



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

James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

IN THIS ISSUE:

"SATAN'S PITIFUL OFFER" - A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"GOD HATES DIVORCE" - DELMER ERB

"THE REMEDY FOR TOUGH TIMES" - RAYMOND FISHER

"THE BLESSINGS OF A LAY MINISTRY" - WENDELL HEATWOLE

"BRANCHING OUT" - A HUTTERITE BROTHER

Letter from the Editor

“Till we all come to the unity of the faith.” – **Ephesians 4:13**

“Unity” is a magic word for some people. It glosses over a multitude of sins and allows them to go on linking arms with other professing believers living in sin. They quote John 17:22 something like this: “Jesus said that His followers should love each other and be one.” Then they stop. Oops! They forget to finish the verse, “**as we are one—I in them and You in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity.**”

Complete unity, where the believers are united in person and purpose as the Father and Jesus are united in person and purpose, is certainly a goal worth striving for. But I do not think this is the kind of unity most people are talking about. They are thinking of organizational unity—denominations, conferences, congregations.

Organizational unity should not be the focus of Anabaptist believers who want to be genuine followers of Christ. But a common desire to obey the teachings of the New Testament and put them into practice transcends organizational unity. Churches can operate under different organizational structures and still be united in person and purpose as God and Jesus are.

The Anabaptist believers of the sixteenth century were not one monolithic group of believers united by creeds and a hierarchical church administration. That is exactly what they were leaving. As I understand it, the Swiss Brethren were very localized churches united in the purpose of following Christ and obeying His Word.

Unity of person and purpose in Christ is the purpose of *Anabaptist Voice*. We are not seeking an ecumenical union of church structures or large congregations of believers under an Anabaptist umbrella. The strength and power of Anabaptist believers can come only from God and from obedience to His Word.

We pray that you will be encouraged and strengthened in your faith and practice by the teaching and examples found in the pages of *Anabaptist Voice* as we champion a faith that works.

If we can encourage believers in the churches to obey God and His Word and put the teachings of Jesus into practice, it will draw believers together in the same unity of person and purpose as Jesus and the Father are.

Then all men will know that we are His disciples, not because we call ourselves Anabaptists, Amish, Brethren, Hutterites, Mennonites, or any other name, but because we love one another.

Peace,

James G. Landis

Send all responses, articles and questions to:

AV Editor

5282 Highway 56 South

Waynesboro, GA 30830

editor@anabaptistvoice.com

www.anabaptistvoice.com

Send donations and/or subscription info to:

AV Production Team

3287 Hwy. 201











Due West, SC 29639

subscriptions@anabaptistvoice.com

www.anabaptistvoice.com

Table of Contents

The  symbol indicates a recurring feature in *Anabaptist Voice*.

| | |
|--|----|
|  Letter from the Editor | 2 |
|  About <i>Anabaptist Voice</i> | 4 |
|  Our Readers Write | 5 |
|  Our Councilors Speak | 8 |
| God's Remedy for Tough Times | 9 |
| Satan's Pitiful Offer | 10 |
| Grow Up! | 14 |
| God Hates Divorce | 15 |
| Worshiping Other Gods | 17 |
| Blessings of a Lay Ministry | 18 |
|  Rubies & Diamonds | 21 |
|  On The War Front: <i>In Iraq</i> | 22 |
| Branching Out | 26 |
| Preach the Word | 30 |
| The Law of Moses in the New Testament | 32 |
|  The Practical Side | 34 |
| The Practical Side: <i>Reader Responses</i> | 34 |
| The Practical Side: <i>The Rest of the Story</i> | 38 |
| The Practical Side: <i>New Stories</i> | 40 |
|  Upcoming Events | 42 |
|  Circulation & Financial Statements | 43 |
|  Proverbs Illustrated | 43 |

Statement of Copyrights & Credits

Anabaptist Voice is not copyrighted, let no one do so. It is to be used in any way that builds the Kingdom of Christ. If any material is reprinted, recognition should be given to *Anabaptist Voice* and the writer or artist.

All images & drawings contained herein are labeled for unrestricted use, free of copyrights under Creative Commons CC0 or used with permission from the creator.

Listed below are credits to various Bible translations used in producing this issue of *Anabaptist Voice*.

AVU — Authorized Version Update, Public Domain

CEV — Contemporary English Version, Copyright 1995 by American Bible Society.

GW — God's Word Translation, Copyright 1995 by God's Word to the Nations.

ICB — International Children's Bible, Copyright 2015 by Tommy Nelson.

KJV — King James Version, Public Domain.

NASB — New American Standard Bible, Copyright 1968. New Century Version of NASB, Copyright 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

NIRV — New International Reader's Version, Copyright 2014 by Biblica, Inc.

NKJV — New King James Version, Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson.

NLT — New Living Translation, Copyright 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation.

NLV — New Life Version, Copyright 1969 by Christian Literature International.

WEB — World English Bible, Public Domain.



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 copy editing. The AV Production Team is responsible for design, layout, printing, subscriptions, and all financial matters. Advisory Councilors are those who voluntarily invest time and effort in supporting the overall work of publishing *Anabaptist Voice*.

At present, *Anabaptist Voice* is choosing to be free of government regulations and control as much as possible. We are not registered with any federal or state government body. We are not a 501(c)3 organization; individual contributions are not tax deductible. Those who give to *Anabaptist Voice* through the local church may obtain a tax deduction.

Our 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 one where a close-knit, disciplined brotherhood exists among the believers.

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



Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

In order to provide clarity about who we are, *Anabaptist Voice* lists some 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 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

Confidence Before God

The article, "Fear God" (AV10 page 14) leaves me a little puzzled. I agree with the first and last paragraphs, but not much in between.

The first paragraph says, "To fear God means to reverence Him, not to be afraid of Him."

The last paragraph says, "For those walking hand-in-hand with God and clad in robes of righteousness, we can reverence Him and look forward to being in His eternal presence."

I believe Christian assurance allows us to stand with confidence in peace before God.

Here are some verses that support my point of view:

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (**Hebrews 4:16**).

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (**I John 4:18**).

"And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him" (**I John 3:19**).

J.R.R. | *Pennsylvania*



Unique and Inspiring

If I am not mistaken, you taught me in the "Methods of Bible Study" class nearly 30 years ago at Heritage Bible School. Since then our family moved to Idaho and then to Chile, South America, where our family has lived for the past 10 years, establishing a church. Ernest Strubhar introduced me to *Anabaptist Voice* at the Latin American Ministers Meetings in El Salvador for which I am very grateful. I feel like the AV has a unique and inspiring message to Anabaptists today, so keep up the good work.

J.B. | *Chile, SA.*

More Information from the Dead Sea Scrolls

I appreciated the article in *Anabaptist Voice* about the Dead Sea Scrolls. The article did not mention that the first scrolls were found in 1946, long after many of our cherished Bible versions and translations were written. And like the article mentioned, the scrolls were over 1,000 years older than our oldest existing manuscripts today. But when these scrolls were compared to our Bibles and manuscripts, there were very few differences, mostly spelling differences, but nothing doctrinal. Matthew 5:18 says, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." I am thankful we can rest assured we have God's Word and need not question it.

Some time ago I ran across something interesting that the Dead Sea Scrolls clarified. We read in I Samuel 11:1-2 that Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, led his army against the Israelite town of Jabesh-gilead. The people of the town asked Nahash to make a treaty with them. Nahash told them, "Only under one condition will I make a treaty with you. I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you as a reproach to all Israel."

The Dead Sea Scrolls give some additional background on this situation:

Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the people of Gad and Reuben who lived on the east side of the Jordan River. He gouged out the right eye of each of the Israelites living there, and he didn't allow anyone to come and rescue them. In fact, of all the Israelites east of the Jordan, there wasn't a single one whose right eye Nahash had not gouged out. But there were 7000 men who had escaped from the Ammonites, and they had settled in Jabesh-gilead. (Dead Sea Scroll 4QSam).

At this critical moment, God used Saul with an army of 330,000 men to deliver the men of Jabesh-gilead out of the hands of the Ammonites (I Samuel 11).

F.Y. | *Montana*



AV a Blessing

This last AV issue was a blessing, packed with really good material. We liked the articles on death, especially since one of our sisters here will be crossing over the Jordan in the near future. This sister is a big fan of *Anabaptist Voice*.

Please up our subscription number to 200 copies. Thank you very much.

May God keep blessing your efforts.

M.H. | *North Dakota*



Who Do I Love Least?

Greetings! I have enjoyed quite a few of the articles and discussions in the AV. There's a quote in this last edition (AV11 page 34) I have been trying to decipher. "We cannot love God more than the person we love the least."

What did Jesus say were the two greatest commandments? Love for God and love for neighbor. We are even to love our enemies!

A couple questions: Are we to love God above all else? Does not loving something more than God constitute idolatry?

So, if I don't know someone very well, even though I love that person, believe me, I love my wife more than that person, partly because of my close relationship with her (and partly because I think she's the best!).

So the quote says that I can't love God more than any other person, including my wife, and if I do, I'm an idolater? Are we sure that quote is biblical? Or do I misunderstand it?

I can't say, "I love God and hate my brother"; that is the Word according to I John. However, I do not see the Word says that I can't love God more than I love my brother.

May God bless the work of AV.

D.J.P. | *Pennsylvania*

Anabaptist Voice: You are right. We must love God more than anyone or anything. And we must love our neighbor as much as we love ourself (Matthew 22:39).



Jesus in Hades?

I would like to add some thoughts to the discussion of "After Death" and "The Abode of the Dead" by Q. W. and Ernest Strubhar (AV11, pages 5 and 8). I agree with much of what Brother Ernest teaches; however, I disagree with his view that Jesus is now in Hades "with His people in this wonderful paradise."

Here is why. Jesus is not a spirit. He is in a body of flesh and bone (Luke 24:38, 39). True, it is a spiritual body which can appear and disappear at will and pass through locked doors, but He is not omnipresent. If He could be omnipresent, what was the point of sending the Holy Spirit? When Stephen was martyred, he saw "Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). I believe He will be there as our intercessor until the time when He will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God" (I Thessalonians 4:16). If my understanding is correct, Jesus cannot be both at the right hand of God and in Hades at the same time.

Scripture tells us little about the condition of the soul after death. From the account of Lazarus in Luke 16, I believe they are in a state of disembodied, conscious blessedness, but more than that, one cannot say with certainty.

M.E.Y. | *Pennsylvania*



Wisdom for AV

I pray this letter finds you healthy in body and prospering in soul and spirit, and earnestly contending for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

We received the new AV magazines (AV11) this week. May God bless all who put effort into it so that we can get the message of the Kingdom to many searching hearts. May He give you wisdom and discernment to write and put it into words, and may He give us all power, strength, love, boldness, courage, and zeal to put it into shoe leather. Yes, we want to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves. "For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (I Corinthians 4:20).

"Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).

"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:10).

D.W.W. | *Montana*

Anabaptist Tenets?

In AV11 page 4, I read the section, “Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism.”

Item 1 – Under the heading I read, “In order to provide clarity about who we are, *Anabaptist Voice* lists historic Anabaptist beliefs and practices we believe are still valid today.” The part “still valid today” indicates that Anabaptist beliefs and practices are not changing. That is good. Not only is our God unchanging, His Word is unchanging. Consider rewording to say something like, “In order to provide clarity about who we are, *Anabaptist Voice* expresses biblical teachings, beliefs, and practices held by Anabaptists from their beginning unto this day.” I don’t want anyone to think that our beliefs are un-biblical or manmade.

Item 2 – #3 in this section. “The teachings of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament are to be interpreted and put into practice.” Wouldn’t it be better to say, “The teachings of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament are to be understood and put into practice.” It seems that nearly every place “interpret/interpreted/interpreter” is used in the Scriptures, it means translation from an unknown language.

Item 3 – #4 in this section. “Anabaptists recognize the church as Christ’s Kingdom on the earth.” Wouldn’t it be better to say, “Anabaptists recognize that the church represents Christ’s Kingdom on the earth.” In Ephesians 6:20 the apostle Paul says, “**For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**” He broadens it in II Corinthians 5:20, “**Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, ...**”

B.H. | Pennsylvania

Anabaptist Voice: **Re: Item 1**– The eight items listed in this section do not include all Anabaptist practices nor did all Anabaptists believe the same things from the beginning. We stand by “Our Mission Statement” at the top of the page, “We follow the example of the historic Anabaptists who sought to obey the teachings of Christ and the apostles, but we do not follow the Anabaptists nor historic Anabaptism. We follow Christ.”

