



Be ye doers of
the Word and
not hearers
only...

James 1:22



Anabaptist Voice

Championing A Faith That Works

IN THIS ISSUE:

- "MARKS OF A DISCIPLINED CHURCH" - D. W.
- "KINGDOM TEACHINGS FROM I COR. 1:1" - ERNEST STRUBHAR
- "ANABAPTISM VS PROTESTANTISM" - DARWIN BEAR
- "ON THE WAR FRONT IN INDIA" - RICKY WRIGHT
- "NOT MY COUNTRY" - MENNO KNIGHT

Letter from the Editor

Issue 4 marks the first birthday of *Anabaptist Voice*. What an exciting and satisfying year it has been! But a year ago, giants of fear stood on the road ahead of us.

- One giant shouted, “You will not have enough material.”
- Another giant sneered, “Anabaptist writers are very scarce.”
- Another giant laughed, “You don’t have a mailing list.”
- One giant mocked, “Who will read one more Anabaptist paper?”

Our little *armée* picked smooth stones out of the brook and with our slings we marched forth in the name of the living God to start *Anabaptist Voice*. One by one, the giants in the road ran away. There has been no shortage of material for living Anabaptists today. We have had more than 50 different Anabaptist voices speaking out in the first four issues, and God is still sending us new writers. A brother created a mailing list.

We believe God has blessed our beginning, and He has great treasures in store, both new and old, in the issues yet to come. **Every student of the Scriptures who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like someone who brings out new and old treasures from the storeroom (Matthew 13:52).**

Fasten your seatbelt and hang on as Issue 4 takes you for a joyous ride into the Kingdom of God. Be thrilled with His power and glory. Hear the voices of past and present Anabaptists as they march with the victorious *Grand Armée* of our Lord and of His dear Son.

- D. W. marshals the Scripture and calls us to present a disciplined and pure church to the Bridegroom.
- Ernest Strubhar takes a look at what I Corinthians 11:1-16 means and the necessity of obeying what it teaches.
- Hold your breath while you visit war zones in two different times and places.
- Gird up the loins of your minds while you imagine the wonders of heaven with Karen Strite.
- Think again about the games you play as Andrew Ste. Marie devastates Anabaptists who play war games.

All these and more in Issue 4. Pray hard if your knees shake a bit when you step down from this challenging ride through the pages of *Anabaptist Voice*.

Peace,

James G. Landis



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About *Anabaptist Voice*

Our Mission Statement:

Anabaptist Voice is meant to be a servant to the churches of Jesus Christ. We believe the name “Anabaptist” is a fitting term to describe an obedient “People of God” in our generation. We follow the practice of the historic Anabaptists who sought to obey the teachings of Christ and the apostles, but we do not idolize the Anabaptists nor historic Anabaptism. We follow Christ.

Our Purpose:

To interpret Bible truth in a simple, childlike way, and to apply Bible teaching to the lives of living saints in a practical manner.

Our Goal:

To reinforce Christ’s call to forsake the world and be loyal citizens of Christ’s heavenly Kingdom. We want *Anabaptist Voice* to stimulate brotherly discussion on Bible interpretation and application, to help generate preaching in our churches on practical discipleship issues, and to be useful in one-on-one evangelism.

Our Tone:

The tone of the magazine shall be positive in that:

- it presents the right way when it decries the wrong way.
- it presents the truth when it warns of the untruth.

Our motto shall be words from Isaiah 30:21.

Whenever you turn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left,
You shall hear a voice behind you, saying,
“This is the way, walk in it.”

Our Audience:

Our primary target audience is anyone associated with an Anabaptist church. We define an Anabaptist church as one that practices believer’s baptism, and maintains literal applications of Bible truths in a close-knit, disciplined brotherhood.

Our secondary target audience is those not familiar with Anabaptist churches but are searching the Scriptures for truth.

Our Finances:

Since there is no set price for a subscription, donations will be accepted from those who wish to support the work. A few brethren have committed to support *Anabaptist Voice* by providing the extra financial backing needed to get this project started; their support is listed as “Local Support” in financial reports.

To assure an informed supporter base, each issue will contain a statement giving the number of copies printed and distributed, the total costs for the previous issue, and the amount of donations that have been received.

Our Distribution:

All *Anabaptist Voice* issues are free of charge to any individual who requests them. Press numbers will be determined by the Anabaptist Voice Council.

Our Organization:

A council of 6-10 brethren from various Anabaptist churches directs the production team and the editor in the publication of *Anabaptist Voice*.

The AV Editor is responsible for assuring that we adhere to the stated purpose, securing writers, and proper copy editing. The AV Production Team is responsible for design, layout, printing, subscriptions, and all financial matters.

At present, *Anabaptist Voice* is choosing to be free of government regulations and control as much as possible. We are not registered with any federal or state government body. We are not a 501c3 organization; contributions are not tax deductible under present law. If you wish to help us with a significant donation, please contact us.

Our Supporters and Contributors:

In order to promote the free exchange of ideas and to prevent unwarranted judgments of people, we have chosen not to publish the names of all the people who support us. The names of the editor and most of the writers are published with their articles and we invite your response. AV wants God’s people to critically examine the material in the magazine and hold us accountable for any false teaching.

For those seriously interested in supporting this work, we can make the names of writers, editors, producers, councilors, and donors available.

Our Statement of Beliefs:

For the purpose of publishing *Anabaptist Voice*, we are in agreement on the following points. We believe:

1. In the 23 articles listed in the Christian Aid Ministries Statement of Faith (available from CAM at www.christianaidministries.org/about-us, or by writing to AV).
2. The Kingdom of God is now in effect on the earth (Matthew 5-7), and will be more fully experienced in a future state in the presence of God (Revelation 4).
3. The whole world outside the Kingdom of God lies under the sway of Satan (1 John 5:19).
4. God’s “New Covenant” with the people of God (the church) supersedes God’s “Old Covenant” with the Israelites (Hebrews 8).
5. The Bible can be understood and must be put into practice (Matthew 7:24).
6. The church is to be a holy people who call all the ungodly to repentance, self-surrender, and obedience to King Jesus. (1 Peter 2:9)

Our Use of Scripture:

We believe the Scripture is authoritative and that it is our final rule of faith and practice.

Our desire is always to give the true meaning of the Scripture in simple language that all can understand. If we ever give the wrong meaning through an inaccurate rendering of the Scripture, we ask that you enlighten us with a correct rendering of the passage in question.



Our Readers Respond

Policy Note: Email letters to *Anabaptist Voice* are encouraged. All letters must be accompanied by the writer's full name and physical address (not a PO Box). If the letter is printed in the magazine, only the writer's initials and state will be attached to the comments. If you send AV a letter, we assume the right to use any part of the letter we deem of interest to our readers. AV will try to be courteous in acknowledging all letters. - AV Ed.

God Preserved Us

I followed with interest the discussion of Sabbath Day/Lord's Day observance.

Many years ago when my wife and I were young married, we had some well-meaning, plain dressed Seventh Day Adventist friends that tried their best to convince us of their view of keeping the seventh day Sabbath. The strength of their argument was that the original Ten Commandments are eternal, and therefore continue to be verbatim binding on us as Christians today, including the fourth commandment.

Because my wife and I were both raised conservative Anabaptist (Old Order Mennonite), first-day/Lord's Day observance was a natural fit for us; but a seventh-day/Sabbath Day observance was a new and strange idea. In our youthful zeal and sincerity, we were almost convinced. Providentially, the Lord provided the right influences in our lives to keep us within the conservative Anabaptist framework.

We embarked on an in-depth, year-long personal Bible study on the subject. We came to understand the errors of Adventism and legalism in general, but then we also saw the error of not taking the New Testament commands literally enough. This opens the door to liberalism and licentiousness.

Looking back, I'm very thankful for having been spared being led astray. I feel historic Anabaptism has been right all along, according to New Testament teaching. My convictions echo those of the three AV councilors as well as P.H. from Kentucky (AV03).

J.D.H. | *Pennsylvania*

Anabaptist Voice: Intensive Bible study is certainly the best method of sorting out truth and error. One purpose of *Anabaptist Voice* is to spur people on to study their Bibles and thus have a better understanding of why and how they observe the Lord's Day.



The N.T. Supersedes the O.T.

I am writing in regard to the articles published in Issues 2 & 3 about Christian worship on Sunday and its relationship to the Old Testament Sabbath Day.

We Anabaptists differ from most Protestants. We believe that the New Testament supersedes the Old Testament. Many of our doctrinal distinctives hinge primarily on this foundational doctrinal point.

Let's continue to live in the New Covenant and teach others to understand the much greater riches of His glory in the New Covenant.

Do not think we have thrown out a day of worship. Here is what we believe about the Lord's Day.

1). Our rest in Jesus is a perpetual rest (Hebrews 4:9-11), an eternal Sabbath.

2). God sanctified the day after the Sabbath (the first day) by raising Jesus from the dead on that day, by pouring out the Holy Spirit on that day, and by appearing to the disciples on that day.

3). The Bible and other church writings make it clear that the Apostles and early church recognized Sunday as a day to "not neglect the assembling of yourselves." They met regularly on that day specifically to worship the resurrected Lord Jesus. So we would teach and practice Sunday worship, and we set the day aside to minister to our Lord, our souls, and our neighbors.

B. K. | *Texas*

Anabaptist Voice: You are right. We advocate observing the first day of the week as the Lord's Day. Perhaps AV Issues 2 & 3 did not make that clear enough.

Sound Bible Teaching

Greetings in the Saviour's name! Enclosed is a cheque as a donation for *Anabaptist Voice*.

We appreciate very much the periodical and our desire is that it may continue to give sound Bible teaching.

M.G. | *Ontario*

All Law Is Abolished

I appreciate that you invite response and feedback to published pieces in AV. This kind of humility is very helpful in making a publication desirable.

I find your extended response to P.H. Kentucky on “Ten Commandments, Still Binding?” [Issue 3] to be falling short of being “able ministers of the New Testament.” A thorough study of II Corinthians 3 indicates that [something], engraven in stone is “abolished,” “done away” (gr. *katargeo*—rendered useless, idled) in Christ and is replaced by the New Testament. This obvious reference to the ten commandments—which Jewish tradition and Scripture (see below) portray as comprehensive and representative of the entire law—is undeniable. Further, Hebrews makes it clear that two testaments CANNOT be in force at the same time. The NEW must completely displace the OLD.

I believe that to be thoroughly Anabaptist our theology must be thoroughly New Testament.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13:8-10).

K.K. | Arkansas

Anabaptist Voice: We agree that our theology must be thoroughly New Testament. Thanks for writing and sharing your understanding of II Corinthians 3. “You are manifestly an epistle of Christ, ... written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart” (II Corinthians 3:3).

We encourage you to live out the Gospel of Christ. God’s Spirit gives you unlimited opportunity for living unrestricted by law. But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong (Galatians 5:22-23).

Refreshing & Challenging

Thank you for your efforts in this AV ministry. It is refreshing, challenging ... a blessing; I feel God is using it for His Kingdom and drawing people to Him.

Z.G. | Indiana

Using Anabaptist Voice for Bible Study

As youth leaders in our church, we decided to use *Anabaptist Voice*, Issue 2, in a Bible study.

After reading through the magazine, we decided to begin our study with the article, “Only One Vote” by Kendall Myers. The USA elections were just around the corner and we thought the issue would be of interest to our youth.

The last Sunday in October we had approximately a dozen youth in our home and we read the article aloud; each person read a paragraph. We then discussed it and tried to answer some of the questions raised in the article.

In another session we went over “Serving Two Masters? Impossible!”

The articles brought out many good points on the Anabaptist position and, hopefully, it spoke to all of us. We learned some new things such as when the Mennonites joined Hitler’s army.

R.R. | Wisconsin

Speaking The Truth

Upon reading your last issue, I came upon a [letter] that tore down one of the Christian’s greatest principles [Issue 3 page 5, “A Quiet Boldness?”] It stated that we should avoid protesting issues that, although they are ungodly, do not affect our plain communities.

If we try to avoid persecution, as this letter suggests, we are no different from the world. Jesus said that those who are persecuted are blessed. Are we so frightened of being persecuted that we will compromise our Christian values?

A.S. | Missouri

Anabaptist Voice: We must be like John the Baptist and preach against sin and for righteousness, even if it brings persecution upon us.

Represent The Truth

May grace and peace through Jesus Christ be multiplied to all that love Him and look forward to His second coming.

I have greatly enjoyed and benefitted from reading AV.

May God bless this effort to represent the truth as taught in the Bible. I love it.

D.M. | Tennessee



Our Councilors Speak

Policy Note: This section is dedicated to the input of our Councilors. They provide direction to this project as well as correction and suggestions on the content. This is their platform. - AV Ed.

Kingdom Building Activities

Too often we forget to promote good as we decry evil. The article on “Playing War Games” does mention briefly that we need to be working for the Kingdom of God. How do we do that? Let’s think about it.

We don’t want our youth training for war because we want them to soldier for peace and love instead. We might recommend that youth take the next time slot they have available and hold a group discussion on some current event where Christians face persecution or civil unrest [See “On the War Front in India” in this Issue]. Maybe if youth discussed how Jesus, or the Apostle Paul, or John, or the early Anabaptists responded to government injustice and mob brutality in their day, it would help them prepare for the persecution they may face in our day.

If Anabaptists would give as much thought to strategies for peace as they currently spend armchair-quarterbacking on American wars and politics, we could be more effective peacemakers than we are now.

J. Anthony Hertzler | *Tahlequah, Oklahoma*

Building Each Other Up

“Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.” **I Corinthians 14:26b**

Opening *Anabaptist Voice* to various understandings should not turn into a battleground where we knock down another’s viewpoint in order to vindicate our own. We should purpose to “be swift to hear” and to fully understand our brother’s beliefs, thus we have cause to more fully examine our own.

Does this mean we will all be spiritual weaklings? No! Romans 14:5 tells us, “Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.” Should the one who believes strongly about a teaching or practice open his mind to a differing viewpoint? The answer is “yes.”

As long as we desire to encourage and strengthen our brother, we are free to vigorously teach what we believe—not to tear our brother down, but to build him up. We ought not attack our brother’s position, but we may vigorously teach what we believe to be the truth.

