

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

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- "WORSHIP IN COMMUNION" - CHESTER WEAVER
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- "BEHAVIOR THAT PROMOTES WORSHIP" - ANDREW KORVER



Letter from the Editor



Here at Mystic Gardens we have been favored with the visits of a bird not usually seen this far north. Ordinarily, the Limpkin is found in the Okefenokee Swamp of South Georgia and in Florida.

At first, the Limpkins seemed to have no fear of our presence. We watched at close range as the bird snatched clams from the waters of our ponds and channel, carefully pried them open, and feasted on the morsels inside.

One May evening Doris and I took a ride on our garden cart around Mystic Gardens. We counted 40 different flowers in bloom, all of them marvelous wonders created by God.

While reading the book of Isaiah, verse 45:18 impressed me. *“God created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos” (NLT).*

In my lifetime I have seen a tripling of the world’s population. Yet, if men are left in peace, God has given enough energy and food to provide for the present population of over seven billion souls. Mankind has never run out of the ability to produce enough food for all peoples.

Listen to what one learned man says is possible in the not-too-distant future. Steven L. Kwast, a retired Air Force General quoted in *Imprimis*, a publication of Hillsdale College, said, “With the right vision and strategy for space, America can develop the means to:

- Deliver unlimited, clean, affordable energy to every human on the planet without power lines or terrestrial power plants.
- Provide fresh water for every human without the need for aquifers or pipes.”

Such great possibilities for the blessing of mankind sound fantastic. But to those who know the power of the Creator God *“who stretched out the heavens,”* all things are possible (Isaiah 40:12, 22; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; 48:13).

While the world cringes in the fear of death—climate catastrophes, natural disasters, starvation, and pandemics—AV18 brings you articles, illustrations, discussions, and stories about how to please the Creator God. He is the One who breathed into our beings the breath of life while on the earth and joyously beckons us to a still better world beyond.

Peace,
James G. Landis

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About Anabaptist Voice

Our Mission Statement:

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

Our Purpose:

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

Our Tone:

The tone of the magazine shall be positive in that:

- it presents the right way when it decries the wrong way.
- it presents the truth when it warns of the untruth.

Our motto shall be words from Isaiah 30:21.

Whenever you turn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left,
You shall hear a voice behind you, saying,
“This is the way, walk in it.”

Our Bible Translation Policy:

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

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

Our Finances:

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

To assure an informed supporter base, each issue will contain a statement giving the number of copies printed and distributed, the total costs for the previous issue, and the amount of donations received.

Our Organization:

The AV Editor is responsible for assuring that *Anabaptist Voice* adheres to the stated purpose, securing writers, and proper copy editing. The AV Production Team is responsible for design, layout, printing, subscriptions, and all financial matters.

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

Our Audience:

Our primary target audience is anyone associated with an Anabaptist church. We define an Anabaptist church as one that practices a follower-of-Jesus baptism, maintains actual applications of Bible truths, and one where a close-knit, disciplined brotherhood exists among the believers.

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



Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

In order to provide clarity about who we are, *Anabaptist Voice* lists some historic Anabaptist beliefs and practices we believe are still valid today.

1. God accepted Jesus’ death on the cross as an atonement for the sins of the whole world. Thus the blood of Jesus enables each person to be acceptable to God when he repents of his sin and surrenders himself to King Jesus. This initial commitment is followed by obedience to the commands of Christ which gives the disciple assurance of his right standing before God. “Salvation” is not just a one-time event but a life-long experience.
2. Adult believer’s baptism signifies a commitment to follow Christ as His disciple in His Kingdom.
3. The teachings of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament are to be put into practice. The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain are the heart of Christ’s Kingdom teaching for His disciples.
4. Anabaptists recognize the church as Christ’s Kingdom on the earth.
5. Faithful obedience to the commands of Christ often brings persecution upon us.
6. The world (*all who do not obey God*) is evil and under the sway of Satan.
7. Our earthly conduct determines our eternal destiny. True faith must result in obedience that will be rewarded in heaven. Evil works prove a lack of faith in God and will result in eternal punishment.
8. Kingdom disciples do not participate in the civil government or “serve” in the military.



Our Readers Write

Policy Note: Email letters to *Anabaptist Voice* are encouraged. All letters must be accompanied by the writer's full name and physical address (not a PO Box). If the letter is printed in the magazine, only the writer's initials and state will be attached to the comments. If you send AV a letter, we assume the right to use any part of the letter we deem of interest to our readers. Not all comments by readers express the thoughts of *Anabaptist Voice*, but we think they may have some merit in showing counter points of view.

AV Editor

Invest in People

“Funny Money” (AV 17, page 28) clearly and accurately describes the situation in America today. The U.S. dollar is going to become worth less. Financial advisers may suggest CDs, gold, silver, bitcoin, real estate, stocks, bonds, or annuities. They all have risks because they are temporal. **“The things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:18).**

Jesus gave the best financial advice in Matthew 6:19-20, **“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.”**

The logical question is, How can we store treasure in heaven? The answer: Invest in people.

All visible things are temporal except people. As the song says, “There is something better than going to heaven; it is taking someone along with you.” That is treasure in heaven.

B. H. | *Pennsylvania*



Tell a Big One

The new magazine (AV17) arrived here yesterday; it looks good.

Nice job with the guest editorial.

Good timely article, “Funny Money” with some good observations. No, I have not gotten any of that “thin air money” created by fiat. But wait a minute. Maybe I did buy my first car with borrowed fake money. Oh no! When I think about it, that’s different—way different. My first car had some actual value!

Hitler said something like, “If you are making up a story or telling a lie, there are no limits. Tell a big one!”

It seems it is the same with this fake money—since you are just making it up anyway—make it a big one.

Back in the day when Trump was in business, it seems his business operations were limited in scope mainly by how much money he could borrow (fake cash); now he has no limits. This being an election year, I fear the \$3.2 trillion is like John Paul Jones saying, “I have not yet begun to fight.” The stream of funny money will soon turn into a river.

Good stuff by Peter Mommsen too. Since this is an election year, we need to really be careful which king we serve.

I just finished *Sylvester’s Journal* by Lester Bauman. There the staunch Mennonites burned English Bibles because they were “the devil’s work.” They believed “God’s Book” was written in German only.

Right now I am reading *Stronger than Fire* by Mark Yoder. All that work and suffering by Casiodoro and then he is a condemned man because he translated the Bible into the common language of the Spanish people. Was all his work and suffering useless because God had only one trustworthy Bible in Latin? Methinks not.

We must hold onto our faith, ALWAYS.

A. R. | *South Carolina*



Dedicated Work

I am so grateful for your efforts to guide us in the truth of God’s Word!!

It is so badly needed as we see so much falling away from our Lord’s teaching.

I wish I could give more but I am living on Social Security and am in a retirement home. I share each issue with many here at the home.

I am praying for you as you do such a dedicated work of faith.

M. S. | *Pennsylvania*

With One Accord

I am writing to answer question #2 (AV17, page 37), “How do different translations help or hinder our understanding of Scripture?”

In the public worship service when the one reading and expounding God’s Word has a different translation than the one I have, it can hinder my understanding of Scripture. I do not have the ability, and doubt many do, to listen to one thing and read another, and fully comprehend either. Either I block out the reader and read only my version, or I set aside my version and listen to the reader.

Another hindrance in using multiple versions is I lose the familiarity and memorization that comes with using only one version. I have read through the Bible many times in my lifetime in one version. When I hear a familiar verse I can often partly quote it from memory. When witnessing I can quote verses because I have read them in one version many times. By using different versions we lose that memorization. I think we need to pick one translation and stick with it for all of our public and private reading. This does not mean we can never read or reference another version, but 95%+ should all be from one version.

P. H. | *Georgia*



Language Changes

Time has a way of changing language. For instance, “thee” and “thou” have no place in our everyday language. As in Spanish, these words in English have been used when talking with familiar friends and family. Today they are used in Bible reading and prayer as though talking to God as one who is high and mighty.

Today we never refer to a donkey as an ass. There are other words sometimes used in our Bibles that are even more vulgar than “ass.” Time has changed the meaning of these words in our language.

We should use words in our worship services that we use in our everyday speech. Then if an unbeliever comes in among us, **“he will worship God and report that God is truly among you” (I Corinthians 14:23-25).**

One reason to read Bibles that use the standard English of today is so that we can reach an audience of today that has never read or studied the works of Shakespeare and old English ballads; these less than 20-year-old unbelievers have likely never heard such outdated language.

For those who strongly prefer the language of the KJV because they are so familiar with it and have memorized much of it, but recognize the need for using current English, the KJ2000 may prove a blessing.

One problem with the KJ2000 is that the version is not yet available printed as one complete book. You can buy a copy of the New Testament and probably one of the Old Testament but as separate books. You can also download it from the internet for free.

God’s Word is God’s Word whether it is in one of 600 languages or one of many English translations. The power is still the same. The Author is still the same. Let us not fight over who is of Paul and who is of Apollos. Let’s also remember that the Bible needs to reach all mankind, not only those who have grown up with KJV since childhood.

T. G. | *Pennsylvania*

More on the King James 2000

The King James 2000 (KJ2000) is a King James Version brought forward 400 years. Several categories of words are brought up to 21st century language. Pronouns such as thy, thine, thou, ye, etc. are put into current language usage form. Verbal endings such as -eth, -est, -st, etc. are given equivalent forms in today’s language. Words so archaic as to be unknown, such as wist, wot, froward, etc. are rendered as their current synonyms. Some words considered entirely proper in 1611, but which may be considered “coarse” today, are changed to equivalent intentions (such as bowels to heart). The common biblical beast of burden is rendered donkey.

No “corrections” or textual considerations are taken into account, since the KJ2000 intent is to preserve the KJV “as is,” except for truly necessary changes.



Even Forum

We appreciate the open dialogue which we consider shared in an even forum.

Many of the subjects discussed in the AV are not on our radar, and being exposed to diverse understandings helps us to see the whole truth, or at least perceive better what we do not discern to be the truth.

Here is a forum where we can think and study truth without being intimidated by others.

K. H. | *Indiana*

Risk and Fallout

I have read through the various letters that you have published complaining about Bible translations, particularly since publishing Brother Ernest's excellent summary (AV16, page 35). I am not sure how many conservatives grasp the statement that is made when they argue against a wholly authentic and authoritative Bible being available in today's languages, including English.

For someone well aware of Christian history but coming from outside Anabaptist norms, such thinking comes across to me as centered in Europe in the 16th century. Rather than being the gospel announced for all peoples, everywhere—through all time, as Jesus and the Apostles originally conveyed it, this thinking belongs to the Roman Catholics and the Church of England. These churches stood against Wycliffe and Tyndale who wanted to make the Scriptures readily understandable to the unwashed masses anywhere in the English world. We should be careful we do not follow the 16th-century error today. God has made wholly authentic and authoritative Bibles available in today's languages, including English.

I believe there are other matters of both spirit and flesh at work in this matter. Accuracy is very important, and every Christian leader should be well aware of departures made for the sake of theology or cultural acceptability. That does not in any way diminish the great importance of what Brother Ernest shared, and I am delighted and blessed that AV took the risk and fallout in order to publish it.

May the Lord bless you for standing on that ancient gospel ground in a Kingdom that is not our own to rule.
G. M. | *Washington State*



Accountable to God

Thank you for the thought-provoking publication.

I am writing in regard to Menno Knight's "Give Glory to God" article (AV17, page 16). The dilemma conservative Anabaptists face regarding the good work of Christians unlike ourselves can be answered simply and effectively with this understanding: All of us must personally give account to God for how we live out our faith.

We need to join Paul in rejoicing when the gospel is proclaimed and the love of Christ is shared even by people we disagree with. Paul wrote, "I rejoice that

in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached" (**Philippians 1:18**).

The good work and effectiveness of other groups does not change my personal accountability to God for how I live out my faith. May God be praised by our careful and obedient life as we "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." (**Philippians 2:12**).

T. S. | *Pennsylvania*



Profitable Discussion

Thank you for your publication. It's truly a blessing!

I love my subscription to *Anabaptist Voice*. It's profitable because it allows open discussion on a variety of topics; it also features wonderful, thought-provoking articles.

N. M. | *Wisconsin*



Undecided

I have received three issues of the *Anabaptist Voice* and have been encouraged by the content that I have read.

I appreciate your desire to put sound teaching before God's people.

I have been writing for nearly a decade and am trying to discern if the thrust of your publication is compatible with my writing style; I am still undecided. I decided to submit a few articles and allow you to make that decision.

Here are four articles that have not been submitted to any publication. You are free to discern their worthiness, offer suggestions, or do with them as you see best.

I would appreciate your feedback.

May God bless your efforts.

L. R. | *Wisconsin*



Government Jobs

It is always a great blessing to read your publication. AV gives me new insights and confirms existing ones. It is a relief to read biblical doctrine which is hard to come by in the Netherlands. All your copies I read from front to back, and are greatly appreciated!

M. S. B. | *Netherlands*

Worship Services That Please God

by Jesse Hostetler

As conservative Anabaptists/Mennonites, we embrace a traditional way of life. Some of the traditions which make up this way of life were instituted by Jesus and His apostles; others were the result of moments in history when godly men and women realized the need to stand on Bible principles and resist the corruption of society that was having an impact on the life of the church. Many of the positions our forefathers embraced in response to the evil influences of their day have become handed-down traditions for the benefit of our generation today.

Our Sunday morning church services, for example, contain certain elements handed down by tradition. In this article we will examine the basic elements of a traditional Mennonite Sunday morning service, and attempt to explain the purpose and scriptural basis of each piece.

Order in the Worship Service

We want to begin by looking at the scriptural admonition Paul gave to the church of his day on how to conduct a worship service. Open your Bibles and read I Corinthians 14:23-40. Verse 40 could be used to sum up the entire passage, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Corinthians 14:23-40).

In I Corinthians 14, Paul gives instructions to the fledgling Corinthian church on how to conduct worship services. As we read these verses, it suggests that their services were lacking in structure, and Paul desired to bring more order into the situation. God is a God of order, as Paul brings out in these verses, and so Paul gives some admonition on how to establish order in our worship services.

It has been argued by some that our Mennonite worship services are so structured and traditional that there is no opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak. These people would charge that there is no room for someone who receives an inspiration or revelation from God to stand up and share it spontaneously, or for the song leader to become inspired with the singing and decide to lead for a half hour.

