

Be ye doers
of the Word
and not hearers
only...
James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

- "TWO VIEWS OF THE TESTAMENTS" - MILO ZEHR
- "DISTINCTIVE TEACHINGS" - DONALD MARTIN
- "HOLDING GOD'S HAND" - EAN & SHELBY STARR
- "A SYMBOL OF PEACE" - ANDREW V. STE. MARIE
- "PRECIOUS WATER FOR EL MARAÑON" - JUDY GLICK



Letter from the Editor

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” – **Colossians 3:2**



Six of our seven children with their spouses and some of their children were around for Thanksgiving. The activities included top-notch food, volleyball, pig and deer hunting, fishing, and much visiting and giving of thanks. Included in storytime was a story, “The Thanksgiving I Will Never Forget,” (published by *Reader’s Digest* in 1956) which my dad once read to us children. The story reminds us what it was like to be without running water and electric lights, conveniences we now take for granted. And could we still be thankful if all we had for our Thanksgiving dinner was a tough jackrabbit and turnips?

The Bible tells us that in every circumstance, God’s children should always be thankful for His mercy and goodness. And the hymn says it well, “Come ye thankful people, come,”

Since 2012 my rainfall records for this small spot on God’s earth reveal some interesting facts. The highest annual rainfall was 60.95 inches in 2013, and the lowest was 40.23 inches in 2017. This year has seemed very dry to us, but as of this morning, December 22, this year’s rainfall has nudged ahead of 2017 with 41.20 inches.

In November TGS International completed *The Final Conquest* in the Conquest Series and sent the manuscript off to the printer. This book marks the end of a project that began twenty years ago.

Christmastime—the whole world should be taxed—and the end of the year remind us that it is tax time. Christians should be glad to pay legitimate taxes—protection money—so we can continue to do good and be protected from evil and ungodly men. We should be thankful rival gangs do not come to our door demanding our support.

Looking ahead into 2020 and beyond, I remind you not to put your trust in earthly things. The Lord is coming back for every one of us and we must be ready to let go of the wealth and conveniences God has entrusted to our care. Christians always need to live detached

from earthly things, whether in disastrous events on earth or when living every day so we’re ready to die.

We have again endeavored to put together an issue that champions “a faith that works.” We pray you will find AV16 encouraging, enlightening, and edifying.

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

Feet and Hands

A friend gave me a copy of AV15 and I would be interested in being added to your mailing list. I appreciate what I see.

However, why is "Anabaptist" so emphasized, and the glorious church of God (Jesus' bride) so sidelined?

If I may be so frank as to ask, "Which portion of God's body or kingdom is the feet and hands behind this publication?"

May Christ be exalted.

D.S. | *Pennsylvania*



A Humble Approach

I really appreciated the article "Rightly Dividing the Word" (AV14, page 7). I feel it would be a good idea to keep this article handy and periodically read through it as we study our Bibles.

The three articles on Revelation were interesting to read (AV14, pages 12-16). When studying different understandings of Revelation, I like to keep II Peter 1:20-21 in mind, "Knowing this first, no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

D.L.H. | *Ohio*



Helpful Resource

Thank you so much for publishing such a helpful resource for the church in our time.

I would like to add my friend to your mailing list. He is currently incarcerated.

Included is my donation to the work. Thanks again, and God bless you.

K.Z. | *Pennsylvania*

Be Considerate

I have called your "interpretive readings" by another name: "expanded paraphrases" (AV15, page 31). Some people may object to your name because it seems to them to be disrespectful of the text of Scripture. They emphasize that the very words of Scripture are inspired and that a translation should be as literal as possible.

Some people may not understand that a rigidly literal translation is not readable, and sometimes not even understandable (AV15, page 16), because they don't understand how different languages are. So "interpretive readings" seems to them to mess with the text of Scripture. I think that your "interpretive readings" might be better accepted if you called it an expanded paraphrase.

E.S. | *Oklahoma*



Balanced Perspective

I thought the article entitled "Bible Translations" was well written. It brought good balance and perspective to a potentially "hot button" issue.

Many of us have grown up using the KJV and have become accustomed to its poetic style. But I have found a deeper understanding of God's Word, and the Word has taken on new meaning as I have expanded the use of other translations in my personal devotions. I wonder how many of those who adamantly hold to the KJV stop to think that this too is only a "translation" from the original text. I have settled on mainly using the NKJV for public worship, but have about six other translations on my shelf that I also use from time to time in my studies.

Again, I appreciate the balanced perspective of this article.

J.G.Y. | *Indiana*

A Labor of Love

Greetings in the wonderful name of God our Father and His only begotten Son, our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I hope and pray for the love, mercy, grace, joy, peace, and faith of Jesus Christ to be abundantly present in each of your lives and freely flowing out of the corporate body to the blessing of all.

I thank you greatly for the labor of love in gathering, developing, and designing the *Anabaptist Voice* publication. It is always received by me as a breath of spiritual fresh air to a hungry soul. The articles of spiritual meat strengthen, nourish, and guide my spirit to continue striving for righteousness and true holiness for the glory of Jesus Christ.

My reason for writing to you is to inform you that I have been transferred to another prison and still wish to continue receiving *Anabaptist Voice*. Be advised of my new address.

C.N. | *Mississippi*



Bad Manuscripts

I have read the articles on translation by Dale Heisey and Larry Weaver (AV15). In these articles the writers totally ignored the “elephant in the room.” This “elephant” is the corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts that underlie all new [English] Bible versions. **THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED!**

Larry Weaver made a statement on page 19 of AV15. “Modern translators have the advantage of using many older manuscripts that have been discovered since the KJV translation was made.” He also made the statement that “if anything, the modern versions are even more reliable than the KJV.” The fact is, the KJV translators had access to all of these “older” writings but chose **NOT TO USE THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE CORRUPT!**

E.M.Y. | *Georgia*



Be A Lighthouse

This lighthouse card I am writing on made me think about your work as editor of *Anabaptist Voice*. Like a lighthouse you are giving Light–Truth to all who are seeking it and no doubt keeping many from shipwreck on the sea of life. Keep up the good work!

A.H.H. | *Georgia*

Screen Delusions

I appreciated the article “Technology and Anabaptism.” The viewing screen is very influential. It has been said that one picture is worth a thousand words. I believe the screen is powerful; some people believe everything they see on a screen.

Illustrations, allusions, and delusions have something in common. They show visual representations. Illustrations illuminate an idea to make it more understandable. Allusions present something that is unreal. Delusions present a lie with the intent to deceive.

II Thessalonians 2:1-2 warns us not to be deceived into thinking the Lord Jesus has already come back and therefore we don’t need to be ready for His return. Then in II Thessalonians 2:9-12, Paul writes, “**The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**”

Apparently the screen is a gift from God, but for those who don’t love the truth it can be a strong delusion that leads to damnation.

B.H. | *Pennsylvania*



Fellow Seekers

I am a member of the Bruderhof communities. I live in upstate New York in the Catskill Mountains.

I just read AV 15 for the fall of 2019; it was very interesting. I was especially intrigued by the story of the Josh and Kristy Scott family from Idaho and what they experienced in their seeking.

Do you happen to know what their email address is? I would like to correspond with them. I don’t know if they know or have heard of the Bruderhof, but at least we can correspond and learn from each other.

C.W. | *New York*



Put to Bed

I have never considered or known the Scriptures to be anything but the Word of God or the Word of the Lord. Sometimes I wonder if people have nothing more important and relevant to glean from the Bible than something with which to play semantics [the meaning of words] (AV15, page 35).

Some of the comments about Bible translations might be correct if one is an English-only speaker! (AV15, page 36). There are many, many, many more translations called foreign language translations by Anglophiles. All of them are translations of whatever original or near original documents in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

To those who speak only English, your language is not the only language. At times, I use a Dutch language translation (not Pennsylvania style) because it is my mother tongue. Many times it gives me a clearer understanding of what Scripture is saying.

Perhaps this seemingly never-ending discussion about which translation (in English) is the best ought to be put to bed for a considerable period of time before being reanimated.

J.V.L. | *Tasmania*



Canceling Out

I request that you take my name off your mailing list. Your publication is not worth spending my time to read it. Why should I spend my time reading it when I need more time to study the holy Word of God?

1. You are not the Anabaptist voice of today.
2. You are very liberal in your usage and promotion of other translations of the Bible. These newer [English] translations do not help me at all.
3. The most recent edition of *Anabaptist Voice* editorial speaks of “interpreting the word of God” in paragraphs four and five (AV14). Interpreting the Word of God is very Protestant. A genuine born-again conservative Anabaptist reads the Bible and LIVES it, whereas the Protestant reads the Word of God, then interprets it. You can interpret the Word of God away, but you cannot live the Word of God away.

M.Y. | *Kentucky*

Not Intended

I am blessed with what AV is producing, giving evidence of the Spirit of God at work.

In response to what T.J. from Ohio wrote (AV15, page 5), “AV is largely unrealistic, divisive, and exclusive.” I disagree with the first adjective, but with the second and third, the truth has been spoken, (although I see it differently than he intended).

Jesus Himself said, “**I came not to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother ...**” (Matthew 10:34). Divisive?

Exclusive? The Kingdom of God is exclusive at its roots. Heaven and hell are mutually exclusive. We are told in the Bible that those who practice lawlessness will not inherit the Kingdom of God. The Word of God warns against idolatry, pride, and the love of this world.

America’s most well-accepted verses in the Bible are ... guess what! “**Judge not that ye be not judged.**” Does that not speak of a guilty conscience? Consider another. “**For God so loved this world that He gave His only son ...**” Acts 2:36 says, “**For Jesus has become both Christ and Lord.**” Not a savior only, but also LORD! These two are NOT separable. Listen people! Judgement is coming! Jonah’s message to the Ninevites is STILL the message for TODAY. But there will be people who will say, “**Did not we do this, and this, and this, in your name?**” “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels’” (Matthew 25:41). Is this not exclusion?

There is another option, praise God! John the Baptist’s message, “**REPENT, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!**” This is still a message for us today. We must repent from our carnality and pride and say as Saul of Tarsus said, “**Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?**”

“**And the Lord said unto him, ‘Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do’**” (Acts 9:6).

In other words, humble yourself and accept direction from a lowly person on the same horizontal level as yourself. God uses lowly men for His purposes, His honor, and His glory. “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear**” (Matthew 11:18).

W. K. | *Maine*

Two Views of the Testaments

by Milo Zehr

The Reformers and the Anabaptists generally held two different views of the relationship between the two testaments. In this article I want to explain what those differences were and how they still affect our lives today.

The Reformers believed the Old and New Testaments were on an equal plane and had equal authority while the Anabaptists believed the New Testament was superior in authority to the Old Testament. Let us look at some of the reasons given on both sides for these two opposing views. Then I want to teach what is the right understanding of the relationship between the Testaments for us today.



Believer's Baptism Set Them Apart

The Anabaptist movement officially began in Zurich, Switzerland, on January 21, 1525, when Grebel, Mantz, Blaurock, and others baptized each other and initiated believer's baptism. By this act they emphatically rejected infant baptism and a number of other beliefs Zwingli was tenaciously committed to:

1. The City Council must determine the speed of reform.
2. Whatever is not condemned in Scripture is allowed.

3. The Old and New Testaments have equal authority.

Differences Arise

Prior to the Second Disputation held in Zurich on October 26-28, 1523, there was little observable difference between Zwingli's views and those of men like Grebel, Stumpf, Haetzer, Mantz, and Hubmaier—this disputation was held to debate the use of images and the (re)sacrifice of Christ anew during each Catholic Mass.

A number of differences between Zwingli and the future Anabaptists now became obvious, especially in relation to how much the town magistrates, and the local congregation should determine the meaning of Scripture and the speed of reform.

During this disputation Zwingli said there would be no changes in relation to images and the Mass apart from the support of the City Council.

In response, the future Anabaptists repeatedly insisted that all religious questions must be submitted to the Word of God, not to City Council.

Later Zwingli argued that what was not forbidden by Scripture, was permitted. The Anabaptists said that whatever is not taught in Scripture by definite statements and examples is forbidden.

Two Different Systems of Belief

These two ideas, the belief that one can do anything Scripture does not condemn in contrast to the belief that one can only do what is commanded in Scripture, needs an explanation. The view that one can do anything Scripture does not condemn resulted in Zwingli saying that infant baptism and the joining of church and state are okay. Zwingli argued that neither infant baptism—baby baptism is similar to Old Testament circumcision—nor a united church and state are specifically condemned in the New Testament.

Because of the Anabaptist belief that one can only do what the Bible commands, they reasoned that infant baptism and the joining of church and state are wrong because they are not specifically commanded in the New Testament.

Although I agree that infant baptism and the joining of church and state are wrong, my arguments against these two practices are for solid reasons based on New Testament teaching even though it is not specifically commanded in the New Testament. These same Scriptures refute Zwingli's teaching that anything that is not specifically condemned in the New Testament is allowed if it was allowed in the Old Testament.

Anabaptists also rejected Zwingli's view of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. In contrast to the magisterial reformers—reformers whose religious reforms were influenced by political rulers—Anabaptists refused to place the Old Testament on a level plane with the New Testament, choosing rather to make the new covenant of Christ supreme and viewing the Old Testament as preparation for Christ and the New Testament. This uniquely Anabaptist principle contributed to the Anabaptists' rejection of war and infant baptism, and to their view that the church is not composed of everyone in a geographical area or of everyone in a particular family (like the children of Israel).

Reformers Place Both Testaments on an Equal Plane

Zwingli and Calvin, on the other hand, said the Old and New Testaments are on an equal plane. As a result, these two reformers concluded that the church today is similar to Israel in the Old Testament. This rationale led to the practice of infant baptism because they said it corresponded to Old Testament circumcision. They also continued to hold to the medieval view that society could not remain stable unless everyone in a given geographical area belonged to the same church. As a result of this belief, Zwingli and Calvin joined church and state as in the Old Testament and taught that believers should fight and kill.

