

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

- "THY KINGDOM COME" - *TIM WALTER*
- "GIVE GLORY TO GOD" - *MENNO KNIGHT*
- "SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU" - *RICHARD THAYER*
- "PICK THE RIGHT POLITICS" - *PETER MOMMSEN*
- "THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL" - *THREE WRITERS*



Guest Letter from a Church Leader

Written to our local churches. (abridged)

April 5, 2020

Dear Church Family,

Is it not amazing how the appearance of a microscopic virus has in such a short time convulsed the entire globe and upended life as we knew it? Millions of people have lost their jobs, businesses have closed or folded, thousands have died, and we all are leery of getting too close to other people.

God who wondrously has given man dominion over the works of His hands, may yet allow man to bring a measure of dominion over this virus. Until then, we believe God is pleased when we live prudently in the face of danger. Consequently, in line with directives from State and Federal officials, we continue to suspend church services until further notice.

Paul, in writing to the Roman saints said, “Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” We, too, have confidence in you—your ability to remain true to your commitment to Christ, and to find spiritual sustenance in the absence of regular church services.

Our being deprived for a short while of coming together for worship, instruction, and fellowship is a significant change from our normal routine. Nevertheless, it is a relatively minor inconvenience for us. Many Christians are unable to regularly congregate with God’s people for one reason or the other. It may be because of extended illness or because of persecution and oppression.

Our present circumstance actually provides the opportunity for us to flex some spiritual muscles that often are underused as we rely on the labors of our brothers and sisters who teach and admonish us in our church services.

Meanwhile, put forth some effort to worship God in your home settings in spiritually meaningful ways. Consider such components as:

- *Singing and prayer*
- *Sunday school for your children*
- *Discussing the youth/adult Sunday school lesson*
- *Listening to a wholesome sermon—various resources are available*
- *Reading a sermon, a Scripture exposition, or an inspirational article*
- *And don’t forget the offering.*

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work, to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Peace,

Wendell Heatwole | Olar, SC

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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

All Together

I have a thought on the different English translations discussion.

While it seems expedient to be somewhat open to several sound translations in the context of personal study of the Word, I am inclined to believe that we do well to bring the same translation to our worship service (my preference is the NKJV). Somehow it seems to flow better when we collectively read the Sunday school text and recite the memory verses from the same translation.

I enjoy *Anabaptist Voice*. It is attractive and well put together. I commend the staff for their efforts. May God bless.

J. G. | *Kentucky*



Our Reward

I especially enjoy your work, and also that of your councilors. Please keep up the good Kingdom-focused work. Be encouraged even in the tough times, and know that I and many others pray for you. When there is no worldly inheritance or reward, the Lord himself is our reward, as with the priestly tribe of Levi. "Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD [is] his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him."

Be blessed as you and the AV team pursue knowing Him more.

T. W. | *Alberta*



Thoughtful Articles

I have a friend who would like to receive your publication.

I appreciate and enjoy the many thoughtful articles. They give much to consider. I appreciate the varying viewpoints that stimulate thought.

C. G. | *Maryland*

Strange Views

I am writing in response to the article in AV16, "Two Views of the Testaments."

I have never before heard these two views of the Testaments and both of them impress me as wild speculations.

When Jesus proclaimed, "But I tell you, ..." he was not challenging the laws given by God through Moses, but how they applied them.

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ..." (Matthew 28:19-20).

Here is my view of the two Testaments. The Old Testament laws and rules were for the culture, people, and nation of Israel. But Jesus came with a gospel for all cultures, people, and nations. Thus salvation can reach people without coming through Israel's culture.

R. L. | *Maryland*



When God Does Not Smile

I really appreciated Menno Knight's article, "Agents of God." However, when we look at the whole picture, maybe we should ask Menno to pull in on his lines a little bit. He says, "If man uses his knowledge to do good, ... 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."

While I am totally with Menno on the principle of vaccines and medicines used to treat diseases such as smallpox, yellow fever, measles, and malaria, I have some reservations about the statement. Romans 1:21 says, "[Men who do not worship God] began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused" (NLT).

Coming up to the present time, I feel man through his carnality has exploited vaccines and used them for evil purposes. When the abortion clinic contributes to the vaccine industry, I have a hard time believing that God is smiling.

D.L.H. | *Ohio*

Living in Community

In response to the article, “Building a Strong Church Family” (AV15, page 8), I kept thinking the writer was talking about those of us who live in Hutterite colonies. Our colonies follow the model of the Acts 2 church where we have a community of goods rather than having personal property. This type of communal living was begun among the Hutterites in 1528.

Many of the blessings of strong church families are similar to what the Hutterites, who share a community of goods, enjoy. Some of the special blessings prominent in our colonies are:

- Accountability one to another and leaders that are accountable to each other.
- Transparency with money spent and received.
- Having meals together with older people sitting in front of younger ones.
- Young and old working together in gardens, shops, and barns.
- Caring for the elderly and teaching the children.
- Reaching out to help families and others in need.

There is no better place than a community in which to practice Jesus’ one new commandment, “Love one another.” As one professor studying Hutterites said, “I would love to join you, but I could never sit across from certain people at mealtime 365 days a year.

Yes, in this setting we sometimes must sit across the table from a member we do not particularly like three times a day, and even work alongside them. We work for the good of everyone, including the weaker members, all the years of our lives. I am not saying a Hutterite colony is the only place to live a godly life, but God has planted me in one. So that is where I shall bloom.

A perfect church or community will only be found in heaven. But while we are on earth, let us be faithful in encouraging each other. Always be aware of the devil and his subtle temptations. Let us remind one another of Jesus’ teachings and how to put them into action.

M. H. | *Manitoba, CANADA*

P.S. Through God’s mercy and kindness there are still hundreds of Hutterite communities in Canada and the United States. If you would like to experience living in community for a period of time, some colonies are open to taking you in.



Hard to Understand

Feliz Manz was brutally murdered on January 5, 1527. However, it was not considered murder because Ulrich Zwingli—the leader of the Protestant State Church—sanctioned the murder. Therefore, Manz’s death was considered “acceptable,” “necessary,” and even “Christian.” That has always puzzled me. How could Zwingli kill

somebody, and yet consider himself a Christian? And how could everybody go along with it?

I marvel at the fact that so many Protestant and Catholic leaders tortured and killed other Christians. How could they be so un-Christlike? Perhaps they were corrupted? Maybe blinded by power? Overcome with pride? I don’t know. But could this spirit still exist in churches today, even in some Anabaptist churches?

In my experience I never felt church leaders wanted to torture or kill me. But they were willing to do whatever it took to get rid of me rather than to be honest with the Word of God or respectful of another person’s conscience. This is what is hard for me to understand.

M.D. | *Indiana*



Power to Forgive Sins

AV16, page 13, Item 4 states: “Jesus is the sole mediator between God and man.”

On the basis of that verse we can conclude that no man, preacher, priest, saint, or church has the power to forgive sins. Since sin is disobedience to God’s commandment, only God can forgive sin.

When Jesus said, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee” in Mark 2:7, the scribes were faced with a question. Was Jesus a blasphemer or was He God? Because they knew only God could forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-6; Luke 5:20-26), the scribes thought He was a blasphemer. We accept Jesus as the Son of God.

Therefore, we do not doubt that Jesus has the power to forgive sins and we can confidently assure repentant believers that their sins are forgiven.

Yes, the POWER (Matthew 28:18) to forgive sin is Christ’s alone, but He has given us the responsibility and authority to share that good news with everyone.

B.H. | *Pennsylvania*



Object Lesson

“Dogs and Obedience” in AV16 was a clever object lesson. It teaches obedience to the Master is what matters most.

Just recently I read Luke 17:7-10. In this lesson Jesus taught that the servant’s job after a hard day’s toil was to “serve his master” before he even eats. The master doesn’t even thank the servant for doing what is commanded of him. Like Bongo, obedience to the master was only the servant’s duty.

This is a “hard saying.”

C. B. | *Virginia*

Thy Kingdom Come

by Tim Walter

Text: Hebrews 8:1-10:39

Purpose Statement: To show how and why the Kingdom of God orders the life of the believer today.

Themes to Develop:

1. Shadows of the Kingdom of God
2. The Kingdom of God in Heaven
3. The Kingdom of God on Earth

Conclusion:

When we let the New Testament govern our lives, we show the world what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

Introduction:

I am a member of a Hutterite community known to many people as “a colony.” A colony is defined as “a body of people living in a new territory but retaining ties with the parent state.” This simple definition has wonderful implications and answers many questions regarding the Anabaptist faith. Anabaptists practice separation from the world because we do not belong to it. While we exist in this world as church bodies, we retain ties to our parent state, which is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Shadows of the Kingdom of God

Because it pleased God to inaugurate His kingdom at an ordained time, He separated unto himself a people from which He would send His son, the King. This people were the biological descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; these descendants became the nation of Israel.

This nation of Israel foreshadowed the true people of God that was to come. Paul explained in Ephesians 3:6 that the Gentiles were to be part of the people of God. In other words, the nation of Israel in the Old Testament was a shadow of the church, or the Kingdom of God in the New Testament.

The Old Covenant of law and death was a shadow of the New Covenant of love, mercy, forgiveness, and life. The shadows did not reveal the true details of the Kingdom of God, but were shrouded in mystery until Jesus came to earth, died, and rose from the dead.

The writer of Hebrews specifically mentions several things that were copies or shadows of the true Kingdom of God in heaven—the priesthood, the tabernacle, sacrifices and offerings, a holy people, and the presence of a sovereign God.

In Hebrews 8:5 we read that the sanctuary of the

tabernacle was a copy and shadow of the true one in heaven. The curtains, the candles, the ark of the covenant, and the ceremonies performed in that place represented what was done in heaven.

As we read through Hebrews 8-10, we learn that the priesthood was made of imperfect men who had to offer up sacrifices for themselves before they could intercede with God for the sins of the people. Furthermore, these priests were appointed by men and because of death had to be replaced by another priest. The blood sacrifices for sin had to be repeated every year; they only foreshadowed the perfect High Priest who would do away with animal sacrifices forever.

All of the sacred ceremonies, the law, and the blood sacrifices only dimly revealed the true glory of the Kingdom of God. When everything had been perfectly arranged as God had prescribed with the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant, with the cherubim of the Glory overshadowing the atonement cover, a very limited view of God’s presence was there. Into this sacred presence, only the high priest could enter once a year and never without blood. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed while the earthly copy or shadow of the true tabernacle in heaven was still functioning (Hebrews 9:8).



Sometimes the awesomeness of God's presence was revealed in a more visible way, not just to the high priest, but to all the people. Numbers 16:19 says, **"Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation."** Similar statements are made in Numbers 14:10; 16:42; 20:6. But these were only shadows of the glory of God. No man could see God's real glory and live.

While not mentioned in Hebrews, two other Old Testament symbols are mentioned that foreshadowed the coming of Christ: the manna and the bronze serpent on a pole.

First was the manna. While the Israelites traveled in the desert for 40 years, six days of every week, God sent a white, sweet substance like coriander seed, which they called "manna." Manna, new every morning, appeared in circles on the ground.



This manna signified the pure, sweet Word of God which was to come from above. Just like the manna the Israelites used to make fresh bread every day, so the manna signified that man should live **"by every word that comes from the mouth of God"** (**Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4**).

But the manna was not good enough for the Israelites; they complained. Then God sent fiery serpents crawling through the camp of the Israelites, biting to death those rebellious ones who had said, **"Our soul loathes this worthless bread."**

God instructed Moses to set up a pole with a bronze serpent on it so that if a serpent had bitten anyone, they could look up at the bronze serpent and live!

That bronze serpent was a shadow of the One who was to come and be set up on the tree of Golgotha. **"For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"** (**John 3:14-15**).

A holy, righteous, angry God was not satisfied with a disobedient people. Under the Law of Moses, sinners died without mercy on the testimony of just two or three witnesses,



which was a shadow of God's wrath against sinners—the wrath of a raging fire that would consume His enemies.

More kingdom-focused imagery and allegory can be found in the journey of the Israelites, and the rest of the Old Testament. When we, as followers of Christ, read these stories, we should remember they are only faint shadows of the Kingdom of God in heaven.

The Kingdom of God in Heaven

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He included this request: **"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** When Christ made that prayer, He knew exactly what the Kingdom of Heaven was like. He did not need to go on the basis of types and shadows or copies of heavenly things. Christ had already been there. He already knew what heaven was like.

He did not say, "will be like." Jesus was not talking about a mystical future kingdom, but was telling everyone about the Kingdom of God He had already witnessed and been a part of.

So Jesus told stories describing the glory and might and power of God—a king who rented out his vineyard, a good shepherd who cared for his sheep, a wedding prepared for the marriage of His Son, the sowing of wheat.

What Jesus wanted His disciples to see and to understand was the glory of God's kingdom. Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of it on the Mount of Transfiguration—dazzling white clothes, His face shone like the sun, and the voice of the Father blessing the Son. For Jesus, it was perfectly normal to be talking with Moses and Elijah. Jesus wanted those three disciples to see the spectacular glory of the Kingdom of God because of what lay ahead of them on the earth.



Jesus wanted His disciples to see and to understand the glory of God's kingdom.

The book of Hebrews also reveals some of the glorious features of God's kingdom.