Paul, in I Corinthians 14, *does* allow for some flexibility in our worship. He says, for instance, “two or at the most three” prophets should speak. However, he puts the responsibility on the Corinthian church to establish order. Everyone should be given the

opportunity to speak and be heard, but there must be order.

The Elements of a Worship Service

Singing

Our services always open with singing. The psalmist instructs, “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing...Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise” (Psalm 100:2, 4a). Singing is not the only way to enter God’s presence, but it is a good way to spiritually enter into God’s courts.

Behold the Glories of the Lamb

WORDS: Revelation 5:6-12; Isaac Watts, c. 1688
MUSIC: Thomas Jarman, c. 1803

1. Be - hold the glo - ries of the Lamb a-midst His Fa-ther's
2. Let el - ders wor - ship at His feet, the church a - dore a -
3. Now to the Lamb that once was slain be end - less bless - ings
4. Thou hast re - deemed our souls with blood, hast set the pris - ners

throne! a - midst His Fa - ther's throne! Pre - pare new hon - ors
round, the church a - dore a - round, with vi - als full of
paid; be end - less bless - ings paid; sal - va - tion, glo - ry, and
free, hast set the pris - ners free, hast made us kings and

for His name and songs be - fore un - known, and
o - dours sweet and harps of sweet - er sound, and
joy - re - main for - ev - er on Thy head, for -
priests to God, and we shall reign with Thee, and

I. and songs be - fore un - known, and songs be - fore un -
known, and songs be - fore un - known,
harps of sweet - er sound, and harps of sweet - er sound,
ev - er on Thy head, for - ev - er on Thy head,
we shall reign with Thee, and we shall reign with Thee.

known, and songs be - fore unknown, and songs be - fore un - known.

As we come to church on Sunday morning, there is plenty of potential for wandering thoughts in the moments leading up to the time the service begins. We gather our children together at home, get them into the car, hoping to get to church on time. When we finally arrive at church and find our places, our minds have a tendency to wander. Then the song leader stands up, opens his hymnal, and announces an opening song.

As we sing this song together, our minds are gathered in from wherever they may have gone, drawn into the service, into what is happening here, into worship, into God's presence. It engages each person in the service. It brings us together as a group emotionally and spiritually, and we can enter into God's courts together.

This means that it is important for the song leader to choose the first song carefully. It is important to begin our services with songs which turn our minds toward God. Songs like "O come let us worship before our great Lord,/Come kneel down before Him in reverence and fear;/With thanksgiving, praise, and in hearing His Word,/O come let us worship, the Master is here!"

We normally do not start our services with "It's Not an Easy Road." That is a song about us; it allows our mind to continue wondering if we filled the gas tank on the lawn mower or turned on the casserole for dinner. It is a good song that is fitting for many situations, but the opening song should be one that draws our minds and our hearts towards God.

Normally we should begin with a hymn with which most of the congregation is familiar so that we can allow our minds to focus on the words rather than the timing and music.

As we sing at other points throughout the service, the joint singing draws us together as we all do together what one cannot do alone. We are drawn together in the harmony of voices and in appreciation for each other. Congregational singing keeps us from simply being passive spectators, and draws us into active worship as the service progresses. Opening with singing and singing throughout the service are excellent traditions.

Devotions

The Apostle Paul recognized the importance of having more than just two or three leaders who do all the speaking in our church services. He wrote, "when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation" (I Corinthians 14:26). There is value in hearing all the brethren in the church expound the Word for our edification. It also helps each of us develop and practice our gifts of study and speaking when we are asked to share a devotional with our congregation.

After our minds have been turned toward God by the opening hymns, the devotional's purpose is to help us focus on God and bring inspiration from His Word. It may sometimes be appropriate for a devotion to make a deep theological point, but it is not to be a mini-sermon. A successful devotional will make a concise point which reminds us of who God is and what He does. It

should inspire us to connect with God and stir within us the consciousness of His presence. Many of the best devotionals are drawn from just a few verses—long enough to have a clear theme, but short enough to be easily absorbed. Sometimes, the devotions—especially if accompanied by a word picture or object lesson—are the most memorable part of the service.

Offering

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:1-2).



These verses do not necessarily command that every church must have an offering every Sunday morning. Nevertheless, the New Testament clearly teaches the giving of alms. In the Old Testament, a 10% tithe of a person's income was commanded by God; in the New Testament, we are not limited to a percentage. We are not taught to give a set amount and consider the rest ours to do with as we please. We are to give "as the Lord has prospered."

It is our tradition to take up a collection on Sunday morning. There is always a need for funding in the Lord's work, and God is always faithful to provide and meet the needs. Taking up an offering is a scriptural way of collecting the needed funds to maintain and operate the church.

Sunday School

There is no scripture which commands us to have Sunday School classes in our worship services. However, in Hebrews 5:12 the writer does admonish the believers to be mature teachers rather than being babes that need to be taught. "By this time you ought to be teachers." Sunday School classes provide a good opportunity for teachers to teach.

(continued next page)

The Scriptures do teach that we should be careful and diligent to study God's Word. **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).**

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who ... received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:10-12).

The study for which the Bereans were commended was probably, for the most part, done at home during the week; however, they must have discussed their findings with each other at some point because they came to a united decision and belief.

Our Sunday School classes can help each member to study the Scriptures for him or herself, and the interchange of ideas helps bring clarity and unity to our thinking. The classes for children are not meant simply for entertainment, but to teach them Bible stories and to impress Bible truths on their hearts and minds, helping the parents in their efforts to do the same during the week.

An older, mature teacher can share thoughts on the students' level regarding the topics in the scripture text which are most relevant to children and youth. In this way teaching classes gives an opportunity for older ones in the church to relate to younger ones in the church family by building bridges of relationship and openness across age gaps.

The Sermon

"We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:23-24).

One should read I Corinthians 1:17-24. In this passage Paul makes it very clear that even though the preaching of the cross is considered foolishness by many "learned men," it is a powerful way of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Preaching is very important, and it is a crucial element in our services. Those of us who are called to preach should put more effort into knowing God's Word and being able to expound it accurately, with conviction, than into being a great orator.

Christ and the "foolishness of the cross" must be preached, along with how living the gospel message will affect our daily lives. Those scriptural doctrines and practices which we hold dear, and which are largely

ignored and rejected by nominal Christianity, should be preached and expounded. The sermon should be the meat of the worship experience; it should be practical, inspirational, and doctrinally correct.

The use of a plural ministry, and the time for sharing of thoughts or testimonies after the sermon, are all helps to keeping our preaching balanced and representative of the whole picture of God's Word.

Prayer

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Our traditional services are filled with prayer. Time for prayer is given at multiple points throughout the service. During the devotions, Sunday School, and the sermon we talk to each other about God; when we pray, we address God Himself. We ask God directly for His presence and direction throughout the service. Members pray for the Sunday School teachers and for the minister as he preaches. The church prays for its members who are sick or in need. We end the service with a prayer of benediction in which we ask God to pour out His blessing on each one who has come out for worship. Prayer is a vital part of the worship service.



Conclusion

Should we change our worship services? While not every part of our service is directly commanded in Scripture, each part does have a scriptural basis. Ordained leadership takes their place in preaching the Word. The members are given opportunity to share and contribute as the Holy Spirit directs. These Sunday morning services have been a great blessing in my life. As the Holy Spirit works through and guides what is said and done, God is honored and worshiped, and we, the church, are edified. If I feel that the service is too traditional, that it should be made more meaningful, perhaps the solution is not changing the order or avenue of worship. Perhaps the solution could be found by working on the needs in my own heart and coming to God's house with my heart in tune with Him in the spirit of worship.

J. H. | Adrian, Michigan

Worship in Communion

by Chester Weaver

Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

– I Corinthians 11:26 (NIV)

Alternate renderings of “proclaim” in the above verse are *show, show, announce, or tell*. Included in all of these different words is the thought that by partaking of these emblems, we are giving our testimony to all the world: the death of Jesus was real.

Proclaim carries the fuller meaning of the verse. It has the idea of standing on a box and shouting the message aloud to the world. We are not to hide this glorious message silently under a basket, but we purposely set it on a stand for all to see.

Because the communion worship service is a public proclamation to the world, it carries additional responsibility that the purity of the witness be maintained. One does not take communion by himself, therefore the purity of the group's witness must be carefully guarded.

Paul makes it very clear that the communion service is not a private affair. He writes, “when you come together” (I Corinthians 11:17, 20, 34).

Carelessness in the conduct of the service must not be tolerated. Much consideration must be made for all the brothers and sisters who are to participate. The service is to be done “decently and in order” (I Corinthians 11:21-22, 14:40).

Each participant must examine himself closely so as not to bring the judgment of God on himself or on the “Lord's body” (I Corinthians 11:27, 29). “If anyone is too hungry, he should eat at home. Do this so that

your meeting together will not bring God's judgment on you” (I Corinthians 11:34, ICB).

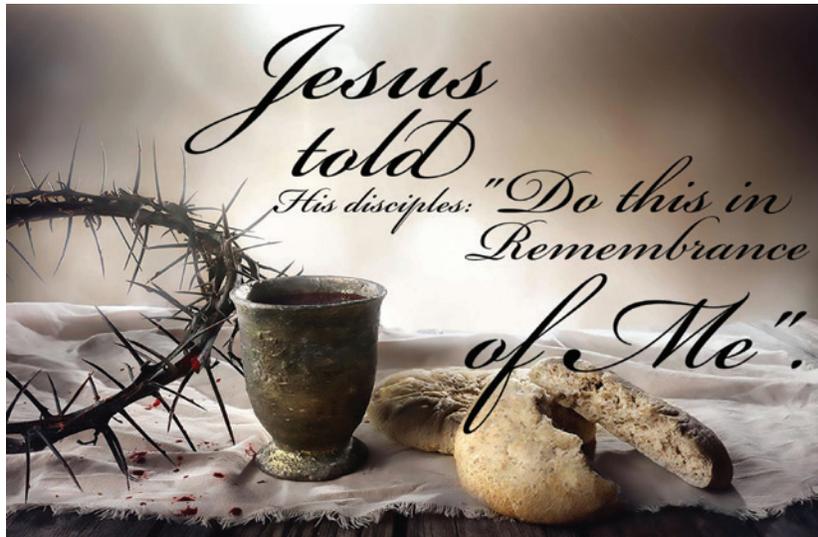
We see then that God's judgment does not fall just on the individual who violates his own standing before God, but his disregard for the sacredness of the occasion and the purity of the testimony before the world may bring God's judgment on the whole group participating in the service. “When the Lord judges us, he disciplines us to show us the right way. He does this so that we will not be destroyed along with the world” (I Corinthians 11:32, ICB).

This particular verse shows that the communion service should be engaged in by a group of believers who have carefully examined themselves, both individually and cross-checked by the group. This serious time of worship and proclamation can turn out to be a blessing to the group, a

time of God's discipline, or a calling down of divine punishment.

This means Anabaptists do not observe the communion service carelessly or without regard to the spiritual condition of the individuals who participate. According to the above scriptures, we consider the purity and testimony of the whole brotherhood to be important in God's sight.

Therefore, *participation in the communion service is usually limited to those who are members of the local congregation or who are members of like-minded sister congregations and who provide a satisfactory testimony of a proper relationship with God and with fellowmen.* Non-local privileges are granted when properly requested and approved. Local church leadership needs to rise to the occasion of “guarding the gate” in situations like this.



This limitation may be surprising to those who place no such restrictions on who shares in communion; many believe that anyone who wants to take part in communion may do so (open communion). Anabaptists do not see it that way.

God will be the ultimate judge of who is worthy to take communion, but the Scriptures do give direction to the church that the body is to be discerning about who is a member and who participates in the communion service. There may be much more involved in the following Scriptures than communion, but it seems crystal clear that sinning members should not take part in the communion service.

– “If he refuses to even hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17).

– “Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (I Corinthians 5:5).

– “I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people” (I Corinthians 5:11, NIV).

Such clear Bible teaching is not plain enough for some people. When it comes to the Kingdom of Christ, some seemingly godly people would like to claim membership and take part in the communion service.

After all, the Kingdom of Christ is the ultimate organization and Kingdom members are quite privileged, actual brothers of Christ and members of His household! This privilege is so desirable that people are willing to say, “Lord, Lord,” expecting mouth profession to qualify them for membership.

But Jesus replies, “Only those who do [practice] the will of My Father will be able to be a part of the Kingdom of Heaven.” Such people feel free to remind Jesus, “Have we not preached in your name? Have we not driven out demons in your name? Have we not performed miracles in your name,” assuming that such good works must qualify them for membership. Jesus simply replies, “I never knew you; get away from me, you evildoers.”

Evidently, Kingdom membership boundaries used by Jesus Christ are very different from understood human boundaries. So, we would do well to think a bit about the issue.

Consider the local church. A local church is not free to invent boundaries but should draw the same boundaries that Jesus, Head of the Church, would draw.

After all, the local church is a part of His body. But try as it may, a local church will not always get it right. The local church simply does the best it can.

Since Jesus notes that a tree is known by its fruit, the local church expects the fruit of a life to pattern itself after that modeled by Jesus Christ. But humans are so flawed; they constantly claim reality which turns out to be fiction. What does a local church do about such? The local church makes some kind of judgment call after observing a life for a period of time. Lip profession is only a part of the consideration. Together, the church permits qualified people, according to their fallible judgment, into membership. And this is the best that can be done.

Some churches downplay membership in order to escape this kind of judgment call. The more open

“Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

churches rely mostly upon a person’s own profession of faith. As long as a person makes a plausible profession of faith in Jesus Christ, membership is proffered. No evidence is required because faith is considered primarily an inner, unseen experience.

The Anabaptist concept of the Kingdom of Christ requires that a person prove himself by word and deed that he/she actually is living in discipleship to Jesus Christ. The Anabaptist considers both the church and church membership important and membership is not to be downplayed.

Interdependence is an important word for Anabaptists. I am not a member of the Kingdom of Christ apart from my brother/sister. Love needs objects. If I do not love [give to] the people in my local body, my profession of membership in the Kingdom of Christ is suspect.

One old Anabaptist said it succinctly, “No man is in Christ apart from his brother.” I must get along with my brothers/sisters. I must be a redemptive influence for my brothers/sisters. I must forgive my brothers/sisters. I must be in *gelassenheit* [yieldedness] to my brothers/sisters. I must serve my brothers/sisters. I must correct my brothers/sisters. I must give to and receive love from my brothers/sisters.

Doing all this and more regularly, over an extended period of time, gives much more evidence of membership in the Kingdom of Christ than simply lip profession. In this rigorous context, membership matters quite a bit. Some professing disciples of Jesus Christ simply do not qualify.

