

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

"MY BROTHER AND I" - RYAN HORST

"PREACHING CHRIST IN THE SYNAGOGUES" - TIM MYERS

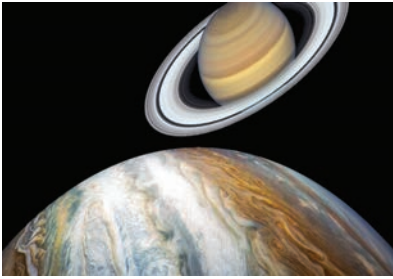
"THE RIGHT USE OF THE BANN" - ELI E. GINGERICH

"MORE THAN NONRESISTANCE" - JAMES G. LANDIS

"TAKING WING UPWARD" - JAY & KATIE JOHNSON



Letter from the Editor



Thirty minutes after sunset on the shortest day of 2020, Doris and I watched the alignment of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. To the naked eye they appeared as one bright object, but through the binoculars we could see two separate planets. What a marvel that these planets traverse vast distances with such precision that mankind can predict exactly when and where they will occur! Certainly our great God could shine a star over a little house in Bethlehem at just the right time.

Since the completion of AV19 in September, Doris and I have traveled in the following nine states: Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, New Mexico, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, South Carolina, West Virginia and crossed the border into Old Mexico. We traveled by plane and car, mostly during daylight hours, and returned home unscathed. When cars and trucks whiz past you at 70 miles per hour and faster, accidents are only milliseconds away. We thank our God for safety on the journeys.

During our travels to New Mexico, Tennessee, Ohio, and our stay at home base, we saw and connected with all seven of our children, 36 of 43 grandchildren, and 14 of 18 great-grandchildren.

In 2020, the whole earth has been shaken by Herodian fear in the “plandemic.” Today many people, like Herod and all Jerusalem with him, are greatly troubled by the awareness of another King. Others, like the wise men, bow before Him and rejoice in His presence.

Once again, Anabaptist Voice brings you good news. Brotherhood can prevail when disagreements are submitted to the rule of Christ. Loving our enemies can overcome evil with good. The repentant sinner can be restored to full fellowship. God will lead those ready to follow Him. A holy people can be a light in a dark and sinful world. Proven treatments for COVID-19 do exist.

We are working hard to complete Issue 20 of Anabaptist Voice in the year of our Lord, 2020 A.D. If the Lord tarries and things continue sorta like they are, we will publish Issue 21 of Anabaptist Voice in the year of our Lord, 2021 A.D.

*Peace,
James G. Landis*


Send all responses, articles, and questions to:










AV Editor
5282 Highway 56 South
Waynesboro, GA 30830
editor@anabaptistvoice.com
www.anabaptistvoice.com

Send donations and/or subscription info to:

AV Production Team
243 Partridge Road
Olar, SC 29843
subscriptions@anabaptistvoice.com
www.anabaptistvoice.com

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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

Registered Citizens

God ordained government before he created man. That government was challenged by Lucifer. Therefore, he was cast to the earth and is now god of this world.

God's government is not socialist, communist, a republic, or even a democracy. It is a kingdom and the king makes the laws. There is no voting, negotiations or compromises.

God's government is called the Kingdom of God. The country is called the Kingdom of Heaven. The borders are secure. All are welcome to enter, but they must submit to the king. The king is Jesus Christ. The conditions are unconditional surrender. No exceptions.

Those who enter are then registered as citizens in the Lamb's Book of Life. There is suffering and hardship in this life for the heavenly citizen, but there are blessed rewards in the future. Those who choose to leave the kingdom can do so, but their names are removed from the book. Those who rebel are cast out to rejoin the dominion of Lucifer.

When the King visited earth, he taught His followers to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." It will happen. God's will is being done in heaven now and His desires will be done on earth.

The King is coming back to earth and every knee will bow. It is better to bow before Him now and accept His grace, than to be part of the rebellion. Worship and obey the Priest of priests, the Lord of lords, and the King of kings.

B.H. | *Pennsylvania*



Interesting Reading

Just recently several copies of *Anabaptist Voice* came into our hands and we find it interesting reading indeed. Could you be so kind as to put my son and I on your mailing list? We would appreciate it very much!

Hopefully, in the future we will be able to send donations.

A. B. S. | *Pennsylvania*

God Never Does Evil

I am writing in response to the letter of E.S. in Oklahoma (AV19, page 6). In this letter he states that "He (God) never does anything evil and He never tempts people to do evil."

If this is true, then I ask, what about the petition in the Lord's Prayer where we ask him to "lead us not into temptation"? Why would we request God would not lead us into temptation if God does not sometimes do that?

The prophet Isaiah states, "I (God) make peace and create evil" (**Isaiah 45:7**).

The prophet Amos states, "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?" (**Amos 3:6**).

Lamentations 3:38 asks, "Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?"

So how do you reconcile these seeming contradictions?

I truly wish the Lord were a source of good only, and agree with E.S. that the big question is why did God put the snake in the garden in the first place!

K.B. | *New York*



Not Consistent

I am enjoying reading, "Government Job Interviews"(AV19). I thought it was interesting that we can overlook our own inconsistencies and practices. On page 32, one of the reasons for a job being unsuitable for a Christian is, "Working on Sunday, except on jobs related to the health and safety of mankind." How many farm jobs require Sunday work?

When we were dairy farming, I thought we should try to only milk one time on Sundays, but we were afraid that wouldn't work and I have never heard of any dairy farmer who tried that. Has any farmer tried only milking one time on Sundays?

Judy Marg's story blessed me.

C. B. | *Virginia*

No Free Handouts

I was disappointed to read in AV19 that you did cash the stimulus check. You say that you see a difference between a tax refund and a government handout. My question is why do you call this a tax refund?

I believe that no one has a problem with receiving a refund if they paid in an estimated amount of tax that was more than they owed. They paid too much money and then got some back. That is a true refund. If a taxpayer receives a “refund” of money that they never paid in, then that is a government hand-out and not a refund.

An accountant I know spoke with some IRS agents on a conference call earlier this year. He said they were expecting the Anabaptist community to return the stimulus, because they knew the Anabaptist community did not wish to receive the government handout. When the government holds something out to us, and we reach out to take it, they grab our hand. There are no free handouts. They all come with hidden strings attached.

We must depend on God and help each other. Our families and the church can take far better care of needy members than the government does of its needy citizens, because that is God’s plan. If we let the government take care of us, instead of family and church, eventually the family and church no longer will.

L. R. T. | *Colorado*



A Simple and Humble Life

I’d like to write a note of appreciation to the writers/editors/publishers and whoever else is involved in putting together such an encouraging and uplifting magazine as *Anabaptist Voice*.

I have had the privilege of reading a few of your magazines and would greatly appreciate it if you would put me on your mailing list. My family and I also believe that living a simple and humble lifestyle is a very important aspect of being a Christian.

Enclosed is a check to help with buying a few stamps.

May the Lord bless you as you glorify His worthy name with the upbuilding articles in AV.

S. E. | *Saskatchewan*



Book Wanted

We have been receiving issues of *Anabaptist Voice* for several years now, which I appreciate very much. I feel the content is scriptural and interesting reading.

In AV19, page 19, there was an article by Chester Weaver, “Lessons from *Lost Fatherland*.” Where would I be able to obtain that book? I receive lots of book catalogs and haven’t found any that list that particular book for sale. I do not have internet.

H. W. B. | *Kansas*

Lost Fatherland can be purchased at Barnes and Noble for about \$25.00. Amazon may have used copies for sale.



The End of the Law

The writer of “Keeping the Torah” (AV19, page 7) asked the question, “Where do we get the idea that the Law of Moses is abolished?” Let us turn to Romans 10:4, “**For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God**” (NLT).

If the Law of Moses has ended, then it is abolished. Also read Galatians 4:22-31. This passage compares living by the law of Mount Sinai to the Jerusalem that is on the earth while the freedom of living above the Law of Moses as children of the promise is like living in the Jerusalem that is above.

There is no slippery slope here. While the Law of Moses was abolished, the principles of the law were not. As Jesus said, “**Loving God with all your heart, soul, and might and loving your neighbor as yourself fulfills the whole law and the prophets.**”

D.L.H. | *Ohio*



A Needed Voice

Greetings! Grace and peace be with you all. I’m Hutterite and I’d like to share a ruby that I found in one of our sermons. Since our sermons have been written by our ancestors, I did not think it necessary to give you the name of the person who presented the sermon.

I’m really enjoying the magazine. I can definitely see God’s hand in it all. It is a voice that we need to hear more often and this is a great platform for it!

God bless you.

J. H. | *Saskatchewan*

Expository Preaching

by Ivan N. Weaver

Expository preaching is a unique, God-ordained method to confront man with all the truth of the Word of God and bring him face to face with the personal requirements of God (I Corinthians 1:17-21).

The goal of expository preaching is not only to impart knowledge, but also to move the will of man toward God. In addition, expository preaching exposes God's will for man as found in a given passage.

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

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

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

Expository preaching is opening up a particular passage of Scripture to public view and setting forth its intended meaning. This is in contrast to preaching that takes a particular subject and develops that subject through various selections in the Scripture. Both types of sermons can be useful, but expository preaching has the following blessings attached to it:

- It helps the preacher stay close to the revealed truth.
- It opens one up to Holy Spirit inspiration and creativity.
- It opens up the Word to the congregation.

