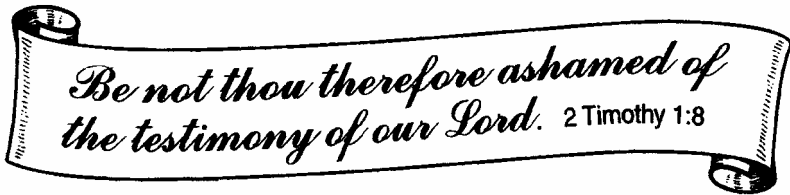


THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

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Physical strength appeals to young men. As they mature and exercise, their strength may reach new heights that may surpass even that of their fathers.

Spiritual strength is gained only by greater quests. Yet many devout young men do attain it, for the Scripture says, "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14).

In the midst of a degenerating world, how is this possible? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" (Job 14:4), especially among young men? We find two basic answers in 1 John 2:14.

"The word of God abideth in you." One's strength, or his lack of it, has a lot to do with his diet—spiritually even more so than physically. What we feed on is what we grow on. The Word of God is as much of a staple to the child of God as food is to the natural body. Daily feeding upon its precepts, with a desire to grow thereby, and repeatedly meditating upon its message for practical guidance are keys to good success. (See Joshua 1:8.) A sure way to gain spiritual strength is to exercise one's senses by constantly applying its truths to one's own life.

One practical way to gain strength little by little through Bible study is to take the time to think through and write out answers to the Sunday school lesson questions. The deeper one puts his roots by the refreshing streams of the Word of God, the straighter he will stand in the storms of life, and the greater will be his fruitfulness for God (Psalm 1:3).

"Ye have overcome the wicked one." Satan has a set of temptations especially designed for each age group. "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22) and "Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:11, 12). The battle is very real today, as it has been in every generation. And God reminds us, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10).

The wicked one offers many counterfeits for true strength. In place of submission to God-ordained authority and divinely chosen circumstances, he suggests insisting on one's own wise way. For gentleness and courtesy he promotes machismo and toughness. Instead of a meek and quiet spirit, he holds forth self-confidence. For selfless love he promotes lust; for repentance, reform; for purity, hypocrisy; for a true fear of God, "no fear." In his subtle manner, Satan works to rob young men of strength and virtue,

and then turns them into puppets of the powers of darkness.

But "the LORD is with you, while ye be with him" (2 Chronicles 15:2), and faithful Christian youth are overcoming. Praise God, there are present-day Davids who have a clear vision of the Lord's cause, Daniels who have purposed not to defile themselves with the portion of the king's meat, and Josephs who cannot give themselves to moral corruption and sin against God.

These victors have the strength to do good to those who hate them, to pray for those who intentionally mistreat them, to love the souls of men and women, and to not lust after their bodies. They have the strength to submit to parental direction joyfully, to follow the speed limit without giving themselves ten-miles-per-hour grace, and to appreciate the wisdom and value of group voice. These young men have the strength to be totally open with their parents and ministry about their use of electronics, the music they listen to, and the books they read. They have the strength to have only one standard for their speech regardless of who is listening, to ask counsel for how to conduct their courtship, and to wait for God to lead them step by step through life.

Uzziah "was marvelously helped, till he was strong" (2 Chronicles 26:15), but when he became proud of his strength, he quickly became weak. Young men, and the rest of us as well, will remain strong only if we acknowledge where our strength comes from. "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

"The everlasting God, the Lord,.... giveth power to the faint.... Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:28-31).

May we and all our young men be among those who find ample strength in our God.

Brother Fred



The Modern Creation Movement.

The present-day "Creation movement" is basically an evangelical and fundamentalist thrust to present scientific evidence for the truth of God's six-day Creation and the Genesis Flood. Though faith is still "the evidence of things not seen," research in numerous fields of science has produced strong evidence for the authenticity of the Bible account of a literal, six-day Creation and the Flood of Noah's day.

The modern Creation movement was launched in 1961, when Henry Morris and John Whitcomb wrote "The Genesis Flood."

Henry Morris was an engineer with a degree in hydraulic engineering. His goal was to better understand the present-day evidences for the Flood, which devastated the earth in the days of Noah. He compared the Biblical account—"And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered" (Genesis 7:19)—with the geological evidence for the tremendous hydraulic effects when "the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11).

In 1970, the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) was founded. Its primary purpose was higher education that focused on research in fields of science where the theory of evolution was falsely interpreting the evidences. Their research over the past forty years has been very fruitful in refuting the evolutionary teaching of uniformitarianism—"all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4). Geologic evidence of a catastrophic flood that changed the face of the earth gives strong credence to the Biblical account of a world-wide deluge as described in Genesis 7. In the words of Mr. Morris, "ICR exists not just to bring scientists to Christ, but to win science back for Christ."

