



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

James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

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"A CALL TO ANABAPTISTS: GO!" - DEAN TAYLOR

Letter from the Editor

“They were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” – Acts 5:41

I am rereading the book *Tortured for Christ* by Richard Wurmbrand. This book tells how a church driven underground by persecution continued to witness for Christ when Russians and Romanians both conspired to silence them through terrible tortures, imprisonment, and death.

The Swiss Brethren of the sixteenth century lived in that same type of dangerous time. Yet they continued to preach and teach and baptize even when it meant torture, imprisonment, and death. Their enemies called them “Anabaptists” or “rebaptizers” and it was a public disgrace to be so-called.

In such times, an underground church is marked in the minds of all believers as an organization separate from the state and society and a government-approved church. It is “us” and “them.” We do well to cultivate that kind of thinking in the church today. We should practice acting more like an underground church that is despised by the government, society, and even the many churches around us.

In that frame of mind, *Anabaptist Voice* has not registered with the government and has no official organization. Many of our writers remain without public identification (*Would you really want to know who the writer was, if under torture, you might be forced to divulge his name?*).

Even if the mindset of an underground church has no present consequences in terms of persecution, it helps sharpen our own minds and causes us to think in terms of “us” and “them.” When the focus of an underground church is clear in our own minds, our witness for the Kingdom of God can speak boldly and without fear on any subject—such as being a part of the military or the defense industry.

We are “the called out ones.” There’s no “half-way in the world” and “half-way out of it.” It’s “us” and “them.”

Peace,

James G. Landis

Postscript: With joy we announce that Andrew V. Ste. Marie of Manchester, Michigan has joined the AV team as Assistant Editor. Already his experience as an Anabaptist writer and publisher, along with his youthful energy have added new zest to *Anabaptist Voice* and helped to lighten the workload for the rest of us.

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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.

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 Bible Translation Policy:

All Scriptures quoted will be in either the KJV or the NKJV translations unless otherwise specified.

We respect the specific preference of a writer who wishes to use other translations for his article.

Our Finances:

There is no set subscription price for *Anabaptist Voice*. We appreciate donations from those who wish to support the work.

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 copyediting. 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 or through Shalom Ministries may obtain a tax deduction.

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 who 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 Readers Write

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 Editor

Teach The Younger

I thank the Lord for the blessings of your magazine ... and may the blessings increase.

Articles like the Dirk Willems story are very good to teach the younger generation, for that is where our focus should be. History can teach us a lot! "The Swastika or the Cross" by Chester Weaver is also very informative.

Keep up the good work!

Please send us five copies next time.

M.H. | *Manitoba*



New Appreciation

A friend from our church let us borrow the first six issues of AV thinking we would enjoy them. We did!

Being new to the Mennonite church it has helped us appreciate Anabaptism even more. We also enjoy seeing and reading about the Anabaptists "down under" since my husband is from Australia.

Please add us to your mailing list.

D.W. | *Tennessee*



No Labels

I need to let you know that I don't identify myself as an Anabaptist. Anabaptism most closely represents how I follow Christ, but I still balk at the label. I would like to share my concerns with you regarding that.

If we identify ourselves as anything but a follower of Christ, we create a "them" and an "us." I perceive that very strongly in Anabaptist circles. This should not be in the body of Christ. I am aware that it is nearly impossible to discuss the Church today without using these labels, but that should not keep us from rejecting them for ourselves.

An Anabaptist distinguishes himself from the Lutheran, Adventist, Evangelical, Reformed, or Catholic brother or sister. I have friends in all of those denominations and they can teach me something about what it means to follow Christ. I may strongly disagree with them on some important points, but they are still my siblings. On occasion someone has asked me about my headcovering and dress. The question might be, "What church do you go to?" I have been careful not to identify myself as a Mennonite, Anabaptist or even Christian. My preferred response is: "I am a follower of Christ and I dress this way to please Him."

May the Lord use AV to keep stirring up discussion and stimulate thinking "outside of the box." Isn't that what the original Anabaptists did? They shed all extraneous teaching and reduced it to "following Jesus." May we have the discernment to do that today.

C.V. | *North Dakota*

Anabaptist Voice: Your answer to why you wear the headcovering is an excellent one. It goes right to the very root of our relationship with God and could be properly given as an answer to many questions relating to the practical side of life.



Only Skimming

As much as I appreciate being considered and included in your mailings, and even though I am a conservative Mennonite, I find I only skim thru your magazine and feel its wasting your funds and trees (*paper*) for me to continue to receive it. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting you remove me from your mailings.

I trust the Lord Jesus will continue to bless your efforts in this worthy magazine and that it will help many come to the Lord in truth of a scripturally sound, plain life for Christ.

N.B. | *Indiana*

God's Light Is Good

In *Anabaptist Voice* (AV09, page 32), Menno Knight correctly stated that “Light is Good.” Although I agreed with much of the article, I believe that several statements are mistaken and misleading.

Some scientists and medical researchers believe artificial light can adversely affect living organisms. I believe their concerns are valid.

God made man, animals, and plants to need the periods of light and darkness He created. Both man and animals need rest so their bodies can repair themselves and function properly. For instance, many plants need certain periods of light and dark to flower. Some plants cannot flower unless they are exposed to uninterrupted darkness for a specific length of time. Exposing such plants to artificial light at night will prevent them from flowering.

Later, the article states that researchers are “trying to picture light as bad.” This misrepresents what the researchers are saying. I doubt that any of these “godless men” would say that light is bad. They are simply saying that a misuse of artificial light can have adverse effects on living organisms.

Psalms 19:1-2 says, “**The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.**”

God's light is always good. Man's light is good, when it is used correctly.

J.G. | Virginia

Anabaptist Voice: We agree that too much light (*sunbathing*) can be harmful to the body. And we agree that rest for the body is needed. However, the point of the article is that in the Bible, light always typifies good and darkness always typifies evil. As a result the term “light pollution” corrupts the meaning of the figure. It is somewhat like saying, “light manure.”



More Light

I am thoroughly enjoying and profiting from reading *Anabaptist Voice*, and thank you for your heart-engaged labors that make it happen.

In “Light Is Good,” I find the attitude towards current light issues somewhat unsettling, and disagree with the statement, “God worshippers should not use the term, ‘light pollution.’”

I certainly agree that God's created light is good, as is all the rest of the original creation. But I do not want to ignore or deny the negative effects of sin, and all its outworkings on the creation, at any level.

The attitude expressed about light pollution, which is the upsetting and disturbance of created cycles and rhythms by man's usage of artificial light, if applied broadly, could result in the denial of many of the wrongs and evils present in our world currently. I fail to understand how that lines up with acknowledging that the whole world lieth in wickedness (I John 5:19).

Perhaps a better response for God-worshippers would be to do enough research to sort out the facts, acknowledge where and how the goodness of God's creation has been messed up, and find reasonable ways that we can return our lives closer to God's created ways as we walk in His Light.

J.M. | Oklahoma

Anabaptist Voice: The Bible names quite a few things that are definitely sin and not pleasing to God. So-called “light pollution” is not one of them. The abuse of light, like the abuse of food, could be sinful.

It seems wise to remember that “scientists” can disregard the Bible and its teaching to promote their own theories (as they do in evolution). The term “light pollution” appears to be another theory that places man's reasoning above God-ordained order that gives man dominion over the earth.



Need More

Greetings in Jesus' name. I am currently on your mailing list and really appreciate your magazine and was wondering if I could get a bulk mailing of 15 copies per issue for our congregation. I would take a mailing of issue 9 if you still have any left. Thank you and God bless!

I enjoyed the article, “Dead To The Law,” in the last issue. We read a lot about the moral, civil and ceremonial laws and how the civil and ceremonial laws are fulfilled, but the moral law still stands today. Jesus frequently affirms He came to fulfill the law and by dividing the law into categories we muddy the message of the new covenant. Jesus ushered in a new and glorious kingdom with His laws written in our hearts and minds and not on tables of stone.

O.M. | Ohio

Light Pollution?

First of all I, thank you for the excellent free magazine. I really enjoy each issue and enjoy most of the articles.

Secondly, while I respect different opinions, I disagreed with Menno Knight in his article “Light is Good” in the Winter 2018 issue. First, the author writes, “God worshippers [sic] should not use the term, ‘light pollution.’” The author’s reasoning is that, since God created light and called it good, we should not refer to His good thing as garbage. If you use the same reasoning, Christians should not use the words “flood damage” since floods are caused by water. Water is a gift from God, and a good thing—in its place. The same goes with light. I agree that light is a good thing, but, as with water, too much of it at the wrong place or time can be a negative power.

When scientists talk about light pollution, they are referring to an excess of artificial light at night which inhibits our ability to view, appreciate, and photograph the night sky (*I experience this myself*) and interferes with the body’s circadian rhythm which can cause sleep deprivation (*which I also experience if I try to sleep after working behind a computer screen, just prior*).

These “light pollution” people are not saying that daylight is bad; indeed, most scientists would be quick to agree that too little light is not good. As the author hinted at, too much darkness can cause depression, a common form of seasonal affective disorder. Essentially, scientists agree that too much or too little light is not ideal, thus they are confirming that God got it right, not attempting to say that light is a bad thing.

R.W. | Pennsylvania

Anabaptist Voice: We agree that too much light can be bad. There are accounts of prisoners kept in cells with bright lights on day and night where it is impossible to sleep. This is not “light pollution,” but a sinful abuse of light by evil godless men.



Passing It On

Please enter a subscription in my name for *Anabaptist Voice*. I obtained a copy at my daughter’s house. This is what my children should be reading.

L.M. | Pennsylvania

Singing Songs

In AV06, page 40, “No Debt!” I. M. Troubled questioned the concept of debt in songs we sing about salvation. Jesus, while at the house of Simon the Pharisee spoke of sin in terms of a debt that was owed. In response to Simon’s critical thoughts about the sinful woman that was touching him, Jesus gave the parable of two debtors which were forgiven and concluded, “**To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.**”

Christ also taught His disciples to pray, “**Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**” Thus our release from spiritual debts enables us to have gracious, forgiving relationships in the brotherhood, and our forgiveness of others qualifies us for continuing release from debts we accrue with God.

I appreciate your magazine and support your efforts to defend the “**faith once delivered to the saints.**”

A.G. | Pennsylvania

Anabaptist Voice: You have done a good job of seeking out the scriptural basis for the words of the song. We encourage everyone to think about the meaning of the words in all the songs we sing.



A Witness In The Netherlands

We received two old copies of the *Anabaptist Voice* from the Fellowship Haven Church my wife visited when she was in Washington DC for two weeks. We have been reading these two issues almost to shreds and are discussing every article! It has been so incredibly informative for us, as we do not get to fellowship with conservative Anabaptists on a regular basis. We would love to receive a printed copy of the magazine, so that we can also share them with another family that lives here but does not use computers.

T.M. | Netherlands

Anabaptist Voice: After receiving the above note, I wrote and asked Tama and Carmen McGlinn if they would share some of their life story with our readers. They graciously wrote their story on page 20.



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 Editor

How Many Sleeps?

“How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.”
– Psalm 36:7-9

The above portion of Scripture continues to be a blessing to us as we realize that even when we sin and fall short of God’s requirements, He still loves us and by repenting we can once again take refuge in the shadow of His wings. The more we read and study Scripture, especially the New Testament, we testify that in His light we see light—the light that leads us through a rapidly darkening world to our eternal hope and destination which is the marriage supper of the Lamb (AV08, page 32, “*Light is Good*”).

As sojourners and pilgrims on our way to the Promised Land, we are doing a lot of reading and contemplating on what Jesus wants from those who follow Him. We know our journey through the wilderness of this world is coming to an end. The Jordan is coming into view and the need to cross over into the Promised Land is ever nearer. Like God’s people of old, the call seems to be more and more to throw off the shackles of earthly things so that we will have nothing to retard us as we face that crossing.

In years past, we often told our children and grandchildren that there were so many sleeps until a special event such as a visit or a trip would occur. Now we wonder how many sleeps we will have before our heavenly guide will take us by the hand and lead us across the Jordan to the other side.

It is encouraging to see *Anabaptist Voice* ending up in the hands of people living in my native Holland where the Anabaptists had their beginnings, their persecutions, and also their downfall when they embraced affluence.

There is a lesson in this for Anabaptists today. If we are going to practice the faith those early Anabaptists gave their all for, we must be careful not to be taken in by the allurements of ease and wealth.

How many are prepared to take up their cross today and follow Christ? Am I? That is a question that faces us daily as we interact with those around us, including those who profess to follow Jesus, but live otherwise.

Joseph van Loon | *Deloraine, Tasmania*



Tell The Stories

I was pleased with the diversity of content contained in AV09: theology, practical teaching, history, fiction, reports (*Hutterites, Bolivia*), admonition, and more. *Anabaptist Voice* had the opportunity to speak and it did. Many more opportunities wait for a voice. I hope those voices will make themselves heard.

I was particularly interested in the Hutterite account. The AV09 report pictures the common everyday experience of Hutterites. The Hutterites have such a compelling story from their 500-year past. All Anabaptists should be faithful in passing their heritage on.

Even though it is easy to forget a painful past—the color, the drama, the work of God, the failures, the successes—our children of faith will not profit from past experiences if we do not pass them on.

Some of these painful stories have already fallen through the cracks in the last 300 years while many Anabaptists have made the dramatic switch from a European-German context under persecution to an English wilderness/prairie context in America where they were free to peaceably pursue material gain. In that prosperous environment it has been easy to forget the horrible stories of past suffering.

I hope these various stories, especially the lesser known stories, can be a regular feature of *Anabaptist Voice*. People who do not know where they came from, cannot discern the present and have no guiding context for the future. As a servant to Anabaptist people, *Anabaptist Voice* owes the readership the service of passing stories from the past on to its readers.

Chester Weaver | *Osceola, Texas*

It's Not About Me

A non-Anabaptist “regular visitor” in our congregation was trying to understand the differences he saw between his understanding of church life and ours. He told us, “If it is not a salvation issue, the church should not address it.” He was particularly puzzled with our practice of making specific applications to biblical principles that we required of our members. To him, such applications were certainly not salvation issues and should be left to the individual conscience.

“Is this a salvation issue?” is the wrong question. The right question is, “Does this please the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ?”

As Anabaptists, we go to New Testament scriptures to find answers for this question, “Does the church making specific applications to biblical principles please the Lord?”