• It outlasts the sermon. The congregation hears God speaking rather than just the preacher.

• It gives the preacher integrity because he preaches God's message without picking on individuals in the congregation.

• It results in a biblically literate congregation.

• It keeps the Bible central in the worship service.

In conclusion, “thus saith the Lord” is where all preaching gets its authority. It is true with expository preaching as well. When the Word is communicated in faith, the preacher is speaking with authority transferred from God.

Excerpts from:

- *Expository Preaching*

- “Preach the Word” (AV12, page 30)



Book review:
Expository Preaching
by Ivan N. Weaver

This 67-page book defines expository preaching as well as tells some of the many virtues of this kind of preaching. Brother Ivan also warns of pitfalls that apply to all preaching.

In this book Brother Ivan shares some of what he has learned from 40 years of experience preaching the Word in the USA, Canada, Grenada, Haiti, and Ireland. He clearly lays out the nuts and bolts

of how to develop and preach an expository message.

A most excellent contribution to any preacher's study are 82+ sermon outlines that can be used without any permission or acknowledgement. Just remember, any sermon should take its place in the heart of the preacher under the unction of the Holy Spirit before he presents it to the congregation.

To order book:

Ivan Weaver <weaverivan1947@yahoo.com>

Current book cost: \$7.00 plus shipping.

If you have no email address, send your mailing address and a check for \$15.00 to Anabaptist Voice, and we will forward your request to Brother Ivan.

My Brother and I

by Ryan Horst

Love Is Essential

Love for my brother is essential if I am traveling to glory with him. The book of I John, gentle yet poignant, is very decisive on the matter. I John 4:20 says, “**He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?**” Love for our brother, the kind that seeks his ultimate spiritual best, is the heartbeat that pumps life into the church, the body of Christ. True godly love is never self-seeking. Rather, it consistently takes upon itself the role of a servant and seeks the good of another.

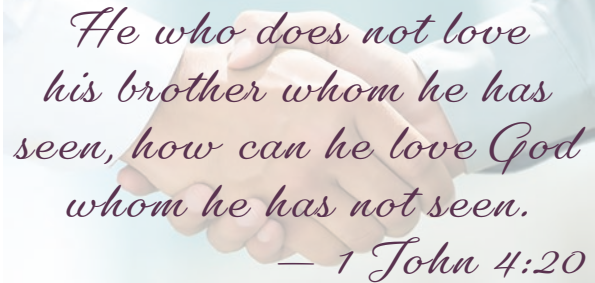
This principle cannot be emphasized enough. Brotherhood is dependent upon men and women who are willing to set aside personal preference and seek the spiritual good of their brothers and sisters. The spirit of contention does not enter our church unless the **doorway of pride** has been opened to make a way for it to pass. It must also be true that the Holy Spirit cannot enter and bring unity unless the **doorway of humility** is flung wide open.

Not Matters of Right and Wrong

How far should I take this business of loving and respecting my brother? Should I adopt the convictions that my brother holds even if they feel excessive and much higher than my own? Should he not conform to mine? In Romans 14, the apostle Paul deals extensively with this very question. First of all, we must be clear on the fact that we are not discussing issues of right and wrong; the issues we refer to are areas of personal opinion, areas of personal conviction, and areas of personal application of biblical principles. This is why a study of Romans 14 is so conducive to the subject of brotherhood and the practical issues of how we relate to one another in the church.

Not Everyone Is at the Same Place

Paul begins by reminding believers that there will be differences in conviction! This is critical to understand. Not everyone is at the same place in their experience with the Lord. This does not mean that we just accept everyone just as they are, but neither do we deny them because they don’t believe exactly as we do. As in nearly every area of life, there are two ditches (one on either side) and a place of safety and balance in the middle.



*He who does not love
his brother whom he has
seen, how can he love God
whom he has not seen.
— 1 John 4:20*

Two Mindsets

There are two ditches we need to avoid in this matter. In Romans 14:3, Paul introduces two possible mindsets that could take hold of a person. The first, is the mindset of **despising your brother** for his restrictive views. When we feel free in our conscience to live a certain way, it becomes very easy to despise those who do not feel the same way. We view them as narrow-minded, restrictive, stuffy, old-fashioned, and ultimately a threat to our own freedom we have in Christ.

The second, is the mindset of judging the person who has “lower” standards than we do. Even though the brother is not breaking a clear command of Scripture, we are tempted to **judge him as unfaithful** because his standards are less than what we are comfortable with. But the rebuke of Scripture is sharp for this view as well. “**Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand**” (Romans 14:4).

Two Concepts

A proper balance on this matter is found in two powerful concepts that Paul shares in Romans 14. The first is that **none of us is living for himself**. Rather, whether we live or die, it is to the LORD. We are not our own! We have been bought with a price. Therefore, we choose to live our lives in such a way that we are always bringing glory to our God. This is love for God.

The second concept should also sound familiar. It is to **walk charitably with our brother**. “**If your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died**” (Romans 14:15). This verse makes it clear that if there is something we are doing that we have no convictions against, yet we are knowingly grieving our brother because of genuine convictions that he holds, we are not walking charitably

towards him. “But,” you may argue, “if the item in question is such a small thing, why does it have to be a big deal to my brother?” The answer is simple: If you are right about the fact that it is a small thing compared to the spiritual health of your brother, why hang on to it? Why not give it up?

Our reasoning can be so backwards. We say, “The Kingdom of God is not in meat or drink, so therefore I can eat what I want and drink what I want, and it should not matter to my brother.” But listen to what the Scripture is saying. The Kingdom of God is not found in food or drink; therefore, it should be a small thing to make some sacrifices in this area out of love for a brother.

The Perspective of Judgment

To gain perspective as to just how far this kind of love will go, let us look at a parallel passage. In I Corinthians 8, Paul is dealing with the subject of brotherhood relationships. Again, the pressing topic is meat offered to idols. The principles we see in this passage can be applied to many modern-day issues.

Paul begins the chapter by acknowledging the argument that a false god has no power to change the meat itself, but notice the transition in verse seven triggered by the word *howbeit*. From this point on, the conversation is pivoted from focusing on “personal liberties” to something of far greater significance – the conscience of another brother.

In I Corinthians 8 the message is clear: our personal liberty of conscience in any area dare not be exercised at the risk of our brother’s downfall. **“Beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak” (I Corinthians 8:9).**

I Corinthians 8:12 also lends weight to this caution—causing a brother’s downfall—by informing believers that when we wound a weak conscience, we sin against Christ. **“When you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.”**

Committed to Each Other

Perhaps what strikes me the most about this passage in I Corinthians 8 is Paul’s personal testimony on the matter. He concludes this way: **“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (I Corinthians 8:13).**

Oh, that our churches were full of men and women who would go to that kind of effort to ensure that they are not being a stumbling block!

Honoring One Another on the Mission Field

We understand this concept well on the mission field. When ministering to the people of the Middle East, we will willingly adopt their modest, yet rather different, style of dress out of a burning desire to reach them with the gospel. In India we will avoid eating with our left hand. In Thailand, we will be careful not to point at anything or move anything with our feet; such a gesture is considered extremely rude. We will go to great lengths to ensure that we fit into the culture as much as possible, in order that we may reach the people we are working with. We will even do things that are rather uncomfortable for us (as long as they are not wrong) in order to put ourselves in a position to impact those we seek to reach.

Honoring Our Brother at Home

Yet how often, in our own brotherhood, do we abandon this approach and simply choose to do what we want to do? If we are willing to go to great lengths to reach the lost in a foreign country, should we not extend the same kind of love and concern for the convictions of a brother at home? In short, are you willing to view our everyday choices, big or small, through the biblical lens of love for our brother?

For instance: A friend once related to me the clear understanding they had in their home that when they attended a certain family gathering where most in attendance were a part of a more conservative church setting, there would be a special effort made to wear clothing that would not be offensive. I was so blessed by that attitude!

It is not wrong or hypocritical to do something that is different than what you would choose for yourself. It is love.

R. H. | Ontario, Canada

Response Requested:

How do you reconcile the seeming contradiction between Paul’s *“concerning the eating of things offered to idols”* (I Corinthians 8:4) and the command *“to abstain from things polluted by idols”* (Acts 15:20)?

AV Editor:

Please send us stories of differences that were reconciled through brotherly love. Or give examples of matters where brotherly agreement is not necessary. We would like stories to use in “The Practical Side” AV21.



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“Peer pressure is not fertile ground for developing good personal convictions. The Word of God is more reliable.”

– Dave Kurtz at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“Take charge of your attitude. Do not let anyone else decide it.”

– Joe Mullet at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“It is not a shame to wait on God’s timing.”

– Ray Stutzman at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“The source of praise is usually a kind heart.”

– Raymond Brunk, Original Proverbs for Life, VA



“It takes the same amount of energy to row your boat in a circle as it does to go towards the harbor. But one exercise requires faith.”

– Bill Miller at Son Valley Christian Fellowship, AZ



“Whether we want to or not, we are all taking a step closer to eternity every day.”

– Jonathan Hofer at Hodgeville Colony, SK



“If there is no practical outworking of a principle of Scripture, the principle will soon be lost.”

– John Nolt at Cimarron Christian Fellowship, OK



“We can pick up hands and strengthen feeble knees by: praying, listening, being observant, showing genuine interest.”