Perhaps we should let God decide which of us is the weaker brother, to whom, out of meekness and love, the

stronger brother must yield. It is our prayer that peace and strength and God’s power may abound among those who read *Anabaptist Voice*.

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. **Romans 14:19**

James G. Landis | *Waynesboro, Georgia*

Looking in the Mirror of the Word

For if anyone is a hearer of the word, ...he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror. **James 1:23**

We listened to a message this morning on Ecclesiastes 10. This message is one of a series on each of the chapters in Ecclesiastes. It made me realize, once again, that I have so much need for godly wisdom. This wisdom is not only to live in this world, but more importantly to make it to where Christ wants me to be in the next. It made me realize again the foolishness of many things in my youth, and when older too, but not so many.

The real question we continue to ask ourselves daily is: Does my life measure up to what God wants it to be?

A contact through Australian Anabaptist sent me this message:

I am originally from Chicago in the USA and am currently teaching English in Tokyo. Last year I was teaching in Kazakhstan and for seven years before that I was in Singapore. I have been teaching mostly in the international schools, teaching children whose parents work for international companies, or governments.

I was raised in a Catholic home, but my mother sent us to a Baptist Bible study so that we could learn the Bible. About three years ago I came across some literature and videos by David Bercot and Dean Taylor, and I felt that the Anabaptists have a much more accurate way of understanding the Bible and what is expected of Christ’s-followers. Since then, I have been actively trying to put into practice what I read from the Word.

I usually listen to a sermon from either your website, or one other website once a week.

So you see, James, the need is there. God is at work in people’s hearts to draw them to His way of life.

Joseph van Loon | *Deloraine, Tasmania, Australia*

Guest Writers

Joseph Funk and Harmonia Sacra

Excerpts from *The Influence of Music*.

Joseph Funk (1777-1862) came to be known as “The Father of Song in Northern Virginia.”

Joseph Funk was in his early 20’s when he evidently attended some camp meetings and became captivated by the “new” style of shape-note singing.

Joseph’s first attempt to write music was in 1816 when he compiled a German tunebook called *Choral-Music*. In this book he used the four-note or “Fasola” system of shaped notes. This book was set in two part harmony, bass and tenor.

In 1832 [at the age of 55], Funk compiled another hymnbook; this time it was in English and harmonized for three voices. The book was printed in Winchester, Virginia, but the binding was done in Charlottesville, Virginia; then it was freighted by team and wagon back to the Valley to be sold by Joseph Funk himself. This book was such a success that it has enjoyed twenty-seven editions over the course of the ensuing one hundred eighty-five years.

The words for this book, now known as *Harmonia Sacra*, (Latin for *Sacred Harmony*) were not translations from older German hymnbooks, but used many hymns written by English Protestants such as Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley.

While in some ways Joseph Funk seemed quite progressive with his musical interests, he was also very conservative in his religious theology. He felt strongly that sacred music should be grave and dignified, and he stated in the preface of the *Harmonia Sacra* that “*the principle motive in bringing out this work is to promote the cause of religion and devotion, and a solemn, dignified, and expressive style of singing in the Church of God ...*”

Joseph was opposed to choir singing, believing that every member should play a part in the worship service. He and his sons held singing schools throughout the Valley using the *Harmonia Sacra* as a textbook, and soon the book was to be found by the fireside in most local homes.

Good Teaching Or Commandment

I don’t believe that I Corinthians 11 is merely good teaching which is optional to apply. If I thought so, I would not have described the grievous losses that followed the abandoning of the covering over the past century. This ranged from immodesty, to sexual immorality, to the popularity of birth control, the horrific destruction of the unborn, the acceptance of divorce and remarriage, the fall into confusion of the biblical roles of men and women, culminating finally and incredibly in the actual denial of the biological distinctions that define men and women. God will judge and punish these acts of disobedience.

My caution is that we do not encourage a concept of easy salvation where all one needs to do is “just love Jesus.” Neither do we want to teach that if people just conform in a few visible ways, all will be well. That’s how we can have cape dresses without modesty and plain coats without non-conformity, and yes, coverings without submission. Here’s where I have had a long-time concern for “selective conservatism” where good appearance isn’t backed up with godly practice.

So I’m interested in the kind of teaching that does warn against disobedience, but at the same time challenges our people to embrace conformity to godly patterns out of deep-seated gratitude for the blessings, the safety, and the security that obedience to God’s way brings.

Lester Troyer | *Stone Lake, Wisconsin*



In 1851, the 5th edition of the *Harmonia Sacra* was the first edition actually printed and bound by Joseph Funk and his sons. It was also the first edition to use the seven character shape-note system.

The first edition of the *Harmonia Sacra* to have four-part harmony was the 12th edition, printed in 1866.

E. Daniel Burkholder Jr. | *Dayton, Virginia*



Our Labors in the Kingdom

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying
that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that can be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way,

an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference
between the Master Builder and the worker.

We are workers, not Master Builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

That is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something and, by God's grace, to do it well.

- *Anonymous* -

Marks of a Disciplined Church

by D. W.

Lift up a standard for the people (Isaiah 62:10).

Proposition: Teaching without discipline hardens people to the truth.

The Church is the body of Christ that He wants to present to Himself. It is to be a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but it should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27). This is why Paul admonishes us in I Corinthians 5:7-13 to purge out the old leaven, not to keep company with fornicators nor eat with hypocrites, and to put evil far from us.

When we observe things in nature, we see that one wild sheep makes a whole herd wild, one drop of poison in a cup of water makes the whole cup poisonous, and one bad thread in a piece of cloth ruins the whole cloth.

Sin is insanity. God hates sin; it is horrible in His sight. As Isaiah 59:2 says, “Your iniquities have separated you and your God and your sins have hid His face from you.” Therefore we, as individuals and as a brotherhood, must seek to truly and completely repent of all that violates and displeases a holy God. Only then can God fully free and cleanse us with the blood of the Lamb.

Repentance is a costly thing, but to refuse to repent is much more costly. Paul goes on to say in II Thessalonians 3:6-14 that the believers should withdraw from disorderly brethren, let the lazy ones eat their own bread, and keep no company with the disobedient that they may be ashamed. Believers are to reject a heretic after admonishing him twice (Titus 3:10), avoid them which cause offenses (Romans 16:17), and rebuke before all those who sin that others also may fear (1 Timothy 5:20).

Hebrews 3:13 tells us to exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Therefore, in the fear of God, we watch over one another to protect and keep each other from all evil and wrongdoing. We should constantly stand guard against the wiles of the devil, and we should fear “lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to fall short of it” (Hebrews 4:1). Because of mankind’s fall in the garden of Eden, we need to let God’s Spirit cleanse and anoint us daily, so that the fire of God’s love continually burns within us as the fire burned continually in the temple of old. “And God will dwell with us, and be our God, and we shall be His people” (Revelation 21:3).

A disciplined church cannot bear them which are evil, tries them which say they are apostles and aren’t, believes not every spirit, tries the spirits whether they be of God, and hates everything that God hates. Therefore, we seek to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Ephesians 5:11). Jesus said He will uproot all that is false and evil (Matthew 15:13).

There will be problems. Humans, especially rebellious ones, naturally do not like to be disciplined. That brings envy, hate, jealousy and strife. We can observe examples like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in Numbers 16 and the tribe of Benjamin in Judges 20, who did not learn from their wrongdoing. God punished them severely for their rebellion.

Christ did this, so that he would have a glorious and holy church, without faults or spots or wrinkles or any other flaws.

Ephesians 5:27

Now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who calls himself a Christian who is sexually immoral, or greedy, or an idolater, or verbally abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. For what do I have to do with judging those outside? Are you not to judge those inside? But God will judge those outside. Remove the evil person from among you.

I Corinthians 5:11-13

If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.

II Thessalonians 3:14

Warn troublemakers once or twice. Then don’t have anything to do with them.

Titus 3:10

Brothers, I ask you to look out for those who cause people to be against each other and who upset other people’s faith. They are against the true teaching you learned. Stay away from them.

Romans 16:17

As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.

I Timothy 5:20

In a church that disciplines in a loving, peaceful, and relationship-building way, the members love and respect the leaders. Peace and unity reigns. If one member suffers, the brethren suffer with him. Members seek to have fellowship and community (brotherhood). Members share in material and spiritual gifts so there is equality. Members seek not only what may benefit themselves, but also look out for the good of others.

Then a place and atmosphere will be created where the teachings and commands of Jesus can be put into practice, and the fruits of God's Kingdom will shine forth (Matthew 21:43). Paul wrote to Titus in Titus 1:13 to consider the Cretans, to rebuke them sharply "that they may be sound in the faith."

We are not to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14), but we should let God's Word set our standard that we may show His Word forth to the world (Isaiah 62:10). We are told to let our lights shine as they do from a city on a hill (Matthew 5:13-14). Our light is a light that cannot be hidden. Our salt is to be the spice to the world. We must not let our light be covered by sin or our salt be diluted by worldliness.

Because a disciplined church does not tolerate sin, people will not come and join the church unless they are ready to renounce their flesh, the devil, and the world. People who come to look around will see that they wouldn't be able to stay in the church because of their disobedience and ungodliness. As the psalmist says in Psalm 1:5, the ungodly shall not be able to stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. An example of this truth is brought out in Acts 5:13. After the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, we read, **"Yet none of the rest dared join himself to them."**

Here is a story of a young man who was often rebuked and corrected for his disobedience. One day he decided, "This is enough. I won't stand this intolerance of my behavior anymore. I will leave." So he left the church and followed after the pleasures of this world. He soon saw that the world passeth away and the lust thereof. The things that he was taught as a child came to his mind again and again. Finally, he understood that he who does the will of God abides forever. So he decided to return to Christ. Then he didn't need to walk in darkness anymore because now he had the Light of Life (John 8:12). Today, that man is a leader among God's people.

So let us, as God's people, as the body and bride of Christ, as a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, and as God's Kingdom here on earth, show forth the virtue and praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (I Pet 2:9). Let us, with the Apostle Paul, be jealous with a godly jealousy over the church that we may present her as a chaste virgin to Christ (II Corinthians 11:2).

"We must be faithful to preach Christ and to warn and teach every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). "According as he hath chosen us in Him, we should be holy and blameless before Him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). "In all lowliness and meekness, we should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3). This must continue till "we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering.

D. W.; Prairie Elk Hutterian Brethren | Wolf Point, Montana

That is why I can guarantee that God's kingdom will be taken away from the Israelites and given to a people who will produce what God wants.

Matthew 21:43

The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.

Titus 1:13

We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from men who are trying to fool us. Those men make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong path.

Ephesians 4:14b

So ready yourselves to pass through the gates from old to new. Clear the way for the people; make it clear, easy, and straight. Unfurl the banners that proclaim these people are renewed.

Isaiah 62:10

But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God's special treasure.

I Peter 2:9

I am jealous over you. And this jealousy comes from God. I promised to give you to Christ. He must be your only husband. I want to give you to Christ to be his pure bride.

II Corinthians 11:2

A Disciplined Church in Ukraine

by Ed Kline

Sometimes we wonder what a people of God would be like if they lived their faith without the fellowship of other Anabaptists to support them. If a group of believers had only the Bible to guide them, how would their practice compare to ours? There is such a church in Ukraine.

Ed Kline visited this community of believers and then told about their doctrine and practices at the 2010 Anabaptist Identity Conference. In this issue of Anabaptist Voice, we want to introduce how these churches came into being and then look particularly at how they view and exercise church discipline.

A Disciplined Church in Ukraine

Taken from “The Ukrainian Amish and Their Worldview” by Ed Kline.

“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it” Luke: 11:28.

I’ll tell you a story. It is a story of a group of believers that was discovered in southern Ukraine in the last couple of years.

I need to make it clear that these people have no German, Swiss or Anabaptist background; they are an ethnic Slavic people from the area in which they live. These people have come to a faith in Christ Jesus that is very similar to a conservative Anabaptist position.

My wife and I and other friends visited these people in July of 2009. They live about 100 miles from the Romanian border in the foothills of the Carpathian mountains in the Dniester River Valley. Their community is very secluded; it took us three hours of tedious riding to travel 90 miles.

Some Description of Their Lifestyle

We knew that we had arrived at one of the villages where these people lived—not everyone in the village was a believer—because we saw men and boys wearing little hats. The people made these hats out of corduroy with a floppy top and a small bill. We learned the menfolk wear these hats for religious reasons and as a mark of separation.

One could recognize the ladies by the fact that they wore long skirts, mostly plain, and had a heavy scarf on their heads as a headship veiling. Interestingly, the

unmarried sisters wore their scarves tied in the front; married sisters tied theirs in the back.

We discovered that these people are very self-sufficient. They raise virtually all their food. They don’t have motors, electricity, or telephones. At home, they do virtually everything by hand.

They made it clear to us that their separation from the world and their rejection of technology was for the sake of following Christ. They felt they would compromise a simple faith in Christ if they would be part of the world.

How the Churches Came into Being

I asked them about their background and how they got started. Here is what they told me.

In 1914, a man from their village was sent to Siberia and put in a concentration camp. During the eight years he was in the camp, he got to know another prisoner who was a Christian believer. Through the Christian believer’s testimony this community man became converted. We’re almost certain the prisoner in Siberia was a Mennonite or an Anabaptist, because when this brother returned to his home town in 1929, he believed in separation from the world, nonresistance, a strong brotherhood, the ban and excommunication. He also had a strong sense of holiness of life and discipleship.

The point for us: sometimes we are called to witness under very difficult conditions. Today, because of one prisoner’s faithful witness in Siberia, 3000 people are serving Jesus 83 years later!

This man came back to his native village in 1929 and, without a Bible, started preaching the new birth on the streets. The result was people being converted and the church being started. In 1940 a man from the Orthodox Church became a Christian. For 3 years and 40 days he struggled with his carnal nature and eventually experienced victory over his sinful nature and then asked for baptism. This man married a young woman in their community and later became the church leader in the 1950’s.

