

Title	Messages and Other Proceedings from the 2012 Beachy Amish-Mennonite Ministers' Meeting.
Speaker	(Various)
Speaker's Residence	N/A
Date	Tuesday, April 3 to Thursday, April 5, 2012
Venue	Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Intercourse, PA
Program	Beachy Amish-Mennonite Ministers' Meeting 2012
Transcriber	Cory A. Anderson (www.beachyam.org)
About this document:	<i>This transcript may be distributed freely. The sermon was transcribed during the live presentation and then later edited for clarity. The material presented is not necessarily endorsed by the above organization(s) or transcriber(s). The content of this transcript is not guaranteed, though every effort was made for accuracy and clarity.</i>

Tuesday, April 03, 2012

7:00pm: **Welcome (Robert Beachy, Canaan Fellowship, OH)**

Welcome to Ohio for the annual ministers' meetings. As I met several of you, I said, welcome to the beautiful plains of Plain City. This may not be as beautiful as the hills of Virginia, but as I thought about that Scripture, when Abraham and Lot parted ways, Abraham picked the plains of Jordan. It says it was well watered, as the garden of the Lord. So, beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. We welcome you, glad you are here. All have made adjustments to your schedule to be able to come and enjoy the meetings with us. We are delighted to have you here. We want to make your stay here as comfortable as possible. If you have needs, make yourself known. I especially want to welcome the widows. There are several here that accepted the invitation to come. Part of what maybe motivated that is one of them is having the ladies' workshop tomorrow. Thank you for coming, God bless you.

Several announcements:

- Child care is available. If you'd like it, go to the registration desk, and they will direct you.
- There are three sets of restrooms here. One behind the sanctuary, and others on each level.
- In the mornings, the building will be unlocked at 7:30, and in the evenings will be locked by 10:00. If you need the building for board meetings, make yourself known, because that is possible. Perry Troyer lives just up the road and has the key. Sometimes you leave a place like this, and you left something you need, and if that happens, call Perry.
- After the service this evening, there is a men's ensemble that will be practicing in the basement. Any men are welcome to join in, led directly by Jason Gingerich from Sarasota. It will be posted on the screen behind me. Make your way to the basement.
- If you have a name tag, you are registered. Your information should be updated. If you do

not have a nametag, you are not registered, and you need to go to the registration desk and get registered before the evening is over. Some misunderstandings, some assume once you are registered for a previous year, that takes care of this year. Not so. Every year, you need to register. We try to keep the directory as up to date as possible. If you know of changes, check with Duane to make sure that information is updated.

- Men will notice you have numbers on your nametag. As you are visiting, and you see someone with a number like your own, you will be seeing more of that person the next two days. There have been some misunderstandings about the program. You will be assigned to a group, and you will be with that group, and with that leader, and in that location in the building for four hours of the ministers' meetings.
- One more announcement, if you come up from the basement, you see a sign, "no food or drink beyond this point." The past several years there have been food and snacks during break time, but in this facility, it is not an option. Thus, break time, while it is on your schedule, is simply a time to fellowship, use the restroom, get a drink. Those that have to have coffee, consider that before you come to the meeting. That is out of respect for the facility here.

Jonathan Raber will be leading in congregational singing. He has consented to take care of the song leading for all sessions, though he may appoint others for a few. We will ask him to lead the singing here, then I'll have a few devotional thoughts, and then into the service.

Bow heads for prayer.

7:10pm: Songs (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)

1. "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" (Christian Hymnal, #35)
2. "Blessed Assurance" (Christian Hymnal, #477)
3. "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" (Christian Hymnal, #496)
4. "Oh, Come Let Us Adorn Him" (Chorus, from memory)

7:23pm: Devotions (Robert Beachy, Plain City, OH)

I'd like for you to think with me, throughout Scripture, in the Old Testament especially, God is often referred to as the shepherd of Israel. Shepherding was the chief occupation of the Israelites in the early days. They knew and understand it better than in today's setting. As time went on, and then the spiritual guides that were established for God's people were also referenced in Scripture as shepherds. Then we come into the New Testament era, where Christ in John 10 says, "I am the Good Shepherd." Then we move on into the book of 1 Peter, where we are given some clear instructions about taking care of a flock. Therefore, we are given at least the title "Shepherd." I'm going to refer to some of those verses. 1 Peter 5:1. 1 Peter 5:3. How does that feel to you, being a shepherd? I remember the evening of my ordination, and you do as well, of feeling overwhelmed with the calling of being a shepherd, a spiritual leader to God's people. That's what they were referred to in Old Testament times. According to this Scripture, we are the present day shepherds of God's people, the spiritual leaders. As I consider the feeling of being overwhelmed, I think of 1 Peter 5:4, "When the chief shepherd will appear." Therefore, it puts our shepherding in a different perspective, not as overwhelming. We are the under-shepherds, we are following the Great Shepherd, referenced in Hebrews. I believe that puts our role of shepherd in a different light, and maybe not as overwhelming. I want to draw your mind to Psalm 23 in

connection with this evening's message. This message is foundational to this whole series. If we don't get this right, nothing else is going to be right as well. How well do we know the shepherd? As we started planning for these meetings, looking at the workshops, the first day, we are looking at meeting the needs of our flock, the people you are called to serve. The second day, we are looking at our personal needs as under-shepherd. As I look at those two, the needs of my flock and our needs are similar. While we are shepherds, we are also sheep. Something that stands out to me, is that David understood he was the under-shepherd. I'm not going to make further comments after I read it. Notice, it is personal. The word is, "my shepherd." *Reads the verses.*

Stand for prayer.

7:32pm: **Knowing the Good Shepherd (Anthony Miller, Taylorsville, NC)**

Good evening. It's good to see you all here this evening. In the past, I have always come with great anticipation of being refreshed, and my expectations have always been met. We give and give and give in the home congregations, and to come to a place like this is refreshing. My wife reminded me, there are times when we can't give, there are times we need to get a little bit, but you know how it is. As we give, we receive back far more than we've given. And that has been the case for me in preparation for this topic. As I have been considering this subject, my personal walk with the Lord has grown tremendously. I've seen Christ in a new dimension, experienced him in that way, and I give God the glory.

Knowing the Good Shepherd, I know all of you take your responsibilities seriously as a shepherd. Even as you sit here, you feel a great concern for the flock that God has called you to serve. As some of you were traveling here today, and the miles were increasing between you and the flock, your mind and your heart was still there. Possibly you had the opportunity to talk to one of the brothers in your congregation, one is scheduled to have a bypass surgery, and you can't be there. Or maybe, a man who had confided in you his personal struggle. Maybe the young sister in your congregation is taking a path away from truth. Or, you are basking in joy in being instrumental in helping a brother and another make reconciliation and find forgiveness. I don't know what your situation is tonight, my shepherd brother. I know that, although you are here this evening in body, there is a part of your here that is back home at your congregation. You carry a part of your congregation in your heart with you.

What can I learn from this topic? What are some techniques and tips and pointers that I can take home with me to learn how to be a better shepherd to my flock? What are some lessons I can learn from the Good Shepherd to enhance my own shepherding abilities. There is merit in asking questions like this. It reminds me of a book someone gave me once, "Learning Lessons from the Greatest Person that Ever Lived," or something like that. As I began to look through that book, I realized that the theme of that book was, learning to be successful as a leader, by learning from Jesus. There is little about personal experience or personal growth, but it was about how I can enhance my own leadership abilities and become more successful. Tonight, I believe there is a fundamental reason for us to be here, and something for us to consider, and that is the direction I'd like to go this evening. Although we have been called by God to be under-shepherds to His flock, we are sheep first, and foremost. It was David that penned the words in Psalm 100:3. *Reads verse.* King David included himself as one of those sheep. We are people in need of a

Shepherd. We are so much like those four legged animals that go “baaa” in so many ways. We are timid at times, and we can be stubborn at other times. We are sometimes easily frightened, and other times we stand there right in the path of destruction. We are creatures of habit. We love our little ruts. We love to follow our own familiar paths in search of something to eat, while all along, that path, there are lush pastures that we miss. We are defenseless. We lose our way. We are sheep that are unprotected, without a shepherd’s watch over us. We will perish without his caring. We need the Good Shepherd. It’s a wonderful paradox that the Good Shepherd, the model Shepherd, is also the model sheep. “Behold the lamb of God.”

Let’s turn to our text tonight in John 10:14 & 27. *Reads verses.* Now this is a beautiful portion of Scripture that was spoken at first to a hostile crowd, Pharisees whose motive was to get a rid of Jesus, stone him. Yes, there was the blind man in John 9, healed on the Sabbath that brought about this confrontation in John 10. He was excommunicated from the Synagogue. These Pharisees both rejected the sheep who Jesus healed and Jesus as their Shepherd. Most of the people who read this beautiful portion in John 10 also rejected the message, that He is the Good Shepherd. For you and me that have accepted that, He is exceedingly precious.

Christ is the Good Shepherd.

In the Old Testament to describe Himself to the people, he used the example of shepherd and a rock. They knew a lot about shepherds. The Hebrew word means, “To tend a flock, to rule, to associate with as a friend.” I like that, three words, “tend a flock.” Our Savior. “To rule,” our Lord. Let’s not forget, a shepherd is a friend of a sheep. The Old Testament is a legacy of God as shepherd leading His people, and His people rejecting that attempt. When people reject God, they choose other shepherds by default. Ezekiel 34 is a pronouncement, the entire chapter, against the shepherds that have taken God’s people and almost destroyed them. God says to them, “For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will search for my sheep and seek them out.” My people will have a Shepherd. In the New Testament, in John, “I am the Good Shepherd.” He said this to the people that were taking advantage of God. Jesus said, you’re not taking care of my sheep. You don’t hear Me, hear My voice, you don’t follow Me, you’re not shepherds and you’re not even sheep. But I am the Good Shepherd.

The word “good” is interesting. Two words are translated as “good.” The first word means “morally proper; an intrinsic quality.” I will read 3 John 11. *Reads verse.* That intrinsic quality of goodness. That is derived from God. There is another word for good in the Greek, it means everything the first term meant, and “perfect in every way, without flaw, useful.” Like the chocolate cake with the peanut butter icing on top. It’s perfect, good, and useful. This is the term John used to describe what Jesus meant when He said, “I am the Good Shepherd.” Goodness is part of the nature of Jesus, but it is imperative for us to realize, that He is perfect in every way, useful. He is the beautiful Shepherd. The title is more than the Good Shepherd, but a beautiful Shepherd.

Here’s a lesson for us under-shepherds, where we only have an expression of inner goodness, but little or no *kalos* goodness evident. Shouldn’t we aim to be useful, aim to present an attractive witness for Christ? We should. I like this quote: “Your doctrine can be just as straight as a gun barrel and as empty.” We need gun barrels to be straight, but let’s have them full of usefulness, of beauty.

I'd like to look at John 10, and look at our beautiful shepherd. He talks about all those coming before being thieves and robbers. In verse 2, *reads verse*. Jesus enters in by the door. He is beautiful in his integrity. Here, Jesus is speaking symbolically of the door perhaps being the Jewish Nation, in the Old Covenant, into the New Covenant. But He comes to all places with pure motives. He is not a sheep stealer. He is beautiful in his integrity. Verse 3, beautiful in his authority. *Reads verse*. I ask, who is the porter? Well, in this case it may be John the Baptist. He opened that door for Jesus, but then he deferentially stepped aside, "He must increase, and I must decrease." As an under-shepherd, you are the porter that stands there in the door. We have many opportunities to open the door to Jesus Christ. Are we doing that? Who are we preaching? My agenda? My message? I don't like to use that term when I'm preaching, my message this morning is going to be this and this; it's not my message. Do I preach my hobby horse, or do I preach Jesus Christ? Preach Jesus. Step aside. Open the door so He can enter in.