- The living, eternal, Creator God is present (Hebrews 9:14, 24).
- Jesus, our eternal high priest, is in heaven (Hebrew 8:1).
- Heaven was not made with human hands (Hebrews 9:11).
- The worshipers in heaven are perfect in God's sight (Hebrews 10:1).
- There is no evil in heaven (Hebrews 10:26).

In spite of the simple and explicit language Jesus used to describe the Kingdom of God, despite the wonderful signs Jesus did, and the glorious portrayal of God's kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount, even the twelve disciples failed to grasp the true nature of the Kingdom of Heaven. But when the Holy Spirit came to open their hearts and minds, they finally understood what the Kingdom of Heaven was like.

The Kingdom of God on Earth

Yes, God was not pleased with burnt offerings and sin offerings; God desired a holy, obedient people such as existed in heaven. When Jesus had His disciples pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," He was giving His disciples a model to live by.

Jesus then taught what doing the will of God in heaven is like. The Sermon on the Mount gives many examples of how living in the Kingdom of God on earth differed from living in the kingdoms of this world.

According to His teaching on the mount, these are the kind of people you will find in heaven: merciful, humble, pure, peacemakers, and those who suffered because of righteousness. Jesus goes on to say that if one wants to enter the Kingdom of God on earth, one is to be the same kind of

person as is found in heaven. Jesus said that:

- You are the salt and light of the world. Let your light shine. You are the fulfillment of the law—a righteous and holy people.
- Do not murder or hate but always attempt to make peace. It is better to suffer wrong than to fight.
- Always live in sexual purity before God. Divorce and remarriage should not be found among God's people.
- Always be careful what you promise and then keep your word.
- Be generous with an adversary, always "giving in" rather than fighting.
- Be kind to those who are mean and hateful to you. Love and forgive your enemies.
- Be kind and generous to the poor and needy. Do it quietly and not to be seen by men.
- Pray quietly. God hears you and knows what you need before you even ask Him.
- Do not love money or wealth. Lay up treasure in heaven.
- Do not worry about anything. Seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness. Your heavenly Father knows what you need and He will provide for you.
- You will be judged by God in the same way you judge others. First, make sure your own eye is clear and then you may be able to help your brother.
- Ask, seek, and knock to understand God's ways.
- Give to others the same kindness you would like them to give to you.
- Watch out for false prophets who are selfish and carry evil fruit with them. They are out to harm you and destroy your souls. There is no way around it; God will punish evildoers. Good works done to offset evil deeds will keep you out of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus said that whoever hears His words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on a rock.

These are the kind of people who will enter the Kingdom of Heaven while living on the earth. These are the people who, when they die, will enter into the presence of a glorious, holy God and their savior Jesus. They will enter the untold glories of being in the presence of God.

This people are part of the New Covenant God made with the church.

No longer do we serve Him out of fear and a guilty conscience. Now the Holy Spirit says, “**This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds**” (**Hebrews 10:16 NIV**).

Thus, Jesus revealed that which had been hidden in mystery and prophecy for so long. The identity of the King himself had been prophesied knowingly and unknowingly by the judges, kings and prophets of old.

Following the example of Jesus, the disciples started building Kingdom churches. When they did not yet have a written canon, the Spirit gave them the wisdom to differentiate between covenants. The apostles taught the churches the practical traditions and ordinances that would show the world how Kingdom citizens should live.

These New Testament churches are havens of rest and trust because God is within them.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church “**Brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by our word or by our epistle**” (**II Thessalonians 2:15**). And to the Corinthians he wrote, “**If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord**” (**I Corinthians 14:37**).

Today's New Testament churches have a number of deeply rooted practices which are not mentioned in the New Testament in express detail. Because Hutterites have love for the King and desire to represent Him and His kingdom, we attempt to make His kingdom visible and practical with teachings on musical instruments and photographs, fashion

and dress, baptism, political involvement, technology, banking, holiday keeping, and sports.

Our established practices are not rooted in the Old Testament. We follow Jesus. The Hutterite Lehr (sermons) teach, “If we love Christ, we will despise and forsake all that is contrary to His holy character. If we do not hate such things, our love towards Him is not a true love, but a false and distorted one.” We aim to put the spirit of the teachings into practice because God has written His laws onto our hearts. In this way we enter into God’s kingdom on the earth.

Conclusion

The constitution, laws, disciplinary measures, promises, and traditions of Christ’s Kingdom are outlined in the New Testament. When we let the New Testament govern our life, we show the world what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

When Anabaptist churches function as Kingdom colonies here on planet earth, we are a shadow of the Kingdom of God in its perfect fulfillment. People need to see that the way of Jesus is better than anything this world has to offer. When we follow Him, His light in us becomes brighter, and the shadow becomes more defined.

The way to love Jesus is to obey His commands. Such an obedient servant is an ambassador of the Kingdom of God. He is a light on a candlestick telling all the world what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

Let us be that kind of light in today’s world.

T. W. | *Alberta, Canada*
Co-laborer: J. G. L. | *Georgia*



“For the doctrine and precepts of the Lord are given in order to be fulfilled and put into practice.” – Conrad Grebel



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“The Holy Spirit is like an air bubble within us, drawing us upward to God through the liquid of this world.”

– Clay Zimmerman at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“If we stop sowing to the Spirit, we will sow to the flesh.”

– Steven Byers at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“Sin causes failure to stand, takes away our peace, opens the door to other sins, and causes continual defeats.”

– Addison Bender at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“The spirit of man is excellent only if guided by the Holy Spirit.”

– Glenn Kilmer at Sparta Mennonite Church, WI



“We can never be justified in Christ unless we admit that sin is not justifiable.”

– Peter Beachy Jr. at Mountain View Mennonite Church, PA



“Jesus did not come to establish a new political kingdom; He came to establish His spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men.”

– Johnny Miller at Christian Fellowship, OH



“The devil’s promise of freedom always leads us into slavery.”

– Albert Strubhar at Cimarron Christian Fellowship, OK



“Do not get distracted by pursuing things instead of God.”

– Alan Troyer at Altona Youth Bible School, MN



“Joy comes not from having what you want but from wanting what you have.”

– Daniel Hartzler at Burkeland Family Conference, GA



“Adam lived approximately 930 years pulling weeds and thistles, all the while remembering his earlier life in the Garden.”

– Bill Miller at Son Valley Christian Fellowship, AZ

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.

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.



In the Stillness

by Georges Gawinowski

Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist all spent extended periods of time in the stillness of the desert where they communed with God. In the lonely, still place of the whale's belly, Jonah surrendered his will to the call of God.

Jesus too, sought stillness numerous times away from the throngs where He could pray to His Father. Jesus:

- went away to a lonely place to be by Himself.
– Matthew 14:13
- spent all night in prayer on a mountain.
– Luke 6:12
- many times spent time alone in prayer.
– Luke 5:16
- withdrew a stone's throw and prayed.
– Luke 22:41

Speak, Lord in the stillness, while I wait on Thee;
Hushed my heart to listen in expectancy.
Speak, O blessed Master, In this quiet hour,
Let me see thy face, Lord, feel thy touch of power.
For the words thou speakest, "They are life" indeed;
Living Bread from heaven, now my spirit feed.
All to Thee is yielded, I am not my own;
Blissful, glad surrender, I am Thine alone. Amen.
– E. May Grimes (1920)

If these men of God and Jesus himself needed time away from people in order to meditate and pray, I also should take time to pray and commune with God "in the stillness."

In my busy daily life, I sometimes happen to find myself drifting away from the presence of the Lord, even though in my daily routine I am still connected with my Creator. I still need a connection without interferences which come from this temporary world I live in. I want to be still, and wait every day to feel His presence. The Holy Spirit's presence is in us, with us, and always present; I do not want to drift away from Him.

"Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10).

Our goal as Christ's followers is to honor Him and give glory to the Lord by showing Him that we are His children. We all know that children may sometimes move away from their father's presence based on what we call circumstances.

In order to avoid drifting away from a close relationship with our heavenly Father, we can use times of stillness to remain in His presence.

Read and Listen to God's Word

Quiet times, when we have put aside all other distractions and interruptions, are a good time to read and study the Scripture. This Bible reading time should be more than just a few minutes, and should extend beyond one verse. But if one verse or one chapter catches your attention, and the Holy Spirit is speaking, it could be written out and memorized. Maybe you will want to read a particular chapter or passage three times. Or maybe you will want to read three or more chapters in one session. However much you read, it will be helpful to write down one thought or one verse to carry with you through the day.

Keeping the Word of God, the Holy Bible, in our daily reading routine makes us understand that the Scriptures are rich and have something for all of us; it is our daily inspiration given by our Creator.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Meditation

The old French word *méditation*, derived from the Latin *meditatio*, means contemplation, a private devotion, a prayer, a reflection. The word found in the Hebrew Scriptures was *haga* (murmur, visualize, breath, & contemplate). This Hebrew word was translated in the Greek as *melete*. Both words refer to a meditation movement into the depths of the human heart. **"My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding" (Psalm 49:3).**

Meditation helps me to stay connected with the Lord even though I know He is always with me, even when I move away from Him during the day. Prayer and meditation are the best ways to return close to Him and open the senses so I am able, during that still moment, to listen to what He has to say to me. This is a moment of quietness when my mind does not think of anything but just seeks the Lord's presence.

Meditation can take place when quietly reading the Word of God, when lying flat on your back on the floor, or in bed with your eyes closed. Meditation can take place when kneeling, standing, walking, or when flat on your face before God. Meditation is possible while doing routine work such as driving a truck or tractor for long hours or even while doing routine housework.

But the particular time of meditation we are talking about here is in the quiet time we have set aside to think about God. To meditate on the Word is a way to empty our mind of all the earthly thoughts that can come and disturb our peaceful time with God.

Relaxation and forgetting about the tensions and stresses of the fast-rushing rabbit-race of today's life is important to get the most out of our time with God. Find stillness before God. I want the Lord to "breathe on me" and fill me with His presence.

quality time spent with the Lord. When we calm down the mind—it is going to stay active—we must get rid of stray thoughts in order to be in harmony during this quiet moment given to God, without thinking of anything else.

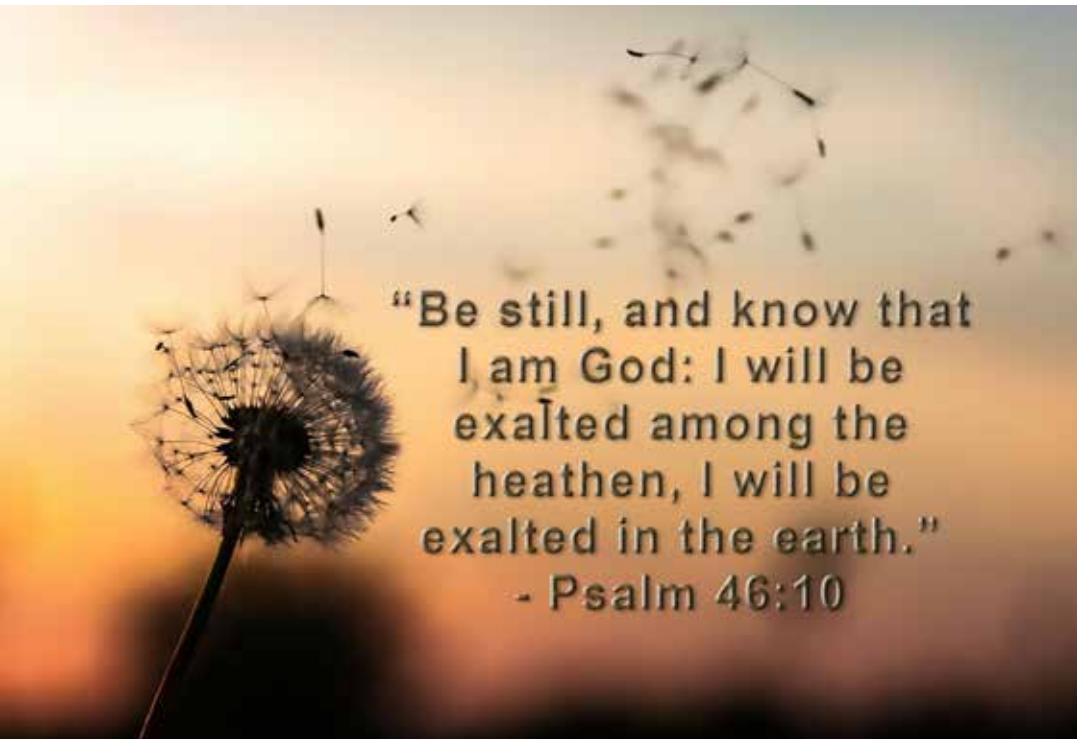
When we do not let our thoughts stray and when we do not talk, then we can listen to what the Lord has to tell us. We do not just hear; we have to listen.

Fasting

Fasting can also be a good way to help us concentrate on the things of God. In the wee morning hours, before we break our night-long fast with breakfast, it is easier to keep our minds bright and focused than when we come in after a day's work and fill our stomachs with an evening meal.

John the Baptist's disciples fasted. Jesus said that His disciples would fast after He was gone (Matthew 9:14). I would understand this fasting to be for longer periods of time than just missing or postponing one meal. In this time of going without food, we should not appear mournful to others or to be suffering by fasting, but we should appear joyful and neat (Matthew 6:17-18). The purpose of this kind of fasting is not to be seen of men, but by God who will reward us openly.