– Eugene Miller, Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“You can run and you can hide, but you cannot escape. If Jonah could not escape from God, why would anyone think that he/she can escape from God?”

– Benjamin Haldeman at Upton Church of the Brethren, PA



“Loving discipline unlocks the heart.”

– Thad Thayer at Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, OK

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.

Notice: WE NEED MORE RUBIES AND DIAMONDS.

The Right Use of the Bann

by Eli E. Gingerich

The following article is taken from a booklet compiled by the late Eli E. Gingerich and translated from German by Daniel L. Hershberger, *A Diligent Search in the Old Order Amish Church from 1922-1974*. This selection from the larger work involved the agreed upon teachings of six ministers and two deacons after a concerted effort to work through the difficulties of a church split.

In this work, the translator has chosen to use his own rendering of the Scriptures based on the *Luther Bible* and *Today's English Version* (renamed *Good News Translation* – GNT).

Two Different Banns

We read about two different banns in the New Testament. The first one is one that Christ and His apostles commanded and taught. The other one was a commandment of the elders that the Pharisees strongly enforced.

The Bann Jesus and the Apostles Taught

The bann that Jesus and His apostles teach about is a bann of love, not only to keep the church pure, but also to bring the sinner to repentance, so he can be brought back into the church as a fruitful member.

The Source of Authority for Use of the Bann

Jesus gave his apostles the key to the Kingdom of Heaven. The key to the Kingdom of Heaven is the pure Word of God through the gospel of Christ. This is the gospel where we can attain forgiveness of sin through true repentance, godly sorrow, and renewal of life that results in obedience to the will of our Lord.

Those who refuse to repent of their sin, but continue on in their evil ways, shall be taught the full gospel so they know the road to heaven is locked shut unless they repent and live in newness of life. And this is not so because the church leaders or the church are saying it, but much more because the Word of God says so.

When Peter declared, “You are the Christ the Son of the living God.” ... Jesus answered, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:16, 18). Verse 18 is saying Christ is the rock and foundation of the church. It was on Peter’s declaration of this “Rock” that the church is anchored.

Jesus further said to Peter, “I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever

you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven” (Matthew 16:19). We understand this to say that what is to be bound or loosed on earth must first be bound or loosed in heaven. The Word of God is the power that we need to use to bind or loose.

We bishops and ministers of ourselves have no power and authority, but much more a sacred calling which we will have to answer for. The Word of God furnishes the authority for leaders to use the bann, along with the council of the church.

Sins unto Death

If a person falls into sins of death like adultery, fornication, drunkenness, and so on (I John 5:16), the Word of God judges him clearly. “What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions” (Galatians 5:19). When these sins of death come to light and the offender will not repent, it is a sin unto death and worthy of the bann.



A Brother Sin

If it is a brother sin (or misunderstandings due to personal opinion), then Jesus says, “Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican” (Matthew 18:15-17).

In II Thessalonians we read, “Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which he received of us” (II Thessalonians 3:6). “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (II Thessalonians 3:14-15).

*Beware of false prophets,
which come to you in sheep's
clothing but inwardly they are
ravening wolves.*

On the same theme we have this command, “A man that is a heretic, (that causes divisions) after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted (corrupt), and sinneth, being condemned of himself” (Titus 3:10). We understand a subverted (corrupt) person to be one who has gone astray in his faith, teaching, and life, and has rejected the word and gospel of Christ. In Matthew 7:15-16, Jesus says, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

We can see that we have many scriptures that teach us that it is our duty to keep the church of God pure. But we must be very careful that we do it out of pure Christian love for the soul of the sinner as well as for the church. This needs to be done without partiality.

In Matthew 18:17, Jesus says, “If he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” Note that he doesn’t say, “If he doesn’t hear part of the church.” In I Corinthians 5:4-5, Paul

writes, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together as a church, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus.” The whole church is to be involved in this.

In II Thessalonians 3:6 (quoted above), we find this same thought; it is not saying that one person should withdraw himself from the brotherhood. This verse states that we as a church, not just a few people within the church, by the authority of the Word of God and the consent of the whole church, shall put a member in the bann. Then we ought not treat him as an enemy, but much more admonish him as a (beloved) brother, so that he may become convicted and ashamed and therefore repent.

Thus one object of the bann clearly remains to bring an unrepentant sinner to repentance so his spirit may be saved on the day of our Lord Jesus (II Thessalonians 3:14-15, quoted above).

Conditions Before the Bann Is Used

We can see that for sin against a brother, a person should be admonished at least three times before he is put in the bann. When a brother is unsound in his faith and doctrine, he needs to be admonished twice. If one is caught in a sin unto death, he needs to be admonished only once, so that he fully understands the seriousness of his sin and the reason for the bann. The full meaning of the word *admonish* above, we feel, is “admonished pleadingly.”

Nowhere in the Holy Scriptures can we find that we should put people in the bann without using the Word of God as the key of heaven and without the unified voice of the church. Neither can we find in Scripture that we should put people in the bann by groups because they do not agree with us or do not do what we say. Such a bann and avoidance, according to the scriptures, is totally against the teaching of the gospel, and should never be considered or practiced in a true church of God.

When the works of darkness become apparent and the church is fully aware of it, then a scriptural bann has its place in the church. But we always need to be very careful that it is done with God’s Word in a spirit of love, meekness, and patience. It dare never be in a spirit of revenge or personal satisfaction. We want to remember the supreme love God had for us that He sent his only Son to die on the cross for the remission of our sins. He loved us while we were yet sinners. We want to have sympathy for each other, and remember the seriousness of what Jesus taught in Matthew 18:23-26 on the ten



thousand talent debt. Also we need to remember how much we needed to be forgiven and what will happen if we do not forgive others. Let us not forget what we pray in the Lord's Prayer, where we ask God to forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors.

The Pharisee Bann Jesus and the Apostles Warned Against

Apparently, the bann by the Pharisees sent Nicodemus to Jesus at night out of fear of the Jews (John 3:1-2).

Another example of this unholy bann can be found in the parents of the son who had been born blind and Jesus healed him. The parents feared to admit the healing to the Jews, because the Jews had agreed that anyone who confesses Jesus will be put in the bann (John 9:22).

This Pharisee bann, without doubt, was not a bann of love to help a sinner but much more a bann of hatred and revenge—a way of exercising power and getting rid of somebody. In John 12:42-43 we read, “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also, many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

It appears that the Pharisees over the years adopted some of their own commandments which were outside of the scriptural law. Yet they enforced them as scriptural law even though those things benefitted nobody and were not commanded.

They rebuked Jesus when His apostles ate without washing hands. Jesus told them, “It is not that which goeth into the mouth that defiles a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defiles a man” (Matthew 15:11).

The Pharisees also taught that a man need not honor his father and mother. Therefore they ignored the

commandment of God and enforced their own commandment (Matthew 15 and Mark 7).

Jesus reminded the Pharisees of what Isaiah wrote: “Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men” (Matthew 15:8-9). In other words, the religion of the Pharisees was nothing but human rules and traditions which they had simply memorized. We should be careful to avoid any semblance of a similar bann in our churches.

God Will Judge Us if We Misuse the Bann

Ephesians 5:11 teaches us not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead we ought to rebuke them (Ephesians 5:11). This we want to do, and if there is no repentance it will come to the bann.

But when we put people in the bann and avoid them for spiritual weaknesses and petty complaints, or where the bann is unjust, because we want to force them to believe what we believe or do what we say, we will not be blameless. If these people are unscripturally in the bann and if we observe it, we are bringing terrible judgment upon ourselves. If a bishop judges something that is not clearly written in God's Word without asking the church, he will be judged for it. If he has the unified voice of the church in the matter, the whole church is guilty. “Judge not, that ye be not judged: and with what measure ye mete (with what rules you make for others), it shall be measured to you again” (Matthew 7:1-2).

A Reminder

We did not write these things to tell you something new, but much more to remind you with scriptures what you probably already know, but maybe have temporarily forgotten.

Eli E. Gingerich | Indiana

Let all things be done decently and in order.
—1 Corinthians 14:40

Restoring the Fallen Brother

by Menno Knight

A great divide separated the Catholic and Protestant churches from the Anabaptists of the 1500s: how should the unity of the church be maintained? The Catholics and Protestants attempted to use physical force to bring everyone into subservience to the church authorities while the Anabaptists followed another path.

A cornerstone of early Anabaptism was voluntary church membership. In contrast to state churches (Catholic or Protestant) where all residents of a certain region became part of the church by virtue of birth and infant baptism, the Anabaptists held that only those who voluntarily chose to follow Christ were worthy of being part of His church. Only those who gave evidence of their faith by repentance and amendment of life were considered worthy candidates for baptism and integration into their brotherhoods. Franklin Littell describes the requirements as follows:

According to the Anabaptists, such commitment begins in a thoroughgoing repentance; repentance was the key word in the oldest baptismal liturgies. The new member must be deeply aware that he has forsworn the world, sin, and the devil, and in whole heart and soul and body set out to live for God and His church.¹

Since it was by repentance and a life of holiness that a person could become part of the brotherhood, it follows that living an unholy life would cause him to forfeit his privilege of membership. The Anabaptists recognized that in a spiritual church, carnal methods do not work to maintain order and discipline. In contrast to the state churches, the Anabaptists used vigorous congregational life—brotherhood accountability, admonition, and exhortation—to maintain the vitality of the brotherhood. Whereas the state churches attempted to gain conformity from their members through physical force—imprisonment, confiscation of goods, slavery, torture, execution, exile—the Anabaptists’ severest discipline was the ban, or expulsion from the fellowship of the brotherhood. This ban was accompanied by varying degrees of social separation, but when properly administered, it was accompanied by an effort to restore the fallen brother.