Jesus is beautiful in his familiarity. He has many sheep in His worldwide flock. He knows all the names of his sheep in your churches; do you? He is familiar with their strengths, weaknesses, idiosyncrasies. He knows my name, He knows me. Psalm 139 talks about how everything about me is open to Him. Oh Lord, thou has searched me and known me. My struggle as a young person, with accepting the fact that my sins are forgiven, this is so beautiful. Brother tonight, whatever you are going through, He knows that. He is also beautiful in his ability, in verse 3. He leads His sheep out; He is beautiful in His abilities. But He is also beautiful in his responsibility. He takes his responsibility seriously. The Good Shepherd is always looking for pasture, always looking at the needs of the sheep He has. The Good Shepherd does not drive His sheep, He leads them. There was a tour guide on a bus in Israel with a group of tourists, talking to them about a Shepherd and how He leads His flock. A tourist looked out a window and saw a man with a stick. This man was waving his stick very belligerently at a flock, chasing them. A tourist said, "Look, you're wrong! Look at what that shepherd is doing." The tour guide ran out and asked the man some questions, then got back on. The man said, this was not the shepherd, this was the butcher, driving the sheep to the market. Jesus leads.

He is also beautiful in his security. verses 9-10. *Reads verses*. He is the door for salvation and abundant living. The word, "enter in" there. He that shall enter in shall be saved. How beautiful is that word. That word means, "protected." What about the going in and out. This is not going in and out from one church to another. This is not going out on a limb on my own, but the liberty in Christ to go in and out and find pasture and find abundance. There is abundant living in Jesus Christ.

Jesus in verse 15 is beautiful in His deity. *Reads verse*. There is a perfect relationship here, and the placement of what He said in verse 15 is an example for us. Our text is verse 14, *reads verse*. This is the relationship model that God the Father and God the Son have, and is the model that He has for us in our relationship to Him as the Shepherd. Jesus is also beautiful in His humility. Verse 11, *reads verse*. Though He is equal to God, He humbled himself to death, to death on the cross. He is also beautiful in His humility. Beautiful in His unity. A better translation would read, there would be one flock. He has many sheepfolds worldwide, different in size, different in construction and layout. The sheep may be different colors, but there is one flock.

Jesus is also beautiful in his invincibility. Verse 17, *reads verse*. Jesus is invincible; they didn't take His life, they gave His life. He is alive, and He is our beautiful shepherd for eternity. Verse 28, and 29. *Reads verses*. Verse 30, *reads verse*. This is not a text for the doctrine of unconditional security. Sheep need to realize there are conditions that need to be met. My friends, He is the Good Shepherd. He will remain the Good Shepherd. He is not going to retire, give up. He will have sheep. I love that verse, in Revelation 7:17, where we receive a picture of Jesus in eternity and He is leading His people and He is feeding His people.

Characteristics of Christ's Sheep.

The word "sheep" in English is interesting. Did you know, there is no plural (separate word) for the word? We do not say, I have one sheep, you have two sheeps, or a pair of sheepen. Christianity, following Christ, is both an individual and a corporate dynamic. There are many errors afloat today regarding this. There is one example I can give you. The idea that I can follow the Good Shepherd apart from a local and accountable brotherhood. The Good Shepherd is portrayed as leading a flock of sheep. We find the lone sheep in the Bible is the lost sheep. What does the Good Shepherd do to the lone sheep? Say, "I found you, we'll have a little fellowship right here"? He takes the lost sheep and carries it back to, what? The flock, the fold. Brothers and sisters tonight, there are far too many lone ranger sheep, and I know some of them. There is also an error that is opposite but equally wrong, to make an attempt to blend into a flock with little or no personal relationship with the Shepherd. "I like it here. The other sheep are so friendly. I like the lambs club. That ram is my hero." Interpersonal relationships within the flock are very important, but they cannot replace a personal relationship with the Good Shepherd. We need a personal relationship, and one within the context of community. They must be in perfect balance. They must be a living reality.

They hear the shepherd's voice: "My sheep hear my voice." My wife and I were still courting when she called our house one evening. The voice on the other end she presumed was me. The person who answered, my brother, did nothing to change that assumption, at least not for a while. The conversation progressed to a point where it seemed to reveal his true identity. She was embarrassed. We thought it was funny. My brother and I have voices that are similar. Recently, we discovered there are differences. We live several thousand miles apart. There are different accents, slight to be sure. My wife would not make that same mistake today. She knows my voice. Why do sheep perk up when they hear the shepherd's voice? Why don't they listen to the stranger's voice? There is familiarity with that voice. There has been a relationship developed with Him. The word "voice" means more than vibrations coming from vocal cords. The word "voice" also means "message." They know his message, they claim his message. They understand his purpose. They spend time with the Master. That is why they know His voice. There is no such thing as a drive-thru break-through. Time is needed!

How do we hear his voice today? We read it in the written word. The very words of Jesus are inspired of God. The entire Bible from the beginning to the last amen is the inspired Word of God. I do believe that we need to look at what Jesus said while He was here to help us understand the rest of the Word. It's sad for me to realize that there are people saying, "The words of Jesus are for a different dispensation [or] a different culture and not relevant for us today." We read the words of Jesus, and if there is any doubt about what Paul teaches in the epistles, about, divorce and remarriage, we go back to what Jesus said, and we'll find every time

that Paul is in perfect harmony with what Jesus taught.

His Spirit speaks to my spirit. His voice is sometimes heard from the sheep. Are you listening to your sheep? He speaks through them at times. Recently, in about a week's time, we had two brothers in our congregation who came and said, "We feel our church needs to spend more time in prayer." One was the oldest, one was one of the youngest. That was the voice of the Lord. There are many strange voices today, some without, and some within. And even verses from within are saying, "Our voice is not being heard." Oh, that we could block everything else out and hear His voice. "Be still and know that I am God!" What does that even mean today, when voices are bombarding us from all over. It's good for us pastors to take a fast, from reading other materials, from work, and just listen, and spend time with Him and hear His voice. Well, the sheep not only hear His voice, but also believe Him. Verse 25 and 26, Jesus is talking to those who do not believe in Him, and alluding that those who believe, hear His voice. In verse 27, "My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me." Here it is: it's obedience. Follow me is found over and over again in the gospels, follow me. It is our love, our faith, in action. It is obedience. It is saying, yes Lord, I will. It is an act of the will. He does not force us to obey him.

There's that story, of the shepherd who has the lamb always running away, always getting lost. So the shepherd takes the lamb and breaks his leg, then carries that lamb around, until the lamb has learned to obey the master. Pretty good story, but I think it is inaccurate. I don't find that in any historical setting, at least not in Biblical culture. That is not the Good Shepherd. He does not force his sheep to obey Him. Yes, they have broken legs sometimes, because they fall into the crevice, but He does not force them to follow Him. Well, they know the Good Shepherd, and He knows them; reciprocal relationship. The word "know" is not a word that only means, "to have an awareness of," it's an intimate word. It means to experience. It's a daily dependence on the Shepherd, an hourly communion with Him, a giving of myself totally to Him.

A Call to Christ's Shepherds.

The word Shepherd, the Greek word is translated once as "XXX" We used to be called ministers. More and more we refer to ourselves as pastors. We have a ministers' meeting, and will stay so I trust. I love the word pastor and I love the word minister. I'm not sure why we take more to one than another. "Minister" is found in the New Testament many, many times. Pastor is a beautiful word, it means shepherd. It's not so important what we call ourselves, but that we are faithful to our calling.

The verse was read already, in 1 Peter 5:3. *Reads verse.* The word "ensamples" means, a dye, a stamp, a pattern, a prototype. A model of what? Of a good shepherd: "My pastor is better than yours!" No. The word ensamples means that we are to be a model of a sheep that is faithfully following Jesus. Be ensamples to your flock, your enthusiasm about following Christ, what you talk about after the service is over, how enthusiastic you are about passing out tracts on the Sunday when you finished preaching, and you're tired. Be an ensample to the flock.

Brothers, tonight, Jesus also talks about a hired shepherd in John 9:12. *Reads verse.* Brothers, there are voices that would lure the sheep away. There are thieves and robbers that are plundering sheep. There are wolves that are devouring sheep. There are hirelings who care not for the sheep, but flee. If my reputation, if my status, if my income is more important than Christ's will for the

flock he has called me to serve, than I am an hireling Shepherd. Let me mention this book: *Road Signs for the Journey*. I am not questioning the salvation of the churches this book refers to, but there is an alarming figure, talking about a group of churches going away from the truth. In a survey, the statement was made, "Jesus is the clearest revelation of God, but God may save people who don't know Jesus." In this group of churches, there were 24% of the members that answered, "Yes, that is possible." That's almost a 1/4th. They asked the pastors the same question. It was 43% who answered "yes."

We would tend to think that when a group of people forsakes the truth and go into apostasy, it is the congregation leading the way and the pastor reluctantly following, but statistics and the truth would show otherwise. Brothers, we have a responsibility. Let's take that responsibility and be accountability, and take it seriously. It has been one of the greatest privileges of my life, although a humbling experience, to teach our precious young ladies and men at Calvary Bible School the past few years, to sit with them and study the word of God. I love it. I gave the assignment this past year for the students to write a short essay about a pastor in their church whom they admire and who has been an inspiration for them in their Christian life. This is about you. I found out some things about you I didn't know before. Many of your names are mentioned here (*holds up a stack of papers*). Some of you are quite the preachers. These dear young men and ladies do not always express it to you, they do appreciate you. They are encouraged by your sermons, those personal touches you do, calling them on their way home, eating breakfast with them, just chatting. They appreciate that you invite their counsel on issues that pertain to them and the church. Do you know what is more influential? It is the voice of your example. This is what one person wrote about a pastor in this group, "When I think of a humble man, I think of him. He realizes that he is only an instrument in the hands of God. He is so passionate about following God. It is obvious he has an incredible relationship with God. He knows much about God's Word, and his wisdom seems endless. He thinks before speaking. This is something I wish I would do more often. He has been a challenge and blessing in my life. I respect him, his passion for God and people, and his desire to live a righteous, holy lifestyle."

God bless you tonight, as you know Him, and He knows you, and as you have the privilege and opportunity to make Him known. God bless you.

8:26pm Comments and Dismissal (Robert Beachy, Canaan Fellowship, OH)

Thank you Anthony. Beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd. I don't know about you, but I was challenged by that message. The importance of recognizing the voice of the Good Shepherd is more crucial today than ever before, because of the broad road, and everything coming under the name of Christianity. Thank you for sharing, the many ways in which we were challenged. The thing of being an example, that starts at a young age, and the older you get, the greater that responsibility is, but the powerful way in which it speaks to young people, again, thank you for your attentiveness tonight.

For those not here earlier, I will mention announcements pertaining to tonight. We will lock the building by 10pm. Men's ensemble, 8:45. Registration. We invite you back in the morning. Come praying, many have been. Keep doing that. As we were preparing for the meeting, it was reaffirmed in my mind, that unless we have the direction of the Holy Spirit, it is vain. We need

the Holy Spirit, and the way God spoke to Anthony this evening.

8:30pm Closing Prayer (Robert Beachy, Canaan Fellowship, OH)

Stand for pray.

Wednesday, April 04, 2012

Singing prior to the service, flowing into the main service (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)

9:03am Songs (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)

1. "There's a Fountain Free" (Christian Hymnal, #230)
2. "Lord Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary" (Chorus, from memory)

Stand for prayer.

9:10am Devotions (Elmer Stoltzfus, Bethesda Fellowship, OH)

As I look across the congregation, some of you, I know a name, some I don't. I don't know what you're going through as a congregation, as in times past I was at the ministers' meeting with a cloud hanging over my heart. If you're here that way this morning, I pray that God can minister to you, strengthen and encourage, rekindling of the fire that God has called you to. Is there a Wesley Sensenig here? We have your thumb drive.

