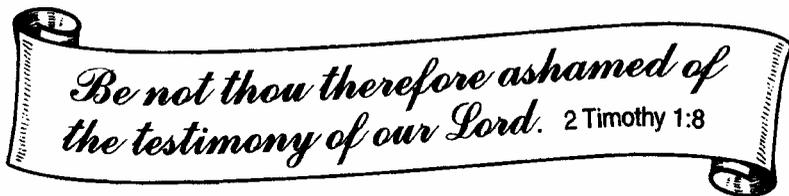


THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

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Editorial.

That There May Be Equality

This quotation immediately arrests our attention because it seems so right and fair. This was the goal of the churchwide collection that Paul outlined to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8 and 9). But what does it mean to have equality? And how do we apply this principle today? These chapters contain the clearest outline of church-directed giving. We find answers to questions such as these like:

Who gave? How much did they give? How did they give? And why did they give? Who gave?

Those of Macedonia, Achaia, and Corinth gave. They all gave. It seems that the poorer brethren in Macedonia impressed Paul the most because they "with much entreaty" insisted that he receive their gift. They wanted so much to be involved in "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. To the wealthy, Paul warned against covetousness. To those who had less, he exhorted, "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened" (2 Corinthians 8:13). The call to all was to give.

How much did they give? Their example is a guide to help us determine how much we should give. The monetary amount is not stated. But their gift is called their bounty, which means we are further informed that they joyfully gave abounded in giving. Some joyfully gave "beyond their power" (2 Corinthians 8:3). Their economic means was "their power," and this governed their giving. Jesus taught, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none: and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" (Luke 3:1 1). And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).

How did they give? They gave systematically. Paul instructed them to lay aside so that when he arrived their gift would be ready. They gave of their own freewill. They were "willing of themselves- (2 Corinthians 8:3). They gave privately. They held no benefit auctions or suchlike. No individuals received special recognition for their gift.

Why did they give? They wanted to be involved in "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. They knew that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." They truly cared about the poor saints' dilemma at Jerusalem. They responded to a call for help. Since the need was communicated, it could be met. There was a real need. They gave "that there may be equality."

What does it mean to have equality? They gave with fairness, proportionate to the need. The suffering saints at Jerusalem were in want of the necessities of life. From across the sea there were those who had the means to help and they did. They did not merely say "be ye warmed and filled" but gave of their ability "those things which [were] needful to the body (James 2:16).

Both were blessed. The needy at Jerusalem were relieved, and the Corinthians had the joy of sharing. We are equally blessed today. Many have had critical needs met. And we thank God for the selflessness that causes our bounty to flow freely as well.

We are enjoying today the results of a return to the New Testament outline of brotherly aid. Following these Biblical principles keeps alive our trust in God. It provides motivation for sacrificial giving. True thanksgiving is promoted as others share so generously with our need. The pressure to depart from faith in God and accept the insurance of the world is minimized. We are relieved of the retirement worries of the world and are free to give rather than laying aside a large nest egg

To preserve a Scriptural pattern, we should analyze whether we are consistently meeting needs in the brotherhood. Is it resulting in equality?

As we receive, do we view it as a gift from the generous hearts of others and our loving Father or as a payment that we are owed? On the other hand, a humble trust in God will help to combat the native attitude of, "I'll be indebted to no man." By God's grace we will generously give and also be willing to humbly receive. This will supersede any social program that the world offers.

May the Lord continue to bless us as we generously give and are graciously willing to receive.



Mission Perspective and Policy (Part 2)

The practice of missions.

In this part we will see the Scriptural pattern and the work of a board brought together in a workable, Biblical practice.

A church-authorized board serves as a commissioning, body of evangelistic outreach (Acts). Pooling resources and involving the gifts of the entire body are utilized by this organization. This sums up the points made under the previous major point.