Re: Item 2– We agree with you that some change here is good. The wording is stronger if “interpreted” is left out and the statement would read, “The teachings of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament are to be put into practice.”

Re: Item 3– The church is Christ’s Kingdom on the earth and every believer should be a fit representative of the King.

The Bible and the Beard

I have asked many brethren why they think we should wear a beard. I have yet to receive a biblical answer. The best I heard was from a brother I highly respect and his reason was because he had come from the Amish. He said that when most people leave the Amish the first thing they do is cut off their beard; however, out of respect to the Amish and his parents, he kept his. I commend him.

I do not find anywhere in Scripture that it says men should wear a beard. There may be commendable reasons to wear a beard. If so, it should be worn all the time. I am not impressed with the current fad among us to grow a beard because it is the thing to do. We should have spiritual motivations for what we practice.

T.Z. | Minnesota



Main Message

I just discovered your magazine this week after hearing the interview with James Landis on *Anabaptist Perspectives* podcast. Thanks for what you do! One of the main messages I’ve found in your magazine, in my reading so far, is something that has been so meaningful to me, “**Whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them is like a wise man ...**” (**Matthew 7:24**).

R.M. | Maryland



Question on Atonement

I just received my first copy of *Anabaptist Voice*. Thank you. It is put together very nicely.

I wanted to ask if the editors of this publication promote the ransom atonement/Chrisus Viktor view and if that is something I can expect from future issues.

A.P. | New York

Anabaptist Voice: I must confess that I do not know what the ransom atonement/Chrisus Viktor view of the atonement is. I can tell you what my simple view of the atonement is and then you can decide if it fits into that special class you mention.

“Abraham obeyed God and was willing to sacrifice Isaac on the altar. God stopped Abraham from killing Isaac and provided a ram in place of Isaac. God accepted that sacrifice as an atonement for Abraham’s sin.

“In the same way, God saw the blood sacrifices made in the Old Testament as acts of obedience whereby He accepted the worshiper as pardoned of his sin.

“After Jesus died on the cross, God accepted His sacrifice as adequate for the forgiveness of the sins of all those who believe on His name.”



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

“Us” and “Them”

“Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king” (**I Peter 2:17**).

The Scriptures tell us there are only two classes of humans—those on the narrow way to life and those on the broad way to destruction; believers and unbelievers; righteous and unrighteous; those who serve God and those who serve Him not.

Jesus told us, “Enter ye in at the strait [narrow] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (**Matthew 7:13-14**). Paul instructed us, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?...or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (**II Corinthians 6:14, 15b-17**).

These Scriptures make it plain we live in a world populated by “us” and “them.” Therefore, believers must not get mixed up with and deceived by the unbelievers. Malachi 3:18 says, “**Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.**”

While it is true there are two groups on the earth, believers and unbelievers, believers must learn from God’s Word the proper way to relate to “them.” “They” are not to be despised, mocked, or looked down upon.

God instructs us to:

- Be at peace with all men, as much as it is in our power to do (Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14).
- Love and do good to “them,” even if “they” persecute and wrong us (Matthew 5:38-48; Romans 12:14, 17-21).
- Submit to and honor the civil authorities (Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-15).
- Shine forth the light of Christ and hold forth the Word of Life to “them” (Philippians 2:15-16).
- Be always ready to answer any of “them” who ask the reason for our hope (I Peter 3:15).
- “Beware” of those who would lead us astray or harm us (Philippians 3:2).
- Act with honesty and integrity toward “them” (I Thessalonians 4:12).
- Live in such a holy manner that “they” will be ashamed of falsely accusing us (I Peter 3:16; cf. I Peter 2:12, 15).
- Act as Christ’s ambassadors, imploring “them” to be reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:20).

We are not to:

- Live the way “they” do (Ephesians 4:17-19).
- Have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11). Rather, we should reprove them.

In summary, we should “**Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time**” (**Colossians 4:5**).

Andrew V. Ste. Marie | Michigan

NEW Writing Challenge!

Write a 100 word description of the Atonement.



God's Remedy for Tough Times

by Raymond Fisher

There is a growing incidence of depression in our society which is sometimes followed by the tragedy of suicide. This does not need to be. There is a way out of depression.

The Scripture offers light, sight, and wholeness to those overcome by darkness, blindness and disease. Listen to what this passage from Isaiah holds out to depressed people.

Therefore will the LORD wait, *that He may be gracious unto you*, and therefore will He be exalted, that *He may have mercy upon you*: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him.

For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: *He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry*; when He shall hear it, *He will answer thee*.

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but *thine eyes shall see thy teachers*:

And *thine ears shall hear a word behind thee*, saying, "*This is the way, walk ye in it*, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

Moreover the *light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun*, and the *light of the sun shall be sevenfold*, as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and *healeth the stroke of their wound*.

– Isaiah 30:18-21, 26

Tough times often increase perception. This passage implies that a spiritual "prison diet" sharpens eyesight and refines earshot. Light increases seven-fold while God performs the finishing touches of healing. *Darkness to Light. Blindness to Sight. Disease to Wholeness*. These miraculous operations were often repeated during the earthly pilgrimage of our Lord.

But are these things currently happening? Indeed, they are! A brother who has undergone a sustained period of testing emerges revived. The congregation which has suffered during growing pains survives and then thrives. Personal valleys of discouragement give way to breaking out with renewed energy and vision. These are not isolated cases, but observable phenomena both in Bible history and present reality.

Healing often comes with a cost. Hymnwriter William T. Sleeper explains:

*Out of my bondage, sorrow, and night,
Into Thy freedom, gladness, and light,
Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee!*

The message of this hymn calls to believers and unbelievers alike. The call to come to Jesus begins with a personal invitation secured by a compelling promise. "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." Repentance and humility must accompany this journey to freedom.

Acknowledgment of need permits admittance to the recovery room. So long as we remain on our self-sufficient platform of having it all together and possessing all the answers, so long will the balm of healing, the calm of rest and the dawn of renewal elude us. Take the disciples of Christ, harassed by a violent storm, stressed by their inability to control the situation, distressed by waves which threatened to overwhelm them; who, though veterans at sailing, experienced peaceful waters only after receiving Jesus into their boat.

So, my friend, though you may, at the moment, be in a time of testing, a time when help seems far away, a time when solutions appear impossible; be patient, hope in God, breathe in His promises, exercise faith, and practice obedience to His wishes. Do not give way to despair; that will only deepen the darkness and increase Satan's chances of destroying you. Those who tarry too long in the clutches of depression can be swallowed up by despair and thus allow the Devil's strategy to end in tragedy.

Much rather then, listen for the Voice, watch for the Light, make your way to the Healer. *His rescue will surely come in time*. The bread and water diet of affliction and adversity will soon give way to abundant sunshine and divine healing.



Satan's Pitiful Offer

by a Preacher of Righteousness

"Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And [the devil] said to [Jesus], 'All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.'"

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, *You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.*'"

– Matthew 4:8-10

Purpose Statement: To examine this temptation and see how Jesus' response to it orders our life and mission today.

Questions to answer:

1. What is the truth about Satan's claim to power?
2. What does Christ's response teach us?
3. How should God's people respond to Satan's temptation today?

Conclusion: All-out worship of God will keep Christians from being seduced by Satan's temptation to seek power and glory in the kingdoms of the world.

Satan's Claim to Power

In this third temptation of Christ by the Devil, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He (Jesus) would fall down and worship him. The Devil's offer was an offer of authority over the kingdoms of the world. We want to examine Satan's offer and see if he really had the authority and power he offered to give to Jesus.



Washington DC

The first thing to note is that the earth rightfully belongs to God the Creator. Psalm 24:1-2 says, "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." As the Creator God, the whole earth belongs to Him. If Satan possesses anything, it is not by right, but by usurpation. Therefore, no reasoning he may employ is to be seriously valued as truth; even his use of Scripture is based upon a rival claim of glory that belongs to God alone.

The second thing of note in relation to Satan's claim of authority over the nations of the earth is that the rulers of the nations have rebelled against God and given their allegiance to the Devil. "The kings of the earth [rise up], and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:2). Standing as representatives for whole peoples in their rebellion against God, ungodly rulers defy the boundaries that God has set, while refusing His authority in order to flaunt their own.

In Ezekiel 28, we read that the Prince of Tyre said in his pride, "I am a god." So God sent other nations to destroy him. God commanded Ezekiel to lament over his destruction, a fall from great heights of wealth and wisdom. The prophet begins by addressing the prince, but ends up speaking to the Devil of his fall from wisdom and beauty in Eden, the garden of God. In a similar passage, Israel took up a taunt against Babylon at its destruction. This proverb is at first addressed to Babylon, but then to Lucifer (Isaiah 14). Both of these passages begin by speaking to an earthly ruler, but then address the Devil himself! Clearly, he is behind the rebellion of the nations—their fall is his fall.

The Devil has power over the kingdoms of the world, yet not legitimate authority; he gains hold by inciting man into rebellion against God, just as he did with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Human rebellion against God is the portal through which the Devil gains power.

The Devil's offer to give Jesus the kingdoms of the world and their power and glory was not a hollow promise, something he could not give Jesus. Maybe it was only a lie, the same as it had been in the Garden, but there was something alluring about his offer or it would not have been a temptation at all.



Paris

But what a terrible bargain the Devil offered Jesus: “If you will fall down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” If Jesus had surrendered himself to worship Satan, all the trifling glory of the earthly kingdoms would have been traded for the everlasting power and authority that were to be His in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus’ Response

Jesus’ answer to this temptation of the Devil was a firm, “Away with you, Satan!” He did not gaze longingly at the kingdoms of the world and converse longer with Satan to see if He could work out a better deal. Jesus did not do as Balaam did and delve further into possibilities for pursuing the riches and glories of the kingdoms of this world. No, He ordered Satan to leave Him immediately.

Neither did Jesus challenge the Devil’s claim to power, but rather, asserted the scriptural command to *worship only God*. The issue at stake was worship—Satan or God. It could not be both.

There was another aspect to the Scripture Jesus quoted. Worship was to be more than offering up sacrifices and prayers. One requirement was to *serve* Him. How does one serve God?

The Scripture Jesus might have quoted was Deuteronomy 10:12-13. In this passage, Moses asked, “And now Israel, what does the Lord require of you?” And Moses was very explicit in his statements as to what God wanted Israel to do when He said “serve” *only* Him.

- Fear the Lord your God.
- Walk in all His ways.
- Love Him.
- Serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
- Keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes.

Micah 6:8 expands what Moses said in Deuteronomy. “What does the Lord require of you but to *do justly*, to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly with your God*?”

When Jesus ordered Satan to leave and quoted the Scripture, the temptation was over. No one can worship and serve only God and at the same time listen to the offers of Satan.

Responding to Satan God’s Way

The first thing Jesus told Satan was, “Away with you.” Jesus knew that Satan’s evil presence was real. Lesson number one: Satan is alive and he is active today. If he had the power and presence to tempt the Son of God, he also has the power to tempt us.

It was for that reason Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matthew 6:13). James 4:7 also tells us, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” When Satan comes to whisper in our ear and tempts us to do evil, we should resist him. We should be ready to say, “Be gone Satan.”

Not every difficulty in life comes from Satan. But if the temptation is to do evil—anything against God’s commandments—we can know that it comes from Satan and not from God. God never tempts us to do evil. James 1:13 says, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’ for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

Now, for the child of God, driving the Devil away should not be an everyday battle. Christians have within them hearts that want to please God and to live righteously. But when the Devil does appear, whether as an angel of light or a roaring lion, and tempts us to do evil, we should be ready to tell Satan, as Jesus did when Peter rebuked Him for speaking of His coming suffering, death, and resurrection, “Get behind Me, Satan!” (Matthew 16:23).



London

The Scripture Jesus quoted says that we should worship God alone. Worship takes on many forms today that try to worship Jesus along with other gods. In schools and churches and eating places, the teaching and the music serves more than one god. A two-hour church service where one gives glory and praise to the one true God and then worships all the other gods of politics, sports, pseudoscience, popular music, wealth, and fashion the rest of the week, is not worshiping the Creator God *alone*.