The church began in 1929 when the prisoner returned from Siberia. Because of communism and isolation, the churches had no Bibles for 15-20 years. In the mid 1940’s, a man by the name of Aneschenko brought Bibles to them. Aneschenko had been converted in a Mennonite village 1,000 miles to the east, and married a girl from a pietist

offshoot of the Mennonites (Stundists).¹ Aneschenko's father-in-law gave him a Bible and somehow God used Aneschenko to introduce the Bible to these churches.

Repentance, Baptism, and the Ban

Let me tell you a little about their philosophy of salvation.

They were very clear that salvation comes through faith in Christ Jesus, along with repentance. They also added, "If a person doesn't repent, he is not fit to be baptized and become a part of the church of the Kingdom."

They instruct their applicants for baptism. They teach against the sins of backbiting, covetousness, envy, anger, immoral thoughts, idolatry, and adultery. If their young people are not clear on these things, the church leaders do not baptize them.

The age at which someone is baptized depends on their spiritual maturity; some are 16 and some a lot older. A strong evidence of repentance is required before anyone is baptized.

They explained how they deal with backbiting, slander, and gossip. If someone repeats something about another person that isn't true and it becomes an issue—in a close group like theirs it will become an issue—he has to go before the congregation and state what he said. Then he has to say it wasn't true and state what is the truth. The offender must make this same statement in the churches of all four regions where they live—their churches are comprised of 3000 people in eight churches. The one who told us about this practice made a simple statement, "It works." I believe it does.

Like the Anabaptists, they believe repentance is not just a mental assent, but a process by which a man brings forth fruits worthy of repentance, fruit that can be seen.

They really stress victory over the carnal nature and the sins of the spirit. They teach that once a person has victory over his carnal nature, where he will be able to forgive his enemies and forgive those who wrong him, this is evidence he has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

They do excommunicate and exercise the ban. However, both are used very cautiously and reluctantly. They said, "When someone errs, strays, and becomes dissatisfied, we have spent years working with such a person. We find if we put in enough effort and enough prayer, most erring people can be won back.

"But if we do excommunicate someone and put them under the ban, we do not invite such a person into our house or eat with them or have anything to do with them. In the course of our existence, we have excommunicated only a few people."

But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who calls himself a Christian who is sexually immoral, or greedy, or an idolater, or verbally abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person (I Corinthians 5:11).

If people won't agree to this teaching, don't welcome them into your home or even greet them. Greeting them is the same as taking part in their evil deeds (II John 1:10-11).

Here was a real lesson to me; the ban can be redemptive. In the history of Anabaptist groups, the use of the ban has been one of the most controversial issues that has ever come up. But it works for these people and we can learn about its use from them.

Hear the rest of this fascinating story at: www.AnabaptistsLive.com, Select "The Ukrainian Amish and Their Worldview."

Ed Kline | Millersburg, Ohio



1. Stundists eventually became the "Mennonite Brethren." Pietists were a 17th century religious movement originating in Germany in reaction to formalism and intellectualism and stressing Bible study and personal religious experience.

Let Her Be Covered

by Ernest Strubhar

It's a matter of grammar. Paul wrote an imperative (a command): "Let her be covered" (I Corinthians 11:6). He went on to affirm that there was no other practice: women in apostolic churches were veiled; men, unveiled (I Corinthians 11:16).

I approach I Corinthians 11—and all Scripture—from a Kingdom perspective. To me that means that we embrace New Testament commands, whether given by Jesus or by His apostles, as the laws of the Kingdom, made to be obeyed. Paul says the same thing in I Corinthians 14:37: "The things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."

Jesus' statement in Matthew 18:3 lays another stone in the Kingdom foundation from which I approach Scripture: to enter into Christ's Kingdom we must become as little children—humble, ready to learn, and free from malice (I Corinthians 14:20). We don't need to be "wise and prudent" trained theologians to understand the simple language of Scripture (Matthew 11:25-26). To know God's truth (John 7:17) and experience His blessing (John 14:21), we do need to be willing to obey from the heart.

With that foundation in place, Paul's words, "Let her be covered," should have ended all controversy long ago—all questions, all argument, all disobedience. Sadly, they have not. Many professing Christians today ignore this Kingdom law. Instead of believing and obeying, they listen to commentators and teachers who invent a wide variety of interpretations—often based on pure conjecture about history and culture—all designed to convince the unwilling heart that the apostle did not mean what he said. Ironically, these interpretations contradict each other, but that doesn't seem to matter. Each person can simply pick his favorite so he can feel comfortable in disobedience.

I praise God for faithful churches that stand against the apostasy of our time. I thank God for Christian men and women who obey the commandments of Christ. I thank God for the solid teaching, both oral and written, that has helped us maintain a conviction in our hearts for obedience.

I write to strengthen the conviction that Christian women ought to be veiled, and Christian men, unveiled. I want to strengthen the practice of obedience to this Scripture by helping us see what I Corinthians 11:1-16 actually teaches. And whatever the Scripture teaches, we must be ready and willing to obey.

Ernest Strubhar | Perkins, Oklahoma

If anyone still wants to argue about this, I want you to know that neither we nor the churches of God have any other practice.

I Corinthians 11:16

If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

I Corinthians 14:37

Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you must turn from your sins; and become as humble as a little child. Otherwise, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3

Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. Think like mature people and be as innocent as tiny babies.

I Corinthians 14:20

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will.

Matthew 11:25-26

If you really want to obey God, you will know that what I teach comes from God.

John 7:17

Whoever knows and obeys my commandments is the person who loves me. Those who love me will have my Father's love, and I, too, will love them and show myself to them.

John 14:21



Eight Kingdom Teachings: I Corinthians 11

Main points taken from sermon notes of Ernest Strubhar — by James G. Landis

1 Teaching #1 Keep the Commandments of the Lord.

I praise you because you remember me in everything, and you follow closely the teachings exactly as I passed them on to you (I Corinthians 11:2).

Paul praised those in Corinth who obeyed what he taught. He did not consider his teachings to have originated from himself; he considered them commandments of the Lord, and Paul, as an apostle, taught forcefully that these teachings were meant to be obeyed. The teachings came from God and held divine authority and power.

Paul was commending the Corinthian church for faithfully keeping the commandments of the Lord—teachings, traditions, ordinances—he had earlier passed on from God to them. And Paul let the Corinthians know they were not the only ones practicing this teaching. All the churches embraced and obeyed the same commandments he was now teaching them.

2 Teaching #2 Recognize God's order.

I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (I Cor. 11:3).

Paul states right up front that God has established an order of headship: God is the supreme head. Then it is Christ. Then it is man. Then it is woman. Paul does not go to this length to explain that men and women are equal. He is making it plain that each person—Christ, man, woman—derives authority by being in submission to the one above him or her.

And it follows that when one does not submit to the one above him in the order God established, he loses the authority to command submission from the one under him. Thus the ungodly man who does not submit to Christ forfeits the authority to demand submission from his wife in matters contrary to Christ's command. For instance, if the husband demands that a wife should cut her hair or not wear a covering, she is not bound to obey him in this matter. It is contrary to the command of Christ.

Likewise, when women step outside of God's order and try to order godly men around, they lose the authority and power that God has given them. In God's order,

godly women are not equal in authority to godly men any more than men are equal to Christ.

3 Teaching #3 Men should pray or prophesy with uncovered heads.

Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head [Christ]. (I Cor. 11:4).

When God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush, He ordered Moses, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). In taking off his sandals and exposing his feet to the burning desert sands, God humbled Moses in His presence. And when God revealed who was speaking to him, Moses hid his face.

I would propose the humbling effect Moses experienced is the same reason that men today are to uncover their heads when they come to commune with God and worship and serve Him (pray and prophesy). Men make themselves vulnerable and show submission to Christ by baring their heads. For a man to come to God with a covered head is an affront to the Lordship of Christ and thus he dishonors not his own head, but Christ.

For men to bare their heads in worship of Christ shows respect for the higher authority He represents. Even the world recognizes a man's bared head as a sign of respect for and submission to a higher authority. I saw an example of this principle in a courtroom. As the defendants entered the courtroom, the prosecuting attorney demanded that the men take off their hats in honor of the judge.

4 Teaching #4 Women should pray or prophesy with covered heads.

Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head (I Cor. 11:5-6).

Again, the teaching is very plain. A woman should cover (veil) her head when she prays or prophesies. The

continued on the next page

Scripture does not say, “when praying or prophesying in the assembly.” For the woman, the veiling is like a dress, an article of clothing. When she is dressed, she should have her veiling on. Her head should be covered.

Nowhere in the passage do we get the idea that the veiling is to be a symbol of a covering. The covered head is the symbol. And it would seem to follow that if a woman wears only a symbol of a covering, she disgraces herself and may as well have her hair shorn off (shaved). The passage is clear. It does not say “cut hair or short hair,” it says “shaved.”

Now the object of the passage is not to disgrace the woman, but to show how shameful it is to go around with her head uncovered. An extension of this thought would say that to be partially covered, or covered with sheer material that one can see through, could also be compared to the disgrace a woman feels when she loses all her hair due to some medical treatment.

Another thing we might learn from these verses is that when the Scripture speaks of covering the head it is also speaking about the hair. So the hair on a woman's head is what's to be veiled or covered. This thought is also borne out in verses 14 & 15.

5 Teaching #5 Symbols of headship stem from the creation.

A man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For man did not come from woman, but woman came from man. Nor was man created for woman but woman was created for man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels (I Cor. 11:7-10).

At the creation, God created man in His own likeness. Our Creator made humankind distinctly different from all the animals. Therefore, a man's head ought not to be veiled because “he is the image and glory of God.”

The woman's veiled head is a reminder that at the creation she was “taken out of the man” so that she could be a suitable helper for the man. The veiled woman reminds us that God created woman to be a helper to the man and to function in subjection to him. In this way she complements the man and is a glory to him.

Verse 10 is reaffirming that the woman ought to have her head covered. It is a symbol of submission and a sign that she has accepted her place in God's order. This gives her authority in the world of the spirits.

6 Teaching #6 God made both man and woman.

Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as the woman was from the man, even so the man also is through the woman; but all things are from God (I Cor. 11:11-12).

God made man and woman for different functions. They are physically and temperamentally different. They were both created to depend on each other.

Man is to lead, to be in the forefront, to bear the burden and heat of the day. Man is to guard and protect the woman as the weaker vessel.

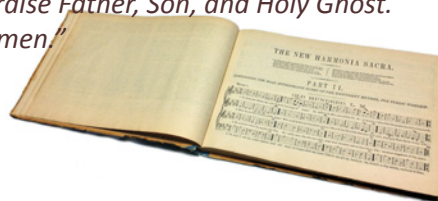
Only woman can bear children and procreate the race. Woman is to be man's helper. She is to support him and honor him. She is to be in the background submitting to man's leadership.

Both man and woman must accept the way God made them and avoid usurping the role of the other. They are not rivals. In humility and with thankful hearts each should strive to fill the role for the way God created them.

Neither a man nor a woman should go his or her own way and act independently of the other. It is a troubling sign of our age when young people wish to go their own way and live their own life to avoid the responsibilities of marriage. This desire for independence is selfish and does not glorify God.

Paul commends, and we should too, those who glorify God by serving Him in celibacy. Such a desire is good. What we are talking about are self-sufficient women who want to pursue their own career and men who do not want to be tied down by a wife and family. Among the people of God, that should not be the desired norm. Young people should ordinarily want to get married and be fruitful and multiply as God commanded.

*“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.”*



In the *Harmonia Sacra*, the tune used was paired with the 100th Psalm and appropriately given the name “Old One Hundred.” This tune (song) is referred to as the Doxology and is possibly the most well-known Christian hymn in existence today.

~ Daniel Burkholder

7 Teaching #7 Nature teaches gender distinction.

Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering [to be covered] (I Cor. 11:13-15).

The obvious answer to the Apostle Paul's question is that it is not proper for a woman with long hair to pray to God with her head uncovered. The long hair is the glory of the woman and, therefore, she should "cover" or "veil" it, as the Apostle has carefully explained earlier in the passage.

Even the world understands it. On main street in town there is a beauty salon named "A Woman's Glory" where they carefully cut, wash, and curl the woman's hair and thus disregard God's teaching. Their aim is to put the woman's "glory" on display. It is not to be so among Christian women. They modestly cover their glory before God and before men. Their "glory" is to be reserved for home privacy where it may be admired without attracting the attention of other men or women.

On the other hand, Paul is saying that we as Christians should observe that in nature long hair on a man is a disgrace to him. In general, men with long hair are defiant of God's creation order and use their long hair to declare it. The days of Samson's seven long braids and Absalom's 12.5-pound annual haircut are over. (Apparently these men with long hair in the Old Testament were admired).

Gender distinction stands out in this entire passage. Men should have short cut hair and have unveiled heads. Women should have long hair with veiled heads. Paul says this distinction is natural. Men and women were created differently and we should recognize that.

Beards on men and smooth faces on women are as natural as long hair on women and short hair on men. It is wrong for Christian men and women to try to mask their gender identity with clothing that is commonly worn by the opposite sex. Christians should be careful to maintain distinct gender identity in their attire at all times.

“The value of the Bible is not simply in knowing it, but in obeying it.



~ Calvary Messenger

8 Teaching #8 The churches practice the teaching.

If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God (I Cor. 11:16).

Some argue that wearing the veiling was a common cultural practice of the era. This verse shows otherwise. If it was a common practice for Gentile women to cover their hair, Paul would not have needed to face the obvious distaste for the Lord's command. Paul obviously knew this teaching was counter-cultural.

We are not certain what the common practice was when Gentile men and priests went into the idol temples to offer sacrifices. Likely the men covered their heads out of respect for their false gods. If that is true, Paul's teaching that Christian men should have their heads uncovered in worship was definitely counter-cultural.

Today, the teaching in I Corinthians 11 is also the opposite of what is being practiced by the culture—heathen, Christian, and Jewish.

In western culture, it is hard to find women who cover their heads and veil their hair. But that is what the passage teaches. Christian women today should obey the teaching regardless of what the surrounding culture practices.