Article XVII, “The Shunning of Those Who Are Expelled,” from the Dortrecht Confession of Faith (1632) includes the following:

In short, we are to have nothing to do with him; so that we may not become defiled by intercourse with him, and partakers of his sins; but that he may be made ashamed, be affected in his mind, convinced in his conscience, and thereby induced to amend his ways ...

That nevertheless, in shunning as in reproving such an offender, such moderation and Christian discretion be used, that shunning and reproof may not be conducive to his ruin, but be serviceable to his amendment. For should he be in need, hungry, thirsty, naked, sick or visited by some other affliction, we are duty bound, according to the doctrine and practice of Christ and His apostles, to render him aid and assistance as necessity may require; otherwise the shunning of him might be conducive to his ruin rather than to his amendment. ...

Therefore we must not treat such offenders as enemies, but exhort them as brethren, in order thereby to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; so they may again become reconciled to God and the church, and be received and admitted into the same—thus exercising love toward them, as is becoming. (II Thessalonians 3:15).²

Conservative Anabaptist churches today still attempt to maintain order by a vigorous congregational life, and that includes excommunication. The purpose of biblical excommunication is two-fold:

1. To maintain the purity of the church.
2. To help the erring brother see his true condition, to encourage him to repentance, and to restore him to full fellowship with the brotherhood of believers.

In this article I want to focus on the process of restoration. The apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, gives some clear direction regarding a church member who was living in gross immorality—**“and such fornication as is not even named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife” (I Corinthians 5:1)**. The Corinthians, perhaps in an

¹ Littell, Franklin H.: *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (1958, Reprinted 2000, by Grace Press, Ephrata, PA (page 84).

² As rendered in *Instruction for the Christian Life* (Farmington NM: Lamp and Light Publishers, 2002) pp. 125, 126.

attempt to show their “freedom from law,” did not mourn this debauched situation but rather were “puffed up.” In this case, Paul did not even need to be there to make a judgment. **“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”** he wrote, **“when ye are gathered together, along with my spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ is present, 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 5:4-5).**

These verses give the reason for the excommunication as being for the good of the offender—for the destruction of his (sinful) flesh and for the salvation of his spirit in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In I Corinthians 5:6-7, Paul speaks of another reason for the shunning or expulsion of a sinful member. Paul says that excommunication is not only for the good of the individual but also to maintain the purity of the congregation.

He asks, **“Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person” (I Corinthians 5:6-7).** This passage speaks of the leavening influence of sin and of the need to remove that leaven of sin from the congregation.

Evidently Paul’s direct letter caused the Corinthian church members to sit up and take notice. It appears they had excommunicated the offender for the sake of maintaining the purity of the church and for the sake of saving the offender. Now, it sounds like the offender repented of his sin, for in Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians, he appeals to them to restore the offender: **“The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him” (II Corinthians 2:6; NIV).**

Paul was helping the Corinthians to follow through toward one of the goals of church discipline – to restore the fallen brother back to fellowship. He knew that keeping the brother outside of fellowship after repentance had taken place would actually be counterproductive. He knew that doing so could cause the brother to be discouraged and to lose heart. In the end, the offender would be just as lost as if he had continued in his life of immorality. Paul wanted the church to forgive the offender and restore him to fellowship in the congregation, **“lest Satan should take**

advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (II Corinthians 2:11).

I want to give several principles for restoring the fallen brother.

“Let all things be done with charity.” Effective church discipline is saturated in love. In the case of personal offense, personal efforts need to be made to resolve the offense.³ In the case of heresy, the heretic should be admonished to give him the opportunity to repent.⁴ And even in the case of gross immorality, such as that mentioned in I Corinthians 5, the offender needs to know that *no one enjoys the process of discipline.* Church discipline should never be a matter of personal vindication. Effective church discipline is always done in love.

Some types of offenses call for a social ban. When an offender continues in his sin or when an offender continues to spread bitterness or false doctrine, then social interaction should be curtailed. But even so, we do not treat the offender as an enemy but as a brother. As we noted above in the excerpt from the Dortrecht Confession, we treat them kindly

“in order thereby to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; so that they may again become reconciled to God and the church.” If a fallen brother does not sense this love from the brotherhood, why would he want to rejoin a brotherhood which has “turned him over to Satan,” expelled him from social intercourse, and by all appearances, does not really want him back in?

“The axe is laid unto the root of the trees.” When John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, he came preaching a baptism of repentance. The bitter root of sin must be axed out. There must be fruits worthy of repentance. This prepares the way for people to receive Jesus, and it also prepares the way for the fallen brother to be restored.

Genuine, axe-to-the-root repentance will be evident in the fallen brother who is on the way toward restoration. He will confess his sin from the heart. He will be clear. He will be thorough. He will not preface his confessions with, “If I have offended someone, ...”

Genuine, axe-to-the-root repentance does not demand that others forgive. While statements like “Will you please forgive me?” might have their place, the repentant offender will focus on repenting himself,



³ Matthew 18:15–20.

⁴ Titus 3:10–11.

more than on securing the forgiveness of others. It is more important to him that he clear himself of the matter than that others forgive. He will have a II Corinthians 7:11 kind of repentance: **“See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter”** (NIV).

Genuine, axe-to-the-root repentance does not demand to be restored to any position. The prodigal son, when he came to himself in genuine repentance, did not go back and expect that his father restore him to the position he had previous to his foray into a life of sin and profligacy. Rather, he determined to go back to his father and tell him, **“Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants”** (Luke 15:18-19).

Genuine, axe-to-the-root repentance recognizes the value of the discipline received. The disciplined brother, if truly repentant, does not say (or think) that he needs to forgive the brotherhood for having placed him under discipline; he instead recognizes that he needed the discipline.

This kind of repentance in a fallen brother can be clearly seen. That brother is on the way toward restoration.

“Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” A fallen brother has obviously sinned. Even if he did not personally sin against you, his sin against God and against the brotherhood has certainly affected you. This sin may have impacted you deeply or it may not have impacted you deeply. In any case, you must forgive. Whether or not the fallen brother has repented, you forgive on a personal level. While the cruel Roman soldiers were crucifying Christ,

what did Christ say? He said, **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”** (Luke 23:34). As far as Jesus was concerned, His murderers were forgiven. Whether the Father actually forgave them or not, we do not know—but on a personal level, Jesus forgave. We should do likewise to the fallen brother. His restoration to the brotherhood depends on his personal response to his sin and to the discipline brought upon him, but he should sense genuine forgiveness from each brother and each sister in the congregation.

Forgiveness versus trust. Sometimes the fallen brother struggles deeply with the lack of trust he feels from the brotherhood. He so longs for the situation to go back to what it used to be before his fall. However, forgiveness and trust are not the same. We can—and must—choose to forgive those who have sinned. But trust must be earned. Trust cannot be demanded. Trust can be restored, but it will not come by demand. Even when a brother is restored to fellowship, the scars remain. The scars might heal, but still they remain. **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”** (Galatians 6:7).

“The ministry of reconciliation.” God delights in bringing reconciliation. But after God the Son returned to God the Father, He left the ministry of reconciliation to us. **“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”** (II Corinthians 5:20). We are His ambassadors, continuing with His work of reconciling men to God. That work includes restoring the fallen brother.

When years go by and a person remains out of fellowship, we conclude that something is not as it should be. Either the person has not genuinely repented or the brotherhood has not done what they should to effect reconciliation. Or maybe it is both.

Conclusion

We ought always maintain the painful practice of social isolation with its twofold objective of maintaining the purity of the church and of bringing the sinner to repentance. And we should never forget the need to restore the repentant brother to the life of the church.

Note:

Articles using the pen name “Menno Knight,” are written by several different authors.



Responses to AV19 Writing Challenge

What arguments did Paul use with the *Jews* to prove that Jesus was the Christ? (AV19, page 32)



Preaching Christ in the Synagogues

by Timothy J. Myers

Immediately after Saul's conversion—we will refer to Saul as Paul from here on—he began to proclaim who Christ was and what He had done.

Acts 9:21-22 records what happened in Damascus. “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ ” (KJV).

Note that Paul went naturally to the synagogue to preach his new revelation from Jesus. In this familiar setting, Paul knew the exact manner and order in which the services were conducted. As a well-respected rabbi, the synagogue leader gave Paul a chance to speak. Probably many of those who heard him had seen and heard him before.

This time Paul's preaching was markedly different. Those who heard could not grasp the interpretation of the Law and the Prophets that Paul put forth. Those in the synagogue wanted to defend the more traditional interpretation, but Paul confounded them by proving, again and again, that Jesus was the Christ.

Many times throughout his life, Paul repeated this same manner of mission as he did in Damascus by going to the Jewish synagogue and teaching from the Law and the Prophets. The Jews looked at the Law and the Prophets as divinely inspired, so Paul would naturally pull from their faith, in which he was well versed, to point them to the prophecies and the shadows relating to Christ.