Zwingli and Calvin's view of the relationship between the Old and New Testaments represent what is commonly referred to as a "flat view" of the Bible. By flat view, I mean the view that the Old and New Testaments are on an equal plane with no progress of revelation from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The flat view recognizes no progressive revelation as a result of the teachings of Christ and the other writings in the New Testament.

Anabaptists View the New Testament as a Fuller Revelation

Most Anabaptists, on the other hand, said that the New Testament, when compared to the Old Testament, is a fuller revelation of the will of God. The Old Testament points forward to Christ, and the New Testament is the revelation of Jesus Christ. Since Christ is the central figure in Scripture and the final/ultimate revealer of God and God's will, Anabaptists argued that we must see biblical revelation as progressive. Scripture is not a flat book. The laws and regulations of the Old Testament are not all God has revealed.

I believe a major reason "flat view" people arrive at "flat view" conclusions is because they begin with the Old Testament and fail to fully appreciate the statements in the New Testament that emphasize the superiority of the revelation of Christ and the New Testament over the revelation

of the Old Testament. Speaking of Jesus, John the Baptist said, "The one (Jesus) who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me" (John 1:15).

The writer of the Gospel of John then says, "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth

came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:16-18).

The grace and truth revealed in Jesus Christ is superior to the revelation or truth presented in the law, and Jesus is the One who has declared, or made known, the Father. According to Jesus, the words that He spoke were the words given to Him by the Father, and by these words people will be judged (John 12:45-50).

According to the writer of Hebrews, "God spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, [but] in these last days [He] has spoken to us by His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). This Son is a superior revelation and greater than the prophets and the angels (Hebrews 1); greater than Moses (Hebrews 3); the greatest High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-5:10); greater than Abraham and Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:13-7:28). Jesus mediates for us a far superior





covenant and priesthood (Hebrews 8:6-8), and this new covenant “made the first obsolete,” and “what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13). The new covenant is superior because it was ratified by the teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and is inscribed in the hearts of His people (Hebrews 8:8-10; 10:16).

We find a number of teachings in the Old Testament that are modified or eliminated by Christ and the New Testament. One example is the difference between the Old and New Testament commands concerning war and killing. In the Old Testament one of the ten commandments says, **“You shall not murder”** (Exodus 20:13). Yet there are a number of times in the Old Testament when God commands the Israelites to do battle with their enemies. Because Israel was both a nation/state and a religious institution, it punished evil, maintained law and order, and carried out military campaigns.

The New Testament nowhere gives the church the responsibility to maintain law and order and to punish evil or the enemies of God in society. Instead, believers are commanded, **“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge, I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”** (Romans 12:19-21; NIV).

The Flat View Contradicts New Testament Teaching

Two examples of the New Testament providing further revelation than the Old Testament include men of God in the Old Testament who had more than one wife, and the instruction in Numbers 35 and Joshua 20 that allowed avenging of blood and provided cities of refuge.

Although neither Christ nor other New Testament writers directly address some of these matters, the instructions they do give demonstrate that people of the new covenant will be motivated from within by the Spirit of God and by love. For example, concerning adultery, Jesus says that a man should not commit the act of adultery, but if he looks at a woman and lusts for her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27-28).

Jesus goes on to discuss swearing, murder, anger, kindness, and generosity. Ten times in Matthew 5 & 6 Jesus says, **“But I say unto you.”** Jesus clearly spoke with authority, showing the superiority of His words in the New Testament compared to the laws of the Old Testament. To say the two Testaments are level and carry equal authority clearly violates Christ’s plain teaching.

Preparation for Christ and the New Testament

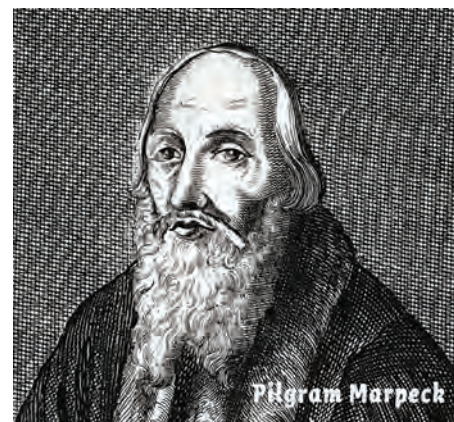
Anabaptists saw the Old Testament as preparation for Christ and the New Testament. We see both Menno Simons and Pilgram Marpeck defending this position. Menno Simons writes:

Search the Law diligently. For it points out to you, first, the obedience to God and righteousness required of you; and also the weakness of your sinful flesh.

According to Menno, the Law prepares people for Christ by requiring of them that which they could not perform.

Pilgram Marpeck also speaks of the Law preparing people for Christ:

[T]he right order of teaching is that God has allowed the laws to precede Christ in order to show clearly the nature of sin and its fruits. Sin then becomes the reason for a sincere prayer to God for help.



By means of the Scripture, Christ is shown to be one who truly raises to life, and who enables us to do God's will; without Him nothing can be done, for it was shown to be impossible before His coming.

In this quote Marpeck is saying that the law shows man what he cannot do and takes away all his self-confidence. In desperation, he turns to Christ for healing.

Anabaptists also saw the role of the Law and the Old Testament as being one of promise. Again, we see both Menno Simons and Pilgram Marpeck defending this position.

According to Menno, all the promises made in the Old Testament are fulfilled in Christ:

Behold, my reader, such a faith ... recognizes, I say, that all the promises to the fathers, the expectation of the patriarchs, the whole figurative law, and all the prophecies of the prophets are fulfilled in Christ, with Christ, and through Christ.

Marpeck likewise sees Christ as fulfilling the promises of the Old Testament.

God has promised redemption through Christ, but this redemption was to happen in the future ... In the meantime, the figurative ceremonies were commanded as a strength and a comfort, and they were to be confident ... that in the end they would be redeemed, and that He would be their God through Christ.

A Fuller Revelation

Since Christ is the central figure in Scripture and the final/ultimate revealer of God and God's will, we must view the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament as Promise to Fulfillment; Type/Shadow to Reality; Law to Gospel. This progression means that ceremonial regulations in the Old Testament are not required in the New Testament (circumcision, ceremonial washings, sacrifices, unclean foods, ascetic-type regulations concerning eating, holy days, and feast days). Christ has removed the need to keep Old Testament laws, for they have been nailed to the cross. According to Colossians 2:14, Christ has "wiped out the handwriting of requirements" in the Old Testament "that was against us, which was contrary to us." Christ says in Matthew 5:17-20 that He came to "fulfill," or "complete" or "fill



to the full," or "bring the law to completion."

Even if one sees practical value in following the various ceremonial and dietary regulations of the Old Testament, the New Testament is clear that the call to faith and repentance does not include a call to obedience to the laws and restrictions of the Old Testament. Of the 1,000 Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, Old Testament ideas are often expanded in the New Testament. Statements and attitudes in the Old Testament that reflect pre-Christ ideals are generally not condemned in the New Testament, but neither are they affirmed.

There is no rule in the New Testament that says what to do if an Old Testament command is not practiced or commanded in the New Testament. The argument that something commanded or allowed in the Old Testament but not mentioned in the New Testament must therefore be right or wrong is arguing from silence. If the Old Testament practice/command is rejected in the New Testament, it is clearly wrong. If it is not rejected in the New, it is allowed unless it violates a clear teaching or principle in the New.

The Harmonious Whole

Christ, the living Word, is the author, interpreter, and applier of the written Word, both the Old and New Testaments, and along with the Holy Spirit, gives life and unity to the written Word. Our interpretation of the written Word must be consistent with the example and character of Christ as revealed in the Scripture.

Although the living Christ provides consistency and unity in one's handling of the Scripture, all of the Old Testament scriptures are seen as pointing forward to Christ. This fact alone results in a harmonious unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament.



M.E.Z. | Virginia



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“A mind that is not clean is not keen.”

– John Ray Miller at Mount Moriah Mennonite Fellowship, TN



“Initial repentance continues on until it becomes a way of life.”

– Jonathan Martin at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“You may have what is mine today. Tomorrow I may need what you have.”

– LeRoy Martin at Zion Mennonite Chapel, PA



“Godliness is not just the absence of sin in your life; it is also the presence of God in you.”

– Alan Troyer at Altona Youth Bible School, MN



“Many times the door of opportunity swings on the hinge of adversity.”

– Jeremiah Snodgrass at Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, OK



“Whatever God is, He is infinitely so.”

– David Weaver at Richland Mennonite Church, PA



“Faith unlocks the door so we can understand the powerful Word of God.”

– Nathan Royer at Old Brethren Church, OH



“A gospel that costs us nothing is worth nothing.”

– Allen Hilty at Old Brethren Church, OH



“If you launch your bark into a raging stream, you ought not blame the stream if it takes you further than you wanted to go.”

– Glen Kilmer at Fellowship Meetings, MO



“This life is more than a preparation for eternity; it is also a foretaste of the blessings to come.”

– Ray Stutzman at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA

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

Distinctive Teachings

A book review by James G. Landis

Distinctive Teachings of the Old Order People by Donald Martin is a booklet of 91 pages. Brother Martin takes on the delicate task of setting forth the teachings and resulting practices that make Anabaptist beliefs and life different from those of Christianity as a whole. He says, “My purpose in this writing is to instruct the Old Order people so they do not unwittingly abandon a heritage that demands of them complete surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ and the written Word.”

Permeating all the distinctive teachings Brother Martin mentions are the three broad themes of discipleship, brotherhood, and the somewhat indescribable mystery of *Gelassenheit*. Maybe the best we can do with *Gelassenheit* in English is “yieldedness, submission to God’s will, and a willingness to suffer persecution.” Or as John Ruth put it, “a non-self-assertive humility and faithfulness.” Each of these themes—discipleship, brotherhood, *Gelassenheit*—and how they affect the life of Anabaptist people are described more fully as one moves through the booklet.

Starting out in chapter two, Brother Martin mentions thirteen distinctive beliefs and characteristics of Anabaptist people that sets them apart from general Christendom and then gives a brief explanation of why each teaching is important.

1. Anabaptists believe the church is a visible body.

In the Anabaptist view, being a Christian means to live a righteous and holy life. Anabaptism is living the Word.

2. Anabaptists view both faith and works as equally important traits of their beliefs.

The belief that a proper confession is sufficient without the resulting holy life and good works is foreign to the Anabaptist way.

3. Believer’s baptism demands commitment.

Anabaptists stand alone in their belief of believer’s baptism tied to repentance, confession of sins, and vows to follow Jesus. Adult believer’s baptism is firmly tied to the Anabaptist belief that everybody is personally accountable before God for what he does.

4. Jesus is the sole mediator between God and man.

Anabaptists teach that no man can forgive sins. Preachers cannot forgive sins. This contrasts with the office of priests, cardinals, and popes who claim the power to forgive sins. The Bible does not give them that power.

5. Worshipping the God of heaven and earth

When we believe that God is the Lord God of heaven and earth, it serves to increase holy adoration, esteem, and reverence for the Divine Majesty among men. In humility we come before Him and worship Him in the beauty of holiness. The Old Order people worship God by keeping the first day of the week as a day of worship and set their labors aside.

6. The Fear of God

The Anabaptist thought on the fear of God goes beyond the Protestant belief of love and respect and includes accountability and judgement. This unbending value, that we are always responsible for our sins, is a concept that most Protestant denominations do not share.

7. The Creation and the Fall of Man

The Old Order people believe that we need not be concerned about Adam’s sin, but that we are personally accountable to God for our own sins.

8. Repentance, Amendment of Life, and Accountability

Anabaptists believe that man is a creature of choice who has the power to yield his heart to God. One is not predestined to be saved or lost. Part of this teaching is, “God judges the righteous and God is angry with the wicked every day.”

9. Salvation

In Anabaptist thought, salvation or grace is God’s free gift to man. This grace means repentance from sin and amendment of life.

The main focus in Anabaptism is living the Word. It is not doctrinal correctness nor trying to understand God’s ways.

10. Discipleship

Anabaptists understand that suffering as a disciple of Jesus is expected and a part of the price they need to pay. For them “grace” is the power of God that makes it possible to be a disciple.

11. The Kingdom of God

Jesus is the foundation of the church. He is the King of the church. The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven is the Church or the Bride of Christ. It is Christ’s kingdom here on earth and its subjects are those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. To the Old Order, the Kingdom of God is a present and spiritual kingdom in which only the believer has a part.

12. The Brotherhood or the Visible Church

Anabaptists hold that the church consists only of those who have truly repented, rightly believed, are baptized upon the confession of their faith and are incorporated into the spiritual Kingdom of God. From the very beginning the Anabaptists believed that “under the rule of Christ” as found in Matthew 18, the church must be kept free from sin.

13. Separation from the World

If we desire God’s spiritual blessing we must separate ourselves from this world in thought, word, and deed. The material things of this life are not part of this spiritual theme, as God lets it rain on the just and the unjust.

Plain clothes set the Old Order people apart from the rest of society. The dress uniforms that police, firemen, pilots, and army personnel wear also sets them apart from the people. However, for the latter, the dress uniforms are a distinction of glory and power, but for the Old Order, plain clothes mean separation from the rest of society, and can mean mockery or ridicule.

To those who think “Old Order” means only

plain clothes and horses and buggies, this book is a must read. Brother Martin lays out many distinctive beliefs and practices of the people who are also called “Anabaptists.” He does not even mention buggies. He helps define what the historic practices of Anabaptists were in the 1500s and 1600s and then shows us the biblical basis for perpetuating these same beliefs in our world today.

Not only does Brother Martin show us the right way, he also helps the reader understand how Anabaptists differ from other professing Christians. In many cases, he exposes erroneous beliefs Anabaptists have imbibed from other prevalent theologies. I would like to put it in his eloquent words: “Here is another point where Anabaptist and Protestant values brush shoulders and yet part ways significantly.”

The following paragraphs could serve as a summary of the booklet:

“The world’s way is to defend its views by logic and reasoning. The most important person is I and the I is determined to defend his rights and opinions.