We welcome you here. It is a privilege to have you here. We have been anticipating this meeting for close to a year, and it is good to see everyone here. We feel humbled to see you all here, may it be a refreshing time as we share. I think about the few days we get together to study the Good Shepherd, I anticipate more, learning who He is. As we consider the call God has given us, I had to think a little how our attitude toward God and how we view who He is and how we reverence him, and it is going to make all the difference in our calling, how we walk with Him and how we respond to the situations God allows to come our way. Turn to Daniel 10, and I'm going to be reading that entire chapter. The amazing account of Daniel's response as he met God, and as we read down through here, try to visualize yourself being Daniel, and being there. I invite you to stand. *Reads Daniel 10.*

There are different times where men that met God fell to the ground. Abraham was one, in Genesis 17:1-3. *Reads verses.* I believe as we think of servant-shepherd that we are following, we can reverence Him, the One that has called us, leading us, as we are servants, following Jesus, the prime example. God used these men in a mighty way, not because of who they were or their own strength, but how they walked with God. As God's servants, we walk with Him in that way. Things can happen, and God can do His work. Let's rest as we share together the next few days, as we continue growing or grow in a new way in our walk with the Lord.

We are thankful for Bill Mullet being here this morning. We'll let him introduce his topic. Culture, and it makes more sense if we understand what it was like back then. Bill doesn't have enough time to do justice to this subject, so we can get some nuggets. One announcement before

we go in.

- For men, make sure you have a number on your nametag. We discovered last night, we cut the shape down to fit them in, so some numbers got cut up. If you have a small number, it might be the one cut off.

Remain seated for prayer.

9:20am Being the Good Shepherd's Shepherd (Bill Mullet, Bethel Fellowship, OH)

It was a year ago tonight Laban Kauffman spoke of building a vibrant church, you remember that? My heart was overwhelmed as I repented. I wanted to be the first one up at the altar because Laban spoke about reaching out to those who are in sin and defiled. That evening I had the opportunity to weep and confess and repent for being a lousy bishop. God had brought into our midst, to us, people who are dirty, sick, and in my heart, I would have been happy had they gone somewhere else. Brother Elmer, Ken Miller, and a few others were able to put their arms around me and weep with me and allow God to change my heart. I thank God this morning for a wonderful team, a team of shepherds. God has since brought us more people, wandering sheep, dirty, bleating, needing healing. There is a balm in Gilead, a physician here. God brings healing, and He wants to use us as shepherds.

My topic this morning is "Being the Good Shepherd's shepherd," understanding the shepherd's role in Jewish culture. I want to look at five scenes this morning. First, I'd like to set the stage. This shepherd's culture is largely formed in the desert. Yes, it was a Judean desert. Many of the noted Jewish leaders were shepherds. While they engaged their flocks, they were cut off from the distractions from society, allowing inner reflection. The Torah says Jacob (and others) all herded sheep. Some of the earliest Jewish leaders were shepherds, though the surrounding culture scorned this occupation. It was not glamorous. One thing I do want us to understand from the onset is that in this spiritual sense of being a shepherd, it is a function, not a position. Ephesians 4:11 Anthony talked about last night. Some apostles, some prophets... We think of them often as positions. They're not. They're functions. The prophet needs to pastor. The evangelist needs to shepherd, teach. It's a function. In other words, shepherd is not a specific leader, but it's a kind of leader. We may be bishops and elders and deacons and not be shepherding. We may have people within the congregation who are not deacons and elders and bishops who do shepherding. Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd. Peter refers to him as the Chief Shepherd. He is the greatest shepherd of all time. When it comes to examples, he is the greatest example, but more. As I look at the history of Jewish culture, I think of other examples: Moses, David (my favorite). If you want to see a shepherd's heart, read through the Psalms. He understood the language, he understood the culture of shepherding. When Nathan came to him with the story of the lamb, he got it. He understood it, and it broke his heart, and he repented. In the Psalms he expresses the deepest of pain, of repentance, the highest expression of joy in the relationships he experienced; the most noted of the Psalms, we all read it last night. I was not assigned a text, so I want to read it again. *Reads Psalm 23.*

I'd like to look at five scenes of the culture. I'm sorry, I can't project from a Power Point, so bear with me.

The sun is rising, casting the shadow on a shepherd, with his skin of water, and he moves across

the desert. Sheep follow him. There is not a great distance between. The shepherd hums a familiar tune, putting them to ease. There is peace and confidence on his face. The sheep sense the same, and gladly follow him

Point 1: The Good Shepherd's shepherd leads.

John 10:4. *Reads verse.* Psalm 23:2. *Reads verse.* Why do the sheep follow? There is only one reason, because they trust Him. That's it. That's why they follow Him. They know his voice, they've been with him, proven them worthy of their trust; if the sheep don't follow, he's taking a walk through the desert. He has the ability to influence them because they trust him. Why? Because of his character, who he is. His character, impeccable. Second, because of what he does, he is not shotty, his workmanship is something he needn't be ashamed of. Third, how he is. The way he treats them, his humility. He doesn't know it all, but he knows the One who knows it all. The greatest need for shepherds is men of integrity, people who know the Chief Shepherd. He knows the dangers, the ravines. The Judean desert, it's not hard to fall over a crevice or into a ravine. With the sun shining, it can be difficult to see these, and he must know the desert to avoid these. The shepherd needs a vision. He needs to know where he is taking his sheep. He needs to know where the green pastures are, to see the future of the sheep. The shepherd doesn't always know what he will encounter when leading them, but he must be alert and prepared: difficult terrain, bad weather, the thief, the wolf. He must have a vision for the future. Curt Kauffman recently said, "If you don't have a vision, you can't lead people forward. You can only lead them against something." The shepherd needs a vision. He cannot sit cowering in the corner, afraid of the future, to venture out in fear of the unknown. If he sits cowering in the corner, the sheep will die. He cannot ensure a fence high enough that will protect the sheep. In the culture we are discussing they are not ranchers, they are shepherds. Only at night do they take sheep into the fold. At night, you know where his bedroom is, in the opening of that fold. It becomes the door.

Scene two. the shepherd has walked more through the desert and gets to an area that looks like rest, but there is a dew here. Small sprouts begin to spring up, and the sheep begin to graze as the shepherd looks to the next slopes, where a hue can be seen. The shepherd gently leads them to an oasis, where there is a pool of good water. The sheep drink deeply, and lie down and rest in the pasture.

Point 2: The Shepherd leads.

Psalm 23:2. *Reads verse.* He leadeth me beside the still waters. In the context of the Judean wilderness, this is not a lush British green pasture that perhaps King James' translators were thinking of, but this is the desert. This is the culture of the desert. This is not a place where you take your sheep or cattle and lead them on their own. If you do, they will die. It is the wilderness, in Hebrew, the "*midbar.*" The wilderness and desert are mostly referred to with the same word. Sometimes a different word is used. A shepherd needs to lead his sheep to the green pastures. He feeds them. This grass grows at night. There is little rain. It only rains 3 to 10 inches of rain each year. They rely on the dew. God created it. It comes in over the night, falls upon the rocks, drips off to the side, and on the side of the rocks, some grass springs up. You can hardly see it, if you are not used to the desert. The shepherd knows where it is at and takes his sheep there. He gives of the fresh sprouts that come up at night. The pasture is known as the *bar*, the same root word as the word "God." Pasture, that's where we take them. They lie down, they get their fill, they get enough, what we consider the desert, these green sprouts come up in the barren desert. Brothers,

there is a desert out there. We need to find the green pasture. If we leave the sheep alone, they will die. The image here is to bring them to a slope that has a green hue. Mostly rock, sand, but it has this little hue of green where this sprout comes up. The image of the sheep shows deep contentment and satisfaction. There is nothing that will bring the deep contentment to your flock as the green pasture of the Word of God. Being properly feed in the midst of the desert, our sheep will eat of the wrong thing if we don't nourish them. The sheep need to be fed. Pastors, shepherds, preach nourishing sermons from the Word of God. A vibrant flock, a church is not a concentration of spiritually starved saints, but Bible fed. He leads them by the still waters. The desert is a desert setting. The oasis has extra grass around, and the shepherd leads them to the water. He knows where the water is, in a natural hole, not a man-made cistern that Jeremiah speaks of, broken, cracked, leaking, and contaminated. Fresh. Sheep need to drink once a day.

Scene three: Sheep are satisfied as the day wears on, and oblivious of other activity in the area. The shepherd is aware of other sheep, and as another shepherd makes his way there, the sheep intermingle, and the shepherds share with one another, the joys of tending to the flock.

Point 3: Shepherds communicate.

John 10:4. *Reads verse.* John 10:27. *Reads verse.* The shepherd speaks to his sheep. He communicates to them. A Hebrew shepherd is constantly speaking to them, and the sheep recognize the tone and pitch of his voice. Someone can dress like that shepherd, but will not follow him. They will only follow because of his voice. There are many voices out there today. Brothers, if you and I do not speak to our sheep, they will listen to voices, and begin to recognize those voices, and will follow them. Communicate! Communicate! It's important what we speak. 1 Peter 4:11. *Reads verse.* It makes me a bit nervous. Brothers, let's be sure we speak for God. Speak for God. The sheep are notoriously noted for going astray, wondering off. A shepherd will always call his sheep in a straight line. He will never call his sheep around something. If there is a water pool, go to the pool where the sheep are at. If there is a crevice there, ... If there is a ravine, make sure the sheep only go in a straight line. The shepherd needs constant communication with his flock. He even names them. He calleth his own sheep by name.

Lois [name], in her book "Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus," tells a story like this. She was in the desert: She watched as three shepherds stood together speaking. Their three flocks mingled, and can see no difference between them. How would they get them separated? One shepherd called out, saying, follow me. Sure enough, there was a group scattered throughout that raised their heads and began to go towards the shepherd. Another shepherd stepped out for the group, went up the side of the mountain, and said, "Follow me." Another group raised their heads and followed him. The other sheep that remained never raised their heads, totally oblivious of anything around them until their shepherd spoke. Then they raised their heads and followed him. They knew the voice. Brothers, if our sheep don't know our voice, don't be surprised if they don't follow.

Scene four: the shepherd leads his sheep down into the ravine. With his staff, he checks the soil to ensure that it is safe; the sun is glaring, and he wants to make sure he can see into the deep canyon, and checks the mire around the pool. Appears contaminated, and he wants to make sure the sheep don't get stuck in the mire. He listens, in case it rained in Jerusalem last night, and it comes down suddenly, and catches his sheep stuck. He continues through the canyon. Darkness

in the canyon. Out of the dark appeared a wolf, and with his rod, he strikes at it. The sheep follow the rod and the staff, and are comforted.

Point 4: The shepherd protects.

He has a rod and staff. These are viewed in Jewish culture as the same thing. I had to go to a lot of different places to get together with those, what about this, and that. Tell me about the Jewish culture, the sheep in the Jewish culture. I discovered many books are written from the American view that really don't know much about shepherding except for American ideas, and that's okay. I don't know much about it either. The rod and staff are comforting. They are a source of safety. In the glaring sunlight, the shepherd uses his staff, because it is so glaring, because when there is a crevice or ravine, it just looks black. So he uses his staff to make sure it is safe. He checks around for mire, places that are not safe. He uses his staff in defense, what David used to kill the bear and lion. The rod was never intended to punish. Anthony alluded to last night what many have read. In these books I've read, some shepherd has a stray lamb, and he wants to teach it a lesson, he strikes it, and then carries it and builds a relationship. Not in Jewish culture. No. These men I listened to, agreed that, studied Jewish culture— never. The rod and staff were not for that, it was a comfort for the flock. It was not a rod of discipline. It was a rod to protect the flock. The sheep were comforted, knowing. Another misconception is the rod has a crook at the top. It has a knob at the top. The Egyptians have two rods, the flail and the crook. You'll find it everywhere. But you cannot find it in Israeli culture, except in the tourist shops. This rod, crook, and flail were emblems of an Egyptian god symbol of divine authority. To discipline, punish, and rule. But it's Egyptian culture. Moses was educated in Egypt. Moses, after being 40 years educated, he knew about the crook and flail. One day he came out among his brothers. What did he do? He used his rod to kill the Egyptian, and then he fled. He went to the back side of the mountain where he tended his father-in-law's sheep for years, Mt. Horeb University. There, Moses encountered the burning bush. Brothers, everyone, every Shepherd needs to encounter his burning bush. His bush where he sees that this is a place without God, existence is impossible. Without God, I cannot do anything; I must totally depend on him. A place he can no longer run from, where he submits to the Almighty. Their rod becomes the Hebrew rod, and not our rod. It changes the perspective. Moses picks up the rod, and obediently follows the call of God. "I want you to lead the people out." Then they come back to Mt. Horeb. They need water. That's it! "Moses, take your rod and strike the rock, and water will come out." He did, and they drank, and were all satisfied. The people later chided against Moses and Aaron. They were upset, and all of a sudden, the training of 40 years of Egyptian came back to Moses heart. He was angry with the people of God. God said to Moses: "Take the rod, my rod, and go out to the rock, and speak to the rock." Moses, in his anger said, "Hear now you rebels, do I have to get water for you?" He was angry, and he smote the rock. Water came out. God said, "Moses, you didn't trust me." I don't know what all God said, but he said, "You were angry with my people; it's like being angry with me. You reverted to the Egyptian way. You can't come into the Promised Land. This one thing stands between you and the promise," because of his relationship with his flock. Ezekiel, Anthony referred to last night, he said, "With force and cruelty you have ruled the flock, they are scattered, but I'm going to give them a good shepherd." Jesus is the greatest of the Hebrew shepherds.