Anabaptists anchor their understanding of Scripture in Jesus Christ, in both His teaching and His life. This principle is so important to true Christianity that Paul called Jesus Christ the one true foundation (I Corinthians 3:11). There is no other.

Two verses come to mind that help me focus on whether specific church applications line up with Jesus’ teaching and example. The first is Matthew 6:33, “**Seek first the kingdom of God.**” The second verse is, “**Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it**” (Luke 17:33).

First means first. “Seek first the Kingdom.” What could be plainer? Jesus does not say, “Seek first the salvation of your soul”; nor does He say, “Seek first to build your church.” He certainly does not say, “Seek first to convince others that your understanding is right or your applications are superior”.

Jesus said, “Seek first the Kingdom.” And He warns us that seeking to save our own lives will cost us, not save us. Jesus’ call to take up our cross daily was a call to die to self. That does not mean to take up a wooden cross in order to save our physical bodies. No, Jesus is talking about the folly of trying to save our souls through a “self-centered gospel” without dying to self on the cross. Jesus is calling us to repudiate the “save-me gospel” that seemingly offers an easy road to heaven.

If there is no cross—no suffering, no self-denial, no death—that’s not Christianity. Christianity makes sense only when Christians resemble Christ. So we must “seek first the Kingdom of God.”

We must not seek first to build our church or save our life or save our soul or protect our reputation or defend our position. If we truly seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness, the “save-me-gospel” will disappear from our vision and our life. People will stop asking questions like these:

- Why do I have to do that?
- What is wrong with this?
- Do you mean I cannot be part of your church if I do not practice your application?
- Are you saying I will not make it to heaven if I do this, or if I do not do that?
- If it is not a salvation issue, why address it? Just leave me alone!

Think about those questions. What feeling do you get from them? Where is the focus? It’s all about me! What is the least I can do and still make it to heaven? That is a “me-centered gospel”!

If we seek first the Kingdom of God and drop the self-focus, everything changes. We start asking questions like these:

- What does Jesus want us to do?
- What does Jesus tell us to do?
- What does Jesus’ example teach us in this situation or question?
- How can we best work together in harmony so that we reflect the image of the living Christ?
- How can we together show the world a picture of what happens when heaven’s rule reaches earth?

These questions fit much better into the “seek-first-the-Kingdom” call of our King than the “is-it-a-salvation-issue” question. When we embrace this Kingdom-first model, we appreciate the practical value of the church’s applications to Kingdom principles that are required of members.

Ernest Strubhar | Perkins, Oklahoma



“Hearing and believing is not enough. Real Christians **DO** what Jesus taught.”

- Ernest Strubhar

Put on the Uniform

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

This is the story of Ernest Swalm, a Canadian conscientious objector in World War I.

The door of Cell No. 23 slammed shut, locking nineteen conscientious objectors (COs) behind bars. Ernest Swalm, the latest arrival, had been sentenced to two years of hard labor for his stand against military service in camp. That day, the grand jury of Lincoln County visited the prison and, noticing that the men in Cell 23 were different from the other prisoners, asked the turnkey who they were. The bitter old man replied, “These are some unconscious rejectors that came up from the C.O.R.’s yesterday.”

The road that led Ernest Swalm, a young Brethren in Christ man, to Cell No. 23 in a Canadian prison began in March, 1918, when the Canadian government passed a law conscripting all men ages 20 to 23 into the military. Actually, it might be said that the road began on June 28, 1914, when Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated in Serbia, launching a global conflict known then as the Great War. As the war raged on and the Allies needed more men, Canada passed a stringent conscription law, with no exemptions for COs as had been included in previous legislation.

A few weeks after the law was passed, Ernest received an order to report for duty on May 7, 1918. His father, a Brethren in Christ elder, and the rest of his family were distressed. In one week Ernest would have to report, with no provision for exemption from military duty.

The next morning, Ernest’s father boarded the train to visit and talk with members of the Nonresistant Relief Organization, which was working to secure an exemption for nonresistant young men. He came home the next day with the bad news that nothing could be done; the exemption privileges of the nonresistant people were gone.

Ernest had no option but to report to camp. Through the week, letters of encouragement came in. On Friday morning, Ernest went to the barn to feed the horses, and his father followed him out. He said, “The days are very dark and they seem to be getting darker, and I realize that it will be only a few days until you’re going to be forced away from your home and we won’t have the pleasure of associating together as we do now. I’d like to ask you something. ‘Suppose that the worst comes to the worst. How is it with your soul?’”

Ernest considered a moment, recalling his past Christian life, and responded, “Do you remember the night that I knelt at the altar of prayer in the old brick church and gave my heart to God?” He did remember. “Do you also remember how some years later, while seeking God for a deeper experience, I knelt in this very barn and consecrated my life to God and sought Him for sanctifying power?” He remembered this also. Ernest concluded, “I want you to know that it still holds good this morning.” Ernest’s father put his arm around Ernest’s neck and said with weeping, “I

would far rather get word that you were shot, that I should never see you again after you leave home, than to have you come home again, knowing that you compromised and failed to live up to the convictions that you had. Though it would be very hard for me to lose my only son, and it would mean a lot, I’d rather know that you honored your convictions if it cost you your life, and I must spend the rest of my days without you.”

Together, the two went into the granary and prayed earnestly together. Years later, Ernest wrote, “It was there that I prayed through, and God was pleased to let me see the firing squad with all that it means. There I faced it and was willing, if needs be, to die for Jesus...when in the actual fray and the thickest of the conflict, while taking our stand for right, we would turn our thoughts back with a great deal of satisfaction and remember the



Would you put on the uniform?

granary experience and how God marvelously visited us there, determination was renewed in our soul.”

On Monday morning, Ernest gave a heart-wrenching farewell to his sister and stepmother. His father accompanied him to the military camp and stayed nearby as Ernest entered military life. When a captain came by with medical history sheets for all the young men who arrived that day, Ernest informed him that he was a conscientious objector and would not serve in the military. The captain told Ernest he would have to express his objection to the captain of his company, but added, “I’ll give you this tip. Don’t try anything like that, my boy, for we’ve had two or three that tried that here. Until we got through with them, they were mighty glad to carry on and be a soldier. I’d advise you to profit by their mistakes.”

This did not dissuade Ernest, who requested an interview with his company’s captain, who referred him to the major. Major Bennett informed Ernest that all exemption privileges were gone, and he would at least have to take noncombatant service, which Ernest refused. Major Bennett then tried hard to persuade Ernest to accept military service. There was no one else in the army who took such a stand, he said; all who had tried had accepted military service after being told of the consequences of refusing. Major Bennett threatened that Ernest would be put in chains, taken to France, and put in front of the trenches as a barricade, to take the bullets to save the better men coming up behind him.

To all this, Ernest replied, “Be that as it may. By the grace of God I am determined in my stand, and I will not take service because I intend to be a conscientious objector.” Major Bennett returned, “We won’t force you to put on the uniform, but we’ll just make you so glad to do it that you’ll put it on.”

Ernest was then taken to the quartermaster’s, where he was ordered to take a uniform. When he refused, he was marched at gunpoint to his assigned bunk room, where he was again ordered to put on the uniform. He refused, but in answer to his father’s prayers, an order arrived just at that moment that Ernest was not to be forced into uniform, but should be allowed to wear his own clothes.

This privilege did not last long, and when Ernest continued to refuse to wear the uniform, he was arrested and put in the guardhouse. There, to his delight, he found seven or eight other COs, also there for refusing to wear the uniform. These young men were a great encouragement to each other in their commitments to faithfulness.

The next day, the COs were taken before the colonel, and once again stated their commitment to refuse all military service, including noncombatant service. They

were informed that within a month they would be court-martialed and returned to the guardhouse.

The day of the court-martial came, and Ernest stood outside the court-martial tent, waiting to be called. A great wave of loneliness washed over him; *what was he doing this for, anyway? Wasn’t he being a fool? He might be shot, while others just accepted military service and had a good time.* Ernest recognized the voice of the devil and asked God to rebuke him.

Just at that moment, Ernest looked down the road and saw Elder D. W. Heise, a Brethren in Christ preacher from Gormley, Ontario. Heise was walking down the road and Ernest called him. “What are you doing here?” asked Elder Heise. “We’re just waiting for the court to assemble. We’re going to be court-martialed.” Heise told Ernest that he had read about the upcoming court-martial in the newspaper, and had awoke at 3 AM to make the long trip by foot, train, and boat to see Ernest. He arrived five minutes before the court-martial began. This providential arrangement was a great encouragement to Ernest in his stand.

The court-martial began, and Ernest was charged with being a conscientious objector and for having disobeyed a lawful order from a superior (to put on the uniform). Ernest pled guilty. The court asked if anyone was there to plead in Ernest’s behalf, and Elder Heise testified to the quality of Ernest’s character.

The court-martial ended, and Ernest was put back under guard until the sentencing. Three days later, Ernest was sentenced to two years of hard labor. That evening, Ernest and six other COs were put on a train to be taken to the Lincoln County Jail, to await transfer to the federal prison.

On the train, which had rows of double seats facing each other, two of the COs sat on one bench with two non-commissioned officers—one of whom had been instrumental in bringing the CO opposite him to court-martial—sitting across from them. One of these COs was a sign painter, and had painted gospel texts on his briefcase, which he had sitting on his lap. As the train rushed these young men to jail, the non-commissioned officer looked with guilt at the words, “But know thou that for all these things God shall bring thee into judgment.” Growing more and more convicted, he ordered the young man, in disgust and anger, “I’m getting sick and tired of looking at that text all the time. Turn that brief case around.” The young man replied, “All right, I’ll just do that,” and turned the brief case around. The exasperated officer now had to look at the words, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

On arriving at their destination, the young men filed into the jail. When the governor of the jail found out that Ernest was from the Brethren in Christ, he said that his grandfather had been a Brethren in Christ preacher. The COs found Mr. Bush to be a very considerate friend, willing to show them every kindness.

Everything was taken from the young men but their Bibles. They were given jail uniforms and placed in the second corridor, where Ernest was put in Cell No. 23, with eighteen other COs. For four weeks, they enjoyed each other's company and spent many hours in prayer and singing together.

The turnkey, who had mistakenly called them "unconscious rejectors" on their first day there, was a 70-year old Catholic ex-sheriff. Garley Clinch was bitterly opposed to the COs and determined to make their stay in his jail miserable. He showed his displeasure toward them in every way possible. When they prayed, he became angry. When they sang, he sometimes asked them to quit.

One day, however, the young men noticed that Garley seemed to be softening a bit. He asked one of them a question about the Bible. Another day, he brought another CO into the corridor, and said, "Here, boys, I brought you another one of your pals. I think when I was good enough to bring you another pal, you ought to sing me one of your hymns."

Despite their astonishment, they immediately agreed and sang, "How good is the God we adore/Our faithful, unchangeable friend,/His love is as great as His power,/And knows neither measure nor end." When they finished the stanza, Garley asked, "Will you sing me another?" As they finished the second stanza, the tears ran down Garley's cheeks. He closed the gates and said, "Thank you, boys."

By this time, the COs were not being locked into individual cells and were allowed the use of the corridor during the night. This gave them the freedom to gather for early morning prayer. They prayed especially for Garley, as they saw that his heart was softening.

From that time on, Garley became kinder and kinder, finally becoming a friend and giving them as much consideration as Mr. Bush did.

After these COs were in jail for four weeks, the news came that the Canadian government had granted an indefinite leave of absence without pay for men from nonresistant churches. The young men's sentences had been remitted and they were going to be released.

Garley Clinch came to give them the good news. Ernest thanked Garley for his kindness, but Garley said, "Don't thank me, I'm ashamed of myself, the way I treated you boys when you first came here. I have never had a set of prisoners like this." Ernest promised he would continue to pray for Garley.

The COs were sent back to the respective camps they had come from to await the necessary papers. Ernest was in camp about ten days before he was released. He went home at once and was joyfully reunited with his family. Just several weeks previously, he had left, prepared to never see his family again. Now he had a jubilant homecoming.

Not long after Ernest went home, Garley Clinch was left with just one CO in the jail who was waiting to be transferred back to camp. This young man took a special interest in Garley, and one day Garley asked the CO to pray for him. There in the jail, the CO led Garley to Christ. Garley gave the young man his Clinch family Bible, since, he said, "You have been more to me than any of my relatives and I want to present you with this Bible." Not long after, Garley caught the Spanish Flu and died. His final words were, "I am glad I met the conscientious objectors. They meant a lot to me."

A.V. S. | *Manchester, Michigan*

Ernest Swalm tells his own story in the 55-page booklet *Nonresistance Under Test*. Readers interested in the whole story may purchase the book for \$3.49 + \$3.00 shipping from Sermon on the Mount Publishing, P.O. Box 246, Manchester, MI 48158. It is also available online at www.kingdomreading.com.

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“Too often our beliefs are determined by our practices, rather than our practices determined by our beliefs. God's Truth will never lead us astray. Surrender to it! Accept it unconditionally!”

- Glenn M. Wenger

from "Handling the Word of God Deceitfully" in *The Way of Truth*, Jan.-Feb. 2018

Active Peacemakers

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”
– **Matthew 5:9**

Christians are called to be peacemakers. Peacemaking goes beyond nonviolence or nonaggression to actively loving the enemy. Here are some suggestions of practical ways to do this.

Pray for Peace

Paul instructs Christians to pray for peace. **“I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and givings of thanks, be made for all men: for kings and all who are in high places; that we may lead a peaceable and quiet life in all godliness and reverence” (I Timothy 2:1-3).** We should pray for our government leaders that they may avoid war and not involve the nation in conflict. We should pray that peace be maintained within and without our national borders.

Pray also for the enemies of the nation in which we live. Pray that they would avoid armed conflict and be willing to work out differences peaceably. Pray for Christians in that country, that they would be encouraged in Christ and bold to share and live the Gospel of Peace faithfully.

Be a Peacemaker

While few, if any of us, may have the opportunity to make peace between nations, all of us can be peacemakers wherever we find ourselves. Is there anyone who has something against me? Jesus says that if we remember that there is such a person, we should not even make an offering to God until it has been resolved (*Matthew 5:23-24*). Is there a difficult neighbor or co-worker in your life? Demonstrate God’s love and peace to him by your Christ-like character. **“If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18).** Are there feuding brethren in the church, quarreling family members, or some other strained relationship which you might be able to help restore by acting as an intercessor? Plead tirelessly for peace!