“From the context of a brotherhood of voluntary Christians, the most important being is WE. The brotherhood’s corporate conscience is like a cistern where one can put in his concerns and reservations and then draws from it with confidence and assurance.

“One cannot fully comprehend what a brotherhood of believers means until he is fully immersed in the Anabaptist theme of *Gelassenheit*.”

J.G.L. | Georgia

Here is the contact information for purchasing *Distinctive Teachings of the Old Order People* by Donald Martin:

In Canada:

Vineyard Publications

7277 Third Line, R.R. 2

Wallenstein, ON N0B 2S0

In USA:

Green Pastures Press

50 Green Pastures Ln

Mifflin, PA 17058

717-436-9115

"The Scriptures on page 22 list a number of verses proving God's power raised Jesus from the dead. Space limited how many verses we could use. Look up the following references for further proof that it was God's power that raised Jesus and each of us from the dead."

- Acts 3:26; 4:10; 5:22, 30, 33; 10:40; 13:30, 33
- I Corinthians 15:4, 20, 26-28
- Ephesians 1:19-20
- Hebrews 13:20
- Romans 6:4; 8:34
- Galatians 1:1
- I Thessalonians 1:10
- I Peter 1:21

Agents of God

by Menno Knight

Once upon a time there was a little chicken, and everybody called him “Chicken Little.”

One day while he was out picking and scratching, an acorn fell down and bopped him on the head.

Chicken Little squawked, “AWK!” He looked up and didn’t see anything in the sky. So he ran down the road toward town crying, “Help! Help! The sky is falling! Help, help the sky is falling!”

As he ran down the road, he met up with Henny Penny. And Henny Penny clucked, “Buk Buk Buk BUK! Hello Chicken Little, what’s wrong with you?”

And Chicken Little said, “Oh Henny Penny, haven’t you heard? The sky is falling.”

And Henny Penny said, “Oh my, how terrible!”

And the two of them went flapping and running down the road toward town, shouting, “Help, help, the sky is falling! Help, help, the sky is falling!”

As they ran Ducky Lucky and Goosey Loosey and Turkey Lurkey also joined them crying the same thing, “Help, help, the sky is falling.” Off to town they all went squawking, and clucking and quacking and honking and gobbling in great alarm.

Now you may rightfully say, “This is a made-up story.” But in Acts 19:23-41 you can find a true story where people acted just like these barnyard fowls. In this account, Demetrius and the silversmiths started a riot that lasted two hours. People shouted “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” simply because it was the mob thing to do.

These two stories perfectly illustrate the godless people who are crying “climate change.” Theirs is a religion of fear—fear of air, energy, food, and water shortages. Fear of ozone holes, rising flood waters, depletion of resources, desertification, rampant diseases, mysterious side effects of chemicals, mineral and vitamin shortages in our bodies—all these fears and many more permeate the arguments.

Many believe mankind is destroying “Mother Earth,” and even the future of generations to come by his use of the earth. In other words, “the sky is falling.” But in all of this climate of fear, there is

not a fear of God—the God who made the world and everything in it (Acts 17:24).

The people of God should not follow this stampede of the ungodly who pretend to know the future of the earth. Their claims are as preposterous as the claims of those who pretend evolution is a science. God has not called His people to “a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (II Timothy 1:7).

Once people have climbed up the mountain of faith and declared their belief in the God who made the world and everything in it, they will accept God’s decrees for how man should live on the earth as authoritative and binding. That makes them a separate people from the people of the world. The people of God can leap out of the valley of fear and ascend to the heights of faith.

Those of us who believe God created the world, also believe He has the authority to set boundaries and limitations over how mankind should control and dominate the earth. Those who fear this Creator God honor Him and obey His commandments.

So for those who believe in God the Creator, the sky is not falling. God made the world and everything in it. He made it very good and we believe His rainbow promise, “As long as the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:22).

God’s commandments concerning how we use the earth are rather simple. One of the most pronounced among His commandments is that God has given man dominion/control over every living thing on the face of the earth (Genesis 1:26).

God not only gave mankind the authority to rule over all the animals, birds, fish, and every creeping thing; He also gave man the power to carry it out. God said, “The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every living thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs” (Genesis 9:2-3). In these verses God has given mankind practically unlimited authority over the whole earth to use it for the good of all mankind.

Another commandment God gave to all mankind was, “**Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth**” (**Genesis 9:1**). God wants an earth filled with people who choose to glorify His name. Neither did God set limits on when the earth would be full of people or on how many or what kind of plants, animals, fish, and birds mankind should place on the earth. He left that entirely up to man.

Now “fill” is an elastic term that allows for unlimited expansion. So we would understand that God intends for man to make the earth a place of abundance and not of scarcity. The point is that using the resources of the earth God’s way provides for physical abundance from now on, not fear and scarcity.

God’s commission to man means the people of God should be pro-active agents of God on the earth—agents of creativity, agents of efficiency, agents of healing, agents of life, agents of productivity.

In practical terms this means the people of God are builders, planters, savers, sharers, and workers; not destroyers, doomsters, fighters, hoarders, liars, naysayers, murderers, warriors, and robbers.

God’s people are the first to give aid to the victims of war and natural disaster. They care about the helpless and the downtrodden, sharing their earthly goods and giving their lives to save others. They love life in man—made in the image of God—and in the plants, animals, birds, fish, and even in the soil microbes of earth. People of God do not wantonly kill; any fool can take life, but only God can give life. Believers in God marvel at the marvelous gift of life God has entrusted to mankind.

Thus the people of God become partners with God in making the earth flourish and in nourishing the earth’s people with abundance. What a different attitude! Instead of being fearful of every future tremor that could threaten our lives, God’s people become confident stewards, boldly venturing into

the future under God’s guidance and power.

Obedience to God’s laws involve both physical laws and what we shall call moral laws.

The physical laws of the earth are those that man, by wisdom, searches out—atoms, bacteria, microbes, genetics, gravity, aerodynamics, electrons, light, hydraulics, cells, and much much more. God has imposed no strictures on honest inquiry into the wonders of His creation. If man uses his knowledge to do good, to improve the condition of man throughout the earth, to heal and to help, God approves. God smiles when men develop vaccines that eliminate dreaded diseases as surely as He rejoiced when Jesus healed the paralytics and opened the eyes of the blind.

Creating a world of abundance is not purely a mechanical thing. The choice is also a moral one. If man obeys the laws of right and wrong established by God (e.g. the Ten Commandments), there is a natural response of the earth, the animals, and his

fellowmen, to his work.

This truth should be obvious to all—respect for the Creator God as the only God, respect for the seventh day, respect for life, respect for another’s property, sexual purity, concern for others, honesty, diligence, and hard work. These virtues create a harmonious productive society.

Such a peaceful society naturally produces more goods than a society where sin prevails—selfishness, idol worship, atheism, lies, drunkenness, gambling, vices of all kinds, violence, fraud, theft, murder, indolence, sexual promiscuity, and war.

So I say again, that for the people of God, the sky is not falling. Our God tells us in both the Old and New Testaments, “**The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and all those who dwell therein**” (**Psalms 24:10**).



A Symbol of Peace

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

The Dunker Church

There stood the meeting house, scarred by artillery fire and rifle bullets, the preachers' table near the door, empty of pews, straw on the floor, and blood everywhere. The Dunker meeting house once more remained quiet and still; the screams and cries and moans of suffering and dying soldiers heard within its walls on September 17, 1862, were heard no more. The Bible was gone.

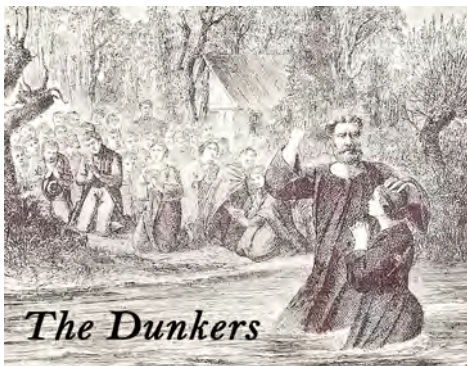
Outside an eerie stillness prevailed. Booming cannons, constant rifle fire, and all the shouts and smoke of battle were gone. Silence prevailed. The dead horse and its wagon made no noise. Nor did the dead soldiers in gray uniforms. The empty pews sat reverently under the great oaks. Nothing moved.

When the smoke and noise of battle had cleared, there on the high ground still stood the Dunker church, a symbol of peace and hope amidst the hopelessness and death of the lost in the world around it.

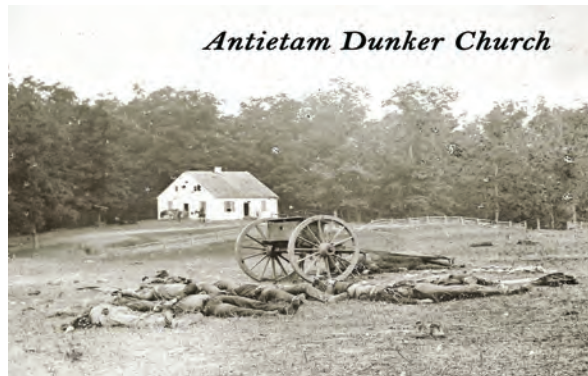
The Dunkers

The people who built this church in 1853 were a people of peace from the beginning of their movement. Influenced by both Pietism and Anabaptism, the Brethren movement began in Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708. Practicing believer's baptism, nonresistance, and the nonswearing of oaths, they were

also passionately evangelistic. The entire group emigrated to America in the 1700's to escape religious oppression. They were dedicated to obedience to Jesus' commandments.



Alexander Mack, one of their founders, wrote: "I do not think that a single commandment of the Lord Jesus dare be considered insignificant, if we consider the power and might of the Sovereign without reluctance. Concerning that about which Paul wrote to the Galatians and Colossians, it has only to do with the laws of the servant Moses, because they were too weak (see Hebrews 7:18). The Galatians wanted to follow these laws in order to be spared the cross of Christ and to set aside the teaching of Jesus."



In America, these people eventually came to be called German Baptists or Dunkers (a reference to their practice of baptism by immersion).

The Dunkers first came to live by Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg, Maryland, in about 1740. Several church buildings were built by the Brethren in the area. In 1782, the German Baptist Brethren made a principled decision: these conscientious brethren forbade slaveholding by their members. By 1790, there were about 1,500-German speaking members in America, but the switch to English occurred rather soon after that.

On February 22, 1851, Samuel and Elizabeth Mumma, who lived near Sharpsburg, "sold" a small part of their farm to the church for \$10 for the purpose of having a place to build a new meeting house. The Brethren in the immediate area had met in homes and barns for some time. The next year, construction began, and the meeting house now known as "Dunker Church"—then known as Mumma's Church—was completed in 1853. The building was small, modest, and plain. Measuring 35' 6" long by 34' 6" wide, it was made of whitewashed bricks, had a door on both the south and east sides, and was heated by two iron stoves near the center of the ground floor. It had an attic level. The main floor was furnished with twenty-two wooden benches and a preacher's table.

The final furnishing was an English Bible which had been donated to the congregation two years earlier by Samuel Mumma's father-in-law, Daniel Miller.

Slave States and Free States

Following decades of strife over the right to hold human beings in bondage, Southerners saw the victory of Abraham Lincoln in the United States presidential election of 1860 as a disaster. Starting with South Carolina, ten states seceded from the United States and formed their own government—the Confederate States of America. These ten states allowed slavery and were known as “slave states.” Maryland was a slaveholding border state that did not join the Confederacy.

The two sides could no longer agree on a peaceable way to coexist, so they raised armies and went to war.

Thus it came about that on September 14, 1862, the Union army of the Potomac under General George B. McClellan (87,000 men) and the Southern Army of Northern Virginia (45,000 men) under General Robert E. Lee prepared for a battle that was to come at Antietam Creek [estimates vary].

The stakes were high. Both sides hoped for a glorious victory that would bring a quick end to the war. Instead, the two armies preparing for a bloodletting like few others, converged on land owned by nonresistant Dunkers.

Meeting in Peace

On September 14, 1862, the Dunkers living near Sharpsburg held services in the Mumma Church as normal. David Long and Daniel Wolf preached in the little building. The members of the congregation were well aware of the fact that two gigantic armies were maneuvering in the area and would likely clash.

That afternoon, the smoke of the battle at South Mountain could be seen from Samuel Mumma’s farm. More than 100 locals fled the area for David Long’s house, further north.

Samuel Mumma, who nine years earlier donated the land for the church, had left his home earlier in the week. During the battle, Confederate soldiers feared the Union army might put snipers in Samuel Mumma’s house, so they burned it to the ground.

Meeting in Battle

As the armies assembled on Monday and Tuesday, September 15 and 16, the yard of the

Mumma Church (forever after known as “Dunker Church”) became the site of a Confederate artillery battery. The two sides traded artillery fire on the morning of September 16, and in the afternoon, Union soldiers crossed Antietam Creek and took up a position to the north of Lee’s forces.

At about 6 a.m. on September 17, Union soldiers marched south toward the Confederates, many of them going through “The Cornfield” owned by David R. Miller (he may have been a Dunker, although this is uncertain). “The Cornfield” was



not unusual before this day, but it soon became the scene of some of the day’s bloodiest fighting. The Union soldiers were attempting to take the high ground near the Dunker Church, but the fighting in The Cornfield, lasting until about 8 a.m., kept them from reaching their goal. The two armies fought back and forth across the field, slaughtering each other. One general

wrote afterward, “Every stalk of corn in the northern and greater part of the field was cut as closely as could have been done with a knife, and the slain lay in rows precisely as they stood in their ranks a few moments before.”

The little white church, the goal of the contestants in this fierce struggle, took a heavy beating from artillery fire. Its simple architecture caused some soldiers to mistake it for a farmhouse or school. Confederate General John Bell Hood called it “St. Mumma’s Church.”