Scene 5: The day is drawing close to a close. They are headed back to the fold. The shepherd calls his sheep and they tightly surround them. He looks over each one. Some are dirty. He takes

his hand to the wool and brushes it off with his hand. They had gotten in touch with the desert that day. He kneels beside one and removes the prickles and thorns hanging on his wool. He puts his arm and embraces the little lamb whose mother just died. He reaches out to the fringes of the flock and calls them by name, and says, "I love you. I've collected some grass and feed for you." He feeds them, bringing them into a tight circle. He becomes aware then of a smell, the smell of sheep. It was a pleasant day, but not a pleasant smell. He finished the day. All of his sheep are in the fold, and he lays down in his bedroom. He comes to the door of the sheep fold. before he drifts to sleep, he still smells the sheep. No, no, it's not the sheep he smells, he smells himself. He smells like sheep.

Point 5: Shepherds smell like sheep.

"I am the Good shepherd and know my sheep and am known of mine." Brethren, if you can't stand the smell of sheep, you shouldn't be a helper or bishop, because you can't be a shepherd and not smell like sheep. We must be intimate with the sheep. It's called relationship. I know that they know me. I call them by name. I lay my life down for them. The sheep are attached to their shepherd, so that when a shepherd dies, the entire flock perishes. What did they do? They began to team shepherd. The second shepherd: if one dies, there is someone there, they know the voice. They are known of him. It's a team. They know the sheep. The shepherd at times will weep for his sheep, the ones wondering from the flock. The shepherd has such an intimate relationship, that he smells like the sheep. Spending time with them. It is as important to go to the Memorial Picnic as it is to preach to them on Easter Sunday. Sorry! Sometimes the sheep do things that the shepherd is embarrassed with. May I suggest something in closing? Don't be embarrassed of your sheep. Identify with their embarrassing actions. Embrace them in the place you find them. Don't isolate. Let's not isolate ourselves from them and drive them out. Ultimately, the goal of the shepherd is to serve the sheep, a servant-shepherd, just like Jesus. In closing, 1 Peter 5:2.

Reads verse.

10:06am **Announcements (Elmer Stoltzfus, Bethesda Fellowship, OH)**

Thank you for sharing this morning. Could you feel the desert and rocks as we walked together? Can you identify with it this morning? The chief shepherd is interested in what we're doing, and that gives me strength.

At this time, we'll be taking a break. A few announcements:

- You can leave your Bibles where you are at. When we begin to gather in here, to be dismissed for workshops
- Buzzard will ring at 10:35, with five minutes to get back.
- If any do not have a number on nametag, please do so at break
- If you have widows in your congregation, please let us know, and we'd like to include them in the directory for future years.
- Ministers' meeting coordinator, we will need nominations. Give them to Ray Stutzman or Vernon Miller.

Are you an American shepherd or a shepherd trying to be like Lord Jesus? Any other announcements before break? Remember to return in here after break, then we'll dismiss you for the workshop.

Stand for prayer.

10:11am **Break**

10:38am **Singing (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)**

1. “Lead Me Safely On,” first verse (#497, Christian Hymnal)

10:39am: **Moderator (Elmer Stoltzfus, Bethesda Fellowship, OH)**

A few announcements.

- After lunch, the newly ordained, and all committee members planning to share in the business meeting, sit up front. Newly ordained can bring your wife along. I’m going to go with the committees that has part (*reads them*).
- Come back to the sanctuary, and you will be ushered out for lunch.
- For the sisters, time will be turned over to the moderator after the men dismiss.

Reads off numbers and men leave and follow ushers.

Workshops

11:51am: **Singing (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)**

1. “In Times Like These” (from memory)
2. “There Is Beyond the Azure Blue” (from memory)

11:56am: **Announcements (Elmer Stoltzfus, Bethesda Fellowship, OH)**

I trust you all had a good time together, probably ran out of time. We are on schedule, the food is not quite ready. We will take care of the announcements.

- After lunch, we will not gather in here for dismissal. So, at 1:30pm, the buzzer will ring. Head for your workshops. Do your group a favor and head there a couple minutes early.
- After workshops, when we meet in here, have the newly ordained sit up front, and the committees who have part in the business meeting.
- If you’re interested, sisters, in joining in prayer before the sessions, contact Sue Beachy.
- Committees that are meeting are the first to be dismissed.
- Buckets will be near the food line for donations to cover expenses.

Stand for prayer.

12:00pm: **Dismissal**

LUNCH BREAK

People went straight to their workshop sessions after lunch. Then, people congregated in the sanctuary for the business meeting. See business meeting minutes

SUPPER BREAK

7:00pm: Songs (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)

1. "Lord, Thou Hast Searched and Seen" (Mennonite Hymnal, #79)
2. "Praise God from Whom (Anthem)" (Mennonite Hymnal, #606) *Standing*
3. "The Ninety-Nine" (Christian Hymnal, #202)
4. "Gentle Shepherd" (projected on screen)

7:16pm: Devotions (Nate Yoder, Haven Fellowship, OH)

A Christian greeting to all. It's been a delight to share these few days with you, to rekindle some old friendships and make some new ones. I hope you found the workshops encouraging and refreshing. Come back again tomorrow. For a few thoughts and meditations, turn to Exodus 3. The setting here is, Moses has been castigated from his former family, the king of Egypt, and now making his home in Midian. *Reads several verses.* Exodus 4:1-11. *Reads verses.* I am going to borrow a term Bill shared this morning. Moses is attending Mt. Horeb University. The sheep here are absent from the shepherd. The shepherd is having a conversation with the Great Shepherd. Moses here is ready to graduate, and he has quite a difficult task ahead. He goes from herding animals to shepherding sheep. He spent 40 years being a nobody, then found out what God can do with a nobody. Moses seems reluctant to accept his diploma. In verse 11, chapter 3, *reads verse.* God assures him that He will be with him, and gives him a sign. Over in chapter 4, verse 1, Moses expresses reluctance again. *Reads verse.* In verse 10, *reads verse.* Possibly the best little phrase that describes Moses is, "Why me?" "I'm not up to this task!" As I think about God's response, when Moses just says, I am not able to do this, God says, "What's that in your hand?" and Moses shows him a rod. Could it be that when we are asked to serve in some capacity, God asks, what's that in your hand? Your resources you already have, what are your resources? Some wisdom, some life experiences you can share with one who needs encouragement. Moses then asks, "I can't talk. I'm not eloquent. I have lips of clay." What about the time when you're preparing for a sermon, have you ever thought, why me? I'm not up to this task. God says, who made your mouth? I'm the one who made it! Depend on me. God's enabling presence in our lives assures us we are never alone. As Moses found out, God is with him. He'll be with us as well, as we shepherd our flocks. As I thought about this passage and the transition he is making, from shepherding sheep to people, sometimes difficult people. God places his treasure in earthen vessels.

As the committee was planning these meetings, and we were thinking about servanthood and humility, Donny's name came up. He is a true gentleman and it is a pleasure to meet him.
Stand for prayer.

7:28pm: Servanthood (Donny Swartzentruber, Montezuma Amish Mennonite, GA)

I count it a tremendous privilege to greet you tonight as brothers and sisters in the name of the Good Shepherd. How can I do that? It is by His grace. The one that left the glories of heaven, and came down to planet Earth, not to be ministered to, but to minister and give His life a ransom for you, and you, and you, and all of us, and all humanity, that is servanthood. That is our subject tonight. The Bible makes that plain. As we're together here this evening, I invite you to turn your Bible to Philippians Ch. 2 It's been a blessing for me being here, listening to the message last evening and then this morning, and beyond that as I look out, I see how God has used so many of you in ministering to my life in so many ways. In 1987, I remember going aside

with one of you in the ministers' meeting, and we went aside, and I was struggling in a real way. Even today, it was such a blessing hearing so many of you are praying for me. We be brethren. If I faint, I believe you brethren would be here to help me, to stand with me. That's one of the blessings that goes with the history before us in our churches, brotherhood, laborers together in God. *Reads several verses.*

There's tremendous blessing God has given us in many ways. Tonight, we tried to sing a song and we failed. We stopped singing, the leader said you messed up, just stop. That was just a song. I tell you tonight, there are so many other areas, I have failed, and things so much more serious than singing a song, but God has always heard my cry to get up and try again and go again. He has always been there. There is great consolation in Christ. What is the value of a purged, cleaned conscious? In Hebrews it talks about a purged conscious, and as I consider how God has heard my cry again and again, when I repent and come back to him, when I fail you and others in my life, it's never, he says, "There's no more hope for you." That's what I was struggling with in 1987. The devil said, there's no hope for me, and it seemed everyone else here was happy. The Lord showed me to people I could share my heart with. I remember sitting in those pews and struggling so bad, and Lord if I could just know that you still love me and there is hope for me, and God used you and has in many ways. There is such great consolation in Christ, and he says, fulfill in me your joy, that you be like minded... Let nothing be done through strife. Wow! Nothing through strife. Because, I see so much fault in my brother, no. Not that you're threatening my position, no. But in lowliness of mind. Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of other. Let this mind be in you... took upon him the form of a servant... obedient unto death even the death of the cross. What a shepherd! Tonight we'd like to look at the example of Jesus.

In the New Testament, looking at Paul; in the Old Testament, thinking of Elijah; and then making applications to our place and time. Jesus' example, there is a question in my mind tonight. Why are you here? Why have you put all this work into this time, locals? Why did you put so much into this? Why does Raymond Barkman answer his telephone all times of the night and day? Recently he was supposed to preach the next morning; he answered 10-11 calls that night. Today, I can't help but think of Ashley right now. Yes, someone that had been Mennonite background, but lost her way, but she called the number. But, why do you do it? I was touched in my heart when I saw on the program there is a sister named Esther Bontrager who two years ago experienced her companion went with the Lord. But she is on the program tomorrow, and the title is "May I present this gift to you?" Why is she doing that? I believe in all these cases, the voluntary serventhood has captivated their hearts. And they are following His example. That is why they continue doing what they are doing. They have read 2 Cor. 8:9. *Reads verse.* They read things like, Jesus lay down his life for us. They want to give and give and give. Bless the Lord. We think of Jesus' example tonight after his forerunner was beheaded, the man who came to tell the world, the Messiah is coming. Jesus and his disciples didn't have enough time to even eat, until they got on a boat to the other side of Galilee, but the people heard and the Bible tells us that they ran from cities and outran him. When Jesus came to the other side; to rest a little, and Jesus got there, and there were people. Some of the most beautiful words in Scripture, 5,000 men, His heart was moved with compassion, because He saw people like sheep without a shepherd. Oh, that God would not be looking at our people and say, they are like sheep without a shepherd. Let's build our place as an undershepherd. Jesus taught them many things. In the

evening, should He send the people away? Jesus bowed down. He could have called manna down, but took what someone gave, two fish and five loaves of bread, and sometimes we don't have that. I'm blessed to know Jesus blessed it and it multiplied, and He fed 5,000 with it. Then Jesus blessed the people and sent them back. Now Jesus goes into the mountain to pray, and He has finally that time alone with God. Do you ever feel like you don't have time alone with God? Jesus was finally there, time alone. But guess what? He looks on the Sea of Galilee and he sees disciples (and us today) and sees contrary winds, and many have shared the contrary winds in our lives: your children, families, home. Jesus saw them toiling and rowing. Jesus didn't go on to Sarasota, FL, but Jesus left that wonderful place on the mountain, and he goes across the water to where the disciples were toiling and rowing. He walked on water. They go on the other side. And there were people again, and Jesus ministers to them. If anyone should have had the best facility earth had to offer, it was the Son of Man, but He was wrapped in strips of cloths and laid in a manger. He should have had the best horse, but he rode a donkey and ministered to people everywhere. If ever a man should have had his feet washed with warm water, but we see Jesus taking a towel when He was going to face the most extreme battle and struggle that there was for him on earth, a time He was going to sweat so profusely, to pray, and ask God if that cup could pass. That night, He took a towel, and washed the disciples' feet: marvelous servanthood, amidst those who were going to deny him. He's the Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd.