That is part of the Devil's bargain. When people worship all the other gods, they have taken up the Devil's offer. He gives them all the glory promised by the glitter of the evils in the world in exchange for falling down and worshiping him. People want to believe the Devil does not have them when they bow down to these other gods, but they deceive themselves. God will not accept their worship if they worship any god but Him. Jesus said, **"No one can serve two masters You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).**



Dubai

This commandment was nothing new. God wrote it with His finger on tablets of stone, **"You shall have no other gods [beside] me" (Exodus 20:23).** It was a long battle for the children of Israel to give up trying to worship the gods of the nations around them and the Jehovah God together. God finally destroyed their nation and dispersed them among the nations in the Diaspora. God is just as jealous today as He was 2622 years ago, maybe more so.

Listen to the ringing words of Jesus in Matthew 22:37 as He quoted the well-known passage from Deuteronomy 6:5, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."** If one worships the one true Creator God this way, it is impossible to worship any other gods at the same time. Worship *only* Him.

The passage Jesus quoted to Satan involved more than bowing down and praising God in prayer and song. It said to *"serve"* Him alone. Service involves many practical parts of our everyday life. It means "keeping the commandments" of God that involve purity of life—holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Serving God means looking out for the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the neighbors in our lives who stand in need. It means showing compassion and mercy to all rather than looking only to our own needs and wants. Serving God means loving and forgiving those who trespass against us, even our enemies. In everyday living, serving God means that we do justly, love mercy and are not proud about it.

There is more to resisting Satan's temptation to fall down and worship in exchange for the power and glory in the kingdoms of the world. "All these will I give you" has no appeal to a heart that is committed to worshipping only God.

If human rebellion against God is the portal through which the Devil gains power, then worship closes that door. It is rebellion—taking for ourselves power and glory that belong to God—that gives Satan the footing to bargain with us; it's a game where he makes the rules. And it is worship—ascribing to God alone all power and glory—that removes the Devil's temptation and drives him from us. In any human encounter with Satan's power, worship to God alone is man's worthy response in the face of evil.

Satan still claims power over rebellious nations and rulers on earth, but rather than battling Satan for a place of power over the kingdoms of the world, Jesus set in motion a Kingdom that spreads on earth like yeast in a batch of dough, or like a tree that grows from a small seed (Matthew 13:31-33). And Christ rules His Kingdom today with the knowledge that in the Father's good time, His Kingdom will triumph over all the kingdoms of the



Havana

world and the Devil and all his hosts will be thrown into hell.

So today we do not resist Satan's grip on the kingdoms of the world by trying to get good moral laws enacted and righteous men put in office to enforce them. Nor should our effort be to support "holy wars" to introduce Christ's reign over the entire world. That disastrous and failed route is littered with the blood of millions.

Christians cannot overcome wickedness and evil by becoming part of the kingdoms of this world under the control of Satan. I John 5:19 reads, "**We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.**" Therefore our battle against the Evil One must be done by obedience to Christ using His methods and His power.

Jesus laid out the rules of engagement for His followers in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Six times in Matthew 5, Jesus mentioned common rules that governed society, and replaced them with his own commands. Do not be angry with your brother (verse 22). Do not lust after a woman (verse 28). Do not divorce your wife (verse 32). Do not swear falsely (verse 33). Do not resist an evil person (verse 38). Do good to those who hate you (verse 44). It is precisely in these areas that we must decide whether to align our battle plan with Christ's or to accept the power-brokering of the Devil.

Jesus Christ continues to speak in the same way today as He did in the day of His temptation on the high mountain. His answer to Satan has not changed; rather, it is amplified through the many who are gathered to worship the Father in His name. This answer goes beyond mere control of evil to its costly uprooting, through and by a people He is forming after himself.

Paul's vision in Ephesians follows this same path: God has set Christ over all things, then chosen the Church to demonstrate His wisdom to principalities and powers in heavenly places (Ephesians 3:10). We in Christ's Kingdom are called to live with one another in such a way as to testify of God's mysterious wisdom in forming a body on earth in which He has set His name. This is the purpose of biblical practices that form our lives in harmony with one another. Not merely that we meet requirements for personal salvation but that we, as a body, make Christ known in the world and display His wisdom and power to spiritual principalities and powers.

Satan said, "All these will I give you, if you fall down and worship me." This seduction to power rings hollow wherever God's people meet in worship, exalting Christ as Lord. Christ's answer, "**You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve,**" continues to

be voiced wherever He is exalted, sounded by a people who embody His life on earth, oriented by the worship of God. In them, Jesus shall continue to speak until all kingdoms on earth become "**the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ.**"



Moscow

Satan's Offer:

Jesus as ruler of the Kingdoms of this world.

God's Promise:

Jesus worshiped by all heaven throughout eternity.

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth and of those under the earth,

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

– Philippians 2:9-11

"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

*'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!'*

"And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

*'Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb forever and ever!'* "

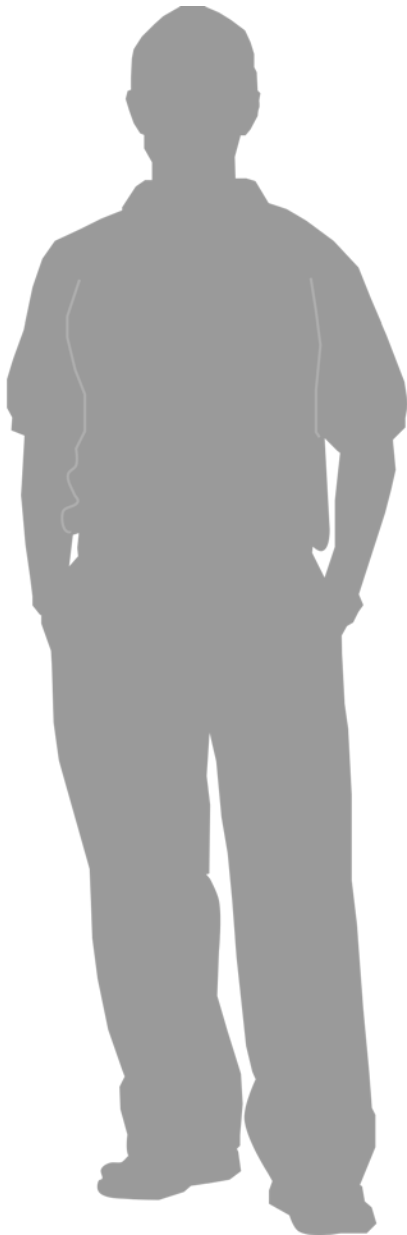
– Revelation 5:11-13



Grow Up!

based on a sermon by Steve Ebersole from Ephesians 4, preached at Pilgrim Mennonite Fall Conference 2018, Grantville, PA

In Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul exhorts us to grow up into Christ. “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (verse 15). We can find nine principles of spiritual growth into Christian maturity in this chapter.



“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.”
– II Peter 3:18

1. Stop thinking it’s all about me.

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (verse 1).

2. Quit being hurt over every little thing.

“With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (verse 2).

3. Stop making a big deal out of every little thing.

“Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (verse 3).

4. Treasure the godly people whom God put in your life.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (verses 11-12).

5. Stop being wishy-washy; have a solid foundation.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (verse 14).

6. Refuse to talk about your brother behind his back.

“But speaking the truth in love” (verse 15).

7. Stop listening to Gentiles and feeding the old man.

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (verses 17-18).

8. Stop and think about how you make others feel.

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (verse 25).

9. How are we able to do these things?

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (verse 7). Treasure the measure!

Submitted by Andrew St. Marie

God Hates Divorce

by Delmer Erb

“Let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth. For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce.”

– Malachi 2:16

This verse plainly says that God hates divorce. Yet there are those who try to make exceptions and do something that God hates. They think God’s love and mercy will overrule His wrath. But that is not true.

When Jesus was here on the earth, He restored marriage to the same design that God had given it at the creation. He said, **“Have you not read [in Genesis 2:24] that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?’ ” (Matthew 19:4-5).** Jesus made it plain that from the very beginning divorce was against God’s will for man.

But some from the beginning until today have not heeded the order God established at the creation and have practiced divorce contrary to God’s commandment. Let us look more closely at what God has said about divorce. Then we will examine a few of the situations where people think (hope) God will excuse their disobedience.

“Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” [Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9 both say the same thing].

“In the house His disciples asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them, ‘Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery’ ” (Mark 10:9-12).

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 19:9).

Now let’s look at some of man’s common exceptions to a strict prohibition against divorce:

1. These Scriptures make it clear that by breaking their vows, a couple puts a marriage asunder. This is open disobedience to God’s commandments.
2. A person who has never been married before, marries a divorcee. Sometime later they divorce. Now the one partner says the marriage to the divorcee was not a real marriage; therefore they are free to marry again.

Such reasoning is plainly overruled by the Scripture which says that those who marry a divorced person commit adultery. Listen to Jesus’ words:

- **“Whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32).**
- **“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” (Mark 10:11-12).**
- **“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery” (Luke 16:18).**

Some use Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9 (see above) to justify their position so as to say that sexual infidelity allows for divorce and remarriage. But the verses do not give any room for remarriage. These verses are consistent with all the other verses in the Bible, and in Matt 19:6 just three verses before Matthew 19:9 we find, **“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man separate.”** Jesus would not contradict what He had just said earlier.

Another proof that Jesus’ teaching did not allow for divorce and remarriage is found in the reaction of the disciples in Matthew 19:10, **“If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”** We can be certain that the disciples well understood what Jesus was teaching them. Their conclusion was, “If God’s law does not allow for any recourse with a troublesome wife, it is better not to get married.” Then Jesus explained that not everyone could or should get married; it was only for those who were able and willing to accept God’s absolute standard for marriage. In no way did Jesus nullify the teaching He had just given in the previous verses; marriage is for life.

In I Corinthians 7:11 the Bible does give room for separation. However, verse eleven spells out that it is only under two conditions: remain unmarried or be reconciled. It is never right to be remarried.

- **“Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband ... And a husband is not to divorce his wife” (I Corinthians 7:10, 11b).**
- **“But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband” (I Corinthians 7:11).**

- We can learn more about Jesus' attitude toward divorce and remarriage from what He told the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:17-18.

"The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.'

"Jesus said to her; You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

Jesus agreed with the woman's statement, "I have no husband" and went on to clearly nullify the validity of her present marriage. In other words, she was living in adultery. Neither can the woman go back and live with her first husband. This agrees with the teaching of Moses in Deuteronomy 24:4, "Then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord."

And this agrees with the words of the prophet in Jeremiah 3:1, "If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man's, may he return to her again? Would not that land be greatly polluted?"

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus often made the statement, "You have heard it said ... but I say unto you," and then He raised the standard to a higher standard than the law had taught. With divorce, Jesus did not introduce a higher standard but instead called for maintaining God's original standard, which, according to Moses and Jeremiah, prohibited returning to one's former spouse (see two above Scriptures).

When the Pharisees tested Him with the question, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" Jesus answered them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

Jesus upheld the standard of no divorce and remarriage that God put into effect in the very beginning of creation. In many cases man seeks to find a way around this standard and declares it to be unreasonable or unjust in real life situations. But that is God's standard and not man's.

There are those who teach that the New Testament is a book of reconciliation and is about God's love and mercy. However, many Scriptures also warn of God's wrath coming upon those who disobey Him. Here are three examples of such warnings.

- "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

- "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).
- "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Romans 1:18b).

There are many other passages reminding us of God's judgment coming upon those who do not repent and stop living in disobedience to the commandments of God. With divorce and remarriage it is particularly obnoxious to God because the remarried person is continuing to live in a state of adultery.

Let me clarify. Let us say a divorced and remarried couple repents and seeks God's forgiveness. It is true God can and will forgive a couple who has been divorced and remarried. But if that couple then continues to live as husband and wife, there has been no repentance and they continue to live in a state of adultery. So continuing to live as husband and wife after divorce and remarriage is an example of "willful sin" that is mentioned in Hebrews 10:26-27. "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries."

Yes, the cost of separation in many instances where divorced and remarried people become saved is often high. But the price is always worth having peace of soul and eternal rest. Separation in these instances is the only way that surely pleases God. Many "exceptions" to this rule can make sense to man's reasoning, but it is a perilous and dangerous course to take. One of the laws of sowing and reaping is, "the harvest is not necessarily in the same season as the seed was sown." Ultimately, everyone must stand before the judgment throne of God and be judged for sin of which they have not repented while on the earth.

God said, "I hate divorce," and that is still His standard and His will for mankind today. Jesus taught, "What God has joined together, let not man separate."

D.E. | Ontario, Canada

Practical Questions:

When separation takes place, how should the children be cared for?



Worshiping Other Gods

by Frank Reed

The annual Super Bowl football game is a very important “spiritual” holiday in this country. The high priests and high priestesses of this religion are busily preparing for the occasion. Worshipers around the globe will be giving their total attention to the proceedings.

