

# THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

SELECTED ARTICLES FROM THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION  
OF  
THE EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA MENNONITE CHURCH  
OCTOBER 2013



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.

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*Editor: [anabaptistmennonites.org](http://anabaptistmennonites.org).*

When Moses was charged to call Israel out of Egypt, he asked God, "When ... they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" In the idolatrous, polytheistic culture of Egypt, Moses knew that, when he claimed to have a message from God, they would likely ask him, "Which god?"

"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Exodus 3:13-15). Why is this Name of God important for us to understand in our generation?

Egypt was a land of many gods, and we also live in times when the definition of God is very blurred. Many men do not believe in only one God, and if they do, it may not be our God. Even in Christendom, the nature and character of God is constantly being redefined to accommodate secular thinking.

God is the "I AM." He never changes. And so He clarified His nature by reaffirming that He was still the same God that their fathers had known. The call of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is in essence the same as God's message today: "Come out of the world. Trust Me to lead you to a land of blessing. Believe My promises regardless of how impossible they seem. Hope for a Savior and look for a heavenly city."

God is "the God of our fathers" because it is through them that we have learned of Him. Faith is perpetuated through the teaching of one generation to another. Fathers serve as a link to pass the knowledge of God to the coming generation.

The Scriptures repeatedly admonish us to heed our fathers' counsel without always qualifying that they may be wrong at times. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father" (Proverbs 1:8). God understood the nature of man to resist fatherly direction. Young people can be tempted to assume that, since their fathers do not understand the latest technology, their wisdom is limited in other areas as well. But the important issues of life do not change. Human nature, temptation, and man's need of God are constant. Men constantly attempt to redefine God according to their carnality. Apostasy is a pattern of compromising the view of God from one generation to

another. God holds men accountable for where they have resisted and rebelled against the Scriptural applications of their parental homes. If every generation would embrace the Scriptural convictions of their fathers as well as yield to further conviction, faith would be maintained. But human nature is just the opposite and too often wins.

We should thank God if our fathers passed the knowledge of God to us. God is not the Lord of all fathers. Fathers can only claim spiritual authority if they "also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Romans 4:12). At some time our fathers were converted from heathendom. And we reverence our fathers who forsook Father and Mother for the cause of Christ. Fathers today are not infallible. But we all can trace our spiritual lineage through spiritual fathers who were faithful.

God ties His Name to our fathers to remind us of the promises He made to them. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). As sons of Abraham we inherit blessing, claim Christ as our Savior, and look for a city of righteousness, peace, and bliss.

God established His covenant with Abraham and his seed after him. We claim as our spiritual fathers those who followed in Abraham's steps. And will God be able to appeal to our posterity, "I am 'the LORD God of our fathers'?"

—BAS



## "Is the Young Man ... Safe?" (Part 2)

Each home must draw lines. Of course not every home will draw them at the same place, yet some basic principles apply to all of us. We set ideals for our home and then reach for them.

Parents must provide work. Children need plenty of work. Little children fold washcloths and wash the dishes. Older children tend animals and manage the garden. Sometimes we deliberately make work. We delay buying the riding mower so the boys can push the mower across the yard. The children pick the potato bugs instead of spraying them. Some jobs for the children do not make money, but they do develop character.

Children find fulfillment in being profitably occupied. The iniquity of Sodom was fullness of bread and abundance of idleness (Ezekiel 16:49). If children lack profitable things to do, their needs are not all met. Energy invested in hard work will curtail foolishness and assure sweet sleep. The discipline of hard work prepares children to answer Jesus' rigorous requirement: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

Parents must monitor leisure time. All children should have some free time, but how are they using it? Mothers should check on preschoolers in the basement. Fathers should basically know where their sons are and what they are doing. Do our children visit with the neighbor children? What kind of company do they enjoy?

Leisure time is managed by providing worthwhile activities. Children develop skills with games such as Lego. Crocheting and quilting patches provide not only profitable recreation but also usable mementos. A few tools can spark interest in woodworking or small engine repair. Wise parents provide wholesome books for their children to read.

Parents must limit technology. Digital cameras take special supervision. Is it a tool or a toy? May they take pictures of each other for fun? Are they permitted to take moving pictures?

Are our children "safe" with a cell phone? The church has given specific direction on how to control them. "Using cell phones for games or entertainment is not permitted.... Only conventional ringtones and wholesome background screens should be chosen.... Children and youth should not have unlimited or unsupervised access to cell phones. Phones should be returned to a central location at the end of the day, and parents should have access to calling logs."