Have those around me seen me lose my Christian composure? One thing I have in my Bible is a questionnaire I received at my last ordination. One question, are you willing to face hardships, misunderstandings, and all such things you may face? Bless the Lord, there was a day His feet were washed with warm water falling from the eyes of a woman. I understand 11 years ago that Simon Schrock preached, "Don't throw in the towel." This is what this book says. He became my footwashing servant and yours. We find, "Jesus Christ also became your footwashing service, my footwashing service. Jesus knows what it feels like to be betrayed by a close friend. As I sit here today, heard two fathers sharing their hearts; I don't know what hurts worse and have spilled your heart out to them and they betray you, turn against you, when your heart has been poured out for them. Jesus, this very night, He was in the Garden, one of his close friends came with a band of men, this close friend of His, and said, "Hey, old master," and he kissed Jesus. It's amazing, that moment, what Jesus said, "Friend." He's our shepherd. When you're betrayed by those you poured your heart out for, call them your friend. Don't give up. The Lord didn't give up on you and me, neither shall we with others. Jesus knows what it feels like to be betrayed, denied, by a close friend.

In the house of Caiaphas, there is Jesus, the Chief Shepherd. And people are trying to find a reason to accuse this holy man. At one point they blindfolded him. I guess He was unblindfolded. He was slapped in the face. They spit in His face. Enduring that time, there was a disciple that came in the back, one that didn't want to be identified with Jesus. Someone you love doesn't want to be identified, and wants to keep his distance. Peter even cursed and swore, "I don't know Him." It's amazing, the rooster crowed, but it's also amazing, Jesus, let's say He was sitting before these men, and Peter in the back, Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, through the crowd and all that were accusing Him and spitting in His face, and he ministers. What did Peter see in His eyes? Anger? Self pity? One of my close friends denied me! He saw something that convicted him; Jesus turned and looked upon Peter. I believe Peter saw Jesus. Peter went out and wept bitterly. It takes real men to cry. I think of it right now, it's only those kinds of men, in good

followers that make good leaders. Jesus, our intercessor today, an example of servanthood; Jesus is picturing the account of the Good Samaritan, this man was going from Jerusalem down to Jericho, going away from the city, in a direction he should not have been going, he fell among the thieves. The type of the OT law, here comes the Good Samaritan, and the beautiful words are “came where he was.” This poor man, laying aside the road, that’s where the Good Shepherd found me, and isn’t that where he found you? And he goes to them, and he goes where he was. We are called to go where those are in the same condition. Then he pours in wine. That’s a type of the blood of Jesus. Pours in oil, like the Holy Spirit. Then he reaches down and puts him on his beast, and what does he do then? He takes him, where? To the inn. I think of that as a type of the church. He brings him to the inn, and takes care of him there. On the morrow he leaves, and gives the charge to you and me, four words that need to stick in our minds, as followers of the Good Shepherd. The good Samaritan said, take care of him, and when I come again, where is he going to go? He is coming back to the inn. The faithful bride in that inn, it’s a place of walls, not restrictions and protection and blessing. And the Good Shepherd is still going out finding those on the road going the wrong way. Take care of him, take care of her, and giving responsibility to underservants.

We think of the example of Paul, giving his life in so many ways. In 1 Cor. 9, we see Paul saying, in 19, *reads verse*. All of that, Paul was saying, I go to where the people are, came where they were, went to where they were, and ministered to them there. Weren’t we thankful that the Good Shepherd came to us when we were going the wrong way, close to the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth, going away from where we should be going, and now he calls us to do the same. This work of servanthood, in Col. 1:28, *Reads verse*. It almost seems like every person God meets, to present to the Lord, perfect in Christ Jesus, poured out His life for that, desire to be there. We don’t know how it is going to be in the Final Judgment, but it’s okay to have this kind of picture in mind, when I read in Hebrews, of us having to give an account and making every man perfect in Jesus. The flock that you as a sheep and also as an under-shepherd, in that last and final day, how it is going to be. It like to think of you and me, and seeing those go before us, and coming before the Lord, and enter in. Are they received in? At last, we are going in as well. We don’t know how it will be, and picture that, that is the kind of heart we need to have for any person, a never dying soul God has given us a responsibility to.

I think of Elisha, busy, plowing with 12 yokes of oxen. Many before called to this work were busy, serving the Lord in whatever capacity it was, Elijah came by one day and threw his mantle on Elisha. Very few have taken this responsibility by personal choice. In most cases, it has been God calling you to this work through the church. God called Elisha to the work through Elijah. Elisha ran after Elijah, and wondered if he could do some things there. He was a man who had relationships with others around them. He followed Elijah, and ministered to Elijah. He was a man that poured water on the hands of Elijah. Helping cleaned his hands. As he was a faithful follower, he became a tremendous leader, undershepherd, maybe a better word, but God used him in so many ways, but it is so important, we must first be followers before we can be good undershepherds, because we must continue following the Good Shepherd all along.

I invite you to turn to 2 Samuel 23. I would like to share some words that have been the most challenging to me in this work in servanthood. We have here, these are the last words of David, and David is called the anointed of the Lord. The Lord spake by me, it says, *reads verses*. I think

we have the triune God speaking here. David spoke these words, this is what he said, he that ruleth over man, ... This servant must rule in the fear of God, must be just, must rule in the fear of God, under God, a proper view of God, honors God. Then it says, this person shall be as the light of the morning. When the sun rises, even a morning without clouds, and as tender grass springs out of the earth after rain. What a challenge. In the morning when the sun rises and there is not a cloud in the sky. Not a question of character and principle. We do fail at times. We must endeavor to get up.

Have there been too many times where our life has been like a morning: it's so cloudy, the sun is not seen. The clouds that were in the sky this morning hid the sun in the air. How many times have I by my life and those failures in my life clouded the true beauty of the Good Shepherd, and we're called to be clear. I thought of that verse again more than any others that I think of. When the pressure is on and when there is so much to think about and plan for and there are calls, and you minister and minister. Don't lose it don't become angry, even when those you minister to lose it and become angry, you just be like the clouds this morning, pray through it, work through it, walk with God through it; like grass springing out of the earth. In Plain City now, the grass is beautiful. Not like a brier. I didn't see any here, but there are kind where if you touch it you are sure it will prick. We may not be that. Jesus is not that way. Tender grass. This afternoon I stepped on the grass. It just gave in to the impression of my foot. You know what, I took my foot off. That grass, it's clean and vibrant, it just came right back in the end. We must be fresh. They didn't know that there were calls, and I didn't have time to study and prepare, or whatever else happened, and there is more I can do by the grace of God. Only two fish and five loaves of bread, and we can be like fresh grass in Plain City. That's what we're called to do.

Sisters, you don't know how important you are in this work in supporting your husband in servanthood. It's so demanding on your life, isn't it? The baby is sick and you have to go again tonight? And the lawn mower is broke-down. But John needs you husband now. The virtuous woman, her candle goeth not out by night. When your husband's light has become dim, dear sister don't ever let the light go out. Don't be the leaders but be the strong ones and help him along; sometimes we just weep on your shoulder. I want to bless you tonight being the wives whose heart we see alive tonight. I want to encourage you wives in another area. If your husband in wrong in any area, would you as a person given to servant hood, help him see it than any one else better than in the world. Pray through, don't nag him about it. Get on your knees. The most precious thing is when we were young and saw Bertha holding a baby in one hand and a Bible in another. Stand by your man, regardless of what and let him know the light is still on in your heart when he struck out so badly. When he's wrong, help him see it. Minister to him in those areas.

Someone has said, the true test of a servant is to act like a servant when treated like a servant. Wow. what about, when we're treated like a servant? How do we handle it then? Do we act like a shepherd? Person given to servanthood yes, it's fine with me if I pour water on your hands, and I'm behind the scenes. A person comes to my mind. You know her better than I. What I've seen of her, sister Edna Troyer is an example of quiet servanthood, serving behind the scenes. Quietly doing the little things that need to be done: servanthood. We bless the Lord. The true test is when I'm treated like a servant. Remember that morning without a cloud, the grass after rain. No one knows it! I'm staying up till 2am studying! Or whatever is on your schedule. Tonight, two brethren are going to give us as an example of servanthod, and this evening, they are giving

themselves to servanthood, and help remind us of what Jesus did, when He went through the most extreme trial. You brethren can come forward, it is time. While they are coming, there are so many things that relate to washing each other's feet, practicing that ordinance. These brethren, I want to share this story with you, maybe before they get here.

The title is "A man fell into a pit and couldn't get himself out." *Reads story. (Various ones look at a man in a pit but don't help. A Christian comes and actually helps him out of the pit.)*

Two ministers come forward and conduct a feet washing service.

I'd like to share some things about these two brothers. I can't help but think of the sheep in McConnellsville, OH, and what a blessing it is to have these two brethren and the rest, to be their undershepherds. Today, I heard one of us say, of the things that happen when we squabble, and how it affects the sheep. They are also sheep. We have an older brother. We have a younger brother. Tonight we have here a younger brother, a man, who likes to have things done now, likes to move things. He's full of energy. Here we see an older brother that is probably as patient as any man can be. Our brother Raymond, down in his heart, if he would be given to what his flesh desires to do, he could be a man, when a younger brother wants to say how things should be, he could put on the breaks and say, no we're not going that way. But we have love, not the kiss of betrayal that Jesus experienced from Judas. I know these two brethren in personality, laboring together among the fold in McConnellsville, OH. Tonight, can't we here? It is such a blessing. It is the kiss of charity

I wonder tonight if some more of us shouldn't wash feet with a brother. Maybe it is one we love. Maybe one we've worked with, it has gone so well, I'm sure these brothers have had their difficulties, but praise God, the Good Shepherd led them through it all. Now, they've knelt and washed each other's feet, when one or the other was in the pit, or failing, they helped. We be brethren. The history of our churches is the strong brotherhood concept, which is so important. Maybe it is someone tonight. I'm not asking anyone to come forward to wash feet. Maybe tonight, it's someone you've struggled with so much. Maybe it's someone you've reached a point, like back in the 30s, Roger Baker wrote a story of a time when he was a teenager, in a church service where two brethren were at odds with each other. He started working in a place of business. These two brethren were right in church, came there Sunday mornings, and worshipped together. They were not one, not brethren ready to wash one another's feet. He mentioned the anger that came from their lives, that came from that. Sunday morning, there's never been a message he ever heard than what happened in that church, as he sat in the church as a teenager. He saw the tall man slip in his pew and go down his aisle and go to the man he struggled with. You know, when we reach the point when our heart turns again a brother, we can come up with all kinds of things. Yeah, that is right! That goes with what happened last week! The contentions go. This man reached the point of being a man. he goes into the pew, and leans over, and asks, can I wash your feet? They come to the front, and there is water in a basin, and one stoops before the other, and washes his feet. Then the same scene is gone through the other way around. Roger writes, these two men stood up and faced each other, and it was like time stood still. These men knew how to stand their ground, but something happened, because of someone that repented, and decide to be given to servanthood, and it made all the difference. Tonight, the thing of broken relationships, it can be one-sided. You my brother can try to reach out to me, but I can still just

hold out. When two are truly broken, there is beauty. If Jesus can break down the walls between the Jews and gentiles, He surely can between you and me if we are committed, and humbled. So, what Roger said, when those two brethren were reconciled, has stuck with him, and it made such a difference in the whole congregation. Who suffers tremendously when undershepherds are not like that cloud? The lambs are scattered and the sheep don't know where to go.