The church leaders in Acts 13:1-3 exemplified this kind of prolonged fasting and focusing on the things of God. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to them with a specific message. Perhaps we too, could experience more of this kind of special direction if we also set aside longer periods of time for fasting and prayer.



"Be still, and know that
I am God: I will be
exalted among the
heathen, I will be
exalted in the earth."
- Psalm 46:10

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (**Genesis 1:7**).

Concentration

Concentration helps us to stay focused on Bible verses, on the moment we have chosen to meditate, and not to think about something else that crosses our mind (job worries, what's for supper, etc...). I call it "tricks" that reduce our

Prayer

Jesus did not just get away from the crowds and the pressures of teaching; He wanted to commune at length with His heavenly Father. The purpose was not only to rest His body, but to be refreshed and strengthened in His Spirit.

Likewise, the purpose of our coming apart into the stillness should be to commune with God. We need to worship Him with praise and thanksgiving.

He has also instructed us to bring our petitions to Him

over and over again as the persistent widow did to the unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8). The point of the parable was that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.

If we are to persevere in persistent prayer, a written list of things or people we are praying for, can surely be helpful. The list should be updated regularly as older prayers are answered with a “yes” or a “no,” and new requests come to our attention.

Our prayers should be specific. We do not just ask that God would heal everybody according to His will. We ought to pray that God would cause doctors to find what is wrong

or that a tumor would go away or that God would take the person out of the pain and misery and on to glory.

Conclusion

The Lord is waiting for a quiet time with His children. When we are focused on Him and not minding other things around us is when we feel His presence and He can speak to us.

Again I say, “Be still, and know that I am God.”

G. G. | Florida



Hid in my Heart

by Robert Loizeaux

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

– Psalm 119:105 (NIV)

The texts to memorize are the ones that “leap off the page to hug you.” Memorize them and keep them in your heart because you value them. God’s words are powerful and valuable; you will need them.

Treasure, value, and memorize Scriptures because they distinguish right from wrong, teach the way of salvation, and direct our thoughts in significant ways.

Memorized Scripture can guide you into a spiritually productive life, helps you avoid sin, escapes the traps designed to catch the clever, and provides the hope that helps you endure affliction.

Scriptures provide compelling words for explaining the gospel, and can be drawn upon in praying according to God’s will.

Put into practice the texts you memorize to equip you for spiritual battle, and to abound with blessing.

R.L. | Maryland



“Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me.

I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on Your statutes.

I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey Your precepts.”

– Psalm 119:98-100 (NIV)

Memorized Scripture can guide you into a spiritually productive life.

Give Glory to God

by Menno Knight

“Give glory to God by telling the truth, we know this man is a sinner.”
— John 9:24 (NIV)

This statement, made by the Pharisees at the inquisition of a man who had been born blind, sparked a response that infuriated them ... again.

The man who could now see, retorted, “That is remarkable! You don’t know where He comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing” (John 9:31-33; NIV).

The Pharisees did not appreciate this lesson at the blind man’s seminary. Unable to refute the truth that the seeing man had spoken, the Pharisees attacked him personally, ““You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out” (John 9:34).

Jesus confirmed the truth of the healed man’s words. In speaking to His disciples, Jesus said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3).

This story is one more instance where the rulers of the Jews found fault with the glorious good works Jesus did among the people. Instead of giving glory to God for such a wonderful healing done right in their midst, these rulers continued to find fault with the bearer of the good news. In Mark 15:10, Pilate summed up the reason why the rulers of the Jews could not rejoice at the incredible opening of the eyes of a man born blind. “For Pilate knew that the chief priests had handed Jesus over because of envy.”

Yes, envy and jealousy blinded the eyes of these religious leaders so they could not glorify God for these great healing works. Jesus said in John 9:39, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind” (NIV).

The Pharisees were not the only ones blinded by jealousy to the mighty works done among them. Because of jealousy that God had reached out to Gentiles instead of to the people of Israel, the people of Nazareth could not give glory to God. Instead they tried to kill Jesus (Luke 4:29).

Even the disciples of Jesus needed a lesson on giving God the glory when someone else cast out demons in the name

of Jesus. In Luke 9:49-50 we have this incident recorded, “Then John answered and said, ‘Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is for us.’ ”

Jesus did not tell His disciples to go and join themselves to the man who was casting out demons. He told them not to forbid the man to do God’s mighty work because if he was not persecuting them, the man was actually on the same side as they were.

Just a few verses later the story is told how the disciples entered into a Samaritan village to find lodging for the night, but were declined hospitality because the people found out Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. So James and John asked Jesus, “Do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” (Luke 9:54).

“But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.’ And they went to another village” (Luke 9:55-56).

Jesus wanted the disciples, as well as the Pharisees, to give glory to God for the good works done in Jesus’ name as well as when opposed by others. It is a lesson for all believers today, but since we are writing to and for Anabaptists, we will specifically speak to them.

Anabaptists have committed to teaching and putting into practice the whole Word of God.

When we see other people doing good works who have not made that commitment, it is easy to become confused and think that the Bible teachings and applications we make are unimportant.

So, it is possible to conclude our specific teachings and applications are unimportant because God blesses the work of those who do not uphold a full commitment to Bible truth. Therefore, it is easy to think that we should abandon many Bible teachings and link arms with those doing other good works in the name of Jesus. This is a wrong conclusion. A full commitment and surrender to Jesus and Bible teaching is important to God.

The other wrong approach is to condemn those doing good works and call down fire from heaven upon them because they do not teach or practice a full gospel. This



Africa Mercy
(498' long, 77' wide)

entirely misses the spirit of Jesus when He declared, “I did not come to destroy lives, but to save them.”

Let us consider a specific example. An organization, Mercy Ships, has been operating a hospital ship, *Africa Mercy*, for a number of years and bringing hope and healing to many in Africa.

Mercy Ships is now building a hospital ship twice the size of *Africa Mercy* and a good bit larger than Noah’s ark. This ship named *Global Mercy*, designed and built especially as a civilian hospital ship, will contain six operating rooms with 144 hospital beds and will be staffed by more than 600 volunteers; this ship will minister to the physical needs of thousands—repairing cleft lips and palates, removing cataracts and life-threatening tumors, correcting debilitating burns, and many more surgeries. *Global Mercy* and its staff will be able to change the lives of thousands, as well as change the surgical landscape of whole countries.

The VP of Human Resources for Mercy Ships, Angie Fadely, has this to say about the new ship, “Our volunteers have been the heart of Mercy Ships for 40 years and are essential to the success of our new ship, the *Global Mercy*! This spirit of hope and healing inspires the best in everyone; the idea that I can help someone else by sharing my gifts, my knowledge, my resources, my strength, my prayers, with no thought for what I might get in return. This is truly the model of Jesus.”

Yes, the work of Mercy Ships is doing good and not evil. It is bringing hope and healing to thousands of people in the name of Jesus. The verse quoted on the brochure is, “**For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything**” (Hebrews 3:4; NIV).

Mercy Ships is a great example of what the disciples saw in the man who cast out demons in Jesus’ name, but was not

one of them. Jesus said, “**Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you**” (Luke 9:50; NIV).

Anabaptists should not throw away their distinctive beliefs and practices because Mercy Ships volunteers do not uphold them, and yet are doing a good work in the name of Jesus. But we can give glory to God for the good work Mercy Ships is doing while continuing to follow our understanding of how God is calling us to obey and serve Him.

We should recognize that the calling and operation of Mercy Ships may be different than what God has called us to be and to do.

While their mission is not antagonistic to ours, there may still be good reasons why we should be cautious of joining up with them.

Many “Christian” missions operate very inefficiently with huge overheads and highly paid executives. Little of their money and effort actually gets to the people pictured on their fund-raiser brochures.

On the other hand, we ought to enthusiastically support and encourage our own organizations that do understand and practice the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Anabaptist way—the same way to which we have committed ourselves—to obey God’s commands and to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we are assured that if we faithfully obey God’s commands, He will be pleased with us and we will be found in Him (I John 2:5).

Some are quick to point out that we are not saved by good works. Jesus never condemned those who did good works of healing and serving their fellow man in His name. Rather, He famously blessed them in the story of the Good Samaritan.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but *he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*”

“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’”

“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, *you who practice lawlessness* [evildoers, workers of iniquity]!’”

Jesus was not condemning people here for the good works they did in His name. He was condemning them for the evil works they did and for failing to do the will of His Father in heaven. When people do evil and fail to do the will of God, and then do good works to compensate for their sin, Jesus warns them that they will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Doing good to compensate for evil is a true “works religion.”

A “works religion” is far different from serving God by serving our fellow man out of a heart of love and compassion.



Give glory to God for the healing!

With such sacrifices and offerings God is well pleased and we do well to let God judge the motives of the heart.

As the healed man born blind might say to the Pharisees of our day, “If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” **Give Glory to God!**

Noah's Ark

(510' long, 85' wide, and 51' high)



New Ship: Global Mercy

(570' long, 93' wide, 12 decks high)

The Mystery of the Gospel

In response to the Challenge Question: "What mystery is Paul writing about in Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 3:3-5?" (AV16, page 21).

The Hope of Glory

by Kenneth Hollinger

The answer to the mystery of Colossians 1:26 is found in verse 27, "The glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory ..." This is not only a mystery to the Gentiles in the past and present, but also to many poor souls of Christendom today. Professing Christ on the outside without having Christ within you, makes being a true disciple an unknown mystery.

"In the beginning, God..." Before the beginning, everything was in God. Man was created in God's image. At the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden, man fell out of favor with God, and was driven away from the Tree of Life. After some four thousand years of mystery, God provided another tree to replace the tree of life. This tree was planted just outside of Jerusalem on Mt. Calvary.

Christ's tree of death was our hope of life by the power of His resurrection. Man could again have the hope of being in favor with God.

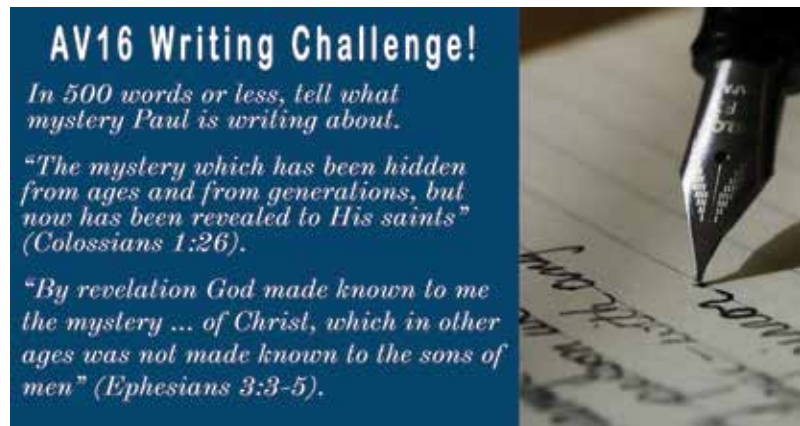
The eternal purpose of God was to procure a pure and holy bride for His Son. In order to make this future bride pure and holy and in God's favor, Christ shed His blood to wash her from her adulterous sins by the power of His resurrection.

Adam was created from the dust of the earth. Eve was formed from a rib taken from Adam's side while he was in a deep sleep. The bride of Christ, the *ekklesia*, was brought to life out of the second man Adam. Calvary was designed to be a tree of death, but the mystery revealed by the resurrection was that it actually became the tree of life for the restored and future bride of Christ. After four thousand years of whoredom, the church could now be white as snow and again be as a chaste virgin.

The apostle Paul writes, "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).

The answer to the mystery is, "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The hope of glory, which was not understood in ages past, is that both Gentiles and Jews can be received into the presence of God.

K. H. | Indiana



The Mystery Revealed

by Jim Gingerich

I am writing about the mystery the apostle Paul wrote of in Colossians 1:26 and Ephesians 3:3-5. It would seem to me that when the Apostle references "the mystery," he is speaking of the ushering in of the Gentiles in the New Dispensation.

While there were a number of "Gentile converts" who became part of the people of God in the Old Testament, it was highly uncommon. When the New Testament church was birthed at Pentecost through the power of the Holy Spirit, it became quite evident that this glorious "city of God" was not exclusively designed for the Jewish people but was to be made up of whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, regardless of nationality.

Perhaps if we add Ephesians 3:6 to the above mentioned text, "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel ..." it will help us get the "mystery" picture.

Also in considering the words of the apostle James in Acts 15:15-18, it becomes clear that the bringing in of the Gentiles was in the Lord's plan at the beginning.

J.G. | Kentucky



(continued on next page)

Humanity Restored

by Brent Hartzler

I am writing about the mystery that was hidden for ages, even to the prophets, but now has been revealed to the saints.

“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

In the ages past and even beyond, farther than the human imagination can conceive, there was God. And God, in His creator mind formed, at His Word and touch, a heavenly realm of infinite beauty and perfection.

Somewhere in those past ages, the perfection of the heavenly realm was spoiled. Lucifer desired the worship due only to God. There was conflict. Other angelic beings joined the rebellion against the Creator. These were cast out of the heavenly realm and doomed to everlasting destruction.

Sometime the Creator God created once again. He created a world, our world. He created good things to make this world a productive and beautiful home for mankind. When He had done so, He declared it “very good.”

God designed this beautiful world full of all things good and made mankind the caretakers of it. God created mankind for relationship, a relationship with Him and with each other. God wanted mankind to choose to serve Him with thankfulness for His great goodness; God also wanted to have communion with mankind.