There will be priests on the field. They will be the finest specimens of male physiology. They will be displaying their prowess in bodily ways. They will be dressed in the shining robes of their religion. There will be priestesses on the sidelines. They will be displaying themselves to enhance the worship experience. They will be dressed in very little. There will be a half-time show of who-knows-what.

It will basically be a body show. The brawn and beauty of the species will be showcased in the most watched spectacle of the year.

And people, who otherwise seem decent, will waste hours of precious life watching human flesh display uncivilized and risqué behaviors. People who otherwise seem to possess wisdom, will surrender hours at which they would revolt, if a Church service or a prayer meeting would dare to last so long.

But maybe that is the attraction to this worship experience? Sports is, after all, the perfect religion. No smoke and mirrors. No sleight of hand. What you see is what you get. There is no hypocrisy. Either the ball went through the hoop or it did not. Either it was fair or it was foul. When the bell rings, it is over. The score board does not tell lies.

In all this hedonistic show of flesh, real substance is sadly missing. The jolts of the gladiator contest are there but any enduring legacy is not. The allurements of the bodies are there but lasting value is sacrificed.

Where is the real/true religion? The real worship of a real Man whose body was also displayed—displayed for all the world to see. The Man who began the real and true religion to call real men and real women to serve Him, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Where is that Man? The Man who never wore a Super Bowl ring but wore a crown of thorns. The Man who was despised and rejected by the masses but will someday wear the crown as King of kings of all the universe.

Can we worship both? Can we worship the priests and priestesses of this world AND the High Priest of the real religion? The High Priest whose body was also

displayed? The High Priest whose body hung on a cross for all the world to see and to mock and to jeer? The High Priest who died that we may live? Can we have it both ways? Will He allow us that duality and duplicity? Will He share His space in our heart with the lust of a world that has rejected Him?

Many people will watch the Super Bowl. Many knees will “bow” at the shrine of this religion. Someday, the Bible tells us, “every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” I will not be participating in this religious event this Sunday.

Someday I long to be among those who cast their crowns at the feet of the real Man, the God Man. The Man who made himself of no reputation but the Man whose character is unassailable, the Man whose life is pristine goodness, the Man of God. The God Man, the Man who was willing to allow abuse without retaliation. The Man who died for me, and for you. The Man who brought and bought redemption. That will be real worship, worship that will last forever. I trust that we shall meet at that Spiritual holiday.

Used with permission - F.R. | *Pennsylvania*

Super Bowl 2019



Date: Sunday, February 3rd, 2019.

Location: Mercedes Benz Stadium, Atlanta, GA.

Seating Capacity: 75,000 souls.

Ticket prices: full range unknown. On 12-1-2018, tickets were available between \$3,500 and \$19,500.

Expected media viewers: 100 million.

Blessings of a Lay Ministry

by Wendell Heatwole

“They appointed elders in every church.”

– Acts 14:23

When I say that we practice a “lay ministry,” I am talking about a type of ministry in harmony with biblical practice and values. This type of ministry has proven a blessing to the church, and I believe it is a part of “the more excellent way.”

I want to share with you what we mean when we talk about a lay ministry as well as how and why it has been a blessing to many Anabaptist churches.

The words *lay* and *laity* come from the Greek words, *laos*, “people,” and *laikos*, “of the people.” In a *non-religious* connotation it is used for the mass of people as distinguished from those of a particular profession or people with special skills. Or it can mean those lacking extensive knowledge of a particular subject. *Religiously*, it is generally used to distinguish those who are ordained to perform pastoral functions from those who are not.

Now, in what sense do we use “lay” when we speak of the lay ministry? Perhaps it should be thought of both in the sense that it is a ministry 1) in which specialized training is not required, and 2) in which the ministers are called “of/from the people.”

Lay ministry was the practice of the early church during and beyond the New Testament period. In Europe during the Middle Ages, lay preaching was forbidden. During the Reformation, Anabaptists championed lay preaching and many were persecuted because they were not ordained by the State Church. For example, couples not married by State preachers were considered unmarried.

Today conservative groups of Anabaptists hold to a lay ministry most tenaciously. I believe there are good reasons for sticking to the time-tested pattern of a lay ministry, but much of the help from the New Testament on the nature of the ministry comes from inference and example rather than direct commands. Nevertheless, that should direct us in shaping our patterns and practices of church leadership.

Let us look at some of the blessings associated with a lay ministry.

Leadership Is Strengthened by a Plural Ministry

One of the characteristics of New Testament church leadership is that it is multiple (at least in a normative situation). The apostles were multiple. On Paul and Barnabas’ first missionary journey, they revisited the disciples on their return home, ordaining elders (plural) in every church (Acts 14:21-23).

Paul left Titus in Crete with the instruction to ordain elders in every city (Titus 1:5). When he wrote to the Philippian church Paul addressed his letter to the saints, with the bishops and elders (Philippians 1:1). In Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church (Acts 20:17, 28, 32).

John Stott, who was an evangelical Anglican minister, says in his commentary on Acts, “The familiar modern pattern of ‘one pastor, one church’ was simply unknown [in the New Testament]” (Acts, page 236).

Not only that, *New Testament leadership is not hierarchical*. There’s no pecking order with one big rooster at the top. In Acts 15 the apostles and elders came together to consider a problem (Acts 15:4). The resolution wasn’t because James said so, but because it “seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us” (Acts 15:28). In other words, a single professional pastor can have more authority, and be more dictatorial, than a multiplicity of ministers, while lacking the value of a team of equals to serve the church.

A letter to the editor of *Christianity Today* says:

For centuries, mainline Christian groups have perpetuated the unbiblical practice of investing virtually sole spiritual authority in a single individual to whom the faithful look up. Yet, in the New Testament prescription, the Holy Spirit appoints elders in every local assembly—his wisdom is that there is power in the harmony and plurality of the spiritually mature (Pilgrimage of Faith, Toews, p. 227).

Yet another value of the plural lay ministry is the opportunity of apprenticing under older/senior leaders. It should foster humility in the younger leader as he works with an older, and/or more experienced one, and is in a context where he can learn the work of his particular function in the ministry rather than having the reins of a church handed to him without experience.

Leaders Are Called by God Through the Church

How are men called to the ministry? Choosing a replacement for Judas, and the choosing of the men we consider to be the first deacons, are the most specific New Testament examples of the process for calling leaders (Acts 6).

The manner in which men are called to the ministry bears on the way the ministry is viewed. When the understanding is that God calls men through the voice of the church, the ministry is seen very much as a **divine calling**.

In contrast to a divine calling by the church, when the call falls first on an individual, who then needs to seek formal preparation, then presents himself to the church for confirmation or affirmation, the sense of divine call is not absent, but the ministry is seen more as a **career**.

The calling of ministry by God through the church has significance that we will see in later points. But let's consider two implications here: First is the **commitment** of ministers. Church leadership has its particular rewards. But the ministry is also demanding—in time obligations, in physical and emotional energy, in interpersonal relationships. Sometimes it would be nice not to be a minister. And when those times come, the commitment of the lay minister, called *from and through* the church for life is greater than the commitment of the career minister called *by* the church.

Second is the **availability** of ministers. While some churches moving to professional ministry may envision pastors continuing to come from within the congregation, it rarely works that way. Instead, few men from within the congregation feel qualified and are willing to serve in the ministry. And the end result is that the pool of people available to serve in the ministry shrinks to those with seminary training.

Leaders Are Selected on the Basis of Character and Competence

Specific qualifications for the ministry are set out in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Those qualifications are based on character and competence—moral qualities, maturity, and giftedness to fulfill the tasks of the ministry.

Good education, training, and experience have real value. Often in our setting, leaders are called who have some of these. But these are not the biblical qualifications. And they can be gained “in service” through various means.

I do want to emphasize the value of personal development for Christian service for all of us, and especially so for those called to church leadership. A well-

focused high school education, development that comes from many voluntary service opportunities, and minister study weeks are readily available sources of training and growth which church leaders can take advantage of.

Leadership Is Rooted in Interpersonal Relationships

The apparent practice in the early church of calling out leaders from among the brotherhood (Acts 1:21), roots the ministry in interpersonal relationships.

One value of a lay ministry is that it strengthens the ability of the church to call scripturally qualified leaders. Rather than relying on resumes and references, the church, in calling lay ministers from among themselves, can rely on relationships. Within a brotherhood, people know something of the Christian commitment and character of one another. Those chosen usually have demonstrated leadership ability in the family, in church life, and in the working world. That's one of the reasons it's good not to choose a novice to the faith, or a novice to the community. First impressions are not always lasting or accurate impressions.

A second value of a ministry rooted in interpersonal relationships is the empathy, goodwill, and respect that a calling from the church and through the church brings to the one called. That goodwill and respect can be squandered by misconduct and malpractice. But the church respects the call of God achieved by an ordination process conducted with integrity. It vests church leaders with meaningful authority to discharge their responsibilities.

Thirdly, when the ministry is rooted in interpersonal relationships, not only does the congregation know their ministry, the ministry knows the congregation. It's a mutual knowledge. The shared experiences of life, the related experiences of work, and the common experiences of worship, fellowship, and service provide a basis for mutual understanding, caring, trust and commitment. While the newly ordained minister may not have specialized training in counseling and ministry techniques, his experiences in life, a sympathetic ear, godly common sense, and the combined input of the ministerial team is adequate for most situations.

Leaders Are Remunerated by Appropriate Support

While lay ministry is typically a non-salaried service, the New Testament clearly teaches material support for those called to serve the church (I Corinthians 9:3-18).

I find our ability to pick and choose Scripture passages to promote a particular position on ministerial support

interesting. Paul had the right to receive full support as well as to decline full support. His practice depended on the situation, and on what was most beneficial to the cause of Christ.

There are times when full support is appropriate. For the most part, a materially supported, yet non-salaried ministry has much to commend it. It is good if the minister shares in the day-to-day work life of his congregation. He knows some of what it means to earn a living by the sweat of his brow. This is one of the blessings of a lay ministry versus a professional ministry.

Another blessing of the lay ministry is that it usually frees the minister from the hire-and-fire control that most salaried arrangements entail. Also associated with a full salary is the mentality of being only a hireling who works for the money rather than as a servant of the congregation (John 10:12-13).

Summary

Practicing a lay ministry has brought the following blessings to our churches:

1. Leadership is strengthened by a plural ministry.
2. Leaders are called by God through the church.
3. Leaders are selected on the basis of character and competence.
4. Leadership is rooted in interpersonal relationships.
5. Leaders are remunerated by appropriate support.

The Calling of Lay Leadership

In the above article I spoke of how a “calling” by the church gives added strength and power to the ministry of the one being called. Generally in Anabaptist churches, laymen are ordained (called) through a process that involves the church. That practice reflects how the early church chose servant-leaders to oversee material needs within the brotherhood. The belief that God is choosing and calling men by means of the church is the foundation upon which ordination work rests.

Ordination procedures conducted with utmost integrity and infused with trust generate confidence that the ordination is indeed of God and not the result of man’s tampering and manipulation. The church believes that God has spoken, and those chosen enjoy the congregation’s good will and support. Often churches guard integrity and trust by including a church leader

in the ordination work who is not a part of the local congregation or church group.

While practices vary among church groups, bishops frequently have the responsibility of conducting ordinations. Under the leadership of the bishop responsible for a congregation or district, the church’s leaders and members determine the need for ordination and seek God’s will about calling someone from within the congregation to serve in the needed leadership role. Ordination work may be suspended or terminated should God’s will or provision not be apparent.

In addition to appointing a time for ordination services, a church may prepare itself through special services and specific sermons. Ordination procedures also need to be established. These procedures address such matters as to who is eligible to nominate a brother, the requirements for one to be eligible for nomination, and the number of nominations required for a brother to be a candidate for ordination.

A nomination service usually precedes the ordination service. During this service, the church gives its voice privately and confidentially to those conducting the ordination. Churches use varying methods to examine and instruct those who have been nominated. Some churches favor great transparency in reporting the church’s voice and subsequent proceedings; other churches value the merits of strict confidentiality.

When the number of brethren put forth by the church exceeds the need, conservative Anabaptist churches typically make use of a lot during the ordination service to determine God’s choice. This practice, while not commanded in Scripture, is consistent with how the apostles chose a replacement for Judas Iscariot.