Anabaptists have understood their own responsibility to maintain this kind of working interdependence. Other churches work out their own understandings. But Anabaptist church membership is a prize to be sought, to qualify for, to maintain at a cost. The story of how this ideal has been worked out is a story all of its own.

The Dutch/Russian Mennonites have their story; the Hutterites have their story; and the Swiss Brethren have their story. The stories have often failed to maintain their own interdependent idealism.

Here we are, five hundred years later. Enough of the interdependent ideal has been maintained through the centuries so that an identifiable Anabaptist interdependent ideal still exists. The practice of closeness in the brotherhood is more evident in some local groups than in others.

Countless Anabaptist groups through the centuries have surrendered the interdependent ideal and have acquiesced to the independent standard wherein church membership is understood as, “You stay out of my hair and I will stay out of yours. Leave me alone and I will leave you alone.” Personal pride issues do not need to be addressed, insurance takes care of messy needs, and little *gelassenheit* needs to happen. Every man’s house is his own castle, off limits to others. This *looseness* and *openness* make church membership so much easier to maintain on a human level ... and of little meaning and value.

Here we want to define three terms used to describe who joins the group in the communion service.

- **Close communion** – limited to members of the church and those who can give a clear testimony of a right relation with God and their fellowman. In addition, they show respect for the practices and standards of the communing congregation.
- **Closed communion** – Only members of the local church may participate.
- **Open communion** – Anyone who wishes to may participate.

Open communion fits the independent, personal “profession of faith” model. On the other hand, closed communion fits the false “we are the only disciples of Christ” model. Close communion fits the high expectation, interdependent brotherhood model.

In the interdependent model, churches are accountable to each other as well as individuals within a local body. Groups of churches work together within boundaries which they decide together. One group of churches may decide on one set of boundaries and another group of local churches may decide on other boundaries. All groups need to respect each other’s boundaries. No person should feel judged, labeled, or condemned because communing privileges are reserved for those operating within certain boundaries. To push against those boundaries and to try to force different boundaries is a kind of arrogance.

In the secular world, the local post office employees operate under different boundaries from the police force which operate under different boundaries from the local fire department. No employee of one of these legitimate local organizations pushes to change the respective boundaries of the others. Social organization is what it is and the local distinctions work well in their local responsibilities.

In the local expressions of the Kingdom of Christ, I should not expect to take communion (to be in common union with) another local expression of the Kingdom of Christ just because I make a profession of faith in Christ.

The local church must operate within the boundaries they have agreed upon. Other churches may have agreed on different boundaries, but I can still respect other Kingdom Christians who operate within different boundaries than those we have chosen. As long as every Kingdom Christian operates with deep respect for the boundaries of others, members of different groups work well as they intermingle with others. When respect breaks down, problems develop.

An interdependent brotherhood as opposed to both open communion on one hand and closed communion on the other hand, has functioned for years as a workable model of interdependence. Every so often we need to review the simple logic and the Bible basis that governs the close communion model. As we embrace this Bible teaching, we feel solid ground under our feet.

We need not be intimidated in our practice of worship in the communion service by the practice of others. Our concern is that each congregation should determine that their worship in the communion service is according to the Bible standards and thus is pleasing to God.

– C. W. | *Itasca, Texas*



Songs That Promote Worship

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

“And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:3).

Our hymnals contain mostly two types of songs—hymns and gospel songs. What is the difference? Which should we sing most?

The biggest difference between hymns and gospel songs is that gospel songs have choruses or refrains repeated after each verse, while hymns do not. While there are a few hymns with choruses, they are definitely in the minority. Because of the use of the chorus, gospel songs tend to be more repetitive than hymns. The two classes of song have some other major differences as well.

Experience-centered or worship-centered?

Gospel songs tend to be *me*-centered and talk about *my* experience. For examples, think of “My Soul in Sad Exile,” “My Heart was Distressed,” “All My Life Long I Had Panted,” etc. Hymns tend to be more God-focused and consist of worship. Think of “God Himself is Present,” “Eternal Father,” “Holy, Holy, Holy,” “Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned,” etc. Both emphases are good and right and should be sung, but worship should predominate over *me*-centered experience.

Shallow music

Gospel songs tend to be musically much simpler than hymns. They are usually composed almost exclusively of I, IV, and V chords—the bare necessities for writing music. (This can be easily noticed in the bass lines, which consist of DO, FA, and SOL). This makes them excellent for teaching or learning how to sing

in harmony, but also makes them musically shallow. Hymns, on the other hand, tend to have deeper, more complex music. A look at the bass line of the tune “St. Anne C.M.” (“O God Our Help”) demonstrates this, although admittedly, this bass is a bit more complex than some hymns.

Emphasis on rhythm

Gospel songs tend to be written in compound timing (9/8, 6/8, etc.) while hymns are usually written in simple timing (2/2, 3/4, 4/4, etc.). Additionally, gospel songs often use combinations of dotted eighth-sixteenth (or dotted quarter-eighth) couplets, whereas hymns rarely do. When hymns do use such couplets, it is an occasional bit of “spice” in the tune, rather than throughout the song as most gospel songs do which utilize this technique. These two characteristics give gospel songs a greater emphasis on the rhythm of the song than most hymns have. (Think of “Cling to the Bible” as an example of a gospel song with an accentuated rhythm.)

As the music of the gospel song gets shallower and rhythm predominates, the lyrics tend to become shallower as well. (For an example, compare the lyrics of the first two verses of a gospel song and a hymn about heaven, below.) With this in mind, we should pay close attention to our use of gospel songs. Choose those with substantive lyrics, and choose them in a much smaller proportion to the hymns which have solid music and solid lyrics. The *Church Hymnal* had a hymn-gospel song ratio of 80-20. *Hymns of the Church* has the same proportion. What proportion of hymns to gospel songs does your church sing?

Gospel Song

There's no disappointment in heaven,
No weariness sorrow or pain;
No hearts that are bleeding and broken,
No song with a minor refrain;
The clouds of our earthly horizon
Will never appear in the sky,
For all will be sunshine and gladness,
With never a sob nor a sigh.

We'll never pay rent for our mansion,
The taxes will never come due;
Our garments will never grow threadbare,
But always be fadeless and new.
We'll never be hungry or thirsty,
Nor languish in poverty there,
For all the rich bounties of heaven
His sanctified children will share.

Hymn

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me!
When shall my labors have an end
In joy and peace and thee?
When shall these eyes thy heav'n built walls
And pearly gates behold?
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold?

O when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end?
There happier bow'rs than Eden's bloom,
Nor sin nor sorrow know:
Blest seats! thru rude and stormy scenes
I onward press to you.

Behavior That Promotes Worship

by Andrew Korver

Purpose Statement: To teach proper etiquette and conduct that promotes an atmosphere conducive to worship.

Did your mother ever tell you to “mind your manners?” What did she mean?

Many of us have been taught proper etiquette from our parents, and if we are now parents, we are likely teaching proper etiquette to our offspring. Such things as saying “thank you,” “please,” “yes sir,” or “yes ma’am”; not using your cell phone during mealtimes; keeping your shirt tail tucked in when you are in town; or not burping in another person’s face.

Why should we pay attention to such things? Why is etiquette important? Does it matter how we conduct ourselves? Is etiquette just a bunch of man-made ideas that we waste our time paying attention to?

Etiquette has to do with our respect for others. It is about courtesy and politeness. As we consider our worship services, etiquette has to do with our respect of God and each other. We are looking at conduct or behavior that helps ourselves and those around us to worship. Proper etiquette implies that there are actions that hinder worship—conduct that is improper.

Before we look at some practical “proper” manners, let us consider why it is important. I believe there are three foundational truths that are both basic to our topic and lend significance to it.

First, worship is a heart experience that is influenced by external activity. The attitude and focus of worship is a whole-life response to the mercy and grace of God. Jesus told the woman at the well (John 4:24) that “**God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.**” This inner worship of God can experience distraction. I am saying that certain activities or things can enhance or distract our worship.

The second truth is that God must be the center of our worship and is worthy of our full and undivided attention. Our view of God affects our behavior toward Him. Malachi raises an interesting and challenging thought in Chapter 1 verse 8, “**And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he**

accept you favorably? says the Lord of hosts.” This verse may be speaking more to the genuineness and sincerity with which we approach God rather than the way we approach Him, but it seems to me that these two go together. God is worthy of our best. Our conduct, our etiquette should be affected.

The third foundational truth when considering etiquette that promotes worship is how our behavior affects others during worship services. We cannot deny the focus of Scripture on the importance of the gathering of believers. God tells us that He is present where two or three are gathered in His name. Consider these verses:

Hebrews 10:24, 25 – “**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**”

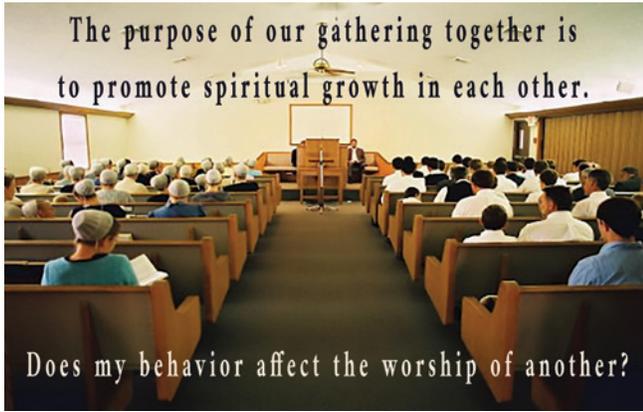
Ephesians 4:16 – “**From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.**”

I Corinthians 14:33-40 – “**For God is not the author of confusion.**” Paul then makes some comments on church gatherings. He also makes this statement, “**Let all things be done decently and in order.**”

The purpose of our gathering together is to promote spiritual growth in each other. Does my behavior affect the worship of another? Can it affect their spiritual growth? Yes, it does! Therefore, I should conduct myself in a way that does not hinder others in the process.

As we move to listing some practical, “proper” manners, please consider that there is some latitude as to what is acceptable and proper. Setting and culture influence what is considered proper. For example, in some parts of our nation, it is considered offensive to be addressed with “yes, sir,” while in other parts of the country it is taught and expected. Graciousness and respect are always in order. Honor what is considered proper in the setting you are in.

The writer of Hebrews admonished his audience to “not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.”



This is a proper thing to do. It is important for us to be present at church meetings.

Prepare your heart and mind for worship. Do Saturday evening activities influence our mindset on Sunday morning? If so, choose activities that help us to worship. Consider what you do on Sunday morning. A mind stirred up by a chaotic, helter-skelter experience will struggle to focus in worship. Emotions fired by conflict and frustration tend to divert the mind from worship of the Holy One. Though not always possible, strive for orderliness and peacefulness ahead of church. Be sure your heart is right with God. Spend time with Him personally and worship Him before you go to the service.

Being on time is also a proper thing to do. We should be seated a few minutes (10-15 minutes is good) before the service begins. These minutes are a good time for prayer and meditation. Use these moments to settle and focus your mind. I heard of a song leader who, when opening the service, made this statement: "Let's continue in worship by singing." The idea is that we have been worshipping God as we gather; now we continue to do so by singing together. Collective worship is a continuation of, or an extension of, our personal worship.

If we are late, and this can happen to any of us at times, be as unobtrusive as possible. If suitable, sit in the back. If you need to sit forward, it is respectful to wait until the song is ended or the devotions are completed. If your church uses ushers, then respect them and their directives. Keep in mind that most times being on time is within our control; tardiness is often a habit.

When gathering, quietness is proper. Friendly greetings are good, but long visiting or light jovial conversation is not so good. On the other hand, please don't hear me as saying that we should not acknowledge

each other. When sitting beside someone, at a minimum, smile and address them with a warm "good morning."

During the service, quietness is appropriate at times and inappropriate at other times. If someone else is speaking, quietly listen. Avoid distracting noises such as nervously clicking your pen. When you need to speak, speak to be heard. If it is important enough for you to say, then it is important enough for you to be heard. Speak to the people across the room. When kneeling and you are to lead in prayer, lift your head above the back of the bench so your voice carries out away from the bench. Teach your children when it is appropriate to make noise and when it is not appropriate.

Heartily participate in the singing.

Be attentive to the one who is speaking. Look at them. Avoid turning around to see what is happening behind you.

Most of us have cell phones. It is necessary for some occupations or situations that they be with us in church. It is proper that they be on silent or vibration mode. If they need to be used, seek to do so in a way that they do not distract. This likely means exiting the auditorium. All extra-curricular activities such as web surfing, game playing, and chit-chatting should be avoided. If society around us has grounds for posting signs at places of business putting limits on cell phone use, it seems to me that we have grounds to limit our phone use while at church. Common courtesy and respect demand it.

*During the service,
quietness is appropriate.*

Avoid chewing gum. I found this emphasized in several articles I looked at regarding church etiquette. I suppose many reasons have been given for chewing gum, yet it can be a distraction when an individual is actively chewing away. Singing, an important part of our church services, is hindered by gum in the mouth. The freedom of full participation is hindered by the need to keep gum tucked safely away and by the extra saliva that gum-chewing produces. It is especially distracting when a speaker or song leader chews gum in front of the audience.

Stay alert and attentive during the worship service.

A good argument can be made that getting proper rest is an essential part of serving God. Yet God has provided a proper time for this to happen. One contributes very little to the worship service while sleeping. There are many tales of a sleeper distracting the worship of others. Admittedly, we all have found ourselves wanting to sleep in church. Here are a couple of ways to combat drowsiness: Sit up and lean forward away from the bench back; take notes; hold your feet off the floor for as long as you can. If these do not help, quietly stand in the back of the auditorium.

Take good care of the sanctuary and its furnishings. Handle the song books with respect. These things are not our own and should be cared for better than we like others to treat our things. It is always good to respect the property of others. Eating food during the service can be distracting and should be discouraged. Babies are an exception to this.

Ideally, the worship experience should affect our lives. The “tones” of the service should not die as soon as the final amen is said. Thoughtfulness and respect should influence our conduct after the service. Fellowship is a good thing. Use this time to encourage one another rather than gossiping.

Children need exercise after sitting through the service, but they do not need to do so in the sanctuary. Even their activity elsewhere in or out of the building does not need to be intense. If your children need to tussle or play a game of tree tag, take them home. Train your children on what is appropriate activity.