This became a pattern in Paul's life. Christ was the center of the gospel Paul preached, and as he said in Romans 1, he felt himself a debtor to both Jews and Greeks to share that “Good News.” Barnabas testified of the focus and efficacy of Paul's preaching. In Acts 9:27 Barnabas declared “how Paul had seen the Lord in the way, and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how Paul had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”

Scripture records much of Paul's teaching. Some is a historical record of his addressing various groups of people verbally; other places we have copies of letters which Paul wrote to different churches. What

we have in Acts 13:31-39 is typical, when he spoke in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia: he begins with a brief rundown of Jewish history, tying in Christ as the promised descendent of King David. Christ was crucified, but rose again the third day. Then, speaking of Christ, he wrote:

“And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, ‘Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.’ And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’ Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, ‘Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:31-39 KJV).

This type of discourse happened many times in the synagogues. It is recorded for us that it happened again in Antioch: “The following Sabbath the people of Antioch gathered in great numbers to again hear the Word of God. So many people believed that Paul and Barnabas were forced out of the city and they went on to Iconium” (Acts 13:44, 45).

In Iconium the evangelists went to the synagogue of the Jews (Acts 14:1).

In Thessalonica, Paul went into the synagogue for three Sabbaths and, as his custom was, reasoned with them from the Scriptures, “explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ’ ” (Acts 17:3 NKJV).

In Corinth Paul “reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath” (Acts 18:4).

And so, as he had in Damascus immediately after his conversion, Paul often went first to the Jewish synagogues to prove from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. Furthermore, he Paul, was a witness that Christ had risen from the dead.

T. J. M. | Georgia



Jesus WAS a Son of David

by Robert Loizeaux

“Imagine you were with Paul at Damascus immediately after his conversion. What argument might Paul have used with the Jews in Damascus to prove that Jesus was the Christ?”

Before the supernatural experience on the road to Damascus, I suspect Saul sometimes pondered the story of King Saul who persecuted David, the man who had been anointed to take Saul’s place as king. Surely he noticed that he had the same name as King Saul, and that Jesus was to be of the descent of David. As well as Saul knew the law and the prophets, he surely knew the Messiah was to come from David.

Possibly Saul was prompted to consider the person of Jesus by the experience of the stoning of Stephen which he witnessed. No doubt Saul was troubled in his mind by the words of Stephen just before he died. He knew that the words of a dying man are sincere. This was pricking his conscience. Saul undoubtedly knew of the promise to David that a son of his was to establish a kingdom and reign forever.

Surely Saul knew some of the history of Jesus. Possibly Saul had heard Jesus say at His trial, “**Hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**” (**Matthew 26:64**). Although Paul regarded Jesus as an

imposter, he must have had some doubts.

He did not want to believe that he, Saul of Tarsus, was like King Saul who persecuted David, persecuting David’s son, the promised Christ.

What might his message have included? Let me guess.

“This Jesus is a descendant of David. This was according to God’s promise to David that one of his heirs was to be the Christ. God said to David, ‘**I will set up your seed after you ... and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and He shall be my son**’ (**II Samuel 7:12-14**). Thus this son of David is God’s Son.

“I have heard the words of Stephen, a man being stoned to death for his faith in Jesus. Stephen said he saw Jesus in heaven, standing next to God.

“After that, I had an experience that confirmed that Jesus is truly exalted into heaven. Jesus appeared to me in a blast of light and spoke to me. The light was so bright I was blinded for days, and the voice addressed me by name. I was leading a band of men on a mission to arrest followers of Jesus in this city. The voice said, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’

“I was confused. If this voice and light was something supernatural, I wanted to know who was speaking to me about persecution. So I asked, ‘Who am I persecuting?’

“The voice answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’ I was shocked.

“Truly this Jesus has been exalted to heaven even as his disciples have said. He is the fulfillment of the promise to David about the coming Christ.

“Repent of opposing Him as I have done.”

R. S. L. | Maryland

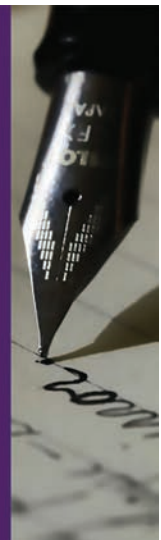
New Writing Challenge!

God called Paul to be the Apostle to the *Gentiles*
What arguments did Paul use when he preached to
Gentile audiences?

Check in Acts 17:24-31 to see some of the arguments Paul used as he wandered about in the marketplace and with the philosophers on Mars Hill.

Check in Acts 28:28-31 to find two powerful themes that motivated Paul after turning his main ministry to the Gentiles.

Check in Romans 1:4-6 and Romans 3:22, 29 to find the themes Paul used in preaching to the Roman Christians.



Books for Boys

Submitted by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

“Whatever things are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report; think on these things. ...” (Philippians 4:8, abbreviated).

“Oh, he reads everything he can get hold of—novels, story papers, sea voyages, robber exploits, pirate yarns, and everything to make him discontented with his home, sick of his work, and ready for any sort of crazy adventure.”

But what have you given your boy to read, which has left his mind open for such occupation as this? Let us look over the book shelf. Here are patent office reports, agricultural documents, dissertations on bugs and beetles, pages of statistics concerning corn and swine, “public documents” which the farmer gets because they are given away and cost him nothing; all very important no doubt, but not the most interesting reading for young persons. Then here are political and sectarian newspapers, containing some wheat and not a little chaff, gospel in fine print, and staring advertisements of patent purgative pills, compound cure-alls; exhortations to repentance and remedies for itching piles side by side; and these are not what usually attract the attention of the young and rising generation.

There is many a father who has a good house, fine barn, well-stocked farm, and money at interest, who has not a dozen books in the house worth reading. An intelligent child can read on the average at least twenty ordinary volumes in a year, without interfering with his usual duties.

Of course those books should not be the thrilling compounds of love and murder, blood and thunder which, once taken up, cannot be laid aside until they are finished. These books should be neither the average novel, nor the goody goody wishy washy Sunday school tale, of which you can read a score without gaining a new thought or finding a new fact. Instead they should be sensible, instructive and interesting books that give the mind matter to think of, and the tongue something to talk about when the hands are employed. Such books can be taken up and laid down again without sitting up all night to see how it comes out, and which will instruct, encourage, and profit those who read.

Twenty five such well chosen books purchased every year, and costing perhaps a few shillings each, would keep a family out of mischief, cultivate a taste for good reading and a loathing for trash, and in ten years would give children more help in the line of education than



they could obtain for five times the cost in schools, which after all do little more than teach children how to study and read outside; and would give a family such a start in general education, information, and fitness for the duties of life as could never be obtained by mere academic training. Children would thus be taught lessons of wisdom, intelligence, virtue, and purity, and the whole expense of the operation would be less than many a man has gladly paid to get a wayward son or daughter out of some dirty scrape into which they had been led by the wretched trash which they had devoured because their parents provided nothing that was really fit for them to read, as lambs eat laurel leaves when the snows cover up the grass [laurel leaves kill the sheep as I found out (JGL)].

It is not enough to say to a child, you should not read this, or you must not read that. The better way is to surround children with plenty of safe and proper reading, and then a gentle hint will serve to restrain them from the wrong and guide them in the right path.

Books are silent teachers, and there is no other method of instruction so cheap; and it is not easy to find any method more important, or more fruitful of good results. Give your children something to read that is worth reading, and avoid the shame and misery which a child left to himself is sure to bring upon those who have neglected him.

The time occupied in reading a book is worth more than the money spent in buying it. Many a child has wasted years in reading books full of wishy washy drivel and half-baked fancies, which have left them soft, silly, sappy, and full of romantic nonsense, when a small sum of money invested in good, pure, healthy literature, would have endowed them with knowledge, good principles, solid facts, sound judgment and common sense. Children will read,—give them something worth reading; they will learn, give them something worth learning. More books in the library and fewer pigs in the pen, may mean less money and more brains, a smaller stock of dumb beasts and a far better grade of

sons and daughters—clear-headed, strong-handed and pure-hearted, ready to serve their God and serve their generation by his will.

– Taken from a 19th century publication, *The Common People*, and reprinted in Herald of Truth in 1887.

– Original author unknown

Chester Weaver comments:

The distractions provided by electronic games, social media, and movies actually rewire boys' brains, making it harder for them to read books today. *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr documents this fact, and it is a major issue facing our boys and their parents today. It is even more important now than ever that boys actually read physical books made of paper and ink. Who will do solid thinking tomorrow if a whole list of solid books have not been digested by the time a young man (or woman) comes of age? Addictive electronic games, social media, and entertainment movies are no preparation for the future.

I would understand that by the time a boy is in his teens he is moving past The Hardy Boy books or the Nancy Drew mystery stories. By the time the boy has reached twenty he should be reading some non-fiction books such as #10, #15, and #16 in the list.

C.W. | Texas

Brother Chester has made a suggested reading list for young boys. We know the list does not include all the good books available for young boys (and girls as well). So we would like to open it up for you to add to the list. This reading and writing was one of the most rewarding parts of my high school days.


In my high school days, “A” students read four books each quarter from an approved reading list. Then we took a special test on each book we read or wrote a book report so the teacher could know we read the book. The reading greatly expanded our minds and the writing of the book report helped develop our writing skills.