A true friend, a person given to servanthood. I like this quote. A true friend, one given to servanthood, is one who knows the song in your heart, and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words. The psalm once there, that is gone tonight, because of the pressures. The song we once sang, we're no longer singing. Oh, that there might be servants, given to servanthood, that can come and sing that song back to us. You know who it is to go into prison, and hear that song "Jesus Loves Me." It makes something come alive in their heart, because they heard grandmother sing it. Don't throw in the towel, continue ministering and giving in this work we've been called to. May God raise up someone just like that.

I have been blessed with friends who have walked with me through loss, illness, deep agony; they held my heart in their hands, to the King of mercy, until He brought refreshing hope. That's intercession, servanthood, serving with a servant heart. On the way here, I called Michael Overholt, if I could use a song tonight. That song, "Daddy, will you be there for me?" Most of us have children. So precious. I asked tonight, do you have a heart to heart connection with those precious children? So important. I was amazed to see how many young ministers are here, some carrying babies. Tonight, when you wake up, come to the bed of the children in the middle of the night, and kneel by their bedside and bless them, and get up from there and continue with that kind of heart, for your children, even if they wonder away from God, they will know there is a daddy watching for my return. This song, says, Daddy, will you be there for me? I changed a few words, "undershepherd, will you be there for me, when I face life's setting sun, when I stand before the judgment seat, will you have taught me right from wrong, will your teaching stand the test?" Wow! Undershepherd, will your teaching stand the test? Will I enter into Heaven's land? "I'm depending on you, under-shepherd, you are a gift from God, lead me to that land." I wish to each of you the Lord of Christ to enable you to be true servants and undershepherds under him. May God richly bless you and keep you.

8:20pm: **Moderator (Nate Yoder, Haven Fellowship, OH)**

There are sermons that when we use a lot of notes, and there are sermons that come from the heart. That one came from the heart. Serving, in spite of hurts, and misunderstandings. When we were at the end of the road, and we feel like giving up, serve him. Will we embrace the call? It's hard to shut this meeting down with something like that. Thank you so much, Donny, for sharing your passion for serving. Just a wonderful picture of Jesus. The true test of a servant, when you are treated like a servant. A blessing to be here this evening, to hear God's word. Thank you for being here.

Announcements:

1. Workshops leaders invited tomorrow morning to prayer.
2. Lost keys up here.

Stand for prayer.

Thursday, April 05, 2012

Jonathan and wife Susan sing duets prior to the service.

9:00: Songs (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)

1. "Come Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove" (Christian Hymnal, #215)
2. "To God Be the Glory" (Christian Hymnal, #532) *Stand to sing*
3. "Gentle Shepherd" (projected on screen)

9:15am: Moderator (Lonnie Beachy, Haven Fellowship, OH)

Good morning, welcome again to our last day.

Announcements:

1. James Shetler last evening was taken to the ER. He might have pancreatitis, the gallbladder. He is doing testing today. Let's stand together corporately and bring him to the Lord. *Stand to pray.*
2. Thank you for all involved in the hosting. We have really been enjoying ourselves.

As I think about the way God ministered to my spirit over these days, truly, has ministered to my spirit, I got away differently. God is not done with me. Matthew 8, starting in 23. *Reads verses.* I'd like to move over to Matthew 14, when Peter, the tempest came, and Jesus had gone off to pray, and He walks across the water, and Peter tries to walk on water. When they got into the boat, *reads verses, 32-33.* That's my heart this morning. Our Shepherd, the way he was portrayed in these meetings, I just want to worship. This is a bad place to be wrong on my Biblical information, but I think this is the first time they corporately worshiped him. They didn't when he healed the leper. They were willing to follow, to die, but not worship him. But this time, it was them who was saved. I know we've been saved, but to come to another degree. I want to serve, because of who He is. I want to corporately worship alongside of these brothers.

Stand for prayer.

9:24am: Leading Our Flock into Missions (Merl Beiler, Cold Spring Mennonite, SC)

It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. It's a sacred privilege for me to address you on this subject. I don't know what you are expecting, but this message must come from a broken vessel. A vessel repenting because of the tremendous, vast privilege and responsibility that is laid on us, the church, the leaders of the flock, to point others to the saving knowledge of Jesus, to lead our flock into missions. I felt as I looked at this subject for some months, perhaps it would have been better to have an experienced, seasoned pastor, and yet we go to the Word of God, and He has a message today. What is the greatest sin of the Beachy constituency? What is the greatest reason our God shepherd would say, "This shouldn't be." He has a message for his church. What does He say to me? He has spoken to me so clearly in this. I believe the greatest sin, my heart, has been, the lack of a God-given, Holy Spirit anointed passion love for lost souls. We can do our services in a formal good way, and everything can seem to be in order, yet, I repent before God

and before you for a lack of that burden.

I invite you to open to Matthew 4. I want to read verses 18-20. *Reads verses.* This is at the beginning of his public ministry. Turn to Matthew 28, the Great Commission. Hear the mandate of the mission, what should be our mission statement, from Jesus Himself. *Reads verses.* Don't forget that! "I am with you always." He is with us to carry out the Great Commission. Now, Mark 16:14-16. *Reads verses.* He that believeth not shall be damned. Let the message of the Lord Jesus, let it echo in every fiber of our being. Abbeville, SC: usually in the springtime there is the tour of homes. This morning I have a tour of you, and it is not a nice tour. It's a tour of hell. If that place were just right here, and you had the awesome responsibility to come and someone that you would have ministered to and would have known closely, and you would stand right next to them as they are passed into outer darkness, and you would hear their scream and gnashing of teeth and sense the hopelessness of eternity separated from God, the wrath of God poured out, what would it do for me? For you? I believe with all my heart, the burden of this assembly is experience what God wants us to experience, hearing the cry of the lost, and sharing the greatest news on earth. Dear church, your pastors, your pastors' wives: do you believe Jesus is the only way, and that we have that sacred privilege? I believe the greatest sin of my heart is not being burdened as the heart of the Word Jesus would have me be burdened. I love the opportunity of these meetings. They are such a blessing, to be encouraged, to hear from God for you brethren, to hear His Spirit. What great revival would break out in our churches and in our communities, if we were totally sold out, 110%, if we were more focused on the Lord Jesus, who our Anabaptist fathers focused on, rather than trying to imitate or duplicate their lives? The call at the beginning of His ministry at the time He was taken up, "Go," the burden of my heart in this message, is to encourage each one of us. We have the glorious Gospel in our hands. We're heaping it to ourselves, and failing to proclaim the message.

Leading our flock, as God calls us to lead. What was the lesson these men needed to know before they could lead? That was explained very well, we need to follow Him. This message of Jesus Christ to go is the privilege and responsibility of each one of us. What did this message of follow Me mean to the disciples at this time? What did it mean to them? What does it mean to us today? It is interesting in Matthew 16, when Jesus asked, "Who do men say I am?" Some Elijah, some John the Baptist, some Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Jesus asked, "Whom say, ye, that I am?" This morning, what does your life say? Not the Sunday morning preaching of the Word. What does your life say? Who does your life proclaim to be? When He asked that question, He said, "I am Christ, the Son of the Living God." In our following, He calls us to follow Him in death. Verse Matthew 16:21. *Reads verse.* Then, they begin to rebuke Him. He invites us to follow Him to death, and until that death is experienced, we can do church all we want to, and plan committees all we want, a religious exercise, but what does God want to take place in this house today? Matthew 16:24. *Reads verse.* Not just an historical fact then, but how fresh is your communion with the One that invites you to die to self. Leading our flock. If there is any prayer that has been mine the most, the most repeated prayer of my heart, has been, Lord, God, show us. Guide us. Show us, how you would have the church inspire and set on fire. Share the message of Jesus Christ effectively, follow me to death, humility, and brokenness. Robert Morrison, one of the first missionaries to China, a Scottish pastor, going there for 27 years. As he got off the ship, the captain sneered, saying, "You think you're going to impress China with your views?" Robert Morrison, said, "No, it's God that is going to impress China." Death to self, humility,

brokenness, can hardly be over-emphasized, leading our flock into missions. We're strong on preaching it. That's good. I need to be just as strong in living, following closely and equipping others to share the good news. Following, leading, and seeking Him. The church is strengthened and motivated to share the Gospel as they see your team unified and sold out in doing the same. As a team we are able to reach further by working together, sharing the good news, speaking the truth in love and living it out in shoe leather, leading our flock. I believe the greatest lesson in the text read this morning is flowing from the springs of an intimate relationship with the Good Shepherd. Unless that is meaningful, vibrant, willing to lay aside everything, laying ourselves on the alter, I am my beloved and my beloved is mine. Are you living under the fear of man, and what man will say and do? I pray you will be released from the fear of man. We have the greatest message on earth. Without that intimacy of the Spirit, we toil all night and catch no fish. Fishermen catch fish. When was the last time you led a soul to Jesus Christ? What are you about? I want you to know, as I say, "You," I'm repenting all the time, speaking to myself. Are you truly fishing, fishers of men, or are you just riding the boat? Most leaders are called to serve the local body, it's a sacred privilege. So, we have fewer opportunities in going out at different mission stations as we had earlier, especially lead pastors. However it is our calling and commission in leading our flock, in vision, and equipping. Paul, in Romans 1:1, he is separated unto the Gospel. When we are separated unto the Gospel, set apart, then other decisions are not so hard to make.

Nehemiah 2:4-5, give some points of Nehemiah's life. *Reads verses.* Point #1: He prayed and fasted and you read that in verse 3-4 in chapter 1. Why isn't there more fire in the church to share Jesus Christ? Why isn't there more fire in my heart to share the tremendous message? Perhaps, I depend on programs and organizational skills. Point #2: He was committed to the task, because He was called by God. #3: He took risks for the Kingdom of God's sake, not His personal agenda, even of being ridiculed by his own people. #4: He was a leader, be delicate. #5: He received the facts, and He did it first hand, He went there personally. #6: Servant-leaders make more mistakes than someone that is hardly doing anything. How does that make you feel? Embrace it. #7: He moved forward, and when God spoke, He embraced the opportunity. If the person near you, in five minutes, would be in eternity, how would it change your conversation?

At this time, I have an important announcement. I have a new publication. I want to share. A large volume just right off the press. You weren't expecting a book report at this time. Imagine that this is a large volume just released, released by three of the most well known missions right here. The thing is, I didn't even ask your permission for those responsible for these missions. I have it here, a really nice volume. "The Seven Keys to Leading Your Flock into Missions" presented by AMA, MIC, and CAM. It's a nice volume, you can put it up there with your other big books, "Seven Keys for Leading Your Flock into Missions." Most of you will not have time to read all of the seven major points, and so, that is taken care of, you have CDs up front. When rushing from one place to another, you can pop a CD in and get all the volume. If you do actually have leisure time, there are DVDs in the back, and you can watch that. Let's look at key #1. Must be a big mistake! Key #1 is not here! Do you know what is here? There are details in this manual... I didn't even ask the rest of my team if I could do this. There are details of our ministers' meeting, some of the details are in here. There are some things I don't want you to see. The burden of my heart is this, what are we expending our energies on? Are we focusing on the problems, the negative things? This needs to be different, that needs to be different. I long that

our heart would be turned to the Great Commission, the greatest mission of all. If our young people could feel the heat of passion, no cause too great, nothing I am not willing to give up, rather than sit in meetings that I have chaired, that are stuffy meetings that lack the Holy Spirit of God moving, and bringing conviction. Calling is one, and ministry is diverse.