Administration of the churches is by the bishops' field administrator and ministry on the field. The Mission Board serves in a capacity, similar to the district minister. This point is sometimes misunderstood. Mission churches are administrated the same way as the sending churches. The ministry, with the bishop in charge, makes church administrative decisions. The Mission Board is involved in mission personnel issues and mission policy, but in church administrative issues, relates in an advisory role when called upon. It is necessary to rely on Holy Spirit calling Scriptural preaching and teaching perseverance in nurturing and exemplary living to produce converts who will maintain and perpetuate the faith. We believe that it takes missionaries not only to teach but also to live and show by example the meaning of the Gospel. Much of the teaching of the Epistles is explaining the outworking of the Gospel and direction to leaders on how to nurture the faith.

Baptised believers are gathered and organized into formal congregations. These congregations become an integral part of the church at large functioning as part of our conferring body and not as independent entities. Again, the emphasis is establishing congregations that operate very similarly to the sending churches. The Biblical pattern is to establish churches and maintain a relationship with them much like any other congregation relates to the larger body.

Uniformity in practice of church standards shall be the norm. Church standards are applications to Bible principles and do not reflect the cultural norm in which we live. The cultural norm of society is at odds with the outworking of Bible obedience. Whether the issue is modesty, simplicity, the head covering, the headship order, or child rearing, we are bound to be out of step with society. But these principles, even when applied in other cultures, should generally find a uniform application to the sending church. Experimentation in these areas has amply proven to be disastrous.

We move now to our platform, or to practical aspects of mission policy. These further define the approach to mission work we believe to be both Scriptural and practical.

We believe that our mission personnel, as an extension of one of the institutions of the church, should be exemplary in standards and conduct. We could compare this to what we would expect of a schoolteacher or a church leader. The qualification lists for leaders in the Scriptures clearly indicate that leaders are to be exemplary. If not, why are these qualifications given? They are not to be those struggling with inconsistency and giving the impression of instability and weakness. The early church also carefully chose

those who were sent as representatives of the church.

We believe that a paternal relationship should exist between the sending church and her outposts. Paternal means "serving in a parent role." This was clearly the pattern in Acts. The apostles were sent from Antioch (Acts 13) and reported back to Antioch. Major decisions affecting the church were made at Jerusalem. There was also a gradual shift from Jerusalem to Antioch and then possibly to Asia Minor. This pattern was retained until circumstances beyond their control brought changes. These changes came gradually as the church grew.

We believe the special nurture features, like furloughs, English prayer meetings [in fields with non-English languages], meetings for worker heads of homes, and so forth are necessary and helpful to the worker group. Why did Paul return to the sending church after his missionary journeys. Why should the Board insist on regular furloughs? One reason is to retain the touch with the larger group. To keep our vision of church life unified, furloughs are essential. The spiritual welfare of our workers as they struggle with using a second language is also a concern that must be addressed. We believe that the Biblical pattern is to take the Gospel in the language of the people to which we are witnessing. But the same applies in reverse to our workers.

We believe that the collective conferring body is best able to make final decisions about policy and practice, and its designated representatives should be respected. When representatives went from the apostles with potentially disturbing news, at least for some, they were gladly received (Acts 16:4). They carried the group voice, and the churches found rest. Struggles between the governing body and workers on the field will have a negative impact on the effectiveness of outreach work. It brings polarization that is not in the spirit of the Gospel and results in a loss of the blessing of the Lord.

We believe that a nucleus of workers needs to exist in an outreach work to provide adequate fellowship and balance in facing the tests and stresses of the work. That nucleus is first staffed by the sending church but also involves native families as additional congregations are established. The goal is stable congregational life; to provide that a stable personnel core is needed.

We believe that the New Testament teaches a delegated human authority that is accountable to God for the conduct of church life. Ordination procedures and charges shall be carried out as by the bishops. Leaders are responsible to lead. Normal church life requires leaders who must at times

"set [things] in order" (Titus 1). Ordinations in developing congregations sometimes require special policy decisions by those responsible for ordinations, and it is bishops who are directed to ordain leaders in the churches.

