



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

James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

IN THIS ISSUE:

"RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD" - MICHAEL STRITE

"ON THE TRAIL OF CASIODORO DE REINA" - MARK YODER

"OUT OF THE WILDERNESS" - ROGER FLATMO

"REVELATION MADE SIMPLE" - MENNO KNIGHT

"ANOTHER LOOK AT REVELATION" - PHIL HAINES

Letter from the Editor

“Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.” – **John 7:37**



In this part of Georgia, June has been hotter and drier than we normally expect. We have experienced temperatures in the high 90's numerous days. These high-temperature days usually come in July or August, not June. Prior to these days of high heat, we experienced four-and-one-half weeks without any rainfall. Without irrigation, our corn crop on the sandy loam soil would have been another disaster.

Before we put in pivots, we lost three crops. But because we now have available water when needed, we have not lost one crop in the ten years since. Water makes the difference.

So it is with the living water of the Word. Jesus' life and teachings are vital to a living faith and practice. In this issue, we again draw your attention to the living water of the Word of God.

Michael Strite points out principles of interpretation to help us get the intended meaning from the Scripture. Then Menno Knight, Phil Haines, and an overview from the Contemporary English Version give some different thoughts on how to understand the book of Revelation. Ponder them.

Anabaptist Voice not only wants to tell about how to interpret the living water of the Word; we want to tell what obedience demands. In this issue, our readers also have something to say about how to put the Word of God into practice.

AV14 has more on reaching out to your neighbors in the USA through the Salt & Light program, an introduction to Anabaptist Perspectives and their internet teaching programs, and an example of brethren touching the lives of needy ones in a homeless shelter in Canada. “Rubies and Diamonds” and an illustrated Proverb give plain teaching on how to put the gospel into practice.

In this issue you can travel to Spain with Mark Yoder and learn how a Spanish translation of the Bible came into being during the fires of the Spanish Inquisition.

Roger Flatmo shares a real life struggle with despair and a return to faith and hope.

Before you lay AV14 aside, write us with your observations and comments. Join the “Round Table Discussion.” Give your thoughts on how to understand Revelation.

Water! Water! Water! As surely as water is needed to produce a bountiful corn crop, the life-giving water flowing from Jesus produces a bountiful spiritual harvest. Drink deep!

Peace,

James G. Landis

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About Anabaptist Voice

Our Mission Statement:

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

Our Purpose:

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

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.

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. Not all comments by readers express the thoughts of *Anabaptist Voice*, but we think they may have some merit in showing counter points of view.

AV Editor

Love For God

I write in response to the brother struggling to understand the quote, "We cannot love God more than the person we love the least" (AV12, page 6). The reality is, our love for God is directly related to how we love our fellowman. Matthew 25:40 says, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily I say unto you, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' "

If you love your wife as you should, that is directly proportional to your love for God. God does not expect you to love a person you just met on the street in the same way you love your wife, but He does expect you to love him/her as much as you possibly can in the time you have.

This love will not be evident only by affection, but also by our actions—a helping hand, a kind word, or support in some way. But if we choose to neglect this person and reject him, how can we say we love God more? Whatever we do to our brethren [fellowman] we do to Christ.

It is not impossible for a non-Christian to love his wife in that it is also not impossible for a non-Christian to carry out a completely selfless act of love to someone else. I do not believe all our righteousness is filthy rags; God loves good deeds done out of a pure heart.

I think non-Christians can do truly good deeds. Every unbeliever has a conscience that tries to steer him in the right direction, so if he heeds his conscience he can do selfless deeds.

Nevertheless, my comment is in the context of a believer carrying out the will of God, in that, "if you love me keep my commandments," one of which is loving our wives as Christ loved the church. Jesus gave himself and died for sinners. If we love our wives and neighbors like that, then we truly love God.

J.G. | Washington



A Teaching Guide

I very much enjoy and appreciate *Anabaptist Voice* magazine!

I believe it is and will continue to be a very powerful tool to educate our younger generations in Anabaptist values and principles, all to the honor and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

L.F. | Pennsylvania



Open Dialogue

Not long ago I was in the home of someone in one of the churches of our fellowship. Here I saw my first copy of *Anabaptist Voice*. One thing that caught my attention was something from "MCB" of Virginia (AV13, page 36). He was promoting a position on divorce and remarriage different from our traditional conservative Mennonite /Anabaptist one. I could identify with some of his concerns, but I was not comfortable with some of his conclusions.

I believe that the Lord has given us all the teaching we need to have on this issue. At the same time I confess that as I get older, I feel less and less that I can come up with the right answer that works. I have difficulty believing that the Lord intended that His teaching should separate families because divorce and remarriage happened sometime in the distant (non-believing) past. But this does not mean we can decide issues on the basis of what is convenient.

On the one hand, I think there could be a place for trying to simply get back to the teachings of Jesus instead of our traditional teachings. On the other hand, I think if we started making changes, we could soon find ourselves approaching positions of the Mennonite Church USA. I think that there has to be a way forward, but it will not be through simplistic conclusions.

J.C. | Oregon

Anabaptist Voice: Obedience to the commands of Jesus can be a simple, though costly, answer. Yet obedience is the only satisfying answer that brings rest and peace to the soul.

Truth in All Things

I was raised on the penal substitution atonement theory. This theory teaches that Christ died on the cross as our substitute to pay the penalty for our sins. The people of the church constantly reminded me that Jesus “paid the penalty” for our sins. In fact, they taught that by believing this atonement doctrine, people become saved.

In my youth, I was putty in their hands; I believed the false teaching. If I am to be delivered from the penalty, why not sin? So I sinned.

Yet, because I knew God was displeased with me for indulging in sin, I knew I would be guilty when I knelt before Him at the judgment. This caused me to wish God did not exist. It also brought me guilt and despair. This doctrine could have taken me to hell!

God brought me deliverance from this false teaching. I learned from the study of Scripture that the blood of Christ DOES NOT pay for sin, it purchases people out of sin. If the blood of Christ buys us out of sin, we are not to sin, but are called to live a life of holiness.

God’s forgiveness of sins through Jesus is part of the process of redemption rather than atonement. Atonement, as mentioned in the Old Testament, means “to cover.” Redemption, on the other hand, is a purchase that buys people out of sin unto God by the blood of Christ.



R.S.L. | Maryland

A New Creation

On page 5 of AV13 in “Our Readers Write,” a writer states: “Reconciliation places man back at the beginning where Adam was before the fall.”

I would suggest that reconciled man does not become innocent as Adam was before the fall, but rather he becomes a blood-washed new creation of a higher order in preparation for ever being with the Lord.



W.H. | Ontario

Seeker Turned Anabaptist

I am grateful I can read the *Anabaptist Voice* issues and always enjoy your articles.

I am a seeker that became Anabaptist and want to share my opinion on the topic of technology. I wrote a paper about it and would like you to consider it. I am truly concerned about this matter and want to share with my fellow plain Christians.

G.G. | Florida

God Preserved The Scripture

The Bible is not just an ordinary book that fades from the scene or loses its relevancy. Its very existence today is ample proof of that. It is the inspired Word of God. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Word of God is preserved forever. “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever” (Psalm 12:6-7).

It is fascinating to see the actual history of how this Word of God is preserved to the present. Jesus Christ Himself, the author of the Word of God, said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

By faith, through the Holy Spirit, we can know that this Word of God will never lose its power but will stand forever.

E.M.Y. | Georgia



Impatient

When will the summer issue arrive in my box? I love *Anabaptist Voice*!

D.S. | West Virginia

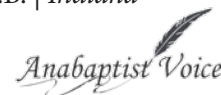


Biblical Eldership

We receive the digital copy of the *Anabaptist Voice* through our family account. I was particularly blessed by the article by Wendell Heatwole (*Blessings of a Lay Ministry*). Our church has been discussing what the Bible says about leadership and praying about what God would desire us to do with regards to our leadership.

I am first generation Anabaptist, but had been exposed to similar concepts through *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch. I was hoping it would be permissible for me to print out a dozen or so copies of just those pages to distribute amongst the brotherhood at our church. This article is written from an Anabaptist perspective and addresses some things with regards to process that didn’t really come up in our discussions.

S.B. | Indiana



Rightly Dividing the Word

by Michael Strite

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

– II Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

Text: II Timothy 2:14-26

Purpose Statement: To help us correctly interpret the Word of God in a way that is approved by God.

Themes to Develop:

1. Interpretation is based on the author’s intended meaning.
2. Interpretation must be done in the context of the passage.
3. Interpretation should allow for figurative speech.
4. Interpretation recognizes different types of writing.
5. Interpretation uses the Bible to help interpret itself.
6. Interpretation distinguishes between the covenants.

Conclusion: We must interpret the Word of God correctly and apply it to our lives before we can be approved by God.

Introduction

In the first part of II Timothy 2, Paul tells Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and to commit the gospel message to other faithful men. But before Timothy is ready to pass “these things” on to faithful men, he himself must endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. Paul uses illustrations of a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer and reminds Timothy that our suffering and even death for Christ’s sake is essential if we are to live and reign with Him.

This suffering and hardship is what Timothy is to remind his fellow ministers to endure. He is to charge them not to spend their time and energy debating inconsequential words to no profit. In contrast to this waste of energy and effort, Paul tells Timothy what he (and they) should be doing instead.

In that frame of mind, we come to our text in II Timothy 2:15. “Be diligent to show yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

“Rightly dividing” in this verse is taken from the Greek word “*orthotomeo*.” The definition of “*orthotomeo*” according to Strong’s Concordance is “to cut straight.”

A worker in Christ’s kingdom has God’s Word, the Word of Truth, entrusted to him. How important it is for a Christian worker to “cut straight” when he handles the Word of God. Paul warns Timothy not to waste his time with trifles nor argue about inconsequential word studies and fables to the ruin of his hearers, but to use the Word of God correctly, skillfully, and powerfully. “Cut straight, Timothy.”

Aside from contrasting with how not to use the Word, Paul does not give a lot of guidance in this passage on how to “cut straight” and use God’s Word rightly and correctly. Nevertheless, I would like to put forward six principles of interpretation that we would do well to follow in order to “cut straight” with the Word of Truth.



“The Word is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

—Hebrews 4:12

Author’s Intended Meaning

If you wrote a letter to your friend but some of the words you used were ambiguous or could be taken multiple ways, your friend might read the letter and think it meant one thing while you might have intended another. What should be taken as the actual meaning of the letter? The writer’s intent, of course.

As we read the passage in II Timothy 2:14-26, we do well to recognize it as part of a letter from a loving and concerned older church leader to a beloved disciple and son in the faith. What were Paul's words intended to communicate to Timothy? If we correctly find Paul's meaning, then I believe we are beginning to "cut straight," to interpret correctly.

God made His Word to be understood by those who are seeking Him. Yet there is also the aspect that to some, the spiritual gifts of God's Word are hidden. In I Corinthians 2 Paul talks about this. If we truly desire to find the divine meaning of a passage, then we need to come at it from a spiritual point of view. To an unbeliever, to one who does not have the Spirit of God, the Bible and the salvation story seems like so much folly. So as we open and look into God's Word, we must see it with our spiritual eyes and we must allow God's Spirit to guide us. Only then can we rightly discern what the author meant in His message to us, rather than misinterpreting it because of our own desires, background, and thinking.



"The Word is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

—II Timothy 3:16

Understand the Context of the Passage

When we search for the intended meaning of a verse or passage, we must do it in its context. Webster defines context as: "The parts of a sentence, paragraph, discourse, etc. that occur just before and after a specified word or passage, and determine its exact meaning." Context is not referring to the whole book or the whole Bible. It is referring only to the verses immediately before and after the passage in focus.

The meaning of a statement or a verse can be completely changed by context. I like the following illustration from James Davis:

Think about the statement, "It was a ball." What do I mean? Well, the answer depends on the context. Consider the following sentences: The baseball umpire saw the pitch drift to the outside and said, "It was a ball." As I was walking along the golf course I spotted something small and white in the tall grass, "It was a ball." In both cases the word *ball* means something different. Therefore, *context can determine meaning!*

In the same way, Scripture taken out of its context can change the meaning. Are you familiar with Jesus's words, "**Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me?**"

If you are like me, you have taken this verse as Jesus giving an invitation to an unsaved person to accept Jesus into his heart and life. But if you take the verse in its context you will find it means something different. In the verse immediately preceding this verse Jesus says, "**As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent.**" In the overall broader context, Jesus was saying to the lukewarm church at Laodicea, "This church has my name over the door, but I'm locked out. Will someone let me in?"

Because context can change the meaning of a passage, we must consider its context.

Allow for Figurative Speech

I believe we should accept a literal interpretation of the Bible whenever that is its logical and primary meaning.

But then, let us look at Isaiah 55:12: "**The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.**" Does this verse mean that some day mountains and hills will learn to sing and that trees will sprout hands and clap? We would say no, trees do not have hands and mountains do not have voices. But we understand the figurative language. Each of us understands how the world looks to a guiltless and joyful heart.

When Jesus says in John 10, "I am the Gate," none of us would say He was literally a gate with hinges and a handle. Jesus is here using figurative language. Sometimes we say that we interpret the Bible literally, but at the same time we recognize that there are times where figurative language is used.

Recognize Different Types of Writing

The Bible is an amazing book. It contains many different types of literature within its pages. One type

of literature is not more or less inspired than any other. But they need to be interpreted in light of their genres.

Many books of the Bible are narrative. Genesis, Joshua, Judges, and many other books classified as history are primarily narrative. They are telling the story of history, of actual historical events. These books are normally, though not always, chronological. I believe that in the Bible, narrative literature should be easy to interpret; its primary meaning is exactly what it says.

But then there are other types of literature. We have wisdom books—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and others. These passages present general truth that is based on observation. “A gentle response turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath” (**Proverbs 15:1**). I think we would all agree with the wisdom of this proverb, but it does not guarantee that as long as we respond gently, people will never be angry with us.

Or, Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” We as godly parents want our children to follow in God’s way. We strive to train them, but we also recognize that each child is an immortal soul with personal choice. While good training is tremendously important, it is not a promise of God that our child will make the right life decisions. At the same time, we can recognize the general truth of the proverb.