Considering the “tones” of the worship experience still vibrating after the service, I discourage youth parties after evening church services, especially after revival meetings. I doubt that activities at the party encourage contemplation and thinking about the things of God experienced during the worship service.

Conclusion

I have mentioned a number of practical areas that show our respect for God and our fellow believers during our worship services. I trust as lovers of God we are careful to practice good manners and behavior that pleases God and edifies one another.

A.K. | *South Carolina*

Practical Questions:

1. What are some important rules of conduct in your worship services?
2. What behaviors not mentioned can be annoying or distracting to others?
3. What behavior in the worship service indicates irreverence and dishonors God?
4. From your experience, what helps you to worship God?

*“Give to the Lord, O kindreds of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength.
Give to the Lord the glory due His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him.
Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!”
– 1 Chronicles 16:28-29*



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“There is no work involved in straying from the straight and narrow. All you have to do is take your eyes off the goal.”

– Clay Zimmerman at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“God is looking for hearts committed to obedience.”

– Maynard Swarey at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



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

– Eugene Miller at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“He that is a slave to the compass has the freedom of the seas.”

– Jason Miller at Marrowbone Christian Brotherhood, KY



“The Holy Spirit wants to write His law in our hearts. To do so He needs a soft heart.”

– Tim Mast at Mount Moriah Mennonite Fellowship, TN



“There is no such thing as selective integrity.”

– Steve Yoder at Wills Ridge Mennonite Church, VA



“If there were no tribulation we would miss out on half of what it means to know Christ.”

– Truman Eby at Cimarron Christian Fellowship, OK



“Mothers can prevent what teachers struggle to understand, what police officers cannot undo, what psychiatrists cannot unravel, and what prisons cannot fix.”

– Merle Beachy at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“Train up a child does not mean just to let them grow up.”

– Daniel Hartzler at Burkeland Family Conference, GA



“Most of the things we worry about never happen. God cannot deliver us from something that does not happen.”

– Jon Miller at Great Lakes Mennonite Church, MI

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.

If Job Had Known

by Menno Knight

In only one day, the wealthiest man in the East found himself without one camel or donkey or sheep or son or daughter and only a handful of servants. When the dreadful, shocking news hit Job, he tore his costly robe in pieces, shaved every hair on his stately head, and fell to the ground in worship.

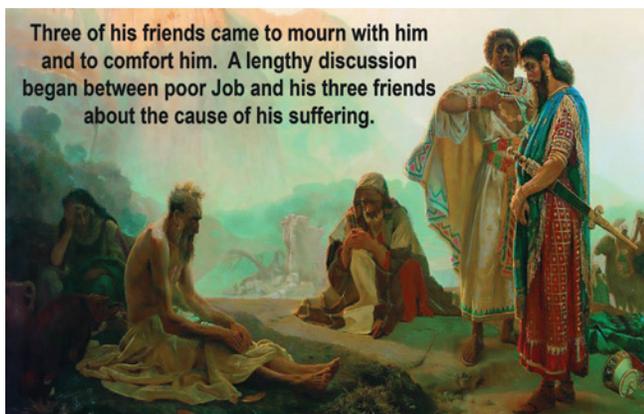
Yet in his extreme grief he did not curse God for his calamity, but said:

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away;

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

In another day, this formerly wealthy man, accustomed to enjoying good food, good health, and every physical comfort, now sat in extreme pain on an ash heap while scraping his boils with a broken piece of pottery.

His foolish wife blamed God for his terrible condition and gave up any semblance of faith. “Curse God and die!” she snapped. But Job responded wearily to her wicked suggestion, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?” Yet in all this trouble, Job did not sin in what he said.



Three of his friends came to mourn with him and to comfort him. A lengthy discussion began between poor Job and his three friends about the cause of his suffering.

Three of his friends came to mourn with him and to comfort him. Job lay in such a pitiful condition that from a distance his three friends did not even recognize him. As they drew near and became certain of his person, his three friends also tore their robes, threw dust in the air that drifted down over their heads, and sat on the ground for seven days and nights without saying a word.

After seven days of shared misery, a lengthy

discussion began between poor Job and his three friends about the cause of his suffering. Job started it off by blasting the day he was born and begging death to come.

Job did not understand why tragedy had befallen him. He groaned, “Why could I not be like kings and wise men of the earth who built palaces for themselves that are in ruins, while they lie calm and still in their tombs? Or why can I not be with princes who had much gold and filled their houses with silver and are now resting in their graves?”

Job moaned, “Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, who long for death, but it does not come? Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in?”

Job could not understand the reason for his intense suffering, but still he remained faithful to his God.

Job protested, “Show me where I have done wrong. Why is God against me? I do not understand,” he groaned.

Each of the three friends took turns agreeing Job had committed some terrible sin that set God against him. Finally, Job cried out, “Miserable comforters are you all” (Job 16:2). And then Job added, “If I were in your place and you in mine, I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief” (Job 16:5).

Elihu came along, full of the wisdom of a young bystander. “God is mighty and just,” Elihu opined. “No one can sin against the Almighty and get away with it. Your calamity comes from the hand of God.”

Despite his lack of understanding, the accusations of his friends, and the bad advice of his wife, Job still held on to his faith in God. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust God,” he vowed (Job 13:15).

Job did not know that it was Satan who attacked him. Neither did Job know that God had told Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power” (Job 1:12). Neither did Job know God had limited Satan’s attack upon him: “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life” (Job 2:6).

Think how much difference it would have made in Job’s anguish if he had known that Satan, and not God,



sent the Sabeans to murder 999 ⁽¹⁾ of his servants and make off with 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys. But Job did not know. Thanks to our divine revelation, we know.

Think about how much difference it would have made to Job and his three friends if they had known that the lightning from the sky that charred 7,000 sheep and the shepherds who tended them was sent by Satan and not by God. Neither Job nor his three friends knew. Perhaps if they had known, they would not have been so certain that Job had committed some terrible sin. But we know. Satan did it.

Think how much difference it would have made to Job if he had known that Satan, and not God, sent the Chaldean bands to murder 999 servants and then ride triumphantly off with his 3,000 camels. But Job didn't know. We know it was Satan who sent the Chaldeans to murder and steal.

Think about how much difference it would have made to Job and his wife if they had known that Satan sent the tornado that wiped out their seven sons and three daughters instead of the hand of God. But Job and his wife did not know. Perhaps if Job's wife had known the disaster came from Satan, she would not have said, "Curse God and die." Thanks to the Holy Word, we know.

But even in Job's ignorance of the struggle in the heavens that resulted in his suffering, Satan was unable to turn Job away from faith in his God. When Satan appeared before God once more, God could still say of Job, **"There is none like him in all the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 2:3).**

Thanks to the book of Job, we gain understanding

that helps us through times of adversity and calamity. These truths ought to guide us in our own wrestling **"against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).** These are things Job did not know, but we know.

First of all, we know God did not test Job to make him stronger. God did not beat up on his servant Job in order to toughen him. When Satan appeared before God from wondering about on the earth, Job was already everything God wanted him to be. God asked Satan, **"Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" (Job 1:8).** By this statement we know that Job was already an excellent example of a God-fearing man who pleased God.

Because of the book of Job, we should know that calamity is no proof of sin in our life. ⁽²⁾ Rather, distress and pain can be Satan's attempts to destroy our trust in God.

In this account we see clearly that the purpose of Satan in attacking Job was to drive him away from God. In both Job 1:11 and Job 2:5 Satan tells God, **"And he will surely curse You to Your face!"** In every time of stress and doubt that we experience, we should remember that Satan is trying to drive us away from God. Knowing this truth should steady our resolve to remain true to God. If Job had known that truth, his uncertainty would have vanished.

Another obvious truth we know from this account is that God does not send EVIL upon his obedient children; Satan sends evil upon them. In this account, the tornado, the lightning, the raiders, the boils—all were sent by Satan, not by God. To say that God sent them is to **"charge God foolishly" (Job 1:22).**

Likewise, when adversity and calamity fall upon us, whether from accident, enemies, lightning, sickness, or storm, we should recognize them as coming from Satan.

The knowledge that evil against us comes from Satan and not from God should always instruct us not to blame God for Satan's attacks. We should not wail, "I don't understand why God allowed this or that to come upon me." We should always remember that God is not the sponsor of evil. Satan is. Therefore, we should always be ready to attribute evil in the world to Satan.

Not all bad things that may happen to us are evil or contrary to God's will. Many times, we may bring bad things upon ourselves by our own foolishness. At other times we can step outside God's protecting hedge in disobedience to God. He may then chasten us as sons, in order to bring us back to Him (Hebrews 12:4-11).

But if our hands are clean before God and our hearts innocent of sin, we can be sure that the tornado or the car accident or the disease was sent by Satan and will be used by him in an attempt to drive us away from God. When Satan sponsors bad things against us, that makes them evil.

Another observation we can make from this account is that God builds a protective hedge around His children. He limits the evil that Satan can throw at us. Satan accused God of keeping him away from Job. Satan said that if he could get through God's hedge, Job's religion would prove to be only a sham.

This agrees with how Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:13, "Deliver us from the evil one." Yes, we should learn from this account that God limits Satan's power to what we are able to bear (I Cor. 10:13). That knowledge should always strengthen us in times of distress when Satan attacks us.

Instead of roughing up His children who please him, God does just the opposite. He builds a hedge around them to protect them from the evil one. Listen to Satan's explanation for Job's blessed life: **"Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land" (Job 1:9-10).**

Job did not know that God cut a great big hole in the hedge around Job and allowed Satan to attack him. Job did not know that the attacks on his health and his wealth came from Satan because God had removed the hedge about him. But we know. What a blessing in our daily life to know that God has placed a hedge around us. May He build the hedge high and thick.

Finally, we should observe that both at the beginning and at the end of the book of Job, God blessed Job physically and rewarded him for his faithfulness. In humility, we should always remember that whatever physical blessings we enjoy come from the hand of God and we should praise Him for them. I believe Job knew that fact, Satan knew it, and God knew it.

Would to God that He would be able to say to Satan

about each one of us the same thing he said of Job: "Do you see my servant _____, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

Practical Questions:

1. Why did God allow Satan to torment Job?
2. Why does God allow Satan to carry on his evil work in the world today?
3. What is the difference between God's testing and Satan's temptations (James 1)?
4. Is there a difference between what evil men do to Christians and natural disasters?
5. Does God use evil men to accomplish His will in the world?



(1) This number is based on one servant to each yoke of donkeys and oxen. It is not found in the book of Job.

(2) In John 9:2-3, Jesus' disciples asked Him about a man born blind, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him."



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.

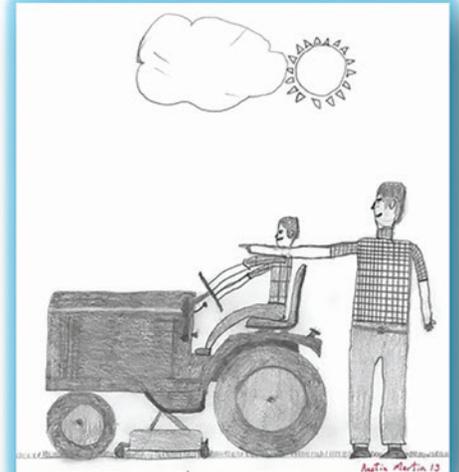
Dear AV editor,

I teach grades eight and nine at Farmersville Mennonite School in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. For a recent art class, I had my students illustrate Proverbs. The project was inspired by your "Proverbs Illustrated" page. We decided to send a few your way to see if you have interest in publishing them. Feel free to pick and choose.

Thank you and many blessings on your work!

Sincerely,

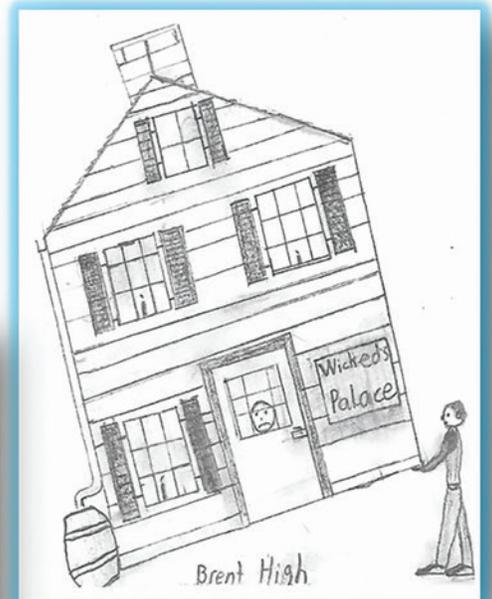
Dwight A. Weaver



A wise son heeds his father's instructions.
Proverbs 13:1



In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
Proverbs 3:6



The house of the wicked shall be overthrown.
Proverbs 14:11

As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so are sluggards to those who send them.
Proverbs 10:26



Pride goeth before destruction, and
an haughty spirit before a fall.
Proverbs 16:18



Let a bear robbed of her whelps
meet a man, rather than a fool in his
folly.
Proverbs 17:12



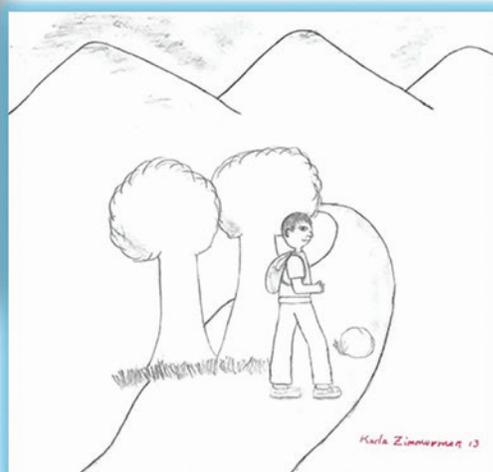
The sluggard will not plow by reason
of the cold.
Proverbs 20:4



Remove not the ancient landmark,
which thy fathers have set.
Proverbs 22:28



Go to the ant, thou
sluggard; consider her
ways, and be wise.
Proverbs 6:6



The way of the
wicked is as
darkness: they
know not at what
they stumble.
Proverbs 4:19

The Story of Chief Wasamapa

A true Indian story that took place in early America

No Hope for the Heathen

Chief Wasamapa growled to the official standing behind the counter, “It is not right that the settlers take our land. They claim they have rightly purchased the land because of land grants to Dutch families many years ago. They make promises to us. They lie. They cheat us. More and more settlers come until there is no more land for us to set our chair upon.”