But lingering in the periphery were the fallen and doomed creatures of evil and darkness. They saw the beauty, the goodness, the joy, the exuberance of God’s creation. What was it that went through the mind of the great fallen angel? Was it simply a desire to destroy all that was good? Or maybe in the twisted logic of the fallen, he contrived to justify himself and prove God unjust. If he could bring about rebellion toward God in the world, and if God should overlook the rebellion of mankind, God would be unjust in condemning the fallen

legions. God would not be good. God would not be just. Satan would be justified.

God could not and did not overlook the rebellion of mankind. Death and ugliness immediately began to mar the beauty. Incredible sorrow and sadness quickly replaced the joy and exuberance.

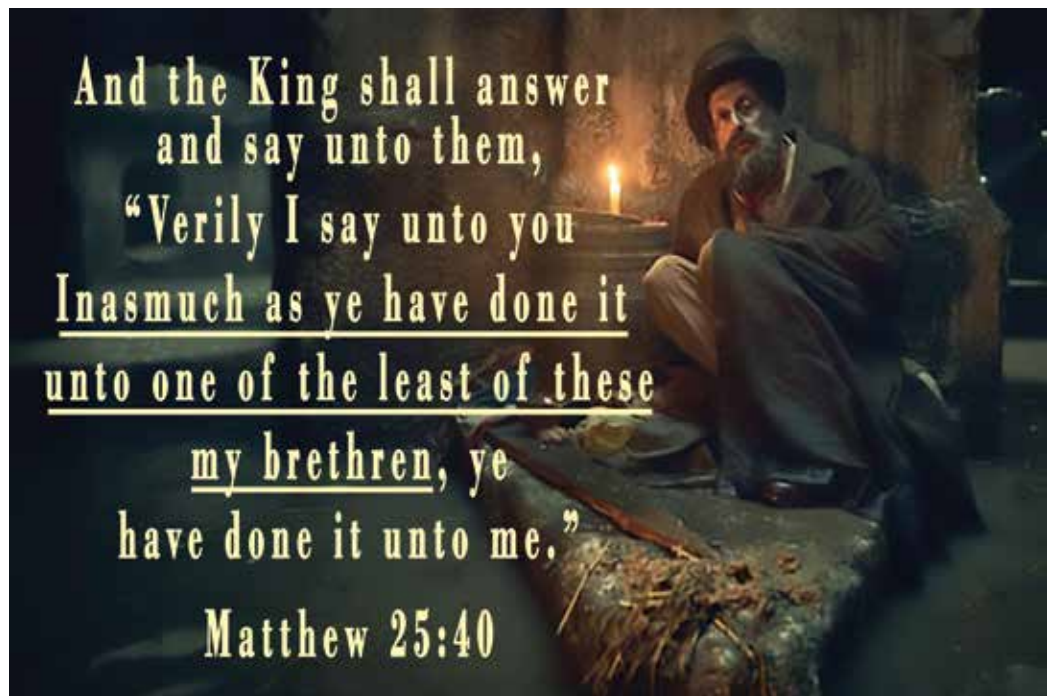
Satan appeared to get the upper hand in the world, but God neither overlooked nor destroyed His creation. Rather, He continued to invest heavily and speak of restoration. At each step the forces of evil seemed bent on foiling any sort of restoration. Through the time of Noah and Abraham and God’s dealings with the Israelites and even during the life of Jesus, the forces of evil were present.

The mystery continued. How could God in His goodness keep true to His holiness and justice and still bring about the restoration of His relationship with mankind? Throughout the ages there were hints and promises. The prophets and angels desired to look into this but it remained a mystery.

And then, when the shrouds of death fell away from Jesus and He burst with life from the tomb, the shrouds of mystery began to fall away. It was a plan of redemption and restoration both marvelous in its brilliance and its simplicity. God is forever good, and evil remains condemned.

Thus the mystery of the gospel was revealed and humanity could once again be restored to the relationship with God that God intended for mankind from the beginning. **“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1 NKJV).**

B. H. | West Virginia



The Cure for the World's Ills

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

Jesus said that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

– Luke 24:47

Our world is filled with problems, inequities, and injustices; worse, it is filled with heinous crimes of people against each other. It does not take a genius or a profound philosopher to see that mankind is seriously broken.

Many Christians, seeing this, have attempted to fix the problems and restrain the sins via political action. They think that if enough Christian officials were elected and Christian values were incorporated into law, the world would be a better place.

There is a better answer. It is repentance.

Repentance and remission of sins are part of what Jesus commanded us to preach to all nations. The apostle Paul went throughout the world, “testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus” (Acts 20:21), and declaring “that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance” (Acts 26:20b).

*Repentance and remission
of sins are part of what
Jesus commanded us to
preach to all nations.*

As followers of Jesus, we have the same commission. Today we have the opportunity to preach to the nations the message of repentance and turning from all sin. The answer to our world's ills is to be found in this divine message of Jesus Christ, not in the passing of laws in an attempt to force good morals on people.

For instance, abortion cannot be stopped by laws. In 1860, when abortion was illegal in the United States, nearly the same number of abortions were performed per capita as are done today. Even if an abortion is prevented because it is illegal, it does not absolve the mother of the sins that surround

it. So our mission is to preach repentance and the turning away from all sin to public educators who teach that unborn babies are merely “tissue” or “products of conception,” to doctors who murder, and to men and women complicit in the murder of the unborn. Abortion is sin and unless those who participate in it repent and turn from their wicked ways, God will surely punish those who partner in abortion and the sins associated with it—selfishness, fornication, adultery, and murder. That is our message.

While some laws may force better treatment of minorities, they can never stamp out racist attitudes or put love in one's heart. The answer is for people to repent of the sin of pride, in thinking they are better than others simply because of skin color or ethnicity, and to repent of maltreating others.

Political action can never bring an end to poverty. Laws may stop some oppressive practices such as slavery, but it does not better the lot of the poor unless selfishness, exploitation, drunkenness, lying, gambling, stealing, and other sinful practices are repented of and abandoned.

Prohibition by a constitutional amendment did not put an end to alcoholism. The answer to drunkenness and drug abuse is for the producers to repent of creating that which wrecks lives; for store owners and tavern owners and drug sellers to repent of selling the poisons to the users; and for addicts to repent of abusing their bodies.

Tax resistance, political action, and protests will not bring an end to war. The answer is repentance. Politicians must repent of their calls for war; Christian patriots must repent of their involvement and complicity; those in the “defense industry” must repent for making the arms and profiting on spilled blood; soldiers must repent of their sinful violence and hatred.

Political action can never stamp out sin. Jesus' message of repentance strikes at the root of humanity's problems, his sinful heart. Only when a selfish heart is transformed into a heart of love, compassion, and mercy for others can real meaningful change happen and the world's ills be addressed from the root.

Repentance and a supernatural change of heart—a new heart which comes from God Himself and motivates and empowers holy living, free from sin—are the hope for real change.

A. V. S. | Michigan

(continued on next page)



Repentance HAS NOT lost its Power from the DAYS OF Jonah

"The people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. The news reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He made a proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, 'Let neither man nor animal, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and animal, and let them cry mightily to God. Yes, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, so that we might not perish?' God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way. God repented of the evil which he said he would do to them, and he didn't do it"

(Jonah 3:5-10)

**"The men of Nineveh...
repented at the preaching of Jonah;
and behold, someone greater than Jonah is here."**

- Matthew 12:41

All Scriptures quoted are from the World English Bible (public domain)

Such Were Some of You

by Richard Thayer

“Such were some of you, but you were washed ... by the Spirit of our God.”

— I Corinthians 6:11

Father said, “Use your head; not your back.”

Grandmother said, “Don’t be afraid of hard work.”

Father opened the door to our house with a sweeping gesture and said, “The world is an oyster. Go, find your pearls.”

Grandmother said, “If there is only one thing you remember of what I tell you, remember this: The Bible is the true word of God, no matter what anyone else says about it.”

Father said, “Go to college; get a high paying job. Don’t settle for a ‘flunky’ job.”

Grandmother said, “College is a dangerous place.”

Father saw college as a step to “higher living,” so in fall of 1967 I left our home in Minneapolis and went off to Bemidji State College in northern Minnesota. I decided to pursue a degree in education, with a minor in history.

At that time there were many college students who just wanted to avoid being drafted into the Vietnam War. We students got the coveted student deferment. I didn’t want to go to Vietnam, but I did not know who I was or why I was there. Nothing made sense.

While I was in college, I was renting an apartment with several other men. Usually on the weekend they would go somewhere to drink and party. The attitude was, “We are away from home. Let’s party.” That was another part of the college scene.

I went to church more than just on Christmas and Easter. Why? Because Father said, “We are Americans and we live in America so we are going to do what Americans do. Period.”

I remember one Sunday when I went to church in January, 1970. I did not understand the sermon. It had something to do with school bus laws and desegregation. The bulletin board had photos of the young people in their nice military uniforms. “Pray for our young folks in service” was the caption. This was pretty well a standard universal understanding. But none of these things made sense to me.

I remembered that Grandmother told me, “The Book is truth. Don’t forget it.” So, I got my Bible out and started

thumbing through its pages, not really knowing where to start. I found this in II Timothy 3:1-5, “**This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**”

I stopped right there. The message was absolutely clear: “From such turn away.” I pondered the question, “What am I going to do about it? If I do what it says, I know the reaction of some of my family: “He went to college. Now he is an atheist and won’t go to church.”

I thought, *Do I dare to do what it says? ... All right, I’ll do it.*

The following weekend my buddies were all away again. I had the apartment to myself. I was not going to church. Remember, “From such turn away.” Now what? I did not know.

The thought came to me, “Read!” Okay, the Bible told me to turn away. Now I should read to know what more to do, but where? I started with James 1, and verses 5-8 stood out, “**If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.**” This was just what I was looking for—an invitation to ask God for wisdom, and a promise that He would not bawl me out for not knowing.

“**But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.**”

So, after the invitation to ask for wisdom, I saw this prerequisite, “**Ask in faith.**” I felt convicted; I didn’t know if God was real. Now I asked for more help.

The Lord took me to Hebrews 11:6. “**But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**”

This important verse led me to yet another question. How do I get to this place of being rewarded? I must believe that God is. So I asked, “How do I get to this faith?”

Answer: Continue reading in James. Remember, I was in my apartment alone with God and His Word. My roommates were out partying. So I kept reading until I came to James 4. *“Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”*

This seemed like an outline on how to get in right standing with God. Right there I got down, face on the floor, and asked for forgiveness. I turned to God and humbled myself. Guess what. That “He-shall-lift-you-up” promise happened! HE did it!

The Bible became a new book to me. Now I could say with Paul, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16).*

As the new week wore on, my roommates asked, “What got into you?” They told me I had to break contract with them for the apartment. They said, “You’re no fun anymore.”

That was fine with me. I had found the answer to my core question, “Who am I?” I am a child, a son of God, my loving Father.

Yes, it is necessary to turn away from what is false and turn to God. But was God asking me to become a hermit and hide away somewhere in a monastery? I didn’t think so. Once again, James 1:5 applied: “If any of you lack wisdom...” Then I wondered, where do I go from II Timothy 3:5 “Have nothing to do with such people.”

The Holy Spirit said, “Trust Me. I will guide you.”

A couple of months later we came across Michael Sattler’s trial in our college history book. The trial was only a page or two and was given as an example of the Radical Reformation. One point in his trial especially caught my attention. Sattler said that if he were to go to war, he would go as a Turk (Muslim), for fighting is their nature, but it is not the nature of a Christian.

I wanted to learn more about this Radical Reformation.

Our instructor was a doctor of history. He said, “The Swiss Brethren movement lasted only 50 years (1525 to 1575); then their light went out!”

Sattler’s testimony made sense to me. I searched the library and found the Schleithem Confession and the Dortrecht Confession. It untied the knot that Constantine

and Augustine had made that joined the church and state together. Sattler and the Swiss Brethren understood that Christians belong to Christ’s kingdom.

One day during lunch in the cafeteria I was talking to one of my table mates. He listened politely. When I was done talking, he said, “The kind history professor is mistaken. I go to a church that still holds to the Dortrecht Confession. Then he invited me to visit his church.

I took up the invitation. In this church the ladies wore head coverings. There was no jewelry. There was no American flag, no candles, no altar, no organ, no stained glass windows. It was just bare. The preaching was plain, direct, and without pretension. They made no apologies for what Jesus said about “turning the other cheek.”

One Sunday afternoon I was with a few families who were together for lunch. They were singing, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” I just melted down in tears and begged for baptism. I knew this was what I wanted.

They were kind and I was baptized for the first time. I was and still am thankful for my testimony in Christ through baptism. It was a stake and anchor for my Christian life. I knew this was the place for me.

It didn’t take long for some problems to arise. I had no clue how to relate in a brotherhood church. I grew up in front of a TV. I had a tremendous amount of bad baggage. My language was bad. Some of my habits were just plain sinful.

When it came to relationships, I couldn’t get “close” to anyone. In TV land, you just change the channel or turn it off.

And you can’t do that with people.

Father was not happy with me for joining a plain church. He said I was throwing my life away. He also said he would help pay for psychiatric help to talk me out of it. The Moonies and Jim Jones cults were making the news at this time. Both Dad and Mom thought I was really getting sucked into something bizarre.