We also have poetry in the Bible. Poetry can fill a tremendous role in imparting truth. But poetry is not narrative. It is much more likely to include figurative language to show an attitude or the feeling of the poet. Poetry vividly displays David’s guilt and anguish after his sin, but also his joy and gladness after repentance. While the historical or books of narrative display God working in the events of history, Psalms shows the emotional reactions of the heart to God’s working. The truth imparted from Psalms is not the same as narrative or commandments. When David calls down terrible curses on his enemies, we do not take that as a command for what we are to do. And yet we can understand the heart cry of David. We have all experienced times of mistreatment when we know that forgiveness is the only answer, and yet forgiveness seems so unfair when our natural heart cries out for justice.

Then there are the Gospels where we have both narrative and Jesus teaching by clear commandments and by parables. We also have the Epistles, laying out doctrine and teaching. And then there is prophecy (the foretelling of future things found in both the Old and New Testaments).



“Your Word is the joy and rejoicing of my heart.”

—Jeremiah 15:16

I am not going to go through each different type of literature, but only reiterate the principle that different types of literature call for different ways of interpreting.

Use the Bible to Help Interpret Itself

In reading the Bible we should prefer clear teaching passages on a topic over obscure references. Passages that seem to be contradictory need to be studied and compared with other Bible teaching. A very familiar illustration of this is Paul’s emphasis on salvation by faith “alone” (not found in original texts) vs. James’ insistence that works and action are part of justification. If you only take a few stand-alone verses, there seems to be a clear contradiction.

For instance, Romans 3:28 says, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” while James 2:24 says, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” While there appears to be a clear contradiction in these two passages, let us look more closely at what is being said.

Paul never says that good works are not important. For example, Paul in Galatians 5:22 lists the fruits of the Spirit. There is no doubt that the changed and redeemed life that Paul writes about is a vastly changed life that will certainly involve actions and good works.

If we look at the larger context of James’ statement in chapter two, we can see that James is refuting those who say that a Christian can have faith and not demonstrate it by his works. He uses several illustrations to show that there is such a thing as a dead or unredeeming faith. He writes that the devils also believe and tremble, but they are not saved. In this passage, James makes a graphic point, “True faith will always be accompanied by good works.”



“The gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation to every one who believes.”

—Romans 1:16

This principle of the Bible interpreting itself requires diligent study of God’s entire Word. I find a cross-reference Bible invaluable in helping to compare passages which help to clarify each other. *Always go first to God’s Word for clarification before going to other study helps.*

Distinguish Between the Covenants

God’s purposes for His chosen people, the Israelites, were different from His ultimate purpose that is fulfilled in the church. The legal code that God laid out for the governing of the nation of Israel is not directly applicable to the church made up of “strangers and pilgrims in this world.” Jesus never told His followers to stone adulterers or to put the disrespecting child to death. In fact, Jesus made the assertion that He was here to fulfill the old law by making it a matter of spirit and conscience rather than legal force.

The promises that God made to Abraham and to his descendants cannot automatically be ascribed to the Gentile church and the Christian. God promised that He would bring His people into a physical land flowing with milk and honey. If we ascribe God’s promises in the Old Covenant to us living in the New Covenant, we may find ourselves disappointed in this life. Instead, God has warned us that as Christians our lives will not be easy. We will be persecuted and suffer for His name.

The ceremonial law that God laid down for the Israelites, as His chosen people, was not intended for the church. It was meant to point both the Israelites and the world to the Savior and His work. When the temple veil was torn from top to bottom, it was a graphic demonstration that the Old Testament system of ceremonial sacrifices and offerings was finished. Jesus was the ultimate and final sacrifice for sins. The

New Testament and the apostles are quite clear that the sacrifices and other ceremonial commands of the Mosaic Law are not requirements for the Christian.

Conclusion

The whole point of “rightly dividing” the Scripture is to apply it correctly to our own lives and then to “teach others also.”

Farmers do not go out and buy a new tractor only to leave it sit in their implement shed; they put it to work. Mechanics do not leave a favorite and most useful tool in their Snap-on cabinet so that it does not get dirty; they use it. Cooks do not just add a new cake recipe to their file so they can talk about it; they must try it and taste the cake.

So it is with the Word of God. We must not just correctly interpret it; we must put the correct interpretation into practice. We must not just talk about and admire the Word of God, but then only bring it out on Sunday or in early morning devotions. James 1:22-25 says that those who look into the perfect mirror of God’s Word and see the truth of their condition, but then turn away and go about their own lives without a change, are deceived, while those who “hear it and do it” will be blessed in what they do.

God’s Word should not just challenge us. God’s Word must change us! It must change our language, our attitudes, our interactions, our hopes, and our dreams. This principle is not a principle of interpretation; it is even more important. We call it application. No matter how perfect our understanding of God’s Word, without allowing the Word and its power to act in our lives, we are like a tentmaker trying to cut his canvas with his teeth. All the intention and effort in the world will not make a tent.

Paul was begging Timothy to be diligent, to work hard to be an approved worker. The Word of Truth is powerful.

As God’s Word changes us, it makes us effective instruments—effective workers in changing the lives of others. May we be faithful in dividing the Word of Truth rightly. May we interpret it wisely, use it effectively, and allow it to work not only in our ministry to others, but also to make ourselves more and more into the image of God. Only then will we be an approved worker, one to whom God will one day say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.”

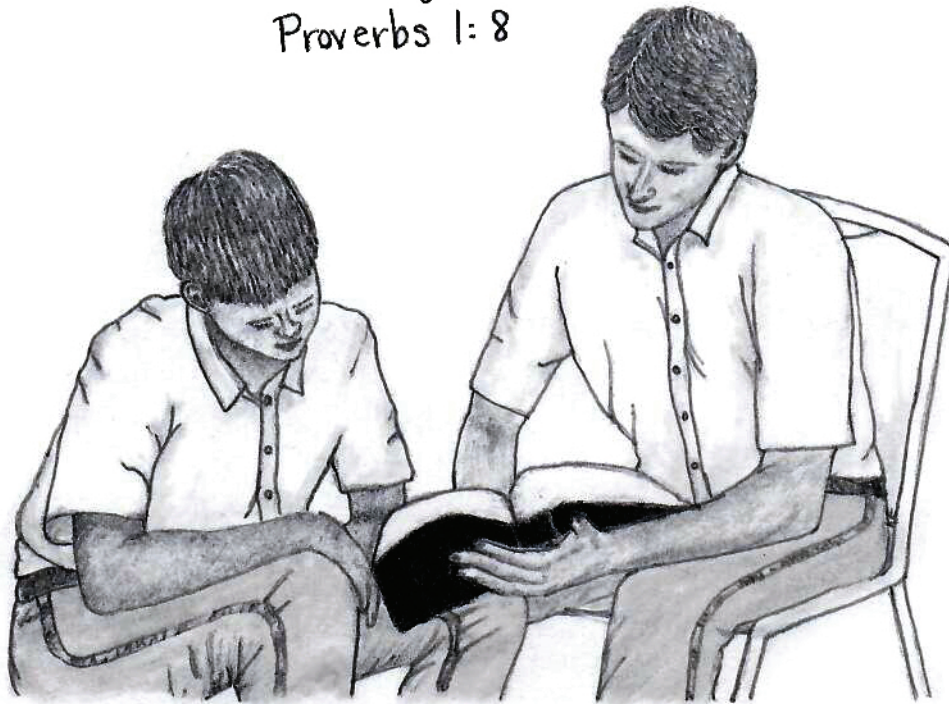
M.S. | South Carolina



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.

My son, hear the instruction
of thy father.
Proverbs 1: 8



Artist's name withheld by request.



“My son, do not forget my law,
But let your heart keep my commands;
For length of days and long life
And peace they will add to you.
Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
Bind them around your neck,
Write them on the tablet of your heart”
– Proverbs 3:1-3

“My son, if you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
So that you incline your ear to wisdom ...
Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.
For the Lord gives wisdom;
From His mouth come knowledge and
understanding.”

– Proverbs 2:1-2, 5-6

Revelation Made Simple

by Menno Knight

“Things which must shortly take place.”

– Revelation 1:1

According to Revelation 1:1, God gave to Jesus a message to share with His servants. Jesus then sent His angel to give the message to the apostle John and commanded him to write it on a scroll and send it to the seven churches of Asia.

John wrote the vision down and it is preserved for us today. Everyone who reads the message today will agree that much of Revelation is written in highly symbolic language that is mysterious to us. Few agree on what everything represents.

I would like to present a concept and a way of looking at Revelation that has blessed me. Please consider this carefully, and if you would like to comment on it, *Anabaptist Voice* will be happy to hear from you.

Understanding Symbols

Sometimes Revelation tells us what its symbols represent—the Lamb is Jesus, the candlesticks are the seven churches, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. Sometimes the meaning of the symbols used is not explained.

Many times Revelation does not use symbols, but the language is plain and the intended meaning is obvious—**“I was dead and now I am alive forevermore” (Revelation 1:18)**. Or **“to him who overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life” (Revelation 2:7)**. Another statement that sounds quite literal is found in Revelation 21:8. **“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”**

So to us, the difficulty in understanding the book of Revelation is usually not with the plain and direct language used, or in the symbols where the message tells us what they represent. The confusion and lack of understanding comes when we are not directly told what the symbols represent.

Let us consider for a moment the people and the historic events when the message of the entire book was given. The seven churches of Asia were composed of real live people living in perilous times. The symbolic language of the book is confusing to us because we did not live in those times. Had we lived in the time when

the angel gave the message to the apostle John, we would better understand the overarching message of the book and what the symbols represented.

The Time Is Near

Thankfully, there is a key given to us in Revelation that can unlock the meaning of the book. If we accept one plain and repeated statement in a literal and childlike way, it all fits together and we can have perfect rest about the entire book—**“The things in the book must soon take place.”**

Revelation 1:1 reads, **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place.”** So in this verse we see that the purpose of the message was to reveal, not hide, things which must soon take place.

Revelation 1:3 reads, **“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it: for the time is near.”** Here the message is instructive and written to real people living in the seven churches of Asia so they may keep [obey] those things which are written in it. The plain language is that the message was urgent and written for living people, “for the time is near.”

The heavenly messenger again stresses the connection between what He is saying and the nearness of its fulfillment when He is giving the message to the church in Philadelphia. In Revelation 3:11 He says, **“Behold, I**



The countdown is on with not many “ticks” left...

come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

Furthermore, the message for the seven churches of Asia was not found only in the first three chapters, but also chapters four and five and on through the rest of the book. This thought is clinched in the last chapter of Revelation.

Revelation 22:8-9 says, “Then he said to me, ‘These words are faithful and true.’ And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. Behold, I am coming quickly!’ ” This passage and the context ties right back in with the same language as is found in Revelation 1.

In Revelation 22:10 the angel tells John, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.” In fact, the angel means that the time is so close that the unjust, the filthy, and the righteous will continue in their ways until the end comes. And then the angel tells John again, “Behold I am coming quickly.”

Revelation 22:14 again refers back to Revelation 1:3 and repeats the overall purpose of the book, “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.”

In Revelation 22:16 John writes, “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches” [the seven churches of Asia]. Jesus said the message was to living people in the churches and it was always stated that the things written in the book would soon come to pass. Thus we see that these suffering saints, if they were faithful and endured to the end of their life, would receive the victor’s crown and the right to the tree of life. Jesus confirms that the meaning of the vision and the rewards would soon come to those faithful saints who hear the words written in the book, for He says in Revelation 22:20, “Surely I am coming quickly.”

All Is Fulfilled

If we accept the plain statements about the timing in the book of Revelation at face value, it is possible to think that everything in between the “A” and the “Z” of the book was fulfilled for the readers soon after the time the Revelation was written. Of course, the eternal truth and the heavenly scenes extend on beyond the immediate events pictured in obscure language which we have difficulty understanding.

People who study the evil times and the places and the emperors of the age when John received the vision confirm that the symbols used in Revelation can be understood to match the events of the times. On the

other hand, the message was purposely meant to puzzle the enemies of the Christians while at the same time being a hope and a blessing to the tried and persecuted saints.

Exactly what each symbol represented in real life to the people of the Apocalypse need not worry or bother us. This simple understanding in no way violates any other Scripture, but reinforces and expands all the other plain teachings in the New Testament.

Sometimes we do not know what the symbols mean in Revelation. That is okay. But it makes things much simpler if we do not label any of the symbols used as unfulfilled prophecy because it does not make sense to us. By understanding that everything was fulfilled for those living then, we avoid the danger of speculation and the complexity of many interpretations and opinions.

Truths for All Time

The point here is that I do not know what many of the symbols in Revelation represent. But whatever one believes the symbols represent does not change God’s standard for how one should live on the earth today.

To say that all the events given to the churches of Asia have been fulfilled is not to say there is nothing in the book for us. All of the standards of righteousness and holiness that God expects of His people are as good today as they were in the time of the apostle John. When Revelation 1:3 says, “Blessed is he who keeps the things which are written in the book for the time is near,” it still applies to us.

The vision of an all-powerful God seated on the throne gives us the confidence that we too, by the blood of the Lamb and the power of His resurrection, will overcome all the struggles and trials and injustices of this present wicked world and gain the Crown of Life at our death. Judgment will also be served on those living wicked and sinful lives on earth—sins that are clearly spelled out (*Revelation 22:15*). They will be barred from entering into the celestial city.

Jesus will come for each of us and the time is soon. Amen!

That is Revelation made simple.



Bible Study: An Overview of Revelation

the introduction to the book of Revelation from the Contemporary English Version

This book tells what John had seen in a vision about God's message and about what Jesus Christ had said and done (1.2) The message has three main parts:

1. There are evil forces at work in the world, and Christians may have to suffer and die.
2. Jesus is Lord, and he will conquer all people and powers who oppose God.
3. God has wonderful rewards in store for his faithful people, who remain faithful to him, especially for those who lose their lives in his service.

This was a powerful message of hope for those early Christians who had to suffer or die for their faith. In this book they learned that, in spite of the cruel power of the Roman Empire, the Lamb of God would win the final victory. And this gave them the courage to be faithful.

Because this book is so full of visions that use ideas and word pictures from the Old Testament, it was like a book with secret messages for the early Christians. The book could be passed around and be understood by Christians, but an official of the Roman Empire would not be able to understand it. For example, when the fall of Babylon is described (chapter 18), the early Christians knew that this pointed to the fall of the Roman Empire. This knowledge gave them hope.

At the beginning of this book there are seven letters to seven churches. These letters show what different groups of the Lord's followers will do in times of persecution (2.1—3.22).