The use of the lot is generally done in a very careful manner designed so that no one knows which book contains the slip that will call one to the ministry. Then the candidates—it may be two or more—are free to choose from the identical books. The one who chooses the book with the slip in it is immediately ordained and given a charge.

The desire of the whole process of the calling is to ensure that the one called can serve the church effectively with the support of the congregation and the blessing of God upon his ministry.

W.H. | *South Carolina*



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“No Mennonite church that has maintained simplicity, modesty, and the headcovering has ever had a vote over whether to allow homosexuality.”

– James Miller at Shalom Church, IN



“Our *don'ts* do not prove our biblical obedience any more than holding the brakes proves that we're good drivers.”

– Dale Heisey at Kingdom Fellowship Weekend, PA



“The Bible says, ‘Hell is forever’ AND ‘God is Love.’ Accept BOTH truths even if you don't fully understand how they can both be true.”

– Brent Stoltzfus at Southern Fellowship Meetings, GA



“Satan is the concealer; Christ is the revealer.”

– Eugene Sommers at Hartville Conservative Mennonite Church, OH



“Wars, hurricanes, and other disasters remind us that we are a long way from Eden, but there's another Eden on the horizon.”

– Tim Myers at Hephzibah Mennonite Church, GA



“The old man is dead. Stop trying to wake him up.”

– Brian Hendricks at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“We need more Daniels to stand up and show the beauty of an excellent spirit.”

– Glenn Kilmer at Sparta Mennonite Church, WI



“Faith without works is like a staircase without steps.”

– Hutterian Brethren, MT



“If our heart is divided, we will worry. If our heart is single, we will trust God.”

– Dathan Stoltzfus at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“Liberty is not the freedom to do wrong, it is the freedom to do right—OBEY GOD.”

– Dave Stoltzfus at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA

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.



On The War Front: In Iraq

ARTICLE REDACTED FOR PRIVACY

ARTICLE REDACTED FOR PRIVACY

ARTICLE REDACTED FOR PRIVACY

ARTICLE REDACTED FOR PRIVACY

Branching Out

by a Hutterite brother

Introduction: *This treatise lays out the practical steps the Hutterian brethren have worked out for starting a new community. It also reveals the necessity of submission, forgiveness, and brotherly love necessary to live as disciples of Christ “in community.”*

“And Abram said to Lot, ... ‘Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.’ And Lot journeyed east. And they separated themselves, *one brother from another.*”
—Genesis 13:8, 9, 11

Amongst the brothers called Hutterian, one calls it *vehnande gehn* or “branching off,” literally meaning “going separate.” This dreadfully exciting event happens when it is time for the brotherhood to “branch off.”

The first major decision to be made in this five to ten-year-long process is that of location. When the soul count of an existing Hutterite community reaches 120, the brothers know it is time to purchase land and begin working towards branching out—in some instances the community lacks enough money to purchase additional land and so it continues to grow in number beyond 120 souls before branching out. The purchased land, now called *Neuhof* (new place) is sometimes only a few miles from its “mother” community; at other times it is an entire day’s travel away. It will be enough land to sustain an eventual community of 120 believers.

Upon acquiring a new tract of land, procedure will most likely follow this pattern: Housing and common buildings such as kitchen, school, and *lehrstuben* (teaching room) are established. After these follow trade and livestock facilities. Usually housing and common buildings are only temporary structures which are used until stable means of income are arranged. Transferable assets like machinery and equipment remain shared until the formal day of separation, on which the common purse and brotherhood are split as well.

Planned Separation

From the very beginning, two or three families from the existing *Oldhof* (old place) will volunteer to move to the *Neuhof*, along with one of the two servants of the Word and their immediate families. More families will follow as the *Neuhof*’s demands grow, and everyone who moves cannot know if this will be their permanent new home or not. Practically, life will function very much like at the *Oldhof* (see AV, Issue 9) except, of course, on a much smaller scale.

One family that moved to the *Neuhof* in the very beginning shares: “The first years taught us how to love others without partiality, because we worked alongside members with whom we never had shoulder-to-shoulder association at home on the *Oldhof*. We got to know each other from a different angle.

“When things got overwhelming, it was amazing that with a few visits and laughs together, we were refreshed and reminded that the small things are of the world, and we should always do what’s right even if it hurts us. We learned forgiveness. Always be prepared to carry the burden of Christ that comes from your neighbor. Looking back, those first years were full of important life lessons.”



“I am the vine, ye are the branches.”

Early tasks on the *Neuhof* are such that easily go unnoticed, yet call to be done. These include picking rocks and clearing brush, earthmoving, excavating, laying pipelines and ground-wires, fencing, and planting shelter-belts. In community, hard work together is appreciated as a means of fellowship. Down in the nitty-gritty region of the workplace where shoulders rub and characters clash, yielding to others is mandatory. The attitudes of men are worked upon like one stone polishing another; the stone who does the most yielding is smoothest in the end.

Since there are many projects to be built, most of the young men will also move to the *Neuhof* and stay together

in dorms or with families while living in temporary housing. The young ladies of the community will likewise split their lives between two places for a few years. They will travel back and forth as faithful custodians—cooking, baking, cleaning, painting, and gardening.

Every day for six weeks, the young ladies of one community piled into the colony's passenger van and drove the ten minutes to their *Neuhof* to do the grouting work in the kitchen complex which also included a bakery, adult and children's dining rooms, laundromat, cannery, several storage rooms and the teaching house. And every day the German school teacher would get coffee and a donut for them.

One sister commented of this period, "We had our disagreements. You have no idea how well we got to know each other. Yet we all are still friends."

Another community's *Neuhof* was a 2-hour drive from the *Oldhof*. One member said, "We have driven this highway so often that thankfulness fills our hearts whenever we think of the angels flying beside us as we drove back and forth all those years."

Separation of Resources

Within true community, there cannot be rational claims of personal ownership. Therefore, every member who moves to and takes part in the establishment of the *Neuhof* is wise to do so with a sense of abandonment. This means that selfish ambition is best discarded, and any definite certainty among anyone that they will ever permanently reside at the *Neuhof* and enjoy the fruits of their own labors cannot be harbored. One must remember and consider the brothers and sisters at home on the *Oldhof*, also chugging along in the daily grind with nothing much having changed, also working and living for the "unknown brother." For both parties, and for all living in true community, work is performed with an attitude of true almsgiving, as taught in Matthew 6:3: "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

True almsgiving is very humbling. But the Father sees in secret and rewards openly. All members of the community are keenly aware of how the *Neuhof* must be nurtured in its early developing years. From financial statements to the kitchen freezer to the mechanic shop's parts room, provision is made so the *Neuhof* lacks nothing.

Step by step, arrangement is made for the *Neuhof* to function on its own without the shield of a protecting "mother" community. Food supply from the *Oldhof* will slow down as gardens and barns grow. New financial

accounts will be opened. Professional relationships will be started with other companies as the brotherhood decides on which businesses to establish. Just like a father looks on his boy when he begins to walk, watching him take careful steps at first, then more confident ones, always providing support and counsel when he falls, so the *Oldhof* is responsible for the *Neuhof*. One day the time is ready for the boy to walk alone...

The brotherhood notices that the *Neuhof* functions better and better, being capable of accepting responsibilities like more members, larger businesses, more livestock, and a developed land base. (During the *vehnande gehn* years, most newly married couples and younger families reside at the *Neuhof*.) All can see the formal day of separation approaching.

In desiring to be as fair as possible concerning the inevitable split, all assets between the two *hofs* are appraised and marked with a ballpark value. Since the *Oldhof* has some irrigated acres, more dryland can be allotted to the *Neuhof*. The *Oldhof* retains the sow herd; the *Neuhof* gets the dairy operation. The book bindery will stay; the leather shop will go. The pipe thread-cutter will stay; the soap mill will go. Bundles of drill stem and lumber will be counted and divided.

Dividing the common purse is done with consideration as well. Does the *Neuhof* have undeveloped projects? Is the *Oldhof* in need of repair? Can the *Oldhof* retain the turkey flocks and the *Neuhof* receive funds instead? Money and debt are considered tools (albeit more seductive ones, just like technology) and will be shared in a similar way as the rest of the assets.

During a discussion meeting on the division of material goods, one servant of the Word reminded the brotherhood, "We can divide the assets to the best of our ability, but let's always remember that the best assets are *treue glieder*, honest and upright members who are committed to Christ and the church, both materially and spiritually."

Balancing the scale in a Christian manner is best done by being scrupulous, as if the law of Moses requires it. Since all members have yet to discover if they will move to the *Neuhof* or remain at the *Oldhof*, this division and allotment of assets is mostly unhindered by personal interest. This state of total abandon must preside for the work to continue in humility and order. This "abandon," this otherworldly disconnect from mammon, is defined by Christ in Matthew 19:21, as Jesus calls the young man out of mainstream ownership of goods with the invitation, "WILL YOU BE PERFECT?" thus offering blessed freedom to one who has kept the commandments from youth on up, and is asking what he yet lacks. "Go

sell all that you have and give to the poor. Then come and follow me.” The Kingdom life is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes!

A New Branch

Once the temporal assets have been taken care of, all remaining to be split is the church, the *ekklesia*—the gathering of the devout. On the appointed day, the entire brotherhood will assemble in the teaching house on the *Oldhof* for song, service, and prayer. The meeting will mark the last day of this community as one unit. Today’s song is special, drawing attention to the separation of Abraham and Lot, and Paul’s parting from the Ephesian church, yet reminding the brethren not to separate from Christ, from unity, from love and virtue, and to keep watch and pray.

A member’s sermon notes from the prayer meetings leading up to this day includes these gems:

- “Who remains in the Word will also remain with the Father.”
- “No one can come to the Father but through Christ.”
- “His yoke is easy and His burden is light.”
- “If we love Him, we will keep His commandments.”
- “He who says he knows Christ in his heart, yet ignores His commands, deceives himself.”

After the community has knelt in prayer, the elder servant of the Word will begin a list with his family’s name at the top. The assistant servant will begin a second list.



Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Matt. 7:16-17

Then each of the servants continue to choose a family by turn until all of the families are chosen. The process then continues among those remaining until the church is evenly split, more or less. Now that two churches have been formed, what follows is that each one elects to fill its empty council positions, including a servant of temporary affairs (financial administrator), a field foreman, and two counselors for each church. Remaining positions like youth supervisor and shop and livestock managers can be settled after moving.

Either of two processes is followed in determining which of the “now” two churches will permanently reside at the *Neuhof*, and which one will stay home on the *Oldhof*. One way to do this is called *freiwillig* (freewill movement). This is when both sides come to the unanimous agreement that one side will move, and the other will stay.

The most common method, however, is to use the lot. Two folded notes are dropped into a hat, one marked *Oldhof* and the second *Neuhof*. The elder servant of the Word draws first, and when the second servant has also drawn, the notes are simultaneously opened and declared to the congregation. The final act of splitting the brotherhood has been committed. From now on, where one has been, two will be.

A brother who remained on the *Oldhof* shared the joy he has when he now visits the *Neuhof*. “When I visit the brother in charge of the blacksmith shop, we talk about metal a little bit; then we talk about God. It brings me peace to know we are of the same spirit. We separated in peace, and I am thankful for that.”

Numerous friends and family of the *Neuhof* church will be on hand to help with the move. They will arrive from neighboring and distant communities, and within the week the *Neuhof* will be permanently inhabited, having a full council and a new separate common purse. An assistant servant of the Word will be chosen for the *Oldhof* and *Neuhof* in the near future.

“Once the move has settled, is when the homesickness sets in. You miss them,” shares one brother. “And it makes me wish I would have spent more time with that brother or with that sister. If I could go back, I would spend more time with that person who I seldom see now.”

Another sister writes, “When a colony branches out, it’s not the actual day that matters, it’s the entire years that leave an impression on your hearts and minds forever. The only way to get through the motions is to rely on the Savior from whom our help truly comes. Half the people in your life are not there anymore and we all have to adjust to a new normal. Everything is new. The most

important thing is to remain firm in the Lord and in faith.”

For the *Neuhof* community, the familiarity and comfort of the *Oldhof* will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Members that have relocated even more than once still refer to their birth community as “home.”

Separation Is Hard

Has *vehnande gehn* been a path of roses? No, one should say not because we cannot deny the human element. The Adamic nature is still present in each of us. Like a beach ball held underwater, it will resurface at every heedless moment; therefore WATCH YE AND PRAY. This old Adamic nature ensures unequal community splits in some cases; it gives rise to unrest and disorder in the hearts of members and sometimes even administrators succumb to its demands. To refrain from portraying an ideal, it has to be said that some communities don’t branch out; sometimes they split.

