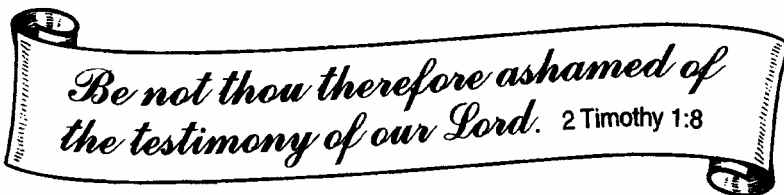


THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

SELECTED ARTICLES FROM THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION
OF
THE EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA MENNONITE CHURCH
MAY 2008



The Eastern Mennonite Testimony is the official organ of the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church. That publication seeks to promote the historic Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and practice. The Testimony is published monthly by the Publication Board of the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church. Subscriptions are free. Forward subscriptions and contributions to Eastern Mennonite Publications, 40 Wood Corner Road, Ephrata, PA. 17522 U.S.A. Telephone (717) 733-7988 Fax: (717)733 2757.

N.B. Only limited extracts from The Eastern Mennonite Testimony are published on this website. No addresses or other personal contact details will be published for privacy reasons. The views expressed in the articles published are those of the individual authors.

The Publisher, AnabaptistMennonites.org.

Editorial.

The Making of Martyrs

When reading the account of a faithful martyr, we may shudder, yet at the same time thrill. What produces these contrasting feelings?

When faced with death, so untimely and unnecessary, the natural man shrinks back and says, "Why?" It all seems so final, so cruel, and so hopeless. But when we know the Lord and rejoice in His salvation, there is something so noble, so steadfast, and so soul-searching about the faithful martyr. The saint who is bound but yet free, beaten but still singing, dying but entering eternal life holds a place of deep respect in our hearts.

When Paul was traveling toward Jerusalem (Acts 21), Agabus prophesied that he would be bound and delivered to the Gentiles. His friends' response was to try to persuade him not to go up to Jerusalem. He replied, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:13, 14).

What was it that made him so willing? He knew the joy of sins forgiven. This produced a sense of indebtedness for salvation. He had

a personal, growing relationship with his Savior; therefore he knew the security of belonging to Him. His singular pressing goal in life was to please God. Paul identified himself as, "Paul, a servant [slave] of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1). He knew to whom he belonged.

In 1 Corinthians 6, we find a list of the sins of the flesh coupled with the statement, "But ye are washed... ye are justified." This chapter ends with God's declaration of divine ownership. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

It is true that not all who have these traits will die a martyr's death. But they will live their lives in greater freedom from the entanglements of an affluent, deteriorating society. It will greatly influence what is most important to them. That for which they are willing to sacrifice will be completely altered.

Do we possess the makings of martyrs? Let us be convinced that these traits not only prepare for death but are also very necessary for living the truly committed life.

What signals are we as parents

sending to our children about what is most important to us?

Some years ago a middle-aged parent from our group met and developed a correspondence with an elderly professing Christian from another area. When this older man discovered that some of this member's children were in Third-World countries like Guatemala, his response was that it is not safe there—too risky—they ought to be called home. When this suggestion met some resistance, he exclaimed, "But it could cost their lives!" The quick response came back, "Well, I could think of worse things than that." This gentleman was at a loss to know what would be worse than death.

In a quiet, subdued voice came this reply: "It would be much worse if they would turn away from the Lord."

Not only did this parent himself possess the making of a martyr, but he was also recommending it to his offspring.

What makings do you possess? —
AWR



The Ministry of Christian Motherhood

Children are as arrows, and mothers play an important role in influencing the direction they take.

A Christian mother, ministering to the needs of her family, is molding lives that in turn will affect the home, school, church, and society. Her influence and dedication will be felt through time and eternity. God and her family will bless her labors (Proverbs 31). Her efforts in the home are most effective when her husband takes his God-given role in directing the home spiritually and materially.

Christian motherhood focuses on the family and home life. The aged women are admonished to teach the young women "to love their husbands, to love their children" and to be "keepers at home" (Titus 2:4, 5). Being a keeper at home should be viewed by Christian mothers as a privilege and not as a burden. A mother who spends her days at home caring for her children is fulfilling her high calling in life.