Christian men will be aware this passage also sets them apart from the culture. For instance, many Jewish men wear skull caps (kippah) in worship and at other times as well. Jewish law requires the men to cover their heads as a sign of respect and reverence for God when praying, studying Torah, saying a blessing or entering a synagogue. But the Jews do not recognize Christ or submit to Him. Therefore, Christian men should not expect support for this Christian teaching from the Jews.

The teaching in I Corinthians 11:1-16 today is counter-cultural for both men and women. We should go by the Book and not by the culture. How men and women should dress still sets Christian men and women apart from the world, both in the worship service and on the street. If you are a Christian going to town or a business meeting or to a worship service and appear no different from the world around you, you should be alarmed.

For the churches of God have no other standard to go by than that found in I Corinthians 11:1-16.

Remember, *"If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God."*

Edited by Ernest Strubhar | Perkins, Oklahoma

Definitions: Anabaptism vs Protestantism

by Darwin Bear

When I discuss my faith with Bible-believing Christians from other backgrounds, it's not unusual for them to conclude, "Why, we believe the same as you do." And if we listen to their words only, that assessment seems fairly accurate. But even the way they frame their statement implies that they see Christianity differently—primarily as a system of beliefs. Anabaptists historically have seen Christianity as so much more—as a living relationship with the living Christ that produces disciples (Christ-followers), not just believers. Our Christ is more than the Savior who died for us. He's our Jesus-saves-us-now Savior, our Master, and the King of His present-tense Kingdom.

Then we could ask this question: why does the faith of our friends, who "believe the same" as we do, so often work itself out quite differently in real life? Pondering that question has shown me something about the words we use. Though we use the same words they use—good, biblical words—we may mean something quite different.

So now I wonder: are we even communicating? Are we understanding each other? And do we Anabaptists wish to adopt their definitions? If we do, will we still be Anabaptists? And how can we avoid adopting their definitions if we routinely use their study helps, read their literature, listen to their teaching?

The following list of 10 words illustrates the differences I have noted by giving a brief contrast between the historic Anabaptist understanding and a typical Protestant or Evangelical understanding. These

differences are not minor, nor are they recent. They affect our whole understanding of Christianity, and they go back all the way to the Protestant Reformation—and beyond. Many of them date to the 5th century theologian, Augustine, who redefined key Christian words because he faced a dilemma. As the new state-church hybrid was forming, Augustine "needed" a way to describe the new "Christianity." The new definitions of Bible words that he invented still persist.

How believers today understand these words varies considerably, but I've tried to capture the main ideas I hear—and these ideas have consequences. In general, the Protestant way of understanding these Biblical words often leads to a sad disconnect between "faith" and life. Still, some that we might call Protestants live goodly lives. And too many who call themselves Anabaptists live in sin, whether sins of the flesh or the spirit. If we smugly point condemning fingers at others, Satan's trap has snapped. The great deceiver has a thousand ways that he disconnects our walk from our talk. The Lord knows those who are His; let them depart from lawlessness.

But God's strong foundation continues to stand. These words are written on that foundation: "The Lord knows those who belong to him." And also these words are written on that foundation, "Everyone who says that he believes in the Lord must stop doing wrong."

II Timothy 2:19

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Quotes From The Didache

1. "Every prophet who teaches the truth is a false prophet if he does not do what he teaches."
2. "If anyone says in the Spirit, Give me money or anything else, do not listen to him. However, if he asks you to give something to others in need, nobody shall judge him."
3. "If someone wants to settle among you, let him work in his trade for a living. In case he has no trade or craft, use your discretion and see to it that no idle Christian lives in your midst."

From Plain Things, Nov/Dec 2016, Vol.4 No.6.

"The Didache (DID-ah-kay) is a very early Christian writing. It is perhaps the oldest early Christian writing still in existence, apart from some of the New Testament."

Anabaptist Definitions

Mercy restrains judgment to give opportunity for repentance from sin. Mercy gives the sinner what he needs, not what he deserves.

Grace empowers us to overcome sin. It disciplines us to say no to ungodliness; to live soberly and righteously each day—while we look for the full deliverance from sin when Jesus comes. See Titus 2:11-13.

Faith is a living power born in the hearts of those who open their hearts to hear the living Word of God. True faith is evidenced by what God does through us as we see in Hebrews 11, not only or even primarily by what He does for us.

Justification is God's work in us to make us righteous before Him—not only forgiven, but upright in thought, word and deed.

Imputation is God counting our present faith as righteousness (like He did Abraham's), even when we have not yet had opportunity to live it out fully.

Righteousness: God forgives our sins and cleanses us from the corruption of our selfishness and pride when we repent and turn to Him. He empowers us to live righteously before Him. Such righteousness pleases Him.

Salvation: We are saved in each today by God's abounding grace—saved from the reigning power of sin so that we can enjoy God's presence both now and eternally.

Election: God chooses a pre-determined "destination" for all whom He saves: conformity to Jesus' image (Romans 8:29). Peter writes that we are "**elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the spirit for obedience**" (I Peter 1:2).

Assurance of salvation: the quiet rest of spirit that comes from the witness of God's Spirit abiding in us, giving us the assurance that we are steadfastly doing God's will and our lives please Him.

The cross: Jesus' death on the cross accomplishes nothing for us unless we die with Him. We must surrender to our God, as did Jesus in Gethsemane, daily taking up our cross to follow Jesus.

Protestant Definitions

Mercy overlooks sins. Mercy doesn't take sin into account. In effect, sin has little or no consequence because God is a God of mercy.

Grace becomes almost synonymous with mercy, overlooking sin. In addition, grace bestows on believers "unmerited favor" and abundant blessings—no matter what they do. Grace saves us, not so much from sin's power but from its consequences.

Faith gives assent to historical facts or a prescribed creed. Faith is seen in what God does for us, confusing faith and grace. Some say the teaching that we "do anything at all to receive God's gift" undercuts salvation by grace through "faith alone."

Justification declares the sinner in right standing with God, righteous before Him. In effect, God "goes into denial" and "cooks the books" without changing the person.

Imputation transfers Christ's righteousness to our account. Our sins were also transferred to Him on the cross, where He took our punishment.

Righteousness: Though "we sin in word, thought and deed every day," God sees us as righteous, because He covers us with a cloak of Christ's righteousness. We are hopelessly incapable of being righteous.

Salvation is an event, a one-time experience. In that instant we are saved by God's grace through the faith He gives—saved from the consequences of sin, saved from eternal hell.

Election: Some believe that God exercises His sovereignty to pre-determine who will be eternally saved and who will be eternally lost. Since for many salvation is all of grace, and even faith is His gift, there is little motivation to be ever "**diligent to make your call and election sure**" (II Peter 1:10).

Assurance of salvation: confidence that we have a home in heaven based on God's "grace" and our acceptance of it by faith. For some, it's based on the assurance that God has elected us; for others, on a "salvation experience."

The cross represents what Christ has done for us, and is often used as a symbol, even as an ornament. No cross for the Christian! As one song writer says, "He took my place on Calvary now I don't have to go."

Darwin Bear | *Patriot, Ohio*

The Treasure of a Godly Family Life

by Drago Stittleburg

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candle stick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16

My name is Drago Stittleburg from Cazenovia, Wisconsin. I am a member of the Buck Creek Mennonite Church.

Whenever I read the above verses from Matthew 5, I think of the Floyd Kauffman family and their Christian witness in our community. The Kauffmans lived just up the road from us when I was a young boy. I could tell their family was different from our family by the way they lived. Something about their life touched me and I wanted to know more about what it was I liked in them.

My dad didn't go to church and was known in the area as a drinker and fighter. Dad was often in and out of the home. I remember times when Dad came home that my sister and I hid in the bedroom until we determined it was safe to come out.

My mom also was an alcoholic. If you have read the book, *Joey's Story*, you already know a lot about my childhood. A few things were different in my life from her story. My mom took us to mass and catechism every Sunday and we attended St. Anthony's Parochial School. I want to say I am thankful for the teaching I received as a child. It instilled in me a reverence for God, as well as a desire to know Him.

As a lad, I knew that my friends had an unpleasant home life, the same as I had in my home. Even though we attended the Catholic school, went to church on Sunday, and were good Catholics, our lives weren't any different than our unchurched neighbors.

When I was fourteen or fifteen, I found a book, *By Birth or By Choice*, written by Martha Stahl. After reading this book, I had a better understanding of what the Mennonites believed. I also learned that a person from the outside could go to a Mennonite church.

By this time, my parents had separated and I was searching for something better. I always told myself, “If I ever have a family of my own, I want it to be different than the family I grew up in.”

Clair Strites lived a couple miles from us. Even though I didn't know them, I called Clair on a Saturday night and asked if I could go to church with them. Clair and Naomi picked me up for church services the next day. The Strites became like a second set of parents. Through them I gained an understanding of what a stable Christian home could be. I will never be able to thank them enough for all they have done for me through the years.

When I first started attending the Mennonite church, three things drew me to them: their love for each other, their family way of life, and their kindness to me. Only later did I become interested in the doctrines they upheld. When I was seventeen years old, I went through instruction class and was baptized on the confession of my faith. That has been over twenty-five years ago.

God has blessed me with a Christian wife and thirteen children, ages 20 years to 18 months. Six of our children have made a commitment to the Lord and joined the church. At 43 years old, I can look back and say that God has truly blessed me with a home that has been much different from the one I grew up in. We have a happy family and worship and praise God together.

I would say that some of the things which make a good family life are:

1. Both father and mother are born-again Christians.
2. Children are viewed as a blessing, rather than a nuisance.
3. There is love at home and no fear of home or parents.
4. The parents teach the children many things, especially through regular family devotions.
5. The whole family regularly attends church.
6. The children learn a good work ethic. This means having chores (regular tasks) and participating in worthwhile work such as collecting eggs, butchering, gardening, milking cows, cleaning, setting the table, packing lunches, baking, sewing, washing dishes The children must learn the importance of work when they are young.

We stop formal education after grade eight. That does not mean that we stop learning or studying the Bible. But I have seen too many people who waste four years in college. When they are finished, they still have never learned to work with their hands and know little about

truth or how to live a godly life. Many of my colleagues at work have never heard the creation story.

Things haven't always been easy. Three months after we were married, my father committed suicide which threw me into a spell of depression. My wife went through a battle with cancer. We had a house fire that destroyed everything. In these difficult experiences the brotherhood, my wife's family, and local churches furnished much support, not only in a physical way but also in a spiritual way. Through it all, God has been faithful.

We make our living with 45 milk cows housed in a tie-stall barn. This helps keep the children occupied as well as furnishes a modest income. I work in an off-farm metal shop four days a week. One son works on a neighboring farm and our oldest daughter teaches school. Their income helps with the extra expenses. We raise much of our food in a large garden and also process large quantities of food for use throughout the year. Each year we butcher hogs and chickens; this year we harvested 10 deer from off the farm. In the fall our larder is usually full.

My advice to those interested in learning about the Anabaptists is to start knocking on doors. You do not have to be born in an Anabaptist home to be one. If you do not feel welcome at one church or it is a closed society, knock on more doors.

I also have a warning for some people who come to Anabaptist churches and think they are going to change the church to suit themselves: it doesn't work too well.

And to those of you who grow up in stable homes where both parents are Christians, where you regularly attend church and have regular family devotions, I say, "Count your many blessings."

Drago Stittleburg | *Cazenovia, Wisconsin*

Anabaptist Voice welcomes your story, telling of your "journey of faith."



The Drago Stittleburg Family | 2017

Sermon Snippets | Awareness of God's Presence

Taken from a message by Gary Hege presented at Burkeland Mennonite Church

24 July 2016

As we live from day to day, it is easy to develop a pattern in which we have our devotional times when we read our Bibles and pray; then we go about our day without much thought of God.

But how involved is God in our lives? When food burns, the car breaks down, a cow gets sick and dies—does God have a hand in all these things?

We believe God is intricately involved in all these little things of life as well as the larger aspects such as marriage, where we live, and where we worship. We want to look at some ways we can take our awareness of God out of the autopilot mode and choose to walk with Him in life's minute details.

1. We are aware of God's presence.

— A good man's steps are ordered by the Lord and he delights in God's way (Psalm 37:23).

— In Genesis 28:16-17 we see how Jacob became acutely aware of God's presence. He was afraid and worshipped. He said, "Surely the Lord is in this place."

— We should continually have God in our thoughts. David said God's law was his meditation all day long (Psalm 119:97).

2. Symptoms of not being aware of God's presence:

- The problems of life seem larger.
- Focusing on ourselves.
- Seldom thinking of God during the day.
- Many duties crowding out time to meditate on God.

3. Helps to maintain God-consciousness.

— Daily read the Bible and obey it. James 1:25 says, "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

— "It is not talking but walking that will bring us to heaven." — unknown

— Cultivate an attitude of thankfulness for our salvation.

— Remember, we are God's ambassadors, His hands and feet.

— We should properly accept trials, hardships, and setbacks in life.

— Do not forget God in times of prosperity.

— Love the Word of God. Meditate on Scripture.

Be Still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

Gary Hege | Olar, South Carolina



The Burkeland Mennonite Church | 2017

Sermon Snippets:

We would like to feature one or two pages in each AV issue with sermon snippets from different congregations. Here is how you can help us accomplish this.

We believe that Anabaptist "hedge preachers" put forth many good sermons each Lord's Day. While we do not want to fill our pages with transcribed sermons that most readers will not read, we think that "Sermon Snippets" offer a good human-interest way of introducing AV readers to many churches and preachers.

Write down the title of a sermon, the date preached, where it was preached, and the name of the preacher. Then write down thoughts that impressed you. It does not need to be a complete outline or a compilation of the sermon. Anabaptist Voice wants thoughts that spoke to your heart and that will speak to others also.

The notes do not have to cover a full AV page. We would like a picture of the house, or meeting house, and the name of the congregation where the sermon was preached.

We also need the name and address of the person submitting the sermon snippets. We prefer email submissions to the editor, but welcome handwritten or typed snippets as well. Please be sure the submission is neat and easily read.

Imagine That!

by Karen Yoder Strite

“At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.”

Luke 10:21

When I was only two, a meadowlark talked to me. “Your mama will come back again,” it sang. The words fit perfectly to the natural rhythm of the meadowlark’s tune and I felt quite comforted.