One brother says he very much anticipated *vehnande gehn*, as he could feel strain on some of his community relationships. But after he moved to the *Neuhof*, he confessed to his own shortcomings and said, “I am still the same person here that I was there, not much has changed after all.”

Acknowledging our Adamic nature is fundamental to becoming born again. Knowing this brings us to the first call of the gospel which is REPENTANCE, and begins nowhere but in each person’s own heart. Repentance is the call of the Spirit to the churches in Asia. It is the call of Peter to the Jerusalem crowd in Acts. It was the first call of John the Baptizer from the beginning. You see, dear reader, it is still the call of our Lord and King Jesus today, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Jesus said, “Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who seeks to save his life will lose it, but he who loses it for my sake will find it.”

Jesus knew He was going to die on a Roman cross, and when He calls us after Him, the same death is expected of us. Crucifixion was capital punishment, there were no survivors—the cross means obvious death—death to the world, death to sin, but most of all, death to our own sinful flesh with which we serve the law of sin and cannot please God, and must needs die!

“But they who are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with its affections and lusts.” The Hutterian brothers cannot view community as an end in itself. Rather, community is taken to be the perfect environment in which to take the Roman cross upon us and crucify our old man, destroy the body of sin, bury it in baptism, and walk in continual newness of life, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. And where a group of people gather together to walk this way of the cross amid the sacrifice, the weakness, the pain and suffering, there is found unimaginable beauty. Such beauty made a visitor to one colony exclaim, “This is how the whole world should live!”

“Where two or three are gathered in my Name, I am there with them.” This is the promise of the way of the cross, the very presence of Him. Living in community is an adventure dared and risked, again and again. We pursue to follow Him who said, “FOLLOW ME” and to let His Kingdom values dictate our lives, especially when we make mistakes. This means mutual forgiveness and care on every side—finding charity amongst ourselves, for charity covers the multitude of sins. We want to love each other because He loved us.

With faith, community is possible; with hope, it is endured; and with love it is advanced forward. Like one candle lights another, each casting off light at the expense of itself, burning itself to nothing to serve others, so we endeavor to be. By God’s grace, we are able.

– T.W. | Alberta, Canada

Facts on Hutterite colonies

The three groups of Hutterites are situated exclusively within the breadbasket or prairies of North America. Hutterites have subsisted almost entirely on agriculture since migrating to North America in 1874 which helps to explain their geographical locations.

The Hutterites have grown very rapidly since coming to North America due to high birth rates and low attrition rates. Today it is estimated there are over 45,000 Hutterites living in 462 colonies in North America.

| Canada | # Colonies |
|------------------|------------|
| Alberta | 168 |
| British Columbia | 2 |
| Manitoba | 107 |
| Saskatchewan | 60 |
| USA | |
| Minnesota | 9 |
| Montana | 50 |
| North Dakota | 7 |
| South Dakota | 54 |
| Washington | 5 |

Preach the Word

by Ivan N. Weaver

“For Christ [sent me] to preach the gospel, not with eloquence and [clever speech], lest the cross of Christ should be emptied of its power.”

– I Corinthians 1:17 (NIV)

A preacher from the past once stated: “If it’s not expository preaching, it’s not preaching.” Maybe that is a bit strong, but if no effort is put forth to present expository sermons, the opportunity to teach the masses is lost.

My burden is that too many sermons coming from conservative Mennonite pulpits are merely personal opinions, pretexts, topics without Holy Spirit unction—or sharing to fill in the time allotted.

Expository preaching is a unique, God-ordained (I Corinthians 1:17-21) method to confront man with *all* the truth of the Word and bring him face to face with the personal requirements of God. The goal of expository preaching is not only to impart knowledge, but to *move* the will of man toward God.



Expond, brother. Expond.

What is Expository Preaching?

A simple definition of expository preaching is to expose God’s will for man as found in a given passage. This means that the preacher systematically exposes the truth of a Bible text, verse by verse and word by word. If the words of the text are not understood, it is very easy to miss the broader meaning of the passage.

The availability of modern methods of copying from others (Internet, Sunday school quarterlies, and many

books) is a threat to Holy Spirit-directed preaching. Preaching is heralding the message of God that the preacher has first experienced in his study of the written Word. The preacher should go first to the Word using different languages and versions to study the meaning of a passage and then, perhaps, compare what the Holy Spirit has revealed to him with the opinions of others.

An expository message can be developed from a book of the Bible, a chapter, a group of verses, a singular verse, a partial verse, or a word within its context. But truths from that passage must first grip the heart of the preacher before he can effectively pass those truths on to his hearers. Expository preaching is not simply passing on the thoughts and opinions of other authors or preachers. Delivery must be authentic—truth from his own heart.

It is fine to use other verses from outside the passage as long as those supporting verses are not misapplied. Example: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus often used the Old Testament to support His teaching.

An expository sermon includes a thesis—a main proposition or central theme. Without a thesis, the sermon is merely a Sunday school discussion. All the different points found in a sermon lose their significance if there is no central proposition that unites them and brings understanding to the hearer. If there is no proposition that unites the different points, then drop some of the points; narrow the text.

The gospel is given to us in words. The calling of a preacher is to *open up* the words, sentences, and paragraphs of Scripture to display Jesus Christ! Expository preaching is when a preacher *lays open* (exposes) the text to public view and sets forth its intended meaning. It is the communication of biblical concepts, which require explanation, interpretation, and application. Otherwise, it cannot really be called a sermon.

Why Use Expository Preaching?

We have said earlier that expository preaching is opening up a particular passage of Scripture and imparting its meaning to the hearer. This is in contrast to preaching that takes a particular subject and develops that subject through various selections in the Scripture. Both types of sermons can be useful, but expository preaching has the following blessings attached to it:

- It helps the preacher stay close to the revealed truth. “Rightly dividing the Word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15c).
- It opens one up to Holy Spirit inspiration and creativity. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (II Timothy 3:16a).
- It opens up the Word to the congregation.
- It outlasts the sermon. When the congregation hears a word-by-word exposition, they hear more than the preacher. They hear God!
- It gives the preacher integrity. He addresses the words in context as they arise in the given order of the text. This avoids the appearance of picking on individuals in the audience.
- It helps the preacher have balanced sermon content (staying within the context instead of “circling the world” never to return to the text again). It eliminates “bunny trails” and “hobby horses.”
- It results in a biblically literate congregation.
- It keeps the Bible central in the worship service.
- It prevents the congregation from becoming “problem conscious”—seeing all the problems in the world and in the church. The solution to the sin problem is through the verbally exposed truth of the Scripture.

In conclusion, “thus saith the Lord” is where all preaching gets its authority. When the Word is communicated in faith, the preacher is speaking with authority transferred from God. Paul stated: “We believe, and therefore speak” (II Corinthians 4:13). The goal is “to declare all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

I.N.W. | Pennsylvania



Study hard to speak well.

Tips for Expository Preachers

- Begin with a particular passage of Scripture. Note! An expository message is not a running commentary.
- Look for divisions in the passage. Try to discover the key verse(s) or main theme of the passage.
- Use only one theme or text at a time.
- Watch for transition words and recurring words. Sometimes a sermon can be built around recurring words.
- Meditate upon the verses in the passage. Begin reading and rereading the passage days before the sermon is to be preached.
- Think about a theme and points that can be arranged in an outline.
- Stay within the text; an exception can be made to this if the context has a clear connection to another verse, chapter, or book of the Bible.
- Make New Testament applications where it is fitting.
- Be sure your ideas emerge from the text or context; never underestimate your audience’s intelligence.
- Keep your ideas simple; never overestimate your audience’s understanding.
- Make modern-day applications without exaggerating the context; avoid purposely presenting your own “hobby horses.”
- Pray for Holy Spirit guidance while developing the message.
- Look for prophetic hints that reveal Jesus Christ.
- Always give the message a title. Present the title as soon as you stand up.
- Develop a *brief* conclusion. This can be a condensed summary of the message, a challenge found within the passage, or a call to commitment to the biblical principles revealed in the passage. And after you have made your *brief* conclusion, STOP.

I.N.W. | Pennsylvania

The Law of Moses in the New Testament

by Menno Knight

“Some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses’

– Acts 15:5

A Distinct Body of Law

The New Testament specifically names the “law of Moses” in at least five different verses (Luke 24:44, John 7:23, Acts 13:39; 15:5; 28:23). In other passages the same body of law is referred to as “Moses’ law” (Hebrews 10:28), “the law given through Moses” (John 1:17), “Moses permitted you” (Matthew 19:8), and “the law of the Jews” (Acts 25:8). These references all clearly indicate that “the law of Moses” was a specific body of law that did not include all “law.”

The word “law” in English is like the word “love.” Both words have different meanings in English that can mean quite different things. If one understands there are several meanings for “law” in the New Testament—God’s eternal law, the law of Moses, Roman law—that knowledge helps us determine which kind of law is referred to in a passage.

The context often makes clear the kind of law a passage refers to. For instance, when Hebrews 10:16 says, “*I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds, I will write them,*” we know this passage is speaking of God’s eternal law and not the 613 rules (the Torah) considered to be the law of Moses. So we want to look at how we distinguish between the different kinds of law talked about in the New Testament.

The Things Concerning Himself

Let us look at what the New Testament means when it mentions the law of Moses. We will begin with Luke 24:27. Here Jesus calls the two on the walk to Emmaus, “*Foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken ... And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*” And in Luke 24:44, He emphasizes again, “*These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses ... concerning Me.*” This passage teaches us that many things in the Law of Moses pointed to the coming of Christ and were fulfilled in Him. Hence it was no longer necessary to keep the Law of Moses.

The Necessary Things

Acts 15 proves that both Jewish and Gentile Christians no longer needed to keep the law of Moses. Acts 15:5 tells of some believing Pharisees who said, “*It is necessary to circumcise them [Gentile believers], and to command them to keep the law of Moses.*” After much discussion, the apostles and elders and the whole church decided that the Gentile believers did not have to be circumcised or keep the “law of Moses.” The evidence lies in the decision reached by the church: “*Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law [of Moses]’—to whom we gave no such commandment.*” So they ruled out all 613 rules of the Mosaic law [the Torah] and circumcision. The Gentile believers did not need to keep them.

But the telling thing in our study is what they asked the Gentile believers to abstain from: “*things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.*” Sexual immorality and idol worship were clearly covered by the Ten Commandments. The prohibition against eating blood and things strangled dated from when Noah exited the ark and offered up his sacrifice. At that time, God forbade the eating of blood because “the life is in the blood.” All blood was to be held sacred. At the Jerusalem conference, the church declared that Gentiles should uphold God’s law given to Noah as well as the two laws clearly stated in the Ten Commandments.

The message sent to the churches did not reiterate all the Ten Commandments, not because they were no longer in effect, but because they were not pertinent to the issues being dealt with. The apostle James stated, “*For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath*” (Acts 15:21). The Jews knew the law. So the church asked the Gentiles to uphold the eternal laws of God while voiding the need for circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses. In this way the church made a distinction between the eternal laws of God and the law of Moses.

From the Beginning

If we turn to Matthew 19, we find another place where Jesus made a difference between the law of Moses and the law God created in the beginning. He said in

Matthew 19:8, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.” Then Jesus clarified what God had intended from the beginning. “Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 19:9). Thus Jesus firmly said that Moses’ law deviated from God’s law established in the beginning.

We are not sure how many of the Ten Commandments were established at the creation, but we do know that at least two of them were: the law of marriage and the seventh day as a day of rest, but it is likely that all ten of them were written on men’s hearts from the beginning. Romans 1:19-20 backs up this teaching: “What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

The divine punishment for disobedience of these inherent laws of God, established in the beginning, are evident from Adam through the flood and then upon the peoples of the world after the flood—Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, Rome The people of these nations were not punished because of their failure to obey the law of Moses, but because they failed to obey the laws of God revealed to them, and those written on their hearts at the creation. So we see again that the law of Moses and the laws of God were not one and the same thing.

Judging with Righteous Judgment

When the Jews continued to trouble Jesus over His activities on the Sabbath day, He infuriated them by pointing out a number of ways in which they themselves broke the law of Moses—pulling a child or an ox out of the ditch on the Sabbath, the priests offering sacrifices on the Sabbath, and David eating the consecrated bread which only the priests were supposed to eat.