Society has departed far from this Biblical view of motherhood. Many mothers are seeking to build careers. We may not allow this emphasis to influence our attitudes and decisions. Golden opportunities are lost, marriage relationships suffer, and homes often experience shipwreck when a mother steps away from God's plan.

The Christian mother spends much of her time meeting the physical needs of her family. Washing clothes, cleaning house,

and cooking food for the family are very repetitive. The demands are great as she seeks to care for her little ones. It is important that the Christian mother does not become "weary in well doing" (Galatians 6:9).

The Christian mother also plays an important role in meeting the emotional needs of the family. Her children find security in knowing that their mother will be there when they arrive home after school. She helps her family develop emotionally as she laughs, plays, and works with them. Her encouragement and praise for work well done brighten their lives. Her cheerful acceptance of interruptions in her schedule teaches important lessons that have lifelong and even eternal implications. Singing uplifts a mother's spirit and also instills a heart of praise in the child. Children need to hear loving words and feel a tender touch from their mother and in her see God's love to humanity.

A Christian mother also shares an important role in helping to meet the spiritual needs of the family. Prayer and dependence upon God are essential for a mother to instill a proper fear of God in her children. This is the work of years as spiritual truths are taught "precept upon precept; line upon line" (Isaiah 28:13) and implanted deep into their consciences. As she

monitors her children's activities, the Christian mother is often the first defense in protecting from ungodly influences and in guarding moral purity in the home.

A mother's godly example shines out to her family, leaving on young minds an impression that is not easily cast aside. Children need to see their mother in subjection to their father's leadership and to his decisions relating to discipline. She needs to be ready to exercise appropriate discipline in his absence, and she will often exercise most of the discipline in relation to them when they are small. Her children need to be taught that God's Word is the foundation for the instruction they are given and for the way the family lives. She does this effectively as she spends time reading Bible stories, helping with Sunday school lessons, and patiently answering the many questions little children ask.

A Christian mother should assure her children of God's presence and protection and remind them of His promises. She has the opportunity to explain many Bible truths in daily home life. For example, she can teach her children the Bible meaning of the rainbow. Children need to see their mother submitting her will to God's will. When there is a planned event, and mother says, "The Lord willing," she portrays her acceptance of God's plan

to her children.

The Christian mother's goal is to pass on the faith so the rising generations will embrace it as Timothy embraced the faith of his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5). As children grow older and sense their need of God, she needs to be sensitive and helpful, pointing them to God's Word. She helps youth appreciate the church by her support of church standards, by regular attendance, and by participating in church outreach work as she has opportunity.

Although a Christian mother's duties lie mostly in the home, she also has opportunities to minister to others outside the home. She can give a sympathetic ear to the sorrowing, send a card to cheer the discouraged, or share a meal with a needy family. Mothers can also reach out to others through prayer while remaining at home.

Although Christian motherhood is very demanding, it is also very rewarding. Mothers have the privilege to enjoy the blessings of parenting in a way that no one else can. A mother is blessed as her infant gazes trustfully into her eyes and responds with smiles to her love and care. She is the one who

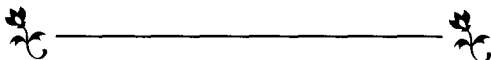
most often sees by her child's play what seems important to him. It is often she who sees interesting happenings such as when the toddler imitates family worship, kneeling by his chair and bowing his head in prayer.

The rewards of Christian motherhood continue beyond the childhood stage. A mother's heart is warmed to have her children rise to the challenge of helping with the workload. The many prayers, tears, and frustrations fade away, and gladness fills a mother's heart when she sees her children choose to serve the God she loves. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4).

It is so crucial that mothers press on faithfully, "for in due season [ye] shall reap, if [ye] faint not." The years are so short and the time is of great value, so it is urgent that children are saturated with truth.

When we as fathers and mothers see our sons and daughters continue the chain of faith, we must conclude with Samuel of old, "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us." *D.K. Myerstown, PA*

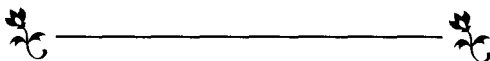




Motherhood

Gracious Saviour, who didst honor
Womankind as woman's Son;
Very Man, tho' God begotten,
And with God the Father one;
Grant our womanhood may be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Jesus, Son of human mother,
Bless our motherhood, we pray;
Give us grace to lead our children,
Draw them to Thee day by day;
May our sons and daughters be
Dedicated, Lord, to Thee.