The computer itself is a grave danger. Young people should not have unsupervised use of a laptop. Father's study is a good location for necessary use. A child who locks his family out of his bedroom is not safe. Sometimes parents wonder whether or not they should regulate children who have "come of age." The old rule was "As long as you are under Father's roof, Father tells you how to act." This bit of advice is still valid.

Parents must guard their children's purity. Parents are responsible to edit the library. Are the books fit to read? Have the indecent pictures been colored? Should our home's standards vary much from the school's guidelines? Pictured clothing should come at least to the knee and elbow. Language not fit to use is not fit to read. Children are naturally curious. It is our responsibility to keep curiosity from damaging them spiritually. "The

heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Is there a danger of raising "greenhouse" children? Some say that we protect our children to the extent that when they face adult life they will not be able to withstand all the evil. But those who understand the greenhouse industry realize that every greenhouse is erected for the strength and stability of the plants, not for their ruin. A properly protected child will continue protecting himself throughout life.

We guard purity by teaching our children proper speech and actions. We teach them where not to look. We instruct them how to respond if suddenly faced with temptation.

Parents should check up on their children's personal lives. A smiling teenager may be wrestling internally. Sometimes this communication may be a come-into-the-study session, but is more often done while working or traveling. If we know our child is struggling, we have a special responsibility to them. If our child suspects that we have forgotten about his problem while he is battling with it night and day, he will soon doubt our concern. Are we are so busy helping others that we forget to help our own?

Parents must teach their children to endure hardness. Is life "fun"? Life does bring many joys, but we help our children see life as a discipline. Days should be routine, not packed with exciting events. Humor has a place. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). Each family has its own set of humorous happenings. But humor must be limited. Life is not a loud, silly party.

We help our children endure hardness by living simply. How often do we need "special food"? How many dresses do our girls need? How new does the car need to be for the young man? Some parents remember hard times when they were growing up. They may determine that their children will have life a bit easier. However, doing with less would benefit the children just as it did the parents. The Christian life is not easy. How will a pampered child fare when he is required to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:3)?

In conclusion, it would be nice if we could follow steps one, two, and three to ensure that our families will turn out well. Of course, it is not that way. Yes, we have our part. But if our children make it, it will be in spite of us, not because of us. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1).

*Brother Philip*



## *The Personification of God* *The Feet of the Lord*

"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu,  
and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel:  
and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone,  
and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness"

*Exodus 24:9-10*

These seventy-four men were among the select few of the masses of humanity who actually saw God's glory with their physical eyes. As these men observed God, one of the things that impressed them must have been His feet and the sapphire stone on which they rested.

Through the Bible, one can trace a theme of judgment symbolized by God's feet. Judgment first became necessary when Lucifer defied God from his place of esteem among the angels and began a course of lifting himself up against God and leading man away from Him. Not long after the Creation account, Lucifer, in the form of a serpent, succeeded in tempting man to sin against God. God spelled out judgment on the serpent and on the woman. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). By outward appearances, Satan was victorious in causing man to fall and in bruising Christ's heel at His death. Yet the Resurrection proved that it was God's victory and Satan's defeat.

God's feet are powerful, durable, firm, and unchanging. The apostle John on the Isle of Patmos describes God's feet as being "like unto fine brass, as if they were burned in a furnace" (Revelation 1:15). Brass, or bronze, is a very strong, durable material that retains its strength even under high temperatures. In the Old Testament, brass typifies judgment. Age has not weakened God's feet. He rests His judgments on the eternal truths of His Word. Truth has not changed, and His judgments upon sin are predictable and fair.

God's feet are worthy of our utmost worship and respect. When have you last fallen contrite at the feet of the Master and with "ointment and tears" washed His beloved feet? The woman in Luke 7 unashamedly identified with Christ and recognized her sinfulness and indebtedness to Him. This woman sacrificed much, but it must have appeared very meager in the shadow of the cross. Since Christ allowed His feet to be nailed to the cross,

we can stand uncondemned before God.

God's feet move in judgment only after man refuses to accept divine compassion. "For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth ... the Lord approveth not" (Lamentations 3:31-36). God does not desire to crush man, especially His chosen people, under His feet.

No one can rightfully stand before the holy God and blame Him for unfair judgment. The choices we make today, while living in the day of opportunity, will determine His verdict. We choose whether to receive the extension of compassion or to receive the miserable fate of eternal crushing. The multitudes in heaven give testimony of God's perfect judgment. "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments" Revelation 19:1-2

"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh .... For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.... Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives" (Zechariah 14:1-4). Christ's feet will return to the same location from which they left. Jesus is as real today as the day He left, and His feet shall again stand on the Mount of Olives. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" Matthew 24:30.