The author uses many powerful images to describe God's power and judgment. The vision of God's throne (4.1-11) and of the scroll and the Lamb (5.1-14) show that God and Christ are in control of all human and supernatural events. Opening seven seals (6.1—8:5), blowing the seven trumpets (8.6—11.19), and emptying the seven bowls (16.1-21) are among the visions that show God's fierce judgment on the world.

After the suffering has ended, God's faithful people will receive the greatest blessing of all: "God's home is now with his people. He will live with them, and they will be his own. Yes, God will make his home among his people. He will wipe all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, suffering, crying, or pain. These things of the past are gone forever" (**Revelation 21:3b-4, CEV**).

Practical Study Questions:

At first glance you may think the following questions are not related to how one understands the book of Revelation, but they are connected. Whenever you come up with answers that satisfy you, write *Anabaptist Voice* and share your insights with other AV readers. Or perhaps you will want to come back with more questions to put in the Round Table Discussion.

1. Where did God take Enoch (Genesis 5:24) and Elijah (II Kings 2:1, 11) when they left the earth?
2. When Moses, Elijah, and Jesus appeared to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, where did they come from (Mark 9:4; Matthew 17:3)?
3. When Jesus told the story of Lazarus resting in Abraham's bosom, where were Abraham and Lazarus (Luke 16:23)?
4. When Stephen looked up and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, where were they (Acts 7:55-56)?
5. How much of Acts 2:17-21 was fulfilled at Pentecost?
6. How much of Jesus' discourse in Matthew 24 was fulfilled in the lifetime of that "generation"?
7. What is meant by the saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Corinthians 15:54)?



Study means STUDY. Know your Bible.

Another Look at Revelation

by Phil Haines

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

– Revelation 1:3

The book of Revelation was written to tell the things which John had seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter (Rev. 1:19). Ever since Revelation was written, mankind has struggled to understand the prophetic message of the things which shall be hereafter.

Revelation has often caused division among sincere Christians struggling to interpret its message. This is unfortunate, because Revelation was given as a blessing to mankind and not as a source of contention and confusion. A blessing is given to those who read and those who hear its message.

I believe God gave a clear-to-understand message in Revelation in preparation for a great final time of calamity that will come upon the earth just before the return of Jesus Christ. Someday, the prophecy of Revelation will be a great source of comfort to those experiencing its fulfillment.

Foundational Principles from Old Testament Prophecies

To understand future prophecy, we need to understand how Old Testament prophecy was given. God used many prophets in the Old Testament to foretell future events. The message of the prophet was almost always a simple-to-understand message. Jeremiah warned about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. There was no hidden message in what he prophesied. “I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers” (Jeremiah 24:10). Jeremiah also gave hope when he prophesied, “For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place” (Jeremiah 29:10). There was no hidden message in the prophecy, but a literal fulfillment.

Scattered throughout the Old Testament there were also prophecies about a coming Messiah. Some of these prophecies were easy to understand. He would be of the lineage of David, born of a virgin, heralded by a messenger, and He would suddenly come to His temple. Some of these prophecies were not so easy to understand. The eunuch could not understand Isaiah 53. This passage

was debated in the different rabbinical schools on who this was referring to, himself or some other man. Today we look at Isaiah 53 and are blessed by how clear this passage speaks of Jesus’ death for us. Isaiah appears to have written the passage after the death and resurrection of Jesus, yet it was written about 700 years beforehand.

If you lived before Christ, how would you understand Isaiah 53? How would you understand Psalm 16:8-10, Psalm 22, or Isaiah 35:4-6? Certainly these prophecies and others confused the scholars and caused debate and contention on how they were to be interpreted. Who and what were the prophets writing about? Now that we live after Christ, the debates have ceased and we rejoice in the Christ who was prepared before the foundation of the world (I Peter 1:20).

Studying Messianic prophecy teaches us a truth that is the key to understanding Revelation. Some prophecy can be easy to understand, but some can be impossible to understand before it has been fulfilled. Prophecy saying Christ would be born in Bethlehem and born of a virgin could be understood. Prophecy saying, “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities,” “they pierced my hands and my feet,” “thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption,” could not be understood before Christ came.

So it is with prophecy regarding Jesus’ second coming. We can understand some prophecies, but others cause debate about their meaning. We know He will come as a thief in the night and shall descend from heaven with a shout; the dead in Christ shall rise first, then those that are alive in Christ. But some of the prophecy surrounding His second coming we struggle to understand. Who exactly will be the hundred-forty-and-four thousand that stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb? What happens during the thousand years that Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit?

Future Prophecy

In Revelation 1:1, it speaks of “things which must shortly come to pass.” From mankind’s perspective, this would seem things should be fulfilled in a few years. From God’s perspective, this can mean thousands of years because He counts “a thousand years as one day” (II Peter 3:8). Throughout the history of the church, many have thought the prophecy of Revelation was being

fulfilled in their generation. That the earth still stands is proof that not everything in Revelation has been fulfilled. Revelation 21:1 has not been fulfilled: **“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”**

Other passages should also be clear that they have not been fulfilled. Consider the beast in Revelation 13. He did great wonders and “maketh fire come down from heaven in the sight of men” (13:13). He also “causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (13:16). Some have tried to put these events in the past; however, there is no clear way to understand fulfillment in these events.

How many Messianic prophecies do we still struggle to understand? None. God does not give prophecy to confuse mankind over its meaning. Prior to fulfillment there is confusion, but after fulfillment we can understand clearly. The key to understanding the future is in understanding the past. There is no Messianic prophecy we struggle with understanding, just as there will be no end-time prophecy we will struggle to understand after it has been fulfilled. Beforehand yes; afterward no.

The prophets before Christ wanted to know about His coming. It was said, “The prophets have enquired and searched diligently... of the grace that should come” (1 Peter 1:10). The prophets would like to have known but they did not; today we know. Likewise, today we would like to know the fulfillment of the events in Revelation, but we do not. Someday when these prophecies have been fulfilled, we will know.

For now, much of Revelation seems a mystery. That is okay. We do not need to understand everything now. To argue over end time prophecy is as futile as the Jews arguing over Messianic prophecy before Jesus walked this earth. We might have our ideas and can make some guesses, but very likely we will all be wrong.

To think we understand clearly the prophecies concerning Christ’s second coming is to be deceived. This does not mean we shrink away from reading Revelation. Let us study and be open to changing our preconceived ideas should something different start to unfold. The Jewish leaders’ minds were closed because Jesus did not fit their expectations of a Messiah. They crucified the Son of God because of this. What a tragic mistake. We do not want our minds made up so firmly that we too could fall into the same trap of missing God’s fulfillment of prophecy. I share all this carefully, and realize my understanding of prophecy could be wrong. Maybe everything has been fulfilled and Jesus could return today. I do not live carelessly, thinking I can repent when I start to see these things begin to unfold. God cannot be fooled.

As I currently understand Revelation, I believe there is coming a day when all the forces of evil are unleashed upon Christians living on the earth. The mainstream belief that a rapture will first take out the Christians and then these things will come to pass is a feel-good interpretation, but unfortunately does not align with Scripture. Christians living during the time of the end have many things yet to suffer for the cause of Christ. At that time Revelation will prove to be a blessing as Christians will understand why these things are coming to pass. This final end-time tribulation is found not only in Revelation but also in the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7. Daniel 7:21b-22 prophesies that one of the horns of the end-time beast **“made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”** This prophecy is yet future and perhaps we will experience it in our lifetime. Until then, let us be faithful.

P.H. | Georgia



Fulfilled Prophecies

“Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.”

- Luke 18:31

“I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.”

- Mark 14:49

“But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.”

- Matthew 26:56

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

- Luke 24:44

Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“Love makes obedience easy and duty delightful.”

– Richard Herr at Great Lakes Mennonite Church, MI



“It took Moses longer to get Egypt out of the Israelites than to get the Israelites out of Egypt.”

– a servant of the Hutterian Brethren, MT



“Be like Grandma. Be in the garden early in the morning taking care of things when they are small! Then enjoy fruit to share with the neighbors.”

– Jonathan Martin at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“There is no better way than God’s way.”

– Eugene Miller at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“Although the fathers who died in the wilderness had failed in many ways, they had not failed in raising a generation prepared for obedience and conquest. Failure does not preclude future usefulness.”

– Allen Petre at Lenawee Mennonite Church, MI



“We cannot see the holiness of God without seeing our own undoneness.”

– Nathan Yoder at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“We are not an island; what we do affects others.”

– Addison Bender at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“Where there is no holy life, there is no faith and where there is no faith, there is no holy life.”

– a servant of the Hutterian Brethren, MT



“God is far more interested in what we are becoming than in how things are going.”

– Dale Byler at Bethesda Fellowship, OH



“Maybe you have God-given authority as a pastor, but there is no God-given authority to abuse God-given authority.”

– Norman Yoder at Anabaptist Identity Conference, IN

Share your rubies and diamonds with AV readers. Send in the quote, the name of the speaker and the name of the place where it was given. We would also like to have the name and address of the person sending in the quote.

Out of the Wilderness

by Roger Flatmo

My name is Arnt-Roger Flatmo, but everyone knows me as Roger. I want to tell you about my experience and hope it will encourage you to walk close with God and never suffer in the wilderness of despair as Anne and I did.

Anne and I live on a 4-acre farmstead by ourselves at Stevensville, Montana. I generally work 12-hour shifts (7:00 am-7:30 pm) four days a week at Providence Medical Center (St. Patrick Hospital) in Missoula, Montana. Anne takes care of me and the house and works as a Personal Care Attendant in various homes.

Neither Anne nor I was raised Anabaptist, but I have felt more of the same mindset with Anabaptists than any other church I have tried to stay with. I originally came to Christ in 1973 at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California at age 15. After the army I went to a Church of God Bible college in Fresno, California. To make a long story short, I have struggled to find meaningful fellowship over the years, due to either worldly teachings or blatant heresy.

Here is the miracle that happened this past year. I was looking on the internet and hoping to find some way to deal with an all-consuming grief Anne and I have been under. This time, God led us to people who have reached out to help us back to trusting and following Jesus. For the first time in a long time, I am hopeful.

Let me tell you about our great struggle in the wilderness and how we came back to God and a church where we feel like we belong.

The Tragedy

On July 15, 2016, our 23-year-old son, Brandon, was on his way home when he went off the road and down an embankment. The resulting wreck caused Brandon to suffer a traumatic brain injury.

The House Supervisor at St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula, Montana called me around 2:00 am. Since I work at St. Patricks, I assumed she was calling to see if I could work extra time that day. At that time I was the designated Psychiatric Technician on the adolescent Neuro Behavioral Psychiatric facility. Then came the last thing I ever wanted to hear, “Roger, we have Brandon here in the ER”.

I suspected by the tone in the supervisor’s voice that Brandon was badly hurt. I was in shock and still trying to wake up when I asked, “How is he?”

When she said, “Roger, you need to get here quickly,” I knew what I had suspected was true. This was serious!

I called Anne who was at work caring for a man who had had a stroke. We met at a local gas station and headed for the hospital. Anne and I drove through the darkness in silence; our numbed minds raced as we drove along. We feared the worst. It was only 30 miles from our small farm in Stevensville, but as we drove over the so-familiar road, it seemed like it took forever to get to St. Patricks.

When we finally arrived at the hospital, everything that was so familiar seemed so unreal, strange, and dreamlike. After all, I had started work in the Emergency Room in this hospital 27 years ago in 1989. Anne had also worked in this hospital four years before she left to be a stay-at-home mom.

We could see the ER staff struggling to be “professional and supportive” as they always tried to be in this kind of situation. But this was different; we were one of their own. I could see and feel their anguish for Anne and me.

We got our first look at Brandon when we entered the trauma room. Surprisingly, he did not look as if he had been in a severe accident. He was not battered and bruised, but only had three tubes going to his chest because of his collapsed lungs. The staff had just finished stabilizing Brandon and were getting him ready to go to the ICU.

Many things happened over the next 36 hours. My co-workers rallied around us and arranged for our daughter, Ashley, to fly from Swannsboro, North Carolina so she could be at Brandon’s side. Anne and I stayed at the St. Patrick House across the street—a home for out-of-town families with loved ones in the hospital—so we could get a few hours rest Friday night before I needed to pick up Ashley at the airport Saturday morning.

Death

Anne’s scream awakened me. “Roger! wake up. We must get to the hospital.” I was completely disoriented. Did I sleep through the phone ringing? No, I had not heard Anne talking to anyone. As we scrambled to get dressed I looked at the clock. It was 4:45 am.

As we walked into Brandon's room, several nurses and other staff worked hurriedly to ready Brandon for another scan. They informed us that Brandon's condition had suddenly worsened and they wanted to do a brain scan. Anne asked, "When did it happen?"

The RN said, "Around 4:45." We looked at each other in disbelief. That was the exact time Anne had awakened me! This confirmed to both of us that God was in control.

They rushed Brandon to radiology for another scan.

After Brandon came back from the scan, we stayed at his bedside the rest of the morning. I talked to him. I can't recall all I said, but Anne and I shared scriptures with him, told Brandon that Jesus loves him, and that we love Brandon. We told him it was okay for him to go home because then we would see him again.

During that long morning, many people—nurses, doctors, co-workers—came to our side and provided food, comfort and support. The outpouring of love we received, and still continue to receive, was incredible.

Eventually, I had to leave and pick up Ashley. I was terrified to leave Anne and Brandon. I had to struggle so as not to become completely unhinged; I worried that Brandon might die while I was going to the airport. My worry was all in vain because Brandon was still alive when Ashley and I arrived at the ICU at 11:00 am.

A little while later the neurosurgeon came in to inform us that Brandon had a significant stroke that morning. The prognosis was grim. In a kindly and sympathetic way, the surgeon told us, "Even if Brandon survives, he will never be able to walk again. Others will have to care for him."

We knew that meant Brandon would never be able to do the things he loved to do and that defined him. He

was a real cowboy—he loved horses, roping, working on ranches in the Bitterroot Valley, doing good to others, fly fishing, and being in the woods with his dog, Schatzi.

The surgeon's report devastated us. All I know is that we never felt so lost and hopeless in our lives. With all hope gone, we made the decision to remove life support.

Brandon passed peacefully with Anne next to him and Ashley and I holding his hands. When we left the room, the ICU staff lined the halls in respect. As we paced slowly down the hall, I became keenly aware that they, too, were struggling with their emotions and grief while still providing the utmost in medical care. So, to those who experienced this with us and helped us through the last three years, Anne and I will be forever grateful.