Bring Others into the Kingdom of Christ

Perhaps the best way to be a peacemaker is to continually act as a co-worker with God to bring people into His kingdom and a relationship of peace with Him. **“We are therefore ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (II Corinthians 5:20).**

Those who have this reconciled relationship with God are spiritually-minded; **“For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).**

Give to Ministries Reaching War-torn Areas

While not all of us can personally help Turkish refugees, distribute Christian literature in the Middle East, or minister to displaced Ukrainians, all of us can give financial aid to those who are actively involved in these ministries. Most charitable organizations depend on small donations. Through Christian Aid Ministries, a Bible can be provided to a needy person for a donation of about \$2. CAM and other Anabaptist organizations are actively doing work with destitute refugees in war-torn areas of the world. Those of us who cannot go in person can help with resources.

Go and Give Aid to War-torn Areas

Some of us **are** able to go to other countries to aid in giving relief, reconstruction, or evangelism to those affected by war. This is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate and spread true Christianity among those who have never seen the real thing. Engaging in these ministries is perhaps one of the most powerful and direct ways to take no part in wars, and turn them into opportunities for the spread of the peaceable Kingdom of God. It is a way in which we can not only keep from cutting off the high priest’s servant’s ear, but with Jesus, pick it up off the ground and heal it (*Luke 22:50-51*).

Conclusion

As Christians, we have been called to live out the “peace that passes understanding” in a world at war (Philippians 4:7). Our responsibility is to take this ministry seriously, in spreading the peace of God.

The Apostle Paul, in an indictment of sinful mankind, gives one of their characteristics as **“the way of peace have they not known” (Romans 3:17).** Those of us who have known the way of peace have a responsibility to share this peace with others; to join the heavenly hosts which sang at Jesus’ birth, **“Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14).** In this way, we can go beyond being nonresistant and on to an active peacemaking, living out Jesus’ love for our and His enemies.

A.V.S. | Manchester, Michigan

Fear God

by Menno Knight

“Fear God and keep His commandments.”

– Ecclesiastes 12:13

In a recent Sunday school class a brother explained, “To fear God means to reverence Him, not to be afraid of Him.”

Both the Old and New Testaments teach something different than that. Man in his mortal condition should reverence, respect, and be afraid of God. Jesus himself said, “**And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**” (*Matthew 10:28*).

Reverence and respect do not portray the full meaning of fear in that verse. Try putting “reverence” and “respect” in that verse instead of “fear.” “And do not respect those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather respect Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Or let us try the word “reverence” and see how that fits. “And do not reverence those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather reverence Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Those words just don’t fit because in this verse, Jesus was pointing out to His followers who they should be afraid of: not men, but God.

Certainly we should reverence and respect God as is taught in many other scriptures, but that is not the meaning of “fear” in this verse. The meaning of “fear” in this verse is “to be afraid.” This verse is translated in the Amplified Bible like this: “**Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be afraid of Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell**” (*Matthew 10:28*).

Jesus taught in many places that God is a God to be afraid of if we want to escape the eternal fires of hell. We will look at several of them.

In Matthew 8:11-12 Jesus commended a Roman centurion for his faith and then thrust out a warning

to the Jews, “And I say to you [Jews] that many will come from east and west [Gentiles], and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. **But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**” Being cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth sounds like something to be very much afraid of.

Jesus taught again the terror and the fear of God in the parable of the king (*God*) who arranged a marriage for His son (*Jesus*). At the wedding feast a man snuck in without wearing a wedding garment (righteous deeds). The king (*God*) then ordered the man to be “**cast into outer**

darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (*Matthew 22:13*).

In this parable Jesus is teaching the people that a lack of good deeds bears awful consequences.

Again, in Matthew 25, Jesus has more to say about the end of those who displease a fearsome God. In the parable of the talents Jesus told of the punishment in store for the lazy, unprofitable servant who buried the Lord’s talent and did not

put it to good use. Then the Lord ordered, “**Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**” (*Matthew 25:30*).

In the same chapter of Matthew, Jesus uses even stronger language where He talks about the time when He will sit on the throne of His glory with the holy angels and divide the righteous and the unrighteous. “**Then the King will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’**” Is such strong teaching scaring people into heaven? No, it is placing a holy fear of God in people’s hearts so they will escape eternal punishment.

And in Luke 16:19-31, Jesus tells the sad story of a formerly rich man suffering flaming torment in Hades and begging to only have Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue. And when the man in



Fear destruction of both soul and body in Hell.

torment realized there was no outlet for himself from this terrible place, he begged Abraham to send someone to his father's house and testify to his five brothers *"lest they also come to this place of torment."* And the man pleads further, *"If one goes to them from the dead, they will repent."* The tormented man knew repentance was the answer.

Then Jesus added the final terrible statement of fact, *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead"* (Luke 16:31). Those people could have known everything they needed to know to escape Hades with only Moses and the Old Testament prophets.

Jesus preached these deathly woes in the local cities of Galilee: *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you"* (Matthew 11:21-24). Does that sound like a new era of grace and mercy and love compared to the Old Testament? It does not. Rather it sounds like the people of Jesus' day carried a much greater responsibility before God because of the greater revelation they had received.

Likewise, we carry an even greater responsibility than those to whom Jesus preached, because of the still more marvelous things that have been revealed to us, things that were hidden even from the Old Testament prophets. I Peter 1:10 says, *"Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you."*

There is still another stern warning for those who do not repent of their wickedness while they are living. It is found in Matthew 13:36-43 in the parable of the tares. Jesus said, *"At the end of this age, the Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

The warning to us is clear. God will cast those evildoers who displease Him into the everlasting fire of Hades. He is a God to be afraid of. Fear Him.

So what is the message for us and for those around us? It is a message of repentance from any willful sin. Mankind may not make God into some kind of

benevolent being who overlooks disobedience to His commands and His ways. God will bring judgment and eternal punishment for evil deeds done in the flesh that have not been repented of.

This repentance is not an act of God but an act of man. God has done His part in sending His only Son Jesus to die for the sins of the whole world. God has made an offering that He accepts as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. Now it is up to man to do his part. God—this awesome, holy, righteous, all-powerful One—is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). This coming to repentance mentioned here in II Peter can be translated different ways to catch the full force of what is meant by repentance. God is patient and waiting to destroy the earth and everything in it because He wants:

- all to change their hearts and lives.
- everyone to turn from their sins.
- everyone to change their ways and stop sinning.
- all people to change the way they think and act.
- each person to change his heart and life.
- each person to turn away from following his own path and to turn toward God.

If one examines all these different translations of repentance, he will soon see that it is man who must change his ways, not God. God is patient and waiting and giving willful sinners the opportunity to change so they will not be destroyed along with all the wicked people on the earth.

But to those who have repented and changed, Peter urges them to be holy in their conduct. He says, *"Be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless"* (II Peter 3:14).

Now, I could stop here and this message would be no different than many another preached around the world. People would listen and take it to heart and make no visible changes in their lives. But if they are really afraid of God and the coming judgment of willful sin, they will make visible changes. Clothing of men and women will become more modest, speech will be carefully guarded, flags will stop flying, ungodly CDs will be destroyed, unholy books will be burned, people will stop attending and watching unholy sports of this world, and some will change their jobs because of unholy associations and requirements in the workplace. Holy people will quit squandering their resources on extremely expensive and doubtful treatments to extend their lives on earth while at the same time claiming to be anxiously looking for a new heaven and a new earth. Hobbies and recreation will need to be scrutinized and sanitized. And this striving

to be a holy people is not a one-time experience, but a continual walking with God until the day we die. Painful changes will be evident and needed as we grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

Furthermore, our message to the ungodly is one of repentance and change. We can boldly warn them of the coming punishment for sin at the hands of a fearsome God. Our message can be like the one John the Baptist preached, “Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:7-8). With that message will come plain, simple changes one must make if a person is going to make himself acceptable to God.

This knowledge of a coming judgment where a holy God casts souls into an eternal fire does not sit well with those who imagine God to be only a loving, tender, forgiving God who washes away our sins and blots out our transgressions and saves us. God does it all and man has only to “accept” this wonderful salvation. It is an intangible salvation of feelings and as a result many people struggle with doubt and uncertainty. They ask over and over again, “Am I really saved or not?” It is the wrong question.

The right questions are, “Have I repented of my sins?” “Have I changed my life and brought it into obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ?” “Is there a visible, tangible change in the way I do business, the way I work, the way I dress, the way I talk?”

These are things man must do. God waits. God is patient. God gives man the opportunity, but God does not force man to change. It takes an effort on man’s part to make himself acceptable to God.

And when man does surrender himself to God’s way and keeps God’s commandments, there is peace. The believer can rest in calm assurance that he is right with God and can look forward to living in a new heaven and a new

earth in which righteousness dwells. I John 2:3,5 gives us a clear promise; “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

For those walking hand-in-hand with God and clad in robes of righteousness, we can reverence Him and and look forward to being in His eternal presence. But for those living in unbelief and willful disobedience to God’s commandments, our God is a God to be afraid of.



You will find peace when keeping God’s commands.



Sermon Snippet

sermon by Wendell Heatwole, June 2018

Particularly in our immaturity, either biologically or spiritually, we approach matters of personal conduct with questions such as: What’s wrong with . . .? Where is that forbidden? What right does the church have . . .?

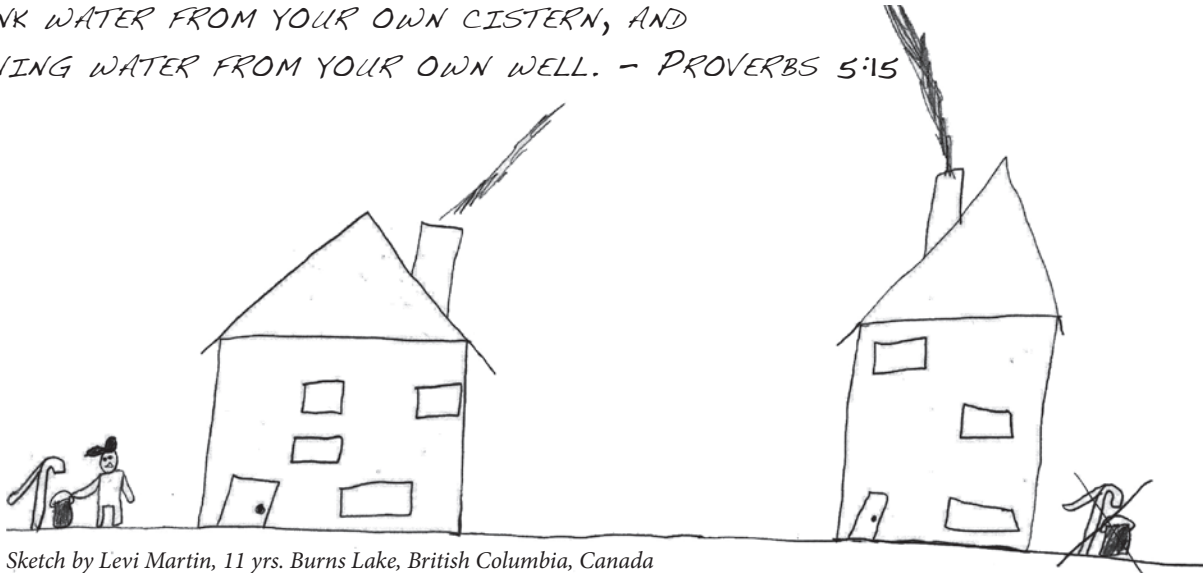
Discernment in personal conduct calls for a different kind of question. Questions such as:

- Will this lead me into temptation?
- What effect will this have on my family?
- Will it bring reproach to the church of Christ?
- Does it compromise my profession of nonresistance?
- Will I lead someone into sin?
- What value does this have?
- Does it have the perception among unbelievers to be wrong for Christians?
- Does it enhance spiritual vitality?

Proverbs Illustrated

The book of Proverbs teaches many memorable lessons with word pictures. *Anabaptist Voice* would like to include in "Proverbs Illustrated" your original sketch illustrating some of the great truths found in this book of wisdom.

*DRINK WATER FROM YOUR OWN CISTERN, AND
RUNNING WATER FROM YOUR OWN WELL. - PROVERBS 5:15*



Sketch by Levi Martin, 11 yrs. Burns Lake, British Columbia, Canada



As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. PROVERBS 27:17

Original sketch by Michele Thiessen, Westville, Nova Scotia, Canada

We Be All Brethren

by Andy Beckner

“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” – Matthew 23:8

Jesus did not want people to honor His disciples with honorary titles by calling them “Teacher” or “Father” because He is their “Teacher” and God is their “Father.” He said, “Ye are all brethren.”

Furthermore, Jesus told His followers not to set one above another in rank and office “like the Gentiles do” so they could rule over others. Rather, He told them that the greatest among His disciples would be a servant of all.

Jesus plainly did not want a system of church government by priests or other clergy and graded ranks. An example of just such a graded system is found in Catholicism with the Pope being the highest, Cardinals ranking second, and on down through several ranks to the priest and then the laity.

If we look at a commonly used system among Anabaptist churches, it is often not difficult to also see a somewhat graded system of church government or order—bishop, minister, deacon, and laity. What the terms mean in actual practice can vary considerably, but the terms should denote an office of responsibility, not an office of mastery or lordship.

Perhaps this graded system is based on I Corinthians 12:28 where it says, **“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.”**

If we look closer at the entire chapter and read about the body of believers, the church, we can see that all are of one body and all are equally important to the body.

This tells me that we, as members of the body of Christ, are all on the same level and should care for one another equally. God gives a different responsibility to each one which doesn’t make one better than another. We are all

given work to do according as God has blessed us with gifts to fulfill His purpose here.

This is summed up in Luke 17:10, **“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”** So then, we are all members of the body of Christ, all equal in the eyes of God—all brethren. We should not use titles such as Reverend, Father, Master, or anything else that places one member above another.

In short, Christ is the head of the church and all church government or order must function under His direction. The church should not function in the same manner as worldly organizations but as Christ told His disciples in Luke 22:26, **“...he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth**

serve.” Or in John 13:14, **“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”**

We want to encourage one and all to know the truth of the Scriptures and understand the doctrine. We must also know and understand why we do the things we do so we can pass it on to others coming after us. We don’t want religion to become only a lifestyle in our lives or in the lives of our brethren.