As the battle progressed, wounded Confederate soldiers came streaming back toward the little white church. A white flag was put atop the roof, signaling that the building was a hospital. The pews and preacher’s table were removed from the building, straw was spread on the floor, and wounded men were laid inside. Wounded men also filled the pews placed in the shade of the oak trees outside. The preacher’s table became a surgical table, as arms and legs were amputated in great numbers.

The Cost of Sin

The assault through The Cornfield was only the beginning of the bloody day at Antietam. Forty-five thousand Confederate soldiers had faced eighty-seven thousand Union soldiers. When the

When the fighting was over, by one count there were 22,726 casualties between the two

sides—12,410 Union, 10,316 Confederate. [In this sense, “casualty” can mean dead and wounded.]

The next day, the battlefield lay quiet. Both armies remained in place, but no major fighting took place. That night, Lee marched his army back over the Potomac and into Virginia.

When it was safe to do so after the battle was over, Dunker families arrived at the church to help with the wounded. Many were taken to the makeshift hospitals on farmsteads which had been set up by Clara Barton. Some stayed in Dunker homes through the winter.

Photographers from Matthew Brady’s studio in New York City arrived to document the carnage of the battle. Their work, when displayed to the public, shocked people into realizing the horrors of war. “Mr. Brady has brought home the terrible earnestness of war,” one viewer wrote. “If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards, he has done something very like it.” One of the photos taken was of the Dunker church, with dead Confederate artillerymen in the foreground.

The Dunkers repaired their church building and continued to hold services in it for many years, but eventually the structural damage, lack of maintenance, and the damage caused by souvenir hunters taking bricks, took its toll. In 1921, the building collapsed in a severe windstorm. In 1961, a replica of the Dunker Church, incorporating materials salvaged from the original building, was constructed.

A Symbol of Peace

On September 2, 1962, then-governor of Maryland, J. Millard Tawes, spoke at the dedication of the rebuilt Dunker Church and said, “Let us here today, in the spirit of the Brethren who built it more than a century ago, rededicate this building to the advancement of peace among nations ... to the brotherhood of all mankind.” The brotherhood of all mankind?

“Ye are of your father the devil,” Jesus said, “and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him” (**John 8:44a**).

Are there many places on earth where this is more obvious than at Antietam? Here were peaceful, nonresistant Christians, who refused to fight, and through and around their land swarmed the clamor and violence of war. Here at Antietam, the difference between the sons of light and of darkness, the children of peace and of war, the children of God and those of the devil, is quite obvious.

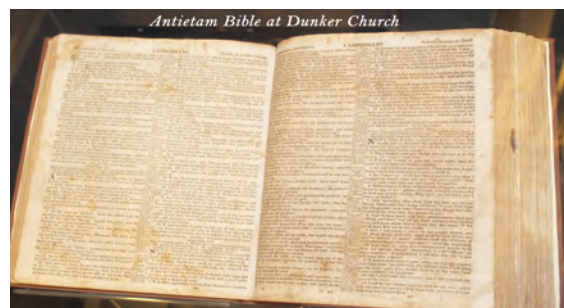
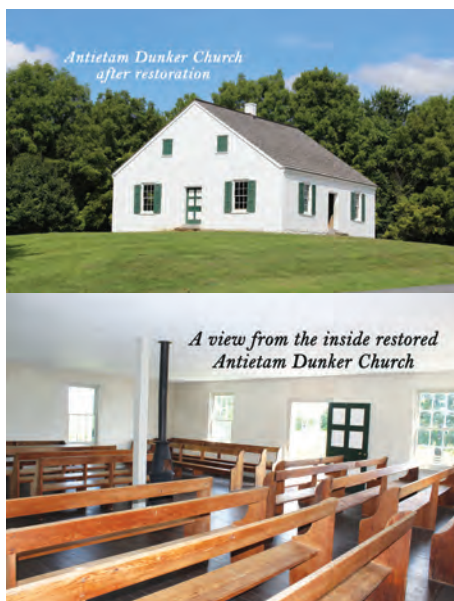
The world wants to talk about “the brotherhood of all mankind;” it makes people feel good and requires no commitment or surrender. Jesus offers true brotherhood to all mankind, to all who will surrender willingly to His Lordship, His commands, and His rule over earth and heaven. All

those who submit to His rule are given brotherhood with Him and with each other. This way is costly and requires obedience and surrender, which is why so few choose it, yet it is the narrow way that leads the sons of light and peace to life. It offers a brotherhood with real substance and power, rather than the powerless concept of “the brotherhood of all mankind” which will never stop war and bloodshed.

A Visit Recommended

I highly recommend a visit to Antietam to anyone interested. Stand on the ground where the soldiers slew each other by the thousands, and ponder the solemnity, tragedy, and sin of war. Visit the Dunker Church and ponder the meaning of this symbol of peace standing in a lost and dying world. And be sure to see the Bible taken from the Dunker Church by a New York soldier, now on display at the Visitor Center.

A.V.S. | Michigan

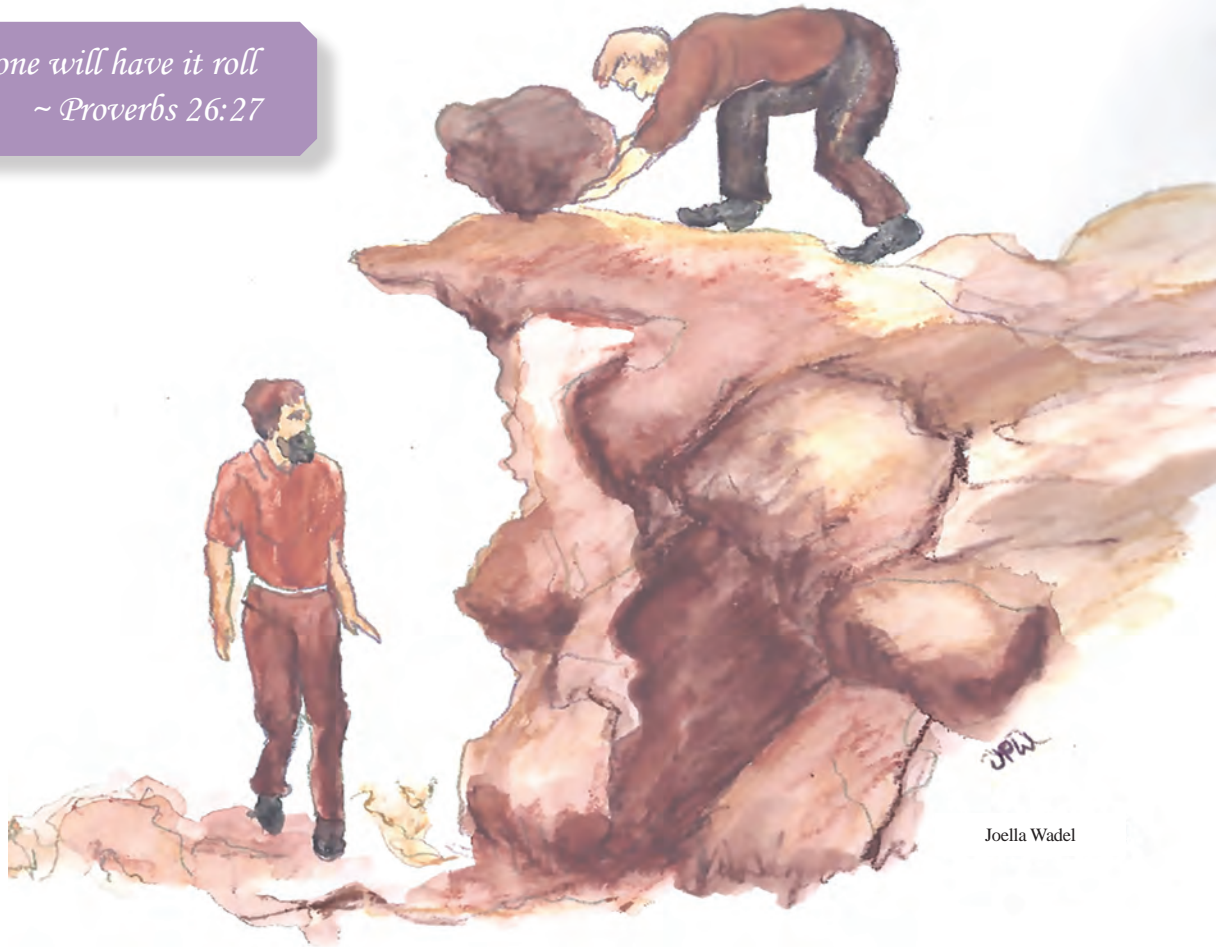




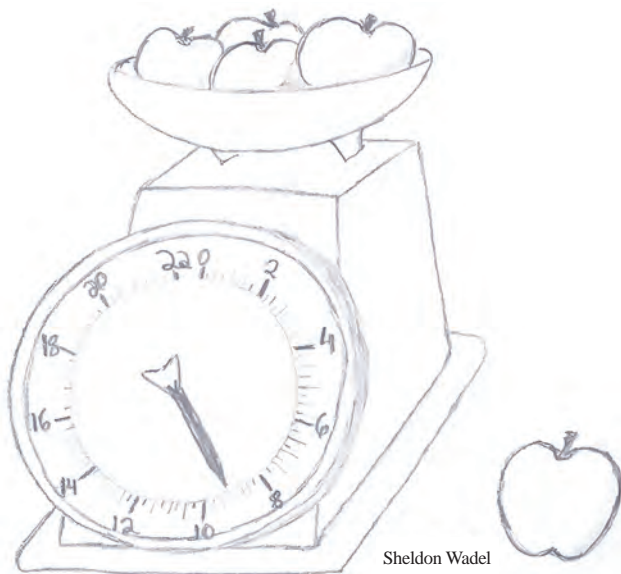
Proverbs Illustrated

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.

He who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him."
~ Proverbs 26:27



Joella Wadel



Sheldon Wadel

"A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight."
~ Proverbs 11:1

Moving Mountains

by Randy Gross

The AV15 Challenge Question was, “Explain the meaning of Matthew 17:20.”

“And Jesus said unto them, ... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (**Matthew 17:20**).

In this verse, unbelief was the problem, not a lack of faith. Jesus’ disciples had come to Him and asked, “Why could we not cast the demon out of the child?” Jesus plainly told them, “Because of your unbelief.” Then Jesus challenged His disciples, “If you had faith like a mustard seed [the tiniest bit of faith], you could move a mountain or throw a mountain into the sea” (**Matthew 21:21; Mark 11:23**).

So what did Jesus mean in this passage? It has fascinated me for years. We do not have any record that Jesus, His disciples, or any man since has moved a real mountain into the sea. So the meaning of the verse must not be literal, but figurative.

To me the verse speaks of how gracious God is. The text DOES NOT say, “If you have faith as big as the world, you can move mountains,” but “faith as a mustard seed.” A mustard seed is the smallest amount of faith Jesus could use. He could not use something smaller. It is not that we have great faith in God but that we have faith in a great God.

Jesus’ teaching in this illustration is: If we put

the smallest amount of faith in the ALMIGHTY God, nothing will be impossible for us.

We need not look further than the Bible to find examples of ordinary men and women doing impossible things through their faith in God.

Hebrews 11 gives us an overview of what faith in God did for the saints of old. The chapter records, “Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (**Hebrews 11:33-38**).

The God who the saints of old served still lives today! He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. May it not be said of us as it was said of the people of Nazareth, “He (Jesus) did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (**Matthew 13:58**).

R.G. | Saskatchewan

New Writing Challenge!

In 500 words or less, tell what mystery Paul is writing about.

“The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints” (Colossians 1:26).

“By revelation God made known to me the mystery ... of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men” (Ephesians 3:3-5).



God's Resurrection Power

Acts 2:24 ~ "But God raised Jesus from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Jesus."

Acts 2:32 ~ "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it."

Acts 3:15 ~ "You killed the author of life, but God raised Jesus from the dead. We are witnesses of this."

Acts 13:34 ~ "God raised Jesus from the dead so that He will never be subject to decay."

Acts 17:31 ~ "For God has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed. God has given proof of this to everyone by raising Jesus from the dead."

~ Book of Acts by doctor Luke

Romans 4:24 ~ "But also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness for us who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Romans 8:11 ~ "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, God who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you."

~ Letter to the Romans by apostle Paul

I Corinthians 6:14 ~ "By his power God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, and he will raise us also."

I Corinthians 15:15 ~ "More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses"

II Corinthians 4:14 ~ "We know that the God who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus."

II Corinthians 13:4 ~ "For to be sure Jesus was in weakness, yet Jesus lives by God's power."

~ Letters to the Corinthians by apostle Paul

(See page 14 for additional references.)

All Scriptures based on the NIV

Holding God's Hand

by Ean & Shelby Starr

Something about the boy walking across the Chambersburg High School parking lot intrigued me. He seemed so quiet and humble. So stable.

Our paths had never crossed, but I wanted to know more about him. So I asked some of my friends if they knew Ean Starr. The only information I could get from them was, "He is very 'old school' and quiet."

Well, 'old school' and quiet is what I really wanted. I came to the firm conviction that someday I would marry him.

But Ean showed no interest in me; I would have been surprised if he had. I was just the opposite kind of person—aggressive, unstable, impulsive, insecure, and unsure of who I was or wanted to become.

Throughout my high school days I was big in sports, especially soccer. In the games I found a sense of belonging and made close friends that led me into much immodesty and immorality. At times, I could sense the Holy Spirit telling me not to do evil things, but I went on and did them anyway. Then guilt plagued me.

In the eleventh grade I had picked up a boyfriend that got very angry at times. I wanted to help him, but at the same time I was afraid of him and didn't know quite how to break up our relationship. So we kept dating on through high school and right on into college.

After high school, I went right on to college without the slightest idea of what I wanted to do or become. First, I thought to study for the police force, but gave that up because I didn't want to shoot anyone. Next, I considered being a teacher because I loved children. So I put my mind on becoming a teacher.

I still dated the boy with the anger problem, even though I knew I did not want to marry him. I felt trapped and unsure what to do.