Another day, I had a conversation with the wind who was not so pleasant a character as the meadowlark. “Little Girl,” said the wind, “I am going to get you.”

I stood up straight, shook my finger at the naughty wind, and said firmly, “Wind, you go west.” And the wind went west (which was where it was going anyway).

My sensible, practical family and teachers who didn’t converse with fowls and typhoons, nevertheless, listened with interest to my childhood tales of animated nature. It wasn’t until I grew up that I realized what a treasure they had allowed me to keep.

C. S. Lewis called imagination “the organ of meaning.” It is the tool we use to view the invisible, hear the silent, and experience the unknown. For Christians whose beliefs are grounded in that which can’t be seen, imagination is a vital skill we must nurture.

Of course, like any other tool, imagination can be misused. I remember reading stories so vivid to me that I was almost afraid to turn out the lights for fear “that thing” under the bed would grab my ankles before I got back under the covers. And for a while I had to keep

the last part of my Bible firmly shut so the creatures from Revelation didn’t jump out. At times I felt like the queen in Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*, who with practice was able to believe as many as six impossible things before breakfast. Eventually, however, I learned how to channel my overblown visions into more productive forms.

For me today, imagination is what helps me understand how sitting on a beach ball might help calm Susie’s wiggly mind even though it would make mine squirm.

It helps me “hear” words as Johnny hears them—through the chronic underwater muffling of fluid on the middle ear.

It helps me try new and scary skills like drawing pictures, writing music, studying astronomy, and paddling a kayak as I attempt to speak in the diverse languages of my sons.

It enables me to understand the parent who says, “I am not a teacher. I don’t know how to help my child.” I can imagine that they must feel as inept as I do in soft ball.

It even helps me to observe this beautiful, tattered, groaning world we inhabit and see the people in it, not as they are, but as they might be. Might there be a Picasso in that scribble? An Emily Dickinson in that poem? A Pavarotti in that warble? A friend in that wheelchair? A leader in that bully? An angel in that unaware body?

In this world with its limited dimensions, it takes imagination to believe in trees that clap their hands; in donkeys that talk; in morning stars that sing; in a King—eternal, immortal, invisible; in a City made of pure, transparent gold.

It is, therefore, with deep gratitude that I thank the wise grown-ups in my life who understood that my favorite childhood realm of “let’s pretend” was but a doorway to a much better Kingdom of invisible reality—the Kingdom where God lives.

And now when I meet a child who says, “Today a meadowlark spoke to me,” I lean closer and listen.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.
John 20:29

Karen Yoder Strite | *Hephzibah, Georgia*



This article comes from *The Scolastic Scoop*, Issue 5.1, 2016-2017.

On the War Front: In India

by Ricky Wright

Our weapons have power from God and can destroy the enemy's strong places. **II Corinthians 10:4**

I received an urgent email from Prakash,¹ a respected pastor and brother in Haryana, India. He has been sharing with me for the last several months how God has been blessing their meetings with miracles: a building shaking, strong winds indoors, demons coming out of people, and local Muslim and Hindu people responding to the Gospel. Although his own situation is difficult, he has been delighted to suffer hardships in order to see God's Word and Spirit going forth. Hearing his reports, we have rejoiced with him.

Recently, the situation worsened. Below is a quote from his plea for help:

Our local situation is burning with fire. One of our local crusade meetings was attacked by the enemy. Another crusade meeting was also attacked, and ten people, including children, were beaten with iron rods. Girls in the choir were beaten across the chest.

We are fighting a legal battle with the police and government for justice. Sadly, the police did not register the case and, instead, threatened us with prison unless we left. That night we called more Christian brothers and pastors for help, but the police still did not listen to us.

At two o'clock the next morning when more pastors and brothers and reporters arrived, the police finally registered the case, but they still did not arrest anyone. We all went the next day to the higher officers. They promised to take action, but arrested only two men and then released them on bail.

Until now, the government has taken no action to give us justice. We will be joining other pastors and Christian brothers to hold a peace march on the 3rd of September against the police and government for injustices done to God's people.

Construction work on a church building was stopped by the enemy; they tried to kill the pastor. All our pastors went to the police station where a big mob came to attack us, but were dispersed.

To incite further violence against us, they threw a piece of a cow's leg onto the church campus, took pictures, and used "WhatsApp" to spread a false rumor: "Christians are killing our sacred animal."

The pastors and brothers here are in real difficulties. We need your prayers.

I felt led to respond to my dear suffering brother. My reply went something like this.



Indian villagers bringing their water pots for water and being told of Jesus, the living water.

LANGUAGE: Constitutionally, there are 22 official languages. The official language is Hindi (spoken by 40% of the population). English is a subsidiary official language. It is reported that there are as many as 456 languages in use in India today.

RELIGION: Hindu is the largest religion with almost 75% of the population. Only 8% of the population professes Christianity.

Hindu practices include rituals, recitations, meditation, family-oriented rites of passage, annual festivals, and occasional pilgrimages. Some Hindus leave their social world and material possessions and engage in lifelong monastic practices.

Hinduism prescribes the eternal duties such as honesty, refraining from injuring living beings, patience, forbearance, self-restraint, and compassion.

¹The name has been changed for security reasons.

Dear Brother Prakash,

I know that you are suffering for Christ's sake. We hold you up in our prayers, and my tears flow for you.

We are saddened to hear of such hard times befalling you brothers. Such things should never even be thought of by decent human beings. I don't understand how people can inflict such pain and hardship on each other in the name of any religion, or how the police can just turn their heads and pretend it never happened. We will keep praying for God to shield you from the evil one and his cohorts.

I understand why you feel the need to participate in the peace march. I want to encourage you not to participate in a civil peace march. The Bible says, *"We fight with weapons that are different from those the world uses. Our weapons have power from God. These weapons can destroy the enemy's strong places. We destroy men's arguments. And we destroy every proud thing that raises itself against the knowledge of God. We capture every thought and make it give up and obey Christ"* (II Corinthians 10:4-5).

I know peaceable demonstrations are supported in Indian culture, but are they supported by the Bible? I completely understand the terrible injustice that you all feel in your heart, soul, and body. Even in my own country, it is tempting to take part in public outcries and demonstrations against violations of God's laws by the government and its servants.

However, I don't remember reading anywhere of Christ's church rallying in the streets to demonstrate against the government or its officers. Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. He could easily have instructed His followers to rise up against their governments and drive them away. He could have requested His little band of followers to demonstrate in the streets of Jerusalem to gain attention from the Jews and Romans for the injustices they were experiencing.

Instead, what did Jesus tell them? Did He instruct the church to rise up and take over the government to force it to act justly, or did He instruct them to love, forgive, and baptize and train disciples? Did Jesus tell Ananias to organize a march in the streets of Damascus against Saul, the persecutor? No, God told Ananias to go to Saul and forgive him, love him, pray for him, heal him, and teach him in the name of Jesus Christ.

"Now, my brother, please forgive me for my many words. I do not mean to scold you. I am not worthy even to speak these words to a faithful brother like you. I really have a burden in my heart to see you all serving the Lord faithfully. I have learned so much from all of you, and my love for you goes beyond anything the world experiences.

A peace march sounds like such a nice thing to do, but what message does it send to those who know nothing about the God of the Bible? Do they see people whose God is too weak to help them? Our enemies are scared, my friend. They don't understand our God. They don't understand why we meet to praise and pray to our God. Wouldn't it be a better witness to feed them a meal or take them a refreshing drink? If we demonstrated this kind of servanthood, wouldn't it lead them to ask questions about our faith?

You are there in the midst of this injustice. I am here in the United States in relative safety, free of the fear that often threatens you. I love you all so much, and I don't want you to suffer.

I want peace, harmony, and godliness for you, but we need to serve and follow God according to what He has told us. I want to follow my Jesus and imitate Him as closely as possible on earth, and I pray the same for you and for all of my family in India. We will continue in prayer for you. We love you with our whole hearts.

Brother Ricky

I wish I could tell you "the rest of the story," but Brother Prakash's last message to me did not say exactly what he had done about the march. From his letter, I know that in a real sense he still considers me his brother.

I can't imagine the chaos and upheaval these believers experienced during these unprecedented times. However, suffering and fear does not change how Jesus would have us respond when persecution comes.

Jesus said:

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbors and hate your enemies.' But I tell you, 'love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you.' If you do this, then you will be true sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:43-45).

Ricky Wright | Jackson, Georgia

Practical Questions

1. What is the object of every march or protest?
2. Why should Anabaptists not join peaceful protest marches?
3. If a protest is "successful" what will be the end result?
4. Are there legitimate ways for an Anabaptist to influence the courts, public opinion, and lawmakers?

On the War Front: In Kentucky

by Miriam Wenger Moyer

In 1952, Wayne and Mae Wenger moved their family of six children to Leburn, Kentucky. They chose this mountainous area of the state partly because some years earlier, Mennonites had conducted a Bible school there. Although Wayne was a minister, he did not start services right away. Instead, Wayne and Mae visited in the community, having Bible reading or prayer when it was welcomed. Wayne also entered into many homes as a salesman of household products such as light bulbs, bed warmers, plastic tablecloths, and shoes. Getting acquainted this way continued for two years while on Sundays the Wengers attended conservative Mennonite churches, forty to fifty miles away. We four school-age children attended the public school while the two youngest children stayed at home.

In June of 1963 we had two Bible schools, each one week long, which brought teachers from the Kentucky churches we attended. Attendance at the one school with three rooms, reached a wide area of the community and averaged sixty some students—five-year-olds to upper youth. Bible school at the one-room schoolhouse up another **holler** brought in fifteen students. During each session, Wayne had an adult Bible study class in a local home with good attendance.

On the first Sunday after the Bible School, Wayne and Mae held the first church service in the basement of our house. We were encouraged by the children and adults who came right away, though it seemed a strong Baptist loyalty kept many people from attending our church services.

In 1964, the Alvin Yoder family moved into the area to help with the work of the church. By now, more of us children were in high school and we brought friends with us to youth meetings. Visitation and cottage meetings continued in many homes.

We continued to have Bible school for children and adults yearly, but the attendance dropped to an average of forty-eight when it was in our home, though it grew into the eighties and nineties as time passed. Bible class in a local's home had been better attended by adults as well.

In 1967 the Caudill parents, with ten children, opened their home for weekly Bible study. Before long the mother, two sons, and a daughter responded to God's call and became members of the church.

In view of evolution in the school system and moral decay, the church felt a need to have a Christian school for their children. With this conviction, the families at Leburn began making plans to provide education. Developing that thought took time. The brethren were open with the local school board about their plans and received their approval.

By the fall of 1970, the church had purchased the now unused, one-room schoolhouse where we had had Bible school in 1963, and began school with eight students. Billy Caudill (of the above home, now a member and teacher in the local school system) gladly came to be teacher of our pioneer school. Martha Wenger helped with the lower grades.

Local opposition to the school developed soon after the school began in late August. Rumors started. "The Mennonites are Communists!" "They don't salute the flag!" "They don't go to war!" "They think they are better than us!" Next, the agitators visited from home to home, in hopes of stirring up more support for their cause against us. They held public meetings, made threats of 'burning us out,' harassed, and slandered us.

Church attendance remained steady for a while, but as the neighborhood became aware of the growing conflict, the attendance of local people dropped to near zero.

Naturally, questions arose in our minds: Who is back of this? Of course Satan was the culprit. But who of the neighbors? How should we handle this wall of hostility?

Our teacher and children continued to go to the little school house day after day. But the newly sown grass around the school building was torn up by a vehicle. I remember the shudder of disappointment the latter part of September when the school's tall windows were shot out on the side away from the road. The church families



The first Bible School group, 1963.

cleaned up the shattered glass and stapled plastic on the inside. Then they stapled plastic over the unbroken windows on the other side of the room, just in case. At the end of each day it became imperative to remove the books from the classroom to the teacher's car.

When the windows on the side of the school toward the road were shot out, the plastic held most of the glass. Next, the door was shot thirteen times, seemingly in hopes of breaking the lock. Burning the building was to be expected, but we thought that would wait for cover of Halloween.

The church group continued to meet in the basement of Wayne Wenger's house. The minister encouraged the audience with verses from Scripture. "Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). "Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). "And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Hebrews 10:34). These verses, and others, strengthened us and gave us JOY and purpose of heart.

The brethren put an intercom in the school to connect with Alvin Yoder's home. The speaker lay at the head of their bed. One night in the middle of October, the Yoders heard footsteps and other noises on the intercom. Then all was quiet. Brother Alvin knew he dare not drive up the holler and check on the situation since darkness is a cover for evil. Likely, the vandals had cut the wires to the intercom and were probably up to worse mischief.

Brother Alvin's early morning trip showed only a glowing pile of embers where the schoolhouse had stood. Now what should we do? We had many questions: Should the children be sent back to the county system? Where do we turn now for help? Is God aware of our distress?

The Scripture gave us much encouragement. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (I Peter 2: 20). "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (I Peter 3:14). The presence of the Lord was real and the church felt strengthened, though sad.

After the burning, many, many people in the area stepped forward to let us know they were not against us; rather, they encouraged us to remain. Two days after the burning, a man three miles away called and offered an empty building of his for our school. Should we rent the building and continue the school? We had our books. But we lacked desks, blackboards, and many other supplies. Other Mennonite churches from far and near encouraged us to keep on in the area, so we rented the building.



The one-room school that burned, 1970.

One week later we reopened the school for our children. But now only families with members dared to show their faces at our worship services.

Open harassment continued. Those in opposition raced their cars close behind us as we rounded the curves while driving to our homes. Some toted guns, although they never shot at our homes or at us. Eventually, we perceived that only four or five families actively opposed us, and one of them was the owner of the land around the school lot. The church then gave the school land deed to him, but it didn't end his hostility toward us. However, within the next couple years, the landowner and a married son moved to another state. But a few close neighbors to the school property didn't concede to us being in the community.

Time erased many tensions and many people have forgotten how our school started, or that the school was burned. Many don't know about the persecution in those early years.

The persecution drew us together as a church. We learned some powerful lessons. With God's help we can endure persecution. We can hold forth the Word of Truth to our communities. We can live a righteous life that exemplifies Christ, His love and redemption even when men "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake" (Matthew 5:11).