We believe that as the church grows in membership and congregations in a given geographical area and are sufficiently established that local bishop oversight can be provided when proper approvals are sought and given. Again, this is in keeping with the view that as congregations are established, they are administrated basically as the sending churches. The pattern of bishop districts eventually developing in new geographical locations in North America applies to congregations in other countries as well.

We believe that supported mission workers and self-supported personnel can effectively co-exist in the congregations and relate well to the work.

To emphasize that one is better able to relate to native members creates cliques, and causes polarization and disunity. We have examples of both in the Scriptures. Paul was an example of one who was supported but supported himself as he was able. In 3 John 5-7, it is evident that some missionaries took no help from those they were helping but received it elsewhere. We believe that personal projects of some type are important for family life and child training. Where these enable self-support or partial support, it is good. But it is also expected that the workload of some of our workers will require full support. Both are Scriptural.

We believe that to be more effective in the work on the field one needs to appreciate the mission and its administration and to understand that the church and the mission are to be respected. The spirit of humility will safeguard us from attitudes that destroy us and lead us to believe that leaders simply do not understand. A humble working together fosters respect and enables the focus to be on the work we are attempting to accomplish. When humility is lost, the focus shifts to personalities; and the spirit of the Gospel is lost (1 Corinthians 1).

We believe that missions as our church conducts them are scripturally based and show evidence of the Lord's blessing. They are not perfect because man is in it. But we could not go on without the Lord's blessing. That blessing takes our little and makes it much.

In conclusion, the goal is to fulfill the commission of Jesus. Let us work to be united in contributing to this goal.

Brother Glenn



Heirs Together of the Grace of Life.

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the Wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

Is your marriage all you had hoped it would be? Do you wake each morning, thrilled with the prospect of one more day with your companion? Or are you more like a broken-down, worn-out bearing who is unconsciously grinding all smoothness out of your marriage relationship? Are you and your spouse "heirs together of the grace of life"?

Christian marriage is the coming together of two individuals who have learned to surrender self. How, and when, does a couple become "heirs ... of the grace of life"? Does God send it as a wedding gift? If that is so, then a single person knows nothing of the "grace of life." This cannot be true! "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16). "But unto every one of us is given grace" (Ephesians 4:7).

Rather than coming on the wedding day, this "grace of life" is made possible at the time of the new birth (Titus 2:11). As heirs we have done nothing to earn this supply of grace. But we gladly accept this inheritance from our heavenly Father who delights in calling us "sons and daughters" and who enables our lives to be graceful! This, then, is the reason it is so important for an individual to marry "only in the Lord." The individual who enters marriage without being saturated with the "grace of life" is ill prepared for coming challenges. Christian husbands and wives have potential that no one has outside of God's family. God gives them strength to endure experiences which cause others to despair. He gives them wisdom and understanding in issues that baffle the unbeliever. God gives them a love that carries them through deep waters.

What is this "grace of life"? It is a reciprocating graciousness which makes blending the ideas and abilities of a man and his wife a beautiful process, yielding astounding results. This graciousness brings out the strengths of both Parties and pushes weaknesses to the background. Perhaps where the husband lacks in managing finances, the wife is a capable manager. Therefore, the family never goes hungry: and few, if any, know of the husband's weakness. But in the same home, the wife struggles to get up early enough on Sunday morning, and the family would be consistently late for church were it not for the husband's regular assistance with breakfast and baby. One who is exercising the "grace of life" is sweet-tempered

regardless of the present stress. This gracious spirit between husband and wife enables a couple to work through spiritual struggles with complete openness and honesty.

The wife may be struggling with negative attitudes toward a church family, while at the same time the husband is fighting an intense battle for purity in the mind. A couple who freely shares their struggles with each other, together beseeching the help of their heavenly Father, find life's battles far more easily won than the couple who hide their struggles from each other. Such sharing also strengthens the sense of accountability to each other. Do you know the grace of complete openness with your spouse?

Husbands have a direct role to play in making "the grace of life" of sufficient quantity in the marriage union. After all, he is to be "the Saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). Sometimes husbands find that they hold a smile and pleasant attitude all day on the job but succumb to weariness and are negative all evening. Not so! Home must get the best of our pleasant attitude. By God's grace, there will be sufficient left for the workplace.