We want our children to hearken to the words of Scripture found in Malachi 3:16, **“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.”**

Old German Baptist Brethren Church

I was asked to tell how the Old German Baptist Brethren Church puts the above teaching into practice. Other systems of church order can be biblical, but this is our system and I believe it is a good one.



Ranking people like chess pieces is not God’s way.

Practical Example of Church Order

The Brethren movement began in 1708 near Schwarzenau, Germany. In 1881 the Old Order segment separated from the main body and began what is called the Old German Baptist Brethren Church. This brotherhood continues today with a very organized church government.

This brotherhood is composed of many districts. Each district has an official body. Brethren are called to their office in the official body by election from the congregation and are expected to serve for the rest of their lives. The official body consists of elders, ministers, and deacons; each office has specific responsibilities. When a brother is called to the ministry, he is placed in what is called the first-degree of the ministry. His responsibility is to preach and to assist the older brethren. After he has proven himself in that capacity, he is advanced to the second-degree of the ministry.

A second-degree brother's responsibilities are more arduous than that of the first-degree. He may baptize, anoint, marry, officiate at communion, etc. In short, it is the full ministry. After proving himself in that capacity, his responsibilities increase to the office of elder. An elder may have the oversight of a district, preside in council, and may participate in elder councils.

The deacons are called to oversee the physical needs of the congregation and assist the ministry in any way. If the need arises, they may open a meeting or bear testimony after a sermon.

The number of officials vary with the size and needs of a district. The official body also has the responsibility of bringing business before the congregation in council. The official body cannot pass judgment or make decisions without voicing the congregation.

Every year at Pentecost, the Old German Baptist Brethren Church holds a conference known as Annual Meeting which is a four-day event of worship, fellowship, and council. It begins on Saturday and ends with the conclusion of business on Tuesday. Every member that can go attends Annual Meeting.

Each district sends two brethren as messengers to Annual Meeting with any queries that district may have. Usually the two oldest ministers in a district are sent as messengers. On Monday morning the messenger body meets and selects from among their own number twelve elders to serve as the Standing Committee. The Standing

Committee serves as the official body of the brotherhood and chooses from among themselves a foreman, a reading clerk, and a writing clerk.

Then they divide the rest of the messenger body into subcommittees to consider the queries that have been sent. Each subcommittee is given one query. Their responsibility is to formulate a tentative answer to be brought before the congregation.

On Tuesday the congregation meets in council. After reading Acts 15, a sermon is preached on that subject. Business begins with the subcommittee foremen handing the queries with the tentative answers to the Standing Committee. A query is then read, followed by the tentative answer of the subcommittee. Then it is opened for discussion. Any brother who "feels to" may make comments. After sufficient discussion, the tentative answer is voiced upon.

Voicing is done in a unique manner. The Standing Committee foreman says, "All those in favor?" And all the brethren in favor of the answer will say, "Yes," in a normal speaking voice. The foreman will then say, "Are there any objections?" Then all brethren who are opposed will say, "Yes." Depending on the voice, a query may be passed, voiced on again with encouragement to submit, or reopened for discussion. A substitute answer may be offered, a query may be deferred (*to be brought up at a later meeting*) or laid down (*as if it had never come up*). The brethren try to obtain unanimity. Only brethren may speak or voice at Annual Meeting. Sisters are to remain in silence.

After Annual Meeting, the minutes of the meeting are read in each district and the ministers admonish the congregation on "adhering to the counsel."

It is my opinion that an individual should be a part of a brotherhood that he/she understands and can work in and with. Many of us were raised in a unique way, tailored by our parents to understand how the brotherhood they are a part of operates.

A.B. | Wirtz, Virginia

Practical Questions:

1. Is the ordained calling a position or a function of servanthood?
2. In what ways is equality expressed between leaders and the "brethren" in your church?



Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

– Psalm 133:1

Finding God in the Netherlands

by Tama McGlinn

“God is not far from each one of us.” – Acts 17:27

Neither my wife nor I was raised a Christian.

My parents are from New Zealand, and moved to the Netherlands so that my mother could study art at the University of Maastricht. Their plan was to return to New Zealand after her study was finished, but things went differently. First my older brother was born, and while they were living in Maastricht I was born. My parents lived in Maastricht and The Hague for a while before moving to Leiden where my father studied Islamic theology.

I grew up in a Muslim neighborhood while my parents considered themselves liberal adherents to the Baha (*Bahá 'í*) religion. When I was six, we stopped praying together. As I recall, this was because I asked a few too many tricky questions about God and was unsatisfied with the answers my parents could give. However, my brother and I still went to the feasts held every nineteen days—the Baha version of a church service. In this case, the feasts included praying fixed prayers in turn, and eating and merrymaking together. So my youth at least gave me some idea of what a religious community can offer over solitary faith.

In Leiden, I attended elementary school, high school and then university (Bach Computer Science). I met Carmen there, and after we married we lived in Leiden for a while, as well.

As a teenager, I varied in my stance on religion. At first, being surrounded only by atheist peers, I developed a nasty habit of trying to disprove claims about God. As I grew and discovered other forms of faith, I slowly let go of that militant atheist attitude. In fact, when I met my wife, Carmen, I still scoffed at her when she referred to her faith. She did not try to talk me out of this, but prayed for me for years.

My parents-in-law had Catholicism forced on them and turned completely away from religion, never to return. They raised Carmen with the firm idea that she

should investigate all religions that interested her. They said she could be baptized when she became an adult. So she went with her friend to their church, and still has many good memories from that experience.

While a teenager, and living in Greece, Carmen saw what the Greek Orthodox Church looked like in reality. She found that it did not appeal to her, especially the idea that the congregation was not expected to listen to the sermon or even understand it. During this time, she spent a lot of time reading about the Greek Orthodox Church, and through that formulated her own ideas of what seemed to her like the truth.

You can imagine Carmen’s amazement when, years later, she found out that Menno Simons had written very similar ideas, and her eyes were opened to the truth. As an adult, aged 24, she got baptized in a liberal Mennonite church. Even at that time we were starting to see the difference between the lifestyles of the liberal Mennonites and the actual “Statements of Faith” written by the Mennonite church in its founding years, and of course, the writing of Menno Simons.

Through Carmen, I’ve also been drawn to attend church and discover the Anabaptist teachings, so that I can now call myself a seeker of the narrow path. We are both very well aware that we are still in the first stages of our journey, but feel so blessed to have had our eyes opened to the truth.

In the past four years, we’ve been slowly studying Anabaptist principles, reading the Bible, and discussing all manner of religious topics which I would previously have been unable to take seriously. During this time Carmen had been praying frequently to the Lord to show her the way to other people who felt like she did, and to show her the path to truth. It was very difficult in the beginning, as she did not know where to start. But the Lord started giving us so many signs the past year, and now these past months, that we feel we are growing much in the Lord. There have come wonderful conservative



Tama & Carmen McGlinn and family

Anabaptists onto our path, and we have been shown good materials to read so we can learn more about the Anabaptist way. Doubly blessed, we now pray together for the Lord to show us the way forward.

As we learn more and more about real Christianity, we feel more and more isolated. I'm appalled with our current surroundings—with the immodestly dressed townspeople, the foul words we hear over their radio, their expensive cars and lack of care for God's earth.

They ask us why we dress the way we do, why Carmen wears a headcovering, and why I wear suspenders, but we feel that when we tell them why, it falls on hearts of stone. Not only does that discourage us, but sometimes we can hear the voice of the Evil One telling us that maybe it's a sign we are following the wrong way.

This anguish caused us to stop dressing plainly for a year, and to quit our outward signs of Anabaptism, as we felt we did not have the strength for being different. At the start of the New Year, however, we started to feel the tug to a different lifestyle again. Once more we took up our plain dress and straight away we felt assured of the Lord's help. How easy it is now to silence that voice of doubt!

But as we've observed of other Anabaptists, once you light a candle you don't put it under a bushel. After my wife's visit this past spring to the United States, she felt much encouraged in walking the Anabaptist way of life. When we both started reading the materials she had brought back, one of them being *Anabaptist Voice*, we both felt it would be wrong trying to hide the light of truth that has been kindled in us. So we try to be examples to others here in the Netherlands, and pray that the Lord would show us the way that we should go.

We also pray how we should go about protecting our children from the influences of the society around us.

There seems to be so few good examples of real Christian life nearby and so much to oppose. The girls are still young, one aged two and one four, and we have decided to homeschool them. A lovely conservative Anabaptist family gave us some tips on where to order good school material; we look forward to teaching the girls ourselves. Sometimes it does feel like we are on an untrodden path, even though we live in the country of Menno Simons!

We're currently reaching out through the few conservative Anabaptists we know in Europe to find more of like precious faith, so that God willing, we may find a place fit in which to raise our children. At the same time, we are educating ourselves about living a different lifestyle—what application of Bible principles will help to bring us rest.

As an example, I will give you one of our most recent "investigations." We recently met with a family of Old Reformed Protestants who shunned the use of internet in the home. Their church had already started using the internet, at first only allowing email. But soon they were permitted to use the internet according to a "whitelist" of websites deemed appropriate. Still later, they started using a "blacklist," more permissive because anything not specifically listed was allowed. I can see that the approach of that church does not work. However, I find it difficult to leave behind the many good and valid uses of modern media.

That is one problem that my wife and I are facing now. Step by step we grow in our understanding of what a Godly lifestyle looks like. I pray and read up on topics such as the internet question, and see what other Anabaptists give as reasons for and against. I talk a lot with my wife about this as well, but sometimes it is very hard to search for the narrow path in the tangled wilderness of modern society.

T.M. | *Amersfoort, Netherlands*

At right is a picture of the Lokhorstkerk, the Mennonite Church of Leiden which has quite a rich Anabaptist history. It was in this church where Carmen found the Lord and accepted the Anabaptist way of life.

Leiden's Mennonite community first built the Lokhorstkerk in 1613-1648 behind existing houses so that it did not appear as a church building. The Mennonites expanded the building in 1648, and in 1860 the houses that formed its facade were replaced by the present entrance.

Today, the Mennonites share the church with Remonstrants, a denomination organized in 1619 by the followers of Jacobus Arminius—best known for rejecting John Calvin's doctrine of predestination—after they were forced out of the Dutch Reformed Church.



The background of the page is a scenic photograph of a Swiss lake, likely Lake Zurich. On the right side, a tall, ornate church tower with a dome and arched windows rises above the water. To the left, there are traditional Swiss buildings with gabled roofs and colorful facades. The water in the foreground is dark blue with gentle ripples, and a small white swan is visible in the lower left. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds.

Tribute to Hans Landis

Today I wear the name of Landis, and though I cannot bear with Hans the same cross he bore, I share with him the same faith he wore and hope to gain another crown like the one Hans hoped for.

For Hans, the Sermon on the Mount became his creed and to live by faith meant to live by deed.

To Hans, there was no higher law than the Word God gave. No rules by Pope or Council or king could in the least way alter right and wrong in anything.

It mattered not to Hans what reasoning the priests did use, or of what error they did him accuse; Hans rested his soul and pressed on toward his goal.

Neither Canton, Council, nor Church could expel this stately tall man from Hirzel. In spite of prison and ban, Hans always came home to serve his own fellow man.

In his gentle manner Hans continued going about encouraging those in doubt. Doing good was his redoubt.

In 1614 Hans made his final decision there at the Wolfstadt Prison. He freely forgave and went to his grave ... in peace.

Today, 26 June 2004, I espouse the same faith Hans Landis lived out fourteen generations gone by. I am honored to bear the Landis name and to pay tribute to this great hero of faith.

This poem was given in Zurich, Switzerland at the dedication of a memorial plaque to Anabaptist martyrs.

Photo By Aak47 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

The Mystery of the Bells

by James G. Landis

The wild banging of the bells jarred me. The noise kept on. Could it be a fire? I peered out the hotel room window checking for flames or flashing red or blue lights. Nothing. I pried the window open and sniffed for smoke. Only a stiff breeze ruffled the calmness of the sleeping Swiss hamlet.

I listened for shrieking sirens to add to the clamor. Surely the bells must be signaling some civil emergency—a bomb threat, a train wreck with toxic wastes, or a call-up of the Civil Defense Units.

I watched and listened. No additional lights flashed on. The town did not black out. Only the wild banging bells.

For five nervous minutes they continued pounding their message into the five-o'clock morning stillness. But what was the message?

It troubled me long after the racket stopped. I needed to find the message encoded in the bells. I would find it at 12:00 noon that day, March 27, 1995.

I had noticed the clock and the tower on the church as soon as we turned off the main road into the village of Hirzel, Switzerland. They dominate the small Swiss village twenty kilometers south of Zurich, just as they have for 378 years.

Nothing in Hirzel escapes the notice of the clock and the tower. The clock keeps time and the bells clang an unending liturgy to be obeyed by the people of the village around it.

Every hour, day and night the bells sound and the clock strikes the hour. At five in the morning and twice more during the day, the bells ring wildly for a full five minutes, commanding the farmers to get out of bed, telling them when to come in from the field at noon, and urging them to start the evening milking. The clock and the tower guard Hirzel present, assuring the villagers that things in Hirzel do not change.

Little has changed in Hirzel, since the days in the 1500's when traders preferred the quality of the silk

woven in Hirzel until today. The size of the village and surrounding hamlets remains at less than 1,800 people. Eleven thousand cars climb and twist past Hirzel every day, but the clock and the town ignore those cars and people. They pretend that nothing in Hirzel has changed.

My son and I, with our wives, had come to Hirzel to learn about my family past and we discovered firsthand the Hirzel mystery that drove our forefathers, some to death and some to America.

Our group of four met Marilyn Schaffner, the curator of the Johanna Spyri museum in the church lot below that imposing clock and tower. She took us inside the church.

"I know that as Landises, you'll be interested in the story of this church. It's not a nice story and yet it tells a lot about Hirzel people even today."

Now Marilyn Schaffner lowered her voice. "I have to be careful what I say around here," she whispered as she rolled her eyes upward. "I am

from London and married to a Swiss man I met in South Africa. I've lived here twenty-four years. I know the Swiss and they care deeply about the past. I have to be careful what I say. You will understand when you hear the story.