And still the church can continue to grow, even in times of persecution.

Miriam Wenger Moyer | Leburn, Kentucky

For a complete account of the beginning of the school at Leburn, Kentucky, one can read the book, The Demands of Love, published by Rod and Staff Publishers Inc., Crockett, Kentucky 41413.

Epilogue located at the bottom of the next page.

Shoot the Gorilla!

by James G. Landis

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.
Matthew 5:30

News item from Wikipedia.

On May 28, 2016, a three-year-old boy visiting the Cincinnati Zoo climbed a 3-foot-tall fence, crawled through 4 feet of bushes, and fell 15 feet into a moat of shallow water.

Harambe, a 440-pound male silverback gorilla picked up the boy and treated him roughly—dragged him through the water, propped him up when he sat, pushed him down when he stood, and bumped his head on the concrete. Afraid for the boy's life, zoo officials made the decision to kill the gorilla, doing so with a single gunshot.

Do you like to look at the gorillas in your life? Do you, like the little boy, want to get in the pen and play with them? And then finally, those gorillas grab you and you are helpless in their power. At that point there is only one remedy: Shoot the gorilla.

Sinful habits are like gorillas. Do you have a problem with adultery, fornication, envy, murder, idolatry, drunkenness, swearing, lying, greed, hatred, pornography, overeating, revelries? If these gorillas already hold you in their embrace, drag you along, and bump your head on the concrete, then shoot the gorilla.

Get back outside the fence God has built to protect you. Do not climb the fence and fall into the moat. Do not visit the gorillas in the pen and admire them. Stay far away from the gorilla pen.

- if the internet is leading you into pornography, get rid of the internet.
- if the bottle leads you to drunkenness, break the bottle.



Harambe and the Boy

- if business leads you to greed and selfishness, sell out.
- if your car or truck or house leads you to idolatry, get rid of it.
- if certain women tempt you to lust, stay far away from them.
- if fine food tempts you to overeat, stay away from the places and foods that tempt you.

This may sound like a drastic remedy for sin. But shooting the gorilla is far better than letting him throw you into everlasting fire.

Actually, Jesus taught the very same thing as shooting the gorilla. He taught that it is better to cut off your arm and pluck out your eye, than it is to go to hell. Jesus wanted people to stay away from the besetting sin that so easily entangles them. He did not expect, nor desire, to see a lot of his followers going around physically blind or without arms. But he did warn them to “shoot the guerilla” rather than go into everlasting destruction.

James G. Landis | Waynesboro, Georgia

Epilogue to On the War Front: In Kentucky:

Looking back forty-five years after the persecution, we see the church was built in 1971, with school starting in its basement that year. Church services remained in the house basement until the auditorium was finished in June of 1972. The church membership grew as well as the attendance, and by 1995 the church was enlarged for services and for school. In 2009, our church leaders urged us to think toward starting an “outreach church” in another location and moving some of our families for that purpose, rather than just growing bigger. At the same time, we again enlarged the building to accommodate our growing families. In 2015, seven families moved two hours away to Mount Sterling, KY, and are “reaching out” to a new community.

Miriam Wenger Moyer | Leburn, Kentucky

Working with Our Minds

by Kendall Myers

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind.”

I Peter 1:13a

In our culture and subculture, we value the man or the woman who has the drive and determination to get up early and work late, to stick to a job until it is done, to tough it out through “blood, sweat, and tears,” and to do a job well. The very hint of laziness is detested. To be a sloth, to be unwilling to work or to exert oneself strenuously to accomplish a task is to be a failure. Laziness is leprosy of the soul.

We teach our children to work hard. When it comes to making the fence, mowing the yard, scrubbing the floor, and uprooting the weeds, our children typically learn that diligence, industry, and tenacity are virtues of the highest order. And for good reason. Success is not served up to us like our birthday breakfasts. The responsibilities of work, family and community call for hard work.

But I have a question to ask: Is the emphasis on working hard in our communities disproportionately directed toward the physical? Cut it straight, hit it hard, pull it tight...we emphasize the importance of diligent and skillful manual labor. And this serves us well. I believe that everyone should learn how to work with his hands. But I wonder...do we care just as much about intellectual diligence? We who are willing to sweat up a shirt—are we just as willing to sweat it out mentally? Are we willing to work just as hard with our minds as we are with our hands?

Certainly the willingness to work hard with our minds is no less important than working with our hands. In fact, the components of our lives that are of greatest long-term consequence—relationships, communication, worship—rely more directly on mental and spiritual faculties than on manual skills.

We must be willing to work hard to find the right word and the right expression when we speak so that

we are really saying what we mean. We must resolve to find original ways to express our ideas, beliefs, and opinions rather than use the oft-repeated clichés and the stock expressions that get used over and over with so little thought. We must insist on the need to work hard to verify our facts and to make sure our sources are reliable. We must persist in our effort to chisel vague and general ideas into specific, exact, and hard-hitting ones: rather than to say, “There is a lot of good stuff in this book,” say “Through the story of Javier Sanchez’s unsuccessful search for employment in the city of Chicago during the 1950s, *A Chilling World* elicits compassion and respect for immigrants in America.” We must resist the urge to turn to Google the first instant a question presents itself, to making it the one-stop alternative to thinking and any kind of intellectual labor. We must be willing to get up early and stay up late to analyze and verify the coherence of our reasoning and the consistency of our beliefs. We must insist that our interpretations of Scripture be accurate and consistent. Anything less is laziness.

What would happen if we were willing to work as hard with our minds as we are with our hands? Perhaps we are just as diligent in using our upstairs machinery as the outdoor equipment, but from my observation, and I’m including myself in the survey, I think we are lagging a bit in this department and hope, as we have opportunity, we will roll up the sleeves of our minds and get to work.

Kendall Myers | Waynesboro, Georgia

So roll up your sleeves, put your mind in gear, be totally ready to receive the gift that’s coming when Jesus arrives. Don’t lazily slip back into those old grooves of evil, doing just what you feel like doing. You didn’t know any better then; you do now. As obedient children, let yourselves be pulled into a way of life shaped by God’s life, a life energetic and blazing with holiness. God said, “Be holy, because I am holy” (I Peter 1:13).

Said to an attendant at a bloodmobile:

“Do you know there was a man who gave all his blood?”

~ the late Eli Kauffman | Montezuma, GA

Not My Country

by Menno Knight



*On the morning after the “so-called election,” before I even knew who the “winner” was, God impressed upon me that the USA is **not my country**.*

The title is based on verses found in Hebrews 11.

In Tents

On this morning after the election, I am confident that Abraham would have said that Palestine was **not my country**, even though he dwelt there ... in tents.

This brings us head-on with a condition that makes it hard for us to say, “the USA is **not my country**.” Too many of us are living in luxurious houses. We have put our roots down and want the good life to continue just like it is in the good ole USA.

We may think or say and pray, “Life is so good here; we just want it to continue as long as possible. Thank God for His kindness to us in placing His blessing upon us in this favored land. Thank God we are not persecuted. Thank God we can preach and pray in whatever manner we want to. Thank God ...”

But we have squelched that little voice inside us that says, “Tents! Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelled in tents.” Now they could have built houses on foreign soil. After all, God had promised them that he would give them the whole country. That was his certain promise to them.

The patriarchs could have afforded luxurious homes, for the Bible tells us they were very rich with hundreds of servants and huge herds and flocks of livestock.

But these men of faith dwelled in tents, and not in houses of brick and mortar within walled cities. Furthermore, Hebrews tells why they lived in tents: they lived in tents because they saw their existence in Canaan as only a temporary, transient one until they could go to a better country, a heavenly one.

Now I am not saying that we should all sell our houses and live together in refugee camps of plastic tents. Neither am I saying that it is wrong to own a house and stay in one location all your life. But wherever we live in this country, we must note the warning to the Israelites when they entered the promised land and dwelled in walled cities they didn’t build and lived well from vineyards and olive trees they didn’t build.

I must tell you, the bigger our houses become and the more comfortable our lifestyle, the easier it is to forget the Lord our God. And the harder it becomes to say with Abraham, “This is **not my country**.”

Owning our own house brings stability to our churches and our lifestyle and furnishes a collection place for our belongings. But it is not the transient lifestyle.

Too many of us have been swept along with the mantra of our culture that says everyone should own his own house. “After all,” we say, “my country gives low interest loans and even forgives large sums on home mortgages.” And so

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”

Hebrews 11:8-10

“The Lord your God will bring you into the land of Canaan. He gave his word. He promised he would give the land to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The land has large, wealthy cities you didn’t build. It has houses filled with all kinds of good things you didn’t provide. The land has wells you didn’t dig. And it has vineyards and groves of olive trees you didn’t plant. You will have plenty to eat. But be careful that you don’t forget the Lord. Remember that he brought you out of Egypt. That’s the land where you were slaves.”

Deuteronomy 6:10-12

we fall for it. Young people and newly married couples are going into debt to buy their own home. It often proves we want to stay here and accumulate comforts and possessions while we gullibly make interest payments to the banks and help fulfill the great American dream ... of the bankers.

Owning our own homes of brick and mortar and crowding them full of elite furnishings and heirloom pieces is not the equivalent of living in tents, unless you can truly say, "This country I am living in, is **not my country!**"

Strangers

Abraham lived as a stranger in a foreign land.

The root of "stranger" is "strange," meaning someone who is odd, different, not familiar to others around them, or "from another place." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were like that. They were distinctly different or "strange" to the people around them.

All attempts to make Abraham and his clan like the Egyptians or the Canaanites ended in failure. Abraham did not want to be like the wicked people around him. He meant to worship his God, not the gods of the people of the land. He did not want to be "like the Canaanites in order to win them over to his God." Abraham was "called out" to be a stranger in a foreign land.

When one is a stranger in a foreign country, he seldom speaks the language of the people around him fluently. If he does speak the language of the people around him, he speaks it with a telltale accent that reveals the country he is from.

When in Mexico City, we met a tour guide who liked to listen to his travelers talk, then tell them where in the United States they were from. Most of the time he got it right. Their language betrayed them.

Does your accent reveal that you, too, speak a different language than the people around you? Can they tell that you are from Galilee and that you have been with Jesus (John 7:52; Matthew 26:69-73)?

Speaking a foreign language marks one as "different" and "strange" to the people of a foreign country. As long as Mennonites who emigrated to Canada, the USA, Paraguay, or elsewhere in the world, kept their native language, they were able to dwell as marked strangers in a foreign land. But when their children could no longer speak the original tongue of their parents, they were no longer strangers in a foreign land, but were now considered to be natives of the country in which they dwelt. We must be careful that we teach our children the language of heaven so they continue to be strangers here.

But language alone does not make people odd or strange to the people of the country around them. Their faith is different, their clothes are different, their houses are different, their work is different. People with a strange tongue hold a closer relationship to one another than those who have been assimilated into a foreign country. Different groups in a foreign land stick together. Irish, Indians, Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans—all tend to dwell together in communities and depend on each other.

Strangers in a foreign land do not intermarry with the natives of the country in which they dwell. Abraham ordered his servant to swear that he would not take a wife for Isaac from among the surrounding Canaanites (Genesis 24:3).

"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised: they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city [country] for them."

Hebrews 11:13-16

Nicodemus was there in that group. He was the one who had gone to see Jesus before. Nicodemus said, "Our law does not judge a man without hearing him. We cannot judge him until we know what he has done." They answered, "Are you from Galilee too? Study the Scriptures. You will learn that no prophet comes from Galilee."

John 7:50-52

Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you."

Matthew 26:69-73

I want you to swear by the Lord God of heaven and earth that you will not get my son a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I'm living.

Genesis 24:3

It greatly frustrated Isaac and Rebecca when Esau married among the women of the land, and they ordered Jacob to go and marry one of their own relatives (Genesis 28:1-2). And when Isaac blessed Jacob in preparation for his journey, he said in Genesis 28:4, “*That you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.*”

Truly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelled as strangers in a foreign land. They were odd, different, and strange to the people around them, and they could truly say, “This is **not my country**. It has only been promised to us as an inheritance.”

Many Anabaptists have trouble remaining strangers in the land. Their language, their clothes, their work, their faith have all become like the people around them. They are not dwelling here as “strangers in a foreign land.” We must wake up from the lull of the earthly country in which we dwell, and say with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, “This is **not my country**.”

Pilgrims

As a dairyman always on the lookout for good help, I remember when a battered station wagon drove in at the farm. Inside a driver, his wife, and several young children eagerly peered out at me. It appeared as though all the family’s earthly possessions were packed inside and clinging precariously to the roof. “Duh ya need any hep?” was the query.

These people were indeed strangers to me, but they were not pilgrims. They did not have a fixed destination in mind.

Abraham knew where he was going. Hebrews 11:10 tells us, “*For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*” And in verse 16, the vision of the patriarchs is spelled out more clearly, “*But now they desire a heavenly country, for God has prepared a city for them.*”

Abraham knew that his dwelling in the land of Canaan was only temporary. He did not get involved with the Canaanite system of government. It did not concern him at all. It was Lot who sat in the gate of the city of Sodom and who paid a terrible price for his involvement in the government. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob saw far beyond the country in which they dwelt, to an eternal city. And their vision embodied descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. They were just passing through the land of Canaan on the way to a much bigger and better city.

That is what it means to be a pilgrim. One is only passing through the country in which he dwells, while he is on the way to a heavenly country. And truly an Anabaptist pilgrim who has his heart fixed on a celestial city will not spend exorbitant sums to remain in this country a few years longer. When one really wants to reach his heavenly destination, a true pilgrim can say, “The USA, as well as any other political country on the earth, is **not my country**.” If one has lost the desire to say that, it is a sure sign that one has lost the vision of the heavenly city.

Isaac called Jacob to him, blessed him again, and instructed him. Isaac, you are not to marry one of the Canaanite women. Get up and pack your things, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel (your mother’s father), and find a wife there among Laban’s daughters. (Laban is your mother’s brother.) May the All-Powerful God bless you, make you fruitful, and multiply your descendants so that you will give rise to nation after nation! May God give to you and to your children in this inheritance all of the blessings of Abraham, so that you might someday possess the land where you now live as a foreigner—a land that was promised by God to Abraham.”