Every year on Labor Day, the Mennonite churches in northern Minnesota met for a Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) program. In 1972 the church at Black Duck, where I had been baptized, invited me to go along to learn about MDS. There I met Mary Esther Yoder and her parents, from Grove City, Minnesota.

The next year I went to Calvary Bible School in Arkansas. There she was again, and I found myself attracted to this no-nonsense young lady. When I asked to begin a friendship, she accepted the challenge of a courtship with a non-Mennonite background boy.



Father liked her, but told me, “Forget her. She is too good for you!” However, she became my wife on October 6, 1973.

Father died unexpectedly on December 10, 1974. He did not get to see any of his grandchildren.

Mom was not sure about my new wife. “Does she always have to dress like she does? It’s like having a nun follow me around when we go shopping together.”

We always tried to honor my mom. After many years, she accepted my wife and her “peculiar” dress. We blessed her with 11 grandchildren. Well, I guess the Lord blessed her with our 11 children.

Life in my wife’s church was not going very smoothly. I just couldn’t seem to grasp their mores. Where were they coming from? Where were they going?

Many years later, one of the old ministers wanted to share a Bible verse with me before he passed away: “**Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusts in thee**” (Isaiah 26:3).

I had always thought, *This brother does not understand me at all; neither did I understand him.* But when he shared this verse with me from his wheelchair, I saw and understood that he knew me better than I knew myself. I did not have

perfect peace because my mind was not stayed on Christ, but on the problems. I did not fully trust God to work things out.

So we moved away and joined another church, more strict. I call this the black-and-white church. But that didn’t work long for us either. After we left there, we were a lone family for about ten years. But we were not alone. The Lord knew exactly where we were. And as the Good Shepherd, He knew exactly what this sheep needed.

Someone introduced us to the Charity tape ministry. This was a blessing to us. In this way we were able to keep a going-to-church Sunday morning habit. During this time we met different families who were also “seekers” trying to follow the Lord the best they knew. One of these families was to become our future pastor, Ernest Strubhar.

On our 26th wedding anniversary, my dear wife kindly told me that she had had it with me and our solitary way of life. I asked her what the matter was. She wouldn’t tell me. She said, “You don’t listen to me anyway. You ask the Lord!”

This was a heads-up call from my wife. Something must be done. But what? She said, “Ask God.”

I was a bit reluctant, but there was nowhere else to turn. So I asked God about it. And He said, “Do you really want to know?” I wasn’t sure if I did or not.

Finally I gave in. “Yes, I really want to know.” And God said, “Good. I will help you one step at a time.” My first assignment was to write a letter of apology to the minister at the “black-and-white” church.

Then my sons wanted me to go with them to a Leadership Conference in Pennsylvania. At first I did not want to go. I said there were already too many chiefs and not enough Indians. I didn’t believe in leadership.

But the boys insisted and my dear wife supported my sons, so I went. One afternoon in our men’s prayer circle I was singled out for prayer. I began asking God to forgive all those people who had hurt me. The prayer leader said, “Stop. That’s not right.” I was confused. What did he mean, “That’s not right”?

So he explained about King David. When he sinned with Uriah and Bathsheba, he did not point to them, but he prayed, “I have sinned against You!” Now the prayer leader asked me to pray again. This time something totally different caught my attention. I had actually made all these people and situations my focus, my little idols! I had missed God completely. I cried out for mercy! Mercy! Then a single ray of light dropped down from heaven and hit me. “It’s you, Richard. You have been so unkind.”

Another “step” at this time was to begin attending church on Wednesday evenings. This church was about 70 miles from where we lived.



The connection was that some of my wife's relatives attended there. Part of the problem was the size of the congregation. I think there were more than 60 families. Sunday services were just too much sensory overload (as they call it) for us.

I told my spouse that I think the Lord wants us to attend the church in Partridge, Kansas on Wednesday evenings for a year. She said, "Oh, no. We can't. It's too far and we don't have the income to support such a project." I told her, "The Lord is in it. It will work." And guess what ... it did.

Our pastor friend from Oklahoma invited some of my boys and me to join him and his sons for a work week in Parsons, Kansas, for a CAM-DRS project. It was a good experience for us. When we returned home that Friday evening, we were glad to be home. My wife and I also celebrated our 27th wedding anniversary. We did not know it would be our last evening together—October 6, 2000.

Somehow in the early morning hours our house was in flames. Our alarm clock woke us at 6:00. Mary Esther and I did not know there was a fire. We heard a scuffle in the hall. When I opened the bedroom door, whoosh, the flames and choking smoke rushed in.

Smoke and flames rushing up the stairs made it impossible for us to escape. Eleven of us were trapped in the second story.

The four boys jumped out their window. Later one of the boys said, "The floor was hot to our feet." Once on the ground, one of them ran to the neighbors and called 911. The courthouse registered the call at 6:11 a.m.

Our oldest daughter, Maggie, got her six sisters into her room. Five of the girls knelt by the bed and pulled the blanket over their heads, but spunky eleven-year-old Paula pushed Maggie out the window and jumped out after her.

As the house was burning and beginning to collapse on itself, I distinctly heard the hymn, "When Peace Like a River Attendeth My Way." My neighbor let me use his phone right there at the scene to call my mom. My first words were, "It is well with my soul."

Our pastor friend from Oklahoma graciously accepted our invitation to conduct the funeral. The Mennonite Brethren church in Hillsboro, Kansas, offered their building for the funeral. It had seating for 1,100; the building was full.

After everything sort of settled down, the surviving children and I continued to meet Wednesday evenings with the church 70 miles away that was becoming "our church."

In the spring of 2001, the ministry invited us to join them in their spring communion.

I was not confident if that was the right thing to do. I asked for their prayers and said I would pray, too, to seek the Lord's will.

That week I read all the Bible references on the Last Supper, and the events surrounding the upper room. I also read some of Paul's thinking in I Corinthians 10 and 11.

Then the Lord asked me, "Did you find any unity at the first communion?"

I said, "No. Those men were very diverse. They completely missed the point of God's kingdom. They argued over who would have the highest positions in Christ's earthly kingdom. And Peter even argued with Jesus about washing his feet."

The Lord told me, "That's right. You're very observant. Now go over all these accounts once more. Only this time look for the unity."

"Do I have to?"

"Yes."

Mary Esther Thayer and the 6 younger daughters
(taken by Maggie, the oldest) Summer of 1999



Everyone on this picture perished in the October 2000 fire except Paula, the one on the far left.

I was terribly reluctant to go over this again. So I began reading these accounts crying and weeping. “Now,” the Lord seemed to say, “Did you see any unity?”

“Yes. First, they were all in one room together. Second, they were all served a piece of bread.”

“True. But did they all get it?”

“Yes, they all got a piece of bread because Jesus gave it to them,” I answered God. “And they all drank from the cup. And they got the cup only because Jesus handed it to them.”

“Did they all drink it?”

“Yes, they all drank. And fourth, they got their feet washed. But Peter argued and protested.”

“But did they all get their feet washed?”

“Yes. But, Lord, the unity was not theirs. They were unified in what the Lord did for them.”

“Exactly. That is what qualified them for the supper. It’s what Jesus had done for them. They really couldn’t do it for themselves.”

Then I knew! I could hardly wait to see the lead pastor the next week. I knew I was ready with this new understanding. *It is not so much about me as it is what Christ has done for me.*

That invitation in the spring of 2001 opened a new understanding for me. My family and I were taken into membership in this Kansas church.

In December, 2001 I married Ruth, my first wife’s sister. I was no longer “ruthless.”

Six or seven years later, after counseling with several brothers, we moved to Oklahoma. The Oklahoma church had, I think, nine families at the time; the Kansas church had around 60.

Three of my sons have made our congregation in Oklahoma their church home. My oldest son was ordained a few years ago. So now he is my elder.

“In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed.”
– Psalm 31:1

R. T. | Oklahoma



Funny Money

by James Landis

“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.”

– II Corinthians 8:21 (NIV)

A 19th-century French magician’s trick became so famous that the expression, “he can pull a rabbit out of a hat” became an ordinary part of our everyday language. My understanding of this trick, like most other tricks, is that the magician gets the audience to focus their attention on some outstanding diversion, and they completely miss how the rabbit goes in the hat.

That is how it goes with the coronavirus. People have madly fallen into the hype that governments have unlimited power to do anything necessary to combat the dangerous virus. The masses and the media are focused on the virus instead of watching what U.S. leaders are doing with the money supply ... in broad daylight. There will be consequences.

Here is the latest news item as of 28 March, 2020:



“On 27 March, 2020 President Trump signed a \$2.2 trillion economic rescue package into law, following a near-unanimous approval vote by the House of Representatives” (Associated Press News). This \$2.2 trillion is in addition to the \$1 trillion of overspending already projected in the U.S. budget

for this fiscal year. This means there is \$3.2 trillion of virtual money—money by decree and backed by nothing of value—added to the number of U.S. dollars in circulation.

The people of God should be alert to what is going on in this money scheme so we are not caught up in it. Let us try to understand how this immoral money scheme works and then we want to look at the implications of it for Anabaptists.

So where does the money come from?

Here is how it works. In one way or another, the government issues a decree that gives out credits for this huge amount of money. There is nothing other than thin air backing the value of the supposed credit dollars.

It should be obvious to any thinking person that simply issuing a decree does not create 10,000 more houses, 10,000 more acres of land, 100,000 more trucks, or ten more ships or ten more airplanes. Neither does Congress’ decree give birth to a million calves or hatch 10 million more chickens.

Neither Congress, the Senate, the President, nor the Fed magically creates these real productive things by simply issuing a decree that now there are \$3.2 trillion more than there were one day ago. Yet many people believe that the government, by committing such deception, will overcome disease, end poverty, stimulate the economy, end immoral conduct, and vanquish all our enemies. Few even consider that deficit government spending is an immoral act that has evil consequences.

To help us understand the delusion/deceit that money by decree perpetuates with a so-called “economic aid package,” I would like to use an illustration. Let me propose that counterfeit (fake) money will stimulate parts of the economy.

In this scenario, another country simply prints ten billion bogus U.S. dollars and sneaks them into the United States. Is the United States or its people any richer because of the increased dollars now in circulation? Do the people of the United States suddenly have more houses, factories, tractors, turkeys, and sheep? The obvious answer is “no.”

Will the answer be any different if the foreign country successfully smuggles in \$3.2 trillion? Again, the obvious answer is “no.”

Yet the sheer size of such a counterfeiting would assure an effect on the parts of the economy where the fake dollars were spent. And the unchangeable, unobserved consequence of the \$3.2 trillion stimulus in the economy is that the total dollars existing in the world will be diluted by \$3.2 trillion.

Take a gallon jug and pour in three quarts of colored water. Now add 3.2 cups of clear water. The coloring in the whole gallon will now be weaker. It works the same way with dollars.

No one can escape the effect of adding \$3.2 trillion of funny money to the total number of dollars without adding to the amount of goods available for purchase. Therefore, prices of goods and services will rise. It will not happen all at once nor evenly, but it will happen. Inflation is inevitable. Put another way, a decrease in the purchasing power of the dollar must take place with the \$3.2 trillion increase in the money supply.

History is littered with countries that have tried this same trick of overspending by issuing fake money—Argentina, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Zimbabwe. In every case, wild inflation overtook them and destroyed the value of their currency. Wild inflation in those countries resulted in hard times for the masses. Prices of goods rose. Many real goods became scarce and people often had to stand in line for essentials. Inflation wiped out the productive middle class and stimulated war and violence.

We do not know what is going on in the U.S. It appears that serious inflation is upon us but there could be much more sinister things involved. Mayer Rothschild, the originator of the world's modern banking system, made this telling statement: "Give me the power to control a nation's money and I care not who makes her laws."

Maybe the coronavirus ailment is only a distraction. It will go away, but the U.S. money system will never be the same and we do not know what is coming.

But whatever happens to the value of U.S. money, God's people should stick by the principles given to us in His Word.

First of all, **do not be deceived by the lure of debt, speculation, and easy money.** "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (**Galatians 6:7 NASB**). God's laws remain in effect. "They sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind" (**Hosea 8:7 NASB**). What an apt illustration of planting virtual dollars and the tornado they spawn.

Invest your life in nurturing life according to God's design—building, sharing, growing good things—not in selfishness, like the rich man who said, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come [retirement]; take your

ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (**Luke 12:19 NASB**).

Second, **the people of God should always live in good conscience, not being a party to evil.** Stay out of gambling and get-rich-quick schemes that promise great gains without physical work. The people of God should recognize the sinful nature of man and that evil men in the kingdoms of this world control virtual money. They use the power of funny money for their own selfish ends.

Be wary of government payments. They will control you and influence your sense of right and wrong. Draw close to the brotherhood in times of distress.

We should always remain honest before God. Only by abiding by God's laws of right and wrong will "the righteous shine forth as the sun." (**Matthew 13:43**).

Third, **the people of God should never put their trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God,** Who gives all things to enjoy. "Do good. Be rich in good deeds, be generous and willing to share." (**I Timothy 6:17-18**).

Inflation discourages savings and honest toil, but let us not be idle. God's standard is that he who will not work should not eat.

"For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread."

— **I Thessalonians 3:10-12**

J.G.L. | Georgia



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Pick the Right Politics

by Peter Mommsen

This article is adapted from the Editor's Letter introducing the spring 2020 issue of *Plough Quarterly*.