Overwhelming Grief

From July 16, 2016 to November 2018, Anne and I struggled to just make it through each day. I did not pick up a Bible one time. I felt God had forsaken us, punished us, and all the other things that a hopeless mind thinks.

We became recluses, let our little farm become overgrown with weeds, and just left the place in disarray. We were numb and not sure what we were going to do the rest of our lives. There were days when I went to the barn to feed Brandon's horses and became unhinged, sobbing convulsively. I felt like I was going to have a heart attack. I hid this from Anne because I was afraid for her to see me like this. I was having panic attacks with high blood pressure (170-180's / 100-117). The doctor became very concerned and gave me anti-anxiety medication.

I was very uneasy with going back to work and leaving Anne all alone on the farm. I work 12-hour shifts at the hospital and was constantly stressed, worrying about Anne being alone. I hid it very well at work until April of 2018 when I started having panic attacks on the job.

My job was too much for me. I couldn't let go of the stories and abusive lives that the adolescents I worked with experienced. All I could think about was, "WHY are these children denied the love they so desperately deserve?" I passed Brandon's roadside cross twice every day on the way to and from work. Then my mind would switch to, "WHY did this happen to us?" My mind would go round and round over these same questions. I cried a lot on the way home from work.

Less Stress Needed

One day in May 2018, I was asked to work in the main hospital as a "video sitter" monitoring high-fall risk patients for safety via a portable camera. As you can imagine this is not a high-stress job. I liked it. Then I



Brandon Flatmo
2/28/93 - 7/16/16

overheard the House Supervisors talking about a video sitter leaving and the Resource Pool Manager posting a full-time position. I had no idea this job had turned into a full-time position.

I went home that night and started to tell Anne about it. I didn't even finish my sentence when she said, "You need to take that position." I was taken by surprise. I asked her, "Why should I take that position?"

Anne started to cry and said, "I can't sit here much longer and just watch you sit in the recliner every night and become someone I don't know anymore." We both wept and realized that this was not what Brandon would have wanted us to become.

Dealing with the Past

I got the job, and with less stress, things slowly began to turn around. Five months later, in October, Anne broached the issue of trying to find a church to go to. We were not raised Anabaptist. I was raised as a Lutheran and baptized as a baby.

My father, mom, and I emigrated from Norway. My dad's brother invited dad to come to Venice, California where he lived. My dad came over in 1959 and my mother and I followed him on my second birthday in 1960. In California, both my parents divorced and remarried.

In 1972, Mother and I, with her second husband, moved to Costa Mesa, California. I was 14 years old. Eventually, I went to a Christian concert at Calvary Chapel, pastored by Chuck Smith. There I received Christ and was rebaptized shortly thereafter.

In 1977, at the age of 19, I entered the U.S. Army. I was attached to the 159th Medevac Detachment outside of Nuremberg, Germany. I had no moral struggle over joining the army. In Norway, joining the army was compulsory, and I thought it was just the patriotic thing to do. Besides, my uncle and my step-dad were also in the army in Korea. Therefore, I had no problem reconciling being a Christian and joining the army.

In the army, I backslid horribly and wound up in an army hospital psych unit overdosed on drugs. I attempted suicide by cutting my wrist. I thought I had committed the unpardonable sin and would never be able to go to heaven.

Shortly after this dreadful time of sinful living, I recommitted my life to Christ. This is when I believe I was actually converted. After my conversion I was involved in many different ministries/churches.

Although Anne was raised by her grandmother in the Church of Christ, she also drifted far from right living for a time. Today it is a miracle that we are serving Christ.

We spent many years seeking a fellowship. We have been in home fellowships, plain fellowships, and Pentecostal (not very long though). We experienced the same problems in all of the churches we tried—compromising doctrines, extremely worldly programs, and false teachers. I became weary of church life and lived as a Christian only in name.

The Turnaround

When Anne started asking if I would go visit some churches, I just could not bear what I felt would be the inevitable outcome—disappointment. I did not want Anne or myself to go through the struggle one more time. In the past we had been shunned by a plain fellowship, The Friends of J.O. Smith started in Norway. (These people wore head coverings and plain modest dress). That experience scarred us badly. You see, we had not yet learned about the healing that comes from total forgiveness of those who have wronged us.

The hurts of our different church experiences were still there when Anne suggested looking for another church in November 2018. I started to look online for anything Anabaptist-related, so we could just start reading at home. I found *Anabaptist Voice* and the videos put on by Anabaptist Perspectives. I couldn't believe I found this. I read a few articles and decided to get a subscription. A week later I sent an email to see when I would receive my first copy and I found myself opening up my heart and mind. I wrote the following letter to the editor at *Anabaptist Voice*:

Greetings!

I can't seem to find fellowship in our area that is Anabaptist. I finally started to look online under Anabaptist and found your website & Anabaptist Perspectives on youtube. PLEASE pray for my wife, Anne, and I. We lost our 23-year-old son to an auto accident on July 16th, 2016. It has nearly destroyed us.

It is only recently that I have come to want fellowship or been able to talk about God. Up until the accident and the resulting death of our son, we had a strong faith. Now I feel like I don't know anything. I am empty and weak. I am not a spiritual leader anymore.

We are doing better, but I need the fellowship of strong men of faith. If you have anything that will help us cross this abyss of grief we would be grateful. This is the first time that I have been able to share this with anyone. I am no longer willing to let the enemy devour us (I Peter 5:8).

Thank you for your ministry.

In Him,

Roger Flatmo

What has followed since is a miracle. My email was forwarded to Brother James Landis who was able to get me in contact with the Gold Creek Christian Fellowship in Gold Creek, Montana. Brother David Yoder called me and invited me to their church on Sunday.

I will report what happened by sharing part of another email.

Greetings Brother Landis,

After a wonderful conversation with Brother David Yoder of Gold Creek Christian Fellowship on Saturday (12-8-18), I made the decision to visit the Gold Creek Fellowship on Sunday, especially since the weather was going to be exceptionally good. We are 90 miles away from them. Anne placed her blessing on my going, but she decided to stay home due to swollen lymph glands. This is the first time in over 2 years I have left Anne and gone to church.

It was a very good day. The meeting was so peaceful and comforting to me that it was difficult for me to hold back tears. I went to the Yoder home for lunch and had great fellowship and food. Another couple (Glen & Pollyanna Hochstetler) were there also—Anne and I had actually met them 17 years ago on our 20th anniversary at their restaurant in St. Ignatius, Montana. It was a joy to see them again.

Brother Yoder gave me information regarding a fellowship that is in the Hamilton area, only 22

miles south of where we live. Brother Jonathan Erb and I made contact and then met the Erbs on Sunday (12-16-18). There we again found warmth and welcome among the brotherhood.

Roger Flatmo

Our journey out of the wilderness of despair and hopelessness continues. On Christmas Day Anne and I went to the Erb home where we fellowshiped and shared a meal with others who didn't go away for the holidays. While I was sitting in the living room with the other brothers and the children, I heard Anne's laugh ring out from the kitchen. I could not have received a greater Christmas gift.

Anne has been accepted and loved by the sisters here and looks forward to bringing meals to meetings and has returned to gardening and the simple things that bring her joy. I have truly been surrounded by men of faith who have lifted me up, encouraged me, and loved me in the Lord.

Recently two families came to bless us and helped mow, weedeat, filled a dump truck full of rubble, moved firewood piles, delivered gravel for our greenhouse and garden area, and shared a wonderful meal with us. Our farm is alive again. And so are we! Praise the Lord.

There is much more to share but the most important thing is that Anne and I continue to fellowship at the Bitterroot Mennonite Church in Corvallis, Montana. We praise God for his providence and His people.

Pray for us as we continue our journey out of the wilderness into the light and life of God's eternal Kingdom.

R.F. | *Montana*



The Bitterroot Mennonite Church in Corvallis, MT



Roger & Anne Flatmo



The Branch Line

The people of God were in bondage, in service to Babylon's king
The result of their state of rebellion did evil upon them bring.

Their worship of God was imperfect, so He into slavery them sold.
God remembered His promise to David and this is the message He told:

"I promise a new heart to give you, if upon Me you call.
And if you fear Me forever, My words to the ground shall not fall.

"I'll give peace and truth in abundance, deliv'rance from captivity;
Iniquity cleansed and forgiven, and you'll bring praise and honor to Me."

For thus saith the Lord to His people, "Again in this place shall be heard
The voice of singing and gladness, so sure is God's covenant Word!

"Behold in the days that are coming, from David will come forth the Branch
Who executes truth and right living. Could My promise fail – not a chance!"

This Branch who surely is coming, forever as King shall reign,
And by Him a priestly office, eternal salvation we'll gain.

As sure as the cov'nant of daytime, as sure as the cov'nant of night,
So sure God's word to us has been spoken, a token of power and might.

As countless as the star hosts of heaven, as countless as the sands by the sea,
From David there comes forth His offspring, believers like you and like me.

So friend, if today you are struggling, this promise is sure – it is true!
Just call on the Branch Line, He'll answer; and great and mighty things do.

Thad Thayer | Tryon, Oklahoma

On the Trail of Casiodoro de Reina

by Mark Yoder

To Spain We Went

For years I loved and daily used my Reina Valera Bible. This is the same Bible millions of Spanish readers have used over the last 450 years. I became very excited when TGS International asked me to write the story of how the Lord helped Casiodoro de Reina translate the Bible into Spanish. When Casiodoro published his translation in 1569, it was the first time the whole Bible was translated into Spanish from the Greek and Hebrew texts. In my research, I discovered how the Lord miraculously brought about the translation of this Bible for millions of Spanish readers.

As I sought the Lord's will about writing this book, the Lord worked out so many details it was obvious He wanted me to go ahead with the project. Ernest Strubhar offered to go along with me for a two-week visit to Spain to learn the story of Casiodoro de Reina. Before we even left for Spain, the Lord helped me make important contacts with Alfonso Jimenez Mohedano, Gabino Fernandez, and Bonifacio Vega. Later, these contacts helped us understand Spanish history and directed us to important places where Casiodoro lived and worked.

On 14 June 2016, Ernest and I drove into Madrid, the capital of Spain, with its old buildings, parks, and monuments. After getting settled in our hotel, we walked down to the lovely El Retiro Park with its many trees, flowers, ponds, and old monuments. Now we were very conscious of being in the Old World where many things happened hundreds and even thousands of years ago.



The Royal Palace of Madrid

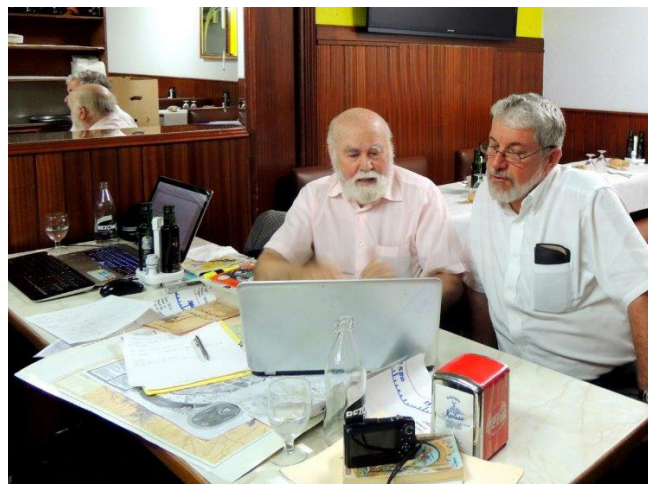
Jonah tried to run away to Spain instead of going to Nineveh. The apostle Paul talked of visiting Spain.

The next morning at a unique Spanish restaurant we enjoyed coffee, orange juice, eggs, bacon, and bread. We arranged to use one of their tables to have our meeting with Gabino Fernandez. At the arranged time we met this short, bearded, elderly gentleman striding energetically up the sidewalk. We gathered at the table with my books, papers, and laptop. First, we had a word of prayer for the project and then spent the most delightful hours asking questions and learning so much from this dynamic man about the history of the Spanish Reformation. Under Gabino's guidance we set off to learn all we could about the life of Casiodoro de Reina.

The Hunger for Truth

Casiodoro de Reina was born in the quaint village of Montemolín. In this village, as in many Spanish villages in the 1500's, the Roman Catholic Church dominated the village with its religion of empty rituals, taxes, and penance. It purposely kept the people in ignorance of the Latin Bible, the only Bible available.

In fact, there were no Bibles in Spanish for them to read. Many people sought peace with God and meaning in life, but they did not know where to go to find the answers to these questions. It is very possible that Casiodoro, like so many others in Montemolín, grew up in a home where his parents hungered for the truth.



Mark Yoder (right) learning from Gabino Fernandez



Street in Montemolín

The Awakening

In the 1500s, Spain was in its height of glory. The Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V, received exorbitant taxes from the merchants coming in from the New World. This all came through the port in Seville, Spain, 106 kilometers from Montemolín. Business was exploding in Seville. Wealth and glory were evident in this almost tropical city on the Guadalquivir River, about a hundred kilometers from the Mediterranean Sea. Seville was an exciting place, in an exciting time in the Spanish part of the Holy Roman Empire.

A new spiritual awakening happened in this booming city. After years of Bible ignorance, a new group of people grew excited about Bible study when studying the Bible was strictly forbidden. Now let us step back in time to see how this came about.

In 1492, King Ferdinand had chased the last Moors from Spain after 800 years of Moor occupation. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella united Spain under one government. The Spanish monarchs were determined to unite Spain to avoid another Moor invasion.

Ferdinand and Isabella also thought it important to unite Spain in one religion. They forced everyone to be Catholic or leave the country. King Ferdinand was so zealous for the Catholic religion that he became known as “Ferdinand the Catholic.”

In 1478, an agreement with Pope Sixtus IV allowed Ferdinand and Isabella to set up the Spanish Inquisition, not under the control of the Pope, but under the control of the Spanish monarchy. Ferdinand accomplished this by threatening to withdraw military support from the Pope when the Turks were threatening Rome.

In this way, the tribunal of the Inquisition became a dangerous and unjust political tool under the guise of the Catholic religion. Supposed enemies of Spain



Montemolín, with the cathedral Casiodoro attended

and the Catholic Church were imprisoned, tortured, and condemned. In 1481, the first auto-de-fé (a public ritual sentencing of condemned heretics) took place in Seville. Six people were burned alive. From there, the Inquisition grew rapidly in the Kingdom of Castile. By 1492, tribunals of the Inquisition existed in eight Castilian cities and the abuses became ever stronger.