The plight of Chief Wasamapa and sixty Indians crowded together in their Mohican village at the foot of Mt. Stissing and close to beautiful Lake Halcyon, was indeed a desperate one. Huddled together in their wigwams on a small acreage about 100 miles north of New York City, they grew corn, beans, squash, and some herbs. To help them supply their necessities they worked for the encroaching settlers who often did not pay them their agreed upon wages. Traders plied them with rum and cheated them out of their skins and furs.

Chief Wasamapa worshipped his grandmother’s leather idols and prayed to them. Chief Wasamapa, with his rough clothing, constant scowls, and fierce countenance, often appeared to others more like an angry bear than a human being. Though very intelligent and skillful in leading his people, Chief Wasamapa drowned his hopeless condition with rum, lots of it.

The Evangelist

God saw the hopeless condition of Chief Wasamapa and this Mohican village at Shekomeko and he sent a highly skilled and learned German young man across the Atlantic Ocean to “evangelize the natives in America.” Inspired by fervent beliefs and a commission from a gathered church in far-off Moravia, 22-year-old Christian Henry Rauch, boarded a ship and arrived in New York City on 16 July 1740. Except for God’s presence, he was all alone.

By the providence of God, Christian Henry made some contacts with influential people he thought might be able to help him. Instead of aiding the zealous young man, the contacts all tried to discourage him. “Every previous attempt to civilize the natives has resulted in utter failure,” they told him. “The Indian savages are illiterate and know nothing of Christian ways. It is impossible to evangelize them,” his supposed friends declared.

Christian Henry would not be deterred. “If the

heathen cannot read about the Savior for themselves, then I must tell them about the Savior and his blood,” he insisted. His friends smiled at the childlike simplicity of the young man.

Christian Henry found the Mohican Chiefs Wasamapa and Shabosh in New York City complaining to officials about land matters. The two chiefs were part of a tough-looking lot. Mohican chiefs Wasamapa and Shabash had multiple tattoos and scars decorating their arms, faces, and chests. Chief Wasamapa had another name as well, “Hard Warrior.”

The New York officials were giving the Indian delegation the old run-around by sending them from one official to another. While the Indian delegation could speak the low Dutch of the day, magistrates and clerks pretended they could not understand their complaints. Young Christian Henry took an interest in their case. He went with them to the officials and was not easily put aside.

The Whites did not like this young German foreigner meddling in their business. When one official saw Christian Henry would not be easily pushed aside, he scowled and told him plainly, “Young man, you’re a fool. It’s impossible to civilize these savages. Can’t you see that the Mohicans are a confessedly worthless tribe of Indians—naturally fierce, vindictive, and given to excessive drinking.” Then he continued in a darker vein. “The sorry, worthless, degenerate Mohicans keep fussing about being defrauded of their land. Just let nature take its course and the land problem will go away.”

But Christian Henry persisted. “Did the settlers pay the Indians a fair price for their land?” he asked.

“What’s a fair price?” the official scoffed. “Old one-legged Dutch Governor Stuyvesant traded with them for their lands 80 years ago. Why pay for their land over and over again? The savages don’t know anything about land titles; there isn’t a magistrate in Poughkeepsie who would rule in their favor.

“Young man,” he warned, “if you know what’s good for you, you’ll stay out of this.”

But Christian Henry knew why he had come to America; he would not be scared off. During one conversation with the Indians when they were sober, Chief Wasamapa said, “I frequently feel disposed to know better things than I do, but I do not know where to find them.”

Then Chief Shabash proposed, “Would you come to our village and be our teacher?”

This was exactly what Christian Henry wanted and he readily agreed to the proposition. But the next day, when Wasamapa and Shabash were drunk, they cancelled the invitation. When they sobered up they again invited him to come to their village and be their teacher. The same thing happened several times—when sober they wanted him to come, but when drunk they cancelled out. Finally, they slunk off without him.

Christian Henry followed Shabash and Wasamapa from farm to farm till he arrived at their home village exactly one month after he had arrived in New York. Wasamapa and Shabash’s village huddled next to a small stream behind which rose a thickly wooded slope. Nearby, sixteen crude shelters housed sixty Mohicans. A large field of herbs, beans, and corn flourished next to the village. The Mohicans called the nearby creek and their village, Shekomeko.

Hope for the Heathen

On his arrival, Christian Henry launched right into preaching to the Indians. The village at first heard him gladly, but soon their attitude turned to scorn and derision. Some threatened his life.

The Whites derisively called the little tract of land inhabited by the Mohicans, “The Wigwam.” All the surrounding country was already claimed and farmed by Whites who regarded their Indian neighbors with utter disgust. Most of them wanted nothing to do with the village except to profit from the Indians through the sale of alcoholic beverages.

In contrast to the prevailing sentiments of the settlers, a nearby German farmer named John Rowe showed concern for the plight of the Indians. The Rowe family had learned the Mohican tongue. They befriended the Indians and gave them small gifts of clothing, tools, and utensils.

John Rowe cautioned Christian Henry about the foolhardiness of his avowed goal of saving the Mohicans. “Aren’t the Indians like the Canaanites when God told the Israelites to take over the land of Canaan?” he asked. “God didn’t want the Israelites to mix with the Canaanites because the Israelites might learn their heathen ways. Chief Wasamapa worships his grandmother’s leather idol. Both Shabash and Wasamapa are nothing but worthless drunks. Do you think you can change them?”

Christian Henry responded quickly with fervor of voice and gleaming blue eyes, “The Mohicans are not

the Canaanites and the Whites are not the Israelites. And neither do the Whites have any God-given right to the land.”

Christian Henry continued. “I cannot change the Mohicans, but the blood of the Savior can. Do you see the perfect beauty of Lake Halcyon? The same God who made that lake created you and Chief Wasamapa. Do you not think the Mohicans have souls that Christ died for? The Bible says that He made all nations of one blood. If we but teach the Mohicans the truth about the Savior of all men, God can change the Mohicans.”

Blood in the Heart

Christian Henry quickly learned Mohican while continuing his regular visits to the Mohican village of Shekomeko. In his preaching, Christian Henry talked much about the blood of the Savior and how the blood of the Son of God could save the Mohicans from their wretched misery. It made no sense to them. The Mohicans thought him a fool and he spent his time in Shekomeko in peril of his life. But he persisted.

On one occasion, after a long journey back from Bethlehem, Christian Henry arrived at Shekomeko, footsore and weary, but extremely burdened for Chief Wasamapa. Christian Henry found Wasamapa in his own hut, exceedingly drunk. He sat down beside him and spoke thus to him:

“I come to you in the name of the Lord of heaven and earth. He sends me to let you know that he will make you happy and deliver you from the misery in which you lie at present. To this end he became a man, gave his life a ransom for man, and shed his blood for him. The Creator has died and the very Son of God, Jesus, has shed his blood so that Mohicans can be saved. Because of the blood Chief Wasamapa can be saved. Chief Wasamapa must get that blood in his heart. Blood. Blood. Blood.”

When Christian Henry had finished his discourse, fatigued by the journey, he lay down upon a board right in front of Chief Wasamapa and fell into a sound sleep.

On another day when Chief Wasamapa had sobered up, he called for Christian Henry. “I must tell you something,” Chief Wasamapa began. “The day you came into my hut and fell asleep in front of me, I thought to myself, ‘What kind of man is this? There he lies and sleeps. I might kill him and throw him out into the woods, and who would regard it? But this gives him no concern. He must be a good man to trust me so. Maybe I should think about his message.’

“Christian Henry, I have thought much about your message. It is different than the message of another preacher who once came to our village and explained to us that there was a God who made the world and everything in it. We answered him, ‘Do you think us so ignorant as not to know that? We know of the Great Spirit. Go back to the place you came from?’

“Another preacher came to our village and began to teach us. He said, ‘Man is evil. You must not steal, nor lie, nor get drunk, and so on.’

“We answered him, ‘You hypocrite, do you think that we don’t know that? Learn first yourself, and then teach the people to whom you belong, to leave off these things. For who steals, or lies, or who is more drunken than your own people?’ And we dismissed him.

“Christian Henry, your message is different from anything I have ever heard. What is this blood you speak so much about when you come to our village? Why do you look so pleased when you talk so about blood? Blood. Blood. Blood. When I am awake, I cannot get this blood out of my mind. When I sleep, I dream of that blood which Christ shed for us.”

Chief Wasamapa leaned his scarred and weather-beaten face closer to Christian Henry and gazed earnestly into his eyes. “Why do you always speak of blood with such emotion and joy of heart?” he asked.

“Ah!” Christian Henry replied, “It is easy to speak of the blood with joy. For it tells people that their Creator died and shed his blood for the Mohicans and for Chief Wasamapa.”

“Is this true?” Hard Warrior asked. “What must one do to get a share in this blood?”

Christian Henry beamed, and with all earnestness of soul, he answered, “Nothing but believe, and with one’s heart hang upon the man, conversing with Him so long in the mind till one experiences what He did.”

“But I am so inclined to drunkenness,” the Hard Warrior confessed.

Christian Henry replied, “The reason you have trouble with drunkenness is that you do not yet have that blood in your heart; you must first get that, and then your drunkenness will soon fall away.”

From that time on, the heathen Wasamapa begged with sighs that God would make this “Thing” so to him as it was to Christian Henry Rauch. God gave Wasamapa the desire of his heart. This “Thing” became real to the heathen Wasamapa, and he would not let this “Thing” go out of his mind. After that he never had leisure to get drunk again.

Transformed by the Blood

The change in Wasamapa was dramatic. He renounced his grandmother’s leather idols, abandoned his brutal ways, and to the surprise of all, stopped drinking.

Before Wasamapa quit drinking, both his wife and mother had been excessively grieved at his getting drunk so much. Now, they were even more displeased that he would have nothing to do with drinking. Instead, he was wholly taken up with things they could not comprehend; they thought he had gone crazy.

Wasamapa’s wife and mother weren’t the only ones who became his enemies after Chief Wasamapa altered his former course of life; many Mohicans and the Whites were no less angry with him. Wasamapa could not understand why this was so, and he asked Christian Henry to explain it to him.

Christian Henry had a ready answer. “All men are corrupt by nature, and it is a very great grace when God takes a person from the bulk of mankind and makes him quite another man. Therefore, people envy such a one because they are convinced of the matter in their own hearts, and yet, they themselves will not be converted. That is why they hate to see others changed when they, themselves, continue to live in misery.”

Wasamapa responded, “Now I know why both the heathen and the ‘Christians’ persecute both you and me, and all my doubts are removed from me.”

Wasamapa’s change in character from an inveterate drunk and reckless ruffian caused a great sensation in Shekomeko. People saw in him hope of a better life for all Mohicans. Wasamapa proved very effective at convincing his own people of the merits of the blood. He said to Christian Henry, “I know how the heathen think. It is not hard to teach them that they need the Savior’s blood.”

Three leaders at Shekomeko besides Chief Wasamapa—Shabash, Seim, and Kiop—soon gave up their fears and followed the teaching of Christian Henry. A great miracle took place in Shekomeko; more Mohicans turned to the Savior.

Ready for Baptism

By January 22, 1742, seventeen months after Christian Henry stepped off the ship in New York City, everything was arranged for the new believers to journey to Oley, Pennsylvania for baptism. Unfortunately, Chief

Wasamapa could not undertake the three-week journey on foot because of lameness, so he sent the following message:

“I have been a poor wild heathen and for forty years as ignorant as a dog. I was the greatest drunkard, and the most willing slave of the devil; and as I knew nothing of our Savior I served vain idols which I now wish to see destroyed with fire. Of this I have repented with many tears. When I heard that Jesus was also the Savior of the heathen, and that I ought to give Him my heart, I felt a drawing within me towards Him.

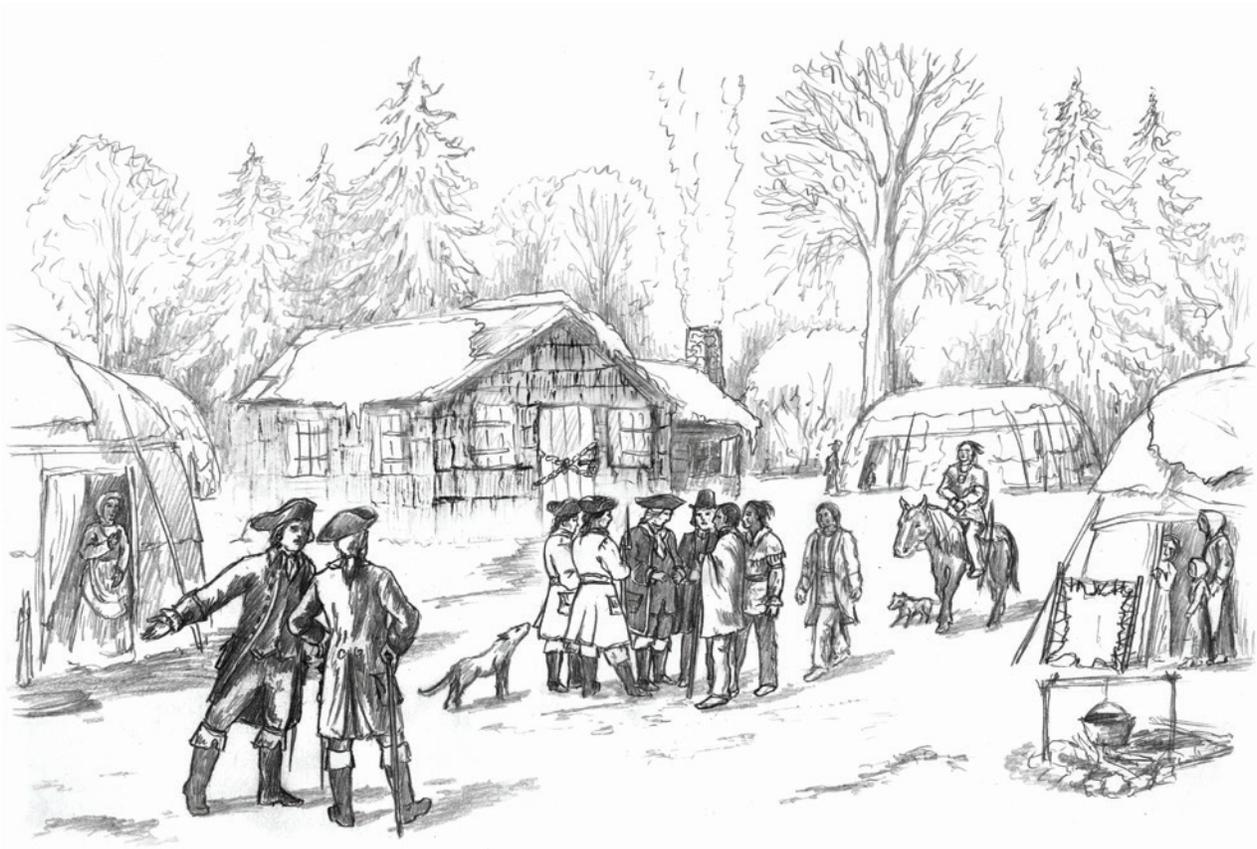
“But my wife and children were my enemies; and my greatest enemy was my wife’s mother. She told me that I was worse than a dog if I no more believed in her idol. But my eyes being opened, I understood that what she said was altogether folly, for I knew that she had received her idol from her grandmother. It is made of leather and decorated with wampum, and she, being the oldest person in the house, made us worship it; we

have done this till our teacher came and told us of the Lamb of God, who shed His blood and died for us poor ignorant people.

