



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

*James 1:22*



# Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

## IN THIS ISSUE:

"DOING THE WILL OF THE FATHER" - WILLIAM BYLER

"THE MEANING OF GRACE" - DAVID BERCOT

"READY TO GO" - LYNDON OVERHOLT

"UNLESS YOU REPENT" - MENNO KNIGHT

"STANDING ALONE" - GARY BUTIKOFER

# Letter from the Editor

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

We have received quite a few enquiries as to when the next *Anabaptist Voice* will come. We are making an effort to get *Anabaptist Voice* into your mailbox before the end of the first month in each calendar quarter—July, October, January, April. If the magazine doesn't make it by then, consider it tardy.

We desire many readers to participate in the *Anabaptist Voice* ministry. Opportunities abound for Anabaptist believers to write a paragraph or more in response to questions at the end of articles, writing challenges, sermon snippets, reader responses, experience stories, and articles. You don't need to be a professional writer. Others will help with editing and copy-editing.

We are grateful for those who have written, but would like more to participate. I imagine many of you have good intentions of writing sometime, but are like those the Master invited to a great feast in Luke 14:18-20. So, if you have just gotten married, recently bought a farm you never looked at, or bought a brand new tractor you haven't yet put in the field, you are excused.

Likewise, if you have never told the preacher "thank you" for a good sermon, have never told your friends a story that happened to you, have never explained the meaning of a Scripture to a friend, have never spoken in a Sunday school class, and you are so-o-o busy after you returned home from vacation at a Christian retreat, I understand. These things you ought to have done and not left writing for *Anabaptist Voice* undone.

Let your candle burn on the pages of AV! O, taste and see what Kingdom writers have done in Issue 6.

- David Bercot defines "grace" in Bible times.
- William Byler holds Anabaptists accountable.
- Believers in China and Minnesota give their testimonies.
- Lyndon Overholt tells of service in needy countries.
- Menno Knight says Jesus loved when he preached hell-fire.
- Perry Klopfenstein explains the origin of "thee" and "thou."

Peace,

*James G. Landis*



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# About *Anabaptist Voice*

## Our Mission Statement:

We want *Anabaptist Voice* to be a servant to the churches of Jesus Christ. We choose the name “Anabaptist” as a fitting term to describe an obedient “people of God” in our generation. We follow the example of the historic Anabaptists who sought to obey the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, but we do not idolize Anabaptists nor historic Anabaptism. We follow Christ.

## Our Purpose:

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

## Our Goal:

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 personal evangelism and disciple-making.

## 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 a follower-of-Jesus baptism, maintains actual applications of Bible truths, and where a close-knit, disciplined brotherhood exists among the believers.

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

## Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

In order to provide clarity about who we are, *Anabaptist Voice* lists historic Anabaptist beliefs and practices we believe are still valid today.

1. God accepted Jesus’ death on the cross as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. Thus the blood of Jesus enables each person to be acceptable to God when he repents of his sin and surrenders himself to King Jesus. This initial commitment is followed by obedience to the commands of Christ which gives the disciple assurance of his right standing before God. “Salvation” is not just a one-time event but a life-long experience.
2. Adult believer’s baptism signifies a commitment to follow Christ as His disciple in His kingdom.
3. The teachings of Christ and the Apostles in the New Testament are to be interpreted and put into practice. The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain are the heart of Christ’s kingdom teaching for His disciples.
4. Anabaptists recognize the church as Christ’s kingdom on the earth.
5. Faithful obedience to the commands of Christ often brings persecution upon us.
6. The world (*all who do not obey God*) is evil and under the sway of Satan.
7. Our earthly conduct determines our eternal destiny. True faith must result in obedience that will be rewarded in heaven. Evil works prove a lack of faith in God and will result in eternal punishment.
8. Kingdom disciples do not participate in the civil government or “serve” in the military.

## Our Finances:

There is no set subscription price for *Anabaptist Voice*. We appreciate donations 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 received.

## Our Organization:

The AV Editor is responsible for assuring that *Anabaptist Voice* adheres 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 501(c)3 organization; individual contributions are not tax deductible. Those who give to *Anabaptist Voice* through the local church may obtain a tax deduction.

## Our Bible Translation Policy:

Our desire is always to give the true meaning of the Scripture in simple language that all can understand. To do this we quote from various translations, combine translations, or sometimes put the text in our own words. If we ever give the wrong meaning through an inaccurate rendering of the Scripture, we invite our readers to enlighten us with a correct rendering of the passage in question.

We respect the specific preference of a writer who wishes to use a certain translation.





# 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.

## A Caution Light

I have read most of the current issues of *Anabaptist Voice* and am encouraged. May God continue to direct you as you seek His will in selecting articles and in proofing them.

I would like to bring one concern to your attention regarding having articles written by sisters. I do not criticize the content of what was written, only that according to the Scriptures, sisters are not to teach or exercise authority over the brethren. **"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not the woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11-12).**

M.H. | Missouri

**Anabaptist Voice:** Thank you for the encouragement and the kind way of expressing your concern. We likewise want to abide by the commands given in Scripture.

We agree that we do not want *Anabaptist Voice* to be a forum where women teach men. For this reason we only print teaching articles written by men. However, we encourage sisters to share their experiences, letters, poems, songs, stories and testimonies with us.



## Still Growing

I found out about AV from a friend and then was pleasantly surprised to find one in the mail. I had intended to write after reading the past issue (*featuring an article about a church in Russia which I found very interesting*) but hadn't gotten around to it.

I don't know how I got on your list but want to say "thank you". I find my convictions growing as time passes and am open to new ideas on how we should "live" our faith.

Find enclosed a contribution to assist in the effort.

R.S. | Pennsylvania

## Missionary At Home

I would like to support your work and have included a check. I'd like to continue receiving AV.

I'd also be willing to distribute a few copies (6-10) of each printing. I have 40 employees and I would be happy to provide AV's for reading in the lunchroom as well as for taking along home to share with others.

By the way, one of my employees was struggling with the Sabbath Day versus Sunday issue. He was convinced we were wrong. I intentionally placed your publication where I knew he would notice it, and sure enough he picked it up and read it. He still has it with his belongings. Thanks for addressing that issue. Keep up the good work.

E.E. | Pennsylvania



## Dealing With Depression

If people understand that things like depression can be signs that all is not well, then we should respond and take action to correct what is in error. If we suddenly have chest pains, or severe stomach pains, we don't just go for the strongest pain medicine we can get. We try to find and correct the problem, realizing that the reason for the pain is to alert us to the problem.

Likewise, with depression, we should not just take drugs to deaden the senses or try to lift our spirits, but rather work at the problem that causes it. For certain cases it may include hormone and vitamin supplements; for all it should include study and putting to practice what the Word tells us about the subject of our hearts and minds. It should include a close examination of what our hearts dwell on. Is there someone we haven't forgiven? Do we have bitterness? God hasn't made the human mind with the capability to harbor this sort of thing for long periods of time without damage.

God tells us: **"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13).** My hope is that as the people of God, we will not mix the world's answers with the Bible's regarding emotional health.

G.W. | Pennsylvania

## On Death and Dying

After 16 years of practice in the medical field, my heart was thrilled with Peter Hoover's testimony "On Death and Dying" (AV02, page 32). I believe that Anabaptists of today should have the same faith and trust in God as Peter expressed in his article. Hopefully, there are at least "seven thousand who have not bowed the knee" to the earthly gods of medicine.

In answer to Question #1 (Should Anabaptists always pray for healing?), I submit the following: I cannot find a single reproof from the lips of our Lord during His earthly ministry of healing toward those who sought, besought, worshipped, touched, or prayed to Him for His healing favor, and our sinless Lord Himself prayed that He might be delivered from suffering—if it was the Father's will.

I like what it says in James 5:14-15. "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up."

Another of my favorite verses is found in Philippians 1:21 which brings out the other side, the Peter Hoover side. "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

D.P. | West Virginia



## A True Understanding

My heart is truly touched by sister May B. Different's genuine observations and questions about the headship veiling (AV03, page 40). Please tell her that she is right in both her questions and conclusions.

It is a simple observation to say that in our day the veils of some who follow the god of the Koran or who pray to both God and Mary are often more consistent with this Bible truth than those of many "Anabaptist" sisters.

D.P. | West Virginia

**Anabaptist Voice:** Sister May B. Different is stating the obvious. The veils of many Anabaptist sisters do not cover the hair or the head.

So let's encourage our sisters to make and wear veils pleasing to God. Anything less than full obedience turns this Bible teaching into a cultural practice which may easily be abandoned.

## Marching in Protest

In response to the Practical Question, "Why should Anabaptists not join in peaceful protest marches?" (from "On The War Front: In India", AV04 page 25).

"Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (Acts 12:5).

When I muse upon this text, it sufficiently proves the point in question. Do we not think the first Christians at Jerusalem could have handled this in another way? We must realize the problems we face as Christians are NOT solved in a worldly way, as the first Christians show us here. This is why their example impresses me.

In the light of the Word of God, prayer is a weapon. As Paul says, "For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). Carnal wars use carnal weapons; in spiritual wars we SHOULD use spiritual weapons.

The conclusion I come to is, instead of a protest march, why not pray? I am convinced, brothers, we in Anabaptist circles have too low a view on prayer. Which of us have not been in a conversation about a bad situation and have concluded, "We cannot do much about it, but we can pray"? This severely minimizes the power of prayer. We should rather say, "We can do a lot about this situation; we can pray." Too often we think, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth LITTLE."

The first Christians at Jerusalem were amazed at the power of prayer, "As Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, THEY WERE ASTOUNDED (Acts 12:13-16). They looked unto Jesus in their time of need, and God rewarded their faith in a powerful way.

We must not conclude though, that every issue we face will end the way it did with Peter. But let us look to God in our spiritual warfare because no situation for Him is impossible and He is able to save to the uttermost. Instead of using our means to solve issues, let us use God's means and have a proper view of our spiritual weapons and the power of prayer as it is written, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth MUCH" (James 5:16).

R.G. | Alberta

## The Great Big “I”

I have enjoyed reading AV and was wondering if it would be possible to find someone who could write about the subject of humanism. I feel that humanistic thinking has affected us in more ways than we can understand. It seems to be very hard to discern what thoughts are humanistic in nature as they masquerade as “good thoughts” at times. I feel it would be very beneficial for us all to take a deep look at the humanistic thought that pervades the culture of America.

Humanism can be tricky to put a finger on, which is why I was hoping some more-versed person than me could try to articulate it. I guess I see humanism borne out in our society in various ways. Here are a few examples:

1. Environmentalism (saving the earth because there is no thought of an after-life).
2. Doing volunteer work for the sake of feeling good.
3. “It was so nice that he (an unbeliever) passed away peacefully.”
4. Encouragement to be optimistic or use positive thinking. The thought is that if we just think happy thoughts, then everything will turn out all right in the end.

Such thinking as described above has surely affected the thought patterns and reasoning of kingdom Christians. Sometimes humanistic thoughts are passed along as being “correct thoughts” and no one bats an eye.

V.R. | Illinois

**Anabaptist Voice:** The root of humanism lies in not believing in God or His Word (*Atheism*). The exaltation of man and self then follows. See AV05, page 42. The cure for humanism is the truth, “The fear of God, that is wisdom” (Job 28:28). Because God is so great, those who truly fear Him should not have a problem with self-exaltation or even think that mankind can deliver himself.

However, even among the people of God, some may fail to see that neither education nor science nor riches can tell the difference between good and evil or produce the peace of God in the heart.



## Inspiring the Younger Ones

This will be brief as I have already taken my break this afternoon glancing through the *Calvary Messenger* that came in the mail. Of course, I had to go ahead and read

the interview with you and decided it was time to make my comment.

In the interview, you mentioned that you didn’t know if anyone young even reads AV. I have been meaning to tell you when I see you that yes, some young folks do read AV. We get a number of copies here that we give to the children. I met two 11-year-olds outside the church and handed each of them one. They both reached for a copy and eagerly opened theirs. They started paging through to see what all was inside.

I don’t remember all their comments but I could tell they had enjoyed previous issues. I sure wished I could have taken a picture for you!

Now, to be totally honest, it was the issue after the one that had pictures of the authors; they did mention something about liking to see the pictures. But young folks do read the magazine.