Before moving on to missions, just a point on vision. We need a vision, and not only a vision, but a commitment to carry out the vision. Some remember well the way our 35th President changed something from being impossible to reality. It can be done in the realm of vision. In 1961, Kennedy proposed a big idea, and attached a deadline: our nation should commit to landing a man on the moon and return him safely to earth. I remember. Many scientists scoffed and ridiculed John F. Kennedy. There were preachers that would say it is not going to happen. The Lord didn't allow the Tower of Babel to continue, and He isn't going to allow this to happen. Ever since he had a vision, from it can't be done, to, if we could do it by the deadline, how would it look? JFK had a tremendous reminder and the people he inspired every night, and he would walk out on a clear night like last night and see the stars and moon, what's your vision? That was 1961 when JFK inspired our nation to do it. November 22, 1963, he was assassinated, and on July 20th, 1969, that Apollo 11 landed on the moon. Missions: the mission of every believer, the Great Commission. What would you say, church, is the greatest hindrance to us leading our flock into missions? I don't remember who said it, but I loved the saying, it was said of Paul, that wherever he went, either a revival broke out, or a riot. The fire of God was in his heart. What's the greatest need or hindrance? Proverbs 24:11. *Reads verse*. Romans 10:13. *Reads verse*. We believe that, preach it, are we living it? We are responsible for how we motivate or stifle our congregations into living out the Great Commission.

About 35 years ago, a pastor was traveling through a place in South Africa, and he was tired, he had meetings at this place. An individual wanted to see him after the service, one who was living in sin, and wanted to try again. After the service, in taking down the tent, the pastor was to go to the home of the sister of the one who was seeking. He was too tired, and he went to the next city, to prepare for the services the next night. After a month or two he was coming through the place he had been at before. He was going to stop in to see the sister. As he knocked on the door, the lady came to the door; she was weeping and crying, "I don't know if I want to see you. My brother came and he was ready, and if he could talk to you, he was going to commit his life to Jesus. But he went home that night, in such an anguished spirit, he was in a drunken spirit, and he perished that night. I don't know if I want to see you pastor." Jesus said unto them, "My will is to do the will of Him that sent Me." John Piper described missions as back-breaking, ordained leaders... Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven. Millions, millions, millions. Does it mean anything to us, that within the last 24 hours, 150,000 souls went to meet God? Will we equip the church to meet the lost, or will we have our religious activities, where we build walls, where we build walls to keep our people in rather than sending them our 2x2, or 7x7. May I ask you a question? If today there were two families from your congregation in Iran. We spoke to a young man who was stabbed for his faith and left for dead, and they left him that way. Someone had mercy on him and carried him to a hospital. His stabbed wound was a fraction of an inch from vital organs. If families from your church were in Iraq or Pakistan and their lives would be on the line for sharing the Gospel, would we pray any differently? Or would we cry out to God for our luke-warmness, having left our first love, not being broken before God. I want to make sure everything is taken care of right here. Are we too often like the merchant, so intent on keeping

the store cleaned, that he failed to unlock the front door. The real reason for the store is to have customers. But he polished, he wanted to look good. Will we be real with each other as we lead our flock into missions?

There is a quote, from, "Cheap Grace" by Nathan Mast. He writes, "If we claim to be a full gospel church, there are 20 or more hours spent per hour in deer hunting than hunting souls. We have more injuries from people falling from deer stands than going into missions." We invite evangelistic speakers to come, I love to hear that and to go from community to community, and share with people who have heard the Gospel 1,000 times over. If we collectively, and many are doing that in foreign countries, what will we do? Who will we be, to reach the lost? Are we guilty of teaching the Gospel in Jesus Christ as a cultural way to live, rather than a gospel for all cultures? Has too much energy, and I run the risk of being misunderstood and being labeled as a conservative or liberal, you can just label me as a needy shepherd. We have invested too much time in doing this and don't do that, and I am glad we abstain from evil and all appearance of evil, and I believe if our focus was on Jesus Christ and sharing the Good News, and with you it is real, there is no cause too great. We would have less reason to say, "Hey, you know, should we be going to that football game, or do this, or that?" when their heart is sold out to the greatest news, and filled with a passion for the Lord Jesus. Are you more enthused about being servant of the Most High? I believe the greatest lack in my own heart, is a lack of being filled, as it says in Ephesians, "Be filled with the Spirit." A friend from one of the mission units, we have units coming here doing things like they do at home, in their own strength, and when they hit the wall, it is more than they can handle. I feel overwhelmed how they could be contributing if they arrived ready to work, with the streams of life overflowing. Is this the reason we have such a difference between church and missions? Do we model what our missionaries are expected to carry out in the field? We have lots of good people, but how many are truly filled and overflowing with the Holy Spirit.

Here are some practical things as you consider leading your flock, leading the flock into missions. I want you, pastor friend, to bless your people in exploring ideas and ways to minister, and let them know it is just as a high calling to be on their way to work tomorrow morning, and sharing the Gospel with everyone they meet, as it is to be... wherever God has called to lead. There are a lot of ways, and I have a long list of things that could be looked at as ways to encourage, practical ways. I'll just name one or two. I challenge you to bless your youth in being involved in long and short term mission projects, where they personally share. I challenge you pastors to teach a missions class to your high school students on a regular basis, once a week. Equipped to send out. Jesus called us, to follow him, lift up your eyes to see what he says, feel the urgency he feels. May I ask you something personally? When was the last time you wept for a soul? Unless they decide to follow the Lord Jesus, is headed for Hell. Compare the time you've invested in prayer, seeking the face of God, compare that with the time you've sat in stuffy meetings, where the only things discussed were the problems of the time. Lift up your ideas, follow him, saving souls, souls that will otherwise be lost for eternity.

10:03: Moderator (Lonnie Beachy, Plain City, OH)

Where do you find yourselves this morning? I need prayer, fill my heart with a passion for the lost. Merl, would you be kind enough, I'm going to go to the altar myself, a prayer for my life.

Would you just come and lead an invitation for us? Why don't we stand?

MERL: Invitation is this, pastors, wives, if you feel you need a time of prayer, I'm going to ask our song leader to lead in a verse, of, just as I am. You are doing business for the church. If you feel you need to come forward, come right up as we sing. *Three verses. Various ones stood around the altar. Merl prayed:* "We bring the thoughts of a better-than-thou attitude, or whatever has been keeping us back from sharing the message. Give us a passion that can come only through the Holy Spirit through our lives."

Chorus: "I Will Serve Thee Because I Love Thee." *Standing.*

Lonnie prays.

Announcements:

1. Break first, prior to workshop, and you will go directly to your workshop
2. Feedback is welcome for the workshop format.
3. After lunch, hopefully we will have directories here. Those who have to leave early, take directories for pastors still at home, to spare us the shipping, etc.
4. After workshops, we'll be back in here for a prayer, and be ushered for the meal.

10:14: **BREAK**

People went straight to their sessions after break.

11:50am: **Songs (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)**

1. ""Will Your Anchor Hold?" (Christian Hymnary, #483)

11:54am: **Moderator (Lonnie Beachy, Haven Fellowship, OH)**

1. Directories are here. Take one home. Inside the front cover there is contact information for how you can change your information.
2. Tag holders are to be put in a box in the back as you leave.
3. After prayer, the committees dismiss first.
4. Anna Beachy of Bethesda was hospitalized. It was very sudden. Tests are being conducted.
5. Go directly to your workshops following lunch. Those in the business session, please be seated up front.

Stand for prayer.

LUNCH BREAK

People went straight to their sessions after lunch.

BREAK

People congregated in the sanctuary for the business meeting. See business meeting minutes

2:46: Songs (Jonathan Raber, Antrim Mennonite, OH)

1. "Revive Us Again" (Christian Hymnary, #317), *standing*

2:50: Moderator (Dale Miller, Bethesda Fellowship, OH)

SUPPER BREAK

Congregational singing prior to service.

7:00-7:10pm: Songs (Manfred McGrath, Dayspring Christian Fellowship, NC)

1. "Walking in the Sunshine" (Christian Hymnal, #440)
2. "All the Way My Savior Leads Me" (Christian Hymnal, #573)
3. "I Need Thee Every Hour" (Christian Hymnal, #578)
4. "We Praise Thee, Oh God" (Christian Hymnal, #527)

7:10-7:13pm: Moderator (Robert Beachy, Canaan Fellowship, OH)

God has been doing that, reviving us. The effects of a whole schedule, you're feeling some tiredness. I'm excited about tonight's message, on shepherding with joy. Of people who left, they left without the icing on the cake. I know different ones were anticipating certain messages based on their needs, but tonight's message I'm excited about. I am just going to share one verse that sums up what I have felt throughout these meetings, especially this morning. Truly God is good to Israel. Even to such as are of a clean heart. Amen? God is good. He has been exceptionally good. I feel overwhelmed with what He has done, speaking through His servants. At this time, I'd like for you to stand with me, then Brother Jason is going to lead a men's ensemble, and then we'll go into the message.

Stand for prayer.

7:13-7:26pm: Men's Choral Group (Jason Miller, Antrim Mennonite, OH)

The choral group included 21 men.

1. "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"
2. "They Tried My Lord and Master"
3. "Blessed Savior, Thou Wilt Guide Us"

7:26-7:29pm: Moderator (Robert Beachy, Canaan Fellowship, OH)

Thank you, men, for leading us in those songs. You'd think they had been practicing a lot. Our speaker needs no introduction: Ivan Beachy from Faith Mission Home. Ivan conducted preordination meetings for my last ordination, and at the end he gave me a shepherd's staff. How many of us could preach this message all the time? We all face times of discouragement. Often, as I observe his life, he has a radiance about him.

Stand for prayer.

7:29-8:11pm: **Shepherding with Joy (Ivan Beachy, Faith Mission Fellowship, VA**

“I’ll be a friend to Jesus, I’ll just go wherever He sends me.” That’s the call of every undershepherd, the call we have from the Master. The intention of the message this evening is simply to bring encouragement and joy to your hearts in the call that God has placed upon your life. In that call, God gives us many opportunities, and He wants us to use those opportunities. As I begin, I give a confession. When they called, and whether I would take the message, my heart was not filled with joy. I was facing a very heavy workload. Add another one to that. I wondered, how will this be? The Lord has lifted my burden. This evening I’m excited about the fact of God’s provision, if we follow His plan. There are opportunities He gives along the way, as he calls us into the ministry. He gives us opportunities that happen in many ways, but some of you know what it is to go on a week of meetings. I don’t know what it does to my heart. It’s humbling to go and share with other people, and, well, I’ve got so many needs of my own. How can I go share the message? When you go and give yourself to study, God’s spirit comes upon you. What happens? It’s a cleansing of your heart, your own heart. I usually feel like I go home revived. My heart has been revived. That is what happens when we give ourselves to the Word in the call to the ministry, He gives us opportunity, concentration of God’s word to fall upon us, and there it does its cleansing. When you listen to these struggles of another, it strikes home. I bow my head, and say, wow. How am I going to help that person? I see myself like they said. We’re made of the same stuff, walk the same paths, and find the same answers. As we turn them to the Word of God, God turns them to the truth, which heals and cleanses. When another verbalizes his goals, it encourages us the same.

Turn to Ps. 126:5-6. *Reads verses.* Can you see the man, that bag of seed, and he’s going out and spreading that seed, and as he is doing that, he is weeping. Why? Because some of this seed is not going to grow. Maybe it is going to be destroyed, maybe a famine. He goes forth and spreads that seed, sewing it, and as he is going it, he’s weeping. But the promise of God’s Word is, My Word shall not return void, but accomplish that I please. But there are results. He that sows in tears shall reap in tears. There is joy in reaping a harvest. Psalm 35. There’s something about the light of a new day that brings hope, opportunity, brings light, if you’ve had a long night of restlessness, perhaps sleeplessness, because of a burden, or a problem you’re facing, or message preparation. I don’t know what’s happening, maybe I’m getting older, I struggle more and more in getting a message together, and sometimes it just takes me all night, and there is something about the morning that brings hope, Joy comes in the morning. God wants us to give us that joy in the morning.