Husbands have a direct command to "honour ... the wife, as ... the weaker vessel." Husband, is your conduct toward your wife honorable? Is she pleased to tell others that you are her "lord" (1 Peter 3:6)? Do you earn the title by leading out in a calm and clear manner? Is the greater weight of family life on your shoulders or on hers? The work of wife and mother is a full-time occupation, far more worthy than any career in the business world. If more husbands loved their wives "as Christ loved the church," fewer women would mind being called "the weaker vessel."

Husbands and wives share the grace of life with each other in various ways. The seven following tests may help you determine how well you are doing:

1. Is your spouse satisfied with the amount and the quality of time the two of you spend together? When you courted, it may have been once a week. Does your living together still yield that much social time? While, at times, 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder,' it rarely, if ever, enhances the unity of a marriage.

2. Are you known for your cheerful disposition? A sour attitude is proof that the outgoing "grace" has stopped.

3. Does your partner feel trusted by you? A marriage will prosper when both believe the other is doing the best he (she) can, and all is done in the interest of the other's happiness.

4. Do you both know how to submit? While the husband must lead out, the wife must be consulted for her opinion. And as for domestic duties, the

wife should be allowed to cook, clean, and manage in ways that differ from her husband's mother.

5. Can you reach a satisfactory compromise in a timely manner? Nonmoral issues will need to be worked through. Do we keep the toothpaste in the medicine cabinet or on the sink? Such decisions should be made quickly so we can set our focus on more eternal things.

6. Do you express optical forgiveness? Mistakes are made at times. Sometimes we hurt each other. Can the offending individual read forgiveness and love in the eyes of the other, eyes often tell if words come from the heart.

7. Are you still courting? Do you act as gentlemanly or as ladylike to your spouse as you did on your wedding day? The continued expression of dignified, loving behavior evidences the "grace of life."

Others will see evidence of this "grace of life" as a married couple exercises it. As the years roll on and love grows deeper, evidence also grows to the perceptive onlooker. That meaningful smile, that helping hand, and the challenge to children as they leave for school to for Father today" prove to those nearby that this marriage is greased with God's grace.

A deficiency of grace in the marriage relationship will result in hindered prayers. The devil is intent on wrecking anything beautiful. He is well aware that the bride of Christ is not stronger than the homes of which she is made. He is watching for a chance to pollute the minds of our children. He wants to drive a wedge of bitterness between you and your partner that "thereby many [your children?] be defiled." The husband and wife who close each day by kneeling together in prayer have discovered a key to pulling down the devil's strongholds.

If a couple is thought to "live happily ever after" the wedding day, one thing is sure: They have learned to apply the "grace of life." *Brother Harold*

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.

—Annie Johnson Flint

A Few Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:9-13

I cannot pray "Our" if my faith has no room for others and their need.

I cannot pray "Father" if I do not demonstrate this relationship to God in my daily living.

I cannot pray "which art in heaven" if all my interests and pursuits are in earthly things.

I cannot pray "Hallowed be thy name" if I am not striving with God's help to be holy.

I cannot pray "Thy kingdom come" if I am unwilling to accept God's rule in my life.

I cannot pray "Thy will be done" if I am unwilling or resentful of having it done in my unwilling life.

I cannot pray "in earth, as it is in heaven" unless I am truly ready to give myself to God's service here and now.

I cannot pray "Give us this day our daily bread" without expending honest effort for it, or if I would withhold from my neighbor the bread that I receive.

I cannot pray "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" if I continue to harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot pray "lead us not into temptation" if I deliberately choose to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot pray "deliver us from evil" if I am not prepared to fight evil with my life and my prayer.

I cannot pray "thine is the kingdom" if I am unwilling to obey the King.

I cannot pray "[thine is] the power, and the glory" if I am seeking power for myself and I desire my own glory first.

I cannot pray "for ever" if I am not serving and glorifying Him today.