“Now I feel and believe that our Savior alone, can help me by the power of His blood, and no other. I believe that He is my God and my Savior who died on the cross for me, a sinner. I wish to be baptized and long for it most ardently. I am lame, and cannot travel in winter; but in April or May I will come to you.”

On 20 February 1742, Bishops Nitschman and Zinzendorf ordained Christian Henry to the ministry. In the afternoon of the same day, Christian Henry baptized Shabash as Abraham, Siem as Isaac, and Kiop as Jacob.

On 16 April 1742, Christian Henry baptized Chief Wasamapa at Shekomeko as John – John Wasamapa. Thus by God’s providence and design, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and John, became model converts and showed to all that even hopeless drunks and reckless ruffians could become gentle followers of the Savior.



This drawing depicts the official closing of the Shekomeko chapel on 15 December 1744

This account is based on Count Zinzendorf’s diary during his visit to America in 1742, and is corroborated by Wasamapa’s personal testimony at a later synod (church gathering) in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Condensed from *Under Attack*, the fourth book in the Conquest Series.

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All Liars

by James G. Landis

All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

– Revelation 21:8

This blunt statement hits one over the head. It should get everyone’s attention. Unrepentant liars will go to hell. The apostle John gives this ominous warning in no uncertain terms. There is no exception stated. Rich or poor, prince or pauper, man or woman, American or Asian, ruler or servant—the verse says “all liars” will go to hell.

Revelation 22:15 throws out the warning in a gentler way, “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are ... whoever loves and practices a lie.” In plain language, liars will not get into heaven.

A warning this serious should cause everyone to consider their ways before the first death – while they are still living on the earth. For what lies beyond the grave should terrify liars.

Sometimes liars are frightened by the seriousness of their earthly punishment and the consequences that accompany them. Those lying sinners who are afraid of God also think about what is to come after death. The Bible talks about devils who tremble at the fear of God’s wrath. “You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!” (James 2:19).

In the story Jesus told of the Gadarene demoniacs, additional evidence of demon fear confronts us. By combining Matthew 8:29 and Luke 8:31 we find the demons begging Jesus not to send them into the eternal darkness of the bottomless pit *ahead of time*. To put it another way, the demons knew their punishment was coming.

God hates lying. It is part of His divine character. The Bible tells us He prepared hell as a place to punish the devil, the father of lies (Matthew 25:41). Jesus tells

us in John 8:44. “[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

Lying then is a most serious sin. Intentionally telling the untruth brings consequences on earth and consignment to eternal punishment in hell. So we might ask, Why do people lie?

Some liars do not believe in God or His commandments.

Others believe it is to their personal advantage to lie.

Still others may lie to help or protect others.

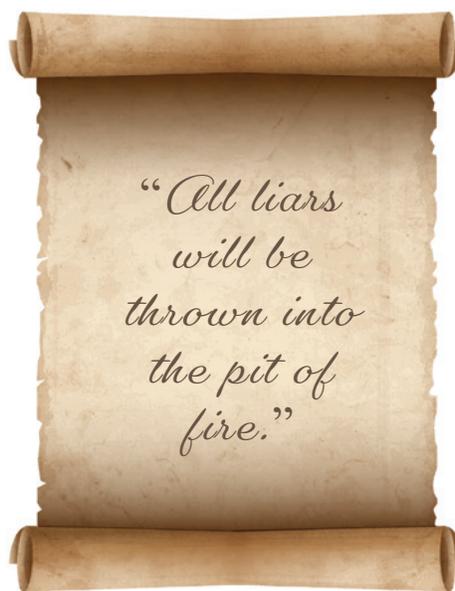
Because most people have an innate knowledge that outright lying brings down the distrust of others in associations, the punishment of the law, and the wrath of God, mankind puts forth great effort to skirt the guilt and the consequences that come from lying. Therefore, in today’s English, men have devised other names for lying and liars so that it doesn’t sound so bad—alternative facts, dishonest, falsehood, fib, mendacious, prevaricate, white lie. But no matter what word one uses to describe it, if the intent is to deceive others by what is said or

done, it is a lie.

In our day, as in Pilate’s day, lying has become so common, even among public figures, that we find it difficult to know what is truth. This is very true with the coronavirus lockdown. We know that evil men who do not fear God or the punishment in hell after they die, lie. Sometimes their lies are obvious and sometimes we cannot tell, but God always knows and He will be the righteous judge.

But with the people of God, let us always be careful to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth. “Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25).

J.G.L. | Georgia



How Accountable Are Anabaptists?

by William Byler

“Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.”

– Acts 20:26-27

There are great blessings in belonging to the Anabaptist community. However, in the minds of some, the beliefs of the Anabaptist faith—nonresistance, the two kingdoms, refusal of divorce and remarriage, separation from the world, modesty, and the headship veiling—are unnecessary restrictions that other Christians ignore.

Let us lay aside the position of non-Anabaptist people and consider the following question: “Can those of us who were taught these things from childhood knowingly decide to ignore them and still go to heaven?” We should also include all people who the Lord has convicted on these Bible teachings. Can they decide some applications of Bible teaching are unnecessary after all, disregard them, and still expect to hear the words, “Well done thou good and faithful servant?”

If we consider the New Testament teachings honestly, I think we are compelled to believe God expects Christians to observe these doctrines—obviously allowing some range for their exact interpretation and application. Why else would He include them in His eternal Word? So, to intentionally stop observing these Bible doctrines is to go against the New Testament teaching, which is sin. James 4:17 says, “To him that knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” Will such a person be worthy of heaven, and see with joy the face of our Savior and Lord?

In this same regard, I think of the verses in Luke 12:47-48, “And that servant which knew his lord’s will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” Clearly, God holds those with knowledge of His will to a higher standard than those with less knowledge or maybe no knowledge at all.

Other Possible Interpretations

Some argue there are other possible interpretations to these important scriptures. We must be very careful

that our motive and personal agenda do not cloud the better judgment of the “pure in heart.” When a new interpretation relies on supposed subtle and heretofore unused meanings of Greek words so as to change the normal, long-accepted meaning, there is reason to be suspicious. The Bible was largely written and preached by average people such as shepherds, fishermen and carpenters; therefore, the Bible can be understood by normal farmers and carpenters today. God has chosen to give common men the power to preach His words and will. We do not depend on superior human intellect but on the authority of the Holy Spirit.

It does not take much learning to understand God’s will, for “not many wise after the flesh ... are called” (I Corinthians 1:26). A fifth grader with no prior theological teaching or indoctrination will probably get the Scripture’s intent on his own.

Only Jesus’ Words Are Valid

Some argue that only Jesus’ words are valid for salvation. Notice that Jesus specifically gave the twelve apostles power from on high to continue His earthly mission. He said, “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

The argument that only the words of Jesus are authoritative and need to be obeyed, is self-refuting by its own proponents who do not practice the very words of Jesus. For example, the pastor of a large congregation once told me that he believes only the red-letter verses in the Bible apply to us today. Yet his church ignores the prohibition of divorce and remarriage and other teaching that comes from Jesus’ direct words. I could add that many evangelical Christian churches do teach against divorce and remarriage but, nevertheless, allow it in their congregations.

Anabaptist Teachings Are Not Essential

Another argument often heard attempts to make Anabaptist/Bible doctrines unnecessary for salvation. Nevertheless, we repeat, “Why then did God preserve them in His Word?” Isn’t it presumptuous to declare, as some do, that because the Bible does not directly link these commandments to personal salvation, they

are not essential? I assume such people are thinking of passages which declare that an adulterer, murderer, drunkard, or thief will not enter the Kingdom. I'm afraid that too often these very apologists allow those sins in their churches. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" (1 Corinthians 6:9).

If Anabaptists, despite the plain scriptural teaching they have received, reject the practices of their fathers and follow the Protestant churches, will God approve? Many have done so and nothing has happened; lightning hasn't fallen from heaven upon them, they haven't been struck with sudden horrible illness, and life goes on normally. But those non-events are not a safe confirmation of God's approval.

People dare not disobey New Testament teachings in order to have a greater walk with God. It doesn't work that way. Galatians 5:13 says, "For you brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." We must not forget that to become more spiritual is to be more filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is to be like Him in all His teaching and life, not less so.

Anabaptists and Non-Anabaptists Are Accountable

1 John 1:7 says, "Walk in the light as He is in the Light." The full light that illuminates Scripture does not immediately come when an unbeliever surrenders his will and commits his life to follow the Lord Jesus. We "grow in the grace of our Lord Jesus." Growing toward maturity is a Christian mandate and goal. But as every believer learns the truth, he becomes responsible before God to obey it. Romans 2:13 says, "For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous."

Some have a greater opportunity to know the truth than others—teaching, training, Bibles to read, church fellowship. But each one is responsible to obey the light he has before more light will be given him. Jesus

made this clear to the Jews of His day in two different passages. In Matthew 13:12 He told His disciples why He spoke to the Jews in parables: "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." And the warning that the truth will be taken away from those who know it is reinforced by Jesus' teaching in the parable of the talents where Jesus said in Matthew 25:29, "For to everyone who has more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away." This truth explains why many Anabaptists who turn their backs on one Bible teaching, soon lose their understanding of many Bible truths. This verse also explains why those who obey the light they have, receive understanding of additional Bible truths.

But the most important question is the one we began with. Will we hear those words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant?" If we ignore things we know are taught in Scripture and intentionally disobey His commands, will we happily meet the Lord?

Disobeying one command of the Scripture is a very dangerous thing to do. Hebrews 10:26 warns us, "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries."

Personally, I must contemplate the sober thought of someday meeting the Righteous Judge on His holy throne and being asked, "Did you obey what you knew the Scripture taught? Were you ashamed of being identified with a peculiar Anabaptist people that obeyed the teachings in my Word?"

I want to do everything I can now to assure that I can give the Righteous Judge good answers to these questions.

W. B. | Bonner's Ferry, Idaho

By request we have reprinted a condensed form of Brother Byler's article in AV06, pages 13-15.

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

– Matthew 5:19

Do Not Stop Meeting Together

by Matt Drayer



I have a lot of memories of playing football with my four brothers when we were young. We did not necessarily play football because we all enjoyed it, we often played football because my brother Tim wanted to. Tim was always trying to talk us into playing football. You see, Tim loved football, but he couldn't play it by himself. He needed a group of people to play with.

Interestingly enough, there are some parallels between football and church. Both require a group of people. Both require working together and both require some sort of leadership. Neither church nor football will work if everybody tries to do his own thing.

You can't do church by yourself. The church needs to be together. Brothers and sisters must gather for corporate prayer and singing, for preaching and teaching, for communion and foot washing, and for fellowship. They need to draw close to God together, make decisions, set standards, disciple, and apply the Bible to daily living.

This is so important that the Bible says, "Do not stop meeting together." You will find these words in Hebrews 10:25 "Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing" (NIV).

The writer of Hebrews (inspired by the Holy Ghost) penned those words for a reason. There were some people "in the habit" of not meeting together. Why were they not meeting? He doesn't say, but obviously there was something going on. The writer of Hebrews essentially said, "Listen up! Some of you are forming a bad habit by not meeting together. That is not good."

Or perhaps he was saying, "In times like these you need each other for support. It will be easier to stay faithful if you are in a group."

Maybe the Hebrew Christians were not meeting because they were afraid of being beaten, jailed, or stoned by the Jews if they were caught meeting together. Or it could be that the Roman rulers would have felt Christians were a threat to their gods and to Caesar. Maybe the writer of Hebrews knew that

gathering together for church would be dangerous, so he encouraged Christians to gather.

Or perhaps some Christians were being lazy or careless. Church was not a priority, so they missed a meeting here and there and after a while, they were only showing up periodically. Suddenly, they were in a bad habit of not meeting with their church family.

Perhaps some Christians were afraid to gather for fear of getting sick. Maybe there was an infectious disease going around and some Christians stayed away from the gathering and, after a while, they never came back. On the other hand, some may have stayed home because they were sick. That is understandable, but sometimes these Christians formed a habit of staying home every time they had a sniffle.

Here is a thought-provoking question. Why did the writer of Hebrews choose to be anonymous? I propose it was because of Jewish persecution. If the Jews could have identified the writer of such a letter, they might have killed him. Maybe it was just out of humility that the writer didn't put his name to the book while the writers of all the other New Testament books attached theirs. I doubt it.

Or maybe the writer wanted to make the book of Hebrews timeless. I realize the whole New Testament was written by first century writers and applies to us today. But Hebrews is unique. By remaining anonymous, it is like the writer of Hebrews is writing in 2020. And if you think about it, those verses seem like they were written specifically for us.

Right now, many Christians are in the habit of not meeting together. Churches are facing tough decisions. Should they meet? How should they meet? Where should they meet?

I think we should all take these verses to heart. Read them slowly, on your knees:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
— Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

M. D. | Wolcott, Indiana

Brother Matt is a long-time school teacher of the Apostolic Christian Church.

Treatments for COVID-19

by James G. Landis

“Let us do good to all men.” (Galatians 6:10).

I will issue my disclaimer right in the beginning: *I am not a medical doctor, chemist, or scientist. Overdosing with these drugs can be harmful to your health.* In this case, I claim to be a farmer, seeker of truth, and reporter.

I have found three common and effective drugs that have been used on millions of people over a period of 20 years. To be safe, I will say that known side effects are very rare. All three medications are reasonably priced and on hand at most drug stores. Each one has shown that it can be an effective treatment for the corona virus.

Dexamethasone – A current price: 10 (4 mg pills) cost US\$16.

Dexamethasone is a medical staple found on pharmacy shelves worldwide and is available as a pill. According to Martin Landray, an epidemiologist at the University of Oxford, for less than US\$63, you can treat eight patients successfully and save one life.