"In 1613, Hans Landis, a local farmer and Anabaptist leader from Hirzel was arrested, along with other Anabaptists and imprisoned in Zurich. The Zurich Council sentenced him and a number of other Anabaptists to a six-year term as galley slaves on a French ship. With the help of good people in Solothurn, the men being delivered to the galleys managed to escape.

"Hans Landis returned home to his family and farm in Hirzel where he continued preaching and baptizing. Some encouraged Hans to flee, but he said, 'The earth is the Lord's' ... and he also asked, 'Where can I as an old man go?' One year after his escape from the galley slaves sentence, Hans was again arrested and imprisoned in Zurich.



The Reformed Church at Hirzel built in 1617

“On the last of September 1614, Paul Volmar, a friend of Hans, led Hans to the place of execution at the Walstatt. Upon arriving, Paul Volmar dropped the rope by which he led Hans, and lifting up both hands to heaven, uttered this request. ‘Forgive me for God’s sake, that which I must do to you.’

“A witness reported that those standing by believed the dropping of the rope signaled Hans it was all right for him to run away. And all understood that if he had, no one would have pursued him.

“Hans did not run away. Instead, he begged his wife and family to leave him so as not to disturb his firm resolve, then comforted the executioner and freely forgave him, whereupon Paul Volmar beheaded Hans with the sword. Hans’ lands were confiscated, but the authorities ‘kindly’ allowed Hans Landis Junior to ‘buy them back.’

“Buying land back, however, offered no real protection. In the years that followed, the Zurich Council determined to confiscate all Anabaptist property without respite. Beadles and sheriffs invaded private homes, abused the residents, took whatever they wanted, and confiscated their property. Many local believers were imprisoned. Some were sold into slavery on the galleys. In 1614, Hans Isler was one of these men who suffered this terrible fate, worse than death, and had his lands taken.

“In 1616 the ‘Lords of Zurich’ came riding out to Hirzel on their fine horses with feathers in their hats. They wished to build a new church for the people of Hirzel. The lords wanted Hirzel people to be a part of the Reformed Church rather than having them meeting in the fields and barns of the hated Anabaptists. The visiting lords looked the village over and selected a choice site for the new church.

“‘Who owns this land?’ they asked.

“‘You already own it,’ they were told. The land was earlier taken from Hans Isler because of the Baptist’s insubordination.

“On that site, confiscated from a simple peasant farmer and paid for by the blood and lands of others in the surrounding hamlets, the Reformed church built the beautiful building that you see standing today.”

“What a story!” I murmured.

“That’s not the end,” Marilyn continued.

“In the oldest Parish Register we find that on September 28, 1617, almost three years to the day after Hans Landis was martyred, the first child christened in the new building was Adrian Landis, a son of Caspar Landis and Verena Aepli. I don’t know what the relationship between that Landis and the martyred Hans

Landis might have been. But two weeks later the register records the christening of Margreth Landis, daughter of Hans Landis Junior, and hence the granddaughter of the executed Hans Landis.”

“Is that the whole story?” I asked.

“No,” Marilyn answered. “The suffering didn’t stop with Hans’ death and the construction of the new church. For the next thirty years all Europe struggled in religious wars. Some areas literally wiped out all adult males. And the fighting impoverished everyone.

“Hirzel was not exempt from those struggles. A few Landises remained, some left, and all suffered. We know Hans Landis Junior died in 1637 after a sixty-week imprisonment. His brother Felix suffered in prison until he could no longer retain food. In 1642 they carried him into church during a service and threw him under the bench where he immediately died. In 1643 authorities placed Verena, the aged sister of the martyr, under house arrest and provided so poorly for her that she soon died.

“What do you think?” Marilyn asked. “Do you understand Hirzel better now?”

“It’s a sad story,” I answered, “and maybe with a name like Landis I better be careful what I say. But why did the authorities kill these gentle, productive people and run them out?” Marilyn’s answer came with a surprising quickness. “They didn’t cooperate. In Switzerland you must cooperate.”

I had a lot to ponder. Marilyn Schaffner gave us an informative tour of the church and the cemetery and the Johanna Spyri (author of *Heidi*) museum. Toward noon she walked us back around the corner to the church yard. Standing there beside the church, we saw Hirzel much as it must have been 378 years ago in 1617, 100 years before some Hirzel people found their way to Pennsylvania.

Various hamlets rested in the greening countryside and there stood the same church with its troublesome clock that guarded Hirzel past and seemed to dominate Hirzel present.

The bells rang and the domineering clock struck twelve times—not timidly but with commanding tones for all to hear. I heard the encoded message of the Hirzel bells: “In Switzerland, things do not change. You must C-O-O-P-E-R-A-T-E.” The echo bounced back, “COOPERATE, cooperate, cooperate.”

**The story is true. However, based on my research, I put the words for some of the history in Mrs. Schaffner’s mouth.*

J.G.L. | Waynesboro, Georgia

Prophecies Quoted in the New Testament

compiled by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES PRONOUNCED Old Testament

“O Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
– **Isaiah 53:1**

“In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken away from the earth.” – **Isaiah 53:8a**

“...for he practiced no iniquity, nor craft with his mouth.” – **Isaiah 53:9b**

“In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and will rebuild the ruins of it, and will set up the parts thereof that have been broken down, and will build it up as in the ancient days: that the remnant of men, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, may earnestly seek me, saith the Lord who does all these things.” – **Amos 9:11-12**

“Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for man.” – **Psalms 68 [67]:18a**

“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall arise to rule over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.” – **Isaiah 11:10a**

“...let all the angels of God worship him.” – **Deuteronomy 32:43b**

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise.” – **Psalms 8:2a**

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES QUOTED New Testament

“Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”
– **John 12:38b**

“In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.” – **Acts 8:33**

“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth.” – **I Peter 2:22**

“After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the LORD who does all these things.” – **Acts 15:16-17**

“When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” – **Ephesians 4:8b**

“There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope.” – **Romans 15:12b**

“Let all the angels of God worship Him.” – **Hebrews 1:6b**

“Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants, You have perfected praise.” – **Matthew 21:16b**

All Old Testament quotes are taken from the Septuagint (LXX). Jesus and the Apostles often quoted from the Septuagint. New Testament quotes are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).

To Die is Gain

by Chester Weaver

This story is based on the book *A Whisper in a Dry Land* by Omar Eby.

Merlin's Background

Merlin R. Grove was born on 9 February 1929 to Russell and Annie Grove in Markham, Ontario, Canada. He was baptized at the Wideman Mennonite Church on 4 May 1942 at 13 years of age. During some of the World War II years, Merlin attended Ontario Bible School.

Merlin married Dorothy Bechtel on 11 September 1951. Merlin was 22 and Dorothy, who had just graduated from nursing school, was almost 25.

After marriage, Merlin and Dorothy operated the family dairy farm. In the next several years God blessed their home with three children, Bruce, Pauline, and David. And the farm prospered.

But Merlin and Dorothy wanted something more than the blessing of a growing family and the satisfaction of operating a prosperous dairy farm. They became involved in mission work in the city of Toronto and then during the winter months Merlin enrolled in Toronto Bible College.

At Toronto Bible College a speaker for the Sudan Interior Mission challenged Merlin with the statement, "God can't steer a parked car."

On to Somalia

Upon completion of his course at Toronto Bible College, he contacted the Eastern Board of Missions and Charities at Salunga, Pennsylvania and the Groves were accepted for service in a mission in Somalia, East Africa. The Wideman Mennonite Church ordained Merlin for this work.

Not everyone saw this service as a good thing. Merlin's parents were saddened to see them leaving the family farm. One of his non-Christian neighbors told him, "Anyone shipping that much milk to the city, making that much money, and now selling the herd of registered

Holsteins it took years to build in order to go preach in Africa is stupid! It's simply fanatical."

A Great Change

The Groves were not deterred from going to Africa by the sacrifices they had to make. So in July of 1960 they boarded a plane and flew to the capital of Somalia, Mogadiscio (*modern day Mogadishu*). From there they traveled 70 miles north to Mahaddei, Uen. What a change in only a few days time—from airplane to a place where cows, goats, and camels walked the streets;

from cool supermarkets to street-side vendors selling their goods in the open air markets; and Mosques and minarets instead of church buildings. The sights and sounds were radically different from home. And the languages—some English, some Italian, some French, and many dialects of surrounding peoples.



The Merlin Grove Family, 1960

Italian Influence

To top things off, just a few days before the Groves arrived in Mogadiscio, the country had been granted independence from foreign rule. On 1 July 1960, a new government had been formed to rule over what had been two separate countries for the past ten years.

The story goes back to the late 1800's when Britain and France were expanding their colonial empires in Africa, and Italy was being left behind. Through a series of treaties with local Sultans and several large wars with neighboring countries, Italy gained control of important seaports on the Arabian Sea and a chunk of hot dry land stretching from the equator north for 1,200 miles and 600 miles to the northwest, all along the coastline of the Arabian Sea.

After the defeat of Italy in World War II, Somaliland was divided into two parts. The northwest part of the country was placed in what was called an Italian Protectorate and ruled by Italians. The Southern part of the country was called a United Nations Trust Territory of Somaliland and ruled by Great Britain. This arrangement

lasted from 1950 to 1 July 1960 when both of these territories were placed under one national government based at Mogadishu.

Learning the Country and People

It was in this tenuous time of transition to an independent national government that the Groves arrived in the new “Somali Republic.” They were assigned to the small village of Mahaddei, Uen. Here Merlin was to operate a boarding school for approximately one hundred boys. Three Somalis and three missionaries made up the teaching staff.

But Merlin had more in mind than just operating a school. He wanted to share the Gospel with these nominally Muslim Bantu people. So he began to immerse himself in the people’s lives.

Merlin observed what happened at the calls to prayer. He sat with the people to join them in their social experiences. He wrote, “I have sat for hours outside the village mosque while prayers for the dead were offered inside, out of respect for one I had known well. I have assisted in the washing of a friend’s dead baby, and have followed in the place of honor behind the funeral bier carried aloft on the shoulders of four men....I was invited to inspect the proceedings of the men who were making the body ‘comfortable.’”

Merlin also observed that the life of a Somali woman could be very difficult. She might try as hard as she could to please her husband and then watch bitterly as he took a new bride. His Islamic religion allowed him four wives at one time; but he could divorce as often as he pleased. Merlin noted, “One old chief gets a new wife every year.”

Operating the Mission

The Mahaddei mission had been operated by another family when it was first established. During that time no one had attended Sunday services for nearly two years. Though a few Muslims would attend services now, they could expect censure from the community for doing so.

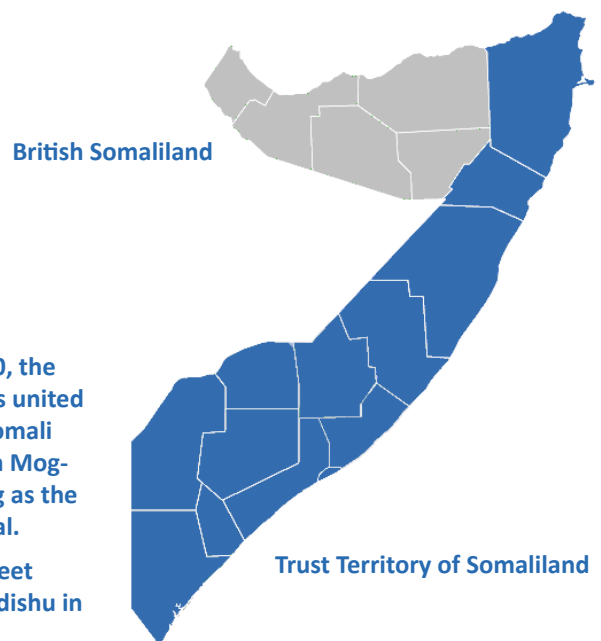
Merlin wrote, “It is difficult for those of us who were born into Christian environments to fully comprehend the size of the step a Muslim must take in order to become a Christian.



“In spite of this a number have expressed a desire to be Christians after they understood better. One teenage fellow had a dream which showed him that Christ was really the true Messiah. Although he is much too afraid of his family to come to services, he is secretly studying the New Testament. He’s pondering the cost of following Christ. We are praying that the price will not be too great for him.”

One day after a young man had given his heart to Christ, his father fumed, “If Ali wants to be a Christian that is all right, but I no longer need him for a son. I have five others. I don’t want to see you again,” he said to Ali. To Merlin he said, “Thank you for trying to bring peace between us, but it is no use, for our ways cross now, instead of running together.” Looking at Ali he flatly stated, “I will not even say good-bye to you. You are a stranger to me.”

After being in Somali for a year, Merlin began to hold Bible classes for seven men and boys who asked to be taught the Bible. There were no public announcements; the meetings were held in enemy territory. He wrote to the Board, “Those of you at home who are wondering whether or not the mission board is making good use of your dollars, ponder the net profit evidenced in this one corner of the church’s mission outreach. Who would want to say that missions do not pay?...We rejoice that God is using His Word to convict and convince some Muslim hearts of their need of a Savior.”



On 1 July 1960, the two territories united to form the Somali Republic, with Mogadishu serving as the nation’s capital.

At left, is a street view of Mogadishu in 1963.

info quoted from Wikipedia; picture from Somaliweyn @ Wikipedia; map from Banskp @ Wikipedia, re-colored by A. Riehl; CC BY-SA 3.0

Conflicting Orders

But things did not always go easy at the mission. One day a government-sponsored practical nurse, who had no authority over the mission, jealously said, “Your clinic dare not operate on Fridays which is our Muslim day of prayer, and you are not to treat anyone except your own schoolboys.”

Merlin told the district commissioner what the practical nurse had said and asked him whether the clinic should stay open on Fridays or not. The district commissioner replied, “They’re taking on too much authority. You just go ahead as you’ve been operating. Leave the clinic open on Fridays. Treat anyone who comes.”

On another day the Somali minister of education held an appointment with Merlin and Wilbert Lind. He told them, “Somalia is an Islamic state and the state has the right to control and teach the Islamic religion in all schools, public and private. The present constitution which grants religious freedom will soon be modified and will require all children of Muslim parents or at least where the father is Muslim, to be Muslim. A child cannot change his religion before he is twenty-one years of age. There are no Muslims who would even want to change their religion anyway. Religion is the most important element in our country.

“Good schools are wanted and there is need for many things, but that which is most essential is the Islamic religion. Anyone who teaches another religion to Muslims is doing it in defiance of the state. Private schools may exist, but their curriculum must be exactly the same as the state schools. Religious instruction will therefore be required and examinations in religion will test whether the child is learning the subject. Unless the student passes his religious subject, his certificate will be invalid.