An offshoot of ICR is Answers in Genesis (AiG). Their bold presentations of Biblical evidence has raised the ire of atheists and agnostics as well as many "fundamentalists" who believe that science has proven the evolutionary teachings of millions and billions of years and that the Genesis account of Creation must be understood accordingly.

In recent years AiG has built and continued to enlarge the Creation Museum in northern Kentucky. It has a strong evangelistic outreach and refutes the "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20).

To their credit, they avoid political campaigning. This is in contrast to many fundamentalist Protestant groups. In America many fundamental

Christian values have become political issues, such as war, abortion, capital punishment, church-and-state relationships, homosexuality, and religious freedom.

The Creation movement is involved in producing curriculum for Sunday schools and home schools with a strong creationist emphasis. Yet they quote the statistic from a poll of Christian churches, "Two-thirds of the young people who are sitting among us have already left the church in their hearts." We agree that something is lacking in many churches, but it is more than a Creation foundation.

So, from a Biblical Anabaptist perspective, what is our overall evaluation of the modern Creation movement? We certainly see the modern Creation movement as a revival movement. There have been many other revival movements in the last centuries of Western Christendom, including our own Anabaptist circles. We realize full well that oftentimes revivals are focused on certain areas of need within the professing church. We must evaluate such movements not only by the good they are promoting but also by their silence on other issues.

If we look carefully, the church in America and Europe was ripe to fall for the theory of evolution because many New Testament foundations were destroyed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The rise of feminism and women entering into politics and the workplace were devastating to home life. The Biblical foundations for the Christian home were threatened as mothers were no longer satisfied to be "keepers at home."

The demise of womanhood as God designed it was accelerated in the Roaring Twenties as women cut their hair and refused to veil their heads (1 Corinthians 11). Christian husbands caved in to the societal pressures. Environmental concerns and reproductive technologies made it seem justifiable to have smaller families or no children, further opening the way for women to leave the home and join the men in the work force. Children and large families became a hindrance rather than "an heritage of the LORD."

These societal pressures brought a spiritual decline in the churches that opened the floodgates for divorce and remarriage in Western society. Broken homes and devastated children littered the land and flooded the apostatizing churches.

The affluence of the last half of the twentieth century was merciless to a pleasure-oriented society. This, along with modern communication such as the radio and television, gave rise to sports and entertainment idolatry.

Government programs became more and more socialistic as society looked to the government, rather than the church, as provider in hard times. This was devastating to the Biblical work ethic.

The failure of churches to counter these inroads has dwarfed the value and impact of the modern Creation movement. Doubtless, many have been brought to salvation and many have been encouraged and strengthened in their faith. But until the modern Creation movement is willing to rebuild the New Testament foundations that have been destroyed, it is like a beautiful house built upon the sand (Luke 6:49) or at least with very weak foundations.

One more concern is the Creation organization's increasing use of drama and entertainment. AiG has decided to open a large theme park and build a life-size replica of Noah's ark, but it stretches the imagination to think that it was a boat with a bow and stern when the Biblical account gives only the dimensions of a rectangular box with three stories. We do well to avoid getting caught up in unproven speculation.

In conclusion, many have benefited from the proofs and evidences to the truths of Genesis 1-11. On the other hand, any revival movement that fails to rebuild the New Testament foundations mentioned above will be limited in its overall witness. We cannot support or justify the massive expenditures that AiG is proposing for their Old Testament theme park. It is a symbol of twenty-first century affluence that militates against the stranger-and-pilgrim testimony of the New Testament church. One must rightly question if this movement meets the Biblical mandate, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them ...: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20).
Brother Lamar



Meditations on Psalm 90

This psalm is a favorite of many. Older folks seem to grasp its message more clearly as they approach the sunset years. This psalm is often used at funerals. Knowing we serve an eternal God who cares for us and numbers our days brings comfort. The psalmist portrays man's life as frail and brief.

Our mind stretches to think that God existed in eternity past, is Creator and Sustainer of life, and will continue forever into an unknown future.

The God who created Adam in the beginning, sustained Noah in the Flood, led Abram to Canaan, inspired faith in Rahab and Ruth, gave David victory over the giant, supplied courage to the early church, and inspired hope and vision to our forefathers in centuries past is the same God that sustains us today.

Moses, the author of this psalm, personally witnessed the tragedy of thousands of deaths during his forty-year tenure as Israel's leader. Truly, our time on earth is very limited! Job likens it to the swiftness of a weaver's shuttle. David declared that his days are as an handbreadth (Psalm 39:5).

Time seems to move with increasing tempo as we become older. The following poem summarizes the brevity of life:

When as a child, I laughed and wept—time crept;
When as a youth, I dreamt and talked—time walked;
When I became a full grown man—time ran;
When older still I daily grew—time flew;
Soon I shall find in traveling on—time gone.

So what is the proper response to life's uncertain and brief day? Youth, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Serving the Lord in your youth will spare you the many regrets of wasted years. Now, while the responsibilities of life are likely fewer, is an excellent time to serve the Lord.