Yet, even in this time of intense danger and fear of Bible knowledge among the people, God raised up a Roman Catholic Cardinal who founded a university in Alcalá de Henares (located 35 kilometers northeast of the country’s capital, Madrid). Though Cardinal Cisneros outwardly appeared to be a staunch and fanatical Catholic, he did a strange thing in those dangerous times. He had a group of men put together a copy of the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts called the Complutensian Polyglot Bible.

Cardinal Cisneros said he wanted to return to the original manuscripts of the Scriptures in Greek and Hebrew in an attempt to improve the education of the Catholic priests. Cardinal Cisneros seemed to have a deeper reason for gathering these texts than just educating priests, for he wrote, *“So, the lovers of the Holy Scriptures, not satisfied to drink water from the creeks, can satisfy their thirst at the very springs where living waters flow for eternal life, we have commanded the printing of the original texts of both Testaments along with the most important and authorized versions.”*

Studying the Bible in the original texts of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible created a special emphasis at the University of Alcalá de Henares. Many men who studied there became interested in learning more about the truth taught in the Bible.

One group of men who had studied in the University of Alcalá de Henares began preaching in the Catholic cathedral in Seville. Different from other preachers, Francisco de Vargas, Juan Gil, and Constantino de la



Seville Cathedral, the largest cathedral in the world

Fuente taught from the Bible. Constantino's teaching was so different, crowds of people came to hear his preaching. People gathered at the cathedral at 3:00 and 4:00 a.m. to find a place in the large cathedral so they could listen to Constantino preach at 8:00 a.m. Apparently, Casiodoro was among those who heard these men preach; it stirred his soul to learn more.

These men also started Bible studies in Constantino's house and carefully kept the meetings secret from the Inquisition. This Bible study group grew till they overcrowded the house. A wealthy woman offered her large house as a place for the Bible studies; soon a large group met there, with Casiodoro being among them.

Francisco de Vargas, Juan Gil, and Constantino de la Fuente also taught in a school for poor boys who could not afford the expenses of an education. This school, Colegio de la Doctrina de los Niños, also became a center of Bible teaching that brought spiritual interest and life to many boys. It is possible Casiodoro was among them.

While we are not sure Casiodoro ever attended the Colegio, we do know that at some point he enrolled in the University of Seville. At the university, his single-minded pursuit of his studies and his devotion to Bible learning set him apart from many of the students. While at the university, Casiodoro became proficient in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Not only could he read the Bible in the original languages, but he also became recognized as a gifted teacher of it.

Sensing the Need for a Spanish Bible

After leaving the university, Casiodoro decided to join the Monastery of San Isidro. He liked the physical exertion he found at the monastery, working with his hands as he had done in his youth. But the lack of Bible knowledge and the moral sins of the monks appalled



Inside the Seville Cathedral

him. Using his understanding of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, Casiodoro began to teach the monks from the Bible. But he thought again how wonderful it would be if the monks, and even the common people, would have the Bible in Spanish.

God was at work in the Monastery of San Isidro and a great spiritual awakening took place. Most of the monks were converted and began to live a new life. For a time the monastery became like a small church hidden away from the Inquisition and all outsiders.

However, the word got out and the Inquisition began to suspect the monastery of heresy. The monks then held a meeting to decide what to do. They knew if they all tried to escape together, they would surely be discovered and caught; so each one decided what to do on his own. (In Casiodoro's time, 22 of the monks living at the San Isidro Monastery were accused of heresy by the Spanish Inquisition. By 1562, forty of the monks who remained at the monastery were burned to death in *autos-de-fé*.)

The fire of this new movement was basically stamped out in Seville by the Spanish Inquisition. But by allowing him to flee safely, the Lord saved the monk who loved to study and teach the Bible. Though outside of Spain, Casiodoro de Reina's heart still burned with the passion of bringing the Bible back to Spain in Spanish.

Escape to Geneva

Soon twelve monks escaped, including Casiodoro de Reina and another Cipriano de Valera. In spite of the dangers, the Lord preserved them; they made it to Geneva, Switzerland. The peace Casiodoro found in Protestant Geneva under John Calvin was short-lived. He soon discovered that Calvin kept tight control over the populace of Geneva. Everyone was forced to submit to his ideas and rule. All the citizens were forced to be a part of his church and all the babies baptized.

Though John Calvin was well aware of the Anabaptist beliefs on infant baptism and the free church, he rejected both. Calvin was married to a widow who had earlier been married to an Anabaptist. Thirteen years earlier he had even written a refutation against the Schleithem Confession (1544). Calvin had also debated with some Anabaptists over infant baptism and the free church. After the debate he banished the Anabaptists from Geneva.

Casiodoro just could not agree with Calvin that people should be forced to be a part of the church. So after a short time, he left Geneva and traveled to Frankfurt, Germany.

Working in London

Soon after Casiodoro's arrival in Frankfurt, Germany, he heard the news of the Catholic Queen Mary Tudor's death (1558). Mary's Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth, was then crowned queen of England. Under Queen Elizabeth there was now freedom of religion in England for Protestants. So Casiodoro and others of the Spanish monks soon made their way to London (1559). On the way to London, Juan de Leon was captured and returned to Seville where he was later burned at the stake.

In London, a group of Spaniards gathered to listen to Casiodoro teach the Bible in Spanish. People were so blessed by his teaching from the Bible that soon quite a group gathered three times a week for these studies. At the suggestion of the group, Casiodoro put in a petition to the Queen to grant permission for him to start a Spanish church in London. She must have taken a liking to this Spanish Bible teacher, for she granted him permission, gave him a building to use for his church house, and even gave him a monthly pension as a pastor. In this way, he

had more freedom to dedicate his time to his passion of translating the Bible into Spanish.

While in London, Casiodoro met a young Christian widow from Nivelles, Belgium. They were happily married in 1561.

It is evident that Satan was against Casiodoro's work in London. First the Protestant Calvinists were not happy with some of Casiodoro's beliefs. His position on a free church as opposed to a state church and his refusal to condone persecution of "heretics" alienated him from the Protestants. They were not happy that the Queen had given him special benefits.

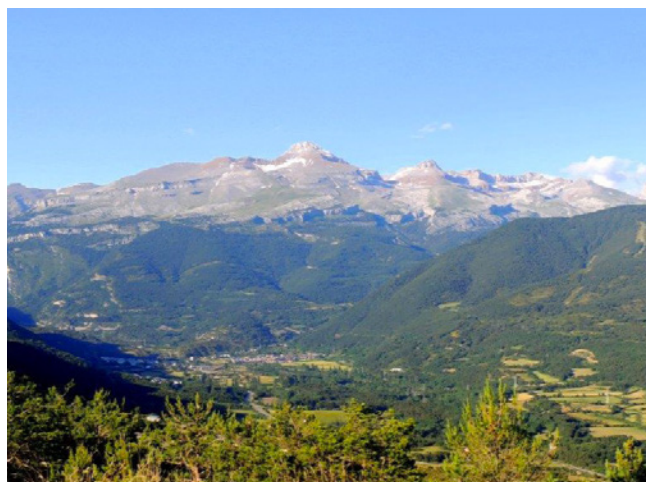
Some Protestant ministers grew jealous of Casiodoro because their members had started attending his services to hear his good Bible teaching. These jealous ministers then asked Casiodoro to write a confession of his faith so they could disapprove him by what they thought was false doctrine. The confession Casiodoro wrote clearly stated many of his beliefs, but the intense doctrinal debate distracted him from his translation work.

The Spanish Inquisition

Some time after their escape from Spain to Geneva, a Julian Hernandez came back to Seville from Geneva smuggling in Christian literature and letters from the escaped monks. Julian made the mistake of giving literature to the wrong person. That man then turned Julian in to the Inquisition. The Inquisition soon caught Julian and before long started capturing other believers. In a short time, they had captured and imprisoned around 800 believers. Most believers were imprisoned in the San Jorge Castle, the Inquisition headquarters and prison. There were so many accused believers, they filled all the prisons of Seville and some were even held in private homes.



Monastery of San Isidro



Casiodoro fled from Spain to France on foot

The Inquisition could not capture Casiodoro because he was in London. They tried different things, but each time God protected him. First, they had the Spanish ambassador in London invite Casiodoro to the embassy. God warned Casiodoro through the Bishop of London not to accept the several invitations since he could be captured at the embassy and sent back to Spain.

King Philip II, when he heard that Casiodoro was translating the Bible into Spanish, offered a sum of money to anyone that would help capture him. But again, God protected him and the reward failed to bring Casiodoro back to Spain.

Since the Inquisition could not capture Casiodoro while he was still in London, they sentenced him in Seville, Spain. On April 26, 1562, they celebrated a great auto-de-fé (a public condemnation and sentencing of a heretic). With great pomp and show the Inquisition condemned Casiodoro to death as a teacher of heretics. In his absence, they burned an image of him along with nine other images of the monks who had escaped from the Monastery of San Isidro.

Finally, Satan had a rumor started that Casiodoro was a homosexual. Again, God protected Casiodoro and warned him to leave London before his enemies killed him.

Continuing the Translation Work

Early in the morning, on September 21, 1563, Casiodoro escaped alone from England and went to Antwerp, Belgium. Later his wife escaped, dressed as a sailor, and reunited with him in Antwerp. In Antwerp, Casiodoro was in danger of being caught by Spanish Inquisition agents who seemed to be everywhere. The Lord then led him to a wealthy merchant, Marcos Pérez, who was involved in smuggling Christian literature into

Spain. He hid Casiodoro and his wife and supported them and their translation work.

When the danger of capture increased, Casiodoro escaped Antwerp and traveled to Frankfurt, Germany, where he continued his translation. While in Frankfurt another ex-monk from the San Isidro Monastery, Antonio del Corro, invited him to come to Bergerac, France. Antonio thought Bergerac was a good place to finish the translation and printing. But the peace in Bergerac was short-lived. Because of political changes they had to leave and return to Frankfurt. Knowing that King Philip II had agents aggressively looking for him, Casiodoro was constantly aware of danger. In spite of traveling around, Casiodoro continued work on his beloved Bible translation.

While Casiodoro was in Frankfurt, he received an invitation to pastor a church in Strasbourg, France. This sounded attractive to him, since he thought it would help cover his expenses while he translated, as well as provide more protection from the Inquisition. Casiodoro accepted the invitation and moved to Strasbourg, but again ran into a doctrinal dispute in the church over what happened to the bread at Communion. This squabbling over doctrinal details frustrated Casiodoro. In a letter he wrote, "It seems their concern is not to learn or teach the truth but to dominate and control others."

Instead of pursuing the pastorate, he applied for a residency permit in Strasbourg, along with a permit for his wife to start a needlework business. Both requests were granted. Casiodoro could now dedicate himself to full-time translating while his wife pursued her business to help cover costs. It was so exciting to again spend day after day working with the Bible text.

Apparently, his wife's business did not cover all their costs, so Casiodoro started another business dealing in



City of Seville near the time of Casiodoro



San Jorge, headquarters of the Spanish Inquisition



Bronze plaque of strangling a heretic

silk. This business slowed down his progress with the translation, but did provide him with contacts that would later help with the printing of his work.

During these years his wife gave birth to a precious little son who they named Marcos, in honor of Marcos Pérez who earlier hid them and was now offering to help finance the printing.

At last Casiodoro finished the first draft, but the draft was not yet ready for the printer. He spent another year carefully reviewing the manuscript, making corrections, and adding notes at the side that explained why he had translated a word or phrase as he did.

While we are not sure of Casiodoro's birth date, his age at the completion of his Bible was about 49. In regards to the length of time he worked on the translation, Casiodoro wrote the following in his introduction to his first printing in 1569:

The importance of this work for the advancement of the Kingdom and the glory of the Lord, ... gave us a courage that we would have never had if we considered only our own strength, to begin the work and to come to this point of finishing it. We have no doubt that our work has been pleasing to God, ... but hindered by Satan. ... The work has been in our hands 12 years, but we can affirm that we have spent nine years [worth of time] when we did not put down the pen, nor slackened in study.

The Printing

After finishing the translation, Casiodoro considered printing the Bible in different cities. He finally made a contract with a printer named Oporinus in Basel, Switzerland. Oporinus agreed to print 1,100 Bibles for 500 *écus*. Casiodoro gave Oporinus 400 *florins* to start the



King Philip II's library contains a copy of Reina's Bible.

printing. In February of 1568 the Bible was in production. Now Casiodoro spent time helping set the type.

Satan, the enemy of this project, was still doing all he could to stop Casiodoro. In June of 1568, Casiodoro fell sick and lay in bed five weeks, gravely ill. Not until August 4 did Casiodoro begin to regain his health. In shaky handwriting he wrote, "I am at last getting better."

But while Casiodoro was ill, Oporinus died. Now Casiodoro had a serious problem. When Oporinus died, he left large debts unsettled. As a result Casiodoro lost the 400 *florins* he had given Oporinus as a down payment for the printing of the Bibles. This sum of money was the equivalent of four years' wages for a university professor. Casiodoro tried unsuccessfully to recover his money.

Fortunately, when Marcos Perez heard about this problem, he offered to finance the printing. Casiodoro then worked with a different printer, Thomas Guarin, to print 2,600 copies of the Spanish Bible.

Contraband

While still busy with typesetting, Casiodoro heard that King Philip II had sent out warning letters to the Spanish borders, ordering his agents to watch for Casiodoro's Spanish Bibles printed in Geneva. (The Bibles were actually being printed in Frankfurt, Germany).

Casiodoro chose a picture he got from another printer to put on his title page. It was a picture of a bear trying to get honey from a bee hive in a tree, but a large hammer hanging in the tree hindered the bear from getting the honey. For safety's sake, Casiodoro did not put his own name as the translator on the title page, nor the name of the printer, nor the city where the Bible was printed.

On August 6, 1569, Casiodoro wrote a letter to a friend advising him that he should expect four wine casks on a

certain ship. He gave his friend directions to store them in a prearranged place and more casks would follow later.

There is actually very little recorded as to what happened to the printed Bibles. We have the mention above of the four wine casks. There is record of 1,400 copies sent to Antwerp. In Antwerp they replaced the covers and added the title page of a dictionary.