In John 7:19 He asks the Jews, “Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keeps the law [of Moses]?” After Jesus had thus attacked the law of Moses and the integrity of the Jews before God, the people accused Him of having a demon. So Jesus gave them a specific example of how the Jews broke the law of Moses. “Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that

the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?” (John 7:22-23).

And then Jesus admonishes them, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment” (John 7:24). Jesus meant that they should not judge according to the technicalities of the law of Moses, but according to the heart and spirit of God’s law.

Thus we see again that Jesus made a distinction between the law of Moses and the law of God. They were not one and the same thing.

Not Justified by the Law of Moses

Acts 13:39 also uses the specific term, “The law of Moses.” In this instance Paul is preaching in a Jewish synagogue in Antioch and telling the people of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then he explains that it is through Jesus that one obtains the forgiveness of sins and is justified before God.

Furthermore, Paul preached that this same justification could never be obtained through the law of Moses. In other words, there was no longer any point in keeping the law of Moses. It was now useless, obsolete. This agrees with Hebrews 8:13 where the writer speaks of a *new covenant* with the house of Israel that would make the old covenant (*and the law of Moses*) of none effect.

Law in the New Testament

The law of Moses is clearly recognized in the New Testament as a distinct body of laws. The word “law” is sometimes used to refer to the law of Moses while many times it means God’s eternal laws that never changed and never will change.

When reading the New Testament, it is important to keep this distinction in mind. From Acts to Revelation the writers all agree that the law of Moses has faded away. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find teaching that would uphold the blood sacrifices, the necessity of circumcision, or a priesthood other than Jesus Christ. Nowhere do we find teaching that obedience to any part of the law of Moses supersedes any of the laws of God.

Rather, obedience to the laws of God always stand as the important thing in the sight of God. “For not the hearers of the law [of God] are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified” (Romans 2:13; see also James 1:22).



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 theological complicated questions with no good answers—for example, the woman who had seven brothers as husbands (*Matthew 22:24-28*).

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



The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

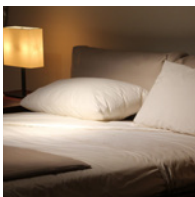


The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

Rest for the Weary?

by A. Larmed



I have a concern for the family involved, apart from the details of the story.

When people are involved in deception, they often use a mask to hide their true character. Often the uglier the character flaw or situation, the more beautiful the mask that is used. Having come from a worldly background, my eyes were opened to this sad fact.

IF . . . if a person were involved in some sort of illegal activity in his business(es), he might very well seek to mask it by association with others who could lend a mask of honesty and credibility to his business. (Who could better convey the outward appearance of honesty and integrity to nonbelievers than a conservative Amish family?)

The details of the story cause me to strongly suspect this businessman. He, knowing their convictions, deliberately deceived this family regarding his marital status. The simple answer to whether they should allow the couple to continue to stay in their home is an emphatic “NO”! The Bible tells us not to be partaker in other men’s sins (I Timothy 5:22).

Beyond that, I would warn them not to be deceived by flattery, or the lure of money. If they compromise their integrity by remaining involved with this man who has already put them in a place of considering compromising their convictions, what further temptations and troubles lie ahead?

My advice: Pray for this man, but distance yourselves from him. The Bible warns us not to be “unequally yoked”! How could you consider yourself equally yoked if you were in a business relationship with a man who has already tested you to see if you will abandon your convictions, and who has proven himself dishonest? “Red flags” are usually small things, but don’t ignore them.

Dead End

by Truth Seeker



I am writing in response to the letter from “Frustrated” (AV11 page 41).

If we read Matthew 5:19 in the context, it can be explained very well. In verse 17, Jesus teaches plainly that He did not come to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfill [them]. In verse 18, Jesus only mentions the law and states that nothing shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Jesus did not say the law would not pass away, but it would remain until it was fulfilled. The Greek word used could mean “be finished, be ended.” In John 19:30, as Jesus died He said, “**It is finished.**” By this statement, Jesus could have been referring to the ending of the law and the opening of the way of salvation for all men.

Hebrews gives a beautiful insight into this. Jesus rose as a priest after the order of Melchizedek and not after the order of Aaron and was a priest forever. With the change of priesthood it was necessary also to change the law (Hebrews 7:11-28). The first covenant was not faultless so a second and better was established (Hebrews 8:7-13). Jesus took away the first to establish the second (Hebrews 10:9).

In Ephesians 2:11-22, we read of reconciliation of the Jews and Gentiles, how Jesus broke down the middle wall of partition between them and abolished in His flesh the enmity (the law of commandments contained in ordinances) so He could reconcile both to God. According to this, would it not be understood that Jesus abolished the old law by His death?

According to Peter in Acts 15:7-11, requiring the Gentile Christian church to keep the Law of Moses was tempting God by putting a yoke upon them that the Jews were not even able to bear!

In Galatians 4:9, Paul was concerned for the Galatians’ desire to turn to the weak and beggarly elements and return into bondage. He may have been referring to the Mosaic law. Galatians 5:1-15 also calls us to freedom in Christ and not to be entangled with the yoke of bondage of the Mosaic law.

We can read in **Galatians 2:16**, “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” and in **Galatians 5:4**, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

I do not think God would be pleased with an effort to revive the dead works of the Mosaic law (Hebrews 9:14).

But a life of living sacrifice to our Lord and Redeemer would be well pleasing to Him.

The law could not address the evils of man’s heart. Which of the Old Testament prophets does not lament the evil ways of God’s chosen people? The Bible speaks of many righteous men who lived before the Mosaic law. Following the old Mosaic Law and offering up blood sacrifices which can never make anyone perfect (Hebrews 10:1) can never equal deliverance and peace through the blood of Jesus.

Keeping our conscience free and tender is very important so that we do not become hardened and callous. But the conscience can also be misguided. It appears that Paul, prior to his conversion, persecuted the Christians in good conscience (Acts 23:1). But the blood of Christ can purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14).

Strong Faith

by Mar Velling



I’m responding to question #1 in AV11 page 40, “Why did Jesus and the apostles heal people in the New Testament?”

Quite a number of signs Jesus did were given to prove that He was the Son of God. He wanted those looking on to believe in Him. For instance, when He raised Lazarus from the dead Jesus prayed, “**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent me**” (**John 11:41-42**).

When Jesus sent out the seventy, He told them to heal the sick who are there and tell them, “**The kingdom of God has come near to you**” (**Luke 10:9**). The healing powers were given the disciples, not to glorify the disciples, but to prove their message was true.

After Peter and John healed the lame man in Acts 4, Peter said, “**Why do you look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?**” This miracle of healing took place to prove that Peter and John were authorized witnesses of God and of Jesus whom God sent.

When real miracles of healing are performed today, they will glorify the Son of God, authenticate the messenger, and bear witness to the truth. All self-proclaimed faith healers who do not bear witness to the whole gospel and glorify themselves, are fakes. Do not listen to them.

Strong Faith

by Ray Dubyus



I would ask faith healers three questions:

1. Was Paul's faith defective when his thorn in the flesh was not removed? (II Corinthians 12:7-10).
2. If lack of faith is the problem, why did Paul leave Trophimus at Miletus sick? (II Timothy 4:20).
3. Where is the faith of the supposed healer? Why are the faith healers not speaking to themselves instead of to the ill whom they judge as not having enough faith? Jesus said, "If you have faith and do not doubt, ... if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and cast into the sea,' it will be done" (Matthew 21:21). Does not the lack of power faith healers claim to have, prove they are false teachers and not sent by God?



Dead End

by Teach Mandios



I am writing in response to Question #2 (AV11 page 41). "What did Jesus mean in Matthew 5:19 when He talked about not breaking any of the commandments?"

"Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19).

In this verse Jesus is speaking of "the least of these commandments." In this verse, He did not say "law," as He did in the former verse, but "commandments." The two terms are not interchangeable.

I find it difficult to think the "commandments" referred to here are the ordinances, rules, and regulations given to the people of Israel to order their daily lives. Neither was Jesus speaking of the sacrifices and priestly order that regulated their worship or the laws that governed the civil sphere. Instead, I would think Jesus was referring to the eternal statutes God had declared (such as the Ten Commandments) and that will endure till heaven and earth pass away.

Dead End

by I.S. Opened



There is a difference between the "Law" and the "Commandments" although both were a part of the "Law" for Israel to keep. God himself, with His own finger, wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone signifying that they were to endure for all time. The rest of the laws and ordinances were written by Moses and placed in a book.

My eyes were opened when I realized there is a difference between "law" and "commandments." In English the words may seem synonymous, but in Greek, law and commandments are two different words.

The Law was meant to be temporary and was meant only for the Israelite nation. It was never applied to the Gentiles.

On the other hand, the Commandments are not temporary and apply to all people living on the earth. Jesus pointed us back to them in Matthew 19:17. Jesus said to the rich young ruler, "If you want to enter into life, keep the Commandments," and then Jesus spelled them out, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "Honor your father and your mother," and "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." We can note here that Jesus did not say, "Keep the Law," and refer to the Mosaic law.

God Himself made a distinction between the Ten Commandments written on stone and the Book of the Law. He told Moses to place the Ten Commandments inside of the Ark, and the Book of the Law was to be placed in the side of the Ark [beside the Ark]. "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 31:26).

We can note the following differences between the "Commandments" and the "Law":

- The Commandments were written in stone. The Law was written in a book.
- The Commandments were written by the finger of God. The Law was written down by Moses.
- The Commandments were placed in the Ark of the Covenant under the Mercy Seat. The Book of the Law was placed beside the Ark.
- Jesus said, "Keep my Commandments" (John 14:15). Paul said, "Christ makes the Law [of Moses] no longer necessary for those who become acceptable to God by faith" (Romans 10:4).

Dead End

by Trew Hunter



I am sharing this in response to “The Practical Side: New Story” article, “Dead End” (AV11 page 41). This is a subject I have grappled with and I want to help anyone struggling with it to find peace and joy in Christ, the Mediator of the

New Covenant.

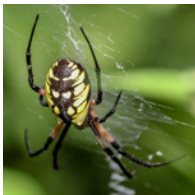
Through my own struggles with understanding the Sabbath and the law, I have come to believe this: We must understand the teachings of the Old Covenant through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant (Luke 24:27). **“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”**

I would love to read someone else’s thoughts on this subject.



Entangled

by Con Sequences



My response to “Entangled” by Chris Crossed (AV11 page 39): In Deuteronomy 24:1-4, a woman who was divorced by her first husband and married to another man was forbidden to return to her first husband. Doing so, is said to be “an

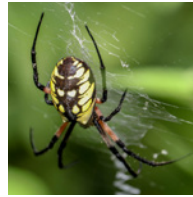
abomination before the Lord.”

I do not find this requirement changed in the New Testament. I conclude that Richard and Betty should not be reunited. In such an unfortunate situation, the only honorable thing to do is to live as single individuals, in separate housing, and for Fred and Richard to provide support to their respective families. They could still be fathers to their children, give due respect to their former partners, and live honorable single lives. Difficult? Yes, but the consequences of sin are not easy.



Entangled

by Only Waybright



My response to question #3 under “Entangled” (AV11, page 39).

“What is the only consistent biblical position in all three situations?”

The only consistent biblical position is not to allow any of the divorced and separated individuals to remarry. For divorced and remarried couples, repentance, separation, and celibacy for the rest of life is a clear standard that is acceptable to God.

The purity of the church and the symbolism of marriage with Christ as the bridegroom and the church as the bride must be guarded by the church as a body. Ephesians 5:25-27 says, **“Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.”**

If anyone wants to deviate from God’s standard on this issue, there are hundreds of churches that will take them in. Probably divorce and remarriage will not be the only issue where they disagree with the Anabaptist position.

Membership in an Anabaptist church will not count for much when God judges them. Instead, their final destination will be based on how well they have met God’s standards while on the earth.



“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

– Colossians 3:17



The Practical Side: The Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Dead End

by Frust Rated



In the 1990's I wanted to live in all good conscience but found it impossible to do so as I then understood the Bible. I also encountered erroneous teaching about sin and salvation in the group I attended. What they taught did not agree with the Bible.

The direction of the errors was always the same. Teachers meant to avoid accountability to God so that Christians did not have to live righteous, holy lives. Rather than being an oversight, or an incomplete message, their teachings were intentional distortions in the terminology of the text.

Here are some of the conflicts I encountered which compelled me to leave that denomination. In column A you will find the distortion. In column B you will find the way I came to understand the Bible truth.

