to prove himself to be Christ's friend by doing whatever He commands. He knows he is not perfect. He is painfully aware of his indwelling corruption. He finds an evil principle within himself that is constantly warring against grace and trying to draw him away from God. But he does not consent to it, though he cannot prevent its presence.

(Continued on Page 8)

Highway to Hell and Stairway to Heaven

By Tanya Hay

"The fact that there's a highway to hell and only a stairway to heaven says a lot about anticipated traffic numbers." I read this post on a social media site and laughed... how true!!!! There is no fast and easy highway to heaven.



There's a slow and steady stairway to get to heaven. Heaven is real. It's a place reserved for those who believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins. Yes, it's that personal, he died for you and for me, so that we may have life after death in heaven. When a person believes that and begins to follow His Word, they start to journey on that stairwell. The fast road, the highway, is a clear and easy road that leads to another real place called hell. That's a place reserved for those who are sitting on the fence debating it or for those who don't believe. It's that simple.

For me, I'll stick to and highly recommend the slow and steady stairway over the fast and furious highway all day every day. However, climbing that stairway is work. Sliding is much easier as it's the way of the world and the more popular choice. Nobody is perfect and that's why we need a Savior. We are all works in progress and we are all offered both paths. It's just a matter of which you choose to take. That's why I ask, like another familiar song Sweet Child O' Mine asks... where do we go now? Do we live our lives working towards climbing the stairway to heaven or do we get lackadaisical and take the highway to hell? I sincerely hope that you choose the right path and it's you I'll see near me climbing on the stairway to heaven!

Editor's Note: Having grown up listening to these songs, I can tell you that they were not written with the Christian gospel in mind. But these insights certainly are good spiritual applications!



Photo Credit: NECB Staff

"Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God" (Jonah 2:6).

My Coping Story: A Personal Christian Testimony

By Gerard Lachance

I started drinking at a young age, and it continued into full blown alcohol addiction. Drinking caused me to lose opportunities for promotion in the military. And my marriage was falling apart, and finally ended in divorce.

During the days of abstinence from booze and drugs, someone invited me to Bible study, which I attended regularly. There I eventually received Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior. During this time in my life, I was struggling with severe health problems (liver&blood disease), which caused stress. Losing a child to death added to my stress. Having Jesus in my life now, I shared these trials with my pastor, and he prayed for us and put us on the church's prayer list. I remember memorizing Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." If I didn't have the LORD in my life at that time, I would have relapsed back into alcohol and drug addiction. I was able to grieve for my daughter's death in peace with the comforting words of the apostle John, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). See how He loved his friend Lazarus! And I retired with an honorable discharge of thirty years in the military as gunnery sergeant, Pay grade E7.

At this point in my life, I'm 24 years sober. Praise the Lord!

Thank You for Your Service

By James and Susan Moriello

Firm Foundation is celebrating seven years of God's faithfulness this year. We wish to acknowledge several people for their faithful service to the Lord and His people. These folks do not serve to get their names in the paper. Rather, they serve out of hearts of thanksgiving to God for writing their names in "His paper", the Lamb's Book of Life. Nevertheless, we're going to give a few "shout outs."

Thank you to Al, Tanya, Alexandra,

and Arianna, You have been faithful from the very beginning.

Thank you to Gerard, Ray, and Tawana. Though you moved away, you were all faithful in our earliest years. Now others have inherited the blessings you are.

Fellow servants at Firm today, thank you for all you do, for your part in God's church. There is no such thing as an insignificant servant of Jesus Christ. Your part in this ministry is appreciated.

The Armor of Light (Continued From Page 1)

By Jim Landry

What is the armor of light? For Paul, it is to live honorably and to love. It is to love one another and to love our neighbors. To put on the armor of light is to give out real aid instead of blame. It is to seek out Christ in all persons (especially those who are not among our comfortable circle of friends) instead of stereotyping the other. So we're told to lay that "garbage" aside and put on the armor of light. To put on the armor of light is to have compassion and to remember not to judge others until we have walked a mile in their shoes. To put on the armor of light is to bear one another's burdens because we are the body of Christ and that's what we do. To put on the armor of light is to pray for one another, and offer one another blessings; even strangers on the highway.

For all who suffer; let us put on the armor of light.

For all who grieve; let us put on the armor of light.

For the long haul ahead; let us put on the armor of light.