Only a year and four months after Casiodoro finished printing his Spanish Bible, we know that the Inquisition in Spain had found out about his Bibles. The Supreme Council of the Inquisition wrote the following to the different Inquisition courts in Spain:

Revered Lords,

We understand that a Bible has been printed in Basel in Spanish. ... Since it would be very harmful for this Bible to come here, special care [should] be taken to prevent this Bible from entering. And if any would have entered and be found, you command that they all be gathered, proceeding against the persons that brought them in. And of all you do, keep this Council informed.

– Madrid, 30 of January, 1571

Casiodoro's Legacy

On March 16, 1594, Casiodoro de Reina died in Frankfurt, Germany (about age 74). In his time, he was not very popular because he neither agreed with the Calvinists nor the Lutherans. His conviction that heretics should not be persecuted and that infant baptism was not in the Bible alienated him from both groups. But he, like the Anabaptists, promoted a free church—a church not controlled by the state—which today is an accepted truth.

Though Casiodoro's Bible was originally hated by the Catholic Church, they now recognize it as a great work. I saw one of the original Bibles in the large Cathedral of

Seville, where Casiodoro heard Juan Gil and Constantino preach. The very church that sentenced and burned the bones of Juan Gil and Constantino, and an image of Casiodoro, now has a copy of Casiodoro's Bible in their Colombian Library.

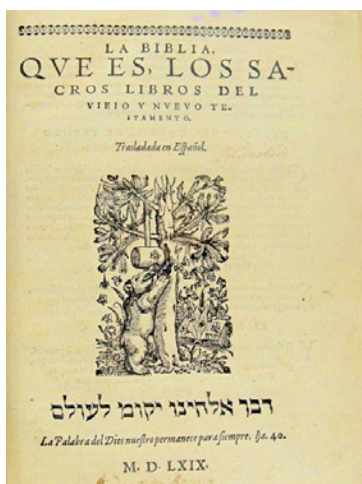
King Philip II hated Casiodoro and tried so hard to get rid of him and his Spanish Bible. He built an enormous building that contained a tomb for his father Charles V, a monastery, a basilica, a royal palace, a pantheon of all-time great people, his library, a museum, a university, a school, and a hospital. (See photo on page 28. This is one of the largest buildings in the world.) King Philip II and Charles V are both dead, but I was told Casiodoro's Bible is somewhere in the vastness of the large library in the Royal Monastery of Saint Lawrence of El Escorial. His work lives on.

Casiodoro's most outstanding achievement was his translation of the Spanish Bible. This was the first translation of the whole Bible into Spanish directly from the Hebrew and Greek text. Though not very appreciated back then, his work is now recognized as an excellent and outstanding translation. Though it has gone through different revisions, Casiodoro's translation has been the most-used Spanish Bible in the evangelical world, and still is today. Millions of people have used his Spanish Bible to find the truth of God and salvation through Jesus Christ.

M.Y. | Chachagua, Costa Rica

The complete story of Casiodoro de Reina can be ordered from TGS International at 330-893-4828. *Stronger Than Fire* by Mark Yoder | © 2018 TGS International, PO Box 355, Berlin, Ohio 44610.

This was the title page for the first (1569) printing of Casiodoro's translation; 2,600 copies were made. It was known as *The Bible of the Bear*.



Eight years after Casiodoro's death, another of the escaped monks from San Isidro, Cipriano de Valera, revised Casiodoro's Bible and had it published in the Netherlands. Here, Mark Yoder holds a copy of this 1602 printing.

Never Fading Fingerprints

by Linda Maendel

“You’re more than welcome to come and tour our facility!” concluded Candice, the rural liaison for Siloam Mission at the time. “We’ll gladly show you what we’re doing with the support of people like you.”

For many years Elm River Hutterite Colony, my community, has supported this homeless shelter in Winnipeg, but that day I became involved on a personal level. Candice was visiting our colony to share about the work of Siloam Mission and offered to make a presentation to the children as well. I teach in our school, so I helped supervise during her presentation and expressed to our principal my enthusiasm for the proffered tour of Siloam Mission.

My younger sister, the principal, accepted the invitation on behalf of the school and arranged for the tour as part of our annual field trip.

Founded in 1987 by Suk Woon Lee, a former penitentiary inmate, Siloam Mission is a faith-based, faith-operated organization. Their mission statement reads: “A connecting point between the compassionate and Winnipeg’s less fortunate, Siloam Mission is a Christian humanitarian organization that alleviates hardships and provides opportunities for change for those affected by homelessness.”

Together with board members and volunteers, Mr. Woon Lee established this inner-city ministry providing meals and counseling services. They believe that addressing homelessness is about meeting not only physical needs but also psychological and spiritual ones. By means of a spiritual-care program, they provide an inclusive space for healing and growth for people of any faith or spiritual background; they conduct two weekly Bible Study Sharing Circles for interested guests.

Siloam Mission has expanded considerably over the years. Hannah’s Place, an emergency shelter on the second floor, opened its doors to 110 homeless men and women, providing a safe place for the night. An onsite Health Centre has been added as well, along with a Resource Centre dedicated to providing art therapy and computer training. During our tour, we learned that the late Dr. Saul Sair donated state-of-the-art equipment for a full dental lab, and a variety of dentists, hygienists and practicum students gladly volunteer their time. In 2011, with the support of all three levels of government, the Madison building was bought, renovated, and turned into supportive housing. Now, Transition Services uses

that building to help guests move forward in their lives through goal setting, weekly meetings, support, and accountability.

Today, Siloam Mission has seventy employees. Over the course of a year, five thousand volunteers, serving in a variety of ways, offer their time and energy. Three times daily, four hundred and fifty meals are served. The largest part of the Mission’s funding comes from private donations—from individual people, businesses, and Hutterite colonies. The remainder comes from the grants of foundations and charities, as well as all three levels of government.

On the day of our tour, Candice was joined by John, a Siloam Mission teacher, in showing us around. I did not know what to expect, but I was impressed by what we saw: classroom, kitchen, dining hall, fitness room, clinic, sleeping area, and stocked storage rooms. Everything was clean, neat, and ready for occupants.

Most surprising and mesmerizing of everything we saw that day was the art room. Bright and spacious, it provided a place for Siloam Mission occupants to practice their artistic skills and creative expression. Not only stocked with everything necessary for painting, it was graced with gorgeous completed paintings, as well as works-in-progress. Paintings were on tables, walls, easels, standing in the windows and even on the floor—all by Siloam Mission people who call this place home. It was deeply touching to learn that these people were given this opportunity, and they were taking advantage of it.

Candice and John informed us that some artists even sell their work as framed pictures or cards. It was easy to imagine how much this might mean to someone living on the street. Walking out of there, I knew I wanted one of those pretty paintings for my wall. A few weeks later I bought a lovely winter scene which is now displayed in our home; it is a constant reminder of my visit to Siloam Mission.

Later that summer, when the kitchen at Siloam Mission was being renovated, we prepared and served one of the evening meals to hundreds of occupants: vegetable soup, ham sandwiches, salad, and chocolate chip cookies. The kitchen was managed by an efficient, well-organized team and I thoroughly enjoyed working with them. Serving food to hundreds of people that day, I was reminded of these words from the prophet Jeremiah: “*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, thoughts of*

peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

My heart went out to these men and women whose smiles radiated gratitude as they took their plate and sat down. I know supplying basic needs is but the first step towards “a future and a hope.” However, learning through our tour and volunteering at the mission, I came away grateful that places like Siloam Mission exist, and that we have opportunities to serve in soup kitchens and homeless shelters. The whole visit was a poignant reminder of how much we take for granted; we have so much more than we need.



Sorting clothes at Siloam Mission

It is one thing to have my Hutterite community offering financial support to places like Siloam Mission, but there is nothing like personal involvement to enhance the meaning of our Lord’s teaching, “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth: when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me’ ” (Matthew 25:40).

In the past, Hutterites may not have seen themselves as obligated to contribute directly to places like urban homeless shelters or even soup kitchens, but after a century of life in Canada, it is becoming more of a reality and we are doing it with increasing frequency. At Siloam Mission, Hutterites lend a hand on numerous levels, in addition to financial donations—preparing and serving meals, sorting clothing, sewing quilts, donating vegetables and other food items, and helping with renovation projects.

There are several reasons for the shift in thinking which has inspired Hutterites to become more actively involved in altruistic outreach. Some leaders now encourage and there is a willingness of grassroots Hutterites to serve in that capacity. In addition, many people see the value of sharing from their bounty and doing good beyond their

own communities in response to the gospel call, “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?” (I John 3:17).

A few years ago ten of us from Elm River attended a fund-raiser dinner at Winnipeg’s Convention Centre. After the meal, we listened to stories by people who at one time had experienced homelessness—heartbreaking accounts of individuals fleeing abusive relationships, struggling with addictions, or dealing with mental illnesses. Through Siloam Mission they found food, shelter, hope, and a renewed purpose in life. Many of those who spoke said they came away from the mission wishing to give back by helping others change their lives around. In this year’s annual report, one of the patrons stated it beautifully: “It is only by God’s grace that I ended up at the doors of Siloam Mission. Now, I want to give back to the community that embraced me with open arms.”

It was heart-warming and gratifying to learn about the Mission’s history, the goals and milestones that have been realized, and the continuing dreams of management and staff, dreams that all of us can help make a reality. Every year too many men, women, and children struggle with unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and mental health issues. Being at Siloam Mission served as a reminder of the constant needs at soup kitchens and shelters that cannot function without the support of caring contributors.

Together with Siloam Mission, we were blessed to have a part in reaching out to the lowest of men. As American writer Judy Blume put it, “Our fingerprints don’t fade from the lives we touch.”

Note: Linda Maendel is the author of Hutterite Diaries.

L.M. | Manitoba, Canada



“Many people are good at talking about what they are doing, but in fact do little. Others do a lot but don’t talk about it; they are the ones who make a community live.”

— Jean Vanier

Claiming Media Frontiers for Christ: Anabaptist Perspectives

by Marlin Sommers

The Vision

In early 2017, Jaran Miller and Reagan Schrock were making a nine-hour trip from southwestern Pennsylvania to their home area in southeast Tennessee. While the two traveled along, they shared a common interest in the lack of Anabaptist representation in Internet media. They viewed this as an opportunity and decided to take advantage of it.

On the journey, the two envisioned a series of interviews with Anabaptist individuals who had a story to tell or an insight to share. Their idea was to film these episodes and then post the videos on YouTube and Facebook. Additionally, audio-only versions of the episodes could be released as podcasts on various platforms; the transcripts could also be used to create blog posts. By the time the two reached home, they had thought of approximately ninety potential episodes that might be used.

A Project Birthed

Conceiving the vision is one thing; giving birth to action is quite another. While both Jaran and Reagan brought energy, enthusiasm, dedication, determination, and skills to the project, it was not enough. They still needed the help of others. Episode ideas had to be turned into outlines. Interviews and recording sessions needed to be lined up. Raw camera files needed to be edited for publication.

They lined up a team of advisors to help keep the project on the right track. A few video editors agreed to work for bargain rates, but even with discounted rates and lots of volunteer energy, money was needed. Some private donors stepped up to help Anabaptist Perspectives carry the vision to reality.

In January of 2018, Anabaptist Perspectives kicked off with Episode 001 where Dean Taylor discussed “The Essence of Anabaptism.” After publishing the first episode, an eager audience gathered and has consistently grown ever since.

The vision had been birthed. Now the founders sensed a need for more structure and a framework to guide the work in the future. While the local church body was supportive from the beginning, Anabaptist Perspectives

had begun as a private endeavor. Through a series of conversations in the spring of 2018, our congregation decided to officially adopt the project. We now operate under the authority of Wellspring Mennonite Church (Athens, Tennessee), with the assistance of some board members and advisors from other congregations. This organization gives needed stability to Anabaptist Perspectives.

What We Do

Interviews are the core of our work. After a guest agrees to appear on Anabaptist Perspectives, the process is approximately as follows. We produce a script with a few questions which is reviewed and revised by our team of advisors in preparation for filming an episode. Once the scheduling and travel is arranged, one of our team serves as an interviewer. We record the conversation and edit the video footage for Facebook and YouTube. We also edit the audio file for distribution as a podcast. These edits are then reviewed and approved for upload. The final steps are to write descriptions for each episode and produce subtitles for the videos. By the time we release a twenty-minute episode, there have already been many hours invested.

Episodes are grouped into seasons where we release one episode per week for about 50 weeks. Season One ran from January to December of 2018. Season Two kicked off the beginning of June 2019. Initially, we also attempted to produce blog posts from these interviews. But it proved difficult to produce suitable written versions, so we have started to treat the blog as a separate project with occasional stand-alone articles.

Fruit: Interactions with Our Audience

Ever since the first episode with Dean Taylor was published, the project has required time engaging with the viewers. Even during our five-month break between Season One and Season Two, our administrator often spent several hours a week responding to those who contacted us. Our most popular video has accumulated almost 18,000 views on YouTube in the last year, and our first release for Season Two garnered over 600 views in the first week. These figures are for YouTube alone; the total is much higher, as we also have many viewers on Facebook and listeners on our podcast.

Those who have subscribed and responded are a mixture of both believers and unbelievers, both Anabaptists and Christians of other persuasions. Many of our listeners and viewers have been interactive, sending us messages through Facebook, YouTube comments, and email. It has been a delight to hear how our episodes have been an encouragement to viewers.

However, most of the significant feedback has come from those who are looking into Anabaptist beliefs and practices and considering their implications for their own lives. Not all such respondents are believers. For example, we've heard from several individuals from Jewish communities. One Jewish man wrote this email:

As a Jew, I'm quite new to Anabaptist and Mennonite. I came across the following video in your channel: "The Technology Habits of Mennonites (Anabaptist Perspectives, Episode 040)." I was deeply impress [sic] from the fact the Mennonites take the decisions as community—hearing different opinions from different people.

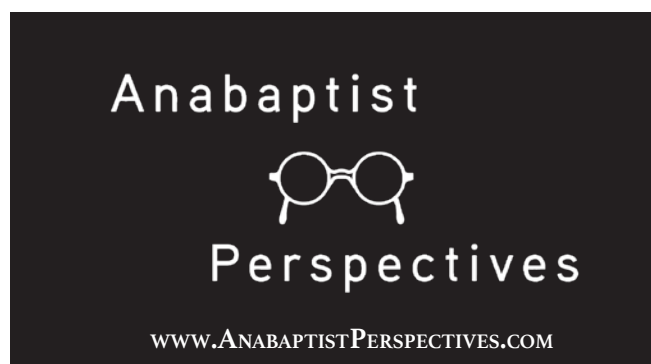
He proceeded to request resources for more information about the Anabaptist tradition, to which we happily directed him.