The United States is caught up in the spectacle of a presidential election year, and political obsession is again a social contagion. The full-blown symptoms may affect only a small part of the population, but through the social networks and the media, it influences far more, and the polarized identities it encourages are real enough. That is true even in a relatively open-minded Anabaptist Christian community like the Bruderhof, where I live. When the talk turns to elections, emotions begin to simmer.

It is hard not to suspect political opponents of willfully shutting their eyes to self-evident truths. How can a follower of Jesus fail to support healthcare for the poor, racial justice, and getting immigrant children out of cages?

Or: how can a Christian tolerate abortion, “sex change” for kindergartners, and the push to eradicate faith from the public square?

“Ah,” interposes another voice, “neither side is right.”

This argument sounds very virtuous, but is also quite bloodless.

We should be appalled at real evils, whether identified by the left or the right; most of us are not appalled enough. Nor is it wrong to desire a transformation of society; most of us should desire it far more, and be more willing to practice self-sacrificial solidarity with our neighbors.

Equally, the mistake is not “being too political.” By nature we’re the “political animals” Aristotle said we are. Only, by New Testament standards, we too often pick the wrong politics—in fact, the wrong polity—to pledge our allegiance to.

The apostle Paul taught that our polity (*politeuma*)—our republic, our civil affairs, our citizenship—is the Kingdom of God (Philippians 3:20). This politics of the kingdom is not just a theological detail. It is the whole point of the gospel that Jesus announced and died for. It is the politics that will truly set right an unrighteous world.

If that is the case, why do Christians so easily imagine that party politics is where the action is? “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”—yet in real life, Christians often lavish their time and passion on trying to manipulate the levers of state power, while treating what should be our highest political loyalty as a pious afterthought. It is worth asking ourselves a few searching questions: Why is it that

democratic socialism or national conservatism sets so many Christian hearts racing, when the goal of re-tooling the state is one to which Peter and Paul were notably cool? Why do denominations prioritize action days, voting guides, and statements of political concern, when the Christian fellowship itself is meant to embody the new justice in its common life? Why do ambitious young Christians gravitate to party politics, pouring their talents into think tanks, conferences, and wonkery, rather than into building up the church as a Basil or Augustine did? In short, why does the knockoff form of politics command such attention when Christ himself had so little time or regard for it?

In an election year, the Kingdom of God can seem a bit too ... abstract. It is affirmed, certainly, as a traditional metaphor for eternal life; it can prove useful perhaps as a source of moral principles to guide our “real” political commitments. But it is not a flesh-and-blood reality. Maybe later—after Judgment Day?—but not now.

This, however, is the opposite of apostolic Christianity. For the first Christians, the Kingdom of God was the only politics that mattered, as scholars such as N. T. Wright have shown. This assertion is nothing novel. It is a truth hidden in plain sight in the Old and New Testaments and the early Christian writings. Five hundred years ago, it caught the imagination of the farmers, artisans, and village priests who made up the Radical Reformation movement now known as Anabaptism.

Fair warning: This issue of *Plough* is heavy on Anabaptism. Our purpose is not to promote the Anabaptist brand for its own sake or to claim our forebears were perfect (the Radical Reformers had their blind spots too). Rather, we believe this tradition recovers elements of original Christianity that are a crucial corrective in a year when simply saying you are Christian strikes many as partisan.

From the start, the Anabaptist movement revolved around questions of faith and politics, church and state, freedom and compulsion. Its origins lie in Zurich in the 1520s, at a time when a charismatic young humanist preacher, Ulrich Zwingli, was introducing the Reformation into the city. In seeking to reform the church based on a “plain reading” of the Bible, Zwingli was backed by the Zurich government, which claimed for itself the right to regulate religion in its territory.

Two of Zwingli’s young protégés, Felix Manz and Conrad Grebel, asked their teacher how he could justify making religious renewal dependent on state power to them, Zwingli

had simply transferred authority over matters of faith from the pope to the civil government. Yet they believed, based on their reading of the New Testament, that this authority belonged to the body of believers under the Holy Spirit (Matthew 18:18-20).

Zwingli responded somewhat ambiguously that of course the city government could not violate God's law, but that Romans 13 gave it the God-ordained right to determine the scope of reform. This claim is what Manz and Grebel protested. It was a protest with which their Catholic compatriots would have agreed, a usurpation of the rights of the church. But it cut deeper, and challenged the medieval vision, shared by Reformers and Catholics alike, of a harmonious collaboration of church and state.

The dream of a Christian state is usually traced back to the Emperor Constantine, who first legalized Christianity in AD 313. Yet Constantine himself seems to have recognized the incompatibility between his faith and his political office, famously postponing his baptism to his deathbed. In subsequent centuries, many Christians had lost the awareness of what Constantine still knew. The Radical Reformers, going back to Scripture and the early church, were simply reminding them of the original Christian tradition.



Infant baptism was the next point of conflict. This question went to the heart of the radicals' protest, and it, too, was linked to questions of state power: mandatory infant baptism, as recorded on parish rolls, was the basis for mandatory church membership enforced by the state. But if only the baptism of believing adults was biblical, then the church ought instead to be a voluntary fellowship, one whose members had freely chosen the way of discipleship. Though Zwingli, too, had earlier questioned infant baptism, he now reversed himself. In 1524, the Zurich government mandated the baptism of newborns, so that it was not even a question of children's parents making the commitment on their behalf, and forbade the rebaptism of adults on pain of banishment.

It was just one month later that the radicals gathered in

Manz's mother's house and performed the first Anabaptist baptism. This was a deliberate act of civil disobedience, in the spirit of the apostle Peter's words in Acts 5:29 that "we must obey God rather than men" (soon a favorite Anabaptist text). As the *Hutterite Chronicle* records:

Conrad and Felix believed that people should be truly baptized in the Christian order appointed by the Lord, because Christ himself says, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." Ulrich Zwingli (who shrank from the cross, disgrace, and persecution that Christ suffered) refused to agree—he said it would cause an uproar. But Conrad and Felix said that was no reason to disobey the clear command of God.



Within days, the movement spread to the countryside around Zurich; in one nearby village, nearly all the inhabitants were baptized amid a revival atmosphere of forgiveness of sins, and the people began living in voluntary, joyful community of goods, much as the first Christians had as described in Acts 2 and 4. The movement's leaders were quickly arrested, but it continued to spread despite imprisonment, confiscations, and banishments.

A year after the first adult baptisms, Zurich made the rebaptism of adults a capital crime, and the other Swiss cantons followed suit. In neighboring Habsburg-ruled Austria, execution was already prescribed. An imperial decree soon made death the mandatory penalty throughout the Holy Roman Empire, including in Protestant lands.

On January 5, 1527, Felix Manz, twenty-nine, became the first Anabaptist executed by a Reformed government, drowned in the Limmat River with the approval of his former teacher Zwingli. Over the following decades, two to three thousand Anabaptists were executed across Europe, usually after torture and often by burning; most could have saved their lives even at the last minute by recanting. Rulers, judges, and executioners: all were Christians administering the church-blessed laws of Christian states.

Martyrdom by fellow Christians sharpens one's thinking regarding the right relation between church and state. In decisive ways, history has borne out the Anabaptists' insights. The Reformation churches' dependence on and subservience to secular power, which Manz and Grebel warned about, would bear bitter fruit in later centuries, not least in 1930s Germany. Meanwhile, it would take Roman Catholicism until the Second Vatican Council to reaffirm the church's original teaching on religious liberty, as Robert Louis Wilken describes in *Liberty in the Things of God*. Early Christianity's tradition of nonviolence and economic sharing, which Anabaptism recovered, has shaped Christian leaders from Martin Luther King Jr. to Dorothy Day, even if the major churches haven't yet returned to it.

*The church itself is
the new society,
the new humanity,
the fulfillment of
Isaiah's prophecy of
the peaceable kingdom.*

What can the Radical Reformation tradition teach about faith and politics in an election year? This short editorial isn't the place for anything like a full answer (though several articles in this issue make a start). All the same, here are three brief observations:

1. *The church, not the state, embodies God's will for history.* Christians don't split their allegiance between two realms (medieval Christianity's "two swords"), with the church responsible for their souls and the state for their bodies. Instead, God's kingdom is the true politics, and makes a claim on both souls and bodies; the state's politics comes a distant second, and its significance in God's eyes is always an open question. It is never worth sacrificing our higher allegiance to the lower.

2. *The calling of Christians is to follow Jesus' words and example,* without crafting ingenious escape clauses to justify the pursuit of power. The charter of His kingdom is the Sermon on the Mount, which means what it says about nonviolence, freedom from possessions, marital faithfulness, and unconditional forgiveness. For obedient discipleship, these are non-negotiables; we can't cherry-pick some pieces of Jesus' message at the cost of others. Accordingly:

3. *The gospel is an integrated whole, meant to encompass all of human life.* Call it Anabaptist integralism. Catholic integralists and others have also envisioned a Christian society in which the gospel is the supreme law. But unlike the Anabaptists, they would bring into that Christian society something alien to Christ: state power backed by lethal violence. Instead, as the early Christians repeatedly taught, *the church itself is the new society, the new humanity, the fulfillment* (though incomplete and imperfect) *of Isaiah's prophecy of the peaceable kingdom*, where swords are forged into ploughshares.

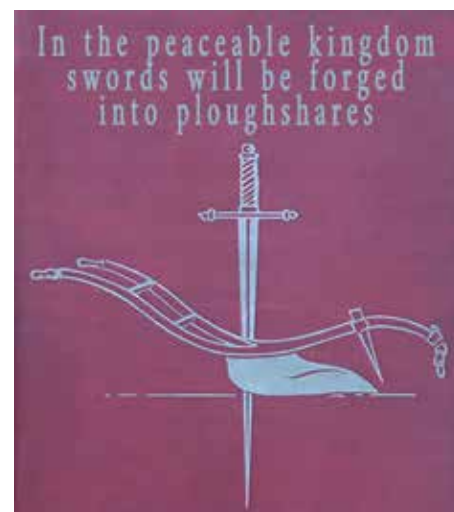
If the early Christians and the Anabaptists are right, earthly politics fade into insignificance next to the reality of God's kingdom. As a matter of faithfulness, we should recognize our allegiance belongs elsewhere.

Admittedly, in contrast to the excitement of an election campaign, this politics may feel grittier and less glamorous. As many saints have shown, it will mostly involve a hidden task: doing mundane works of mercy, being a good father or mother, bearing suffering patiently, taking and keeping religious vows. If it does involve activism in pursuit of justice, it will be the truth-telling activism of the prophet, not the compromising tactics of the professional politician. Such a life usually won't look much like success:

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).

That is Jesus' politics, deserving of all our devotion. No matter who wins the next election, Caesar will remain Caesar, doing some good and some bad. But we report to a different king.

P.M. | New York



A Short History of English Bibles (1381-2019)

Mined from Wikipedia

The spread of Wycliffe's Bible in the late 14th century led to the death penalty for anyone found in unlicensed possession of Scripture in English.

William Tyndale's translation was the first English Bible to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts. His work was taken to be a direct challenge to the hegemony (dominance) of both the Catholic Church and the ruling class of England. As a result, Tyndale was strangled and his body burned at the stake in 1538. His dying prayer was, "Lord open the eyes of the King of England."

One year after Tyndale's death, King Henry VIII authorized the Matthews Bible, which was largely Tyndale's own work. Following this came the Great Bible and then the Bishop's Bible, both authorized by the Church of England.

During the reign of the Catholic monarch, Queen Mary (1553-1558), a group of Protestant scholars fled from England to Geneva, Switzerland. In 1557, this group published the Geneva Bible. Like most English translations of the time, the Geneva Bible was translated from scholarly editions of the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures. The English rendering was substantially based on the earlier translations by William Tyndale and Myles Coverdale.

The Geneva Bible was the preferred Bible of Puritan Protestants during the Elizabethan age. However, one year after King James I came to power in 1603, he publicly stated his distaste for the Geneva Bible with the following declaration, "I think that of all English Bibles the Geneva is the worst." King James felt strongly that many of the notations in the Geneva Bible were "very partial, untrue, seditious, and savoring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits ..." In all likelihood, he saw the Geneva interpretations of biblical passages as anti-clerical "republicanism" which could imply church hierarchy was unnecessary. It followed

that the need for a king as head of church and state could be questioned also.

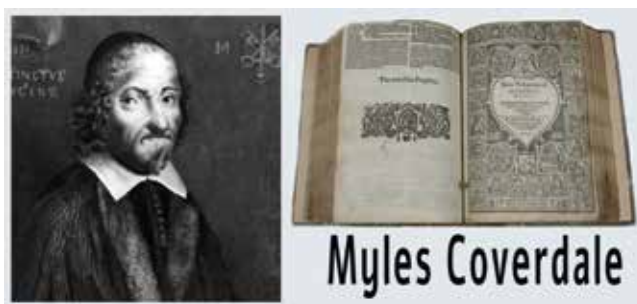
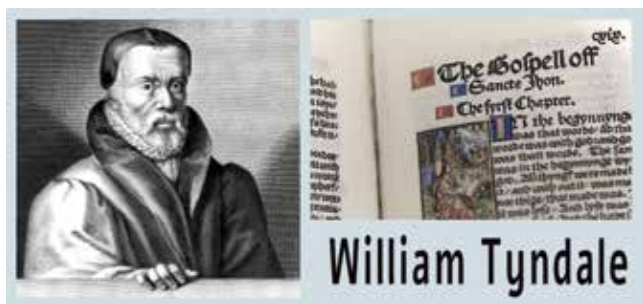
King James embraced the idea of a whole new translation where he could have greater influence on the translation of the Bible as a whole and at the same time get rid of those troublesome notations in the Geneva Bible. In 1604, sixty-six years after Tyndale's death, King James I commissioned and chartered the third official translation of an English Bible (Great Bible the first, Bishop's Bible the second).