Because we are Christ's people and it is what we do, let us put on the armor of light.

Did Jesus Ascend to Paradise the Same Day as the Crucifixion?

By James Moriello

In Luke 23:43, Jesus says that the penitent criminal will meet Him in Paradise that very day. How is this possible if He was buried in the tomb until early Sunday morning? Second Corinthians 5:6-8, particularly verse 8, teaches that "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord." So, we explain it this way. The spirit goes to heaven in God's presence at the moment of death. The body goes to the grave. When Jesus died on the cross, His Spirit immediately went to heaven, where it was since eternity past, to be with God the Father. Likewise, the penitent man's spirit went to heaven. Thus it was fulfilled that the repentant man on the cross alongside Jesus was with Him that very day in Paradise (heaven). In the meantime, both physical bodies were placed in the grave on earth.

If you are a Christian, your spirit will also immediately go to be with Jesus in heaven when you die. Your body will remain in the tomb until it is reunited with the spirit at Christ's Second Coming.



"Angel of Light". Artwork by Al Hay

"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)

Walk the Talk: The Narrow Road (Continued From Page 1)

By Scott Lancot

A price will be paid one way or another, for your negative actions and emotions. Be sure that you will reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7-8). So look to Jesus for directions. He is the answer. He is our example to follow. He walked this earth to teach us what the will of God truly is. He went to the cross for all men, to take away the sins of the world (1 John 2:2; John 1:29). Jesus paid that price for you and me, friend. He did it without question. "He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). So if you believe in Jesus, profess He is your Savior, and the Savior of the world. I hope we show some fruit that is pleasing to Him, "not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6). A Christian should not be selfish, always thinking about "me", thinking "What can I get out of situations?" Rather, a Christian should be truly caring about spiritual brothers and sisters, some of whom have it a lot worse than them. This is not to say your problems don't matter or count. Being nice once in a blue moon will not cut it. As children of God, we should be thinking of others. Faith can move mountains, so have no doubt in your heart. Thy will be done, not my will be done, is key (Matthew 6:10). If it be God's will, it will be done.

God's will can be a debate. What does it mean to you? Ask yourself this important question with an honest heart. How's your will been working out? My will doesn't work at all. A look in the mirror proves that. My past is my best teacher. It caused only pain and heartache. By turning my will over to God daily, I exercise belief and faith that His will nourishes and sustains me. His will brought freedom and purpose and meaning to my life. Being led by the Holy Spirit, I have direction in my earthly path. This is not to say I don't have trials and seasons. We take the ups and downs of life, as lessons to be learned. Be remembering daily, God's ways are not our ways. In order to grow, there must be change. His will is to be content wherever you are in life (Philippians 4:11). If honest, when life has gotten hard, you've probably kicked God out of the driver's seat only to bring on the "pain train." Not a good place to be! Today, to the best of my ability, with Christ on my side and the Holy Spirit that dwells

in me, I can live to fight another day. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Apart from Jesus, "all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). As a Christian, I'm clothed in righteousness through Christ alone (2 Corinthians 5:21). The more I walk my Christian walk, the more I am aware of sin today. I'm to turn from sin. Sin is anything that doesn't glorify God. First, confess. Make it real. God knows anyway. And repent. That simply means to turn from sin, and go the other way. Believe God can change lives for His purpose. I do. The power of God is mighty and all powerful. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). This proverb is a gut check for sure, to see where your head and heart are at in the eyes of your Maker. Diligence simply means earnest effort. You're either sitting in the boat or rowing. God knows our hearts. A good question to ask yourself is, "Would you rather please God or man?"

"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11). Today, nothing short of hard work, reading and studying God's Word daily, is without a doubt God's will for me. How am I going to know God's will if I don't read His Word? That would be a good question to ask oneself. Get God involved in your life, and you will be surprised at the results. "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). Is anything too hard for God? We cannot comprehend the depths of God, who is not limited by space or time. We have to believe, have faith, and trust that God is God. We need to keep short accounts, not turning mole hills into mountains. Seek God often. "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). The mirror does not lie. I'm not capable of changing on my own. God has done for me what I could never do for myself. Pick the narrow road. It is not easy, but the reward is life. God has the power to change lives.