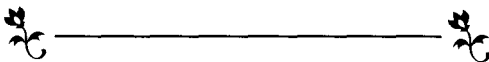
—E. L.S.



Stability

Immovable, yet movable, But only in God's hand.
Grounded firm, yet flexible,
But only in God's plan.
Not blown about by winds of change,
Not built on shifting sand;
But only moved by Spirit pow'r
That leads to heav'nly land.

—D.B



Seasoned Speech (Part 5)

A Flowing Brook---by M.S.G.

"The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook" (Proverbs 18:4).

Flowing brooks capture the imagination. Where did the water come from? Where does it go? What distant shores will these drops of water touch? The rapid movement and widespread dissemination of water in a brook well illustrate the influence of words.

A negative example of the wide-ranging influence of words is gossip. Why do stories of failures spread more quickly than stories of victories? Our carnal nature enjoys making a sensation by telling a sensational story. Reveling in the shortcomings of others, it tempts us to justify our own weaknesses. How quickly a reputation built on years of careful living can be besmirched! "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth," that I may not be guilty of the sin of gossip.

Words with an often-underestimated influence are words used in witnessing. Just a few words, loaded with prayer and strengthened by a consistent life, can have an effect beyond our imagination. A prosperous, middle-aged Jewish man was rocked to the core when his oldest daughter became a Christian. After months of study to prove her error, he was

less sure than ever of what he believed. A stranger who sensed his spiritual struggle asked him, "Who is your god?" This simple question proved to be the catalyst that opened his mind to belief in Jesus as the Messiah. "The words of the wise are as goads" (Ecclesiastes 12:11).

Words of teaching are words of influence. Mothers use many words in a day's time to answer questions and to mold young minds for God. Fathers ply words to instruct their families in practical skills and in spiritual lessons. Teachers, with much verbal instruction, impart knowledge and wisdom. Ministers employ words in the God-ordained method of preaching to proclaim the Gospel.

Committing words to paper greatly increases their influence. Written words can be read slowly, thoughtfully, and repeatedly. Writing can travel to people around the globe. It also can travel through time—people not yet born can someday be inspired—possibly for hundreds of years. God chose to give His words to men in written form for these reasons. Are we making the best possible use of the tremendous potential of writing?

The stream of words from our mouth does not flow into the sea of forgetfulness. Each word has an influence that affects eternity. May we speak words that we will not be

ashamed to have read at the Day of Judgment.



Gleanings from Anabaptist Mennonite History--Missionary Outreach

Menno Simons;

“In the second place we seek and desire with yearning, ardent hearts, yea at the cost of our life and blood that the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ and His apostles, which alone is the true doctrine and will remain until Jesus Christ will come again in the clouds, may be taught and preached throughout all the world, as the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples in His last words which He addressed to them on earth.

This is my only joy and the desire of my heart that I may extend the borders of the kingdom of God, make known the truth, reprove sin, teach righteousness, feed the hungry souls with the Word of the Lord, lead the stray sheep into the right path and win many souls for the Lord through His Spirit, power, and grace. Therefore we seek, to the extent of our opportunity, to make known and proclaim to all mankind the grace of God which has appeared, and His great love toward us, that they may experience with the same joy and renewing of the Spirit, and know and taste with all saints how sweet and

good and kind the Lord is to whom we have come. To this end we preach as much as opportunity and possibility affords, both in day time and by night, in houses and in fields, in forests and wildernesses, in this land and abroad, in prison and bonds, in the water, the fire and on the scaffold, on the gallows and upon the wheel, before lords and princes, orally and by writing, at the risk of possessions and life, as we have done these many years without ceasing.”

Hutterian Brethren Chronicler;

“The Christian mission work is carried on among us according to the command of Christ: As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you,” and again: “I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go forth and bring fruit.” Accordingly, ministers of the Gospel and their assistants are annually sent forth into the various countries to those who desire to amend their lives and are asking for the truth. Such are brought to the brotherhood in Moravia, in spite of hangman and headsman, notwithstanding the fact that many were apprehended while on their way to Moravia and suffered martyrdom.”

—John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe*, 2nd ed. (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1950; reprint, Crockett, Ky.: Rod and Staff Publishers, 1995), p