King James gave the translators instructions designed to guarantee that the new version would conform to the present practices of the Church of England. For example, certain Greek and Hebrew words were to be translated in a manner that reflected the then-present practice of an ordained clergy governed by bishops, and the word "church" was to be retained instead of being translated as "congregation."

The resulting royally approved translation was first published in 1611, seventy-three years after Tyndale was killed for translating some of the Bible in English. Some scholars claim that 83% of the King James Version was the work of Tyndale. The Authorized Version meant that this Bible was approved for reading in church services of the English church.

Initially, this new King James Bible did not sell well and competed with the more popular Geneva Bible. Shortly after the first edition of the KJV, King James banned the printing of new editions of the Geneva Bible to further entrench his version.

Gradually, the KJV spread throughout the English-speaking world. Let us say that with several updates, from 1681 to 1881 (two centuries) the KJV has been the dominant English translation of the Bible.





Since 1881, many English translations with different emphases—reading, listening, dialects, literal, amplified—have been produced that can complement each other and strengthen our faith in God and His Word.

In this very brief history, we can see how God has moved to take the Scripture from a time when reading the Bible in English was worthy of the death penalty to a time when an English Bible is readily available to most English-speaking people.

- AV Editor



The Word and the Words

By Rodney Yoder

One of the features of the Gospel of John is a litany of bitter accusations of the Jews against the Christ and His sharp responses. Here are a few of the charges they hurled at Him:

- You don't keep the Sabbath!
- You don't come from the right town!
- You are demon-possessed!
- You are insane!

Here is one of the incisive counter-accusations that Jesus brought against the Doctors of Divinity of His day:

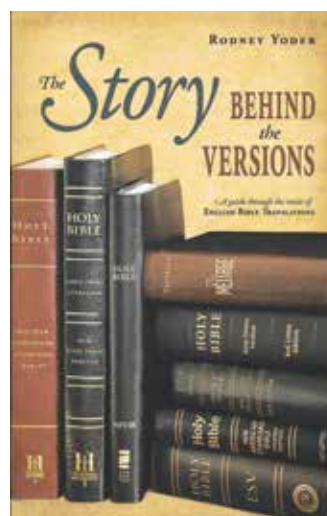
“You do not have [God’s] word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:38-40 NKJV)

I want to notice two things from these verses: (1) It is possible to lose ourselves among God’s words and fail to give His Word room to abide in us. (2) It is possible to search the Scriptures for life and never find it because we refuse to come to Him who is the Life. What a shame that these men who had spent their lives studying God’s Word had none of it in their hearts! What a shame that those who knew the Scriptures so well could still miss the great end to which they all point!

Studying Bible translations carries some of the same dangers. The study is by its nature sometimes technical and analytical. But what a tragedy if we stir up our intellects and

fail to rouse our hearts! What a loss if we find the best text and forget the purpose of that text! How sad if we waste our time in pointless disputes over textual matters and miss the weightier matters of the Word! Considering Jesus’ words to the Pharisees, what would He say to us if we spend so much time so close to the Bible and yet miss the purpose for which it was given?

- *The Conclusion*, pages 152-153



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“This book has several smaller goals, but in the end they all converge into one goal: that more people might have more of God’s Word abiding in them, bringing them ever closer to Him who is the Fountain of Life. ‘So now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace’” (Acts 20:32 NKJV).

R.Y. | Virginia

Round Table Discussion

by AV Readers

Seventh Day or First Day?

I have a question I often wonder about and thought I could ask you. Some controversy exists over this; perhaps there is no right or wrong answer. The question is, “How did the observance of the Sabbath change from the Old Testament to the New Testament?” Is there a difference between saying Sabbath or the Lord’s Day? I know God wants us to set aside one day of the week to rest and worship Him. Does it matter which day of the week we rest and worship or does it not?

Maybe you had an article in a past AV issue about this topic. If so, could you please send it to me? I don’t like being unclear in my mind on an important issue. Please help me out if you can, brother. And God bless you!

A.T. | *Canada*

Feel free to use my questions in the “Round Table Discussion.” Here are two more questions I would like to hear discussed:

Practical Questions:

1. What are good family activities to do together on the Lord’s Day?
2. What happens over time if we do not observe the Lord’s Day the way God wants us to?

AV Editor:

All AV’s can be found at our website and a number of them have information in regards to your questions. I will email you a pdf copy of AV02 (see pages 8-14).

I believe it is important that we observe the Lord’s Day as a special day of rest for our bodies, in honor of God as the Creator, in honor of the resurrection of Jesus, and as a weekly reminder of the rest we enjoy in Christ.

I believe the First Day of the week is the correct one to observe in memory of the above truths. Jesus rose on the First Day of the week and twice appeared to His disciples on the First Day of the week. The Scripture says Jesus was seen by more than five hundred brethren; we do not know how many times He appeared to them on the First Day of the week.

Related to the above appearances is the understanding that the early church did observe the first day of the week as the special day of rest. One of the most powerful reasons for observing the First Day of the week is the statement

in Revelation where John says, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (Revelation 1:10). John did not say, “I was in the Spirit on the Sabbath.” If this is not the right meaning of the term, “the Lord’s Day,” I am at a loss to know what the real meaning is.

Another proof that the First Day of the week is the correct day to observe as a day of rest instead of the Seventh Day is the long-standing tradition of the Christian churches. For 2,000 years, almost all Christian churches have observed the First Day as a special day of rest and worship. And the godless people, as well as many nominal churches, increasingly disregard both the Seventh Day and the First Day as a special day to honor God as the Creator and Jesus as the resurrected Lord, or they give it only lip service and it becomes a worldly day like any other.

Continuing to observe the Seventh Day as a special day of rest and worship is a tacit denial of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Observing the First Day of the week as our special day for rest and worship honors Jesus as our resurrected Lord ... every week.



Tending to Confusion

After getting AV for several years, I decided it’s time to write and ask to be removed from the mailing list. The last several issues raised my concern enough to take this step of discontinuing my subscription. Let me explain.

I am disappointed with AV’s free use of and support for so many versions of the Bible! I agree wholeheartedly with E.M.Y. of Georgia (issue 14) about the King James Version being a reliable and genuine Word of God! And when we have something genuine, why do we need to tamper with other versions? Really, what is the need to have so many versions? Will using so many versions not tend to confusion and unrest to the oncoming generations? If we use a number of different versions and “pick and choose” from different ones, what kind of faith and foundation will our children have as they see Dad and Mom not grounded in their belief of what really, finally, constitutes the Word of God?

E. Y. | *Arkansas*



Churned Out Bibles

I have watched with interest the growing debate over the importance (or lack thereof) of the number of new Bible versions that are being churned out year after year with the supposedly “innocent” intention of helping us understand our Bible better.

May the Lord continue to enlighten you as you study this controversial subject.

T. R. | Virginia



Not to Be Trusted

May we “sit across the table” with you and discuss an article printed in AV15 (“Bible Translations” on page 18)?

We believe neither you, nor the author of that article are aware of recent research that has found the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts to be neither “oldest” nor “best” as some have claimed them to be in the last 150 years—most modern Bibles are based on them.

The manuscripts *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* are the foundational sources of the modern Critical Text which underlies virtually all modern Bible versions. Hence we are dealing with issues which go to the foundation of the reliability and trustworthiness of modern Bible versions.

R. A. M. | Indiana

AV Editor:

You are right. Neither I, the author of the original article you refer to, nor a reviewer have heard of any research proving that the *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* manuscripts are “neither” the “oldest” nor the best. We need your sources for this remarkable statement.

Perhaps you have mistakenly made this statement based on the discovery that forgeries of the Dead Sea scrolls were found in the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC. This discovery has nothing to do with the authenticity of the Dead Sea scrolls or the manuscripts you question.

Note this March 15, 2020 newscast from CNN by Daniel Burke, CNN Religion Editor:

How forgers fooled the Bible museum with fake Dead Sea Scroll fragments

Last year, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC, said five of its most valuable artifacts—once thought to be part of the historic Dead Sea Scrolls—were fake.

Now the museum is facing a harder truth: All of its 16 expensive fragments are forgeries.

This weekend, at a conference in Washington scrambled by the coronavirus pandemic, experts released a 200-page report revealing how the forgeries fooled scholars and buyers on the antiquities market.

We need to be wary of false claims that try to discredit years of careful scholarship. AV’s aim is to be truthful and honest in all things and we do not want to be party to promoting unsubstantiated false theories.



More Than One Bible

Some people think there is only one reliable and trustworthy English translation. I do not believe this is so. A number of problems arise that do not support the logic of such a conclusion. I would like to point out a few of them.

A strong point declares that translations in other languages are also reliable and trustworthy. I do not believe God has only one Bible in English. God has preserved the meaning of His Word in many languages and in many translations.

The Anabaptist churches began in the Dutch and German languages and with English and Spanish Bibles 100 years before the King James Bibles gained any common usage. Evidently these people understood what God wanted them to be and do while they read and studied their illegal Bibles. I believe God is still able to reveal the meaning of His Word to those who search with open hearts, even in many different English translations.

Another problem with only one selected version is that this does not assure people will live by its precepts. For instance, if the KJV says, “make no provision for the flesh,” that in no way means people will interpret it according to its meaning or put it into practice. It is entirely possible that people who read different English versions can come to a knowledge of the truth and please God by demonstrating a holy life to the world.

The conclusion of the matter is this, “Not all who say, ‘KJV only, KJV only,’ will enter into the kingdom, but he who does the will of God who is in heaven.”

R. G. | Saskatchewan, Canada



AV Editor:

I thank each one who has participated in the “Round Table Discussion.” Above, I have printed small parts of longer letters but do not think it advisable for a technical discussion to continue on the pages of AV. *Anabaptist Voice* has aired different aspects, beliefs, and opinions on translation and the inspiration of Scripture. Everyone has had a chance to hear varied viewpoints on the questions and could weigh the arguments presented.

The problem is that everyone is seeking the right answers to the wrong questions. Questions like:

- Should all English translations save one be discarded because of different words used in the text?
- Does a different text origin nullify a translation as the Word of God?
- How can there be only one inspired translation in English?
- Which texts are the most reliable?

I see dogmatism about the “correct” manuscripts and about the “best” translations as having little relevance to the way we understand and live our faith.

Therefore the above questions are the wrong questions and we ought not be striving over them. We should take heed to the reminder of the apostle Paul in II Corinthians 3:6, “**He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life**” (NIV).

The question to ask is, **Do different English translations affect the way I put my faith into practice?**

In the past, AV has stated, “**There is no doctrinal difference in any of the translations that affect the way we ought to live and in what pleases God.**”

So I ask, “**Is there one issue where you and I disagree on how the people of God ought to live in today’s world because of translation differences.**”

I am NOT asking for *differences in belief*, but for how translation differences affect *our practice*. To be fair, our beliefs affect what we practice. Here I state my basic beliefs:

1. I believe God has preserved the meaning of His Word in many translations and in many different languages and those who want to know His will can know if the doctrine comes from God or not (John 7:17-18).

2. I believe in the inspiration and authority of the Scripture. It is those who obey Jesus’ words who will be saved (Matthew 7:21).

3. I believe in the eight statements on page four of each issue of *Anabaptist Voice* (James 1:22).

We should stop trying to find what is wrong with the different English translations and instead see how they complement and strengthen each other. Take this example from Philippians 2:1: “**If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies.**”

This may be a literal and accurate translation, but I can only guess at what is the meaning of “bowels and mercies.” I checked ten other English translations and came up with “compassion, sympathy, kindness, affection, tender hearts, and tenderness.” Do any of these words contradict each other? Is any one word the only right word? No! The different words help us better understand God’s intended meaning in the passage.

May we open our hearts to the truth God has for each one of us.



Would you like to help us with the “Round Table Discussion” in AV18? Choose one question and write an answer.

1. Can you give a specific example of how translation differences affect the way you practice your faith?
2. How do different translations help or hinder our understanding of Scripture? Give examples.
3. What are specific stated aims of various translations?
4. Why do we need updated or new translations from time to time?

While you write answers to the above questions, do not forget the writing in I Corinthians 13:2, “**Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, ... but have not love, I am nothing.**”





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

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

It Cannot Be The Bible (from AV 16, page 41)

by E. Van Gel



I have a response to “It Cannot Be the Bible!”

The couple who wrote about studying the Scriptures and dialoguing with “Anna and Joseph” are to be commended. This is the

first step in obeying Christ’s Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

My husband and I also had an enlightening experience while traveling in the western USA. When visiting national parks in Utah, we repeatedly heard historical stories of native American Indians and Mormons living together in those areas.

As we drove out of Bryce Canyon National Park on a Sunday morning, we found a Latter-day Saints Church in Tropic, Utah. To our surprise, we felt more comfortable in their church service than in most of the community churches which we had visited on our trip. Families came to church together, Sunday school classes were studying scriptures

from the Bible, and the congregation sang hymns together.

So we felt very comfortable in their worship service, and we wondered what they believe that might differ from our own beliefs and practices.