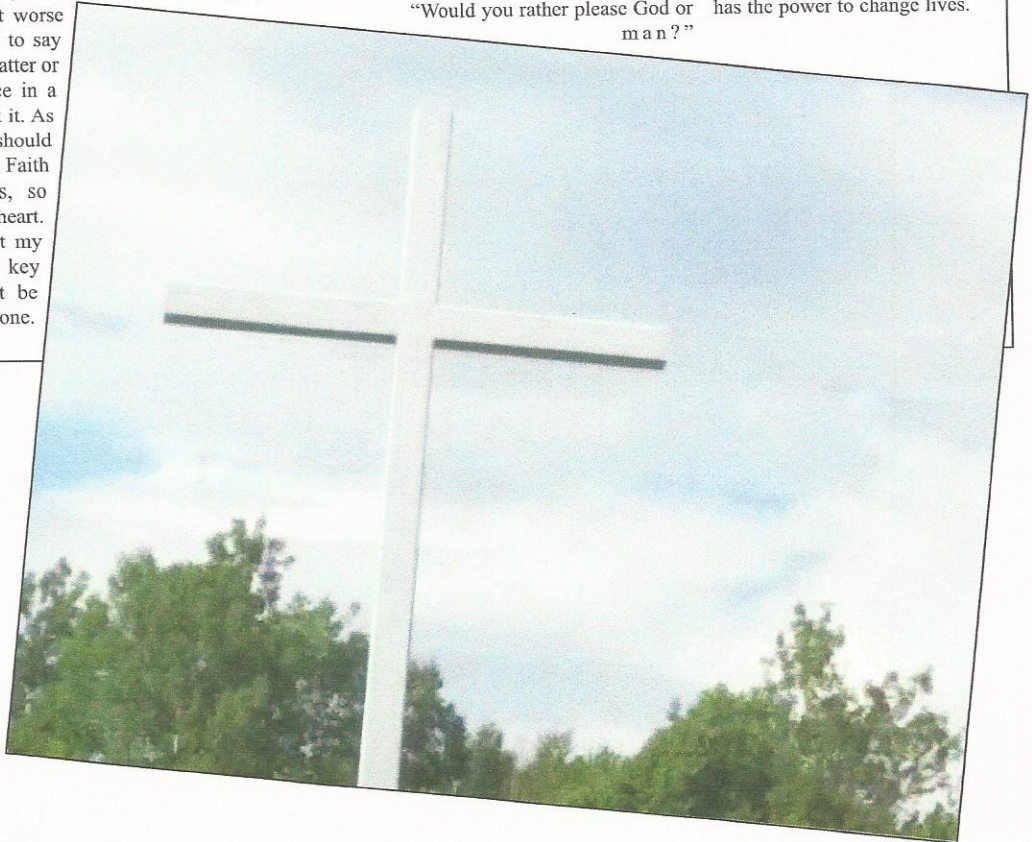


Photo Credit: Tanya Hay

Bait the Hook: Becoming Fishers of Men

By Jim Landry

I spend a lot of time on the road for my job traversing the northeastern part of the country. I am in sales, and call on many manufacturing companies. Some of my sales calls are scheduled and have set appointments, and others are just based on what I see as I drive. People in my line of work call it "smoke stack chasing". If there's a smoke stack, they must make some kind of product. I average 30,000 miles a year on the road and pass many churches. Sadly, some are closed and abandoned, and others are still in the game of being "fishers of men."

Now, although I love to fish, the kind that requires a fishing pole etc... it's not something I often do; but one thing I do know. If you want to catch a fish, it's important to bait the hook. Another key part of baiting the hook is how tantalizing the "food" looks to the fish. In other words, you have to catch its attention.

Getting back to the churches I pass, I noticed they do the same thing. How can they bait the hook and get your attention? We have all seen the clever signs that some churches post outside the property on the side of the road, right? Well, I have come to love these signs and the ingenuity and word play that many use to "catch your attention". Best part is, as you drive another mile or two, or ten or twenty, you're thinking about their clever com-

mentary and hopefully, it brings you to thinking.

Thinking. Meditating. Either on the Word of God, or maybe even going to that particular church on Sunday. Or maybe going to the church near your home. Like the clever postings, hmmm, you should think about it, then do it. Here are some of my favorites for you to ponder:

The History is His story.
God answers knee-mail.
The best vitamin for a Christian is B1.

Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous.