Then an idea leapt into my impetuous eighteen-year-old brain. In one of my daring moments I called Ean on the phone. It was a bit awkward at first but my assertiveness helped me through it; Ean agreed we could become friends and get better acquainted.

Ean and I enjoyed several casual meetings where Ean listened attentively to my chatter. He was just the steady personality I needed. He agreed with me most of the time and I liked that, especially when he agreed that I must break up with my boyfriend before he could start dating me. That gave me enough courage to call my old boyfriend and break it up over the phone!

For two months after the breakup Ean and I continued visiting and just being friends. We talked a lot, at least I did, while sharing our hopes, dreams, and wants. We connected well because we both came from broken homes.



Ean's parents divorced and remarried multiple times. The first divorce occurred when Ean was six years old. His dad stayed at the house and his mother moved out and took the children with her. She moved the children around many times while remarrying several times.

When Ean was fourteen, his mother married a wealthy man and they moved to his huge house in farm country. Ean was glad to be back in farming



Ean was glad to be back in farming country as he had many fond memories of "helping" on his dad's parents' dairy farm in younger years.

country as he had many fond memories of "helping" on his dad's parents' dairy farm in younger years. Soon after the move to the big house, Ean took a job working for a River Brethren man on his dairy farm; there Ean fell in love with farming.

I also grew up in the insecurity of broken marriages with a half-sister on my mom's side and a half-brother on my dad's side. Throughout my childhood, I was back and forth between home and visits to my dad. Many times when my mom would take me to my dad's place, he was drunk and unfit to keep me. Drunkenness, parties, drugs and bad language were very normal. Multiple times I saw bad things and knew to run away. These things scared me and I knew I never wanted anything to do with alcohol. Many times I cried because I wanted to go home where things were more stable.

After I was ten, things got some better for me when I went to visit my dad on his farm. He had pigs, horses, and cattle. I loved driving tractors, four wheelers, snowmobiles, anything. I knew God watched over me in some of these adventures. These farm visits instilled in me a love for the farm.

In my childhood years we attended different churches several times, but no one in my two families ever seemed serious about church. When I was 15, I became involved in things I knew were wrong. But again, God reached out his hand and protected me.

When I was 16, my mom and stepdad started going to a Methodist church where my good school friend attended. Through this church, my sister and I became very attached to the girls in this well-rounded family.

I started going to the Methodist youth meetings and through them I had the opportunity of traveling on mission trips to Bronx, New York; Tennessee; Baltimore, Maryland; and Washington DC.

Through these trips I found out that I really enjoyed doing things for others and showing people I cared about them.

These trips ended when I no longer felt comfortable associating with these young people because of immoral things happening among them. God spoke to me and my conscience plainly told me some of the youth activities were wrong, evil, and sinful.

That gives you some idea of the heart-wrenching instability and insecurity with which both Ean and I had grown up. Our sharing brought us together and we started dating in 2010 when I was still eighteen. Because of our experience with broken homes, we both agreed the only reason for dating was to see if we wanted to get married. We also agreed marriage was for "as long as we both shall live."

When we started dating, Ean wanted me to come meet his special friends at the dairy farm where he worked. I prepared myself for the visit by wrapping my hair into a bun and putting on a "modest" skirt. Ean was always sharing with me what the Bible says on different subjects like modesty. So I caught his approving eye when he picked me up; I was glad I could please him by being "modest." It made me feel like I was his girl and no one else's. His approval made me feel loved and protected.

My visit to Ean's plain friends opened my eyes to a new world, a world I had only imagined existed. I saw seven little heads peeking through the door trying to get the first look at me. I had never felt peace before like I found in that home. The order and love was pronounced. Here I saw stability, love, and peace. God was showing me the kind of home He had for His children. Theirs was the kind of home I wanted to have.

This family took a continuing interest in our lives and gave us a model to go by as we thought about our future. We both had a passion for farming and dreamed of raising a large family on a farm where we could work together, be together, and work for the Lord.

One day as we talked about our future, Ean asked if I liked school—I was still attending a liberal arts college and studying to be a teacher. "Not really," I answered.

Ean responded, “If we get married, I would like you to stay at home. I don’t really see how your college studies will make you a better homemaker. If you don’t like college anyway, why not stop?”

I quit college and attended a short-term vocational training school to become a nurse’s aide. Then I took a job in a nursing home where I helped take care of old people. I loved this work.

Meanwhile, Ean continued working in the HVAC company where he had been working ever since he graduated. The environment was terrible and a great strain on his Christian walk. We became engaged in February of 2012 and soon thereafter the company laid Ean off. We began to pray about what Ean should do next.

Our dream was to start farming, but we knew Ean needed more experience before he tackled it on his own. So we put the matter in God’s hands. God had His way of getting us around to a family looking for somebody. This family decided to give Ean a trial run. By the end of the week he had a full-time job and a little white house to live in. Imagine that! God even had me in mind!

Ean and I married on 5 October 2013 at the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church. Ours was a typical wedding for the church, with rings and without coverings for the women. Yet for us it was a glorious day! I can honestly say I felt the Holy Spirit’s presence with us. It was invigorating to know this was exactly what God wanted us to do.

After the wedding we moved into the little white house by the farm where Ean worked. Life was pure joy and we were committed to the perfect marriage for life.

At this point, I did not really understand what being a Christian was all about, but God was working in my life. Many people have asked me, “When did you become a Christian?” I really do not know the answer to that question. What I do know is when I started covering my head I felt God’s presence in my life more than I ever had before.

Wearing a veiling did not come all at once, but I had to hold tightly to God’s hand before taking this big step. It was not that I knew nothing about the veiling. After all, I had been around Christian women who wore a veiling for several years; they

were women I admired. Now I wanted to know why before taking such a radical step myself.

I had worked at an old folks home for two years before marriage. In that home I took care of a couple elderly plain women who wore veilings. I would fix their hair and put their coverings on; I felt like it was such a holy time. At the nursing home, God also supplied a co-worker whose wife and daughter wore veilings. I plied him with dozens of questions. He patiently answered them, often with Bible verses and explanations written out for me.

I loved the idea of a sign of submission on my head telling everyone God is my father and I submit to Him and to my husband. God stirred my heart and convicted me that I should wear a veiling. But I was not ready yet. First, God had two other things in my life he wanted me to deal with—modesty and my rings.

The biggest struggle I had was about our wedding rings. Ean had already given up his wedding ring, but I stalled.

“Is there a church out there that is plain, but allows one to wear a wedding ring?” I asked.

“Yes, I believe there are,” Ean assured me. He knew my nature and did not pressure me.

But God did. Ean and I both agreed that God wanted each of us to live a simple, unadorned life. I knew Ean and I had made a covenant that was bound by God. But I argued with myself, “Why should we need a wedding band to prove it?” It sounded quite convincing. However, I stubbornly refused to take it off.

God kept poking at my conscience. I took off my engagement ring. Still, that plain gold band meant so much to me I was unwilling to surrender. Finally, I prayed, “God, if this is what you want me to do, you are going to have to take it off for me.”

Two weeks went by and I started getting a rash under my wedding band that made my skin raw. My ring irritated the skin so badly that I had to take it off. That was God’s sign to me; the ring stayed off my finger from then on.

Another thing God spoke to us about was modesty.





Ean and I prayed about me wearing skirts all the time. We both felt God's leading and made the change. I ripped up my blue jeans and made them into skirts. I enjoyed sewing and found it enjoyable creating new clothes. We anticipated some flack from our families so we fortified ourselves with Scripture verses and reasons for the change. But the best answer was simply, "We believe this is what God wants us to do."

At first some in our families had questions, but they got used to it. Many people at work asked me about the changes and I used their questions as an opportunity to witness. I wanted to share with everyone what God was doing in my heart! (Cape dresses came later on).

Now I was ready to cling to God's hand and put on a veiling. Both Ean and I felt the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit were convicting us of the need to take this step. When a friend asked if she could take me to get measured, I knew it was a big step. Ean was solidly behind me. He wanted to make sure I knew where the Bible commanded the veiling and why I wear it so I can answer all the questions that might come in a God-glorifying way.

I will never forget the first time I put on my covering! I cannot explain the peace that came over me, but I was certain God's blessing rested upon me. No shame bothered me. I wanted to mow the grass every day so people driving by could see it! Some in my family looked at me funny and some acted like they didn't see my covering at all. Only a few asked questions.

To this day, I want others to ask why I am wearing a covering. I want everyone to know the covering is not just a weird cultural custom but that it is a mark of a woman with a meek and quiet spirit that is submissive to her husband and to God. So help me God!

Ean and I have made many mistakes in our journey to follow God and serve Him faithfully. In the six years since our marriage we have lived in four different houses and Ean has worked at four different jobs. After the first year, I was always

able to work at home.

Especially trying was the time we tried dairy farming on our own. It turned into a complete disaster with toxic feed, cows dying, and the feeling of losing everything. We worked ourselves to a frazzle and became emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausted.

God used that leap into dairying to humble us so that we would realize our inexperience and seek the counsel and support of dedicated brethren in the church before plunging ahead on our own.

The first failure did not kill our dream of living and working together on a farm. Now God has led us into our present situation which is much more stable than our first attempt. By God's direction and the counsel of godly men, things are going much better for us. We hold God's hand for the future.

During these six years, we have visited many churches in a search to find the one that is best for us. By God's leading and provision, we have found close friends and the support we needed at the Culbertson Mennonite Church.

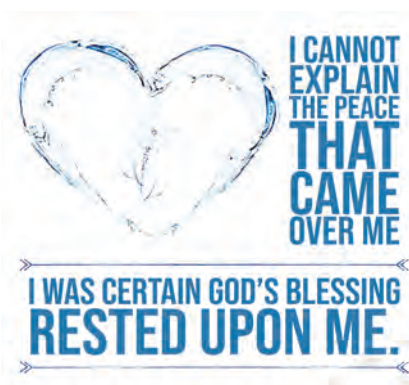
Ean had been baptized at the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church when he was 18, but I had never been baptized. I had been desiring baptism for a long time, but had never gone through with it. After a six-month instruction period at Culbertson that greatly blessed us, I was baptized 6 April 2019 and we were taken in as members.

Many friends have supported and encouraged us in our quest to know God better. We are still learning and are so grateful to have a church family to surround us and help guide us. I am encouraged by the faithfulness to God in our circles and in our friends' lives. This is the life God has called us to. It is hard to find common ground with our earthly families, but we know God is greater than we are and He makes the impossible possible.

"Thanks be to God which gives us the victory."

– I Corinthians 15:57

S.S. | Pennsylvania



Precious Water for El Marañon

by Judy Glick

“In God's hand are the deep places of the earth.”

– Psalm 95:4

High in the mountains of El Salvador, Central America, the people of El Marañon needed water. Day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, the villagers descended from El Marañon (elevation 1,500 feet MSL) and crossed two ridges to a creek. There they dipped their jugs into the creek and then repeated the journey, laden with their precious water, until at last they climbed up the ridge atop which stood the 76 houses of El Marañon.

The village had always depended on this strenuous one-and-one-half-hour trek to secure their drinking water. In the dry season the people carried their clothes to the creek to wash them. The people tilled the not-so-fertile soil to grow their corn and beans. Corn and beans furnished only a small amount of outside income for most villagers while some livestock aided the “well-to-do.” A Catholic priest and an evangelical preacher ministered to the spiritual needs of the people in somewhat of an unholy truce.

Nothing much had changed in El Marañon for a long time. Life was hard and opportunities for improvement nil. For many years the mayor had promised them water, but year after year he made the same promise and nothing happened.

But now, something was happening. The villagers formed a community council committed to getting water to the village by drilling a well. Here is how they got the money. Practically every one of the 76 homes in El Marañon had some member working in the States who faithfully sent money back to El Marañon to support their families.

These men living in the States did not forget the continual long trek for water in El Marañon, so they sent money home to hire a well driller. Before the well driller arrived, the community council met

to decide where to drill the well. The council then hired a water witcher to determine the best spot for the well. After some due machinations, the hired man chose a level area on the outskirts of the community, a bit lower than the main part of it. The spot also happened to be conveniently along the road that goes on to another community and then on out to the paved road.

When Señor Glick finally arrived with his drilling rig, he dutifully set up his machine on the spot that had been decided upon and began drilling. For one week the drilling operation proceeded



smoothly, but at the depth of 100 meters (325 feet) the bit got stuck. Señor Glick prayed and patiently labored for three months trying everything he could think of and spent most of his savings to loosen the bit. Nothing worked. At last he gave up, packed up what he could retrieve of his drilling rig, and

prepared to leave. The disillusioned villagers gathered around him and Señor Glick made them a promise, “I will come back.”

Señor Glick made that promise in August of 2016. Weeks turned into months and months dragged into years, yet Señor Glick did not return. As the year 2018 passed the halfway mark and started drawing to its close, things did not look very hopeful for these hardy but needy people. Many people in El Marañon began to fear that all their effort and money they had poured into the well had been in vain. This Señor Glick had not come back to fulfill his promise, and it seemed to be as empty as the promises their mayor had made so many times over the years.

But some villagers did not lose faith in the promise Señor Glick had made to them, and from time to time they contacted him to see how things were coming along. One day in December 2018, two-and-a-half years after he had left, their faith was rewarded. Señor Glick told the committee,

“All is nearly ready and I am coming back to El Marañon SOON.” The good news spread through the community and hopes for good water soared heavenward once again.

Late in January 2019, the well drilling rig once again made the arduous climb up the “road” toward El Marañon. The villagers spotted the truck coming long before it arrived. By the time Señor Glick stepped out of the truck, the whole community council and many of the villagers gathered around him.