Jesus' judgment of the earth will also be the vindication of His faithful saints. 'And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20:4). "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:25-26). Christ's final earthly triumph is over death.

God's feet will soon bring judgment. 'And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" Romans 16:20. The church shares a part in God's final judgment of Satan. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" 1 Corinthians 6:2. The word shortly should stir hope and anticipation in the life of the believer. Someday soon justice will be meted out.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless"

*2 Peter 3:14*



## **Social Life That Complements Spirituality**

The Lord God pointed out one of man's basic needs when He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Adam was surrounded with animals, trees, and water, but he had no one with which to talk or share life. God created us with the desire to interact with other humans. Social life begins at an early age. A baby can soon recognize familiar faces and voices and respond with a smile. This social thirst continues into the sunset years. Elderly folks who spend many hours alone are grateful for visitors.

Jesus visited in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus on at least three occasions. He apparently enjoyed the fellowship and spiritual discussions that took place in that home. His presence also brought a blessing to them. This friendship is an example of social interchange that complimented the spiritual lives of the individuals involved.

The apostle Paul did not have a wife and children, but he had many friends. In his letters, to the churches, he affectionately mentions his friends and the encouragement that they brought him. His letter to Philemon reveals the depth of his friendships. Near the end of his life some of his friends deserted him. Others were away with church responsibilities. Without their friendship and support, he felt rather alone (2 Timothy 4:10-17).

Youth is a time when social life takes on new dimensions. Young people learn to know more people of their age and have a growing desire to be with them. However, the social interests of young people must be directed so as to complement spirituality. Here are some guiding principles.

Our personal interests must be spiritual. If social life is to be spiritually upbuilding, we must be spiritual ourselves. Born-again persons have received a new nature from above with interests on the things above. Do we enjoy spiritual discussions with our friends? Or are hunting, ice skating, pickup trucks, and cell phones more exciting to discuss? How can we tell if our interests are spiritual?

A person with spiritual interests is not attracted to places of carnal appeal. He does not attend events such as farm shows, car shows, tractor pulls, the county fair, or IMAX theaters. These places are geared to gratify the flesh and are part of the world's social life. We go to the farmer's market, public auction, or shopping mall primarily to purchase necessities rather than to socialize.

A spiritual person values spiritual virtues over material interests such as cars or dresses. Friendships stay on the surface when the conversations are light and frivolous. But heart-to-heart sharing on deep spiritual truths makes a friendship strong and enriching. Do we like to be with those who are attractive, popular, and fun-loving? Or do we befriend those who possess inner joy and beauty, those who appreciate and support the church, and those who respect their parents and take an interest in others?

Surface relationships exploit physical contact. In such friendships, girls hold hands as they go for a walk and embrace each other when meeting or parting; boys slap each other on the back or have prolonged hearty handshakes. Relationships that are primarily sensual rather than spiritual will entertain but will not build character.

Young people need to understand this principle before courting. The purpose of courtship is not primarily to have a good time together but to make a character study of each other. Those who do not converse on a spiritual level about convictions or the evening sermon will never really get an insight into their friend's heart and character. Healthy courtships depend on a high level of spiritual openness with a strict level of physical restraint.

Chicken barbecue picnics, volleyball games, or skating parties focus more on the social than the spiritual. The attraction is food and fun rather than spiritual fellowship. Such events may be appropriate in a home setting or family gathering, but the physical aspects need to remain low-key, or the gathering will hinder rather than complement spiritual life.

The friends we choose must be spiritual. Our friends exert a tremendous influence on us. Either they will drag us down, or they will build us up and inspire us to greater spiritual heights.

We must be selective but not exclusive. While we are friendly to all, we choose our close friends from those who share our same goals and convictions. To be cliquish with a small, tight circle of friends is not wise either. Generally those who form a clique have the same tendencies, and, therefore, do not have the resources to help each other stay balanced.

We should find friends beyond our own age group. Naturally, our closest friends will be near our age, but relating beyond our peer group brings spir-

itual blessings. Do not forget to visit with the elderly or to invite the older singles or widows to go along to a Sunday evening service. They add a valuable spiritual dimension to social life.