B. H. | South Carolina

**Anabaptist Voice:** We are blessed to know that people of all ages enjoy articles of substance related to their faith and practice. We also hope that AV can inspire young people with the stories of heroes of faith who live it out in our own time. May AV light a lifelong fire in these young people that will move them to follow Christ into eternity.



## Ornery Thinkers

I want to thank you for your work in the Kingdom. Some days you probably don’t feel like vessels in God’s hands; don’t let those days get to you.

I am already receiving bulk mailings, but have not communicated as to how many copies I’d like. I was receiving three, but I’d like to receive eight, if I could.

The brothers in my community have disagreed with some of the content in AV, but they still ask for it. Of course, we humans are so ornery we would sometimes disagree with the Bible if our consciences would let us. Thank God there are still faithful men on the earth.

A. V. S. | Maine

**Anabaptist Voice:** We are not afraid of those who disagree with us. The truth will stand, even if closely examined. AV sometimes ventures into unpopular areas. If upon examination, brothers and sisters feel we stray from the truth, we welcome their thoughts. And we also appreciate those who agree with our stands and support us with letters, articles, stories, and checks.



# 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.*

## Ask, Search, Walk

Each of us today, like those who have gone before us and those yet to come, journey through life in many and varied circumstances and yet God offers salvation to all that dwell upon the earth—every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Revelation 14:6). For some of us it is through direct revelation from His Word as we sought Him; then He sends others to help us grow in our Christian walk. For that reason I will be eternally grateful as I look back on my life.

No one is born a Christian. We may be raised in a Christian home but that is no guarantee that Christ rules in our personal lives. Each one of us has to make a personal decision as to whether or not we will submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and be saved by grace through faith and not by our own works. Each of us has a personal story of the events that led to the moment of decision when we came to the place where we said, “Lord Jesus, forgive me for having offended You and rejected You with my life of sin. I throw myself on Your mercy and accept You as my Lord and Savior.”

Today the Bible is our one sure foundation. Its principles direct us. Although our applications may vary for a number of reasons, none of which we believe take away from or diminish our life in Christ Jesus, the principles must be put into practice.

Menno Simons said it well when he stated; “All true Christians are members of one body. Since they are thus united, it is Christian (Christlike) and reasonable that they divinely love one another, and that one member genuinely cares for the welfare of the other. Both Scripture and nature would teach us this.”

There are times when children and young people, in fact all of us, should, in a right and respectful way, question what we are being taught or asked to do. We as adults ought not put them off, but should explain to them what is wrong. That is what Jesus offers and requires from us.

Keep asking, keep searching; the Lord will reveal what He wants for your life step by step.

*Joseph Van Loon | Deloraine, Tasmania*



## Is “Bobby Bluebird” in the Bible? (AV05, page 22)

God has long been teaching me the Bobby-Bluebird lesson from life experiences. And I have felt that it fits many scriptural passages and principles. For example, “Love your neighbor as yourself” and “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” But some years ago, I found a story in Joshua 22 that illustrates the “Triple A Rule of Life” beautifully. Read it for yourself. But here's a review:

- After the conquest of Canaan, Joshua sent home the two and one-half tribes that received their inheritance on the east side of Jordan.
- At the Jordan, they stopped and built an altar of witness.
- When the western tribes heard about the altar, they assumed that their brothers had a wicked motive and prepared to attack them.
- Before attacking, they wisely decided that they should send a delegation to ask.
- Even though the delegation started out accusing more than asking, they listened and found out that their assumption was wrong, and civil war was averted.

There it is:

Don't assume.

Don't attack.

ASK.

And notice this: “**Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the divisions of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them**” (**Joshua 22:30**). That really blesses me. They not only accepted that they were wrong in their judgment of their brothers’ motives; they were pleased to find out they were wrong!

What would happen in our churches if we always followed this example? What would be the outcome if we always responded like this to our brothers when we ask? How many “civil wars” would be averted?

*Ernest Strubhar | Perkins, Oklahoma*



# An Anabaptist Understanding of Grace

by David Bercot

*“Good will and peace are yours from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!” (Galatians 1:3)*

I still vividly remember sitting in class under the watchful eye of Matt Dawson, listening to his legal lectures. I remember him saying one day: “You can write the law any way you want, but let me define the terms, and I’ll win every time.”

## Defining Bible Terms

If defining terms is essential in understanding the law, it is even more so in understanding the Bible—because eternity is at stake. Whoever defines the words used in the Bible essentially defines what the Bible teaches.

However, Christianity differs from law in one essential aspect: In law, if you can convince a judge or a jury that your definition is right, you win. In Christianity, all that matters is that our definition is true, or we can lose our eternal reward and may even suffer eternal punishment.

## Defining Grace

In Protestant evangelical Christianity, there are few words that have taken on greater importance than the word “grace.” Our English word “grace” is a translation of the Greek word *charis*. For most of my life, I’ve been told that *charis* means “unmerited favor.” The common understanding is that this definition of grace supports the teaching that Christian obedience is not necessary for us to be acceptable to God.

So if the common definitions with all their theological meanings are suspect, what is the proper definition of the Greek word, *charis*?

I would argue that the only way we can know what *charis* meant in New Testament times is to go to the writings around that period—particularly, the writings of Jews and Christians. For any New Testament word, the three most valuable ancient sources we can go to in order to discern the meaning of that word, as used by 1st century Christians, are: (1) the Septuagint, (2) the New Testament, and (3) the early Christian writings. So in the past year, I made a study of how *charis* is used in those three sources.

## “Grace” in the Septuagint

I began with the Septuagint. What’s that? It’s the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament made, or

begun, around 250 B.C. Why begin with the Septuagint? We start with the Septuagint because it was the Greek Old Testament used by the vast majority of the New Testament Christians. Most of the New Testament quotations from the Old Testament are from the Septuagint.

Not only that, so much of the language and expressions used in the New Testament come directly from the Septuagint. The same 1st century Christians who were reading the letters of Peter, Paul, and John in *koiné Greek* were also reading the Septuagint, which, too, was written in *koiné Greek*. So the Septuagint is an obvious starting place. In fact, most of the same words used in the New Testament are also used in the Septuagint.

So, what did I discover *charis* means in the Septuagint?

Most of the time it simply means “favor” or “goodwill”—particularly favor extended by a person of greater power or authority to one in a weaker or lesser position. Usually there’s a reason why the recipient receives favor from the person in greater power.

For example, Noah found *charis* or favor with God, because he had strong faith and because he was living righteously in a wicked world. Joseph found *charis* or favor with Potiphar, the head jailer, and eventually Pharaoh, because God gave Joseph special competence and wisdom. Ruth found *charis* or favor with Boaz because of the kind way she treated Naomi, her mother-in-law. Esther found *charis* or favor with her husband, the king, because she was beautiful both inwardly and outwardly.

Look at this quote from Proverbs 3:36-37 in the Septuagint and Proverbs 3:33-34 in the KJV. *“The curse of God is in the houses of the ungodly, but He blesses the dwellings of the righteous. The Lord opposes the arrogant, but He gives grace to the humble.”*

In this passage Solomon gives us two sets of opposites: (1) He curses the ungodly but blesses the righteous and (2) He opposes the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble. So God’s treatment and view of people is based on their conduct. He opposes the arrogant but grants *charis* (favor) to the humble. So, it is evident that *charis* does not refer to unmerited favor in this passage. You may recognize the last verse as one of the proverbs that Peter quotes in the New Testament (I Peter 5:5). This is important, as it shows that *charis* means the same thing in the New Testament, as it does in the Old.

What am I saying? I'm saying the evidence is very clear in the Septuagint<sup>1</sup>. *Charis* was an ordinary, everyday word that simply meant "favor" or "goodwill"—particularly favor extended by a person of greater power or authority to one in a weaker or lesser position. It carries with it no connotation of being "unmerited" or "undeserved." Nor does it carry with it any connotation that it is merited or deserved. It's neutral. In that sense, it's exactly like our English word "favor." In itself, the word "favor" is neutral. It doesn't imply that favor given is either merited or unmerited.

*Charis* in the Old Testament Greek was just an ordinary word like mercy, kindness, peace, or humility.

### "Grace" in Early Christian Writings

So we've seen what *charis* meant in the Greek Old Testament. Now we are going to take a look at what *charis* meant in the centuries after the Greek New Testament was written. If the meaning of the Greek word *charis* was the same in the centuries both before and after the New Testament was written, we can then assume that the meaning of *charis* remained the same in the New Testament.

In this short treatise, I can't possibly share all the passages I was able to find where the word "grace" is used in the early Christian writings of the 2nd century.<sup>2</sup> I will list only one example from Clement of Rome and give some arguments to summarize how these writers understood the word "grace."

Clement of Rome was a faithful leader in the church at Rome in the late first century. It's very possible that he is the same Clement mentioned by Paul in Philippians 4:3, but we can't be sure. Around the year 95 A.D., because of a dispute the Corinthians were having, he penned a letter to the church at Corinth. If this date is correct, his letter is contemporaneous with the writings of the apostle John. Let's see how Clement uses the word *charis*.

In chapter 7 of his letter, Clement writes:

[Christ's blood], having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world.

So Clement talks about the "grace of repentance." In other words, God has granted "grace" or "favor" to all of mankind by allowing them to repent of their sins. This means Clement doesn't understand *charis* or "grace" to be

simply a blank check that God writes. His giving us the opportunity to repent and be forgiven is *charis*.

Let me give you an illustration of how this opportunity to repent is different than saying "grace" is an unconditional "blank check." Let's suppose a man has lived a life of crime—burglaries, armed bank robberies, and even murder. But he is finally caught and stands trial. The evidence against him is incontrovertible, and the jury finds him guilty. There are no extenuating circumstances, nor any other basis for clemency, so the judge sentences him to life in prison. However, just as he is about to be led away from the courtroom, the judge suddenly stops the guards, saying, "Wait a minute."

Then, looking at the convicted man, he says, "You don't deserve any clemency. However, if you will right here and now completely repent of your crimes, I'm going to cancel the sentence and let you go free. When I say repent, I mean that you are thoroughly sorry for your crimes and you totally hate the kinds of things you did. And you're determined to never again return to a life of crime."

The man accepts the judge's offer and thoroughly repents of his past crimes. So the judge cancels the sentence against him and sets him free.

Now, I can assure you that in real life, this would never happen. No judge would extend that kind of clemency. But that's what the early Christians understood by God's grace or *charis* to do for us. As former sinners alienated from God, we didn't deserve any clemency. The opportunity God gave us to repent was completely unmerited and undeserved.

But hold on a minute. God's grace or *charis* is not a blank check.



### GRACE: An Unmerited Clemency?

<sup>1</sup> For a complete listing of references and arguments from the Septuagint, go to <[scrollpublishing.com/store/grace.html](http://scrollpublishing.com/store/grace.html)>. Or simply contact Scroll Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> For a complete listing of references and arguments from early Christian writers, go to <[scrollpublishing.com/store/grace.html](http://scrollpublishing.com/store/grace.html)>. Or simply contact Scroll Publishing.

In our illustration, what if this man who has been given clemency returns to a life of crime? Well, the next time he's up before that judge, there isn't going to be any mercy, is there? He's shown that he has little appreciation for what the judge did. Figuratively speaking, he has spit in the judge's face. He was given "grace," and he has trampled on it.

So when Clement of Rome wrote about the grace of repentance, he meant that God gave the whole world the opportunity to repent, and not that God's *charis* or "grace" gives a repentant sinner a right to continue living in sin.

## "Grace" in the New Testament

So God's grace is not a blank check to continue sinning. Thankfully, Jesus tells us that we can, and should, pray every day for God to forgive us our trespasses or debts. The entire New Testament teaches that God continues to forgive our sins when we repent—even after our initial repentance and conversion. So God is much more merciful and long-suffering than even the judge in my illustration.

Yet, there is a point—if we continue to sin willfully—that God says, "Enough! You have spit in my face. You have trampled on the precious blood of my Son. Your repentance is not genuine." The Scriptures teach that in places like Hebrews 6:4-8 and Hebrews 10:26-31.

However, popular Christianity today teaches something different. Taking the illustration I just gave you, it changes at the point where the criminal has been sentenced and is about to be led away by the guards.