Parents, you have only one opportunity to influence your children. Twenty years is only a little more than one thousand weeks. Stop and think: Just where in the growing process will your family be in ten years from now if the Lord tarries? Mother, that infant in your arms will likely be halfway through school. Father, your teenager may be a parent himself.

Older folks, do not give up in despair. Stand firm and true for God. Your family and friends are counting on you as an example of enduring strength, as were Joshua and Caleb of old.

May we, whether young or old, take the challenge to be diligent in our commitment to God.

Remember, opportunities that are here today may be gone tomorrow.

Brother Dennis



Church Library Committee Report

Where can we find good books for our school library? Our children have read the few books that are in our library. We do not want to waste our patrons' money on books that are not good for the schoolchildren. These are questions and comments that school boards raise.

We do want our children to read good books. Reading not only stretches their vocabulary but also carries them to faraway places and teaches them how other people live. Reading can take them back in history, making it interesting, exciting, and learnable. Books can also teach good morals, correct etiquette, proper human relationships, and many other virtues that children should learn. But parents must not assume that books will take their place in instilling proper values. We also realize that some children must learn to moderate their reading habits. As children mature, their minds should be stretched with heavier reading.

The EMP Library Committee consists of five brethren, including one member from the Publication Board, who meet several times a year. We send out two book releases a year, with three to five books per release. We continually keep our eyes open for new, interesting, and good books. We do not review books from Rod and Staff, Christian Light Publications, or Pathway Publishers since their catalogs are readily available.

Secular publishers are geared to provide books that readers will enjoy. We are finding that, more and more, we can rarely recommend these books. One change in publishing that makes it a bit easier to find good books is the trend for writers to print their own books. We do, however, need to watch closely for poor writing style and crudely drawn pictures since there is no publisher to help them with such details.

This world is not getting any friendlier toward grace. Therefore, we need to be vigilant lest Satan catch us unawares. We try to point out the problems with the books; however, we strongly urge the local library committees to read the books themselves to make sure they meet their criteria. We are open to help and suggestions from committees, parents, teachers, or concerned persons.

We have recently made changes that we hope will make the releases more user-friendly. The envelope will be more attractive with a bright sticker to highlight the contents. The cover letter will display the names and phone numbers of the committee members. Feel free to call any of them with your questions. We are also including the place where the book was purchased, the price of the book, and the ISBN so that persons can

purchase the book at a local book store.

Again, we are always open to suggestions or help in any area. Please remember to pray for the Committee as they strive to do the Lord's work.

Brother Daniel, For the Library Committee



PRAYER POINT

*“The effectual fervent prayer
of a righteous man availeth much”*

Pray for the elderly among us as they face their limitations.

“Yet is their strength in labour and sorrow” Psalm 90:10

*Pray that God would help us to use the opportunities we have
to point people to Jesus.*

Pray for the personnel needs on foreign mission fields.

Thank God for salvation and eternal life through Christ Jesus



"But I Say Unto You" (Part 4)

"Swear Not at All"

"Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth?" We may have been asked this question if we have been called to testify in a court of law. How do we answer? Why can we not consent? Why are we glad we have the legal right to answer "I affirm" instead of swearing? Jesus very plainly acknowledged that in the Old Testament era the oath could be used with caution, but now the clear command is "Swear not at all" (Matthew 5:34).

Why are we called to not swear? Jesus taught that it is wrong to use that which is sacred to make our word appear stronger. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King" (Matthew 5:34, 35).

Christ further warns us not to swear because our strong sounding words are really powerless. "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black" (Matthew 5:36). Adam Clarke wrote, "An oath will not bind a knave or a liar, and an honest man needs none!" Jesus also warns that if we are not simple men of truth, we are opening ourselves to the direction of Satan. "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:37).

How do we avoid swearing? We must believe that for the New Testament Christian, the swearing of oaths is sin. The grace of God frees us from the need to swear even though it was permitted in the Old Testament. We must accept the fact that we will be judged for swearing. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, . . . lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5:12).

We should be alert that we do not sign a document that brings us into an oath. We should alter it to state that we affirm.

We must also be very careful that we do not casually add emphasis to our statements that would sound like swearing. Using the Name of God or forms of it in a profane or casual oath was forbidden in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

Expressions that call on "my Word" or "my Goodness" subtly invoke the Name of God. Determining to be completely honest and reverent in all that we say will go far in keeping us from sinning with our lips. *Brother Ernest*

Jesus, Thy Name I Bear

Jesus, Thy name I bear,
Make me Thy life to share,
 Be Thou my Lord;
Write me as one of Thine,
Redeemed by grace divine;
My heart to Thee entwine,
 With loving cord.
Let me be brave and strong,
Patient to suffer wrong,
 Hardship endure;
Ready at Thy command
Always for Thee to stand,
 To enter any land,
 Loyal and sure.
—*William Colton Clark*