We have also heard from believers who do not show particular interest in Anabaptism but still appreciate what we publish. This message came from one such individual:

This was very helpfull, [sic] thank you very much!

May God bless you and greetings from the Netherlands!

A number of people have asked us to help them locate an Anabaptist church. Whenever possible, we consult directories and connect them with an Anabaptist church in their area. We have not followed up with all these inquirers, but we know that some have indeed attended services at the church to which we pointed them. However, many who have asked for church information live in areas where there is no Anabaptist church nearby. Responding to these requests has been more difficult.



Messages from seekers have taught us two things:

1. First, the presence of an Anabaptist church is not always obvious to those looking for such a church.
2. Second, even in the United States, there are large spaces with no Anabaptist churches. Several of America's large urban areas have sincere believers wishing for fellowship, but no Anabaptist churches are available. Much church planting work remains.

Our Anabaptist Perspectives

The perspectives we seek to represent are recognizably Anabaptist in the following points:

1. First, we believe that allegiance to Jesus rules out violence, nationalism, and ethnocentrism; our affinity with believers in other nations supersedes any earthly citizenships, and believers respond to the evils of the world with love.
2. Second, we submit ourselves to local groups of believers who have a substantive say in how we live out our Christianity.
3. Finally, we emphasize straightforward obedience to King Jesus even in areas such as the Christian woman's veiling or the permanence of marriage, that are often neglected in Christian circles.

Target Audience: Three Profiles

What follows are not descriptions of specific listeners. Rather, these characters are composites of people whom we seek to engage.

Wendy, age 50, has seen Amish and Mennonites occasionally throughout her life and is mildly curious. She is also fascinated by Christian teachings about peace, but she has never connected this with the Anabaptist lifestyle. Wendy enjoys some of our teaching-oriented episodes and is intrigued by stories of individuals who have joined Anabaptist communities as adults. We want to encourage her to follow Jesus wherever she is and to show her that older adults can indeed join such a community.

Stan, age 20, is part of an established congregation. Stan is no troublemaker, but neither is he one to take much initiative for God and others. He often hears exhortations to "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness," and he faithfully has devotions. But when it comes down to it, his life revolves around family, work, and hunting. We want to stimulate Stan to thoughtful discipleship and deliberate support of kingdom ministry.

Crystal, age 25, is a person of passion. She enjoys ideas, but also needs to see something happen. She follows various podcasts, both religious and secular. She is seriously considering leaving her Anabaptist congregation for a church that seems to have more happening and that has articulated its theology more forcefully in her media sphere. We want Crystal to see passionate, thoughtful articulation of Anabaptist ideals and real-life kingdom exploits of Anabaptist people.

Sample Episodes

Dean Taylor

Missionary, Writer, President of Sattler College

“The words of the Lord were meant to be put into practice. I believe the word of God without a complicated interpretation and out of this I speak.”

Elijah Yoder

Pastor, Instructor at Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute

“I don’t believe that biblical principles are going to be a handicap to reaching out to people, but, if we’re not loving them, then those things can be.”

Patrick Matthews

Church Planter, Evangelist, Servant

“The Anabaptist church or the plain churches that I have in Central Pennsylvania accepted me willingly as long as I repented of my sin. I submitted to that godly group of people...I never felt that true acceptance anywhere else in my life...They said, ‘It’s okay. Come on!’”

Bryant Martin

Sower’s Harvest Café & All Nations Bible Translation

“We were praying as a congregation for a kingdom embassy in downtown State College. We wanted an embassy, a piece of the home country on foreign soil. It felt like God just really, really blessed that.”

Keeshon Washington

Teacher at Tidings of Peace Christian School

“We don’t know where all these people will end up, but we do know we have them for this moment in time where you can help steer them and show there is another option. There is a better way, and that’s Jesus. Some of them get tired of how much I talk about Jesus, but, to me, the primary motivation for education is, ‘Can you see how awesome God is?’ ”

David Bercot

Author, Speaker, Founder of Scroll Publishing

“The colonists didn’t want to pay the taxes that England was imposing on the colonies and yet anyone who’s read the New Testament at all has read Jesus saying, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s.’ ”

Angélica Aragón

Missionary, Scholar, Musician

“I told them, ‘I’m just following Jesus Christ’s words.’ ”

“Anabaptists have a very strong tradition that they have developed over the years. Those traditions from an outsider sometimes are hard to understand. However, if you see that you are there for your brothers and that you love them, those traditions and those challenges that you have—if you see it through the light of Jesus Christ, through the love of Jesus Christ—become very minor.”

M.S. | Athens, Tennessee



AV Editor: The report on the work of Anabaptist Perspectives is to inform our readers of this service which uses the internet in a constructive way. Some blessings of this effort have been to introduce honest seekers to other Anabaptist literature and to direct them to churches where faith is put into practice.

However, once the initial contacts are made, I believe true Bible believers will not spend time on social media or surfing the internet trying to grow in their understanding and practice of faith. Too often, time spent on social media shortchanges the actual reading and study of the Word and causes the reader to accept the doctrines and standards of the world. I believe the acceptance of social media in our homes is as detrimental to a holy life and true brotherhood as television and the radio.

If the past instructs us, churches that accepted the radio and television into their homes soon became acculturated and lost their distinctiveness as a holy people. To them, the Bible no longer stands as the final rule of faith and practice, and the local brotherhood becomes less and less important in governing the life of the believer.

So beware. Sin is ever present in the world. The true believer will shun those temptations that take him away from God. The Bible says, “**Draw near to God and He will draw near to you**” (James 4:8).

J.G.L. | Waynesboro, Georgia

Reaching Outside My Bubble

by Gary Miller

Those of us living in an Anabaptist community have a worldview based on what we have seen and experienced. Most of us have grown up in a stable home environment. We had a father who worked, a mother who was at home and available, and a large network of individuals who were willing to help if needed. When I interact with others, particularly those who have been raised far differently, I struggle to understand how they think and why they make the choices they do. I wonder how to properly assist them when they ask for help. We grew up in different cultural bubbles.

The purpose of CAM's Salt & Light program is to help the Anabaptist people reach out to their neighbors—to penetrate that bubble, learn to understand, and build relationships with those who live close to us geographically, yet culturally are miles away. The Salt & Light program is designed to provide Biblical teaching and financial help for those who need basic teaching. It is easy for those of us living in "Anabaptist bubbles" to assume that others have had similar teaching and life experiences, but many have not had this blessing. Salt & Light is meant to assist us in sharing some of the cultural blessings we grew up with.

I had the opportunity to sit down with a single Hispanic man who recently went through a Salt & Light course. Emanuel* is 27 years old, and says his parents did not teach him anything about managing money while growing up. After graduating he was able to get a job, but money just passed through his hands like water. Here are a few excerpts from my recent interview:

Gary:

Tell me a little about your relationship with finances in the past.

Emanuel:

It's embarrassing, looking back at how much money I wasted! I used to buy those little tiny bags of potato chips for \$1.87 at the local convenience store, plus a drink every day. In fact, I did it three or four times a day!

Gary:

Did you give any thought to how much that added up to in a month?

**Name changed to protect identity.*

Emanuel:

No, but after learning to track expenses in the Salt & Light class, I discovered I was spending \$500 a month on food! For just one person! And that wasn't because I was going to Olive Garden or other nice restaurants. This was just trash food! I would swing by the convenience store on my break to get a drink and chips or whatever. Then again at lunch, and again for a snack in the afternoon. And then I would stop again on the way home. I'm still mad about how much I used to spend!

Gary:

Why do you think young Americans struggle with finances?

Emanuel:

There is so little teaching today, and it's so easy to get credit! There is just a lack of discipline and basic knowledge. I don't understand why they don't teach this stuff in school! But maybe I wouldn't have accepted it when I was younger.

Many Americans are like Emanuel. Without basic teaching, they find themselves enslaved by credit card payments and car payments, as well as payday loans and other types of predatory lending.

Those of us who work in the SALT program see this problem as a tremendous opportunity! We travel around the globe providing Biblical teaching and seeing lives being changed, but could it be that God is calling us to do more right here?

If you are interested in reaching out to your neighbors and blessing your community or coworkers by providing basic Biblical teaching on finances, the Salt & Light program may be a tool that you can use right where you live.



To learn more about this outreach opportunity, register for the upcoming Salt & Light training seminar. See details in Upcoming Events on page 42.

Round Table Discussion

by AV Readers

The following pages are meant to encourage interaction between Anabaptist Voice and our readers. If you have questions or thoughts and would like to hear a response from AV, this section is for you. Write to us.

AV Editor

A Reliable English Translation

Our great God who created the confusion of different languages at the tower of Babel is great enough to preserve His Word, in spite of all the different languages. This is a subject I have studied intensely for more than twenty years, especially since the time we served as missionaries in Europe.

While in Europe, a fellow believer in France told me that his Bible does not say what mine does on the subject of divorce and remarriage. He was right. It was very different. And how was I to convince him that his was wrong on this subject and mine was right? It drove me to study.

In my study, I found the King James Version in English to be the true inspired Word of God and inerrant. To explain what I mean by inerrancy is simple. It is to not delete or change [the meaning of] the Word of God. I find nowhere in the Bible that the scriptures will lose their inerrancy; rather, they will be preserved forever (Psalm 12:6-7).

Early Anabaptists totally rejected the only other version available to them, the Roman Catholic Bible. Incidentally, the Roman Catholic Bible had basically the same deletions in it that are in the new Bible versions. One thing that should not be overlooked are the many verses totally deleted from new English translations that have come out within the last 150 years (for example, Acts 8:37 and Matt. 18:11).

I believe the KJV is a reliable translation and that it is the genuine Word of God.

E.M.Y. | Georgia

Anabaptist Voice would answer the questions in this manner:

1. The Roman Catholic Bible at the time of the Reformation was in Latin. This was a critical issue to most of the reformers who wanted the Bible in the language of the common people so they could read it and understand it. Once the Bible was available in their native languages, many Anabaptists learned to read so they could see what the Bible taught for themselves.
2. The first complete English Catholic Bible was completed in 1609 (84 years after the beginning of the Anabaptist movement). This was a translation from the Latin Vulgate. William Tyndale was burned at the stake in 1536 for translating the Bible from the original languages into English. The King James Version or Authorized Version (meaning that the King of England approved it) first appeared in 1611.
3. It is my understanding that in the different English translations, there are no doctrinal differences that affect how we are to live today. If people approach the Scripture with a willing heart, the truths of God's Word are plain, simple, and open. Yes, I acknowledge there are differences of wording and expression in the various versions, but has the meaning been changed? If the meaning has been changed, I would like to see some specific examples of where differences in meaning affect the way one lives. What pleases God and what displeases Him is quite plain in most translations.



Practical Questions:

1. In what language was the Roman Catholic Bible at the beginning of the Anabaptist movement in 1525?
2. When was the Roman Catholic Bible first printed in English?
3. Are there contradictions between the KJV and other English translations that affect how we put our faith into practice?

Is Technology Really the Issue?

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”
– Colossians 3:17

Should we reject all technology? Or should we accept every invention that comes along? These are two opposite extremes.

Trains and steamboats did not exist when Jesus and Paul lived on the earth. They rode in boats with sails, but Jesus sometimes walked on the water. I know of no record of them riding in a chariot [Philip did ride in a chariot, Acts 8:38]. They walked everywhere except when Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem (Mark 11:7) and when Paul was removed from Jerusalem (Acts 23:24).

Would Jesus, Paul, or Philip have used the latest technology if it had been available to them? Or more importantly, does Jesus want us to use the latest technology?

For instance, let us talk about a cell phone. It could be argued that the telephone is an expensive time waster. It can be used to spread gossip and evil reports or it can be used for many good things—to summon help in an emergency, to bring comfort and cheer to shut-ins, and to order needed parts or arrange a tire repair while working on the farm. So possibly we can agree that the remarkable technology of a cell phone can be used for the glory of God or it can be a tool of the Devil.

Radios and televisions are similar but very different than a cell phone. Their major controls are off/on, loud/quiet, and the station selector. Otherwise, you have no control over what is thrown at you. TV and radio dull the conscience and gradually one accepts the songs, the dress, and the standards of the world.

The main reason that commercial radio and TV exist is to make money. The programming is designed to appeal to those who will buy their product. The sensual programming attracts those who are carnal. People can argue that these inventions provide weather reports and news from around the world. But again, it is clear that the ads associated with news and weather clearly reflect the attitudes and philosophies and morals of the world.

The computer is similar to radio and TV, except the operator has more control over what is received. Information is available on almost any subject you name, but one needs to test the spirits to know if they are of God. Computers are useful for the efficient operation of a business and can be as useful as a wheel on a bicycle. Or they can also be a great time waster that keeps one from reading and studying his Bible and other good books.

The invention of the printing press has made the Bible available to us all. It also has been used to print much ungodly and evil material. So the printing technology of today, like the cell phone, can be used for good or evil. Just because a printing press can be used for evil material does not mean we should not use it to print Bibles.

So what should we do about technology? We want to always remember that as Anabaptists we seek to base

all of our beliefs on the Scripture because the highest authority to whom we answer is God, and the Bible is the Word He has given us.

B.H. | *Pennsylvania*

Practical Questions:

1. Who decides whether the use of a particular technology is good or evil in your home? In your church? In your personal life?
2. What factors determine whether a particular usage of technology is good or evil?
3. Does our usage of a particular application honor the Lord Jesus?
4. Does our use of an application leave a clear testimony to unbelievers?

Anabaptist Voice: Even though some technology like cell phones, cars, planes, vaccines, electricity, and GMOs did not exist when Jesus walked on the earth, the New Testament does lay out principles of right and wrong that guide the Christian in the use of all technology.

Hebrews 5:12 tells us, “Solid food is for the mature, [those] who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (NIV). We do not arrive at maturity easily. Note the terms: “by constant use,” and “trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

And how do we distinguish good from evil? By the Word of God. There is no other standard we can use.



Religious Intoxication

The first time I ever read the term “religious intoxication,” I was reading about the early Hutterites and their break from the Catholic system. Up to that point I felt there were many unnecessary frills being added to the truth, but I had not known there was a name for it.