The president of the council stepped forward and made a speech. “Señor Glick, welcome to El Marañon. We are grateful that despite all the difficulties you experienced here on your first attempt to secure water for our people, you have returned. On your previous bitter experience, we



The men having prayer before beginning to drill. The man in the red shirt is the evangelical pastor leading the prayer.

did not ask God’s guidance and protection on the project. Instead, we hired witchcraft to choose the site for the well. This time we want to do it right. We are going to pray to God first; then we want you to choose the site for the new well.” The president of the community council, a declared Catholic, then asked the evangelical pastor to lead the prayer.

With that blessed beginning, Señor Glick chose the site and the work began. Day by day the work proceeded, with some difficulties and delays. But after three weeks of work, Señor Glick completed the well and set the pump at 192 meters (640 feet).

On the fourteenth day of February 2019, it was my turn to visit El Marañon and get in on the excitement. Señor Glick (my husband Philip) and his crew had finished the new well in only three weeks. The water committee had procured the

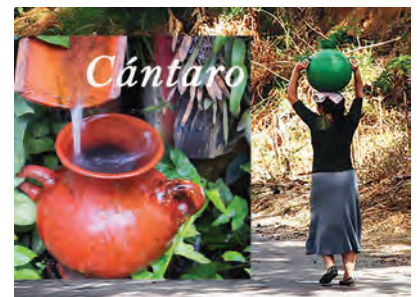
needed funds to purchase the pump. Señor Glick had agreed to let them use his generator if the council would provide the means of transportation to haul it out to the well. Now the hour was at hand to see the sweet results of all their labors!

I rode along on the big truck that delivered the generator to power the pump in the well. The sun was climbing high in the sky by the time we arrived in El Marañon that memorable day in February 2019. This was the long-awaited day for which the inhabitants of this mountain community had dreamed and worked so hard!

Today the people of the village would have the joy of filling their barrels, buckets, and tanks with water from their very own well. Finally, the long years of trekking over the hills in the hot sun (and sometimes rain) to keep their households supplied with water were drawing to an end.

I am sure the whole community noticed the big truck we were riding in as it wended its way along the dusty, bumpy road.

From where we were, I could look up and see the houses strung out along the ridge and soon I could see villagers here and there on the paths coming down the hillside. Almost all of them carried a container of some sort, big colorful objects that from a distance appeared to be coming down the trails on their own legs. Most of these seemingly animated objects turned out to be either a bright blue 50-gallon plastic barrel or a brightly colored 6-gallon *cántaro*.



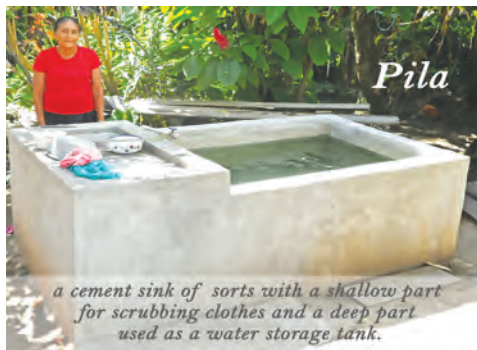
Drums waiting to be filled with water from the well

These would-be water carriers began to arrive in twos and threes and lined up their cargo in an orderly manner close to the well. Then they settled in for the wait. Some were leaning against the few pickups that had been driven down the hill bringing more water barrels, and of course people.

Others found places to sit on the ground. No one seemed to mind the lack of shade as they chattered and laughed, anticipating the fun to come!

The crowd continued to grow. One of the village ladies had prepared a tasty lunch of cooked beans, spaghetti without meat, fresh tortillas, and soft cheese. By the time the men had finished their lunch and everything was in readiness, there must have been close to a hundred people milling around. Even greater than that count was the number of barrels waiting to be filled with precious water.

Once the containers were full, the real work would begin, as the water had to be hauled up the hillside by a lot of manpower, a few horses, and even fewer pickups. I wondered how the people were going to haul all those 50-gallon barrels up the hillside once the barrels were full of water, since I could see very few people had pickups.



a cement sink of sorts with a shallow part for scrubbing clothes and a deep part used as a water storage tank.

Pila

My husband, Señor Glick, told me what I wanted to know. He said, "The water from most of those barrels will be transported one or two *cántaros* at a time. The barrels are only used to store the water

while their owners make the countless trips up and down the dusty hillside to fill their *pilas*."

When the motor on the generator started up, everyone moved closer to watch for the first glimpse of their very own well water. I think we were all holding our breath until the first water came gushing out onto the ground. A loud cheer arose from the crowd! I'm sure this joyful, thankful shout went straight up to heaven and that God smiled down on these people He loved and had so richly blessed with clean precious water!

It is our prayer that we can be a living witness of God's love and mercy and that these dear people will open wide their hearts to Him—the giver of living water.



Precious Water!

Please join us in praying for the many thirsty souls in this community called El Marañon, as God lays their needs on your heart.

We are hoping to take our youth group in to pass out *Antorchas* (The Torch of Truth) and have a worship service there some time in the near future.

Epilogue

By May, the water pipe had been run up the hill into the village, but the electric company still had not hooked up the main electric line to the water pump. So Philip had promised to bring his generator along to pump water for the villagers when we would come again.

In June we took the generator and a youth group of approximately twenty to El Marañon. We divided the youth into three groups. They went from house to house passing out the *Antorchas* and inviting the people to come to a service at the house across the road from where the water pipeline came out.

About fifty people came to the service. They were very attentive to the singing and the message and seemed happy to have us there. After the service the community ladies passed out chicken sandwiches and horchata (a typical party drink made from the seeds of a gourd called a *morro* that grows on trees) to everyone.

We were blessed by this experience, and pray that those thirsty souls at El Marañon might desire living water for their souls as well as for their bodies.

J.G. | *El Salvador*



Blowing out the new well
[The electric company made the connection in July]

Dogs and Obedience

by James G. Landis

For several years my wife and I sensed the need for a dog to chase away the deer that eat the buds off the roses, to keep away the varmints such as skunks, opossums, raccoons, and squirrels, and to also dig up and kill the moles and voles that tunnel through our yard. In addition, our dog must be visitor-friendly, not dig up flower beds or lawns, not a loud barker, not eat guinea fowl, not litter up the yard with junk, not too big, attractive, and ... obedient. As you can see, our requirements were very high.



Regardless, we found a dog that, by our friend's honest description of their dog, promised to be the ideal dog we needed. And just down the road from our friends' house happened to be several pups for sale. The end result of our years of discussion came to an end when we settled on a cute, white male Shiba Inu puppy.

On October 8 Bongo arrived at our house playful, friendly, and with a will of his own. Our obedience training sessions began at once.



Since we wished Bongo to stay within prescribed boundaries so the alligators wouldn't get him and he wouldn't get demolished on the highway by a truck or car, I put a leash on him and daily walked him around the perimeter of the four acres we had decided would be his boundary. Bongo devised a very fast maneuver he used to slip out of his collar—forward, over, back, and out. I tightened the collar and watched him closely. But our walks did not go the best.

Bongo's energy and vivacious nature made

me wonder if I was leading Bongo or whether he was leading me.

If things did not suit him, he would lie down or tug on the leash to pursue a fallen stick or bug. With head and curled tail held high, Bongo wanted to pursue whatever interested him rather than following me around his prescribed boundary. And those cars and trucks whizzing past on the highway fascinated him.

I could see that walking around the boundary and just talking to Bongo was not enough. We needed stronger measures.

With Bongo's best interests in mind, we purchased and installed an underground signal wire that followed the boundary of his "yard." In addition, we put a special collar on Bongo that first beeps, then shocks if he comes near the white flags marking the boundary. After a few punishing episodes with the shocker, Bongo has learned to respect the line quite well.

After ten weeks of training, Bongo does fairly well following me while on the leash. He will "sit" and "stay" quite well when leashed fast. But when loose, he is a "free spirit" and often acts dumb when he knows he is to "sit." I want Bongo to be obedient both when he is on the leash and when he is not on the leash.

A friend told of being in New Zealand and watching one man working three or four dogs on a distant hillside. The dogs gathered the sheep and brought them to the temporary corral made up of movable panels. One tourist watching the performance remarked to the shepherd, "You sure have smart dogs." "No, no," the shepherd replied, "I have obedient dogs."

I have watched sheep dogs doing very difficult things in the championship field trials. The dogs do nothing on their own, but constantly move only at the whistle or voice of their master.



So it is with God's children. Like the shepherd with the sheep dogs, God can do great things with us if we are obedient.

But if we choose to wander off and do our own thing contrary to His commandments, God cannot use us as He would like. Obedience then is the key. With a "want to" in our hearts and a desire to please God in all things, we will be happy and useful in God's kingdom here on earth.



Let us liken the dog fence with its white flags, warning signal, and shocking collar to the conscience. God has put the conscience in place to save us from being snared by alligators (devils) or run over by trucks (consequences of sin). We should always be careful to heed the voice of our conscience in order to save us from death and eternal punishment.

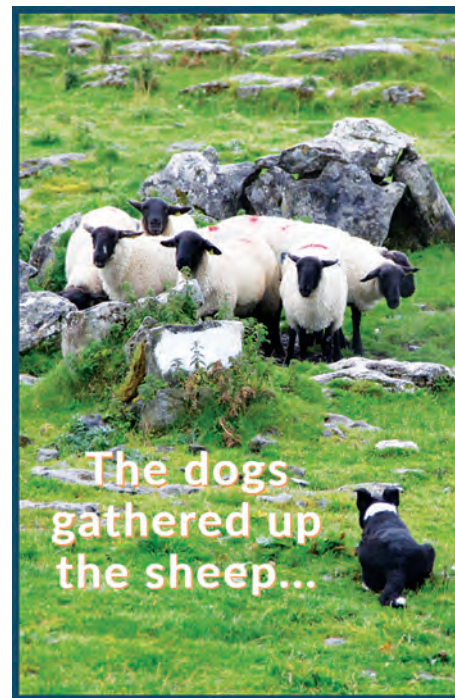
We should not be constantly testing the boundaries God has established and getting "shocked" or chastened by a loving Father. Our duty should be to respect the boundaries God has set and "play" joyfully in God's yard. Galatians 5:18-23 tells us that as long as we stay within the boundaries God has established, there is no limit to the good things we can enjoy. But if we insist on going beyond the white flags and "crossing the wire" we will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Thus the conscience must be trained so that feelings do not overpower reason. The boundaries of right and wrong must be established by the Scripture, not by our likes and dislikes. Hebrews 5:14 tells us, "Solid food is for those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Maturity does not come to a puppy all at once, but obedience to his master's commands can keep him happy and safe while he grows.

God has also given us additional help in deciding how best to put our faith into practice. We are called to obey the Shepherd. A trained New

Zealand dog that does not heed the whistle of the shepherd is useless.

Hebrews 13:17 tells us to, "Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you" (NIV). This calling to obedience is as plain as any command in the Scripture. Yet, in our quest for selfish independence, this one is so easy to disregard. The command for obedience is fortified by II Corinthians 2:9, "whether you are obedient in all things;" II Corinthians 7:15, "as he remembers the obedience of you all;" and II Corinthians 10:5, "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."



No matter how adorable and lovable a dog may be as a puppy, a fully-grown dog that listens to his master only when it suits him, is not dependable.

I say then, "Obedience! Obedience! Obedience makes a dog useful to his master."

J.G.L. | Georgia



Round Table Discussion

by AV Readers

Miraculous Preservation

The Bible is not like an ordinary book that fades from the scene with the passage of time. It is perfect and preserved and will remain so. Its very existence to this day is proof of that. It IS the inspired Word of God. II Timothy 3:16-17 says, “**All Scripture IS (not, WAS) 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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**”

The Scripture 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**” (**Psalms 12:6-7**). Nowhere in the Bible is there any indication that it will lose its perfection. Rather, there are dire consequences in store for anyone who tampers with, or changes, the perfect Word of God (Revelation 22:18-19; Proverbs 30:5-6).

After the Word of God was completed and compiled by combining the New Testament with the existing Old Testament, the seriousness of copying did not diminish. By this time the Old Testament scriptures were centuries old, copied and recopied many times, yet just as perfect as when they were written by holy men of God (II Peter 1:19-21). (*See note #1 below*)

In 1604, King James of England authorized up to fifty-seven men divided into six companies or groups to make a new translation of the Bible. The stated purpose was to make a good Bible (the Bishops Bible) better. It was completed in 1611. The main manuscripts employed in translating this Bible was the Old Testament Masoretic Text and the New Testament Greek Received Text. This is basically the same KJV Bible that is used today. There were several minor revisions of the Bible

since then, changes consisting mainly of spelling (blinde to blind).

For several centuries, there were two distinct Bibles. One was the corrupt Bible based on the Alexandrian manuscripts and used by the Roman Catholic Church. The other was the divinely preserved Bible based on the Old Testament Masoretic Hebrew Text and the New Testament Received Text used by the persecuted followers of Jesus Christ. (*See note #2 below*)

In 1881, two Anglican theologians, Westcott and Hort, published their New Testament Greek text that had for its basis the Alexandrian manuscripts. They refused to accept the Textus Receptus, calling it “vile.”

Since 1881, more than one hundred new versions were printed, all utilizing in varying degrees the Alexandrian Westcott/Hort text. The NKJV, although not omitting many verses or parts of verses outright like all the others, changed thousands of words, and contains many footnotes questioning the authenticity of words and phrases [compared to the KJV].

The battle is in the minds of Christians. If Satan can convince someone, or even entire churches, that the perfectly preserved Word of God does not exist today, that there are many mistakes in the Bible, that all we have is a faulty translation for a Bible, that the only inerrant one was in the “originals” which have been gone for thousands of years, he has won a great victory and we are set upon a sea of uncertainty concerning the Word of God! (*See note #3 below*)

By faith, through the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, we can rest assured that the Word of God will never lose its power and perfection. God has preserved it and it will stand forever!

E.M.Y. | Georgia



(1) Reviewer Comment: Applying Psalm 12:6-7 to the preservation of a perfect text simply does not fit reality. Is the writer saying that a copied text that has no errors exists? Please show us where that copy is!