We would like teachers and parents to help us. Recommend books to your students and get them to type a 250-word book report. Books on the list can be included in the report. Send them to AV. We'll publish the most worthy reports and add the books to our list. Include the writer's name and age.

To get you started, here are the essentials of what a book report should include.

- The name and author of the book.
- The time period and the location of the story.
- Introduction to the main character and telling the story.
- Lessons learned by reading the book.

J.G.L. | Georgia



Appropriate for ages 12 - 16

1. *Coals of Fire*, by Elizabeth H. Bauman
2. *Light from Heaven*, by Christmas Carol Kauffman
3. *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie ten Boom
4. *Gifted Hands*, by Ben Carson
5. *Little Britches*, by Ralph Moody
6. *Where the Red Fern Grows*, by Wilson Rawls
7. *The Yearling*, by Marjorie K. Rawlings
8. *Black Like Me*, by John Howard Griffin
9. *Stories from the Old Squire*, by C. A. Stephens

Appropriate for ages 16 - 20

10. *His Name Was John*, by Barbara Coffman
11. *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne
12. *The Insanity of God*, by Nik Ripkin
13. *Ben Hur*, by Lew Wallace
14. *The Robe*, by Lloyd Douglas
15. *How We Got to Now*, by Steven Johnson
16. *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*, by John Amos Comenius

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.



Vernon L. Shetler, age 12, New York

The Message of Job

by a suffering saint who wishes to remain anonymous

Crying Out to God in Suffering

God speaks it here in written word for all of us
Who've ever heard of suffering.
A righteous man who walks with God will suffer
On this earth, but still cling to a relationship.
Not seeing face, but feebly, fiercely trusting
In the unseen Known One.
And through alarms, our arms stretch up to His.
Not turning back, just crying out.

Some Think Pain Is Caused by Sin

Our friends or foes may come and gaze upon our pain
And try to gauge its origin.
But seeing not the Unseen One, they judge
As in His stead, degree of sin assumed by wounds.
And crying out of willful, woeful words
Poured gushing from a stricken soul.
"He must confess, unless he wants to die in pain,
For clearly he's to blame."

Calling on God to Judge

Perhaps afraid that such a woe could lurk near them
And forthwith show up unawares,
They vouch for God's omniscient right
To punish such a man. "This lying scamp",
They say "retains his pride
And calls on God Himself to give account.
He acts like he is right and God is wrong,
And fails to hail the Lord of all."
On Him we call to arbitrate.

God Speaks to Justify the Innocent

Then, speaking out of gusting gale
The Holy One meets with travail and tells His tale.
He meets this man who lies on straw,
Whose wounds are raw,
Who dares to call upon His name
And seek His face instead of cursing Him
And seeking retribution or demise. God said,
"I heard your voice and choice to seek
My hand that holds your life and soul.
Now hear me well."

God Speaks of Knowledge and Power

"I'll give you time to first explain the source
And path of wind and rain and sun and moon.
Who made, and how, if you can say, this vast array
Of living, breathing energy?
How was it formed and how sustained?
Who planned the route of birds or bees?
Who blows each breeze? And do you know
The glow and force it takes to shine the stars?
Can you tame Leviathan?"

Men Are Changed When They See God

The oozing sores and warring words all fade away
When God is heard and glory reigns.
In seeing the face of One above—eternal,
Self-sustaining, faithful, living, holy truth and love;
All true men do the same—bow down. We worship
And the earthy shadows fade as soul-sight wakes.
Then dawn shines on our hearts and His light breaks.
And we are changed.

Knowing God Overshadows Pain

What now the loss of friends or fame, of home or health?
In light of Light, what worth is earthly wealth?
Oh yes, the woes of earth remain,
The wounds hurt still the same.
Real feels the sorrow, the grief, the pain,
But it is all o'er shadowed
By the awe and wonder of the coming,
Of the One our heart has pled and bled to know.
Yet we long to know Him more.

Knowing God Gives Hope

The book of Job is full of hope for anyone
Who seeks to cope with here and now.
A righteous man who walks with God
Will suffer on this earth, but by it be drawn close to Him.
We wait through silence, shame, and storm,
To hear His voice ... and then He speaks,
And love is born! Our pain is gain.
Our hearts are warmed in knowing Him—
The Seeing, Knowing One.

Taking Wing Upward

by Jay and Kaity Johnson

“The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

– Ruth 2:12

1969-1991

My wife Kaity and I were both born (1969) in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. Our parents raised both of us in stable Catholic homes.

Both of my parents were raised Catholic, but during my growing up years, I almost never heard them speak about God. As far as I could tell, my parents had agreed to let my brother and I decide for ourselves what we believed about God.

I believed in God, but had no idea who He was. God was seldom in my thoughts. I memorized the Catholic mass and could recite it verbatim, so I reasoned, “What’s the point of going to church?” As a result, once I was in high school, I rarely attended church.

I was a serious child, and through hard work, I excelled in school. My school and extra-curricular records allowed me to gain an appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado. My passion for flight and a desire to serve my country were my driving factors.

1992

God began working on my heart toward the end of college. In 1992, through a series of events, I needed to land my small 2-seat aircraft on a road, at night, in a snowstorm on the plains of Colorado. I was effectively lost and low on fuel. After surviving this flight, I had to acknowledge that God had protected me and allowed me to land safely. Looking back, it was as if I opened the door of my heart slightly and God was waiting to come in.

After graduation, I moved to southern Texas for USAF pilot training. The training was intense, but I did well. Toward the end of that year, a classmate invited me to a Bible study. I was immediately defensive and turned her down. Once back in



my room, I thought about my reaction to her simple question. What was my problem? Why was I so defensive? I considered that my perception of the Bible was unreasonable – only a priest could read it, yet why would “regular” people want to read it?

I thought, this is ridiculous. I have a college degree; if it is in English, I can read it. The Gideons had placed a Bible in the government dorm rooms, so I picked it up and started in Genesis.

I kept reading the Bible in spare moments. I considered it my current novel. As I read, I tried to be non-biased and open-minded without any pre-conceived judgments. In private I let my guard down and accepted the stories at face-value. As I read about the six days of creation or the parting of the Red Sea, I thought, OK. God can do that. That could have happened – He’s God, after all. As with other novels, it took me a while to figure out who was who and how they played into the story.

Most of the characters I had heard about—Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Moses—but I knew next to nothing about them or how they applied to history. I had always been interested in history, but mostly only modern history, the last 200 years. I appreciated some of the history I was reading, but recognized there was more to the Bible than simply ancient history accounts. I discovered the Ten Commandments and wondered why some groups were making a stink about having them posted in American courthouses or in schools. They all seemed like good principles to live by. How could anyone go wrong by following the Ten Commandments? No stealing, no killing, don’t commit adultery – wouldn’t the world be a better place if we followed these rules?

But then I got to the book of Leviticus and was amazed at the sheer volume of rules. God was passing the rules down through Moses—don’t do this and don’t do that. Obviously, I read them through the viewpoint of a young American adult. Many of the rules listed just didn’t fit into the framework of everyday life (especially the animal sacrifices) while others sounded like good ideas. I was still debating with myself whether it was true or not. Was this just a good book, albeit outdated, or was it a message from God himself?

Then I came across Leviticus chapter 25. It was as if someone had flipped a light switch on in my mind.

Listing another rule, the chapter talks about how God told Moses to tell the people to not farm the land every seventh year. They were supposed to farm the land for six years, then not farm in the seventh year. Suddenly, I uttered, “This book must be true! This must be from God because He knew about resting the land and crop rotation thousands of years ago. The Americans only discovered this after the Dust Bowl in the late 1920s and early 1930s!”

That day I was convinced the Bible was true. I realized that God knew these things before the Americans. The laws and rules listed in the Old Testament are there for a reason, even for mankind’s good. From that day forward, I looked at the Bible with new interest. I thought, if this part is true, then the whole book is true. And since this is true, when God says don’t do this or don’t do that, then I need to listen. The Bible must have been handed down from God Himself.

Maybe a bit simplistically, I thought, if God showed up today right here in my room and said something, would I not listen to Him? I supposed, however, He didn’t need to actually show up. Since He wrote this book and I had it in my hands, that was good enough. In my eyes, the Bible was transformed from a novel to God’s message to me.

1993

The flight training at Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas was intense, but I still had time for some social events. At a wild-game-dinner, a couple introduced me to an attractive 22-year-old lady, Kaity Ryther, because they found out we were both from Illinois. After the introduction, it did not take long for a bubbly Kaity to tell me about herself.

Kaity, like myself, had joined the Air Force and was stationed at Laughlin AFB and working in public affairs. Kaity edited the small base newspaper and interviewed personnel for articles. She had six sisters and one brother. Her mother and father had lived together for 37 years and Kaity thought a lot of her mother. Kaity described her mother as a committed, submissive wife—I knew that was the kind of wife I wanted. All of Kaity’s siblings had gone to Catholic school for eight years and then moved on to public high school. At the public school they were influenced by feminist views of the 1970s and 1980s.

Kaity was quick to tell me she was a Christian and that her Bible study group had been praying for me. She told me how some of her siblings got “born again” through a ministry to public high schools called Young Life. Kaity saw how their lives had changed and she

wanted what they had, so she had given her heart to the Lord three years ago.