Genesis 28:1-4

Abraham said, “I am only a stranger and a foreigner here. Sell me some of your land so that I can bury my dead wife.”

Genesis 23:4

These all died in faith without receiving the things promised, but they saw them in the distance and welcomed them and acknowledged that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth.

Hebrews 11:13

“These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised”

Hebrews 11:39

“ But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.”

~ Matthew 8:20

The Promises

Hebrews 11:13,39 make it clear that all these heroes of faith—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah—died without receiving the promises. Empty? No! They understood the promises to be something much greater than what they could ever experience on the earth.

Let's look again at verse 13. *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them from a great distance, were persuaded of them, and embraced them. And they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

Do you see the promises of a celestial city built by God?

Are you persuaded that these promises are real?

Have you put your heart around them and embraced them?

Are you ready to confess that you are a stranger—odd, different, strange? Are you a pilgrim just passing through to a heavenly destination while living on the earth?

If you can truly answer “yes” to these questions, you will also be able to truthfully say, “This is **not my country**.”

And regardless of the results of the recent USA elections, you will not be surprised by the rampant corruption and wickedness found in the government. It is what Anabaptists ought to expect from governments that operate by force under the sway of Satan.

But we, like all the other heroes of faith in Hebrews 11, look for a city whose builder and maker is God; and this country where we are only foreign pilgrims and strangers is **not our country**.

“Since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect”

Hebrews 11:40

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one”

I John 5:19

“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 3:20



Not My Country

Playing War Games

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

Battleship. Risk. Axis & Allies. Stratego.

Board games, video games, and computer games simulating war, battle, and combat can be enjoyable, mentally challenging and stimulating, and promote good mental habits—thinking ahead, planning, tactics, and responding well to unforeseen circumstances. But what should the follower of Jesus think of war games? Should nonresistant Christians play such games?

We do not think most Anabaptists would want to stand before a local draft board and try to explain why it is wrong to go to war, but it is alright to play war games.

It will be much harder to explain the same thing to an almighty God (II Corinthians 5:10), yet it is certain that everyone of us must give account to God for the games we play (Romans 14:12).

War games are wrong for all the same reasons that war itself is wrong. As nonresistant people, we recognize that war is contrary to the teachings of Jesus and His apostles. He taught us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35); to resist not evil (Matthew 5:39); to pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us (Matthew 5:44). The Apostles taught us to feed our enemies rather than harm them (Romans 12:20); to show gentleness and meekness to all men (Titus 3:2); that the weapons of our warfare are not physical ones (II Corinthians 10:4); and to follow Jesus in the path of meek suffering (I Peter 2:21-24).¹

It would be hard to imagine something more out of step with these teachings than war, and for that reason, nonresistant people from the time of the earliest churches have refused to take part in this horrible business.

Yet how innocent it seems to get out the board game, set up plastic soldiers across the map, and roll dice to “shoot” the opponent and steal his land! Yet when looking at it in that way, it does not seem innocent at all.

Board games simulating combat are making a game out of something that is sin. We would not play a board game of any other activity we recognize as sinful.

Would we play:

- A “rob the bank” board game?
- A “mass murderer” board game? Most victims killed and wounded, without the shooter committing suicide, and winning.
- A board game called “Drift?” Each player starts with a conservative church and works to get it to drift. First one to accept homosexuality wins.
- A board game centering on divorce? The player with the most “marriages” over the course of the game wins.
- A game about drinking or drugs or prostitution?

We would never justify playing games like these, with the excuse, “it’s just a game.” So how can we excuse war games, by saying, “it’s just a game?”

War games make play out of something very serious, very harmful, and which sends people to hell. It makes a game out of something that is the cause of immense human suffering. Imagine the deaths of soldiers on the battlefield; the amputations and emergency surgeries; the widows and orphans made every minute; the sufferings of civilians killed or wounded as “collateral damage” by the fighting armies; the resources stolen or destroyed by the combatants, causing famine, starvation, and untold suffering of innocent civilians; property destroyed, as a direct result of the fighting or, occasionally, as the result of “scorched earth” policies;² hatreds and prejudices perpetuated for years after peace has supposedly been concluded; the ongoing psychological effects (such as post-traumatic stress disorder) which afflict those who return from the war—physically whole perhaps, but emotionally scarred.

Making a game out of such tragedy is not an innocent thing. We should teach our young people to detest war and war games. All our activities must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ and forming His character within us. We should not muddy the water by playing board games which promote values foreign to the Spirit of Christ? We want to leave a clear testimony

1. For in-depth discussions of nonresistance, see John M. Brenneman, *Christianity and War*; and Michael E. Lewis, *Church and State*. Both are available from Sermon on the Mount Publishing (www.kingdomreading.com).

2. “Scorched earth” is a tactic used when an army retreats and burns everything – buildings, bridges, crops, food – which may be used by an advancing enemy. In the Civil War, the Union troops pursued a similar policy in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to destroy the Confederate stronghold there, thus causing untold suffering for the nonresistant Mennonites and German Baptists living in the valley. One Union soldier counted 167 barns burning simultaneously.

to the world when we say we are nonresistant, and will not participate in war; neither will we foster the evils of war in our minds by playing war games.

Jesus said, “The thief comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy: I have come so that they might have life, and so that they might have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

“To steal, and to kill, and to destroy”—that is the essence of war. Yet this terrible essence is tamed and made “fun” by war games, in which the opponents only pretend to kill and destroy, in order to steal each other’s land and resources. But Jesus said he came to give life! John wrote: *“This is why the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil”* (I John 3:8b).

We, who follow the One whose purpose in coming to earth was to destroy the devil’s works, should not play and enjoy games which simulate and commemorate those works?

John M. Brenneman, a prominent Mennonite bishop, wrote a book on nonresistance, in which he said:

“How, then, I ask, can it be possible that a Christian, who is a partaker of Christ’s Spirit and nature, and is become a harmless and defenseless lamb, can go forth to war, and, with sword and gun in hand, destroy the lives of his enemies (whom he loves); cutting them limb from limb into pieces; wasting their fields waving with beautiful grain; burning their houses and barns; destroying all the property he possibly can; making widows and orphans; and bringing sorrow and trouble, and often starvation and death upon them?...Now, for a moment, let us behold the scenes of a battle field, where thousands lie rolling in blood, both men and beasts, mingled together. Some dead—some just expiring—some have their arms, others their legs severed from their bodies—limbs are scattered all around, none can tell whose they were—some groaning in painful agony are wishing for death to put an end to their sufferings. Oh, what anguish, sorrow and distress! Oh, what wailing and crying for relief! Besides cannon roaring, shells bursting, muskets cracking, and the loud shout for the victory! Behold, the atmosphere is darkened with dust and smoke! Surely, here is confusion and every evil work; nor is this all, for who can describe the sorrow and distress of those at home, on receiving the sad news of the death of a dear husband—of a beloved father—a dear son or a brother? Oh, who can hear the cries of the widow and orphans weeping for their loved ones, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not!—But who can describe the dreadful evil, the painful and dreadful scenes and horrors of war? Can such painful and dreadful scenes be the work of

*Christians, those harmless, new-born lambs of Jesus? Can any of those who take a share in it be the faithful followers of Him, walking in His steps?*³

“Can such painful and dreadful scenes be the work of Christians?” Brenneman asks. I say, “If they cannot be the work of Christians, neither should they be the play of Christians.”

The spirit of the war game, like that of war itself, is a spirit of fighting, of revenge, of theft, of killing, of power, of domination, of control. Such a spirit has nothing in common with the Spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus who said, *“For the Son of man has not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them”* (Luke 9:56a).

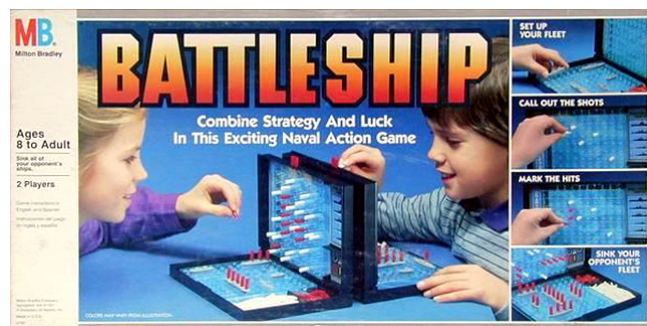
Let us not cheapen in our minds what the evil of war really is by playing war games. War is killing! We do not want to lose this deadly perspective on the horrors of war, and what war really is, by reducing it to a mere game.

So, brethren and sisters, let us not make the devil’s business fun nor amusing, but let us join in the work of Christ by playing games that nurture the Spirit of Christ in both our body and soul.

Andrew V. Ste. Marie | Manchester, Michigan

Practical Questions:

1. Are Chess and Checkers “war games”?
2. Name some good indoor games that build Christian character.
3. Why do most computer games not develop good Christian character?
4. What are characteristics of games that Christians should play?
5. What is the difference between gambling—playing slot machines, betting on horse races, state lotteries and “games of chance” such as Rook, Poker, Blackjack, Craps, Roulette?



I’ll shoot your ships (and sailors) first!

3. John M. Brenneman, *Christianity and War*, 1863.



The Practical Side

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

— Colossians 3:17

This recurring feature in *Anabaptist Voice* consists of three parts.

1. **The Rest of the Story**—what actually happened
2. **Reader Response**—feedback on previous stories
3. **New Stories**—situations met by today’s Anabaptists

Here is your chance to help others live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ “right in the corner where you are.” This section is not for some idealistic future kingdom posing theological complicated questions with no good answers—for example, the woman who had seven brothers as husbands (*Matthew 22:24-28*).

Take the time to write *Anabaptist Voice* and share your situations where you faced a difficulty ... and failed, or won a victory. As you ponder the situations in these stories and then share your answers and experiences with others, remember the words of Jesus when He told the packed-out house, “**My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s Word and put it into practice**” (*Luke 8:21*).



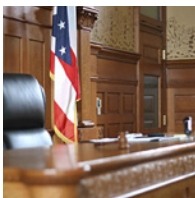
The Practical Side of Life

The Practical Side | Reader Responses

Reader responses to the stories from previous issues.

Summoned

by Scrip Sure



A letter to the court:

I greatly appreciate the courts of our country and recognize the many privileges I have because of them. I keenly feel my responsibility to pray for our government leaders and all

that are in authority (I Timothy 2:2).

I believe the Christian is to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14). Furthermore, the church has been purchased by the blood of King Jesus (Acts 20:25) and its members have been transferred to the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13).

In my belief, those who have experienced this are strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Hebrews 11:13, I Peter 2:11). Such people are without loyalty to any earthly flag and are accustomed to fleeing political boundaries in the event of persecution (Matthew 2:13, 10:23; Acts 8:1).

I believe that the New Testament vision for God’s church, as the kingdom (nation) that Jesus came to establish, strongly implies that the Christian should in no way be involved in the affairs of earthly government (for example, I refuse to vote in political elections on all levels).

This being my conviction and the historical position of the Conservative Mennonite Church of which I am a part, I cannot conscientiously serve as a juror in the courts, and would deeply appreciate being excused.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Readers Responses Continued...

Judge & Jury

by Carried A. Long



You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should

speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Matthew 10:18-20

I was summoned for the first time to appear in court for the selection of a jury. It was for a murder trial. I filled out the enclosed form and then wrote an essay, “Why I Cannot Serve” on an extra piece of paper. I sent the papers to the Clerk of the Court.

I was required to appear in court Monday morning along with hundreds of other people. The courtroom was packed and some were even standing. First the judge gave a number of reasons why one could be excused from serving on the jury—if you were a school teacher, if you must be on a job, if you had children under four years of age, or if you knew the person on trial. Some people were leaving, but none of the reasons fit me, so I stayed on.

The judge ordered that all of us remaining should not read any newspapers, listen to any news, or discuss the case with anyone. So I spent a lot of time with my Bible and in prayer. I can say I felt God was with me. I had to think of Christians in the past, and even now, who are not excused, but who must suffer for Christ’s sake.

I had to go to court almost every day for a week. On Saturday when I appeared, they took me in another room and gave me a piece of paper with three questions on it. The questions related to my stance on the death penalty. I filled it out the best I could and handed it to a clerk.

Then came the very scary part. An officer ushered me out to stand in front of the judge and the full court—the lawyers, the witnesses, the state attorneys, the fellow that committed the murder, and all other interested parties. I felt that I was being carried along by God and He would give me the words to speak!

The judge was very kind when he spoke to me. I gave him my reasons why I could not serve. I gave verses from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. The judge said he was a

Baptist, and he would have to look those verses up. Then he excused me from jury duty. What a relief!

But before he excused me he said, “I would like to ask you a personal question. ‘Why do you wear that cloth on your head?’”

I gave him several reasons why I wear it.

Then he asked me, “Where is that found in the Bible?”

I told him it was found in I Corinthians 11.

The judge acted interested and again stated, “I will need to check into that.” When I was explaining to the judge how the veiling signifies the submission of the woman to the man in God’s order, the state attorney—a very proud-looking female—openly made a scornful noise.

I thank God for standing beside me and helping me through this call to jury duty and then giving me the opportunity to testify before a whole crowd of people, yes, even to a scornful prosecuting attorney. Because of this experience, I will pray more fervently for those who are tried and suffer for their faith in God and His Son Jesus Christ!

Practical Questions:

1. What reasons would you give to the court if they questioned you about the head covering?
2. Why did it take a whole week to select a jury?
3. How would you answer these questions about the death penalty?
 - Can you issue or give a death penalty under any condition?
 - Can you not give or recommend the death penalty under any circumstances?
 - Could you recommend the death penalty under certain circumstances?

The Practical Side | Reader Responses

Going For Help

by Not A. Lone



Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Matthew 6:34

I am not of Anabaptist background, and am a first-generation Mennonite. I am a 23-year-old living with my fiercely nationalistic parents.

Recently I received a summons to serve on the jury. I am ashamed to say it, but I trusted God so little that I made myself physically sick worrying about the outcome of the situation.