I cannot pray 'Amen' unless I honestly say, "Cost what it may, this is my prayer."



Church Committee Report

Sunday School Committee Report

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Sunday School Committee is a joint effort of Rod & Staff Publishers and Eastern Mennonite Publications to produce dated Bible study material that is doctrinally sound and has a conservative emphasis. Much effort is put forth to maintain the vision that was begun over forty years ago.

The committee, consisting of approximately ten brethren, meets monthly at the EMP office to discuss the next four or five lessons that are to be written. Often the writers who are planning to write that group of lessons are also present. The writers receive the material they need to proceed with their work. They have approximately three months to complete the lessons. The lessons then proceed to several editors and reviewers. The process to develop a lesson begins about one and one-half years before it is in print.

The goal is to cover all the Bible with a twenty-eight-year plan. This plan is divided into four 7-year cycles, each going from Genesis to Revelation. Not every Bible book is studied each cycle. For instance, one cycle will focus on Old Testament books dealing with Judah and the next cycle on the books dealing with Israel. The Gospels are also divided among the cycles. The adult, youth, and intermediate lessons are always rewritten each cycle.

The prior studies are considered a valuable resource material for the present writer. It requires about nine writers per quarter for these three levels. Effort is put forth to include writers from across our churches. We are thankful for those who are willing to write even though they cannot regularly attend the writers' meetings because of the distance involved.

The preschool, primary, and junior lessons are on a three-and-one-half-year permanent curriculum.

After the lessons are edited, they are forwarded to Rod & Staff for final copyediting, layout, and production. Approximately 41,000 Copies are distributed per quarter. These are distributed primarily in the United States and Canada.

Another responsibility of the committee is to plan the churchwide Sunday school meeting held in September. This meeting is rotated through the local districts to encourage a broader attendance.

Continue to pray that God would bless this work and that the Scriptures would be rightly divided. *Brother Dwight for the Sunday School Committee.*

Ordering the Child (Part 1) Physical Needs

Curvin and Regina stirred. Three-month-old Michael was crying lustily from his crib. "It's only three o'clock and I'm so tired," Regina whispered. "But Michael is intending, to be fed, the way it sounds," she finished wryly, crawling from the comfort of the covers. Whether it is the first child or the eighth, a child's physical needs demand attention. The following needs are obvious and commonplace but part of a parent's responsibility.

Children need adequate food. With 1,095 meals per year, our mothers are constantly busy. In addition, children need a balanced, nutritious diet. The growing body requires higher amounts of protein, minerals, and vitamins in comparison to adults. Too many candies, snacks, or sweets in proportion to vegetables and meat will be counterproductive. Fathers also face the challenge of providing resources by "the sweat of [their] face" that enable mother to satisfy the children's healthy appetites.

Children need sufficient rest. Children with sufficient sleep are healthier, happier, and more cooperative. Parents need self-discipline to see that children have a regular naptime and bedtime. As a child approaches school age, naps are needed less. When the schedule is heavier due to prayer meeting, revivals, or Bible school, it may be necessary for school-age children to take a nap in order to perform well at school.

Children need respectable clothing. Clothes need to be bought and sewed, washed and dried, sorted and mended, and ironed and folded. A mother is guaranteed job security! Children need clothing that fits for the varied occasions of church, work, and play. Dressing our children in a simple but dignified manner will promote humility. Will personalizing our baby's clothes with fancy stitching, lace, or ribbons cultivate "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:4)? Is it consistent to let our school-age girls wear white socks when we expect our church members to wear dark hosiery? How short can the trousers really be on our little boys and still be modest?

Children need shelter. Whether it is a blazing tropical sun or driving sleet and snow, children need shelter from the elements. The carpet may be wearing thin, but a clean and tidy house will meet a child's physical, emotional, and social needs. The family house is part of a child's identity.

The physical needs of children are demanding, and at times fathers and mothers feel worn-out before the day is over or the work is done. But meeting the physical needs of a growing family is a calling with eternal implications that God will bless. "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). *Brother Philip.*