I liked Kaity and we started dating. She knew I was not yet a believer, but she took the risk and dated me anyway in the hope that I would become a Christian. In our dating we discussed many things—everything from Santa to our future plans and the possibility of adopting children. But so far I had not made a commitment to follow Christ.

1994

Early in 1994 Kaity invited me to go with our mutual friends to a non-denominational church in San Antonio (three hours east of Laughlin AFB). The church was unlike anything I had ever seen before. The very large church must have held nearly 1,000 people. The pastor, Rick, wore a stylish suit and tie; there was a full band up front with vocalists singing upbeat music. Most in the congregation were standing or dancing and clapping. Some were waving colorful flags to the rhythm of the music. With my guard up, I listened intently to his sermon, searching for warning signs of brainwashing or cult-type rhetoric. I didn’t detect any and enjoyed hearing how he used to be a professional baseball player until he started considering God in his life.

Overall, the service was the opposite of my Catholic church experience. That Sunday directly challenged what I thought church was supposed to be like. How could anyone be so excited about God? I thought repeatedly. Why would anyone want to spend more than 45 minutes in church? How can people dance and clap in church? What is a professional baseball player doing leading a church? The questions kept coming. I had stood or sat stoically during the service, but I could not deny the enthusiasm coming from the people there.

A few weeks later Kaity and I went back to San Antonio. The date was April 3, 1994 – Easter Sunday. The church was as colorful as ever. I joined in the clapping during the songs, but dancing in church was still way outside of my comfort zone. Rick started his message: “Why do we even have Easter? What is the point? Let’s start with the basics.” He started with the birth of Jesus Christ and why He came to Earth. Then he expounded on His ministry and teachings, and why the people crucified Him. Finally, Rick described His resurrection from the dead and His ascension into heaven. He said, “He conquered death and is waiting for us to come to Him. All we must do is believe Jesus is who He said He is and we, too, can meet Him in heaven.” Rick presented the simple, Christian gospel message laid out in an orderly manner.

“Anyone who wants to accept Jesus Christ into their lives come up to the front and we’ll pray with you,” Rick encouraged. I stayed at my seat with Kaity next to me. Once again, I constrained myself; I wasn’t comfortable going up-front, so I didn’t move.

However, I was deeply moved on the inside. As Kaity and I walked to the car, I said, “I’m convinced. I believe in Jesus Christ.” It was not an emotional experience; it was more of a logical decision. The Christian message made sense. I believed all that Rick said about Jesus. I believed He really did suffer and die for my sins. I believed that He was the perfect sacrifice, just as I was reading in the Bible. I believed I would see Him someday in heaven.

In the spring of 1994, I graduated from pilot training at Laughlin AFB in Texas and the Air Force then stationed me at Dover AFB in Delaware. I began flying huge C-5 cargo planes and I enjoyed the thrill and sense of accomplishment I received from flying these big planes.

Through an Air Force ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) program, Kaity managed to get transferred to The University of Pennsylvania where she entered a graduate school program in social work. And since Philadelphia and Dover were less than 1.5 hours apart, our courtship could continue.

By November I was ready to propose marriage. I rented a stunt plane and attached a banner, “KAITY, WILL YOU MARRY ME? JAY”.

By the time I came back down to earth, Kaity had her answer ready, “YES”!



1995

On July 9 we married in Inverness, Illinois. Kaity’s brother-in-law, Martin Gonzalez, a missionary in Mexico, officiated. Both our extended families and friends celebrated with us. As Jay and I had decided not to drink alcohol we did not want to serve alcohol at our wedding. Kaity’s dad agreed to a non-alcoholic wedding immediately, but Kaity’s mom worried about what others would think.

We left the day after the wedding for a very adventurous ten days in Costa Rica. Then we went back to Dover where Kaity worked part-time with children at a YMCA program. I flew C-5s, and was often gone for ten days at a time.

This was a hard time for Kaity. When she was born there were already nine people in the family, so she was not used to being alone. When Caleb, our firstborn, came about ten months later, Kaity was glad to have someone else around.

While I worked as a pilot at the Dover, Delaware AFB, Kaity and I faithfully attended an Assembly of God church. This was a far cry from the Catholic mass, but we were attracted to churches where people were excited about Jesus.

The ministers at our church gave powerful messages about God, but Kaity and I felt like we needed more teaching about the Christian family. I would say that Kaity and I didn’t realize that God gave more specific guidance in the Bible. In due time, God gave us more teaching on how to have a godly home.

Kaity quit graduate school and made a written request asking to be released from the Air Force so she could stay home with our baby-on-the-way—the Air Force could have sent her off to Turkey if they had chosen to separate us. We trusted God for the outcome, but we waited for 18 months before she received an honorable discharge.

1996

Our firstborn son, Caleb, came in the spring of 1996. By September, we discovered that Caleb had a rare cancer, a retinoblastoma in his left eye. The doctor recommended removing his eye, but I did not want to do that. We chose instead to spend a couple of months at Boston Children’s Hospital getting radiation treatments for him. Today Caleb is mostly blind in one eye, but still has peripheral vision. We are all glad he kept his eye and that he is alive and well.

1997

After our second child was born, God really started working on Kaity and me. He was setting up seemingly small encounters that would seriously affect the course of our lives in the next couple of years.

A lady Kaity hardly knew had given her a child-training book. One of the authors recommended a cassette tape called “The Hidden Woman” by Denny Kenaston. We bought the tape and listened to it. The focus of the message was to encourage a wife to stand behind her husband by recognizing God’s role for a woman and mother in the home.

We discovered that this tape was just one of a sermon series entitled, *The Godly Home*. We bought the whole series and found it included messages about the role of the father (“Where Are the Men?”), raising godly children, child discipline and the witness of a Christian family.

Kaity was really excited and encouraged by the tapes, but I had a much harder time. I would play a tape in the car on my way to and from the USAF base. It was only a 12-minute drive, but I could barely make it through 5 minutes of a tape before shutting it off, completely discouraged. With a plea to God, I cried, “I can’t do it, Lord.”

I knew what Denny was saying was God’s truth and good for my family, but I felt completely overwhelmed. One reason was that his messages were delivered in fiery preacher fashion, which I was not used to; but also, I had no basis on which to hang his teachings. I had never really seen a family like the ones he described. Soon, God showed me just such a family.

1998

I had been promoted to be an instructor pilot on a trainer plane (a T1A). To fill this role I needed to undergo four months of additional training at San Antonio, Texas. The time for our move was coming up fast.

About two weeks before we were scheduled to move to Texas, Kaity said, “This church where Denny preaches, Charity Christian Fellowship, is only about a two-hour drive from here. What about going there next Sunday?” I agreed, not knowing what to expect.

We arrived a bit late, as usual for the Johnson family. When we pulled up, I noted a simple building with a parking lot full of full-sized vans and deduced they must have large families. Kaity especially noticed a lady in full Amish dress with a big, black bonnet and she felt intimidated. I don’t remember much about

the message, but there seemed to be a common thread among the people there—large families with lots of children; simple dress (men with slacks and button-down shirts and women with dresses); people really interested in church, and a warm kindness in their faces and smiles. There was a seriousness without a feeling of oppression. We were greeted by several people after church who were genuinely interested in where we were from and how we learned about the church. I felt welcomed.

The church service was long, so we were thankful to be invited to lunch afterward. One of the ministers, Aaron Hurst, invited us to his home for sandwiches, applesauce, and cookies. It wasn’t so much the food that impressed me – it was his family. He had about 8 or 9 children who respectfully sat quietly during the meal; they seemed interested in what Kaity and I had to say. After the meal, while Kaity and I sat on the couch talking with Aaron and his wife Janice, the children put the food away, did dishes, and cleaned the kitchen quietly and efficiently. I was so impressed. I could tell this wasn’t about harsh discipline or “the hammer” to make the children obey.

This family seemed to have a unity as they worked together. Even the younger children were helping any way they could with older siblings quietly teaching and encouraging them. There was a joy and peacefulness in Aaron’s home that I couldn’t exactly put my finger on. There were no scowls or bad attitudes, no backtalk, and no scattering to “the four winds” to leave the work to someone else. In half an hour, the house was back in order. Older children sat on chairs or couches listening to our conversation and younger children played with toys on the floor. It was so picture perfect, but obviously not faked.

We were so amazed at how the daughters cheerfully helped, and seemed to be friends with their parents. Although Kaity had come from a good home, she had been strongly influenced by friends at school and she would not have said she was “friends with her parents”—they lived what Kaity calls “parallel” lives.

So, is this the kind of Christian family Denny was describing on his tapes? I want a family like this, I thought.

By this time I had finally made it through all of Denny’s sermon tapes in the ‘*Godly Home*’ series, and remembering Aaron’s family, I started to form a new vision for my family. I felt fortunate that my children were still young, as I had heard stories of how hard it is to change directions when children are older.

My strategic, or ‘big picture,’ goal was to raise

children who love Jesus Christ and want to follow God's direction, but I was very foggy on the details of how to reach that goal. Some of the principles were tangible and easier for me to grasp. One was keeping our children with us during the church service and teaching them to sit quietly. Most churches expect you to put the children in the nursery where they play during the service. Because of our protective instinct, we didn't want to let our children out of our sight during the worship service, so this was an easy principle to accept.



There were other principles and practices not as easy for us to accept—the headship veiling, nonresistance, people giving the holy kiss on the lips, the wedding band as adornment, the authority of elders, dress standards.