“Teachers of religion will be paid by the government and teach (sic) in private and public schools and the entire teaching staff of a private school may be determined by the state.”

Conflict with Islam

After such a threat from the Somali Minister of Education, Merlin wasn’t sure what they were to do with their boarding school. They opened the school anyhow on June 4, 1961, but they refused to allow a formerly disruptive student to attend. The father of the boy was angry. He threatened all kinds of action against the mission if his son was denied permission to enroll. A

week later, upon the district commissioner’s direction to forgive the boy, Merlin accepted the boy again.

Then the school had another problem. The Arabic teacher was teaching Islam to the students. When Merlin asked him why he was teaching Islam, the Arabic teacher replied, “I have the right to teach Islam.”

“You’ve been hired to teach Arabic, not Islam,” Merlin told him. “And it is possible to learn the Arabic language without teaching Islam; so we want you to be quiet about religious matters.”

The teacher was angry and kept on teaching Islam. The school sent a written protest to the teacher stating he was not to teach religion, but it did no good and he continued his unwanted teaching.

Now the whole village was astir. Troublemakers in the village continued their activity. Friends of the Arabic teacher told the boys that the mission is evil and that it had come to force them all to become Christians.

Next the Minister of Education confirmed that the Arabic teacher was out of place. The district commissioner added his word: “The village elders are overstepping their authority. The constitution of our new country guarantees religious freedom.” In the end the Arabic teacher was removed.

Stressed Out

But more complaints erupted. Merlin was fatigued and found sleep difficult. At this difficult time, Merlin’s parents came to visit the family in Somalia. They brought a time of refreshment and healing to Merlin during their stay. Then on 10 March 1962 the Russells left the mission to return to Canada.

Thirteen days later the Groves received word that the mission and all its activities would be suspended.



Aerial view of the Port of Mogadishu

The American ambassador was upset that the mission had provided free Arabic tracts entitled, *The Way of Salvation*. The tract mentioned Christ, the Trinity, and more. Someone complained to the Somali president who had visited a particular mosque. The President was urged to stop this heresy!

Wilbert Lind apologized to the American ambassador for causing trouble and promised him that no more tracts would go out.

During the same week thousands and thousands of Somalis marched from the British Embassy to the Parliament building where the Prime Minister gave a two-hour speech. In the speech he said, "The freedom of religion guaranteed in the Somali Constitution will need to be changed. In the meantime the mission will need to be closed." A mob spirit then resulted in a demonstration against the Mennonite Mission and the mission was closed.

Why? First, the Mennonites had their national "priests" who taught Somalis the Christian faith, and secondly, Arabic-language Christian literature was being distributed in the capital city.

On 5 July 1962, Merlin received word that the mission was permitted to reopen. Why? Pressure behind the scenes.

Hatred and Murder

At 3:30 on a Monday afternoon a few days later, students began to arrive. At the same time 55-year-old Jassin Abdi Ahmed Ibrahim, a Muslim mullah, had finished his call to prayer and went down to the mosque to ask Allah to help him purge Somalia of the infidels. If the Christian mission could not be gotten rid of peacefully, the faithful Muslims would need to resort to violence. He



Young Somali boy at a clothing and footwear shop

stuck a double-edged dagger under his cloak and headed for the Mennonite mission.

Registration was in process. Merlin was sitting at a typewriter. Harold Stauffer was sitting behind him working on mission ledgers. Jassin walked in, looked around, sat down on a chair, and watched as Merlin laughed and talked with the students. Jumping to his feet he stabbed Merlin repeatedly in the chest. Merlin slumped to the floor while Jassin continued to stab him. Hearing a scuffle Harold saw what was happening, knew he could do nothing, and fled for the door. Jassin followed, both running through the crowd of students who did not know what was happening.

Hearing the disturbance, Dorothy headed up the driveway. Harold yelled, "Run, Dorothy, he's got a knife!" As Jassin approached her, she started walking backward, still facing him. She tripped and went down. She screamed to her son who appeared, "Bruce! Run!"

But Jassin had reached her, slashing her abdomen. Then Harold appeared so Jassin pursued him again. She clutched her abdomen and staggered to the Stauffer house.

Dorothy asked, "He's dead, isn't he? Take good care of the children. I think I'm going to die too."

The assassin fled to a village outside of Mogadishu where he was arrested with the blood-stained dagger still in his hand. Dorothy recovered and returned to Ontario. The mission continued for a while until it was permanently shut down.

Love and Forgiveness

Grove's assailant was later brought to trial. At the trial Harold Stauffer, speaking on behalf of the mission staff and Dorothy Grove, read a statement of love and forgiveness. The murderer was given a life sentence.

We publish this story to make sure that Merlin Grove's life and witness are not forgotten.

C.W. | Osceola, Texas

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

– **Philippians 1:21**

Note Of Interest:

Muslim Impact Training is holding a 3-day conference to learn about Islam from other Anabaptists and engage with Muslims in a local community. The conference will be September 20-22, 2018, at Whispering Pines Mennonite Church in Honea Path, SC. Call 717.884.8771 or visit www.gifc.net to pre-register.

A Call to Anabaptists: GO!

by Dean Taylor

Introduction: *One year ago, Dean Taylor and his family served at a refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos at a refugee camp named Camp Moria. On May 20, 2018, the Mine Road Amish Mennonite Church held a commissioning service for Brother Dean and pledged to support him in the church-planting opportunity in Europe and sent him and his family, with their blessing, back to Camp Moria.*

The Greek Island of Lesbos (also called Lesvos or Mitilini) with 630 square miles of land and 199 miles of coastline is the third largest of all the Greek Islands. The island is five miles across the Aegean Sea from Turkey. Evil men currently charge refugees between 400-700 euros, tell them they can enter Europe through Lesbos, put them on a plastic raft or boat, and send them off.

If they make it safely across the Aegean Sea and arrive on the island of Lesbos, they find it is nothing like they were promised. A refugee camp designed to hold 2,500 people is now flooded with 7,000 people. Over half of them will be sent back home. Meanwhile, Christian Aid Ministries is attempting to help with humanitarian relief. Brother Dean is spending his time baptizing and teaching souls whom God has prepared beforehand.

This polyglot mix of people from twenty different nations and a variety of languages and religions present Dean with a huge challenge and opportunity. Many of these refugees are interested in hearing about Jesus.

Brother Dean is there in Greece, but he sees Camp Moria as only one tiny part of God's harvest field that is white and ready for harvest. There are millions similarly adrift in this huge surge of humanity toward Europe. Brother Dean challenges the churches of today with a compelling command of Christ and shares a glimpse of the work to which God has called him.



Go, Go, Preach & Witness

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" – **Matthew 28:19**

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." – **Mark 16:15**

"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." – **Luke 24:47**

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me ... unto the uttermost part of the earth." – **Acts 1:8**

These commands of Jesus are very challenging. They are commands and not just suggestions for when times are good and the church is well established at home. Jesus expected his followers to "GO" and make disciples of all nations.

Some of the early founders of Anabaptist faiths spread out because of persecution while others deliberately sent out missionaries to evangelize.

As I read the Hutterian Chronicle, one thing that stood out to me was the "reason" the brothers gave for going into the mission field. It was always "the command of Jesus." These brethren simply did not separate the command

to "GO" from any other command of Christ. In their thinking, "If you are not going, you are not obeying." It was as simple as that.

Please remember that our forefathers carried out the commands of Christ. Their example speaks loudly to us today, spiritually and physically. In the Hutterite Confession of Faith under the section entitled "Differences in the Offices," Peter Riedemann explains the necessity of having a dedicated ministry designed for outreach. Writing from prison, he said:

In the church, Paul says, 'God has first appointed apostles'. These are the ones who are sent out by God and His church in accordance with the command of the gospel, to go throughout the country and establish the obedience of faith for His name's sake. This they do by teaching and baptizing.

These early brethren carried out the command of Christ and the teaching of Peter Riedemann. One of my favorite quotes from the Hutterian Chronicles was written in 1620, just a year after the beginning of the deadly Thirty Year War.

This year too, we followed the example of our forefathers by sending out several brothers to various places in Germany. They went to seek those on fire for the

truth and to call people to repentance. It amazed many people in Bohemia (where both hostile armies were encamped) as well as in Germany that our defenseless members set out during a time of such terrible danger, when scarcely anyone, whether of high or low estate, could travel in safety. But the Lord was their protector, and they relied on Him alone. When their task was completed (through the intercession of His people), He led them home again in peace and safety.

The Hutterites today perpetuate the sending-out idea of the 1620 brethren. When a minister makes his ordination vows, he is asked to answer this question: “I ask you, my brother, how do you stand? Are you willing to be obedient and allow yourself to be used, inside or outside of the country, as needed whether or not the time suits you, however God the Almighty may lead?”

Today we need to actively pursue filling Christ’s command to “GO.” It’s not enough just to talk about it. Jesus not only told His followers to “GO.” At another time He told them to “lift up their eyes and look at the fields for they are white and ready to harvest.” Then He told them, “Pray the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers.”

The command to pray for laborers is very important.

My whole life I have used that verse to talk about the harvest of souls in America. If I am honest, I really was praying that people would just be interested. But it is not that way here in Europe (*and many of the works in other foreign fields*). The work I am seeing in Europe is truly like the one Jesus described. The fields are so “white” that I can hardly keep up with the interest.

After being here only a week, I see that I cannot physically get to all the people who are interested in the gospel. When I do spend a tiny bit of time with them, I see that God has already prepared their hearts. I only need to go into the field and gather in the white harvest that God has made ready.

In the natural fields of wheat or corn or soybeans, when harvest time comes, every day is important to be in the field gathering in the harvest. A storm might come bringing fire, wind, or hail and destroy the crop. It is even more urgent today that we send forth laborers because the fields are white. So where do we start?

Here’s the amazing thing. It’s really not that hard. The amount of people, gifts, talent, and resources that the Anabaptist people possess is more than adequate. Every community of believers should be able to send out at least two for a term of service, and perhaps more.

We do not need more committees, organizations and conferences to talk about carrying out Christ’s command

to “GO.” We need more churches to lay hands on dedicated people and send them out.

I will help what I can. There are many organizations already in place to help with travel arrangements, and necessary contacts. I feel that Christian Aid Ministries would possibly be willing to work with many of you. They are accustomed to working with Anabaptist peoples. But that is only one of many helpful organizations.

It’s not enough that we should just talk about sending forth harvesters. It’s not enough that we should pray for laborers.

It is time to send them out.

How soon can your church or community send laborers into the harvest? The fields are white. The time is short. The call is urgent. The Lord of the harvest has commanded us, “GO.”



Refugee tent village on the island of Lesbos

Update from Camp Moria

Hello everyone, from the Dean Taylor family here on Lesbos Island, Greece. It seems as soon as we arrived, we hit the ground running. I will share some stories, write a quick summary of some highlights, and give some prayer requests.

Currently we are running three discipleship schools—Persian, French and Arabic. They are a blessing. Each group comes with their own particular personality.

The Persian-speaking group are people from Iran and Afghanistan. The French speakers would include some of the African countries such as Congo and Cameroon. This group also includes English-speaking Africans from Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The Arabic-speaking class would have people from Syria and Iraq.

Story of Afghanistan Family

Some of the stories from these new believers have been amazing. For example, a precious family from Afghanistan is here. The man was introduced to us through OASIS (*“Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards”*). He walks with a limp and has a deformed right hand. His injuries came from an explosion and torture he received in Afghanistan. As soon as he heard about Jesus, he became very interested. He told me that he had dreams where he felt God was calling him to Christianity.

He is illiterate even in Persian, but very precious. He always wants to kiss my hand or my face before and after class. His wife is now also coming to classes and is becoming more and more open to Christianity. They have two little boys who have been struggling with minor sicknesses.

Their recent impressive story is that they found out that his wife is pregnant. They could not think of how they could take care of this baby, so tragically they had decided to have an abortion. However, that night he had another dream where he saw God telling him that if he kills the baby he would be in trouble on judgment day. The next day he came to church and wanted to talk to me. After church he told me the dream and asked me if I agreed with it. I confirmed the words of the dream and he felt very happy. He now wants to keep the baby and feels the Lord has a special purpose for the child. I rejoiced with this decision and felt that this one victory alone is worth the trouble of all of us coming here to the island.

Story of Iranian Man

Another story I heard recently was of a man from Iran. He left Iran with a group of people escaping over a high mountain into Turkey. However, while walking in the middle of the night, he slipped off the trail into a deep gully and became separated from his group. Everyone left him there alone; he was there for two days. He did not want to scream for help because he knew if the police found him, they would deport him and put him in jail in Iran.

So he started to pray. And he prayed to Jesus. The next morning two shepherds came and found him. They told him they seldom come this way, and then took him to a cave, gave him food, water, and tea. These shepherds also pointed the way to Turkey more clearly and showed him a passage he was not aware of. He went through the passage as directed, but it still meant climbing a large peak. As he began climbing the mountain, he got to a point where he could not find another step to go higher and he was scared to go lower. So he was stuck there on

the mountain with a lot of fear. Again he cried out to Jesus and asked for help. When he opened his eyes, he saw one little spot he could grab to pull himself up and get around the cliff. Now he was able to go to the other side of the mountain and finally reach Turkey. From Turkey he made it to Lesbos Island. Once on the island he ran into Christians. After his experience he knew he wanted to study Christianity because he feels that Jesus saved him.



Muslim refugees waiting to cross the street

Story of Syrian Woman

Another story is of a Syrian woman who wanted to come to Jesus. She is older and still wears a full hijab. She lost her husband years ago in an auto accident and recently her two remaining boys were killed by ISIS in Syria. She reads a lot and studies the Bible. She really wants to come to Jesus—Sister Esther has been ministering to her. This woman has a lot of needs so please pray for her.

Story of Kurdish Couple

We also met a Kurdish couple from Iraq who speak Arabic. These will be the beginning of the Arabic Bible study group. Saif and Emily will be the translators for us. They are a wonderful young family and are expecting their first baby.