What I Heard People Say about Salvation:

Deliverance from Penalty

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for us that He might *redeem us from all penalty*, and purify unto Himself a special people *zealous to avoid salvation by works*.

Deliverance from Good Works

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to *avoid good works*.

Deliverance from Condemnation

And this is the condemnation: that *men wanted to do good*.

You are deceived if you *think you are good*.

A Saving Faith

He who comes to God must believe he is a *sinner every day*.

For the eyes of the Lord are over the **sinner**s, and His ears are listening unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is *against those who think they are righteous*.

Expect Christ to Do It All

Forasmuch as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, we are *delivered from the sufferings of hell*.

Christ died as our substitute, *paying the penalty of our sins*.

Trust in the finished work of Christ *alone* for our salvation.

What I Read In Scripture about Salvation:

Deliverance from Iniquity

"That He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a special people *zealous of good works*" (**Titus 3:14**).

Deliverance unto Good Works

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *good works*, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them" (**Ephesians 2:10**).

Deliverance from Condemnation

"And this is the condemnation: Light is come into the world; and *men loved darkness rather than light* because their deeds were evil" (**John 3:19**).

You are deceived if you *live in moral darkness*.

A Faith That Will Motivate You

"He who comes to God must *believe He exists*, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him" (**Hebrews 11:6**).

"The face of the Lord is *against those who do evil*" (**I Peter 3:12**).

Take Up Your Cross and Follow

"Whoever does not *bear his cross* and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (**Luke 14:27**).

"All who will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall suffer persecution*" (**II Timothy 3:12**).

"[The man] who has suffered in the flesh *has ceased from sin*; that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but *to the will of God*" (**I Timothy 4:1-2**).

Strong Faith

by Faye Bell



One lady in our community visited a woman with cancer a few days before she died and told her that if her faith was strong enough she would be healed. Another person took one of the books on faith healing to a young mother with breast cancer and told her that if she believed enough, she would be healed. Furthermore, if she didn't believe in this book (*Word of Faith*) she was living in ignorance.

It is upsetting and cruel to do this to vulnerable people who are going through hard times. It is dangerous because it mixes Scripture with untruth.

There have been a few instances of people who report healing of eyes (no longer needing glasses), stuttering, and back pain. They also claim to have seen people raised from the dead and healing of any/all sicknesses.

Faith healing and faith healers are nothing new. They twist the Scriptures in an effort to gain money for their "ministry." For example, these particular teachers pitch various "give to get" cons as a means for devotees to obtain financial prosperity. These leaders say, "Those who don't give financially to the work of the gospel will not have God's financial blessings in their personal lives."

Although Christians are encouraged to financially support the ministries of the church they attend, there is nothing in Scripture that guarantees a financial return for our donations. Rather, the Bible sets forth the general principle that sowing seeds of unrighteousness will produce bad fruits, but sowing seeds of righteousness will produce good fruits (Galatians 6:7).

These faith healers also falsely teach that those who give to the work of the Lord will have an abundant harvest of finances. The Bible is clear on both points. II Timothy 3:12 says, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." The verse says nothing about financial prosperity.

In addition, the gospel condemns those who seek financial gain by preaching the gospel. I Timothy 6:5 warns us about "[men] who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself." And Titus 1:11 tells us that there are those "teaching things they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain." Be wary of false teachers who are in it to make money.

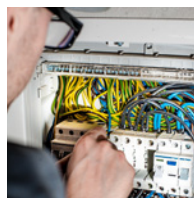
The Bible also teaches that sickness and death are the normal order of things in this life, but those who have faith in Jesus Christ have the hope of being resurrected and

glorified at the end of the age (I Corinthians 15:42-58). Not until that time will believers no longer experience sickness, suffering, and death (Revelation 21:1-4). Jesus never made any absurd prohibition against praying for the sick; however, James, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, writes, "Is anyone sick among you? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14, NASB).



Contracted In

by Hot Wired

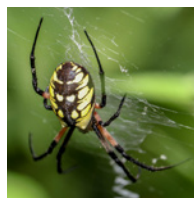


I got my dad to talk to my employer. Then my employer excused me from working on the job that involved building the machines used in manufacturing hand grenades.



Entangled

by Chris Crossed



After prayer and fasting, the only way the church was able to resolve this, and be biblical, was that none of the remarried divorcees could be remarried to their first spouses as long as one of the spouses with whom they had made marriage vows was still living.

In another situation, I have witnessed the marriage of a couple who were divorced and then later remarried their original spouses. I wish I could say the couple was a happy blessed couple following being reunited in marriage, but I can't say that. It was full of strife and mistrust.

If one wants to have peace of soul and be eternally secure, God's standard is the best, and He will be the ultimate judge of any deviation from his will. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

Rest for the Weary

by *Pert Turbed*



We told JM about our beliefs and asked him to honor them when he was in our house. If they wanted to stay overnight in our home they would need to stay in separate bedrooms, one of them upstairs, and the other one downstairs.

They scoffed and said they wanted to leave and sleep somewhere else. After a few more “snorts of indignation” they went meekly to a motel twenty miles away.

We finished our business and did not feel any resentment or ill will. We continued to manufacture items for him for many years after that. We had many discussions about religion. JM was not happy with the “Christian” religions of the Western world. (We weren’t either). JM said he liked us and “had a feel for us,” and knew that our word was always good.

Sometime after that weekend, I visited his offices in New York City. As I was being introduced to the managers and office personnel, one of the fellows said, “Oh you’re the fellow who kicked JM out of your house because he was shacking up with his girlfriend!” I became somewhat of a “celebrity” around JM’s company personnel after that. Even though JM scoffed at us and attempted to mock our old-fashioned values when he was at our house, I believe he bragged about our values after he got back to his office. Later he even apologized somewhat for having put us in that position.

I think he was so used to the worldly lifestyle around him, that he never gave his non-married status any thought until I brought it up. He was a very open and expressive fellow, and known to be a man of his word throughout the business community. In our case, standing for what was right and true worked out well for all, but whether we think it will work out “well” or not should not be a consideration when faced with a choice of right or wrong. Always choose right (Daniel 3:16-18).



The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today’s Anabaptists

No Rules

by *Con Fronted*



He leaned in close, looked me in the eyes and whispered, “When we’re out of here, out on the streets, I’ll get you.” I hardly knew how things had escalated so quickly. Bobby had been outside the homeless shelter after the chapel service from 8:30-

8:50pm, the time designated for smoking before the outside door is locked for the night. Time was up, but after I had given the call for “two minutes left” and “time’s up,” Bobby was still outside. This time I went over to him and said, “Hey man, it’s time to come in. You have to come in at 8:50.”

“No, I’m going to finish this cigarette.”

“Well listen, the rule here is that you have from 8:30-8:50 to smoke and then everyone has to come inside for the night. I’m not trying to be difficult. It’s the same rule for everybody.”

“I don’t care, I’m going to finish this cigarette.”

After he had finished, Bobby came inside, and he wanted to finish something else. He didn’t like being told what to do.

“So these rules: are these your rules, did you make them? Do you get paid for this, or are you just a volunteer? I don’t listen to volunteers. So why are you doing this? Are you just trying to make up for something bad you’ve done? You just trying to make yourself feel better for some \$#!+ in your past? Are you a Christian? Are you a Christian?!”

Then he leaned in close, looked me in the eyes and whispered, “When we’re out of here, out on the streets, I’ll get you.” He was close enough for me to smell the alcohol on his breath, and to see the hate pulsing in his eyes. Bobby didn’t want anyone else to hear him say this, to make the secret of his threat more threatening.

It worked.

My vision narrowed and I felt the anger welling up inside of me as I looked back at him. In a desperate move

to avoid what my mind and body wished to do, in weak submission to the Spirit of Jesus, I replied, “I’m not going to argue with you Bobby,” and sat down. It was a pitiful reaction by all accounts.

Another shelter guest, Oscar, came up to me and said, “Man, you are really good at staying calm. You just kept your cool the whole time.” Maybe outwardly, but I knew that inside I was still lacking the love of Jesus. . . but maybe this was the perfect situation for revealing to me what still needs to die. It took me until I got home a couple hours later to begin praying for this man who wished me harm.

Practical Questions:

1. What are some Christ-like ways to relate to people like Bobby—especially in a situation like this?
2. What should Con do the next time he sees Bobby?
3. Explain the power of praying for someone who has done you wrong.



Flagged Down

by Am I. Dreaming



I was going past a plain man’s place of business and on his work trailer I saw a half circle, about 12 inches, of the American flag. I wasn’t sure I was seeing right so before saying anything to anybody, next time I went past I stopped in

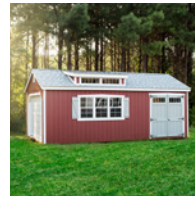
and went to the trailer and checked again to make sure I wasn’t mistaken.

Practical Questions:

1. Should I talk to the owner and tell him that it is not consistent to have an American flag on his work trailer?
2. Should I talk to the ministry and ask for advice?
3. Should I just ignore the issue as it really is not any of my business if a brother displays the flag?

Extra Power Darkness

by M. Doubting



At the office for our portable building business, we got a call asking for a quote on a large building with some extraordinary features. “We need an extra tall building, with no windows, and a 400 amp electrical service.”

Because that’s double the amperage required for a normal American house, I asked, “Are you sure? What are you doing that needs so much power?”

“We are opening a recycling center,” was the vague reply. He didn’t seem eager to say more. I was puzzled.

After several more conversations with different people involved in this “recycling project,” I was still unsure what they wanted, or why, but I referred the matter to our electrician for a quote, suggesting that he call them to get more details.

“They don’t know what they are asking for,” he told me. But he knew more than I did. “I think they are in the marijuana business. That’s the only thing that would require extra electrical power.”

The partners in the project kept pressing us for a bid for the building. We felt like we needed to understand their needs before we could bid it, especially the electrical service. So we persisted in asking questions. They finally told us that they were planning on starting a recycle center for processing the refuse from the production of CBD oil.

CBD oil, a medicinal product made from hemp (a plant similar to marijuana) is now legal in the U.S. In fact, it is widely used and promoted. Also, “medical marijuana” was recently approved for sale in our state. But we still didn’t know if what they want to do is legal, and we don’t know if it is ethical.

What should we do?

Practical Questions:

1. Do more research to determine if the stated use of the shed is ethical and legal?
2. Give the customer a quote on the shed and ask no more questions?
3. Decline building the shed?





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.

REACH 2019

March 21-22, 2019

Event:

REACH brings together over 50 conservative Anabaptist ministries and Kingdom-workers from all walks of life.

Program:

The 2-day program includes 95 breakout sessions addressing people in ministry and all those with a desire for service. Participating ministries share their vision in focus sessions and displays.

General sessions tie the event together with sermons, singing, and prayer.

Location: Calvary Church, 1051 Landis Road, Lancaster, PA 17601

Registration & information: reach.fbep.org



Anabaptist Identity Conference

March 28-30, 2019

Topics and speakers to be announced.

Location:

Shipshewana Antique and Misc. Auction Building
345 S. Van Buren Street
Shipshewana, IN 46565

Places to stay:

Farmstead Inn 260-768-4595 code: AIC
Blue Gate Garden Inn: 800-545-4725 code: AIC

Within 13 miles of Howe, IN, right beside toll road 80/90

Best Western 260-562-2880
Holdiday Inn Express 260-562-3660
Hampton Inn 269-651-4210





Circulation & Financial Statements

Income & Expense Report

October thru December 2018

October 2018 Beginning Balance \$11,801.79

Income

Reader Donations \$9,551.16

Local Support Donations* \$2,000.00

Total Income \$11,551.16

Expenses

Handling & Packaging \$561.00

Postage \$2,569.86

Printing \$4,785.00

Staff Expense \$1,234.05

Total Expense \$9,149.91

December 2018 Ending Balance \$14,230.04

ISSUE #7 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 6,300 | Print & Postage Cost: \$9,736
\$1.55/Copy

ISSUE #8 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,500 | Print & Postage Cost: \$7,695
\$1.71/Copy

ISSUE #9 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,600 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,100
\$1.76/Copy

ISSUE #10 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,600 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,488
\$1.84/Copy

ISSUE #11 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,500 | Print & Postage Cost: \$9,150
\$2.03/Copy

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



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.



Original sketch by Milton Hobbs, Hephzibah, Georgia

Anabaptist Voice
5282 Hwy. 56 South
Waynesboro, GA 30830
editor@anabaptistvoice.com
www.anabaptistvoice.com

**“...AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE ONLY
BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER...”**

JOHN 1:14