The judge cries out "Wait a minute." He then looks at the criminal and says, "If you will acknowledge you're a criminal—if you will say and believe that you are completely helpless to save yourself—if you will say you are sorry and you want to be free of your life of crime, then I'll wipe out your sentence. Not only that, if you return to a life of crime, I'll wipe out the sentence for those crimes as well. You are guaranteed never to go to prison, or suffer any other judicial punishment—regardless of what you do in the future."

Common teaching today says biblical grace means that regardless of your future sins, you will not suffer punishment in hell, but that's not true. Grace is not an act of law. It's not a "get-out-of-jail-free" card. Grace is simply God's favor or goodwill.

Just because God's grace is conditional doesn't mean we deserve His continued grace or favor. It means that He is very merciful and kind. But there is no blank check.

Jesus made this clear in His parable of the Unmerciful Servant, found in Matthew 18. In that parable, the king

canceled the debt of a servant who owed him an enormous amount because the servant expressed heartfelt sorrow. But then this same servant refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed him a fairly small debt. In fact, he had the fellow servant thrown in jail. What does the king do when he hears about this? Jesus tells us:

*"Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him" (Matthew 18:32-34).*

And just in case we don't get the message of the parable, Jesus drives the point home in the final sentence: *"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" (Matthew 18:35).*

So there's no blank check. In fact, Jesus shows us that even the initial cancellation of our debt is a conditional one. God has the right to reinstate it if we refuse to forgive our fellowman. So God's *charis* or favor has conditions on it.

If a person reads the New Testament without any preconceived views that grace is some kind of special theological word, he will find that it has the exact same meaning in the centuries before and after the time when the New Testament was written.

When I went to the New Testament to see how the word *charis* is used there, the first thing I couldn't help but notice is that the word doesn't even appear in Matthew or Mark, the first two books of our New Testament. This struck me as rather strange, since the Gospel of Matthew contains more of the direct teachings of Jesus than any other New Testament book. And Mark's gospel was a record of the gospel that Peter was preaching about Christ. But the mystery doesn't end there. The big revelation I received is that Jesus never used the word "grace."

I said that Jesus never used the word "grace." He actually used *charis* three times in one passage but the KJV and most of the modern Bibles translate it as "thanks" instead of "grace."

*"For if ye love them which love ye, what thanks have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to ye, what thanks have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thanks have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again" (Luke 6:32-34).*



The true grace of God does not eliminate the need for good works.  
Rather, it brings forth a new, just, holy life full of good works

**Samuel Frölich (1803-1857)**

In this passage, Jesus is saying that if we only do what the rest of the world does, don't expect any *charis* or "favor" from God.

I would like to go through the entire New Testament with you, looking at every passage where the word *charis* is used.<sup>3</sup> I can't list all of them in this short treatise, but I do want to comment on one of the most common uses of the word *charis* in the New Testament—and that's in the greetings and closings of letters. Over a fourth of Paul's use of the word *charis* are in such greetings and closings.

Paul's typical greeting in his letters is, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," or something similar. Translators use their special theological word, "grace" there instead of giving *charis* its ordinary meaning of "favor" or "goodwill." They could just as easily translate that greeting as "Favor and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Or as "Goodwill and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For a complete listing of all the uses of *charis* in the New Testament, go to <[scrollpublishing.com/store/grace.html](http://scrollpublishing.com/store/grace.html)>. Or simply contact Scroll Publishing.

<sup>4</sup> I have found six English translations that consistently give these greetings as Brother Bercot suggests is the correct meaning of *charis*. — JGL.

Let us summarize what we have observed in studying the meaning of *charis* in (1) the Septuagint, (2) the New Testament, and (3) the early Christian writings.

- God's treatment and view of people is based on their conduct.
- *Charis* does not refer to unmerited favor.
- *Charis* means the same thing in the New Testament, as it does in the Old.
- *Charis* is God giving us the opportunity to repent and be forgiven.
- God's *charis* or "favor" has conditions on it.
- *Charis* is not a blank check to continue living in sin.
- God's *charis* may be withdrawn.
- *Charis* was an ordinary, everyday word that simply meant "favor" or "goodwill."

D.B. | Amberson, Pennsylvania



In Romans 4:4, Paul writes, "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt." This is consistent with what we have been saying. *Charis* means "favor" or "a favor", but it never means "wages" or "debt." Salvation is a "gift" or "favor;" it is never something owed to us by God.

For more discussion of "grace" from Romans 4, see the next issue of *Anabaptist Voice*.



# Doing the Will of the Father

by William Byler

“Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God” (Acts 20:26-27).

There are great blessings in belonging to the Anabaptist community. However, in the minds of some, the beliefs of the Anabaptist faith unnecessarily restrict them from worldly freedoms that other Christians enjoy. Why then should we be conservative Anabaptists if it isn't necessary in order to get to heaven? We see many non-Anabaptist Christians around us who name Christ as their Savior. They pray, study the Bible and attend church. We read their books, listen to their testimonies and see changed lives. They preach the gospel and souls are saved through their witness. We assume they are heaven-bound.

Yet many teach that some of our firmly-held Anabaptist beliefs such as nonresistance, the two kingdoms, refusal of divorce and remarriage, separation from the world, modesty and the headship veiling are nonessentials as far as the Lord Jesus is concerned. In their view, these are simply traditions that are not necessary to get to heaven. Strictly speaking, these are not Anabaptist doctrines; they are Bible doctrines. However, given that the Anabaptists are the largest group in the USA that uphold these truths, we will call them “Anabaptist doctrines.” These are truths that provoked the founders of the Anabaptist movement to re-establish the doctrines of the early church.

So for the moment, let us lay aside the position of non-Anabaptist people and consider the following question: Can those of us who were taught these things from childhood knowingly decide to ignore them and still go to heaven? We should also include all people who the Lord has convicted on these Bible teachings. Can they decide some applications of Bible teaching are unnecessary after all, disregard them, and still expect to hear the words, “Well done thou good and faithful servant?”

If we consider the New Testament teachings honestly, I think we are compelled to believe God expects Christians to observe these doctrines—obviously allowing some range for their exact interpretation and application. Why else would He include them in His eternal Word? So, to intentionally stop observing these Bible doctrines is to go against the New Testament teaching, which is sin. James 4:17 says, “**To him that knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**” Will such a person be worthy of heaven, and see with joy the face of our Savior and Lord? In this same regard, I think of the verses in Luke

12:47-48, “**And that servant which knew his lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.**” Clearly, *God holds those with knowledge of His will to a higher standard than those with less knowledge or maybe no knowledge at all.*

Some of my readers will say that these “Anabaptist teachings” are open to other interpretations, only Jesus' words are binding or valid. Let's examine each of these statements, in turn.

## Other Possible Interpretations

First, in answering the question of other possible interpretations, we must be very careful that our motive and personal agenda do not cloud the better judgment of the “pure in heart.” When a new interpretation relies on supposed subtle and heretofore unused meanings of Greek words as to change the normal, long-accepted meaning, there is reason to be suspicious. The Bible was largely written and preached by average people such as shepherds, fishermen and carpenters; therefore the Bible can be understood by normal farmers and carpenters today. God has chosen to give common men the power to preach His words and will for mankind. We do not depend on superior human intellect but on the authority of the Spirit. Accordingly, it doesn't take much wisdom to understand God's will, for “**not many wise after the flesh... are called**” (**I Corinthians 1:26**). A fifth grader with no prior theological teaching or indoctrination will probably get the Scripture's intent on his own.

## Only Jesus' Words Are Valid

Some argue that only Jesus' words are valid for salvation. Notice that Jesus specifically gave the twelve apostles power from on high to continue His earthly mission. He said, “**Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high**” (**Luke 24:49**).

In addition, God through the Apostles communicated His written Word. So in a strong sense, the written words of the New Testament are the words of Jesus.

However, the argument that only the words of Jesus are authoritative and need to be obeyed, is self-refuting by its own proponents because most of the above-named

Anabaptist doctrines are directly derived from Jesus' own teaching. For example, the pastor of a large denomination once told me that he believes only the red-letter verses in the Bible apply to us today. Yet his church ignores the prohibition of divorce and remarriage and other teaching that comes from Jesus' direct words. I could add that many evangelical Christian churches do teach against divorce and remarriage but, nevertheless, allow it in their congregations.

## Anabaptist Teachings Are Not Essential

We have already addressed the third argument, which attempts to make these Anabaptist doctrines unnecessary for salvation. Nevertheless, we repeat, why then did God preserve them in His Word? Isn't it presumptuous to declare, as some do, that because the Bible does not directly link these commandments to personal salvation, they are unessential? I assume such people are thinking of passages which declare that an adulterer, murderer, drunkard, or thief will not enter the Kingdom. I'm afraid that too often these very apologists allow those sins in their churches. **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" (1 Corinthians 6:9).**

Despite the scriptural teaching, an increasing number of Anabaptists are rejecting the Anabaptist teachings and following the Protestant churches. Does God approve? Many have done so and nothing has happened; lightning hasn't fallen from heaven upon them, they haven't been struck with sudden horrible illness, and life goes on normally. But those non-events are not a safe confirmation of God's approval. People dare not disobey New Testament teachings in order to have a greater walk with God. It doesn't work that way. Galatians 5:13 says, **"For you brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."** We must not forget that to become more spiritual is to be more filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is to be like Him in all His teaching and life, not less so.

## Anabaptists and Non-Anabaptists are Accountable Alike

I John 1:7 says, **"Walk in the light as He is in the Light."** The full light that illuminates Scripture does not immediately come when an unbeliever surrenders his will and commits his life to follow the Lord Jesus. We **"grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus."** Growing toward perfection is a Christian mandate and goal. But as every believer learns the truth, he becomes responsible before God to obey it. Romans 2:13 says, **"For it is not those who**

**hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous."**

Some have a greater opportunity to know the truth than others—teaching, training, Bibles to read, church fellowship. But each one is responsible to obey the light he has before more light will be given him. Jesus made this clear to the Jews of his day in two different passages. In Matthew 13:12 he told His disciples why He spoke to the Jews in parables: **"For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."** And the warning that the truth will be taken away from those who know it is reinforced by Jesus' teaching in the parable of the talents where Jesus said in Matthew 25:29, **"For to everyone who has more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away."** This truth explains why many Anabaptists who turn their backs on one Bible teaching, soon lose their understanding of many Bible truths. This verse also explains why those who obey the light they already have, receive understanding of additional Bible truths.

This teaching illustrates again that all believers, Anabaptists and non-Anabaptists, must "do" the things they know, or God will take away the understanding they already have. Let's remember that there is a difference between rebellion and immaturity.

So how accountable are most Anabaptist Christians who from childhood have been gifted with a godly heritage and much precious truth? <sup>1</sup> Will God bless the one who rejects these truths for "instant food" which might be physically gratifying but spiritually is a bowl of porridge? The children of Israel are an example of this; they hated God's food—manna that He had provided as good and adequate. God was very displeased with them.

Consider the ways God calls His children. He calls us through His Word, through His Spirit, and through the voice of other faithful believers. Examples are men like Moses, David, Daniel and many others. Is it possible that God would want us to ignore our calling and choose another, clearly lesser call? What will happen if God has called us to witness Anabaptist truths to the Protestant world, but we end up joining them instead? Remember Jonah, who ran away from the task that God had called him to do. Or maybe we dislike being a waterer like

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*<sup>1</sup> We recognize that some Anabaptists have been taught the correct outward forms of obedience to Anabaptist teaching without ever learning the biblical basis for observing them. This is a dangerous situation because these practices then become only part of a culture and can be easily thrown away when one rejects the culture.*

Apollos and want to be a planter like Paul, despite God calling us to be waterers (I Corinthians 3:6).

But the most important question is the one we began with. Will we hear those words, “Well done thou good and faithful servant?” If we ignore things we know are taught in Scripture and intentionally disobey His commands, will we happily meet the Lord?

Disobeying one command of the Scripture is a very dangerous thing to do. Hebrews 10:26 warns us, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”

Personally, I must contemplate the sober thought of someday meeting the Righteous Judge on His holy throne and being asked, “Why didn’t you obey what you knew the Scripture taught? Why were you ashamed of your calling? Why were you ashamed of being identified with a peculiar Anabaptist people who obeyed the teachings in my Word?”

I want to do everything I can now to assure that I can give the Righteous Judge good answers to these questions.

W. B. | Bonner’s Ferry, Idaho

“Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven”

*Matthew 5:19*



## Writing Challenge!

*“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.”* **Hebrews 5:12**

In Hebrews 6:1 & 2, the writer lists six things he would class as elementary. Take one of the six topics, explain it in an essay and send to AV.