Story of Saman

There are sad stories too. One sad case I would like you all to pray hard about is a young man named Saman who I baptized last year. He has been rejected by asylum officials and has been waiting here in the hope of obtaining one more trial. Two days ago his landlord kicked him and his roommate out of their apartment and wanted them to leave. Saman has nowhere to go. He would like to stay in the area so he could continue to attend Bible studies. Pray for a roommate for Saman and

that a cheap apartment would become available where he could stay for a few more months until he goes to Athens.

Saman is a very dear young man. He grew up without a father in a small farming town. Because of the war he and his mother had to run away. His journey to the island, like that of many other refugees, is filled with stories where deceitful traffickers and smugglers took advantage of them as they traveled. These evil men all promised him things and never delivered them.

He had a pretty good job in Iran, but because of his faith he has been persecuted. His mother has even received some persecution because of his conversion to Christianity.

Story of Mohammed

A young man I baptized last year was Mohammed. He had a very hard year. Mohammed suffered terrible abuse in Camp Moria and then tried to go to Athens. There he was given a devilish roommate. When he could not take the pressure and strain anymore, he asked to be deported back to Iran. Tania and I were able to visit him several times in prison before his deportation. I received a message from him two days ago; he has made it back to Iran safely. I praise the Lord for his safe return, but I pray that God will send him other believers so that he will not compromise his faith.



Abandoned life jackets and rafts along the shore

Additional Prayer Requests

On the practical side, much of our energy has been spent working to organize the Bible studies. *Pray* that the Lord would open up the perfect place where we can have our Bible studies in a convenient location. We have been looking at warehouses that are within walking distance of Camp Moria. It would save us a lot of work if we could be very close to the camp. Driving the refugees to and from the Bible study is some of the most difficult part

of the work. So please *pray* that God would open up the perfect place for us.

Continue to *pray* about the visas. Our lawyer seems very confident that we are going to be able to work something out. We have been looking at doing some sort of humanitarian service to add to our biblical discipleship school. The lawyer has spoken to officials and feels very optimistic. However, as of yet nothing has occurred. So please keep this in your prayers.

Physical Needs

Joanna's health [Crohn's disease] is doing very well. She does have times of very bad pain but overall, I feel we are making progress. I have not yet met with the Greek doctor; I hope to do that next week. Please continue to pray for her and for the health of all of us. We all have received new little sicknesses from being in camp and around new people.

Our living condition adds a few difficulties. Most of the modern conveniences like a refrigerator and washing machine are very limited. We have a very, very nice house but it has no air-conditioning. I feel wimpy to ask for prayer for this but it is very hot here. Pray that the Lord would give us all courage to keep going during the heat. It seems during the daytime we can just keep going ...the hardest part seems to be just sleeping at night. (*I guess this is why I am writing this report at 3 AM*).

Rejoicing

The unity between the different organizations has been outstanding. I-58 has gone out of their way to be very accommodating. They have blessed us and helped us in so many different ways. I really feel like they are fellow-workers in all we are trying to accomplish here. God is at work and we all long to be working with Him.

In short, this entire work is completely amazing. To see so many people from Muslim backgrounds come to Christ is incredible. I pray we can give support to these dear souls who are coming to Christ and encourage them. There are so many of them.

I wish I could tell you the life story of each of these dear souls. Everyone has a journey, a story, a dream, and a vision that has brought them on a long path to believing in Jesus Christ. They are all so precious, yet they all have such a long journey ahead of them to make it to safety. Please pray that God would open up the door for all these beautiful souls so they may continue to live a fruitful and prosperous Christian life.

D.T. | Lesbos, Greece

Thy Kingdom Come

by David Walter

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

– Matthew 6:10

“Thy Kingdom Come”

Jesus started His ministry by saying: “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (*Matthew 4:17*). This is the good news of the Kingdom, because the world finally has a righteous king. A new nation under King Jesus’ leadership has been birthed. Citizens of this new nation live the abundant life and demonstrate to the world the radiant presence of God among them. So even though the kingdom is now here in us, and among us, we pray that the glory of God’s kingdom may be fulfilled and rule over the entire earth.

God’s kingdom begins in the heart and is then manifested outwardly. It comes when a person is born of the Holy Spirit, becomes a new creature in Christ, reckons himself dead to sin, and walks daily in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Are we prepared to suffer, to be persecuted, and to die? Are we ready to forsake all that we have, deny ourselves, and follow Christ? Satan and his forces are opposed to God and His kingdom. When we decide to submit to King Jesus, we must be prepared to resist all evil that will certainly come against us.

When we pray “Thy kingdom come,” we pray that His kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy will prevail and rule over us—that all our thoughts and motives may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. We pray that righteousness will triumph over unrighteousness, love over fear and hatred, peace over conflict, unity over division, truth over deception, holiness over sin, and light over darkness. It is a petition for our full surrender that we may grow in grace and usefulness in God’s kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is no individual matter; it certainly has a corporate aspect. It is a kingdom with laws, citizens, a domain, and a king. In this kingdom, every citizen in company with his fellow believers, must pray and work so that the Kingdom of God will come and rule over others also. Still we must all make the choice to

give our lives in full surrender to the King individually, but that is not the end.

The end is the Kingdom of God. To that kingdom we must come and lose ourselves in it. We must work and fight together with our brothers and sisters to seek the spiritual welfare of others. We must bring to others the terms of peace while at the same time opposing the forces of evil that are trying to demolish God’s kingdom.

May we truly stand in awe, amazement, surrender, and humility before our great King, and earnestly plead, “Thy kingdom come.”

May we devote ourselves fully to God that His kingdom may come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

“Wherefore, since we are receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire” (*Hebrews 12:28-29*).

“Thy Will Be Done on Earth as It Is in Heaven”

God, the great and almighty Creator, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who has all power and authority in heaven and on earth, also has a will—a longing and a desire that His will be done here on earth by us, as it is done in heaven. He desires a place to come and rule and to establish His kingdom on earth where His will is being done—hearts where He can manifest to the world what He is like and what He can do. God wants His people to represent heaven here on earth and to show forth what He intended from the beginning, “A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a special people that show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light” (*1 Peter 2:9*).

“Father, may Thy kingdom come, and be established in us and among us where you have complete control of our lives. May our will become one with your will, so that your will may be done in all that we do on earth as promptly as it is done in heaven. Help us to show what the world would look like if everyone obeyed Thee. Amen.”

D.W. | Wolf Point, Montana



John the Baptist came preaching.... and saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”

– Matthew 3:1-2



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes to be treasured as fine jewels.



“When we are governed by the Holy Spirit, everything is subject to regulation.”

– Calvin Yoder at Southern Mennonite Fellowship Meetings, GA



“We are not humble before God until we humble ourselves before men.”

– Eugene Sommers at Hartville Conservative Mennonite Church, OH



“Every deed done in love is an eternal investment.”

– Simon Sommers at Hartville Conservative Mennonite Church, OH



“A good marriage takes a lot of time and talk.”

– Ron Wolfer at Hopewell Mennonite Church, OR



“Peace is not a feeling; it is our actual state of being before God.”

– Lyndon Miller at Farmington Mennonite Church, NM



“The rough sea was never really out of control. Jesus simply said, ‘Peace be still,’ and all was calm. We see Jesus as the supreme ruler over all things.”

– Robert A. Troyer at Lyndonville Amish Church, NY



“The death of Jesus has the capacity to change your eternal destiny. The life of Jesus holds the capacity to change yourself.”

– Calvin Yoder at Southern Mennonite Fellowship Meetings, GA



“Trust the pruning of God. What He takes or withholds is not necessary for your fruit-bearing.”

– Brian Yoder at Southern Mennonite Fellowship Meetings, GA



“In a good marriage, joys are multiplied and sorrows are divided.”

– Jake Kropf at Hopewell Mennonite Church, OR



“Boundaries will not produce spirituality, but spirituality will have boundaries.”

– Calvin Yoder at Southern Mennonite Fellowship Meetings, GA

Share your rubies and diamonds with AV readers. Send in the quote followed by the name of the speaker and the name of the congregation or church where it was given. Just for our records, we would like to have the name and address of the person sending in the quote. WE NEED MORE!



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 they are.” This section is not for some idealistic future kingdom posing complicated theological questions with no good answers—for example, the woman who had seven brothers as husbands (*Matthew 22:24-28*).

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.

Comfortable

by Wel Kohming



AV asked the writer of the story “Comfortable” to answer the four questions that were posed at the end of the story in AV09, page 41.

1. What happens when a visitor comes to your church for the first time?

When a visitor comes to our church for the first time, he is greeted with friendly smiles and sincere welcomes, and is invited to share dinner with the family serving as hosts for that Sunday. Conversation following church services always include the newcomer.

2. Is it possible to “learn the culture” and join your church?

I am proof that it is possible to “learn the culture” and join our conservative Mennonite church! Along the way, I was gently guided and often reminded to avoid referring to children as “baby goats” and to remove certain expressions (*substitutes for the Lord’s*

name) from my vocabulary. I needed some help to arrange my hair under the covering in such a way that the covering actually stayed put. One of our gifted seamstresses helped sew dresses for me, for while I sew, I have not mastered the cape dress we wear.

But those little differences are truly that — small. The larger challenges have involved learning and completely embracing some of the biblical principles that I did not learn in my first 50+ years of life. For example, I spent over two decades raising my family of three—my husband left when our youngest was only nine months old. Learning about headship, the man’s role in the family, and seeking the advice of those in my church were all new concepts for me. I had worked full-time once my son turned four and at one time I balanced a full-time teaching job and two part-time jobs. You may understand how relinquishing my “independence” and recognizing the true blessings of brotherhood, counsel, and headship have taken awhile!

I continue to make mistakes. The first time we met at church on Wednesday night to discuss the first part of a book our church was reading and studying, I did what effective college students do. I had read the assigned section, answered all the questions, and came prepared to discuss the material. I was

surprised that I was the only woman raising her hand to answer questions or share.

There continue to be cultural differences that crop up now and then, but so far, nothing as major as what I've written about earlier. I'm blessed with a loving, understanding brotherhood.

3. Must a person prove his sincerity before baptism?

It is absolutely vital for anyone wishing to join the church to be completely sincere and knowledgeable about it. I knew I had found a church home immediately, but I had no idea what a Mennonite was, nor did I understand the enormity of the Bible's teachings that I sought to live. The ministry was wise to provide opportunities for formal Bible study, informal get-togethers, and meals where I could ask plenty of questions. I'm still learning!

4. How long does it take to bring an applicant to baptism?

Each applicant will need to be evaluated individually regarding his readiness for baptism (*or rebaptism, as in my case*). Discernment, education, and commitment cannot be mandated, but I believe a period of time is essential for both the Anabaptist church and potential church member to learn about the other. Church membership must be a good fit for both. I Corinthians 4:5 says, *"Therefore do not go on passing judgement before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."*



The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

Forgiveness Required

by Noah Trusty



I was saddened by the account of "Pay Me" in AV08, page 41. Apparently two brothers in the church failed to follow the biblical way of settling an account between them.

The debtor was in the wrong when he did not make a satisfactory commitment as to when and how he would pay off his debt. His promise, "I will pay it when I can," is too open-ended. Certainly he could have offered some kind of a payment plan that would show a sincere effort to pay off the debt.

The creditor was also in the wrong when he withdrew the money from the debtor's account without his consent. If such a thing were done to my credit card, I would call it stealing. According to I Corinthians 6:7, it is better to suffer wrong and let yourself be defrauded than it is to go to law against your brother. And then Paul chides the creditor in verse 8, *"No, you yourselves do wrong and defraud, and you do these things to your brethren."* I am sure that Jesus would never bless this way of grabbing a brother by the throat and making him pay a debt. This is not being *"generous and easy to be entreated."*

So it seems both the creditor and the debtor did not deal with each other according to Christ's standard and therefore He calls both of them to repent. This is not dependent on both of them repenting before either one can forgive the other. True forgiveness is based on forgiving the one who has offended us whether the other responds favorably or not. And we are commanded to forgive those who trespass against us if we want God to forgive us our trespasses against Him.

This means that the creditor must return the money he stole from the debtor and ask for forgiveness for the wrong he has done to his brother.

This also means the debtor must ask forgiveness of the creditor for the unkind and harsh words he raised against his brother. He must also ask pardon and beg for mercy of the creditor for not paying his debt on time.

This is the only way both of them can be justified before an almighty God and have peace in their daily lives.

When God's standard of forgiveness is followed in this experience, a mutual level of trust can be restored that affects not only these two brethren, but dealings throughout the whole brotherhood.

He Arose

by A. M. Gladson



In AV09 (p.41), “Kenny C. Clearly” argues that Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday and resurrected on a Saturday. Proponents of this chronology point to Jesus’ statement that He would be “in the heart of the earth” for “three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:40). But He also said He would rise “after three days” (Mark 8:31), “in three days” (John 2:19), and “the third day” (Matthew 16:21).

Although to our minds these statements may seem to be contradictory, Jesus and His contemporaries apparently did not think so. This is shown clearly by the priests’ words to Pontius Pilate when they requested a guard to be placed at Jesus’ tomb. “Sir, we remember that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, ‘He is risen from the dead:’ so the last error shall be worse than the first” (*Matthew 27:63-64*).

The scriptural record nowhere hints at a Saturday evening resurrection, but it strongly implies a Sunday

morning resurrection, before the rising of the sun (Matthew 28:1-2; Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1, 13, 21, 46). The early church remembered nothing except a Sunday morning resurrection (Justin Martyr, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* volume 1, p. 186; Tertullian, 3:689; Anatolius, 6:148-149; etc.). If Jesus really had risen on Saturday evening, and the apostles knew it, why would the churches they founded not know it? And if the apostles did not know that Jesus had risen on Saturday, how could we know that?

Based on the historical information given in the gospels and the early church, it seems nearly certain that the apostles believed Jesus rose again early on Sunday morning. What day of the week He died, we may never know. The gospels’ Passion Week chronologies are hard to reconcile and the various authors may have been using different calendars.

We can avoid pagan Easter practices without misleading and uncertain speculations about the chronological details of the Passion Week. Let us continue to remember the resurrection of the Son of God on the first day of the week, the eighth day, the day of renewal and the beginning of the New Covenant.



Not Pagan Origin

by I. Sing



Reading “Easter Amiss” by Kenny C. Clearly (AV09, page 41) prompted me to check out pagan “Easter” origins. Only in the English language is “Easter” used as the name of the Christian celebration of the Resurrection of the Passover

Lamb. Most languages have a name which sounds like the Hebrew word *pesach* for the Passover holy-day sacrifice. For example, in Spanish *Pascua de Resurrección* is the name for Easter.