“Dexamethasone is a major breakthrough [in the treatment of the corona virus]” says Peter Horby, an infectious-disease specialist at the University of Oxford, UK and a chief investigator on the trial.

These statements are based on a large trial of over 4,000 people in the UK where this cheap and available steroid cut deaths by one-third among patients critically ill with COVID-19.

Hydroxychloroquine – A current price: 30 (200 mg pills) cost US\$20.

Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquinil) is FDA approved to treat or prevent malaria, several forms of lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis. This drug has been prescribed for years to help patients with these debilitating, or even deadly, diseases. FDA has determined this drug is safe and effective when used in accordance with their FDA approved labeling.

Here is a note of interest to those who may want to use this safe and effective drug for the treatment of the corona virus: FDA approved products may be prescribed by physicians for off-label uses if they determine it is appropriate for treating their patients.

Ivermectin – A current price: 8 (3 mg pills) cost US\$45.

Discovered in the late 1970s, the pioneering drug ivermectin has had an immeasurably beneficial impact in



improving the lives and welfare of millions of people throughout the world. Originally introduced as a veterinary drug, it was quickly discovered to be ideal in combating two of the world’s most devastating and disfiguring tropical diseases—river blindness and scabies—and has also been used to successfully overcome a number of other human diseases. New uses for it are continually being found.

The full report of the following story can be found at <trialsitenews.com>, June 12, 2020. TrialSite News has interviewed doctors around the world who are using the anti-parasitic drug to treat COVID-19 with significant success.

Ivermectin, considered a wonder drug, along with penicillin and aspirin, is now approved in Peru to treat COVID-19. Perhaps Peru is now the epicenter of the movement for off-label use of ivermectin to treat COVID-19 patients. The doctors there really believe in it.

In one small case study, Dr. Gustavo A. Aguirre-Chang reported that his group had treated 39 COVID-19 cases and that the ivermectin regimen was quite successful—100% of the 36 who continued the treatment showed improvement within 2-3 days after starting treatment, fever resolution rate at 36 hours after taking ivermectin was 94%, and the resolution rate of those who had difficulty breathing was at 86%.

In a larger observational study of 1,200 patients in the northern regions of Peru, Dr. Gustavo Elera Arevalo treated 1,200 infected patients with ivermectin and reported incredible results. When pushed for evidence of success, Dr. Elera Arevalo retorted, “COVID-19 is a new disease, so evidence worldwide is hard to find. I have treated 1,200 people in jails, among first responders, and others deemed ‘at risk’ with phenomenal results. Is that not evidence in a pandemic?”

In Peru, growing numbers of doctors declare in concert that the ivermectin treatment is working. There are no widespread reports of adverse events.

Hence, dozens if not hundreds of doctors around the world are prescribing ivermectin in the treatment of COVID patients.

J.G.L. | Georgia



Round Table Discussion

by AV Readers

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

AV Editor

Jesus in Both Testaments

I would like to respond to “Good Reasons” in AV14’s “Round Table Discussion” (page 38). It was about certain practices of New Testament churches which seem to draw morality from the Old Testament.

We know that the Word of God in its entirety—the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament—is profitable for our salvation. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, his son in the faith, “The Holy Scriptures are able to make you wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof and correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly capable of all good works” (II Timothy 3:15-17).

People have tried to separate the Law of Moses into ceremonial, sacrificial, and moral categories, with the Ten Commandments on the side, but II Corinthians 3 tells us that it ALL passes away because a more glorious covenant has been revealed.

Jesus said that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Him. Jesus is the fulfillment of every requirement of the Law of Moses. He is the person who is truly a man after God’s own heart. He is more than Solomon; He remains standing when Moses and Elijah have disappeared. He is the spiritual Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Samson, David, Solomon, and Jonah. Hidden in the lives of all these great men of old are attributes that point to Jesus. This is what we need to look for in the Old Testament. We need to look for Jesus; He should be the light by which we interpret both the Old and the New Testaments.

Jesus did not annul or forbid the standards of right and wrong found in the Old Testament. Instead, Jesus set a higher standard which demanded obedience to the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law.

To help His disciples carry out the intent of the law, Jesus promised His disciples that He would send His Spirit who would lead them into all truth. With the Spirit of Jesus to guide them, the disciples started

building New Testament churches even though they did not yet have a written canon. The Spirit gave them the wisdom to differentiate between covenants and to “found” New Testament doctrines. Under the Spirit’s leading, the apostles taught the churches the practical traditions and ordinances that would show the world how Kingdom citizens live.

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).

For the Spirit of Jesus to lead us in the way of truth, we must give Him room in our lives. This begins with complete obedience to the obvious Kingdom teachings that Jesus and the apostles taught, such as in the Sermon on the Mount, and the teaching on the head covering. If we do not obey what has already been revealed to us, it will be taken from us and be given to them that bring forth fruit.

T. W. | Alberta, Canada



Matter of Conscience

In your Round Table Discussion, “Seventh Day or First Day” (AV17, page 35), you write, “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.”

For me, trying to keep the Seventh Day was not such a denial, but rather a conviction that I ought to obey a command of God.

The commands to Israel in the Old Testament to keep the Seventh Day as a special day of rest were repeated over and over again. God intended for the Israelites to set their work aside and honor Him on the seventh day.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. ... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, He rested on the seventh day” (Exodus 20:8-11).

Sabbath means “rest” and refers to the seventh day of creation, and every seventh day since. The command concerning the Sabbath was given to Israel, and they kept it as their day of rest on the seventh day of the week.

As a student of the Bible, I find no biblical text authorizing a change of the day from the Seventh Day to the First Day. Nor did I find a reason to speak of the Sabbath as the day of worship. It was authorized as a day of rest. Worship was not restricted to the Sabbath but could be any day.

The Sabbath is explained in Scripture as a memorial of creation. The Sabbath, being a command of God, should not be lightly changed. We need God’s authorization to do that. And since it is based upon God’s rest at creation, how are we, being part of God’s creation, exempt from it as a memorial?

Having understood these things, I tried to keep the Sabbath as God had commanded and found that without a supporting community, it was fraught with many problems.

I found it impossible to keep all the regulations in regard to Sabbath observances. My conscience smote me many times because of my failure to keep the Sabbath properly. I became very miserable from guilt. I cried out to God and He answered me. “It is sufficient if one people, the people of Israel, remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.”

I concluded that Israel is God’s chosen people. God deals with them in a special way, even beyond what I understand. I believe Jesus, and trust God in this.

R. S. L. | Maryland

Practical Questions:

1. Did the Jews worship God on the Sabbath Day?
2. What scriptural evidence do we have that the special day for rest and worship was changed to the first day of the week?
3. Who is the “Israel of God” today?



AV Editor:

Thank you for writing your interesting letter on this important subject. Your letter has called me to more study on the subject. And the more I search the Scripture to see if these things are so, the stronger First Day advocate I become.

Question #1

The Jews did “worship God” on the Seventh Day in their synagogues. Luke 4:16-22 tells of Jesus going into the synagogue of Nazareth on the Sabbath Day as his custom was. In many Scriptures we find the Jews gathered together in the various towns to pray, to sing, to remember the covenant, and to discuss righteousness and holiness. “[Paul and his party] ... went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on” (Acts 13:14-15).

Furthermore, the Jews did worship by offering sacrifices in the temple on the Sabbath. Jesus said, “Have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?” (Matthew 5:12). Then Jesus goes on to say that if His accusers had known that God desires mercy and not sacrifice, they would not have condemned Him for doing good on the Sabbath, for He was greater than the temple and was Lord of the Sabbath as well.

Question #2.

One exciting find in my study was that Pentecost certainly came on the first day of the week. Pentecost to the Jews was the culmination of the week of harvest celebrations, a joyous time and a remembrance of the giving of the Law.

As I understand it, the Law ordained the observance of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15-21) fifty days after Passover. Since the Passover was always celebrated on the Sabbath or seventh day of the week, Pentecost came seven weeks and one day later on the first day of the week.

What better time to celebrate the giving of the Holy Spirit than on the First Day!

We also have the record that Jesus showed himself to the disciples on the resurrection day, the first day of the week, and also one week later, also on the First Day.

Acts 20:7 also presents a strong case for the disciples meeting on the First Day to break bread. It sure sounds like it was a regular practice for “disciples,” not Jews, to come together on the First Day and must be explained away if it did not mean that.

Some also believe the order to take up collections on the First Day suggests this was the time when Christians regularly gathered (I Corinthians 16:2).

And there is no other plausible explanation for John's statement in Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Holy Spirit on the Lord's Day." What a wonderful term used to celebrate Pentecost and the Resurrection and the day of rest from physical labor in honor of the Creator.

Question #3

The thought that the Sabbath was meant only for the Israelites and that it continues on today, undermines the teaching that the church today is now the "Israel of God" (Galatians 6:15). What a glorious way to think of the believers meeting on the first day of the week to fulfill all the requirements of the Seventh Day, testifying to Jesus' death and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit! The practice of meeting on the First Day is distinctly Christian and definitely sets it apart from Judaism.



Take It Or Leave It?

I read your last copy with interest, especially your article "Funny Money" (AV17, page 28).

One sentence in particular caught my attention, "Few even consider that deficit spending is an immoral act that has evil consequences." Amen.

I am sure you are aware the U.S. government mailed money to most citizens. In light of the above statement, could a case be made to refuse this money? Is it immoral to accept it or is it okay to take it?

I was raised in a setting where this would be refused, I think. Where I now live nothing is said whether we should take it or not.

How do you see this kind of stuff? Any thoughts?

T. H. | Georgia

AV Editor:

What government subsidies do to the receiver is more important than what the refusal of a government handout says to the government.

No matter how innocuous and legitimate a government handout may seem to the receiver, it still has an effect on him or her. "The hand that feeds you, leads you" is still a worthwhile saying.

If one solicits direct government payments (payments paid directly to the individual)—Medicare, government loans, grants, food stamps, agriculture payments, or any of the thousands of government programs available—taking any of them will influence one's attitude toward the kingdoms of this world. Honest toil, production efficiency, brotherhood dependence, and how and where couples have their babies—all become less important while complying with government regulations becomes very important to the individual or the group applying for and receiving these payments.

No matter how one looks at whether the payments to the individual are honest and fair and just, one must still remember, they come from the kingdom of this world and increase our dependence on government. And we must remember that the same government that nurtures us also pays to abort babies, kill millions through the military, propagates many lies, and pays for many other kinds of evil in the world.

We can expect evil from all the governments of the world because "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (I Peter 5:19). It is inescapable that taking government payments influences our minds and softens our hearts to the corruptions of the world.

Now brother, you asked, "What about this Economic Impact Payment with President Donald J. Trump's name on it?" I never expected that Doris and I would get such a check which we did not apply for or earn. But two days ago, we did receive a check in the mail for \$2400. My reasoning goes like this. The whole country, including us, is paying an "inflation tax" in the form of trillions of dollars of bogus money. That means this \$2400 is a tax refund and we plan to cash it.

Do you see what I mean? Taking direct government payments influences one's mind and softens one's heart.



Practical Changes (AV17, page 37).

I Peter 3:3-4a

World English Bible: "Let your beauty be not just the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on fine clothing; but in the hidden person of the heart" (I Peter 3:3-4a).

New King James Version: "Do not let your

adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart” (I Peter 3:3-4a).

King James Version: “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart” (I Peter 3:3-4a).

The first two translations allow me to have outward adorning of jewels, gold, and fine clothes as long as I also have an inward adorning. I follow the KJV that more clearly states that our adorning should not be anything on the outside.

Malachi 4:6 is another verse where we can compare two translations.

New International Version: “He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to the parents.”

King James Version: “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.”

By following the KJV the fathers are responsible for the hearts of their children; in the NIV the parents are equally responsible. In our home the father takes the lead in nurturing the children spiritually and not both parents equally.

The KJV also supports this understanding of Malachi 4:6 in Ephesians 6:4. “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

P. H. | Georgia



One Person

I am responding to the question, “Why do we need new English translations of the Bible from time to time?” (AV17, page 37).

Consider this KJV translation of Titus 2:13: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

In this translation we cannot be sure if the passage is speaking of both God the Father and of Jesus the Son or if it is speaking only of Jesus. In English usage it could be either way.

For instance, if in English we speak of “the President and Commander-in-chief,” both nouns refer to the same person. On the other hand, if we speak of “the President

and Vice-president,” the two nouns refer to different people.

However, in Greek this passage speaks of only one person (“*the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*” is the same person). The rule that determines this in the Greek is called the “Granville Sharp rule.” After much study of the Greek scriptures in the late 1700’s, Granville Sharp determined that when phrases of this sort meet certain grammatical conditions *the two nouns always refer to the same person*.

Now consider how these two translations make it clear that Titus 2:13 means “our God and Savior, Jesus Christ” is one person:

“We look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ will be revealed”

– Titus 2:13 (NLT)

“We wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

– Titus 2:13 (NIV)

This passage illustrates why we need new English translations of the scripture from time to time. One reason is so that we can make use of the scholarly work that went into discoveries like the Granville Sharp rule. We should not need a commentary or study-help to learn that Paul referred to Jesus as “our great God and Savior.” That phrase should be on the pages of our Bibles. This phrase is a particularly dramatic example, but the principle is general; some scholarly discoveries should be reflected in English translations.

M. S. | Tennessee





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 17, page 38)

by Truth Seeker



I would like to share a few thoughts to E. Van Gel in their impression of Latter-day Saints (AV17 page 35). It is true many religions have “good” people and “good” practices. Satan and his

ministers do not always present themselves as who they are. II Corinthians 11:14-15 says Satan is “transformed into an angel of light” and his ministers “can also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.” Just because a group has some good characteristics does not make them part of the true church of God. We need to examine all of their teachings before we can accept them as part of the true church.

Ultimately accepting Mormonism means accepting the Book of Mormon. If we accept the Book of Mormon then we must accept Joseph Smith as a prophet of God; for it was Joseph Smith who was said to have translated the book of Mormon from golden plates written in “Reformed Egyptian.” If Joseph Smith was not led by an angel in translating the golden plates then Mormonism is a false religion.

need to take heed to Jesus’ warning “Beware of false prophets” (Matthew 7:15). How will we know a false prophet compared to a true prophet? Jesus tells us, “Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

Anyone studying the life of Joseph Smith can readily see many inconsistencies and strange doctrines that do not line up with the rest of Scripture. A question to seriously ponder is if God did indeed have another book to give mankind why did He choose Joseph Smith above millions of other men? Wouldn’t God have used someone whose character was completely above reproach? Someone who wouldn’t die with a gun in hand shooting his attackers?