I repeatedly played out the worst-case scenarios in my mind, thinking about what I might do. I hid the entire situation from my parents in order to avoid conflict.

I made a special trip to the Mennonite church I attend so I could have some face-to-face advice and feel the support that I was lacking.

I told the bishop's wife about my fear that the judge would not take me seriously; I could even be facing jail time. She said something that, though small, really

put things into perspective for me. "If your worst fears come true, the members of the church are already used to visiting incarcerated people so you would not be facing it alone."

It made me ashamed of myself that I had even, for a split second, considered backing down from my convictions for the sake of pleasing people. God was providing for me and that was enough, even if I faced the scorn of my family and the loss of my freedom. Thankfully, none of those worst-case scenarios came to pass, but I am grateful that God used the experience to make me evaluate where I stood.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
Galatians 6:2

Practical Questions:

1. Where should you go for help when difficult situations confront you?
2. How many different resources can you think of? Write them down.
3. Should we always wait for a crisis before seeking the advice of the brotherhood?

The Practical Side | New Stories

Situations met by today's Anabaptists.

Stylish Ride

by Rich R. Hardly

And when Jesus saw that the rich young ruler became very sorrowful, He said, How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Luke 18:24-25

Jesus said in this verse that it is not easy for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. In fact, it is literally easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.

With men alone, entering the kingdom is impossible, but with God all things are possible. And the way God has made it possible is for a rich man to get down on his knees at the cross and say, "Lord, I am nothing. All my righteousness is as filthy rags. All my wealth is nothing, and without you I am eternally lost." That is difficult for a rich man to do. That's what rich men struggle with.

Rich men have temptations and challenges you know nothing about, unless you are there.

I'm almost embarrassed to tell you of some of the high-end kitchens we manufacture. I've already been challenged whether a Christian should even manufacture some of the kitchens we manufacture.

The Practical Side | New Stories

I've been on job sites already where we see people who think they are in control. We are just wrapping up a job right now where the salesman has been kept on his toes because the owner thinks everyone should, "jump when I say jump, sit when I say sit, and walk when I say walk." The salesman has been trying to convince this man there is also such a thing as reality where not everything can happen immediately.

This owner is typical of rich men who think they are in control of everybody because they can cash them out. They think, "I can have what I want because it is at my fingertips."

Okay, I will illustrate such a man.

A man ordered a ridiculous amount of cabinetry for his house. I can't even call it a house because it's his cottage. I can't even call it his cottage. You don't even use words like that for some of these buildings. I'm not even sure what you are supposed to call them.

He wanted to see our factory before he placed the order. Our salesman called me up and asked if he could have a tour of the factory. "Sure, bring him on in," I told him.

I was sitting in my office when Jason brought him in. I had never met the man before and to me he was just another guy. I wasn't told how wealthy he was, so I shook his hand and we talked a little bit and then he said, "You are way out in the country. I had to drive gravel roads to get here."

I said, "Apparently your GPS is taking you on back roads because you don't have to drive gravel roads to get here." I laughed and said, "It just takes us back to the good old days. It doesn't hurt any one of us."

Of course I was just joking but he stood there and looked at me. Then he said, "Well, not with the car I'm driving."

And I went, "Oops!"

He walked out on the factory floor, and I decided to see what kind of car he was driving. I went out on the front yard and found an Aston Martin sitting out there with this black velvet finish on it, brand spanking new. I

said to myself, "Okay. I don't really know what the value of this car is but I'm going to find out."

I went back in the office and googled it. And then I said, "So that's why you don't want to drive it on gravel roads!" \$250,000 is the base price for an Aston Martin and another \$50,000 if you get the kind of paint job he had on it. I doubt if he wanted to settle for such a cheap car so he probably had some accessories on it. No wonder he said, "Not with the car I'm driving."

My son was taking him through the plant so after he returned, he said, well I gotta be going, I'll be gone for the weekend."



Aston Martin: Money & Power?

Jason said, "Oh, going tenting are ya?"

And the guy said, "No."

Jason said, "Oh! going to the cottage?"

And the guy said, "No."

"Cottage" still wasn't the right word. The man replied, "I'm going to my mansion."

Jason said, "Call your place whatever you want, but enjoy your weekend."

Whoever loves money will never be satisfied with money. Whoever loves wealth will never be satisfied with more income. Pursuing wealth is pointless.

Ecclesiastes 5:10

Practical Questions:

1. From an Anabaptist standpoint, beside the initial cost, what is the main difference between an Aston Martin and a Honda Civic?
2. After you have answered question #1, what elements should affect your choice of color and styling when buying a new car or truck? Or a new horse and buggy?
3. What principles should guide Anabaptist businessmen and craftsmen when building elaborate furniture or housing or show places?
4. How can Anabaptists avoid the snare of riches?

The Practical Side | New Stories

Sour Party

by Wood B. Peacemaker

*Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called
Sons of God* **Matthew 5:9**

I'm the newcomer on our street. I had been invited to a birthday party for the girlfriend of one of the neighbors. Because of some things that happened in the past, I was uneasy about going to the party, but I decided to attend and be neighborly.

I should have stayed home. As I parked in the hostess' driveway, I observed that the birthday dinner was being served on the front porch of her home—in clear view of the next-door family with four young children. And they weren't invited.

As I helped bring dishes outside, the neighbor's Yorkshire Terrier decided to come on over and visit. You would've thought a Rottweiler was padding across the porch instead of a 4-pound dog. The hostess yelled viciously at her neighbors, berating them for allowing the dog to get out of their yard and reminding them that she was allergic to dogs. The poor little thing skedaddled home quickly. I wanted to follow suit. The next-door neighbor yelled something back, to which our hostess responded.

Then the neighbor turned on a Halloween ghoulish decoration that he had positioned in a grape arbor right next to the property line. It made very loud, creepy noises. I was appalled at my hostess and at the reaction of her neighbor, whose four little children were witnesses to all this.

I suggested that we take the party inside where we wouldn't have to hear the recorded moans and screams from the grape arbor. Our hostess insisted we stay put. I started to think she must be enjoying all the drama.

Next, I suggested that I go next door and see if I might bring a little calm to the setting. I had spoken to the parents on several occasions and had also made it a point of stopping and chatting with the children. But the other guests shook their heads solemnly and said it would only make matters worse. I felt anxiety and panic rising within me.

I walked over to talk with the young man who had turned on the ghoulish decoration. He had always been pleasant with me before and I didn't think tonight would be any different, but he was livid with rage over what had just taken place. I suggested we turn off the ghoul and see if that might help everyone calm down a bit, but he refused.

So I told the young man that I was going to turn off the noise as it wasn't good for the children. He said, "Don't move that ghoul!" I reassured him I wasn't going to move it, but I was going to turn off the noise.

I walked over to the grape arbor and turned off the noise. This prompted the ghoul's owner to call the state police.

I returned to the "party" and suggested I go home. They would have none of it. Instead of chatting about the birthday girl, these "Christians" (not Mennonites) seemed to take delight in gossiping about the neighbors.

A state police officer arrived. He seemed to enjoy speaking with the folks at the party and the loud laughter accompanying his "investigation" could clearly be heard by the neighbor next door. The officer left without filing any charges.

After I had helped take in the dishes, I left. I was so shaken by what had transpired that I went to talk with two dear church friends and find out what I had done wrong in my attempt to make peace.



Peace at the Party?

Practical Questions:

1. What should the church friends tell her?
2. Should she have gone home when the disturbance started?
3. Did she do right to try to move the party?
4. Did she do right to turn off the ghoul?
5. What would alternative actions have been?
6. How should she restore relations with the angry neighbor?



Announcements, Meetings & Events

If you know of any meetings or events that would benefit the Kingdom of Christ and are open to attendance by the general Anabaptist community, please let us know so we can continue to feature this section in future issues.

MEETINGS: REACH 2017

REACH brings together fifty conservative Anabaptist ministries and Kingdom-workers from all walks of life. The two-day program includes over 100 breakout sessions addressing a wide variety of ministry-related topics. Ministries share their vision and work in breakout sessions and displays. General assemblies tie the entire event together with worship, messages, and prayer.

Registration is currently open. For more information and to register, you can visit reach.fbep.org. A paper registration form is also available. Contact Faith Builders at the phone number or email address listed below.

DATE: March 23 - 24, 2017

LOCATION: Calvary Church
1051 Landis Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

CAPACITY: 2,200

CONTACT: Faith Builders at (814) 789-4518 or fbep@fbep.org for more info or to request registration forms.

WANTED: A volunteer to cover the convention for Anabaptist Voice. Contact James G. Landis <editor@anabaptistvoice.com>.

MEETINGS: Anabaptist Identity Conference 2017

The AIC's mission is to equip watchmen for the present hour by addressing current issues from a historical context. The three day conference includes a range of topics by speakers including David Bercot, PA; John D. Martin, PA; Chester Weaver, TX; Roman Stoltzfoos, PA; Andrew St. Marie, MI; Kevin Fall, IA; Ray Miller, OH and David Martin, OH.

Registration to attend the conference is required. Please call 941-822-3282 and leave a voice mail message or e-mail <hsofgrace6550@yahoo.com> and provide your name, phone number and how many people will be with you, attending the conference. There is no registration fee. Free-will offerings will be taken at the conference. Meals are included.



Visiting at AIC meeting.

DATE: March 16 - 18, 2017

LOCATION: The Well
462 Barren Hollow Rd.
Hurricane Mills, TN 37078

CONTACT: Nathan Overholt at (941) 954-2399 or <hsofgrace6550@yahoo.com> for more info.

LODGING: There are hotels, cabins, and RV hookups available within 1/4 mile - 7 miles of the location of the conference. There will also be some homes available to stay in, within 15 - 20 miles away.

Distribution & Usage for Anabaptist Voice

by *Anabaptist Voice Staff*

We at Anabaptist Voice have been cheered on by letters from readers who express excitement over the blessings received from Anabaptist Voice. One reader wrote, “[AV] is refreshing, challenging ... a blessing; and I feel God is using it for His kingdom and for drawing people to Him.” Another reader succinctly stated our purpose. “May God bless this effort to represent the truth as taught in the Bible. I love it [AV].”

We have heard that people are using AV in many different ways—in Bible studies, sermon preparation, Sunday school discussions, family teaching, prison ministry, and in outreach efforts. The staff believes the potential for increased usage of *Anabaptist Voice*, as a teaching and inspirational tool among people interested in the Anabaptist way, is great.

Therefore, we would like you to help us double our distribution in 2017. We printed 5,300 copies of AV03. Our goal would be to print 10,000 copies as soon as we have a demand for them.

Several factors are important in making this decision. We have been very pleased with the level of voluntary financial support we have received. Small and sizable donations have come in from encouragers; some from people we have never met. We have never asked for funds or bowed to the expense and demands of formal organization under government regulation. Yet our funds are adequate.

This is important when we think of asking you to help us increase distribution of AV. You can tell everyone that the magazine is completely free. No one is under any obligation to donate or pay for a subscription. All financial support for this work is voluntary and under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

So far, all the staff, writers, and editors have followed the example of the Apostle Paul and contributed without financial reward. This means that doubling the number of print copies will not result in any increased cost for editorial or layout costs. All the cost of getting the master copy to the printer will be the same if we print 5,000 or 10,000 copies. And after the first copy of AV is printed, the cost per copy decreases rapidly as the volume increases.

Another thing we would like to encourage in your efforts to help us increase distribution is bulk mailing. The cost of mailing AV to one address is about \$1.10 while the printing cost is about 60 cents per copy. Depending on how many copies are bulk mailed to one address, the mailing cost per copy drops substantially. So bulk mailing could reduce the total cost involved in adding 5,000 copies to the mailing list.

Understand that individual subscriptions are still welcome. But where bulk distribution points can be set up, perhaps many more people can receive AV.

We do not need to limit our outlets to churches. Anabaptist tourist points, schools, and businesses may be glad to offer AV on tables, counters, or desks. People like free things.

Waiting rooms where visitors and staff can pick up AV's and take them home are good opportunities to expose people to the magazine. An attractive AV lying on the waiting room stand may be much more interesting reading than the stale magazines often found in such places. Like the airline magazines, interested people can take AV's along and read more if the magazine interests them.

These are just a few ideas. You may have more and better ones. May God bless you as you help build the Kingdom of God on earth ... and in heaven too.



We would love to print more!



Circulation & Financial Statements

Anabaptist Voice Income & Expense Report *October thru December 2016*

Income

Donations for Issue #3	\$4,325.19
Local Support Donations*	\$4,473.88
Total Income	\$8,799.07

Expenses

Handling & Packaging	\$752.00
Postage	\$2,988.07
Printing	\$5,059.00
Total Expense	\$8,799.07

Donations for Issue #4 \$5,333.33

**see section "Our Finances" on Page 4.*

ISSUE #1 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,000 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,538
Donations for Issue #1: \$3,020
Local Support Donations: \$5,517

ISSUE #2 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,000 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,984
Donations for Issue #2: \$4,434
Local Support Donations: \$4,550

ISSUE #3 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,250 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,799
Donations for Issue #3: \$4,325
Local Support Donations: \$4,474
**see report at left for details*

ISSUE #4 - ESTIMATED NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,250 | Est. Print & Postage Cost: \$9,000
Donations for Issue #4: \$5,333



Thank You!

We say "Thank you!" to each one who has expressed an interest in *Anabaptist Voice* whether face to face or by filling out a written response. Some have donated money. That is needed. Some have helped with encouragement. Words help keep us going. Some have indicated a willingness to help distribute the magazine. Some have shared words of wisdom to give direction to our efforts. Others have indicated a willingness to try writing for AV. For all those willing to write, I would like to suggest that you pick out a question or two scattered throughout the magazine and write a 200-word response. Pick one that you have a special interest in. That will give us a chance to get acquainted with your writing and interests.

- AV Ed.

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“EVEN THE SPARROW FINDS A HOME, AND THE SWALLOW BUILDS HER NEST AND RAISES HER YOUNG AT A PLACE NEAR YOUR ALTAR, O LORD OF HEAVEN’S ARMIES, MY KING AND MY GOD!”

PSALM 83:4