Our social life should center on the home and the church. God has wisely planned that mankind's social needs are met primarily in the home. "[He] setteth the solitary in families" (Psalm 68:6). As a husband and wife and as parents and children live and work together, they find their needs met in each other. The broader family circle of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins adds an expanded dimension. In homes that have a strong family spirit, each family member enjoys being home and is not looking for opportunities to get away.

When possible, the family should go away together to visit in other homes or to attend meetings in another congregation. Youth who come along with the family to visit make the visiting experience very meaningful—both to the older folks and to the younger children. If the family vehicle is large enough, why should not the young folks travel with the rest of the family to church? This can be a time of valuable family sharing.

The home also provides opportunities for recreation. Young people should enjoy playing games with their siblings or helping with family projects and hobbies. This results in healthy social interchange.

Occasionally, older youth gather in small groups to sing, take a hike, or travel to an evening worship service. Such gatherings should always be under the direction of parents in order to keep the activity profitable and character building. If such gatherings happen too often, with too large a group, or with a mixed group, they will soon become counterproductive.

Youth gatherings after evening services can easily detract from the meaningfulness of the service. They also keep young people out of bed when they should be at home. When youth gather to socialize at restaurants or shopping malls, spiritual life is threatened rather than enhanced.

Our church family provides for healthy spiritual interchange beyond the home. Fellowship after worship services, winter Bible schools, revival meetings, all day meetings, district and churchwide Bible conferences, and youth Bible schools bring abundant spiritual and social blessings.

What are some church-directed projects that youth can enjoy? Spiritual youth will find fulfillment in participating in literature distribution, street meetings, prison services, rest home singings, flood cleanup, church building projects, and Bible school cleaning days. Youth are needed to assist busy mothers; to serve as Sunday school teachers, voluntary service workers, song leaders, or devotional leaders; to make scrapbook pages or cards;

to write letters to distant friends; and much more.

Every good thing that God created Satan tries to pervert and use to man's ruin. Social life brings not only many blessings but also great potential for spiritual ruin. May God help us to have the right kind of interchange with the right kind of people so that our spiritual life is enhanced. Darrell



## **"Glorify God in Your Body" (Part 4)**

### **Distinctive Appearance**

Every aspect of our appearance should glorify God. The effort of godly men and women to avoid glorifying themselves by their appearance has developed a distinctive simplicity. Distinctive simply means "serving to identify, distinguishing." The fashion of the world is competition to distinguish oneself. Subdued, modest clothing reminds men of godly graces. A uniform, church-regulated dress also limits pride in personal identity and distinguishes each as part of a God-conscious group.

Many men willingly pledge loyalty to worldly organizations by distinctive appearance: the businessman with his tie, the UPS driver with his brown suit, the soldier in his uniform. Are we willing, dedicated, and loyal representations of the "vocation wherewith [we] are called"? God never forces men to identify with Him. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me ... of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed" (Mark 8:38). Are we ashamed of our Mennonite identity, or do we love the blessings we have inherited by our church's Scriptural applications and dress standards?

Our appearance should be an expression of nonconformity to the world. "And be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2). "Keep [yourselves] unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Simple, modest dress is a powerful witness against the corruption of society. If we conform to the world, we will merely salve the worldlings' conscience.

Distinctive appearance is a defense for us. "Remember who you are" is excellent advice. God commanded the Israelites to put a ribband of blue on the borders of their garments "that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God" (Numbers 15:40). Distinctive appearance for the Christian is not a punishment but rather a protection. Might plain clothing keep us from sin? God planned it so. Oh, that we all might value such wisdom! Clothing not only reveals our heart but also subtly forms our character. We become what we wear.

Plain people are identified both by what they wear as well as by what is obviously missing. Jewelry, expensive perfume, and expensive clothing compete against God's glory. The tattoo mania unveils the bondage and lordship Satan holds over men's bodies. We should not desecrate our bodies by using them as billboards to advertise the glory of earthly businesses. "His name shall be in their foreheads" (Revelation 22:4).

Casual clothing competes with glorifying God in worship. It reveals both our attitude toward our self and our reverence for God. Have we allowed a casual attitude to affect the way we dress for church? Wearing the plain suit unbuttoned or closing only the lower ones may reveal a casual attitude. Do our dress prints express humility by being conformed to the group? At Jesus' return, we want to be identified with God's people. Can we afford not to be identified now?

—*Brother Andrew*



### *PRAYER POINT*

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

Pray that we would love the Word  
Read and study it and live faithfully by it

Thank God the “while the earth remaineth  
Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,  
Summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.”  
Genesis 8:22

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest  
That He will send forth labourers into his harvest.  
Matthew 9:38