We don't change the message, the message changes us.

Play Hide N Seek: "Ready or not, here I come"--Jesus.

Prevent truth decay. Brush up on your Bible.

It's hard to stumble when you're on your knees.

Don't give up. Moses was once a basket case.

Forbidden fruit creates many jams.

Christians: keep the faith . . . but not from oth-

ers!
Give God what's right, not what's left.

Man's way leads to a hopeless end. God's way leads to an endless hope.

A lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing.

Wrinkled with burdens? Come to Jesus for a faith lift.

A family altar will alter a family.

WARNING: Exposure to the Son may prevent burning.

Don't say 'Our Father' on Sundays and spend the rest of the week acting like an orphan.

In the Beginning there was nothing, which exploded...Yeah right . . .as if?

Notice: The party in hell is canceled due to the fire.

If you can't sleep - Don't count sheep - Talk to The Shepherd.

Don't be so open-minded, your brains fall out.

You are not too bad to come in. You are not too good to stay out.

Where will you be sitting in eternity? Smoking or non-smoking?

Under same management for 2,000 years.

Real eyes realize real lies, so read the Bible.

Free trip to Heaven! Details inside!

Holiness is not the way to Jesus. Jesus is the way to holiness.

My life was going to waste, but Jesus recycled me.

We're all invited to a heavenly feast, but we must RSVP!

I'm dying to know you - Jesus. Lord, please make me the kind of person my dog thinks I am.

(Editor's Note: These pithy sayings posted on church signs certainly do attract attention. When used in addition to personal soul winning and faithful gospel preaching, they can sure be effective for the kingdom! Let's make sure our churches are promoting gospel truth on both the inside and the outside, lest our churches suffer the same fate as those abandoned churches our brother mentioned in his introduction.)



Credit: Tanya and Alexandra Hay

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit'" (John 3:3-8).

Photo Credit: Tanya Hay



Are You Born Again? (Continued From Page 4)

By J.C. Ryle

Though he may sometimes feel so low that he questions whether or not he is a Christian at all, he will be able to say with John Newton, "I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am." What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Loving Other Christians

Fourth, John wrote: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14).

A man who is born again has a special love for all true disciples of Christ. Like his Father in heaven, he loves all men with a great general love, but he has a special love for those who share his faith in Christ. Like his Lord and Saviour, he loves the worst of sinners and could weep over them; but he has a peculiar love for those who are believers. He is never so much at home as when he is in their company.

He feels they are all members of the same family. They are his fellow soldiers, fighting against the same enemy. They are his fellow travelers, journeying along the same road. He understands them, and they understand him. They may be very different from himself in many ways—in rank, in station and in wealth. But that does not matter. They are his Father's sons and daughters and he cannot help loving them. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Overcoming the World

Fifth, John wrote: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4).

A man who is born again does not use the world's opinion as his standard of right and wrong. He does not mind going against the world's ways, ideas, and customs. What men think or say no longer concerns him. He overcomes the love of the world. He finds no pleasure in things which seem to bring happiness to most people. To him they seem foolish and unworthy of an

immortal being.

He loves God's praise more than man's praise. He fears offending God more than offending man. It is unimportant to him whether he is blamed or praised; his first aim is to please God. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

Keeping Oneself Pure

Sixth, John wrote: "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself" (1 John 5:18).

A man who is born again is careful of his own soul. He tries not only to avoid sin but also to avoid everything which may lead to it. He is careful about the company he keeps. He knows that evil communications corrupt the heart and that evil is more catching than good, just as disease is more infectious than health. He is careful about the use of his time; his chief desire is to spend it profitably.

He desires to live like a soldier in an enemy country—to wear his

armor continually and to be prepared for temptation. He is diligent to be a watchful, humble, prayerful man. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

The Test

These are the six great marks of a born again Christian.

There is a vast difference in the depth and distinctness of these marks in different people. In some they are faint and hardly noticeable. In others they are bold, plain, and unmistakable, so anyone may read them. Some of these marks are more visible than others in each individual. Seldom are all equally evident in any one person.

But still, after every allowance, here we find boldly painted six marks of being born of God.

How should we react to these things? We can logically come to only one conclusion—only those who are born again have these six characteristics, and those who do not have these marks are not born again. This seems to be the conclusion to which the apostle intended us to come. Do you have these characteristics? Are you born again?