1. Repentance from dead works.
2. Faith toward God.
3. Doctrine of baptisms.
4. Laying on of hands.
5. Resurrection of the dead.
6. Eternal judgment.



# He Taught with Authority

by multiple writers

On page 23 of Anabaptist Voice, Issue #5, a writing challenge was presented to young men. The challenge: to tell what was different about Jesus' teachings in Matthew 7:28-29 where it says, "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law."

Following are responses of brethren who answered that challenge; see the previous page (15) for a new challenge!

## He Taught with Authority

by Reuben J. Kaufman

### 1. Authority by position

Authority is legal power delegated to a person's position or office. It gives the privilege or right to give commands and enforce obedience. Jesus was chosen and sent by the Father. He didn't seek to do His own will, but the will of the Father. When John the Baptist was hesitant to baptize Him, Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." He fulfilled the prophecy of Isa. 11:5 and His own words in Matt. 5:17. The Spirit of God came on Him and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Jesus was obedient in all things to the Father's will. Therefore His teaching was by the authority of heaven itself.

### 2. Authority Because of Power

Authority means power. Wherever Jesus went, people followed Him because He demonstrated power and control.

He was able to supply every need—wine at the wedding, food to the hungry, sight to the blind, healing to the sick, and the lame walked. He cast out evil spirits. He walked on the water and stilled the stormy sea. When the scribes, chief priests, and elders asked who gave Him His authority, they were looking for something whereby they could accuse Him. He then asked one simple question, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" They were caught in their own trap for they couldn't answer Him without admitting their own guilt and lack of power.

### 3. Authority by Personal Character

Authority may also flow from a person's character, personality or position—the ability to influence and shape the actions of others. Jesus lived His life on earth as the Son of Man.

He went through the different stages of life, childhood to manhood, as the Son of Man. When He was baptized

and before he began His public ministry, He had the Father's blessing. The Spirit rested on Him and led Him into the wilderness to be tempted. He was tempted as we are and didn't sin. He returned from the temptation in the power of the Spirit. He began to do and teach. He lived and taught truth. His teaching was how He lived. He was the friend of sinners and of the poor. He did not seek to do His own will, but the Father's will. His authority came from heaven itself.

R.J.K. | Sugarcreek, Ohio



## He Knew it All

by James A. Goering II

In John 7 officers sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus were so moved by His speech that they said, "No one ever spoke the way this man did." They returned awed and without a prisoner.

In Matthew 7 the people listening to the Sermon on the Mount were astonished at Jesus' teaching because He taught in a new and powerful way, "as one who had authority."

In Luke 24 Jesus walked to Emmaus with His disciples and spoke to them from the Scriptures. He spoke so intensely that afterwards they said, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

What was it about Jesus' teachings that so affected the people? The people had certainly listened to other powerful speakers so it must have been more than His speaking ability. What made Him different?

We often speak of an expert as an "authority" on a subject. Perhaps He went to school for further education or, perhaps He learned by personal experience and study. Experts often have insights and information we couldn't possibly hope to know ourselves because of their greater experience in a given area of study.



Jesus was divine. As wholly God and wholly man, Jesus had access to all truth and wisdom. When he spoke, He spoke as one having authority because He was “the authority.” Hearing God incarnate speak must have been an incredible experience.

As men, we can only strive to discover the truth because we “see through a glass darkly.” Unlike us, Jesus had a direct line to the source of all truth. This infused His speaking with an authority that was unlike anyone else who ever lived. Imagine being asked to preach a sermon when you know everything there is to know about the passage you are preaching from. This knowledge and insight would lend your preaching an unimaginable degree of power. That must have been what it was like to hear Jesus speak.

As the source of all truth and knowledge, Jesus could open the Scriptures to the people in a new way. The scribes were educated in the Scriptures, but may have struggled to explain them in an understandable way. Jesus used parables about common things to explain difficult concepts to the common people.

Jesus spoke as one having authority because He was God incarnate. He could open the Scriptures to the common people because of His accessible speaking style. These two characteristics combined to make Him a speaker who astounded all those who heard Him.

*J.A.G. II | Bridgewater, Virginia*



## The Authority of Jesus' Teaching

*by Bradlyn Wadel*

After Jesus taught the people the things that are recorded in the Sermon on the Mount, the people were amazed at his doctrine. Jesus' teaching was given with authority and His way of teaching contrasted with the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. So, why did Jesus' teaching have authority that the teaching of the scholars did not have?

In this passage, we are not told exactly how the scribes taught, so we cannot know for certain why their teaching lacked authority. But we can assume from what we know of the scribes' character and values that their teaching did not bring the truth of Scripture to the people as a relevant, progressive, and life-giving message.

## Truth and Relevance

Truth and relevance to the listeners' lives is the foundation of authority and influence. I want to point out a few of the ways in which the message of Jesus was astonishingly authoritative.

Jesus' message inaugurated a new way in which God related to mankind. He revealed this way by a thorough understanding of the Scripture as well as through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His message was new but was connected to the truth that God had already revealed to the Jews.

## Make the Principles Understandable

Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 with a declaration of the attitudes that people should have toward themselves and toward others. Some of the attitudes Jesus called us to—meekness, peacemaking, willingness to suffer—were not apparent in the way God called the Jews to live in the past. But the Jews could see that these new teachings of Jesus were consistent with the character of God. Jesus' hearers realized the authority behind the call to develop these attitudes.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also corrected some of the twisted and self-serving interpretations of Scripture that the religious leaders had developed. He pointed out the true purpose of the commands that were given in Scripture and explained how these commands were to be put into practice. Jesus authoritatively taught in this way on murder, adultery, swearing, retaliation, and love for all men.

## Practical Daily Living

Jesus also taught about many areas of practical daily living that challenged people to a new and better way of life. These practical teachings showed how the universal nation of Jesus' followers should relate to each other. These principles for living were different, in some ways, from the way the Jews had been called to live as a special, chosen people during the previous centuries, but were consistent with the past and recognized as truth by those with open minds.

## The Conclusion

Jesus is a great example of authoritative teaching. We also are called to bring the message of God to others with authority in the same way that Jesus did. May we lay out truth in a convincing way, make the principles behind the commands understandable to listeners, and give practical applications that are relevant to the current times.

*B.R.W. | Waynesboro, Georgia*

# Servants of the Kingdom

This is the condensed and translated testimony of a Chinese believer at a conference in Hong Kong. All names are withheld for security reasons.

“He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them” (I Samuel 2:8). In this verse, I see God’s grace to me. I hope to honor Him and reveal His grace through this testimony.

On the first day of my stay here, I walked past a garbage dump. When I saw an older lady picking up some clothes (better ones for her) from the dump, I thought of the above verse. Even though the lady was in a garbage dump, she saw some potential in the trash.

God is like that. He sees potential in the garbage dumps of this world. As for me, I am just like the trash. He picked me up like a piece of trash. He showed grace to my family.

My grandmother became a believer when she was young. During the Cultural Revolution,<sup>1</sup> my grandmother and my family members experienced persecution. They tortured my grandmother by hanging her up for a whole day. My uncle was continually arrested. He would leave wearing a white T-shirt, but when he came back, it had become a red T-shirt. I am so grateful that my family was faithful.

I remember them telling their stories in the evenings when I was young. My mother visited my uncle’s family during this hard time and became a believer. They did not give up their faith or compromise because of the persecution. My mother and father brought us up in

an environment that left me with strong impressions on my mind.

My grandmother set a good example for me. No matter if it was winter or summer or what else may have been happening, every Sunday morning she would walk thirteen kilometers from my home to the meeting place, even though her feet were bound like those of other Chinese women of the time.

My mother was also a good example. When I was young, she would teach us songs and tell us stories before we went to bed. In those days I was an obedient child.

When I grew up, I went to the city to study and spent time with bad fellows. To make matters worse, I told them I was a Christian. Whenever I think about my life at that time, I feel like the prodigal son.

But one day I went to a meeting. A missionary was preaching, and he said something like this: “God only has sons; He does not have grandsons. You need to make a decision and build a direct relationship with God yourself.”

At that time, I was struggling so hard in my corrupted life. When I heard that each individual will face God one day and be accountable for what he has done in his life, I began to think about my life. The example of the missionary, coming from a faraway place to our city and living a very simple life, shocked me. His values challenged me a lot. So in fear, I faced God and repented.



New Year March, Hong Kong



Mao Zedong, 1963

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese Cultural Revolution led by Mao Zedong took place between 1966-1976. Millions of people were persecuted in the violent struggles that ensued across the country, and suffered a wide range of abuses including public humiliation, arbitrary imprisonment, torture, hard labor, sustained harassment, seizure of property and sometimes execution. A large segment of the population was forcibly displaced. Historical relics and artifacts were destroyed. Cultural and religious sites were ransacked.

During the terrible prodigal time of my life, I met my future wife. She was not a Christian. After I repented and turned to God, I began to rethink my relationship with her. I felt that God was not pleased since the Bible says that we must not be yoked together with unbelievers. So I told her, “God is not pleased with our relationship. If you do not come to faith in Jesus Christ, we cannot get married.”

At first she wanted to please me and came to church, but one day she asked me a question: “If you make a decision between me and God, which one would you choose?” I struggled with this question, but then I told her, “I will not choose you, but God.” She became very angry and did not want anything more to do with me.

But the next Sunday, I called her and invited her to church. From that time on she became serious about the sermons. Her life gradually changed. Later she also came to faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized.

Whenever I think about my “prodigal son” life and about life today, I realize that God has given me so much grace. After I repented, I felt God calling me to be a full-time minister. Some people have asked, “Did you really have a clear vision from God?” I tell them, “No, I decided to serve God because my life does not belong to myself. In Isaiah 6:8 God said, “**Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?**” I said to God, “I will.” I know that God loves me, so I need to repay love for love.

I feel called to a ministry among university students because there is a great crisis among young people today. They do not have correct values. They do not know the meaning of life. Yet it seems the hearts of many remain open to the truth. So I think students in the university offer a good soil in which to plant the seeds of the gospel.

When I was young, I saw the faith of the older generation, but as I grew up, I did not understand who God really was. I think young people today may have the same experience. Like me, maybe they will repent when they observe a real follower of Jesus Christ.

In order to serve these young people, my wife and I both quit our jobs. We opened our home to them so they could see our lives and our values. We wanted others to see a real Christian marriage is more than just two people living together. We want to counsel young people before they get married so they understand how marriage must honor God and have a good influence on others. Otherwise, there will be much trouble in marriage.

I know our lives are not perfect, but at least we have direction. There is a saying in China, “It is better to depend on ourselves than to depend on earth and heaven.” We want to tell these young Chinese that they must first seek

the Kingdom of God rather than depend on themselves. Then all the things they need will come from Him.

I want to explain further about our ministry. Students come and go, but right now we have about one hundred students in different groups. We focus on Bible study. Many people today focus on fellowship. I do not say this is not important, but Jesus told us His Word is a Light and a Spirit. So in every meeting, we study the Bible together.

First, we study the Sermon on the Mount because it is like the constitution of God’s kingdom. Even though these teachings are so important to Kingdom Christians, very few churches preach the Sermon on the Mount anymore.

In addition to the Sermon on the Mount, we arrange time for the students to learn from the parables of Christ, because His parables teach the mystery of heaven. Some intensive Bible study in books like Romans and John are used to deepen their knowledge of Christian doctrines and the Gospels.

We also share with the students about the foundation of spiritual life, regardless of whether they are new believers or mature believers, because we want them to know what a real Christian is like.

Every Sunday we preach gospel-centered sermons because the Bible says the gospel is the power of God. However, the gospel that some people are proclaiming nowadays is very different from the biblical gospel. So we tell the young people, “If you really believe in God, you need to surrender your life to God.” We challenge them to have a correct response to God’s Word—belief rather than unbelief; obedience rather than disobedience.

So our ministry structure goes like this: students become Christians, they graduate, they marry, and then they have families. Young Christian families become the core of the church. Of course, at first they must be willing to commit themselves to this ministry for young people. We walk together with them.

After they graduate, but before they find a job, they often have a break. During the break period we encourage them to become a full-time worker and serve our fellowship for a year; or, find a job and give offerings to support our church.