(2) Reviewer Comment: This paragraph about two distinct Bibles, one corrupt and another divinely preserved, has no basis in history that I can see. The Masoretic Text was preserved by unbelieving Jews, not by Christians. It was not used as the sole basis for a Christian Bible until the sixteenth century. The NT Majority Text was preserved by state churchmen, not by persecuted followers of Jesus.

(3) Reviewer Comment: In my opinion, this paragraph has it backward. If Satan can distract people from following Christ, he has won a great victory. And one way he does that is by getting people focused on the battle for a perfect text. If people swallow the perfect-text line they will eventually find out that no text is perfectly preserved nor can any translation be perfect; this may cause people to lose their faith. The one true foundation for our Christian faith is Jesus Christ himself (1 Corinthians 3:11). He is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Trustworthy Bibles

I have read the Round Table Discussion item, “A Reliable Bible Translation” (AV14, page 36) with both interest and dismay. I respect the writer’s opinions, but take issue with several of his comments and conclusions.

I especially take issue with his statement where he says (paragraph three) “I found the King James Version in English to be the true inspired word of God and inerrant.” The King James Bible is not inspired. It does contain the true and inspired word of God. However, only the original writings of Scripture, none of which are extant, were truly inspired (II Peter 1:20-21). Since the KJV is the work of mere men, it is not above error, however innocently committed, and therefore not inerrant. That the KJV is a reliable translation (last sentence), I would agree.

However, I would also posit that there are trustworthy Bibles among the “modern,” more readable translations available today. Please note here that the KJV is also a translation. I quote this from the frontispiece to the KJV: “Translated out of the original tongues: and with the *former translations diligently compared and revised.*”

I believe Bible scholars and translators have, in the main, attempted to stay as close as possible to the ancient texts and *render their meanings* as accurately as possible. I would concur with the AV Editor’s response (item #3), “that in the different (reliable) English translations, there are no doctrinal differences that affect how we are to live today.”

Several things we need to be aware of when comparing Bible translations:

1. There is a difference between a **translation**, or **version**, and a **paraphrase**. A **translation** is simply the act of changing a document from one language to another in an attempt to, as accurately as possible, *convey the meaning* of the original document. **Versions** simply reflect the variant forms of a translated work. A **paraphrase**, on the other hand, allows for a restating of the text in another form, normally to provide clarity to the text.

2. We also need to be aware of the danger of bibliolatry, the worship of the Book instead of the God of the Book.

3. Another highly relevant factor in the choice of a more modern translation is that given the cultural, social, and accompanying linguistic changes in general society over the past 60-70 years, the King James Bible is a foreign language to the average

man on the street. So, do we teach him an archaic language so he can understand God’s will for his life, or do we present God’s word to him in a language he can understand and relate to? The answer is clear. King James’ men were attempting to put the Scripture into the language of the people of their time. We should do the same.

The purpose of Scripture is to teach us of God’s will for our lives, how to live, how to relate to Him and to our fellowmen. Let’s make that our primary focus.

D.L.B | Virginia



Knowledge and Light

Knowledge of the truth will help us evaluate the arguments on both sides of this debate. I will mention three points we ought to consider.

1. The KJV Only tract I am responding to says that the writer compared the New King James Bible to the Authorized Version (KJV) that has long been accepted as the infallible, inspired, inerrant Word of God.

That statement reveals a basic fallacy in the evaluation of Bible translations. The original manuscripts were indeed the “Infallible, inspired, inerrant Word of God,” but the copies of those originals have been tainted with mistakes/differences because the men who made the copies and/or the translations of the copies were not inspired and were fallible human beings. That is why, for the New Testament, no two Greek manuscripts in existence are exactly alike. And that is probably why every translation of the Bible has some mistakes in it.

2. Bible scholars in the last century or so have been able to reconstruct the original text of the New Testament by comparing some 5,000 Greek manuscripts in existence.

It is the differences between that text and the Textus Receptus that accounts for most of the differences between the KJV and many of the more recent versions. We should use the same standards to evaluate the work of Erasmus (Textus Receptus) and the translators of the KJV as we use to judge the editors of any recent translation. Erasmus was Catholic, the editors of the Textus Receptus

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were Catholic, and the translators of the KJV were mostly Anglicans and Puritans. They were baby sprinklers (baptized infants), militaristic (not nonresistant), and most of the translators were Calvinists.

In view of that, KJV translators were not “greater men of God” than the translators of all the other English versions.

3. There really are no major doctrinal differences between the KJV and most modern translations because there really are no major doctrinal differences between the Textus Receptus and the Nestle/Ahland text.

Some say that modern translators have taken the trinity from the Bible when they did not include I John 5:7: “There are three who bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” The truth is, I John 5:7 was added to the Greek text in 1527. In the earliest and best manuscripts, I John 5:7 is just not there. *(See note #4 below)*

But the Godhead is still intact in other Scriptures such as Matthew 28:19, “Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” and II Corinthians 13:14, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

J.A.G. Deceased | Virginia



Bible, Scripture, and Word of God

In the Round Table Discussion (AV15, page 35) both E.S. and J.D.M. leave me perplexed. The claim that the Bible is never called the “Word of God” is an unfounded technicality. The Bible and the Scriptures are one and the same. The Scriptures are not merely “called” the “Word of God.” They are the Word of God. They are God speaking through various means and prophets, and finally, through His Son (Hebrews 1-2).

Jesus used the Scriptures as the proof of His own authenticity, and even to fend off the Devil in the wilderness temptation. The Scriptures record “Word of God” 48 times, and “the Word of the Lord” 256 times. You could count on

a few fingers the number of times that these terms actually refer to Jesus Christ. The other 300+ times they refer to divine revelation.

This does not nullify the point that He is indeed the Word, but does give us all the evidence we need to identify the real Jesus through the full, final and complete revelation of the Scriptures.

Jesus himself made the point that had the Pharisees believed Moses, they would also have believed in Him. Jesus wrapped His whole life, death, and resurrection in the mantle of the Scriptures. The Scriptures, which cannot be broken, clearly define the real Jesus. To pit the Scriptures against Jesus is to create a false dichotomy. While it is true that one can believe the Bible without knowing Jesus, one cannot know Jesus and disbelieve the Bible.

L.T. | Wisconsin



AV Editor: Here is a parable. “Two ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ boarded airplanes and flew to London, England. The one flew Delta Airlines out of Atlanta, Georgia and the other flew on American Airlines out of Chicago. In London they both preached the same gospel.”

The majority of English translations enrich and complement each other; they do not contradict each other. The same is true in foreign languages in whatever text they were based on.

I know practically nothing about textual criticism and I do not need to. Neither do I know Greek or Hebrew or Latin. But I can compare the work of able scholars who have studied the ancient languages and the extant manuscripts. From the various English translations it is possible to grasp a fuller understanding of God’s message to us.

There is need for due diligence in comparing translations with one another. The kind of critical thinking used when examining different versions is the same kind of thinking we should do with every sermon we hear and every book we read. Does it match up with the truth of God’s written word?

God has wondrously preserved the Scripture so that today I can read and study beautiful truths

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(4) Reviewer Comment: I John 5:7 was included in the Textus Receptus because Erasmus chose to follow the Latin Vulgate. He had no Greek manuscript evidence for that verse; he made up a Greek text by translating the Vulgate. And to this day, with all the Greek manuscript evidence available, only a mere handful of very late manuscripts have been found that validate the inclusion of this text. How did it get into the Vulgate? I am not sure. The history is obscure.

in good, clear English in multiple translations. I thank God for this wonderful gift that teaches us about the sacrifice of His Son and that He raised Him up so that we too can walk in newness of life. If my heart is willing and the Holy Spirit is active within, I can know what is righteousness and what is sin and what pleases God.

The same is true in hundreds of other languages. Praise God for revealing to mankind what pleases Him in our generation.



Bible Texts and God's Truth

by Ernest Strubhar

Note: In this article I review history in exceedingly broad strokes without providing documentation. I want to give us a perspective that takes us out of our narrow world of controversy about Bible versions in the English language.

God's Word has come to us today through a number of imperfectly preserved texts in different languages, but we can rest in faith that God has preserved the meaning of the Scripture in every tongue, tribe, and text where it is heard or read. God's truth does not depend on a perfectly preserved text.

However, some knowledge of the different texts by which the Bible has come to us may be helpful in keeping us from ignorantly thinking one English Bible is better than all the others.

The Greek Text

The Old Testament Scriptures were written in Hebrew, but by Jesus' day, few Jews spoke Hebrew as an everyday language. They spoke either Aramaic or Greek. However, the Scriptures were not translated into Aramaic until later. So Jesus and Jews in His generation used the Greek Septuagint (LXX), the Old Testament Scriptures that were translated 200 or 300 years before Christ's birth.

The apostles preached the gospel without any collected New Testament Scriptures. They preached Christ from the Old Testament Scriptures. But did they use the Hebrew Scriptures? Perhaps so when they were speaking to the few educated Jews who still understood them. But they usually used the Greek Septuagint, the only Scriptures available that most people understood.

When Jesus and the apostles quote the Old Testament Scriptures in the New Testament, they generally follow the Septuagint. But their quotations sometimes match the Masoretic text that is the basis for our Old Testament.

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and their associates to write the Scriptures that were later collected into the New Testament we have today. They wrote in the language people understood, *koine* (commonplace) Greek. We do not have the exact text they wrote. The texts we have were copied and recopied many times. Scribes made little mistakes which were passed on.



The Greek Text

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The Majority Text

The eastern part of the Roman Empire kept speaking Greek and using the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint. In fact, the Orthodox Church still uses it.

The Orthodox Church also standardized the text of the New Testament. Almost all the New Testament Greek manuscripts that we have were preserved for us by either the Greek-speaking Orthodox Church or by the Roman Catholic Church. Contemporary scholars group these manuscripts into a “family” they call the “Majority Text” or the “Byzantine Text.”

The Critical Text

In 1859, the *Codex Sinaiticus* was found in a monastery near the traditional Mt. Sinai. This and another manuscript thought to come from the fourth century, the *Codex Vaticanus*, are older than any manuscript evidence for the Majority Text. Most scholars believe these manuscripts are closer to the original because they are older. So translators for the past 150 years have generally based their work on the “Critical Text” derived primarily from these older manuscripts. Virtually all the Bibles translated into hundreds of languages by Wycliffe Bible translators, for example, have been based on the Critical Text.



The Critical Text

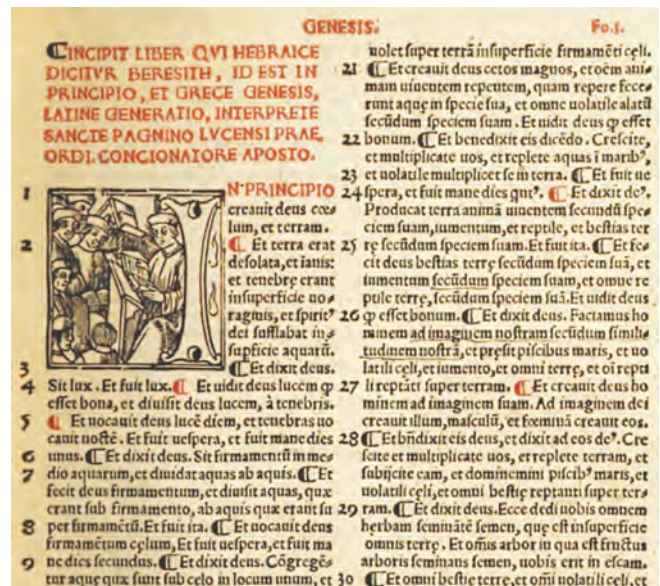
The Latin Text

Stepping back to the fourth century, most people in the western part of the Roman Empire no longer spoke Greek; they spoke Latin. And Christians used various translations of the Scriptures in Latin.

In A.D. 382, Pope Damasus I commissioned Jerome to make a better Latin translation for the western church. Bucking tradition from apostolic

times, Jerome decided to learn Hebrew and use the Hebrew Masoretic text, rather than the Septuagint, as the basis for his Old Testament.

But the Latin Vulgate (Jerome's translation) does not always follow the Masoretic Text. Christians in Jerome's day were so used to a Latin version based on the Septuagint that switching to another text for many familiar Bible passages was too big a hurdle. So sometimes Jerome preserved the Septuagint reading.



The Latin Text

Jerome's work, known as the Latin Vulgate, eventually became "the Bible" for most western Christians. It was used by virtually everyone in western Europe for over 1000 years until the Reformation, and became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church up until the twentieth century.

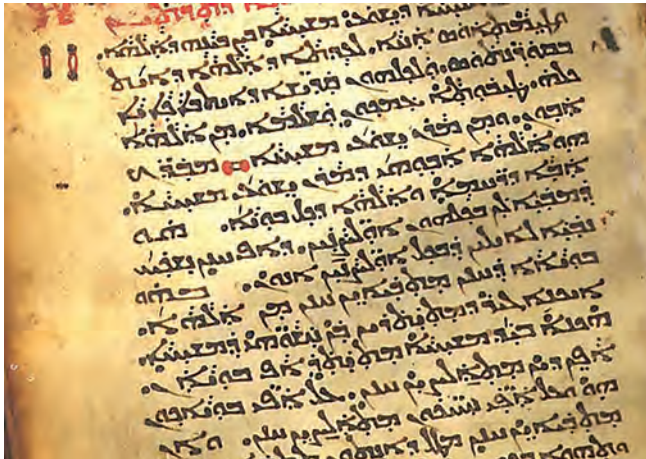
Translations of the Holy Scripture into common languages in western Europe until the sixteenth century Reformation were made from the Vulgate, including John Wycliffe's translation into English.

But beginning in the 1500s, translators in western Europe, like William Tyndale, began translating the New Testament directly from the Greek manuscripts, and the Old Testament directly from the Masoretic Text, instead of from the Latin Vulgate.

Christians in eastern Europe continued to use the Septuagint as their Old Testament, and also for translating the Old Testament Scriptures into vernacular languages.