I’ve divided the message into three parts. I want to consider first of all the privilege, then the work, then consider the blessing. Consider the privilege. In 2 Timothy, I want to read what Paul gave to the pastor, particularly, in 2 Timothy 1:6-10. *Reads verses.* In the morning when you go out and look at the holes, I like to take a stick and start to stir around. Is there any life and possibility of a fire being kindled? Underneath there are some ambers, you stir up, put something on it, and after while you have a fire. Here, it says, stir up the ambers, stir up what has been suppressed, or has kind of dwindled because of time. Stir it up and allow it to rekindle into a bright flame.

Think back to how it was when you were first ordained: overwhelmed, obviously. After you got over that and started thinking about the call of God on your life, what should be my goals? And you began to define those goals. Where are you in relation to that? It is true, that we get tired in the work, but I trust we will not get tired of the work. There is a huge difference. Don't get tired of the work of the Lord. Those rewards and those results are not always seen very quickly, but they will come. Paul, here, reminds young Timothy, stir up the gift God has placed in you. *Reads verses*. He's a part of that Gospel to you, placed that in your heart and sharing that good news to others. Look at your record, it's not because of our record of how good we are that God has called us to this ministry. In 1 Timothy 1, Paul says about himself... *reads verses*.

Paul says, in spite of my record, and this is my record, God has called me and entrusted to me the good news, the message that changes men's heart, and has counted me faithful to be one of his laborers. When I was ordained bishop, this filtered back to me. One of my friends from long ago, said, "He, a bishop?" I have a record that I'm not proud of, but in spite of that record, God has touched my heart through His grace and has changed me. Now today, I stand as one of His under-shepherds, called to take the mantle of Christ, and minister to the people in His love. When He calls you to that, He gives you the rope that you need. We have a picture of what a shepherd should look like. He gives us the robe of righteousness, not ours, His. He pours into us His grace, gives us His tools, the Word of God. Not the whole truckload of tools. It's very simple tools. He pours his Spirit into us, His grace, enablement, and says, I'll go with you. We'll walk in His path. Peter says, we walk in His steps. Isn't that amazing? I'm intrigued by the guard at the tomb of the unknown in DC. I have had the privilege of going there many times. Many have been there. The honor guard at the Arlington cemetery has been guarding it since July 2, 1937. They take pride in the fact that for every second since then, there has been a guard on duty, since 1937. It's rain or shine, heat or cold. It takes rigorous training to become a guard. More than 80% that apply are rejected. It's only a handful. Since 1950, since they began to give the badge of honor that they have served at the unknown, there have only been 500 given since 1950. It's the second highest honor that the military gives in the United States. It's pretty stiff requirements. I wouldn't qualify on a number of counts. You have to be between 5'11" and 6'4". Your waist has to be 30". You must be able to perform flawlessly several different marches, and it must be under scrutiny and observation, perfection. Yet, they're honored to do it. They're on 24 hour, off 24 hours, on 24 hours, off 24 hours. There is a contingent of men on that 24 hour period, but when they walk the mat, it's an honor. A guard spends between 6 and 8 hours to get his uniform prepared before he goes out to walk the mat, before he takes his shift.

By the way, how many hours do you spend to get your message ready, that God wants to give to His people? Is it worth eight hours? It's worth more than that. If those men are willing to prepare their suit for eight hours to walk that mat, it is worth taking the time to prepare a message for the people of God, people that are hungry, people that want truth, direction, it's worth it to spend the time, invest the time it takes. Jesus said, many are called, but few are chosen. I'd like to read to you the sentinels' creed for the tomb of the unknown. *Reads creed*. 99 words, they say, this is what we are about. Some of this sounds familiar, as you start off reading what they say, it sounds like a minister of the Gospel, who is called to represent Jesus. What an honor, in spite of our record. Let's move on.

I want to consider the work. 1 Timothy 3:1. *Reads verse.* It's work, brethren, it's a lot of work, but it's a good work. 1 Cor. 9:15-17. *Reads verses.* The sense I get is, if I do the work of ministry willingly, there is a reward. But if I don't do it willingly, it's my responsibility. It becomes an obligation, and it sometimes feels very heavy. There have been times I have gone into the pulpit with a feeling of obligation, I just want to get this behind me. I'm ashamed, but that's been the truth. When you get done, you have a weariness if that has been the case. When you are willing to enter the pulpit with a fire burning in your heart, somehow when you are done, you are not tired as before. God has ways of compensating, overruling our own abilities and giving us what we need. If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward. 1 Peter 5:2. *Reads verse.* Feed your flock willingly.

I've never been a real farmer. I've enjoyed sheep, cattle, some pigs, and things like that. There is something about it, I enjoy standing, watching, and listening when cattle or sheep come to the trough to feed. Or think of it, if you are living where it is dry, the grass is brown and brittle, little of it, and the cattle are starting to fall off, not looking as nice anymore, and you need to do something about that to keep up their shape, to keep them healthy. I remember telling our sons, young, still in school, boys, let's get the machetes and go to Scotland Halfmoon and we're going to cut grass. David Hostetler's had a place that was swampy. We go out there and get grass. We stuffed the pick-up full until it was to the top. It was dry season, warm. We opened the back door, and the cows came running. We got that grass out, and the cows were around there, what a lovely sound! They were chomping away at that grass. It was a delight to my ears, because I knew they were being satisfied. For every pastor, it should be a delight when the flock is sitting there and they are just drinking it in, and you see that they are getting it. There's been times when they didn't get it. Why didn't they get it? My heart wasn't prepared. I hadn't cut the grass. The challenge is, cut the grass. Get it ready, and then feed it to them, and let them enjoy that grass.

It took sacrifice to go over there and cut that grass, but when we were done and watched the cattle enjoy that, we didn't think about sacrifice. It was the joy of seeing them satisfied. There are things that require sacrifice. Some time ago, I was asked to share what experiences were like on the mission field. What were things that may have been something you regret? The thing I regret is that I didn't do better. It's not the sacrifice, but the soul you helped to God, the delight of a man who comes to the Lord after 20 years of people ministering to his heart, then the joy of being able to share the first communion and wash feet with him, a tremendous joy; they that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Well, what a work. One more passage concerning the work of the ministry. 2 Timothy 4:1-5. *Reads verses.* I like that last phrase, do the work of an evangelist and make full proof of your ministry. An evangelist has good news that others need to know. The world needs to know, and it is burning in your heart, and you are willing to share it with others. There are times you need to reprove, but do the work of an evangelist. What about the rewards? I'm borrowing some of these from Howard Bean in the book, "A Good Minister." In one of the last chapters in the book, what are the rewards of a minister? The smile of God's approval. We have that in Matthew 25:1. *Reads verse.* The joy of thy Lord is preceded by faithful discharge of responsibility. Faithful discharge of responsibility. If we are going to enjoy the rewards and blessings, it requires faithfulness on our part. We've heard about faithfulness in these meetings. There's the joy of helping others. When a struggling person, the light goes on and the radiance comes on his face,

and they now understand, and they come back later, and say, thank you for that counsel. There's joy that comes out there. You know sometimes the work of the minister becomes time consuming. It becomes taxing. No doubt, many people have no idea what all is included in that. You also have the benefit of the joy of seeing a life change. That's been an exciting thing in the ministry. There is another one: the abundance of grace. In 2 Cor., when he talks to them about their giving. 2 Cor. 9:8-?. *Reads verses.* Joy, abundance, when God pours his grace into our hearts, and we are able to serve out that grace, there is thanksgiving that comes. In 2 Cor. 12:9, after Paul had come to God in his prayer, and he requested to the Lord, to take it away, whatever the issue was, and the Lord came, and said, Paul, my grace is sufficient. Have you found God's grace sufficient for you? How does God's grace come? Did you on the night of your ordination, get one huge bundle of grace, and God said, this is it, make it last? No. Somehow it comes one day at a time. Right when we need it. My heart was feeling burdened. Today, the burden lifted. I've been challenged by these messages in this meeting. I told Elsie, I don't even know if I can preach this message. Bill says he's a lousy bishop. You're looking at #2. But God gives grace to change my heart, and wants to pour His grace into my heart. Remember the manna of the Old Testament. You know, God spoke to Moses, tell the people they can go out in the morning, get their bread and food, and six days a week it is going to be there. God's grace is there, every day, as we need it. I love that. Another benefit, or blessing, and it is a joyous part of the shepherding, that is the development of the character of Christ in my heart. Let me say, we want to be more like Christ, everyday, more and more of Him. How is that going to happen? He takes us through difficulties, He takes us through situations, that we don't know what to do, and we turn to God, and look at the Scripture, and see the character of Christ, how He responded, and we develop in our hearts, that same longing.

In conclusion, I want to bring a few verses, a sampling that speaks about joy. Alvin Stoltzfus, in one of our last board meetings, shared a devotional that stripped my heart in a special way. Psalm 16:11. *Reads verse.* He went on to say, you find joy in the presence of God. When we get away from it, we find that heaviness. There are other Scriptures. John 15:10-11. It talks about joy in obedience in doing the will of the father, in doing the will of the Shepherd. Children that are obedient are free and happy and enjoying life. When they have not been obedient, there is guilt that comes. There is joy in following the commands of Christ. Paul says, there is joy in tribulation. 2 Cor. 4. We don't normally find joy in tribulation, but the reason we can find it, is because it brings us full circle back to God. In thy presence is fullness of joy. He allows difficulties to come our way. In that difficulty, we bow our head and seek his face. Thank you, Alvin, for sharing that. Nehemiah said, the joy of the Lord is your strength. He said that to the people of Israel. They read the law and were weeping, when he said those words; the Levites and priests got busy, and told the people, put away the heaviness, and break out in singing. There was wonderful revival. We must have the joy of the Lord in our hearts. Do we sing because we have joy or joy when we sing? My wife has a way of singing the day away, in spite of her handicap. Thanksgiving time I was asked to share a message with people in Harrisonburg, their Thanksgiving service. As I spoke, I said, in everything give thanks. My wife reminded me, that it says, *for* everything gives thanks. That's one of the secrets in overcoming the discouragement of overcoming a handicap that is going to be for the rest of her life. That just breaks into my heart. In everything give thanks; it prepares us and enables us to be thankful for it. As we are thankful, there is joy. Thankfulness and joy.

Just a few verses. Phil. 4:4. *Reads verse.* Paul, in Acts 20:24, *reads verse.* By God's grace, when I come to the end, and maybe I'm faltering, hardly able to go on, but come to the Good Shepherd, I want to still have the robe of righteousness He gave me, the tools he gave me, and bring it back to Him in joy, and kneel before Him, and say, I am an unworthy servant, and present the flock to Him. It is His flock, we are stewards of that flock, and we are called to lead it with joy. What a privilege. Let's not lose sight of that. I leave you with these words. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling...Amen."

8:11pm: Moderator (Robert Beachy, Canaan Fellowship, OH)

It feels like circumstances get in the way of serving. But this message gave me fresh courage to continue on. In thy presence is fullness of joy. We as leaders have the opportunity to lead young people in their beginnings of their Christian life. John said that, "I have no greater joy than to see that my children walk in truth." We pastors come along those young people, bringing tremendous joy. We know the other side as well. Wayward youth, who are taking their own course, turning their back on the Good Shepherd. Tonight, I saw God wants to work in my heart, my life. Can I maintain that joy? The question is, what can separate us from the love of God? Nothing. Ivan, thank you for allowing yourself to be used in this way.

Announcements.

1. Thanks to speakers, workshop leaders, song leaders, and especially widows for coming. Widows, this group will welcome you each year.
2. As you are leaving, pick up your directories. If a neighboring area did not get theirs, pick theirs up as well.
3. CDs, some of them, will be ready this evening. If you ordered CDs, stop by Victory's booth by the lower entrance.
4. Name tag holders, please return those. Empty your name tag.
5. Bottled water, there is plenty of bottled water, take some for your trip home. there is plenty.
6. You've been a gracious group to host. The format was maybe not to some of your liking. Thank you for being gracious and coming anyways. We have our various tastes, and some of these things, and unless we try them, we don't know the outcome. Thank you for being a gracious group to host. Bless you as you leave.

Stand for prayer. Then sang, "God be with you until we meet again."