Latter-day Saints study and believe that the Old Testament and the New Testament are true (*see note #1 below*). The difference is that they say, “The Bible is not the end of the prophets.” Mormons believe Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; therefore the Book of Mormon is also a holy book. In that book it says that after Jesus’ resurrection He appeared in America and at His second coming the Book of Mormon predicts that He will come to Jerusalem and then to Missouri, USA! (*see note #2 below*).

Joseph Smith definitely seems like a false prophet to me. But will that difference alone attract a former Mormon to my home congregation?

Here is the question we were left to ponder as we journeyed onward. What other outstanding differences in my home congregation would be appealing to a Mormon?

(1) Reviewer Comment: They say the Bible is true only if it is “translated correctly.” In practice many Mormons ignore the Bible and read the Book of Mormon.

(2) Reviewer Comment: I don’t think that is in the Book of Mormon.

AV Editor:

Maybe there are three different ways for Anabaptists to think of evangelizing the Mormons.

1. First we warn our own people of the errors of Mormonism so Anabaptists do not run off and join them.

2. Another way of thinking about it is to tell the Mormons everything that is wrong with their beliefs and practices in the hope they will come and join us.

3. I believe the best way is to tell the Mormons the really good things about our Anabaptist way of life as we believe and practice the gospel in our own congregation.

So here is a soul-searching project: Write down five good things about how you practice the gospel in your home congregation. This will help you in your evangelization of many different peoples, not just Mormons.

Send *Anabaptist Voice* your list. We would like to publish a full page of blessings found in various congregations.



Child Custody (from AV 16, page 41)

by Hap E. Home



While the situation described is different than ours, I want to share our story and hopefully it can be helpful in making some decisions.

In 1998 our 19-year-old daughter left home to be with a divorced man who convinced her that she could help him become converted. Ten years later she had four boys and was in a terrible life situation. The law placed a restraining order on her husband so he could not come in her house.

With our advice, she decided to annul the marriage. A close friend asked her if she realized that such an action would put her life in danger. She responded, "With God's help I want to go through with it."

On 13 June 2008, we were living in Wisconsin. At 11:30 p.m. the phone rang. It was the Holmes County, Ohio coroner. The coroner informed us that our daughter had been fatally shot and the shooter had committed suicide. We asked about the children and were assured that as maternal grandparents we would be given custody of the children.

Twenty-four hours later we arrived in Millersburg, Ohio, to find that the murderer's family had been given custody of the children; custody could not be given to us because we were living out-of-state.

Since no one had claimed our daughter's body, it was up to us to plan a funeral. We planned the funeral, but then found out the family in charge of the boys was not going to bring the boys to the viewing or the funeral.

After discussion, we agreed that we needed legal advice. We got an emergency hearing with the other family and the judge ordered the other family to release the boys for the viewing and the funeral.

Next we filed for custody. Then we filed for visitation rights. We stayed in Ohio and the court allowed us visitation rights.

The visitation allowed God to work in the situation. When we went to pick up the boys (ages 2, 4, 6, 8) on Thursday evening, they came running to us with their bags all packed and jumped into our arms.

The scene was much different when the half-brother of the murderer came to pick them up Saturday evening. The boys refused to willingly go along; they had to be forced into the car. The neighbors heard the boys screaming as they headed off down the road. The family of the half-brother was heartbroken. They said, "We can't understand this. In three days those boys have bonded to you."

God intervened. By the time of the custody trial, the other family had submitted and we were able to be on speaking terms with them.

After the court granted us custody of the children, we called a meeting with the other family and presented our plan to them. We wanted a childless couple we knew to adopt the four boys. Everyone agreed to this plan and today those boys are in a secure home and very happy.

What would have happened if we had not sought legal advice? The half-brother that wanted to adopt them is now divorced and has a serious drinking problem. None of us know for sure what would have happened, but very likely the boys would be out in the world.

I think we can all see that if we had refused to seek legal advice, the outcome of the situation would have been quite different. Give God the glory for His wonderful help in getting a good home for the boys (now, ages 14, 16, 18, and 20).

It Cannot Be The Bible (from AV 16, page 41)

by R. T. Entnis



The last AV had me wondering how many articles, questions and debates does it take to decide what Bible, translations, and versions are right.

I wonder what Jesus would have thought, had He been here now. It seems to me He would have wanted to keep things simple—just look at his parables. And His disciples, wanting to understand the deeper side, just asked Him to explain. He said, “Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find.” Ask the Holy Ghost to reveal the meaning. Like my dad used to tell us, “Read even if you don’t understand. If God sees you trying, He will give you the *Erkenntnis* -understanding.”

I wonder if perhaps the verses in Amos 8:11-12 might

apply to the end times. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.”

Maybe we should be focusing more on doing, than reading and speaking. Instead of studying a number of different versions, let us think of what the apostles had to read. Or did they just remember what Jesus said and did?

Revelation 2:25 says, “But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.”

Revelation 3:11, “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”



The Practical Side: Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Child Custody (from AV 16, page 41)

by D.V. Willing



We decided to hire an attorney and see if we could get our grandson back. The judge ordered that an amicus attorney be hired for our grandson since he was under the age of 12 years. An amicus attorney is appointed by the court to determine what is in the best interest of the child. The amicus attorney recommended that our grandson receive therapy, which he did. Recently, our grandson finished the therapy sessions and the therapist informed us he was going to recommend that we be granted primary conservatorship. If we cannot reach a resolution with the child’s attorney, we are scheduled to go to court on December 6. Please pray for us that the Lord will grant us favor in this legal battle. Pray

the Lord will not allow the unbelieving to triumph over us. Pray that God’s will might be done and that He will increase our faith and give us peace.

Update as of 27 March 2020:

God has certainly upheld us. On March 13, 2020, we went to an informal settlement meeting and were able to negotiate an agreement where no one party is primary conservator. Instead all parties are joint managing conservators. This gives all parties an equal footing and no one has an advantage. My wife and I will basically have our grandson one-half of the time.

We want to thank all our brethren for your prayers.

(“Rest of the Story” continued on next page)

It Cannot Be The Bible (from AV 16, page 41)

by Eyes O. Pened



Anna read a few more sentences and the argument commenced again. “I am positively certain this cannot be the Bible,” she told her husband.

“Why do you say it cannot be the Bible?” Joseph asked.

“It is written too plainly. I can understand it,” Anna answered.

“Here, let me see the pages,” Joseph commanded.

Joseph studied the pages and verified that it was the Bible Anna was reading to him, but it was not the King James Version approved by the Mormons.

Joseph and Anna now have a copy of the Bible in the New Living Translation and it is our prayer they will regularly read and understand the Bible.



The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists

The Corn Deal

by U. Ken Witness



My husband and I were shopping fifty miles from home at a Dixie Mobile Homes store.

“How much does a new door cost?” a gentleman behind us questioned the cashier. The clerk

looked up the price and gave the prospective customer a price.

But it did not satisfy the man. “This just isn’t right,” he fumed. “I should not have to buy this door. My wife kicked the bedroom door down because the thirteen-year-old girl locked her out. Now my wife says, ‘It’s a new door tonight or a divorce.’ It’s not right,” he repeated.

“Cheaper to buy the door than get a divorce,” quipped another waiting customer. A group chuckle was meant to lighten the atmosphere.

But Jimmy’s burden was no lighter. After the purchase was complete, my husband acknowledged Jimmy’s statements. “Can we go outside and talk?” Jimmy wondered.

There in the parking lot, Jimmy unloaded some of his pent-up frustration and pain. “I’m tired. I can’t take it anymore.”

We could not solve Jimmy’s life problems. We could listen and point him to Jesus for answers. He gratefully accepted our offer to pray together.

“I’ve researched you people,” Jimmy said. “You people live what Jesus taught. Where’s your church located?”

My husband began with some general directions since

we were an hour from home. Jimmy suddenly lit up and exclaimed, “I know exactly where your church meets. Right by a fishin’ hole, not? Yeah, and there’s big fields of corn around that crossroads,” he went on.

“Well, I knew a man who was there stealin’ corn—could’ve been 20 or 25 years ago now. The police and the farmer met the thief right there on the highway. Caught him red-handed.”

So the policeman said to the farmer, “Are you going to press charges?”

“No” the farmer answered.

“Well, then what shall we do with the thief?” asked the policeman.

Jimmy leaned over close to us and looked us right in the eye. “Do you know what the farmer had the policeman tell that thief?”

What would your answer have been that would make such a lasting impression on the thief and on his friends?

Write your response and send it to AV. We’ll publish it along with the real answer in AV18.

Or maybe you have an experience you want to share with AV readers? Don’t hide it under a bushel basket. Put it on a lampstand.

We need your story!



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.

2020 Church Planter's Institute

Date: May 23-24, 2020

Registration: Registration is required.

Register online at www.biblicalmennonite.com

Location: 1858 Meeting House

43 East Sandusky Street, Mechanicsburg, OH

Contact: Clyde Byler ~ 937.834.0298

email: cwbyler@emypeople.net

Lodging Information: Limited lodging is available in local homes for those who register early.

Highlights of the seminars include the following speakers and topics:

Bob Miller: Pray and Fast

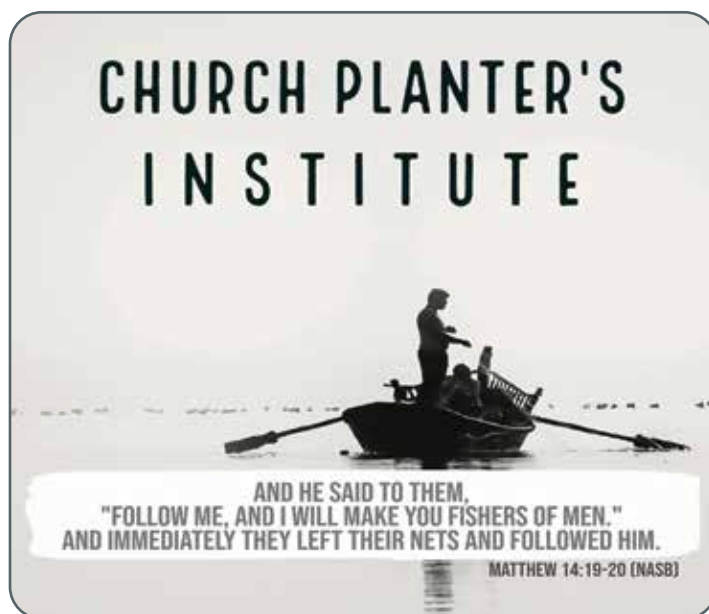
Clyde Byler: Forsake it All

Henry Blank: Obey Anyway

Daniel Pollard: I Once Was Lost, but Now I'm Found

Jason Groff: Recognize His Power

Allen Roth: Lose Your Fear



WORKSHOPS

All workshops offered during both time slots
(The same workshops will be held twice)

Workshop 1 - Practical ways to share your faith (Allen Roth)

Workshop 2 - Starting a cross-cultural church among the unchurched (Stan Miller)

Workshop 3 - Interpersonal communication in the church (Jason Groff)

Workshop 4 - Catching the vision to help plant a church (Richard Newschwager)



Kingdom Fellowship Weekend

Date: August 21-23, 2020

Registration: Registration is required.

Location: Roxbury Holiness Camp

13763 Cumberland Hwy, Orrstown, PA 17244

Lodging Contact: Marvin Dolly ~ 717.753.0845

More Information:

www.kingdomfellowshipweekend.org





Circulation & Financial Statements

Income & Expense Report

October thru December 2019

1 January 2020 Beginning Balance	\$7,218.00
Income	
Donations	\$5,222.25
Local Support*	\$0.00
Total Income	\$12,440.25
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$594.00
Postage	\$3,081.51
Printing	\$5,256.00
Staff Expenses	\$1,304.75
Total Expense	\$10,236.26
31 March 2020 Ending Balance	\$2,203.99

Circulation Report

December 2019

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.

ISSUE #15 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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

Cost Per Copy: \$1.98/ea.

ISSUE #16 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$10,236.26

Cost Per Copy: \$2.18/ea.

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



Signing Off

We are again humbled as we bring another issue of *Anabaptist Voice* to completion. I have experienced several times when God through the Holy Spirit brought writing and thoughts to my attention at "just the right moment."

Some articles we had counted on for months did not come in. Other ideas I tried did not work out. I fretted about how to fill in the gap. When I decided to just wait on God, that very Saturday noon the *Plough Quarterly* arrived in the mail. The editor of the magazine was very agreeable to adapting his letter to meet our needs. That took care of three pages.

This past Sunday morning we received a church letter from our local leader. I thought it much better than the "Letter from the Editor" I had planned. That timely message served as a "Guest Letter."

God also guided many others as we worked together to produce AV17—writers, copyeditors, reviewers, printers, financial contributors, treasurer, and mailing list organizers. While the production of 44 pages of God-honoring content has been demanding, it has not been an onerous burden to bear; it is a joy to serve Anabaptist believers in this way.

In an effort to maintain the financial support of many, we have been completely transparent. With each issue we print the number of copies made, the amount of donations, and a list of the expenses. Almost all of the work is done by volunteers who work for little or substandard pay.

God has provided the funding to produce sixteen issues. We are grateful and want you to understand that we feel any donation is a sign of your support and God's blessing in this work. To God be all the glory!

J.G.L. | Georgia

Answer to the riddle in AV16, page 43: AMERICAN.

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“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?”

- Micah 6:8