The young people are encouraged to practice their faith through trips to places where they can help the poor locals in their needs. Serving in different cultures helps them grow and strengthen their attitudes and values.

When serving these young students, I often have a kind of fear in my heart. But God is always with me and gives me strength and grace. All glory belongs to Him.





# THE ANABAPTIST WAY

## All to Jesus I Surrender

*by Judson W. Van DeVenter*

All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender, Humbly at His feet I bow,  
Worldly pleasures all forsaken, Take me Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender, Make me Saviour, wholly Thine;  
May Thy Holy Spirit fill me, May I know Thy pow'r divine.

All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give myself to Thee;  
Fill me with Thy love and power, Let Thy blessing fall on me.





# The Use of “Thee” and “Thou” in Prayer

by Perry A. Klopfenstein

When worship language in many American denominations switched from German to English during World War I, reference to God in prayer reflected language patterns found in the King James Version of the Bible—thee, thou, thy, and thine.

In virtually all of America this pattern of prayer language continued until the latter stages of the 20th century when many new versions of the Bible emerged. In these, the Elizabethan forms of language, “thee” and “thou,” etc., were eliminated in favor of pronouns such as “you” and “your.”

So today, the question arises regarding using “thee” and “thou” versus “you” and “your” when addressing God. Does it really matter?”

The King James Bible scholars apparently thought so; it’s critical that their viewpoint on this issue be understood. It is often thought by many today that Elizabethan language was the universal pattern during the time the King James Version was published (in 1611), and that is why “thee” and “thou,” etc., were retained.

Yet, this is not totally true. Such formal language had begun passing, in varying degrees, from the scene nearly 300 years previously. A growing number of common people, and others, no longer spoke in the Elizabethan form. Bible translator William Tyndale (1494-1536) and the King James Bible translators recognized this fact (1611).

The translators used “thee” and “thou” because both are singular personal pronouns. They recognized that “you” and “your” did not differentiate between singular and plural. Since God is one God, not many, they reasoned that in referring to God the accuracy of the language was important. “Thee” and “thou” are unquestionably singular, and “you” and “your” can be plural. To the King James scholars, this was vitally important.

They saw the use of “thee” and “thou” as a reflection of monotheism (one God) as opposed to polytheism (multiple gods). To them, “thee” and “thou” were more accurate, language-wise, in referring to God. For the sake of doctrine (one God), they held that because of the singular nature, “thee” and “thou” better reflected the accuracy of one God.

In this sense, they comprehended this matter as a doctrinal one, that is, the Christian faith worships one God. Language, especially in prayer, should reflect this attitude.

The Hebrew and Greek texts have different words for singular and plural pronouns; expressions and references to God are always in a singular tense. Thus, the King James scholars felt compelled to use the same singular/plural patterns when translating into the King James Version. They did so to make it completely accurate and faithful to the original texts.

Every time “you” and “your” are used in the King James Version they are plural. Every time “thee,” “thou,” and “thy” are used, they are singular. When the Lord Jesus uses “thee,” He is always addressing an individual; when He uses “you” or “your,” He is always speaking to more than one person. It is interesting to note that the word “you” occurs over 2,000 times in the King James Version, but never as an address to deity.

Four precepts that must be upheld when considering prayer language during public worship:

1. Accuracy: “Thee” and “thou” are singular and follow the pattern of the original texts when referring to deity.
2. Reverence: A higher and more elegant form of pronoun exalts God and reflects His high and exalted standing. “Thee” and “thou,” etc. surely extends a higher honor and a more serious tone than the more casual and everyday “you” and “your.”
3. Consistency: In churches, the Bible, the hymnals, and verbal prayer should be similar in addressing God.
4. Continuity: Reverent, accurate, and consistent worship must be passed on from generation to generation.

Perry A. Klopfenstein is a 78-year-old historian of the Apostolic Christian Church. This article was used by permission and submitted by Gary Butikofer.

## Practical Questions:

1. If we use “thee” and “thou,” in our prayers, is it important that we also use correct verb forms?
2. Why did the Quakers use “thee” and “thou” forms and verbs when addressing others?
3. Does God really want his children to address Him in high and mighty language?
4. What are some flaws that may be in this article?

P.A.K. | Gridley, Illinois



# Journey of Faith: Why I Became an Anabaptist

by Keith Dehn

My journey to the conservative Anabaptist church is really a journey to know the truth. Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “If ye continue in my word, then ye are my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

I was born and raised as a Roman Catholic and lived on a dairy farm. We had 80 acres and 25 milking cows near the Minneapolis, Minnesota area. I am the youngest of 10 children and enjoyed growing up in rural farm life. The city kept encroaching into our area during my youth, so in the early 1990s my dad sold the farm. Today, it is all built up in houses.

Because I saw the hypocrisy in the Catholic Church while growing up, I decided it was not the true church of Jesus Christ. Because of my bad attitude and sinful nature, I walked away from the organized church somewhere between the age of 16-18. I thought I would live just for myself and the pleasures of this life.

After several years I came to the realization that a life of sin was empty and meaningless. When I was 24 years old, I got down on my knees in my living room, and with the aid of a TV evangelist, I prayed the sinner’s prayer. Through that prayer I became a new creature in Christ.

I started attending an evangelical charismatic church, and was active in Bible studies and church life. In my personal devotional times I experienced tremendous growth.

After 3 years of being a Christian, I realized something was wrong in the teachings of the evangelical church I was part of. This church taught the prosperity gospel of health and wealth; that just didn’t sit right with me and it seemed to go against Scripture. I thought they often took the Scriptures totally out of context and taught them in a very twisted way. So I started asking the Lord what the truth of His Word was. I knew that the prosperity gospel was a false gospel.

I met my future wife at that time. She was attending a different evangelical charismatic church that did not preach the prosperity gospel. Because of my dissatisfaction with the church where I was a member, and because of my attraction to her, I started attending her church. After we married, we both attended “her church.”

Like me, Heidi also experienced the new birth later in life after growing up in the Lutheran church, she left

it and joined the evangelical charismatic church where we met and married. Both of us wanted something better than suburban city life for our children. So soon after our wedding day, we started looking for a more rural area to move to where we could raise a family. We were led of the Lord to purchase a 160-acre farm in the northern Minnesota town of Oklee and moved there. We didn’t know anybody in our new location, but we began attending an evangelical church in the area.

We were not attending our new church very long until questions started to surface in our minds. For instance, when I read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5,6,&7), I saw that Jesus clearly said we are to love our enemies. I was told, “It doesn’t really mean that.”

The same passage said not to swear oaths. Again I was told, “It doesn’t really mean that.” Each time they offered no convincing argument as to what the Scripture did really mean or they said it was for a later dispensation.

Many other New Testament teachings were totally ignored. We felt ill at ease with these teachings and practices where so many things were on the fringe. Heidi and I were just not satisfied. Why did Jesus say to do something and then the church would just dismiss what he said?

But the real stickler came on divorce. My wife and I were beginning to take Jesus’ teachings at face value so we believed divorce and remarriage was wrong. It was soon after that we found out the pastor counseled a couple in the church to get a divorce. Furthermore, Heidi’s parents were already divorced and one of them was remarried at the time. During this time of distress a friend told us, “Look, we know a church about 90 miles from here near Bemidji that might be a better fit for you. Maybe you ought to visit them.”

So we did. In November of 2001, we put our first child in the car and drove the 90 miles to Kitchi Pines Mennonite Church. We both felt perfectly at peace with the service and the people and felt Kitchi was a “safe place” for us.

One of the things that impressed me most was that it seemed the Anabaptists had a way of interpreting the Scriptures so they fit together in perfect harmony. No longer did the Scriptures seem to contradict themselves; the Bible started making sense because all the verses fit.

When I came into the Anabaptist circles, I realized that here was a group of people who not only believed

what the Scripture taught, but they also tried to put into practice all of the New Testament teachings.

We knew nothing about the Anabaptist churches and all that it entailed, we opened our hearts to the teachings. They sounded right to us and they were backed up by Scripture. After much study and prayer, Heidi put on a veiling and started wearing modest dresses.

Heidi's divorced mother and her new husband got really concerned. "What kind of cult are you joining?" they wanted to know. I explained that the Anabaptists were not a cult and that the movement started at nearly the same time as the Lutheran church did.

We then needed to share with them about their marriage, so we sat down with them and had a talk. "Look, the Bible is clear. You are living in adultery. We want you to visit us, but you cannot sleep together in our house when you come." So for a number of years our relationship with them was very strained. Then I apologized for not being gentler in the way I talked with them and after that our relationship improved. Today we visit each other about four times a year, but our stance on what the Bible says about their marriage has not changed.

So much of Anabaptist teaching was completely new to us that we were very cautious when thinking about membership. Bob Stauffer, the lead pastor, and Dale Ropp, the deacon at the time, gently guided us along the way and answered our many questions. There seemed to be no "black holes" or areas we could not talk about.

Finally the day came when we were ready to join Kitchi Pines Mennonite Church. Heidi and I each gave our testimony expressing our peace with God and our fellowman. Then our former adult baptism in the Evangelical church was accepted as a genuine baptism and we were taken in on our own confession of faith. We sold our farm at Oklee and moved to a place four miles from Kitchi Pines Mennonite Church.

I know Anabaptists are not perfect and there is still sin among our people, but I did find a willingness within the Anabaptist church to be obedient to all the Scriptures. Most members take the Scriptures at face value and want to obey them.

My wife and I became members of Kitchi Pines Church in 2002 when I was 32 years old. Seven years later I was ordained a minister. Because of various circumstances in May of 2016 my family and I left Kitchi Pines Church and are now attending Disciples of Christ Mennonite Church. I have my own auto repair business just down the hill from our house so I can walk to work.

Heidi has been home schooling our seven children and doing the other duties of a mother. When the children need some "extra love" she sends them out to the shop to see me.

I love the Lord and look forward to serving Him wherever He leads us. I intend to always remain a conservative Anabaptist.

*K.D. | Bemidji, Minnesota*



#### THE DEHN FAMILY, 2017

The Dehns live close to a statue of Paul Bunyan and Babe, his blue ox, where Paul stands 18' tall and Babe is 10' tall. Bunyan and Babe, in American folklore, performed many imaginary and impossible feats such as hooking Babe up to a crooked road and stretching it straight.

In Isaiah 42:16, we have a promise from God, "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

I know my God can make crooked paths straight! But a big blue ox? NO WAY!



# Why Call Me Good?

by Peter Hoover

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone,” (**Matthew 10:18**).

Not long ago, when my Burmese doctor received my latest bone scans from the hospital he sat at his computer for a little while in silence, scowling. He muttered some inappropriate words. Then he swung his chair around to me and said, “This is my problem with God! You love God and serve Him. But if God can do anything, why does He allow bad things to happen to good people like you? Why doesn’t He help the people who like Him?”

No doubt of a Buddhist background, my doctor has been a very helpful friend for years. I know he cares for me and would so much love to help. I also sense his sincere frustration. Why does life look so unfair?

Trying to explain my position to my non-Christian doctor was not easy, but to me it all makes perfect sense. First, as Jesus said, I am not “good.” None of us deserve good health or any other benefits from God. None of us even deserve our existence to begin with, much less everlasting life with God “in new heavens and a new earth where righteousness will dwell” (**2 Peter 3:13**).

Our life on earth, destined to be short, is nothing other than a preparation, a test run, for what is to come. No matter what we believe or what happens to us, life on earth forces us to choose our eternal destinies. I thank God for giving me the opportunity and urge to choose it now!

What about pain and trouble? If we experienced nothing of it, here on earth, how would we ever learn to choose a blessed eternity?

What is so sad about turning sick or looking at death, if this is reality itself? All the more reason to turn to God, at this time, for the blessed hope, the redemption through Jesus’ blood, and the glory that awaits all “who endure to the end in order to be saved” (**Matthew 24:13**).

Of course, this must seem totally mysterious to my Burmese doctor. How can he understand that I see my earthly situation nothing other than an unlimited series of blessings granted to me by my loving heavenly Father? He has absolutely nothing in mind except my everlasting salvation and good.

Not only in the distant future, but already right now, it all fits together perfectly. “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,” (**Romans 8:28**). And, “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” (**Romans 8:38-39**).

This is my hope and joy. Will you pray with me that my doctor may catch this vision as well?