It is thought that an English monk Bede (*who lived in the 7th or 8th century*) changed the name to Easter. In Old English, April was the month *Eostre*. There was a fertility goddess *Eastre*, so bringing bunnies and colored eggs into Easter celebrations may have stemmed from pagan practices.

During communion services, I remember Christ’s death and sacrifice; likewise, I want to remember the Passover Lamb’s Resurrection, whether the day is named Easter or *Pascua de Resurrección*. I want to sing “Up from the Grave He Arose” along with other Christians with joy, thanks, and praise to God and King Jesus for life after death. My observance of Easter is a Christian celebration, not a pagan one.

Anabaptist Voice: English and German are the only two languages which do not use a form of *pesach* (Passover) for the observance of Jesus’ resurrection. In English, the name was changed to Easter, and in German to *Ostern*. There is only one reference by the English church historian Bede (672/3-735 A.D.) that early English/Germanic pagans worshipped such a goddess. Scholars today debate whether such a goddess ever was worshipped by Germanic or Celtic pagans.

The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

A Gifted Picker Of Nits

by A. Falt Finder



I have a spiritual gift for nitpicking. Nits are those troublesome little creatures like flies, mosquitoes, and gnats that constantly bother a person and are hard to get rid of. Some nits can easily be known by their obvious annoyance. Others such as lice, ticks, and tiny spiders may be so small the person they lodge on may not even notice them. So it is very helpful if another person points out the troublesome bug so they can be removed before they cause real damage.

Spiritually speaking, these troublesome nits are what I want to call to my brother's attention. Things like feast days, different kinds of food, end time details, speaking in tongues—I am quick to see problems in all these things that might lead to worse errors if they are not dealt with. So I consider it my duty to point out these errors to others and to show them what it might lead to. I hate to admit it, but it does make me feel good to know that I see through most things better than others. I always have plenty to say in Sunday school and I faithfully point out the errors in the message to the minister of the day.

Although I have the best of intentions for others in my heart, most of the time the very ones I am trying to help do not get it. They think I am trying to kill them with 1,000 paper-cuts. Some of them react rather violently by pointing out faults in my own life—pride, arrogance, bitterness. Others will try to refute what I say with counter-arguments, but most people simply ignore what I say and keep on smiling and calling me brother. A few will humbly admit they were wrong. I don't understand why so many are sore at me instead of appreciating my helpful corrections. It is the same way I correct my children and they appreciate it, at least they did when young.

While I have honed this skill of nitpicking to a professional level, it is not without problems. Brothers and sisters do not seem to appreciate me like they should. And I must admit, it is hard to love the brothers and sisters like I should (*I really do not want to go around passing out untruthful comments just to make others feel good toward me.*) But the biggest thing I wrestle with is where Jesus said, "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye. Then you will see clearly to remove the speck (*nit*) out of your brother's eye."

So I see a need to change my ways. But I have worked with this nitpicking habit so long I need some help from spiritually-minded brothers. What are your suggestions?

Practical Questions:

1. Who is most affected by a nitpicker in church?
2. How do you think the nitpicker can change?
3. How can others in the church help the nitpicker?



Off Track

by Kaam Back



On May 4, 1970, at Kent State University in Ohio, the National Guard killed four young students and injured nine. This happened during a time of tremendous anti-war protests and racial tensions among the youth of America.

I was 14 when Kent State happened, but was very aware of what was going on with the whole Vietnam thing. A rebellious and anti-establishment spirit dominated young people trying to resist another terrible war; this one was in Southeast Asia. That same spirit infected the Mennonite and Amish young people of Lancaster County. We ran around flashing the "peace sign"—adapted from Winston Churchill's famous "V for Victory" sign. And the cry was "Peace man, peace... Make love, not war!" We had a big "Jesus Freaks" thing going on in Lancaster County during my teen years. It was a bit confusing with mass baptisms in creeks, and "spirit signs," and people "on fire for Jesus."

I was baptized in the New Order Amish Church (*we had cars, but dressed Amish*). Some years later, after I turned 21, I left the church and hung around with a counter-culture crowd—jeans, long hair, guitar playing Bible study groups—for a bit. I even had some burnt-orange, polyester knit dress pants to go with my big belt buckle and shiny black dress boots with heels.

It just didn't seem right. Even though I was arrogant and self-centered, I did not like the lines being blurred with the "free love" peacenik types. Like many youth my age I was somewhat confused.

I went off to a far-away mission program to “get away,” and maybe bring some clarity to some of these confusing issues. In this service program, I befriended two young fellows about my age, who helped me come to a better understanding of what I really wanted from life.

The one young man was rebellious, but covered up and got by. I knew I did not want to be like him. The other young man was well-taught and well-mannered. I admired his family and stable upbringing. I quit school after 8th grade, and had little education in proper social mores. We both spoke plainly, and asked hard questions; he was polite when he asked them, I was not.

A major reason I had left the church was because of the hypocrites in my ultra-plain circles, but upon further investigation, I found hypocrites in liberal churches as well. I consciously decided I did not want to raise children in the liberal environment where I was. I rededicated my life to following Christ. When I went back home, I returned to the same church where I had been baptized.

Practical Questions:

1. Why were so many young plain people caught up in the counter-culture?
2. Did this type of thing happen other than in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania?
3. What are some keys to keeping youth raised in plain Anabaptist churches dedicated to following Christ and separated from the world?



Drill Bitten

by Iza Goner



My son and I were on a job as an electrical contractor renovating a restaurant in a large city. Another subcontractor with several employees was also working on the same job doing the necessary construction work to the building.

When noontime came, we left our tools lay on the job—ladders, tool belts, and cordless drill sets. One of the drill sets was a new set with bits, chargers, and accessories that cost \$325.

We returned to the job after a 45-minute lunch break to find the new drill set gone, as well as an expensive impact drill. Now I knew that drills do not just walk off under cordless power. So I tried to think about who

might have taken our drills. In the afternoon there were no people on the job who had not been there in the morning. My suspicion came to rest on the construction subcontractor.

I knew this man had a strong temper from other jobs we had worked on together. He was not a stranger to me. His shady past included shooting at a man and winding up in jail for a time. Currently he and his girl friend were fighting and he was out of jail on probation.

I found the subcontractor’s vehicle in the parking garage not far from my own. I walked around the hatchback vehicle and tried to see through the tinted glass windows. I pulled out my cell phone and shown its light through the back window. There in plain sight lay our drill set and impact drill. I checked the hatchback door and to my surprise, it was not locked.

Practical Questions:

1. Should Iza open the door and take the drills?
2. Should Iza confront the subcontractor and ask him how the drills got in his vehicle?
3. Should Iza block the vehicle in and call the police?



Book Sale

by M. A. Watchman



I run a conservative Anabaptist bookstore, and one day, a woman came in and asked me to find her a book she wanted. It was a historical fiction book about the life of Jesus. She wanted a copy for each of her grandchildren, and I was able to special order several copies for her.

The books arrived, and I leafed through one of them. When I saw that the book portrayed the boy Jesus as approving of divorce and remarriage, I was very troubled. Should I be responsible for allowing these books to be put into the hands of the grandchildren of this woman? What lessons would they learn from this made-up storytelling that portrayed Jesus as saying things which the real Jesus taught against? Should I do one of the following?

Practical Questions:

1. Sell the books to the woman and say nothing.
2. Sell the books to her but warn her of their errors.
3. Throw the books away and apologize to her.

Clean and Unclean Animals

by Dan Avery

An answer to the “Writing Challenge,” AV09 page 12: “How did Noah know the difference between clean and unclean animals?”

God instructed Noah that the clean and unclean animals were to be loaded on the Ark differently, but we don’t see the prescribed list of clean and unclean animals until Leviticus 11. How did Noah know that he correctly loaded all the animals onto the Ark? Let’s take a look to see what Genesis and its context tells us: “**Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female’**” (*Genesis 7:1-2*).

Notice the directions the Lord gave Noah: clean animals, seven pairs; unclean animals, one pair. How did Noah know about clean and unclean animals well before the dietary descriptions otherwise set forth by Moses in Leviticus 11?

We are not told that the Lord gave Noah a “manifest” (a detailed loading document) or a list of every animal that Noah was to have board the ship. We need to conclude that Noah knew which animals were clean and unclean. We find some hints in previous chapters of Genesis which lead us to understand that the godly culture understood this distinction.

In Genesis 2:19-20, we see the Lord gave Adam the task of naming the animals. The Hebrew tells us that Adam “gave names,” but it wasn’t a flippant act. Adam *discerned and observed and declared*, by observable characteristic, every animal. This naming process included understanding that some animals had particular purposes—the “unclean” animals such as scavengers work to clean up things in nature. By this process, the animals effectively pick up things—bacteria, viruses, etc.—that could cause harm to humans.

Adam was the first man to see and understand that there were “kinds” of animals. The astute reader may say, “Wait a minute, this was before the fall into sin, and

creation wasn’t under the weight of sin.” To this we say, “Look at this as evidence of the Lord’s foreknowledge and provision for a fallen world.”

For more evidence, consider Abel: “**Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering**” (*Genesis 4:4*).

Adam’s son knew to bring the first lamb as a sacrifice to the Lord. Was this intuitive? Hardly. This was a prescribed offering, and Abel was following that prescription. Abel’s offering was different from Cain’s in outward form, consisting of the firstlings of his flock. These were killed animals; their fat was offered, blood was shed, and life taken away. We could suppose that each brother offered what came from his own work—one grain, the

other animals. But let’s remember that before the Flood, people were vegetarians (*Genesis 1:29*). The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering, but not unto Cain. That was because Abel’s was a clean animal sacrifice.

This wasn’t the first sacrifice mentioned in Scripture. Genesis 3:21 tells us that the Lord

Himself took animal(s), using the skins to make clothes for Adam and Eve. We can only assume that not only this practice was passed down to their descendants, but the knowledge of what constituted a proper animal sacrifice was also handed down to succeeding generations.

As Noah was gathering the animals onto the Ark, he knew which animals and birds were clean and which were unclean, long before the Law of Moses was given. Noah waited for the correct time that these clean animals would be available for an offering to the Lord. He knew that there would be a time for a sacrifice of praise. Genesis 8:20 tells us Noah made that sacrifice right after they left the Ark.

D.A. | *Alcester, South Dakota*

Anabaptist Voice: It is certain God revealed to man which animals and birds were acceptable to Him as sacrifices as well as fit for man to eat. These animals and birds He declared to be clean.



Why did Noah take unclean animals on the ark?



Upcoming 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.

Church Planting Seminar @ KFW

Location: Roxbury Holiness Camp, 13763 Cumberland Hwy, Orrstown, PA 17244

Date: August 24, 2018

Time: 10:00AM-2:00PM

Speakers: Jason Allgyer & Finny Kuruvilla

Topics: Developing a Vision for Church Planting in America's Urban Core & Discipleship as the Foundation for Church Planting

Contact: Jason Allgyer to register before August 10th via email (jallgyer@gmail.com) or phone at (513) 635-0146.



Kingdom Fellowship Weekend (KFW)

Location: Roxbury Holiness Camp, 13763 Cumberland Hwy, Orrstown, PA 17244

Date: August 24-26, 2018

Intro: Continuing in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in prayers; 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, especially as modeled by the Anabaptist tradition.

Speakers/Panel Discussion: Ken Miller | Harry Argo | Gary Miller | Kyle Stoltzfus | Chris Blake | Kevin Shenk Finny Kuruvilla

Topics: Christians in Babylon | Time for a Media Ethic | Surviving the Tech Tsunami | Authentic Relationships (*for women*) | Babylon, Paris, Zion: Is Your Citizenship Obvious? | Tower of Babel or City of God? | Youth Session | Panel Discussion | Small Group Discussion & Prayer | Testimonies & Singing.

Contact: For questions or to register by phone, please call Marvin Dolly @ (717) 753-0845.

Homework: Cultivate the soil of your heart by memorizing Hebrews 12:18-29 in the KJV or NKJV. Prepare to recite this at the event.

Partial printing of suggested Memory Passage for KFW:

"For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel." – Hebrews 12:18-24



Circulation & Financial Statements

Income & Expense Report

April thru June 2018

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Income

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Expenses

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Postage \$2,501.34

Printing \$4,667.00

Staff Expenses \$392.00

Total Expense \$8,100.34

June 2018 Ending Balance \$13,101.49

*see section "Our Finances" on page 4 for more info.

ISSUE #7 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Local Support Donations: \$1,928
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ISSUE #9 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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AV Production Team

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You Can Help AV Increase Circulation

When the first AV copy comes off the wondrous press, all the writing and editorial work has been done. At that point, we have done all we know to make the magazine interesting, attractive, informative, inspiring, truthful, thought-provoking, and God-honoring.

It would be easy to run the press longer and print more copies. However, this would be useless unless those extra copies get into the hands of people who will read them. Here is where you can help us.

You can introduce the magazine to family and church friends who may then subscribe. When sharing *Anabaptist Voice* with someone, always be sure to point out that just inside the front cover is the Production Team address where one can obtain a free subscription by just writing in.

Anabaptist Voice is not limited to people who have some acquaintance with Anabaptist Bible teaching or practice, but is for all those who want to put the teachings of Jesus into practice in our own times. Distributing them in hospitals, jails, places of business, and to friends at work or in other churches can lead to many opportunities for witness and outreach.

For instance, you might try this approach, "I have an interesting story I would like you to read in this free magazine. It tells about a man who was willing to die rather than put on a uniform ..." Or you might try this to catch someone's attention: "This copy tells a story of a brotherhood that cares for and loves its people from the cradle to the grave. It beats insurance any day ..." People are yearning for that type of kindness, love, and attention.

You can also use the magazine as a tool to reach out to sinners who know their lost condition. Introduce them to interpretations of what the Bible means to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in stories and in the example of your own life.

After you have tried some of these methods of distributing the magazine, write in and tell us your stories. How did it go?

There is the opportunity. You may stretch your own life and experience as you use *Anabaptist Voice* to reach out with the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As the Lord leads, we will look forward to running the press longer and longer.

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**“IF YOU KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS, YOU WILL ABIDE IN MY LOVE,
JUST AS I HAVE KEPT MY FATHER’S COMMANDMENTS AND ABIDE IN
HIS LOVE.”**

JOHN 15:10