The Roman Catholic Church is one example of what we mean by religious intoxication. One look at their practices and you will understand—grand stone buildings with ornate carvings and statues, pictures and paintings, stained glass windows, candles and incense, music and religious chants, robes, hats, gold and silver. Any churchgoer can be intoxicated before a word of Scripture is even spoken—their five senses are so stimulated that they will neglect to apply real objective thought to anything being preached.

We once had a Spanish family stop at our colony for a tour. When we walked into the Lehr Stuben (the teaching room) the grandmother of the family exclaimed as she looked around, "Nada! Nada!"

I assumed she was Catholic, as many Spanish people are, and realized immediately what she meant. Since "nada" is Spanish for "nothing," I knew she was noticing the absence of intoxicating extras. I explained to her that we believe Jesus should not hang on the walls; we believe He should live in our hearts. She understood and was deeply thankful for this teaching.

"Religious intoxication" consists of excessive frills added to otherwise simple and down-to-earth practices of the faith. When you are attracted to the pleasant surroundings rather than the truth, you are being intoxicated by these things. I challenge you to strip away all the external add-ons to the practice of your faith in its simplest form and see if anything is left of your "faith."

For instance, our Hutterian practice of *Abendmahl* (examination, confession, absolution, and the Lord's Supper) has remained very simple. All that is needed—bread, wine, a penitent church and the memory of Christ's suffering—is there, and nothing more.

Look at weddings, and one can easily see how much excess has been added to this humble practice. The promise and meaning of biblical marriage is fully complete with simply a man, a woman, vows, and a marriage feast. A wedding cake, flowers, special dresses, and other "frills" can become a part of religious intoxication that distract one from the ordinance itself.

Christmas celebrations might be another example of "religious intoxication." Christmas would not even exist to some people if it were stripped of all the hype—the food, the shopping, the clothes, the decor, the gift-giving—that has become attached to it. In order to truly celebrate Christmas, one needs a thankful heart and maybe a Bible, so he can read the story of Christ's birth. Most of the other things are add-ons to keep spiritually dead people interested.

Consider Easter. Eggs, rabbits, and lilies have nothing to do with Jesus coming out of the grave. They deceive people into thinking these practices are part of faith when it is simply "religious intoxication."

We do not want to be deceived by magnificent meeting houses, statues, symbols, icons, and traditions and think they are part of faith or truth.

Truth is self-substantiating, meaning it proves itself to be true. No instrumental music, no pictures and statues, no incense, no fancy preaching and theological reasoning, no decorum and grand buildings, no flowers, no special

foods, no special clothes, no fancy lights, nothing will help truth be more true than it already is. That is why a true Christian will shun these things and pursue truth alone—pure truth. For if pure truth is not sufficient enough to convict you, you will miss out on the deepest mysteries of the Kingdom of God, and the white foam of "religious intoxication" will keep you tossed to and fro in mindless, meaningless worship.

Let's purge our lives of religiously intoxicating things and practices. Then the light of truth will shine in our hearts clearer than ever before.

T.M. | Alberta

Practical Questions:

1. How can frills and add-ons deceive the worshipper?
2. What customs or add-ons in your experience detract from true faith?
3. Are you satisfied with simple biblical practices, or do you need add-ons to keep you interested?

Anabaptist Voice: Keeping things plain and simple is often harder than adding crosses, steeples, flowers, robes, and other fancies to our meeting houses. But we must always remember that obedience to God's commands, along with humble hearts, is better than sacrifices and offerings.



Good Reasons

Thank you for your thought-provoking magazine.

In AV 12 and 13 there was considerable discussion about whether NT Christians are required to keep the Law of Moses. If the Law of Moses was abolished by the death and resurrection of Jesus, and Christians are freed from it, then I have two questions for the "Round Table Discussion."

1. On what do conservative Anabaptists base their belief/practice that it is inappropriate for a woman to wear pants/slacks if not on the OT command that a woman is not to wear men's clothing?
2. On what do conservative Anabaptists base their belief it is wrong to wear tattoos etc. if not on the OT passage condemning body piercings?

Since those things are not strictly forbidden in the NT, are they then OK to practice?

M.E.Y. | Pennsylvania



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 Responses**—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: The Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Delicate Issue (from AV 13, page 40)

by Emma Mazed



I can see many positive aspects of my new church’s teaching with regards to sexuality.

What a blessing this is! I do not know if our openness to discuss such topics is recognized for the gift that it is, but for this former Catholic coming to the Mennonite faith, it is truly a revelation.

The Mennonite perspective is so much healthier! No embarrassment, an opportunity to learn and ask questions, the chance to see the entire congregation, men and women, supporting God’s Word on this topic. How incredibly refreshing!

Something Missing (from AV 13, page 41)

by Ona Track



I just wanted to update you concerning the fellowship situation.

God has drawn a small group of us to worship and fellowship together. At this point none of the people believe they are to be a part of starting a church. They are still active members of their churches and do not feel it is time to leave. However, they are open to God’s leading, but right now they believe they are where God wants them.

We do enjoy the magazine and I will continue to give it to them as I receive it. I just want to thank you for your prayers and care for us. I suppose the timing is not right for such a move of God, but in the meantime, we will pray and continue to seek God for His will.

Thank you again and may God bless you in all you do for His kingdom.

Help! Help! (from AV 13, page 40)

by Hess I. Tente



So first of all, I will tell you what I did: nothing. I stood there and watched until it was too late to do anything. Then, I continued to the bookstore with questions plaguing my mind.

I feel like I have more questions than answers on the issue. Here are my thoughts on the questions:

1. Is it the right thing to only stand by and watch a robbery take place?

I do not really feel that my response was wrong, but neither am I sure that it was the best response. In this culture (Peru), most people will not interfere with robbers. I think it is a result of the violent terrorist activity in the not-too-distant past. People try to avoid getting involved, or even observing robberies. Even the police are more interested in scaring off the bad guys than in trying to capture them. Most times armed robbers will not get violent as long as their victim cooperates with them, but if they face resistance they might beat up their victim. They are unpredictable as they are often on drugs. Thievery is common. General society accepts it as an unhandy part of life.

Anabaptist Voice: In Luke 12:14 Jesus refused to divide an inheritance between two brothers and gave this reason. “Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?” Jesus did not want to become entangled with being a judge over earthly disputes. Neither should we become entangled in affairs of social justice, at least not yet. The day will come when the righteous will judge the world, but not yet (I Corinthians 6:1-2).

We should not become involved in disputes between non-redeemed people. “He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears” (Proverbs 26:17).

2. What are possible courses of action a nonresistant follower of Jesus could take in this situation?

There is often a third option between doing nothing and resisting violently in such a situation. I could have ran along behind the robber hollering at him and trying to get other people’s attention, in hopes that he would drop the backpack or someone else would tackle him. But is it right to hope someone else would tackle him if I am not willing to do it?

Many times I believe the Holy Spirit will lead the believer in how to respond. I have heard many stories of Christians who were robbed and responded in unpremeditated ways. One missionary was riding a bus and realized that someone had pickpocketed him. He went to the front of the bus and stood in the doorway and said, “Someone robbed my wallet. No one is getting off this bus until I get my wallet back.” After a while his wallet appeared on the floor.

In another incident, a young armed man pointed his gun at a missionary behind the counter of the mission’s bookstore. The missionary told me later that he has no idea how it happened, but the next thing he knew, the gun went flying and the would-be robber was lying on the floor.

Such ways are not the typical response taught in nonresistance class at Bible School. But I believe these men were led of the Spirit, and did the right thing. We need to be very slow to judge others in such situations because we do not know how we would respond until we are faced with it. However, I think it is valuable to think beforehand what would be a proper response. The most important thing is to be in tune with God and follow His inner prompting.

Anabaptist Voice: In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), the Samaritan showed compassion and helped the one who had been robbed rather than trying to track down the robbers and recover the stolen goods. In this situation, we could pray and ask God to intervene. Then we could try to assist the one who has been robbed in various ways.

3. What should the brother have done when witnessing the taxicab dispute?

Jesus’ command to “resist not evil” seems to be given in the context of facing personal enemies. Jesus bore personal suffering quietly, but had a heart of great compassion for others who suffered. Maybe the brother could have gone over to the fighting pair and pled with the man to stop beating his victim. In fits of anger a man will often come to his senses if he realizes a third party is observing, or talks to him. Of course, if he is drunk or high on drugs, his response is unpredictable.

Anabaptist Voice: Would it be a good response to go near the fighting pair and audibly pray for them?



The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

Three Pledges

by Manny Masters



I recently attended a program at an elementary Christian school. At the beginning of the children's part, the children and their teachers recited the following three pledges in the order given:

The American Flag

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The Christian Flag

I pledge allegiance to the Christian Flag and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands, one Savior, crucified, risen and coming again, with life and liberty for all who believe.

The Bible

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.

Something did not seem right to me so I asked to have a copy of the three pledges. I wanted to study the pledges more closely and came up with the following questions:

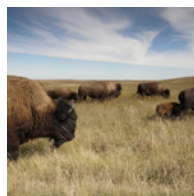
Practical Questions:

1. What does it mean to pledge allegiance to some person or thing?
2. Is anything wrong with making any of the pledges individually?
3. Is there a conflict between the pledges?
4. Can an Anabaptist make any of the pledges?



The Parable of the Herd

by Al Together



A herd of buffalo traveled over the land together. They followed the older leaders who for years had roamed over the wide open spaces and knew the seasons, the grass ranges, and the watering places.

One buffalo strayed off by itself and became lost, never to return to the herd. It liked being alone and cared not for the presence of other buffalo. One day, a mountain lion attacked and killed it. Another buffalo became lame and could not keep up with the herd. It too fell behind and sickness overcame it and it died. One day the wolves attacked the herd. The herd fled from the wolves until one buffalo could no longer keep up. Then the wolves cut it down and devoured it.

But the buffalo roamed the land in the strength, safety, and security of the herd. The herd greatly multiplied until one day it separated into two herds.

The herd is the church.

The lone buffalo are those who like to go their own way and will not submit to the church. The weak and sick buffalo are those led astray by false teaching or lack of interest in spiritual things. The wolves are the evil ones that attack and destroy the church. The herd buffalo are like the righteous who stay together and flourish in the presence and joy of the Lord and in the strength of fellowship.

Practical Questions:

1. What are the blessings of being part of the herd (*I Corinthians 12:7*)?
2. When is it not safe to be part of the herd (*Acts 6:13-14; Revelation 2 & 3*)?
3. When is it not safe to stray from the herd (*III John 1:9-11*)?
4. Who commissioned the Old Testament prophets?
5. What does Anabaptist history tell us about following the herd?



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.

Kingdom Fellowship Weekend

Date: August 23-25, 2019 | Friday @ 6:00 p.m. through Sunday @ 12:30 p.m.

Registration: Registration is required. Check-in begins Friday at 1:00 p.m.

Location:

Roxbury Holiness Camp, 13763 Cumberland Hwy, Orrstown, PA

Contact: For more information or to register:

Call: 717-753-0845 | **Visit:** www.kingdomfellowshipweekend.org

Program: Interspersed with singing, prayer, memory work, sharing life experiences, quiet times, meals, and fellowship are the following messages:

Curt Wagoner: "The Good Report of Faith"
Brandon Byler: "James, The Brother of Jesus"
Dean Taylor: "Michael Sattler"
John D. Martin: "Peter Waldo"

Dean Taylor: "Midnight Message"
Ernest Strubhar: "Casiodoro de Reina"
Ernest Strubhar: "Ladies of Faith"
Separate topics for men and ladies



Salt & Light: Facilitator Orientation Seminar

Date: September 26-28, 2019 (*Thurs. evening, Fri., and Sat. morning*)

Registration: Registration is required by September 3.

Location:

Haven Fellowship, Plain City, OH

Contact: For more information or to register:

Call: 330.893.2428 | **Email:** saltandlight@camoh.org | **Visit:** www.christianaidministries.org/salt-light

Highlights of the seminars include the following speakers and topics:

Sessions by Gary Miller:

Analyzing World Views
The Impact of Culture
Adapting to Changing Conditions
Learning to Categorize Needs

Breakout Discussion Groups:

Example of a Real-Life Salt & Light Course
Emulate a Real-Life Salt & Light Course
Share Your Initial Course Plans

Sessions by Clyde Zimmerman:

Introduction to the Salt & Light Program
High Level Salt & Light Course Review
Practical Steps of Salt & Light
Course Tips and Best Practices

Sessions by Joe Hess:

Do I Know My Neighbor?
A Tool for Outreach in the Kingdom
Consensus Building in Your Home Church





Circulation & Financial Statements

Income & Expense Report

April thru June 2019

April 2019 Beginning Balance \$18,329.68

Income

Donations \$495.00

Local Support* \$0.00

Total Income \$18,724.68

Expenses

Handling & Packaging \$592.00

Postage \$2,888.12

Printing \$5,044.00

Staff Expenses \$344.00

Total Expense \$8,868.12

June 2019 Ending Balance \$9,956.56

Circulation Report

June 2019

ISSUE #9 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,600 | Operating Cost: \$8,100

Cost Per Copy: \$1.76/ea.

ISSUE #10 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,600 | Operating Cost: \$8,488

Cost Per Copy: \$1.84/ea.

ISSUE #11 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,500 | Operating Cost: \$9,150

Cost Per Copy: \$2.03/ea.

ISSUE #12 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,600 | Operating Cost: \$8,464

Cost Per Copy: \$1.84/ea..

ISSUE #13 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$8,868

Cost Per Copy: \$1.83/ea.

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



Help Wanted!

Anabaptist Voice needs the assistance of a Layout Designer. Our current volunteer has assisted with 14 issues and is ready to pass the baton.

The new Layout Designer is responsible to layout pages, articles, and pictures in an attractive manner. AV Editors will provide completed articles and do all copy editing. This volunteer needs to have experience with Adobe InDesign and will be responsible for sending the final, print-ready, digital file to the printers. The workload for each issue as experienced by the current Layout Designer varies from 20-40 hours per issue depending on a number of variables. Payment is possible.

Please email the Editor if you would like to volunteer, have questions, or would like to make a suggestion.



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“GOD DRAWS UP THE WATER VAPOR AND THEN DISTILLS IT INTO RAIN. THE RAIN POURS DOWN FROM THE CLOUDS AND EVERYONE BENEFITS. WHO CAN UNDERSTAND THE SPREADING OF THE CLOUDS AND THE THUNDER THAT ROLLS FORTH FROM HEAVEN?”

JOB 36:27-29 (NLT)