P. H. | Tasmania, Australia

Burma (now known as Myanmar) with its world famous golden temples.

What do they have to offer when trials come? Even a smidgen of hope?

No.





# A Living Hope

by Lester Bauman

**Introduction:** *Lester Bauman, a Mennonite writer living in Alberta, Canada, and I both came from southern Ontario. Recently he sent me a small writing that I found instructive and on track. — Peter Hoover*

In my Old Order Mennonite background the idea of assurance of salvation was a foreign one. In fact if a person stood up and said he was a Christian and he knew he was going to heaven, he would have been called proud by some. The more knowledgeable ones would have considered him a Calvinist. When I was a boy, if someone believed he was born again, people thought he believed in eternal security.

People read the Bible and noticed the word “hope.” They did not interpret this word like we tend to, like an eight year-old “hoping” he will get a new bicycle for his birthday. Rather, they viewed it as something that was very likely, but not necessarily settled in stone. Some did not understand this and lived in constant fear their salvation was not secure. To them it seemed they would be lost as it was they would be saved, and they felt helpless because their fate was in the hands of a God they did not really know.

But what I have seen in the last decades is a sort of evolution of the idea of assurance to the point that it has

almost become a formula that guarantees our salvation. It has almost made us the master of our own destiny, as the humanist loves to say. I feel that in too many cases this also is a counterfeit, and is often driven by fear. So we are afraid that we are not good enough, and we look for a formula that will force God to accept us. That formula takes various forms but has become very important to Fundamentalist Christians. Take it away, they revert to their fear.

I am suggesting the old belief in hope was actually more solid and more biblical. Why did they hope? They believed in a merciful God who understood them and their humanity. They believed in a God who loved them enough that he would lead them in the right path. Sure, they could turn their back on him, and he would not be forced to accept them, but they had a hope that led them to believe God would not just give up on them and toss them in the trash heap when they failed. So they would crawl to their feet after a failure and continue, with their hope undiminished. This kind of assurance is based on relationship and love, rather than fear. I believe it is actually more solid than the hysterical promotion of “assurance” we sometimes hear.

L.B. | Alberta, Canada



## Our Hope

by James G. Landis

**Credits:** *Peter Hoover and Lester Bauman inspired the following article.*

Today’s newspaper announced the death of a local First Baptist parishioner who died in a truck accident. On the front page, in a special block, was this statement: “Brad was a fine man, and we personally know that his spirit is now absent from his former body and in the presence of his savior, Jesus Christ.”

An Anabaptist preacher at a funeral where speakers were consigning the deceased into glory and a certain reward for the good things done in the body, had it right.

He said, “All we can say is, ‘We have laid the body to rest, and now the spirit is in the hands of God.’”

Does that leave us without “hope”? No! Do we sorrow as those that have no “hope”? No! Are the redeemed no different than those who do not know the Savior and who have not been washed by his blood? No!

Our “hope” is not one of fear and doubt aroused by the sting of sin and evil deeds done in the flesh. It is rather one of calm assurance that past sins have been purged by the blood of Christ and that our good works bear testimony to our saving faith.

J.G.L. | Waynesboro, Georgia



# Called to Service: Ready to Go!

*an interview with a Christian worker in the Middle East*

**This article has been redacted due to security concerns.**

**This article has been redacted due to security concerns.**

## Photos of Tsunami in Indonesia



The tsunami of December 26, 2004 may have claimed the lives of up to 280,000 people. The northern coasts of Sumatra, Indonesia reported tsunami heights of almost 100 ft. Several people as far away as South Africa lost their lives due to the tsunami.



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# Standing Alone

by Gary Butikofer

This story tells the World War I experience of Gary's grandfather, Will Butikofer 1892-1972.

Will Butikofer never knew his father. Jacob Butikofer, Jr. died when Will, the youngest of eleven children, was only 10 months old. Will never saw a picture of his father because the Apostolic Christians before 1940 did not take pictures of people.

At the age of 24, Will lived with his widowed mother—a widow of 23 years—on her farm and hand-milked eight cows, fed the cows, horses, mules, and chickens, slopped the pigs, made the hay, and did all the other duties associated with a farm in those days. Only one sister, Louisa remained at home to help with the farm work. All nine of the other children had left home.

## The Rushed Marriage

In 1917, Will thought he would like to marry a neighbor girl, Marie Grimm. Although Will Butikofer had known Marie Grimm ever since she was a baby, and although they had grown up attending the same country church, they hardly knew each other because Will was seven years older than Marie. There was no period of courtship. As was the custom among the Apostolic Christians, Will asked to marry Marie through the ministry in the fall of 1917.

Marie was not quite ready to get married because she felt eighteen years of age was too young. She made Will wait for two months before she finally gave him a positive answer in November.

They kept their engagement a secret for several months because they feared Will might be drafted into World War I. But when it appeared that he would be deferred because he was the only one farming his sick mother's land, they announced their engagement in church the following July. However, their wedding came much sooner than they expected.

About a week after their bans were published in church, Elder John Plattner from Sabetha, Kansas, called from West Bend, Iowa, where he was proving and baptizing a group of young folks. He said he would like to marry Will and Marie the next Thursday evening because he would be in the area and he had no idea when he would come to Iowa again.

Even though weddings were simple in those days with no attendants and no fanfare, it was still not easy for them

to get married so suddenly. The day of the wedding Will had lots of hay to mow. That evening he had all the chores to do by himself, including milking the cows by hand. He hoped his brothers, who all lived nearby, would offer to do the chores for him that evening, but they did not. So after chores were done, he had to hurry and heat the water, take a bath, and then change into his wedding suit.

Elder John Plattner married them on Thursday evening, July 18, 1918. This was unusual because most Apostolic Christian weddings, then and now, occur on Sunday.

After their marriage, Marie's uncle, John Grimm, transported the newlyweds to her parents' home in his new car. The morning after their wedding, Will got up early, went to his mother's farm, did the chores and then put up the hay. There was no time for anything like a wedding trip.

Marie's parents planned a big reception the following Sunday night for Will and Marie. For Marie a dark cloud hung over the event. Apparently, someone had reported Will's marriage to the draft board in Elkader and accused Will of getting married simply to escape the draft. The board immediately ordered Will to report to Elkader on the following Thursday for induction into the army. Marie tried to keep the shocking news a secret from Will until after the 300-person reception at her father's farm was over. She failed.

On that hot humid evening when the festivities were in full swing, somebody told Will about his draft notice. Marie felt terribly bad that Will found out about the draft notice. She had tried so hard to keep the sad news from him. For the rest of his life Will would never tell Marie who it was that told him the terrible news. He knew that the information would not do her any good. Marie felt Will was right, but still, a woman's curiosity ....

## Drafted into the Army

A week after they were married, Ed Grimm reluctantly took his daughter and son-in-law to the courthouse at Elkader where Will was inducted into the army on July 25, 1918, along with 158 other men from Clayton County. It was a very sad and difficult day for everyone, especially for Will and Marie. Until this time, all the young men from around Elgin were sent to Fort Dodge in Iowa, not far away. But Will's contingent was the first to be sent to Camp Gordon near Atlanta, Georgia, nearly 1000 miles

away. Will and the other recruits from Clayton County boarded a troop train in Elkader. By the time they reached Camp Gordon, the train had picked up over 3000 young men along the way.<sup>1</sup>

The first morning after arriving at the army camp, all the recruits were ordered to stand at attention. The commanding officer then demanded all conscientious objectors to take one step forward. After Will stepped forward, he glanced around and saw that out of the 3000 men present, he was the only person to do so! The officer got real angry and called him derogatory names.

Later they told Will they had no job for him as a CO, but within six weeks they would find a new job for him that was compatible with the CO position. The commander ordered him to carry a gun for six weeks and march with the rest of the men. At first he refused. The officer asked him why. He told him, “I will never shoot to kill anyone because I am a Christian.”

The officer replied, “I never asked you to do that. You will just be carrying a gun like you do when hunting back home.”

For the first six weeks Will went along with the orders. He carried a gun, marched with the rest, and practiced shooting at the rifle range. At the rifle range he did poorly because he shot left-handed and did not try very hard.

## Taking a Stand

After six weeks of drill, Will’s orders still had not changed and the officers did not give him a new CO job as they had promised. Will wrote Marie, “I feel I have compromised long enough. Tomorrow I am turning my gun in and I will take whatever the officers do to me. I know that some COs have been badly mistreated, but this is what I have decided I must do.”

The next time he wrote home, he informed Marie, “I have been issued my overseas clothes. Can you and your father come see me before I am shipped over to the war front in Europe?”

Marie and her father, Ed Grimm, immediately took a train on that long ride to Atlanta, Georgia. They had a wonderful reunion with Will and spent several days visiting and encouraging him.

As it turned out, the army was just testing Will and trying to scare him into giving up his convictions. But because Will remained steadfast, the army officials finally gave him a noncombatant job the same day Marie and his father-in-law came to visit him.

<sup>1</sup> Camp Gordon was founded in July 1917 to handle the training of troops for World War I. It was built on 2400 acres, had 1600 buildings and could house 47,000 people.

## A New Job

The officials now transferred Will to “Auxiliary Remount Depot 316.”<sup>2</sup> In this new job he had to feed and take care of hundreds of horses and mules which were being trained to send overseas for use by the army. In the mornings, before the animals were fed, they made so much noise that it seemed like the ground shook. He also helped cut down trees to build bridges across ditches, fences, and corrals for the mules and horses.

Four months after Will arrived at Camp Gordon, World War I ended. Everyone thought they would soon be discharged and allowed to go home. Things did not work out that way. Will had to stay at the army camp four more months.

During his extended stay, he became close friends with Ira Nussbaum, a fellow Apostolic Christian from Forest, Illinois. The friendship lasted the rest of their lives. Will and Ira felt closer to each other than they did to their own blood brothers.

During part of the time that Will was at Fort Gordon, an influenza epidemic was raging around the world. Will helped take care of several soldiers in his barracks when they became sick, but he never contracted the flu while he was at the camp. Will heard that more soldiers died from flu than were killed in World War I and he believed it. He said that many days the helpers carried a hundred dead soldiers out of the barracks. To stop the spread of the disease, the men were ordered to take their cots outside to sleep. If it rained, they pulled their cots under the barracks. Many nights their covers were white with frost, but such measures finally stopped the flu epidemic.

In January, 1919, Will was allowed to go home on a fifteen-day furlough. While there he came down with a mild form of the flu; so his furlough was extended to a total of thirty days. Soon after Will returned to the army camp, his sister, Salome, contracted the flu and died. The officers did not allow Will to return home to attend her funeral because he had just been there.

Finally on the 21st day of March, 1919, he received his discharge which Will often said was the best birthday present he ever got. He turned twenty-seven on that day.

Will Butikofer was inducted into the army on 25 July 1918 and released on 21 March 1919. Found on the roster for Quartermaster Corps, Detachment for Auxiliary Remount Depot No. 316; *Private QMC Will Butikofer*.

— G. B. | Richland Center, Wisconsin

<sup>2</sup> This depot cared for as many as 5,000 horses.

The basis of all Anabaptist beliefs is the two-kingdom concept. You cannot live in both kingdoms with divided loyalties. You must make a choice. Are you in the kingdom of this world or are you in the Kingdom of God?

~ *Frank Reed*



Below is a scan of a 99-year-old post card from Will Butikofer when he was in the army at Camp Gordon, Atlanta, GA. The picture on the card is of soldiers at mealtime; the card has a 2 cent stamp.



*Dear Mamma,*

*What are you doing all the time? I guess you are always working hard. I wish I could see you folks again.*

*I will close with best love to you all. Tell Anna we have to trust in God and He will not leave us. He will care for all of us.*

*From your brother in the Lord,*

*Will Butikofer*





# Unless You Repent

by Menno Knight

**“God overlooked past times of ignorance, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:30-31).**

I know that preaching repentance to keep men out of hell isn't very popular these days. It's much easier to proclaim the great love of God in order to get men into heaven. Messages that make people squirm in their seats and fall on their faces in repentance can get a preacher into serious trouble—no love in his heart, always pessimistic, inconsiderate of the feeble-minded. Read the Sermon on the Mount again.

The devil wearies me with thoughts like these: “You're preaching to the Anabaptists; they want to do what is right. They're all saved and satisfied. You don't need to keep crying for repentance. Leave out the ‘all’ and make exceptions for those that really want to do right. Soften up. Your audience is human, not perfect angels. Don't be specific in naming particular sins. Sometimes they are sin and sometimes they aren't.”