At first meeting we may feel common bonds with Mormons but the more we learn of their church hierarchy and their history the more clear it will become their fruits are not the fruits of the true bride of Christ. Mormons are a deceived people led astray by a false prophet.



Before we accept Joseph Smith as a prophet we

(Continued next page)

It Cannot Be the Bible (from AV 17, page 39)

by On Track



From the heart of Mormon country. Here are my answers to the questions you sent.

1. **What truths do Anabaptists hold that should appeal to a Mormon?** *The fact is that Mormons don't care much about doctrine and truth; their focus is the priesthood authority restored to earth through Joseph Smith. Mormons read and quote (rarely) their unique scriptures, but the heart of the Mormon experience is just that: experience.*

The prophet speaks to them on God's behalf. They likely have a testimony of a burning (sensation) in the bosom, confirming the Book of Mormon to be true.

There are those who begin to research the factual history of their religion and cannot be at peace; it does not track with the story taught by the church. At that point some give up on religion altogether. Others, following the Protestant "believe only" line, give up on works. Since Mormons emphasize both faith and works, it seems that the Anabaptist emphasis on a faith that works should appeal to them, if they can be reached before they become too cynical.

2. **Why do we believe that Revelation is the final revelation of God to man?** *When the first Anabaptists saw (as did Joseph Smith) that all churches were apostate, they went back to build again on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Joseph Smith, in his disillusionment with the existing churches, turned inward. There he found the restored gospel, along with the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. Early Anabaptists had personal experience with the devious results when the church followed ongoing revelations.*

3. **How is the Holy Spirit's work different than Joseph Smith's dealings?** *The Holy Spirit speaks of Christ and for Christ. Joseph Smith speaks of and for himself.*

4. **What are some Mormon teachings that deviate from the true gospel?** *Eternal marriage. Baptism for the dead. Patriotism. Exaltation of man, both present and future.*



God's Approval (from AV 16, page 37)

by Eager Beaver



In AV 16, p 37, an invitation is given to respond with examples how different translations help or hinder our understanding of Scripture. I offer the following example.

In II Timothy 2:15 KJV says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God." When I was younger I thought that meant, if I study Scripture I will have God's approval.

Both NKJV and NAS say, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God." NIV has, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved." These newer translations more nearly convey the urgency of the Greek, "to be eager." To "be diligent" involves all of life's endeavors, not just the "study" of Scripture.



The Corn Deal (from AV 17, page 41)

by Don Notell



We have received Issue 17 of the AV and have enjoyed reading it. In "The Practical Side: New Stories" the article "The Corn Deal" caught my attention. This story reminded me of a short story in Paul Hoover's book, *My Memories...Life at Five Points, Goshen, Indiana*. Paul was one of the ministers in the Yellow Creek Whistler Church during the years that my wife was growing up.

Paul writes that years before his time there was a highly respected minister who went out to his granary to sack up wheat to take to town, either to exchange it for flour or to have it made into livestock feed. The next day when he was ready to go to town, he went to the granary and found the sacks gone.

He didn't say anything to anyone, not even his wife, but sacked up some more wheat and took that to town. After some time had passed, he met a man from his area who said to him, "I heard you had some wheat stolen."

The preacher mildly said, "Yes, I did, but don't tell anyone. No one knows about it but you and me."

Thank you for the good reading and blessings to the work.



Ham Handed

by E. Z. Catch



When great-great-granddaddy lived in North Carolina, he woke up one night and found something amiss out at the smokehouse.

It was a dark night. When granddaddy approached the smokehouse, two men outside ran away. In the darkness granddaddy made out two rough hands holding a nice ham through the open door of the smokehouse.

Granddaddy silently took the ham and laid it alongside the pile of other smoked meat. After a short

and silent exertion when several more hams came out the door, a mirthful voice inside inquired, “Should we save a couple for the old man?”

For the first time, granddaddy spoke up, “I think we should leave ‘em all!” and he started passing the pile of meat back inside.

When all the meat was again in the smokehouse and the runaways rounded up, granddaddy told them, “Come to the house the next time you need food.” Then he sent the men away with a nice portion of meat for each one.



The Practical Side: Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

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

by Eyes O. Pened



My husband and I have continued to interact with the Mormon couple. They are very courteous to us, the kind of neighbors anyone would like to have. Their moral standards, conscientiousness, and politeness are exemplary. As our friendship develops, we are learning more about their beliefs.

They say they believe both the Old and New Testaments, but one must understand that the words we both use such as “grace” and “salvation” mean something entirely different to them than they do to us. There are many terms like this with unique definitions given to biblical words. At first glance, the differences might appear minute. But they are not. They are drastic, even deadly.

Some of the most jarring and alarming beliefs we have encountered are:

- Men can become gods just like God. And God the Father used to be a human just like we are now.
- One must earn his way to heaven. Mormonism is a religion of works.
- The Book of Mormon supersedes the Bible. The Bible cannot be fully trusted because undefined portions of it were not accurately preserved from the original.

Mormons have been trained to put up a barrier and walk away if they feel any hint of contention. We find this to be a common practice if someone attacks their religion.

We want to continue to present Bible truths to our Mormon friends in a loving and non-contentious way. Then it is up to the Holy Spirit to move in their hearts and and draw them to God and Jesus himself.

We want to follow the practice taught in II Timothy 2:24-25: “**The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth**” (ESV).



The Corn Deal *(from AV 17, page 41)*

by U. Ken Witness



Here is what the farmer told the policeman, “I want to see him in church for the next four Sundays.”

We do not know if the thief ever attended the church or not.

We do know that his friend Jimmy remembered the story for more than twenty years.

The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists

Like A Mustard Seed

by Dye Rected



By going to car auctions, I help people locate used cars, vans, or trucks that meet their needs.

On one occasion, a family with eight children needed a van. I looked over the available vans at an upcoming auction and found a 15 passenger Dodge Maxivan I thought might fit the family's needs. I called the father and described the van to him and asked if he would be interested.

The father then told me the family had prayed for me that morning. Furthermore, the children had prayed: "Dear Lord, help the car man find a van for us at the auction today. And I pray, that no one else will bid on the van; help the car man get the van for us." The father and I then talked about the van. He agreed to trust my judgment as to how much I should pay for the van at the auction, and what would be a fair price for it.

When the van came on the auction block, no one bid. The auctioneer kept coming down in his crying, trying to get an opening bid. When he finally got well below what I knew the van was worth, I placed my bid. Since there were no other bids, the auctioneer knocked it off to me for discussion.

The owners were not ready to let the van go for my low-ball bid. At the discussion, I found out the owners had been trying to sell the van for some time, so when I raised my bid by \$400 the seller agreed to let us have the van.

I still marvel that the prayers of children could be so definitely answered.



Midwife in the Crosshairs

a report from Associated Press (A.P.)



Columbia, Missouri; December 13, 2019. A Cole County Circuit Judge Jon Beetem has given a ruling today on whether or not a Missouri

midwife and her clinic can continue delivering the babies of its mostly Mennonite and Amish patrons.

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, argued that **Susan Wilson and her clinic, A Mother's Heart**, was operating a birthing center without a proper state license, as reported in *The Columbia Missourian*. The case began 2 1/2 years ago, although the center near Versailles was allowed to operate while the case was being decided.

"For the community, this case decides if people have the option to deliver a baby where they want and can continue to get the services they want," said **Wilson's lawyer, Gaylin Carver**. Wilson had said that many of the Mennonite and Amish patients she serves don't want to give birth in a hospital.

By statute, birthing centers are considered a type of "ambulatory surgical center." Those are defined as any establishment operated primarily for the purpose of performing surgical procedures or childbirths. Wilson argued that more than half of the services the clinic provides do not meet the definition of an *ambulatory surgical center*, [and therefore the clinic does not come under its regulations].

Practical Questions:

1. What are possible reasons Missouri state officials wanted to force Susan Wilson to obtain the license or shut down the clinic?
2. What are likely reasons Susan Wilson's mothers wanted her to keep the clinic open and were satisfied with her services?
3. Was anyone compelled to go to the clinic if they did not think it should be allowed to operate?
4. Did the state pay for any of the births at the clinic?
5. Should the clinic have complied with the state statutes as interpreted by the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services?



Amish Under Fire

a report from United Press International (U.P.I.)



December 24, 2019 (UPI)
— Amish residents in Michigan are suing the Lenawee County Health Department for violating their religious liberty rights by seeking to have their homes

demolished if they don't modernize water and sewage systems.

County Administrator Martin Marshall said officials are protecting public health by ensuring property owners comply with the environmental health code, which has requirements on how human waste can be disposed.

The residents counter that they're not harming anyone with their traditional way of living.

[These] Amish do not use electricity, hydraulic power or running water because of religious observances that reject modern technology in favor of simple living. Instead, the families hand-pump water and use outhouses.

In separate suits filed last month in the 39th Circuit Court, the county said it has condemned structures at 14 Amish properties as unfit for human habitation because sewage disposal and water supply systems are inadequate. The suits say unsanitary conditions are injuring neighboring properties. In addition, "injury to persons, particularly children, is highly probable and imminent unless this nuisance is immediately abated by removal of the buildings."

The county is asking for court orders requiring the property owners to either correct violations of the health code or demolish the buildings.

Last week, attorneys with the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan (ACLU) and Dayton, Ohio-based law firm Wright & Schulte countersued Lenawee County on behalf of the families, on referral from the Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan.

The countersuits say the health department's actions violate constitutional guarantees of the right to religion and cite violations of provisions in the federal Fair Housing Act.

"The Constitution allows everyone to practice religion as they see fit as long as they're not harming anyone." **Phil Mayor, senior staff attorney of the**

ACLU of Michigan, said. "If the county gets its way, it'll be the expulsion of an entire religious community within its borders."

Mayor also said he's not aware of any health problems caused by sewage disposal. The counterclaims say the method used to provide water to homes and dispose of black and gray wastewater does not present a health or safety threat.

The county said in a statement Monday that it is willing to work with property owners and emphasized that it has never demolished a home for non-compliance with the health code. Furthermore, the county said that there are ways to comply with the code without installing electricity."

"There are safe options for outhouses that have been presented to the families. The county itself has implemented these safe facilities in county parks."

The health department first received complaints in 2015 from county residents about the unsanitary disposal of sewage at Medina Township properties. The county said it has educated property owners on health code requirements and discussed options for compliance.

None of the property owners has agreed to a compromise, county officials said, and additional homes have been constructed in the area in the past four years.

"We've let those property owners know that they have options available to them that do not impact their beliefs," Marshall said. "Even now we're willing to work with them to meet the objectives of the environmental health code."

Practical Questions:

1. What possible motivation did county officials have to enforce the sewage and water handling code in Lenawee County?
2. What possible factors kept the Amish from complying with the regulations?
3. Can ACLU lawyers file a lawsuit on behalf of the Amish without the Amish being a part of the suit?





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.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the problems associated with a mass meeting in times like these, KFW has been canceled for 2020. However, the Lord willing, the same program will be planned for 2021.

Kingdom Fellowship Weekend

Date: ~~August 21-23, 2020~~ **SOMETIME IN 2021**

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

Theme: “Life More Abundantly”

“...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” **John 10:10**

Prepare now: Please prepare your heart by memorizing Romans 8 in the KJV or NKJV—yes, the whole chapter! All those who memorize this chapter will be given an opportunity to recite it together at the Saturday evening service.



The messages are planned as follows:

Friday evening:

- “Mystery of Life” by Philip Hess, State College, Pennsylvania
- “Resurrection Life” by Donny Brechbill, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

Saturday :

- “Family Life” by Mark Yoder, Chachagua, Costa Rica
- “Adorned with the Beauty of Life” (ladies’ topic) by Mary Ann Brechbill, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania
- “A Fruitful Life” (young men’s topic) by Mark Yoder, Chachagua, Costa Rica

- “Spreading Life in a Culture of Death” (panel discussion)
- “Helping the Homeless” – by Patrick Matthews
- “Loving the Fatherless” – by Mark Yoder
- “Exposing Unethical Vaccinations” – to be announced
- “Fighting Addictions” – by Frank Reed

Sunday :

- “Structure and Life” by Dale Heisey, Marsella, Costa Rica
- “Beatitudes of Life” by Finny Kuruvilla, Medford, Massachusetts



Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report *April thru June 2019*

1 April 2020 Beginning Balance	\$2,203.99
Income	
Donations	\$1,970.50
Local Support*	\$7,500.00
Total Income	\$11,674.49
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$608.00
Postage	\$2,989.99
Printing	\$5,059.00
Staff Expenses	\$1,242.00
Total Expense	\$9,898.99
30 June 2020 Ending Balance	\$1,775.50

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 #16 - ACTUAL NUMBERS
Print Qty: 4,850 Operating Cost: \$10,236.26 Cost Per Copy: \$2.18/ea.
ISSUE #17 - ACTUAL NUMBERS
Print Qty: 4,850 Operating Cost: \$9,898.99 Cost Per Copy: \$2.04 /ea.

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



Partners in the Work

From the beginning, *Anabaptist Voice* has chosen not to base our publication on a subscription basis, but to make it free to all who wish to receive it. This means we do not need to keep up with when subscriptions come due and send out notices; all we need to keep up with is a mailing list.

The downside of this is that *Anabaptist Voice* has no fixed income. Occasionally larger donations have come in and some smaller contributions do arrive, but *Anabaptist Voice* has been heavily dependent on local support. Our vision would be that we could share the financial load with more supporters.

One of the results of not being a registered entity—501c(3) organization—is that larger contributors may not receive a tax deduction on their income tax. This difficulty can be overcome if contributions to *Anabaptist Voice* come through a church offering. According to my Mennonite accountant, here is the way this would work.

“With respect to individuals that donate money to their church, they should receive a tax deductible donation receipt, including monies that are given for the purpose of supporting *Anabaptist Voice*. The church has the right to support organizations such as *Anabaptist Voice*, under the advancement of religion clause.”

Anabaptist Voice would like to have churches actively partner with us in this work. If a number of churches would take up an occasional freewill offering it would give all contributors in the congregation the opportunity to receive a tax deduction on their tax returns as well as spread out the AV financial load among more uplifted arms.

Peace,

J. G. L. | *Georgia*

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“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them: for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you, nor forsake you!”

- Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV)



Field of Lavender in Provence, France