The Aramaic Text

To this day, many Christians in the Middle East use a Bible called the *Peshitta*. It is based on ancient manuscripts that were translated into Aramaic as early as the second century for the Old Testament, and a century or two later for the New Testament. Not surprisingly, its proponents argue that their text is superior to what Christians in Europe use.



The Aramaic Text

The Imperfect Texts

The Textus Receptus was used as the basis for the KJV New Testament and other Bible translations in the West from the 1500s through the 1800s.

About 400 years ago, God gave English-speaking people an excellent and beautiful Bible translation, the King James Version. But the KJV was not perfect. If God gave the English-speaking world a perfect translation based on a perfectly-preserved text, He gave us something no other people has ever had.

Our faith does not depend on a perfect text or a perfect translation. I would like to paraphrase Jesus' words in John 5:39-40 and apply them to the text-and-translation question. "You search for the correct text of the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and they indeed testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

I firmly believe that our faithful Father has given all His children, in all the world and in every generation, the Scriptures they need in order to know God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent (John 17:3).

Knowing God and Jesus is not based on having a perfectly preserved text or a perfect translation. God did preserve His word and His truth, in the Holy Scriptures for every tribe and nation in every generation. All who have willing and obedient hearts can know, love, and serve Him.

E.S. | Oklahoma

Practical Questions:

1. Can you think of any way in which a disciple of Jesus will live differently if, for example, he reads the NIV (based on the Critical Text) instead of the KJV (based on the Textus Receptus)?
2. Does one faulty translation of a verse (in our opinion) or one "omission" negate the value of a whole translation of the Bible?
3. When we read our English Bibles, should we consider the meaning or the words of a text to be inspired and preserved by God?
4. Will English-speaking Christians who use the KJV have any advantage in the Day of Judgment over the Keliko people from South Sudan whose Bible is based on the Critical Text?



Pilate's Troublesome Writing



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: Reader Responses

Three Pledges (from AV 15, page 39)

by Alee Jantz



When I was in public elementary school, there were some Jehovah Witness children whose parents brought them to school late. I didn’t realize until later that they wanted to avoid morning devotions, which

included the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following is a pledge that every Christian should be able to make:

“I pledge allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, who commanded that we have no other gods before Him and that we should pledge allegiance to no other person or thing.”

Jesus said, as recorded in Matthew 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the things of man.”



Three Pledges (from AV 15, page 39)

by Tay King Stand



“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11).

The Anabaptist practice of nonresistance sometimes causes us to expect persecution from the government. Because of a long history of such persecution from governments for not surrendering ourselves to their power, it is easy for us to develop a bias against the government.

The Ephesian text identifies our enemy as the devil rather than the government. Our armor is to enable us against the schemes of the Devil.

I personally have been persecuted for my Christian faith by a local government. This was before I was associated with a Mennonite church. Testimony against me stated, “He cannot be persuaded to abandon his Christian faith,” which was critical in causing me to be fired.

We, by putting on the armor of God, are enabled to stand against the Devil wherever we may encounter him.





The Practical Side: Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Three Pledges (from AV 15, page 39)

by Torne A. Part



This is the rest of the story from AV15, page 39.

I was fired in June of 2015. If I would have been martyred, I would have died joyfully and peacefully. But I wasn't martyred. Life went on.

I saw the damage of the after-effects. A group of people were mad at me. Others were upset that I was fired. A bunch of families pulled their children out of the Christian school I was fired from.

There was a lot of division and hurt feelings in my church. I was sad that so much division was going on, and I felt responsible. Plus, I didn't have a job. I was fired from my job, a job I loved.

For about a year, I battled depression. Praise God, my wife and many faithful loved ones helped me through it. For a few months, I worked part time for Christian Light Publications and did other various jobs to earn money to feed my family. I eventually got a full-time job working construction. I did not like that job, but I learned so much in that year concerning construction, healing, working with people who need Christ, loving your enemies, and perseverance.

In October of 2016, I started substitute teaching. Hoping to get a job in a public school, I substituted for a year. God did not open that door.

In the summer of 2017, I was offered a job at a Christian school affiliated with the denomination I am a part of [Apostolic Christian Church], but some distance from our home. I accepted the job and our family moved to the new community!

I am now in my third year at this school. It is going great! This school does not say the pledge. I am teaching high school students and taking on responsibilities in administration. I have a wonderful relationship with the students, families, and school board.

The church here is smaller than the one I came from. It seems to be more like-minded and Christ-focused. Praise God.

Here are my answers to the three "Practical Questions" in AV15, page 39.

1. Why was the church upset that the teacher did not say the pledge of allegiance?

I understand why they were upset; they thought I was being divisive. This was not my intent at all. I have no desire to be divisive, as that is a serious sin. I just could not say the pledge, which to me would mean placing my allegiance to a nation above my allegiance to Christ and His Kingdom.

The church was also upset because they are very patriotic. They saw nothing wrong with the pledge. I explained my reasons for not saying the pledge, but they did not try to understand.

2. Should the teacher have bowed to the church leader?

I really wrestled with this issue back in 2015. I should mention there were two other teachers who did not want to say the pledge, but they decided to submit to the church authority and go against their conscience.

I could not say the pledge. If it were a matter of preference, I would have submitted. But it was a matter of conviction. I would rather die than say the pledge. I was hoping we could get rid of the pledge and work together, but instead of getting rid of the flag, they got rid of me.

3. What is the right thing for the teacher to do after being fired?

Looking back, I know I did not do everything right. I think I had a "pity me" attitude. I was hurt and I let my emotions run me more than I should have.

For example, I wanted to leave my church. For a few months my family visited some other Anabaptist churches. I knew it was not the right time to leave just because I got hurt. I am so thankful we went back to our church. Things calmed down. When we moved to the new community, I received a heart-felt goodbye from most of my congregation. I believe the right thing for me to do was show love.

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I pray that through my experience, the people in my denomination, and others, could see more clearly why we as Christians should not say the pledge. I pray others can see that there are **two Kingdoms!**

I wish I could report a happy ending with the people who fired me; but it is not. They feel they did the right thing by firing me. They wanted me to go to another church and they avoid me when they see me. But my prayer is for reconciliation with them.

AV Editor: Yes, you were being divisive, but standing for truth and obeying your conscience is not sin. The sin is on the part of those who place national obedience above obedience to God and His Word.

Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth" (Matthew 10:34). If one reads the rest of the passage it is clear that one who takes up his cross to follow Jesus will sometimes suffer separation, even from immediate family members. But the one who loses his own life for Jesus' sake will find life.



Pot Customers (from AV 15, page 41)

by Dove Fairly



Practical Questions:

1. Tell them we are unable to help them?

This is a reasonable approach for items specific to marijuana growing.

2. Do some research so we can help them grow marijuana?

NO! As an alternative, do some simple research and learn the detrimental effects of marijuana on the body. As Christians we believe that we are created in the image of God and are to be wise stewards of our body. We could not conscientiously "help" them grow something that will be detrimental to their souls or their bodies.

3. Sell them whatever supplies we have on hand but refuse to order in specific supplies for growing marijuana?

Yes, this is generally a good approach. There are many items that cross over into the "sane" horticultural world that garden centers either stock or order in on a regular basis for their customers.

We shouldn't police our customers or refuse regular service just because we know or suspect we know how they will use it after they purchase it.

We can decline a special order for any reason. For example, we do not order statues of Mary or of Buddha, though we have access to these items. We can do the same with marijuana

supplies. These have been very effective methods for doing our part in avoiding indirect participation.

4. Do more research to find out exactly what is legal?

In addition to spiritual reasons, there are legal reasons to abstain from participation in marijuana production. We really don't need to research this. It is illegal. While many states have "legalized" marijuana, it remains federally illegal.

5. Hang up the phone when they want specific information on how to grow marijuana?

Generally, this shouldn't be needed. Just simply tell them you are not in the cannabis growing business and do not have the experience to help them. However, our experience has been, even with this peaceful approach, they can become agitated perhaps because they sense disapproval. In this regard, they are more likely to hang up on you.

6. Hang up the phone if they use foul language or listen to their tirades until they hang up?

Not all pot growers have foul language. There are some very pleasant, peaceful, smiley pot growers! There is a place and time where hanging up on this nature of conversation may be the best option. But first consider blessing them with a peaceful loving response.



The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists

Child Custody

by D. V. Willing



My wife and I raised our 11-year-old grandson from birth because both parents were mostly absent in his life. Our daughter had our grandson out of wedlock at an early age and was not ready, nor willing, to become a mother.

Throughout the years both parents pursued lives of worldly living and devoted little time and resources to our grandson. We have had our grandson attending a private Christian school since pre-kindergarten. He is in sixth grade now; we pay everything. We raised our grandson in the church (we are Baptist).

As the boy grew, he referred to me as “dad” and my wife as “mom.” We asked our daughter numerous times to just sign conservatorship to us, but she always refused.

Unbeknownst to us, in April of this year our daughter then gave the biological dad primary conservatorship (a guardian appointed by a judge to manage the daily life of another). The dad then took the child away from us. We were devastated because we didn’t know what to do. Our grandson was also devastated and traumatized by the sudden separation from the only home he had ever known.

Our angel cries when he’s away from us and has no interest in staying with his dad and his dad’s present wife (not our daughter). Our grandson doesn’t mind visiting his dad on weekends, but at this stage the boy has no desire to stay with his dad full time. His dad and his dad’s wife are not believers; they wear tattoos and earrings and the dad drinks much alcohol.

Practical Questions:

1. What should the grandparents who raised the child do?
2. Is it right to hire a lawyer to advise the grandparents?
3. Is it right to go to court to regain the child?
4. Can Christians expect justice will prevail in the court?
5. How should the grandparents pray?



It Cannot Be The Bible!

by Eyes O. Pened



My husband and I reached out to some friends with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I shall call them Joseph and Anna.

Anna was raised in Russia where she had gone to the Orthodox church for special holidays like Christmas and Easter. She came to the United States twenty years ago.

Joseph was raised as a Mormon and is a current member of the Mormon church. According to Joseph, the Mormons believe in the Mormon scriptures and accept only the King James Version of the Bible—insofar as it is translated correctly—as part of their faith.”

On different occasions Joseph would read the Bible to Anna, but soon after he would begin to read, she would fall asleep. Anna told us the difficult words and the strange language were more than her brain could sort through.

My husband and I met with these friends a number of times and we asked them a lot of questions about their faith. In turn, Joseph and Anna also asked us a lot of questions about our beliefs and practices, especially Anna. So I emailed her several passages from the New Living Translation (NLT) that pertained to our discussion.

Anna did not read the passages until several weeks later when Joseph was sick, and she went looking for something to read to him. She printed off the passages I had sent her and sat down to read them to Joseph. After a few sentences, she stopped and asked Joseph, “What am I reading?”

“It think it is the Bible,” Joseph replied.

That began an argument between the two of them. Anna insisted the book she was reading could not be the Bible and Joseph became quite sure she was reading from the Bible.

Practical Questions:

1. What is the best way to evangelize Mormons?
2. Should we make sure the couple understands Joseph Smith and his Book of Mormon are frauds?
3. Should we stick to the Bible and prove Jesus Christ is more than a prophet?
4. Should we use only the King James Bible since the Mormons generally accept this version (when properly translated)?



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.

Anabaptist Identity Conference

Date: March 19~21, 2020

Location: Dean Beachy Arena at Mt Hope Auction, 8076 SR 241, Millersburg, OH

Speakers: David Bercot, David Martin, John D. Martin, Michael Overholt, and more.

More Information: Not available at press time.

Anabaptist Voice Morning Meeting: General information for all interested parties.

Lodging Contact: Lester Beachy ~ 330.852.4148

Past AIC Conferences: Past Anabaptist Identity Conferences offer challenging topics you may not have heard discussed before. Former sessions can furnish many hours of edifying and instructive thought to stimulate your understanding of Anabaptist history, thought, and practice.



Through the courtesy of Victory Music Services, all past Anabaptist Identity Conferences (2007-2019) can be listened to online free, or through purchased CDs.

Victory Music Services
PO Box 1498
North Highlands, CA 95660
443.480.1489



Salt & Light: Facilitator Orientation Seminar

Date: January 17 & 18, 2020 (*Friday all day, and Saturday morning*)

Registration: Registration is required.

Location: Streetlight Christian Ministries, Sacramento, California

Contact: 330.893.2428 / Irene Martin | **Email:** saltandlight@camoh.org



Highlights of the seminars include the following speakers and topics:

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

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



Circulation & Financial Statements

Income & Expense Report October thru December 2019

| | |
|---|-------------|
| 1 October 2019 Beginning Balance | \$3,751.01 |
| Income | |
| Donations | \$11,081.28 |
| Local Support* | \$2,000.00 |
| Total Income | \$16,832.29 |
| Expenses | |
| Handling & Packaging | \$594.00 |
| Postage | \$2,944.90 |
| Printing | \$5,261.00 |
| Staff Expenses | \$814.39 |
| Total Expense | \$9,614.29 |
| 31 December 2019 Ending Balance | \$7,218.00 |

Circulation Report December 2019

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.

ISSUE #14 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$9,195.55

Cost Per Copy: \$1.90/ea.

ISSUE #15 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$9,614.29

Cost Per Copy: \$1.98/ea.

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



A Riddle:

A European asks:

What do you call a person who can speak three languages?

Answer: *Trilingual.*

What do you call a person who can speak two languages?

Answer: *Bilingual.*

What do you call a person who can speak only one language?

Answer: ???

Directions: Fill in the blanks. Using the first letter of each person's name, unscramble to find riddle answer.

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|---|
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | Someone who rebaptizes. |
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | The first man. |
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | The prophet who ran as fast as a horse. |
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | Eli's grandson born on a tragic day. |
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | The man who inherited Hebron. |
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | The leper healed in the Jordan River. |
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | The mother of Jesus. |
| <input type="text"/> | _____ | The mother of Boaz |

Answer: _____

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“ Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains... how priceless is your unfailing love, O God! ”

Psalms 36:5-7a (NIV)