Jesus doubtless heard all these criticisms. Yet “repentance” was a major theme of his preaching. Listen to what Jesus said when the news of the day came to Him. Some Galileans had gone up to Jerusalem and offered up sacrifices. Cruel Governor Pilate had his soldiers slaughter those worshippers and mingled their blood with the blood of the animals they had killed.

Surprisingly, Jesus reacted not with tears of sorrow for the dead, but with words of alarm for the living. “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered this way they were worse sinners than all the other Galileans?” He asked. “No, they were not,” He thundered to the listening Galileans, “Unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Then Jesus added to the insult and accusation he had just made. He mentioned the disaster in Siloam, Jerusalem where a leaning tower suddenly collapsed and killed eighteen people. Do you think these people were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem?” He asked. “I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.” And when Jesus said “perish,” He was not talking about dying a physical death, He was warning of punishment for sin in the eternal ages to come.

Repentance for what? Sin! Not just vague unnamed general sin. Time and again Jesus named specific sins—giving alms to be seen of men, laying up treasure on earth, judging motives of others, and worrying. Jesus

used the word “hypocrites” many times in his teaching. Were such sweeping words of condemnation and warning uncharacteristic of Jesus? No. They were common fare.

Listen to these scathing words He uttered against the Galilean towns where most of His miracles had been performed:

**“Woe to you Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades, for if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you” (Matthew 11:21-24).**

Tyre and Sidon! These were wicked trading cities of that time. How much worse could it get? Then for good measure he threw in Sodom! That notorious city burned up with fire and brimstone because of wickedness.

Jesus' words were indeed strong harsh words for those who did not repent. Listen to what He told His twelve disciples before He sent them out.

**“If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town” (Matthew 10:14-15).**

Sodom and Gomorrah! There you have it again. Those towns who rejected the messengers of the kingdom were worse off than the people in Sodom and Gomorrah.

When Jesus sent out the seventy-two to every town where He was about to go, He included a charge against people in towns who did not repent.

**“Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near. I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ... And you Capernaum, ... you will go down to Hades” (Luke 10:11-15).**

These are only some of the many hard words of warning Jesus uttered which are scattered through the Gospels.

They were serious charges with eternal consequences, “unless you repent.”

“The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah ...” (Luke 11:32).

“This generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world ...” (Luke 11:50).

It was not out of bitterness and hatred that Jesus used such strong language. He did it out of love for souls of people in danger of eternal fire. And He warned His hearers, “I tell you my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear God, who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear God” (Luke 12:4-5).

You may rightly ask, “Would the caring, forgiving, loving God contemporary Christianity portrays, really cast people into hell, the place God has prepared for the devil and his angels?” Yes He will, if sinners don’t repent. “He will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’ There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out” (Luke 13:27-28).

So I ask you, is it love to muffle and muddle the Word of God and say some people can disregard it because they interpret a passage differently, or they do it out of ignorance? I tell you, it is not exciting to think of being beaten with few stripes instead of many stripes in the place of torment (Luke 12:47-48). Wouldn’t you rather enter the place of eternal rest, peace, and bliss after death?

When people have heard the truth of the Scripture and turn their back on it, and disobey or disregard its teaching, it is sin. The true prophet is not like Jonah who lamented that the sinners of Nineveh repented and thus escaped destruction. The true prophet rejoices when people repent of their sins and surrender their all to the King of kings.

The faithful preacher continues to preach repentance for sin and surrender of self to his hearers. He shines the spotlight of God’s Word down into the swamp of sin and picks out the eyes of the alligators lurking in the darkness. He opens the doors of hearts and lets the Son shine into the closets of our carnality. And there we find things that call for repentance and surrender and a new obedience. That is the way we grow in grace. That is the way we maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and man. That is the way we lift up holy hands in prayer and gaze with open faces toward our Lord.

The heart of the Anabaptist way is that repentance and surrender, followed by obedience, is a growing life. Repentance does not end at the cross in one glorious experience. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives continues to bring things to our attention that call for repentance. If we repent of those sins, that is not a sign of failure but of growth.

A willingness to repent of sin is a sign of surrender. A lack of obedience is a sure sign that one has neither repented nor surrendered himself to the King of kings.

Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Perfection is our goal, our heart’s desire. But we will never attain perfection on this side of glory. So in our experience, there can always be room for repentance.

This does not mean that we examine the same sin every day and repent of it. But it does mean that when the preacher or a brother or the Holy Spirit calls an area of our life to attention, we can examine it carefully without fear. If it is sin, we stand ready to repent and forsake it and obey the Master. If it is not sin, our conscience is clear.

We should always stand ready to repent when our heart condemns us. We must live in a continual state of unconditional surrender to the will of the Master. This is the way of obedience and peace and the calm assurance that we are acceptable to God.

“Blessed are those who obey the teachings of Jesus and put them into practice” (Matthew 7:24). The blessings of Matthew 5:3-11 are for those who obey His teaching. Such people need have no fear of divine punishment. They need have no guilt or worry, but they can rejoice that their names are written in heaven.

Therefore my friend, bear good fruit in your life and not evil fruit. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, “A bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire” (Matthew 7:18-19).

There I go again, warning about being cast into the fire. Jesus did it too. He said, “Unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

Why do I write such hard words? It is because “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9).





# 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. **Reader Response**—feedback on previous stories
2. **The Rest of the Story**—what actually happened
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:** Work Boots Required

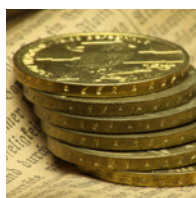


## The Practical Side: The Rest of the Story

*What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.*

### Tru G. Standard

by Canny C. Clearly



*He knoweth the way that I take;  
when he has tried me, I shall come  
forth as gold” (Job 23:10).*

As there is something like material inflation, there is also something like spiritual inflation.

Let us take a look at what it does to the church and what causes it.

On January 21, 1525 a group of people were assembled to search the Scriptures and implore the Holy Spirit to guide them. They were in great anxiety and unitedly bowed their knees before Almighty God, and called upon Him and implored Him to grant them grace to do His divine will. It is clear that this group was seeking the scriptural standard (gold).

The focus of these brethren was not on seeing who was the best orator or who could push his personal opinion the hardest. Even though the group was unified, they were not focused on unity, nor were they focused on peace

because their decision that evening brought anything but peace. Nevertheless, they ended up with a peace that passes all understanding which became evident as they were led to the place of execution. Their conclusion had to be authorized by the Scriptures and sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. The sign of the power of the Holy Spirit was group unity based on the Gospels.

In Acts 15 we also find a group of people assembled facing a serious issue. After the leaders convinced the group that they were following the voice of God, unity set in and the presence of the Holy Spirit was realized.

We do not find that people were compelled to agree for the sake of peace and unity. Yes, that is spiritual inflation when we focus on peace and unity and are willing to devalue the Scripture for the sake of peace and unity (false spirituality). Like the Federal Reserve notes not having redeeming power, our church values erode. More and more voices are focused on human wisdom and, as a result, personal opinions carry the day.

*“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12).*

# The Practical Side: Reader Responses

*Reader responses to stories from previous issues.*

## The Better Way

*by R. Legacy*



Sometimes I'm tempted to think, that disagreeing and separating is one of the most enduring legacies our Anabaptist ancestors left us. I have seen and been involved in a few disagreements in my lifetime, and I suppose many of us have

been. Though we don't enjoy those experiences, they do help us to grow, if we let them teach us.

I would favor Paul and his decision. Paul had a special calling from God to be an apostle and to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; Barnabas and John Mark didn't have this calling. Paul had a burning desire to know Christ and fulfill his calling.

*"[A calling] given to me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among*

*the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).*

*"[It pleased God] to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles" (Galatians 1:16).*

In the divine record Barnabas drops out of the picture and Paul is recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

I marvel that Paul didn't try to prove his point by flashing his credentials before Barnabas and mentioning his visions, revelations, and sufferings as he playfully did in II Corinthians 12. I think some modern-day Anabaptists might do this.

I believe Paul's primary concern was to fulfill his calling, rather than to show an attitude of disrespect to John Mark.



## The Better Way

*by B. U. Knighted*



The article, "The Better Way," (AV05 page 40) brought a refreshing perspective that is not taught enough. I too have lamented the many times the incident of contention between Paul and Barnabas has been referenced as an

endorsement for Brothers to part ways. I have taught repeatedly this passage is telling us what not to do!

There are two key phrases in this passage that clearly indicate that both Brothers were in error. According to 15:37 it says that "...Barnabas was determined..." and secondly in verse 38 it says, "But Paul insisted...". Humility was lacking in both attitudes. As much as I appreciate both Brothers, let's not hold them as infallible humans. In this incident, they failed! The lessons we should learn from failed relationships is how we can avoid a similar

situation rather than ratify the pride and stubbornness that typically exists when Brothers part ways. History will never tell us the turn of events if they would have journeyed together.

I have a similar lament when I hear leaders recommend parting ways due to "irreconcilable differences." These conclusions simply do not ring true with the words of Jesus in Matt. 5:23-24. The instruction is to "first be reconciled," rather than part ways. May God give us humble hearts!

## Practical Question:

1. What are some actual issues that were "irreconcilable differences and resulted in a church split?



# The Practical Side: Reader Responses

*Reader responses to stories from previous issues.*

## Fool's Gold

*by No D. Preciate*

Though I find inflation interesting, it does not worry me. I am convinced that the Kingdom of Heaven is not limited to earthly resources. We are, however, responsible to use the money God has entrusted to us in ways that honor Him.

Brothers and Sisters, let us invest in the heavenly Kingdom where inflation will never cause our investment to depreciate and our rewards will last forever.



# The Practical Side: New Stories

*Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.*

## Country Church

*by Broke N. Bell*

When I was 10 years of age, the congregation where my family attended went through deep and troubled waters. Conflict brewed between two of our pastors for several years. Finally it split the church down to where only four or five families remained. The two pastors in conflict left, leaving the remaining minister—a brother with the gift of evangelism—to pick up the pieces.

The gifts of this evangelist/minister did not lend themselves well to pastoral responsibilities in a fragmented congregation. After five years and much discouragement, he also left our church and the Anabaptist way.

My parents were one of the families who decided to stay and try to help bring stability to a bleeding church. For years, even during the years of my youth, we remained a very small congregation who struggled to survive. In fact, several times we wondered whether it would be better to just close the doors. During those years, I recall how much I longed to have more stability in our leadership and wished that our youth group was larger than the few we had.

I am amazed that by the grace of God, this experience did not embitter me toward church and Christianity but rather, gave me a passion to try God's way when conflict arises. I am deeply saddened each time I hear of church members dispersing due to conflict. Church, of all places, is where we should find safety and where our differences should be worked out according to Romans 14.

It's hard to believe that was over 40 years ago. It seems like yesterday. I have observed through this experience, however, that God is a person of restoration. He is able to take the errors of fallible humans and create His own story.

In retrospect of my own story, I probed my parents for further details. They thought perhaps the leaders that were in conflict with each other disqualified themselves. Maybe God could not use them because of obvious issues of pride and arrogance.

Many times when I find myself in conflict with another person, I can usually find elements of pride in my own heart. Pride is a destroyer of relationships! And having gone through that experience, it placed a desire in my heart to "do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with God."

## Practical Questions:

1. Should we always strive to remain one body?
2. Are there ever differences beyond personal issues where a parting of the ways brings peace? Like what?
3. What conditions should guide a parting of the ways?
4. Should Anabaptists keep congregations small?

# The Practical Side: New Stories

*Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.*

## Gone To The Dogs

*by Wee Care*

Some of our children and grandchildren have found that raising dogs can be a lucrative business. People are willing to pay cow prices for certain exotic breeds of dogs I never even heard of before they started mentioning them around our house. Even little lap dogs with hair hanging down over their eyes that require shampoos and toe-nail trimming find ready buyers. And there are also the great big dogs that can bite you with just a look; people want that kind as well.

I think we should be in businesses that are ethically sound. We don't sell whiskey or cigarettes or army tanks because these things are not compatible with our faith. So are expensive pet dogs in the same category?

I would say that a working dog that is used to herd cattle and sheep or a guard dog that bonds with his charges to keep predators away is an acceptable class of dog to raise and sell. But some of these dogs my Brothers others are selling are definitely not in that class.

So why do people buy these high-priced dogs? I read a bit and observe "dog life." Many keep dogs in the car, in the house, and in the bed. People talk to them, hug them, and sleep with them. They feed them, walk them, curry them, and bury them.

Some people love their dogs and believe their dogs love them. One article I read has five questions that help one determine if "your dog loves you."

1. Does your dog cuddle up to you after eating?
2. Where does your dog sleep?
3. How does your dog react when you leave?
4. How does your dog react when you get home?
5. Do you love your dog?

Not everybody would go to the extreme of the following story, but there is no doubt people spend exorbitant amounts on their dogs.

Lulu the dog was diagnosed with cancer and given three months to live, about four years ago. Today, Lulu still lives, thanks to the \$30,000 of chemotherapy treatments the dog's owner pumped out.

"Look, I don't have kids to put through college, so I can put my dog through chemo," said Lulu's owner. "Lulu is a member of the family."

— *DailyMail.com*, December 2, 2015

One estimate back in 2006 was that American households who had dogs as pets spent \$672 per year just on veterinary/medical expenses. One estimate of first year costs of owning a dog is \$1,270.

Why are Americans willing to spend money and go to a lot of trouble to own a dog? Often there may be the desire for companionship so lacking in human relationships. It has been said pets in America outnumber children by a ratio of 4:1. Some people who have no children or grandchildren and no intimate church friends hug their dogs.

Another reason some people place such a high value on their dogs is tainted with a false religious belief in animal rights. "No-kill zones" are springing up where people work to keep from "putting dogs down" except under extreme situations. Dog funerals reveal the belief in an afterlife for dogs. It's all the same emphasis that Hindus place on preserving the lives of cows and rats. They don't believe the Creator God has given man dominion over the animals.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Phillipians 3:2, "**Beware of dogs.**" I don't think he was talking about animals, but about people that act like animals. Still I don't want to encourage my children and grandchildren to take the dogs into their houses, eat with them, hug them, and sleep with them.

After all, Colossians 3:2 says, "**Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.**"

## Practical Questions:

1. Does it matter to an Anabaptist what the customer does with the dog?
2. Should Anabaptists have dogs in the house?
3. Should Anabaptists keep fierce guard dogs around?



Lovable

# The Practical Side: New Stories

*Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.*

## No Debt!

*by I. M. Troubled*

We have great a capella (*of the chapel*) singing in our church—wonderful harmony, good acoustics, enough singers, and able leaders. The music of heaven rings out from the heart ... with expression—sorrowful, joyful, meditative, or exuberant. You name almost any song out of one our hymnals and by the end of the song we can do a pretty fair job with it. Sometimes we even use supplemental books or sing by memory.

Our music is such a blessing to me that I have a hard time concentrating on the words like I should. I try, but I confess it's easy to just kinda let my mind wander off on other holy ethereal thoughts. Once in a while my mind even runs off on some carnal thought such as how the song leader doesn't have his shirt collar buttoned up and his beat doesn't really match the timing. Or I may wonder about the attendance today and how much the offering amounted to.

In all truthfulness, such mind wandering has happened more than once or twice. It must have been on one of these off-the-record mind journeys that I suddenly came out from under ecclesiastical bliss and realized what I was singing. "Jesus signed my pardon ... took my place on Calvary ... now I don't have to go." I stopped singing. "Wouldn't have done a bit of good for me to die on Calvary," I fumed to myself. Wasn't anybody thinking what they were singing? Or did they really believe such erroneous doctrine.

I decided to find out if others agreed with my thinking. Or was I very deluded in my understanding of what took place at Calvary?

I found out others also share my concern that the hymns we sing do support sound Anabaptist teaching. We do not want to be mouthing false doctrines espoused by Martin Luther and John Calvin. As pointed out to me, most of the hymns we sing in our churches do teach Bible truth. But I am still troubled when we sing songs and hymns in our churches that do not agree with the Anabaptist understanding of salvation. Instead they solidly reflect the false idea that salvation comes by faith alone.

Another false idea that has crept into our songs is that good works have nothing to do with our salvation because Jesus pardoned me, ransomed me, and paid the debt I owe. In this understanding, salvation becomes

somewhat of a mystical experience, with a verbal prayer, a good feeling, and baptism.

In the Anabaptist understanding of how we are made acceptable to God, obedience does matter. Individual repentance and surrender and baptism are the entry point into the Kingdom of God, but the beginning is not the end of the matter. Joining the battle in the fray requires continual surrender and good works to give proof of an ongoing relationship with King Jesus (*"Fully Surrendered, Lord Divine"*).

For starters, here are some of the lyrics we sing in our churches that trouble me:

*"He paid a debt He did not owe,  
I owed a debt I could not pay  
I needed someone to wash my sins away  
And now I sing a brand new song, Amazing Grace,  
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay."*

Each stanza of this song ends with *"Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay."* The line offends me because I do not know what the debt is. Who owes what to whom? And I can't be at ease with "wash my sins away" or "Amazing Grace."

Or how about this wonderful hymn? I love the music.

*"Hallelujah for the blood, for the sin cleansing fountain,  
For the Lamb has been slain, and the ransom price paid;  
Fully canceled was the debt, when on Calvary's mountain  
All the sins of this world upon Jesus were laid."*

Here are some of the thoughts that trouble me:

- What is the debt that was canceled?
- When did He seal my pardon?
- When were all the sins of the world laid upon Jesus?

## Practical Question:

1. What is the best response when one does not agree with the stated wording in the hymn?
  - Refuse to sing.
  - Talk to the song leader after the meeting.
  - Trust God to understand I didn't mean what I just sang.
  - Seek understanding about the meaning from others.
  - Allow poetic liberty to songwriters.
  - Don't sweat the small stuff.

# The Practical Side: New Stories

*Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.*

## The Ram is Dead

*by Noah Power*

Earlier this year, we elected to make some modifications to one of our diesel delivery trucks so we took it to the “doctor” (*hereafter called Shop A*). We estimated the length of time the truck would be “off-line” and called a few customers who required that specially-equipped truck to tell them deliveries would resume after the modifications were completed.

Late one afternoon, Shop A called to report the job was done. We paid our \$2,000 bill, picked up the truck and brought it home, ready to go back to work.

The next day, our driver called from 50 miles down the road to report a loud noise and subsequent loss of power while driving. Oddly, there were no warning lights on the dashboard and all vital fluids and temperatures were at normal levels.

Our driver was almost to his destination so we decided he should “limp” on up the road and unload his payload. We made a call to Shop A since it was highly coincidental that the truck had just been in their shop and now we were experiencing serious issues. They told us several things we might try in order to diagnose the problem.

During this time of diagnostics, our driver noticed a significant drop in oil pressure and quickly shut off the truck. I still have the picture he sent me of a black pool of oil under the truck—dead, with its vital liquids spilled everywhere. He wasn't going to be moving from that spot.

We again called Shop A with the latest news. The manager thought the problem was “over their heads” so he recommended a heavy-duty diesel mechanic where we could have the truck diagnosed and repaired, hereafter called Shop B. We called our customers to cancel appointments that were scheduled for the day and hired a tow truck to transport the lifeless Ram to Shop B.

A number of days later, the diesel mechanic at Shop B called and told us the truck needed a new turbo. His estimate for the repair was around \$8,000, depending on what he found when taking things apart.

We made another phone call to Shop A to see if they felt any responsibility to help us. “Turbos fail all the time,”

they said. “You have no proof that it was because of our work.” They were right. Technically, nothing was proven except that the turbo had failed. So we told Shop B to proceed with the repair because we needed the truck.

A few days later, Shop B called again. The mechanic had taken things apart and discovered a loose bolt inside the turbo! Ouch! Utter destruction from a stray bolt!

One of the modifications Shop A had done was to change the intake/air filter. The mechanic determined the bolt was supposed to hold the intake assembly to the side of the truck. Instead, there was a strange-looking bolt holding the new intake assembly in place and the original bolt was now in the turbo, inadvertently dropped during installation of the new intake/air filter.

We drove to Shop A and showed the turbo and loose bolt to the manager. He said, “Yeah, it looks like we made a mistake. I will talk to the owner to see what we can do.”

When Shop B finished the repair work, we picked up the truck and paid the \$7,000 repair bill in full because we had some customers who were unhappy with the delay in receiving their product and we needed that truck ASAP.

Over the next weeks, we attempted to contact the owner of Shop A. He was always “gone on vacation” or “not here” or “just left.” We stopped by on a couple different occasions, hoping to talk to the owner but his manager just kept saying, “I'll talk to him and see what we can do.” The manager promised he would have the owner call us, but he never did.

## Questions for Readers:

1. Would it be right to dispute the original \$2,000 payment on our credit card or go to a small claims court and file a suit against Shop A?
2. Should we post a negative review with the BBB and tell everybody about our experience with Shop A?
3. What response will give the best testimony to:
  - a. the owner and mechanics of both shops?
  - b. the customers of Shop A?
  - c. our own customers?
  - d. our brothers in the church?



## Somebody Is Responsible!





# 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: Kingdom Fellowship Weekend 2017

*Continuing in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in prayers.*

Kingdom Fellowship Weekend (**KFW**) is a forum for biblical edification focusing on spiritual renewal, fervent prayer, and absolute surrender to our King, Jesus. We are committed to a Christian expression that is Christ-centered, Scripture-anchored, and Kingdom-focused, specifically as modeled by the Anabaptist tradition.

**KFW** is held at Roxbury Holiness Camp, which has cabins for families, dorms for singles, hotel rooms (*handicap accessible*) as well as tent and RV sites.

**KFW** operates on free-will donations and does not require a set fee for attendance. Payment is required for lodging costs only. Opportunity will be given to contribute towards the rental of the campground, food costs, and a love gift for the speakers.

**Please register well in advance.** Visit [www.kingdomfellowshipweekend.org/reg](http://www.kingdomfellowshipweekend.org/reg) to register online. For questions or to register by phone, please call Marvin Dolly @ 717.753.0845.

**Cultivate the soil of your heart by memorizing John 17:1-6 & 16-23** in the KJV or NIV and be ready to recite this passage during the weekend.

**DATE:** August 25th - 27th, 2017

**LOCATION:** Roxbury Holiness Camp  
13763 Cumberland Hwy.  
Orrstown, PA 17244

### **SPEAKERS:**

**Men:** Dale Heisey, Brent Bear, Terry Myers, Curt Wagoner, John D. Martin

**Ladies:** Caroline Mast

### **TOPICS:**

Encountering Christ in Prayer | Encountering Christ in the Apostle's Doctrine  
Encountering Christ in the Breaking of Bread | Encountering Christ in the Place of Worship  
Ministry Presentations | Small Group Discussion & Prayer | Testimonies & Singing

*Anabaptist Voice* encourages its readers to send in "Sermon Snippets" from messages at KFW. See tips and guidelines for "Sermon Snippets" below. You may reference a past issue of *Anabaptist Voice* as well.

## Guidelines for "Sermon Snippets"

*Write down the title of the sermon, the date preached, where it was preached, and the name of the preacher.*

*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.*



# Circulation & Financial Statements

## Anabaptist Voice Income & Expense Report *April thru June 2017*

### Income

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Donations for Issue #5   | \$6,130.44 |
| Local Support Donations* | \$3,505.72 |
| Total Income             | \$9,636.16 |

### Expenses

|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| Handling & Packaging | \$725.00   |
| Postage              | \$3,436.16 |
| Printing             | \$5,475.00 |
| Total Expense        | \$9,636.16 |

**Donations for Issue #6** \$392.79

*\*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

### ISSUE #4 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,250 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,935  
Donations for Issue #4: \$6,435  
Local Support Donations: \$2,500

### ISSUE #5 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 6,150 | Print & Postage Cost: \$9,636  
Donations for Issue #5: \$6,130  
Local Support Donations: \$3,506  
*\*see report at left for details*

### ISSUE #6 - ESTIMATED NUMBERS

Print Qty: 6,300 | Print & Postage Cost: \$9,750

## 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.

## Championing a Faith that Works

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**“THEN HE SAID TO THEM, ‘FOLLOW ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN.’ THEY IMMEDIATELY LEFT THEIR NETS AND FOLLOWED HIM.”**

*MATTHEW 4:19 & 20*