Kaity and I had picked up the Statement of Faith from Charity, as well as some other literature, and we began

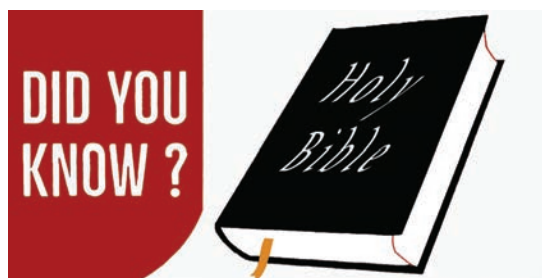
to study them. We had both read the Bible through, but had not noticed these topics/commandments before. We had a friend, John, who knew the Bible very well. He regularly witnessed to Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. John seemed to have an answer for everything scriptural, so we were quite surprised at his answer when we asked him about specific tenets of the Anabaptist statement. We asked him, "If these things are in the Bible, why do we not do them?" He answered with something I'd never heard him say before: "I don't know."

That answer did not satisfy Kaity and me. One verse that has inspired us on our journey says, "**And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him**" (Acts 5:32). We find that things become more clear to us the more we do what He says.

We wanted to live out the true gospel, wherever that would take us. It seemed to us the journey was much like a ride in a stunt plane – at times quite scary, but oh so thrilling to fly with God as the pilot in command.

In March of 1998 we moved to San Antonio, Texas, for training for my new flight instructor position in the Air Force. We went looking for a church. No one seemed to want our children in the service, but we would not think of sending our two little ones to a nursery with complete strangers. After a few different churches, Katie actually started to cry when a lady asked her for the third time if she could put our children in the nursery.

(to be continued in AV21)



The punctuation in Scripture has all been provided by the translators.

For instance, the KJV translators made I Thessalonians 5:16-18 into three separate sentences. The NKJV and many other translations make the three verses one sentence, using a comma after verses 16 and 17 and a semicolon in verse 18.

Paul, like all the writers of his day, wrote in all capital letters, with no punctuation, not even word divisions (saves writing materials!). In English, his manuscript would look like this:

**“REJOICEALWAYSpraywithoutceasingineverythinggivethanks
forthisisthewillofgodinChristJesusforyou”**

Now imagine reading the Bible if it were all written like that! I guess they were used to it, but it would call us to some extra labor to decipher it all.

– Ernest Strubhar | Oklahoma

More Than Nonresistance

by James G. Landis

“I tell you not to resist an evil person.”

– Matthew 5:39

Nonresistance in 2020

The term “nonresistance” can be gleaned from the above verse. Similar terms such as “conscientious objectors, nonviolent people, pacifists, and peace people” might also be used to state that we as a people do not go to war, that we do not go to law, and that we refrain from acts of violence against others.

These terms indicate a passive stance, meaning that we patiently stand by when an evil person abuses us. If someone strikes a blow on the right cheek, we do not hit him back, but instead offer him a swing at our left cheek. If he reviles us, we do not revile him back. Truly nonresistant people are as harmless as sheep and innocent as doves; they are not to bristle like porcupines. Our passive stance means that we never become an aggressor, but calmly take whatever evil an aggressor metes out to us. God wants His children to suffer patiently at the hands of their enemies, even though they know that the Father could send twelve legions of angels to protect them. This is true nonresistance.

The New Testament Teaches More Than Nonresistance

Jesus taught His followers more than passive nonresistance. Jesus did not stop with a passive not hitting back or not attempting revenge; He taught active love for one’s enemies. He talked of overcoming evil with good and of doing good to one’s enemies.

Jesus called His followers to be a gentle people who do not seek revenge in thought, word, or deed; a people who in humility reach out with acts of love, mercy, kindness, and good deeds to bestow on even one’s enemies. Let’s look at some of the ways Jesus taught active love for others in Matthew 5:38-42.

– **“Give to him who asks you.”** Jesus tells his followers to give to those who would take advantage of them more than what evil people forcefully try to extract from them. This is more than not fighting back, but giving joyfully out of love as Jesus would give.

– **“Love your enemies.”** Jesus did not leave love in an ethereal thought realm. He told us exactly how he meant for us to “love” our enemies. **“Bless those who**

curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” Jesus and Stephen demonstrated this kind of love toward their murderers when they prayed, **“Father forgive them for they know not what they do”** and **“Lord, do not charge them with this sin.”**

In I Corinthians 4:12-14 Paul urges us to imitate his own example, **“Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it; being defamed, we entreat.”**

– **“You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”** Jesus explicitly said we should be kind, not just to those who treat us with kindness, but also to mean and ugly sinners. We are to be kind and merciful to the ungodly and the unjust because we are sons of the Father and He sends rain on evil ones as well as righteous ones.

Luke 6:27-36 touches the same themes as Matthew 5:38-48. **“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.”**

Luke adds another proviso to the already generous response when enemies attack, **“From him who takes away your goods do not ask them back.”** I am smitten with how far from God’s standard I have strayed. When hoodlums stole our wood-splitter, I wanted it back. When they returned one night and took the dump truck, I wanted it back. And if the sheriff could have found it, I would have been glad for him to have brought it back. I had no desire to offer the robbers my tractor and my car. Yet Christ set that standard for His followers.

Luke adds more troubling instructions to how we should treat our enemies ... and sinners. **“Do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return.”** In my understanding, if you lend someone money and expect nothing in return, it is not a loan, but a gift. If you do not expect the one to whom you make the loan to pay interest or principal, why call it a loan and put him under a moral obligation to pay it back? The key here is that the borrower either cannot or does not expect to pay it back. Jesus says that even though we know the man is a bad credit risk, we should loan to him anyway. I do not believe this type of gift is talking about a business loan, but a gift to poor and needy people struggling to exist—the Lazaruses of our time.

We can see another often misapplied instruction in verse 31. **“As you want men to do to you, you also do to**



them likewise.” This verse has often been interpreted to mean that Christians should not do unkind things to other people because we would not want other people to do the same mean things to us. While it is true that we should not do mean things to other people, this misses the meaning of the verse. The context of this verse is all about what Christians should do—do good—and not about what they should not do.

Furthermore, we are told to do this good to enemies, sinners, and evil people. This is more than nonresistance. Jesus said that if you only do good to those who are kind to you—and you should be kind to them—you are doing nothing more than the heathen do. But we should do more than sinners do and be kind and merciful to unthankful and evil people as well, just like our Father in heaven is merciful. And your *reward will be great* and you will rightfully be *a son of the Most High*.

Often it is not convenient or possible to do something nice for a rude or ungodly person. But, like Peter and John, I do have something I can give to everyone – my blessing. In the past, I have often been hesitant to place my blessing on sinners and evil people because it seemed to me that would only encourage them to continue in their sinful ways. More recently, in light of these scriptures, I have hesitantly said, “God bless you,” when others tell me, “Have a good day.” I like to watch the surprised reaction from those on whom I invoke God’s blessing. Isaac Watts caught the spirit of this gospel teaching when he wrote, “So let our lives and lips express, the holy gospel we profess; so let our walks and virtues shine, to prove the doctrine all divine.”

Now turn to Romans 12:14, 17-21. Here we find more amazing instruction that simple nonresistance does not encompass. “**Bless those who persecute you;**

... bless and do not curse. ... If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink. ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Here again, I assure you that I have failed to live up to this standard. When I felt the milk and meat inspectors were unreasonable in their demands, I did not bless them and try to reach out to them in kindness. I went over their heads and tried to force them to be more reasonable. That is not the

kind of active love the above verses speak of.

These verses do not speak only of passively smiling while calmly enduring mocking, beating, ridicule, and other suffering. These specific activities mentioned tell of overcoming evil with good. I have so much room to grow in a gentleness that is willing to do kind things to those who take advantage of me—those who don’t keep their word or their contract. I have to wrack my brain to think of a nice thing I can do for those who cheat me and lie to me, but that is what I am told to do.

Another command that goes beyond nonresistance is found in Romans 12:18. “**If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.**” Paul hints that it is not possible to be at peace with everyone no matter how hard one wants to avoid strife and contention. Am I willing to give up the right-of-way on the highway to a more aggressive driver? Am I willing to gladly surrender the water rights to someone willing to fight for them? If a neighbor claims a chunk of my field, will I give it to him for the sake of peace?

Oh, as I look back over sixty some years, I see my failings where I could have done so much better if I had been willing to keep the peace at all costs. But let it be stated, I have repented of my sins, and by God’s power I will do better in my remaining time.

I Corinthians 6:6-8 gives another precept for God’s people, “**Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?**” Paul chides those in the Corinthian church who had gone to law against one another. He says going to law before the unbelievers is wrong. I believe it is equally wrong to go to law to defend your “rights” or to seek justice. This does not meet God’s approval. God’s standard is rather to suffer wrong and allow ourselves to be cheated. But if someone drags you into court, it is not wrong to make a defense as Paul did in Acts 26.

None of these scriptures even hint of using force and violence to defend oneself, one's country, one's neighbor, or a "just cause."

In every scripture passage we quoted it talks about love for enemies, suffering wrong, and overcoming evil with good.



This moves far beyond a passive nonresistance, where the abused do not hit back, to an active love embodied in a gentle spirit. This godlike spirit should be so evident in our conduct that even our enemies do not fear retaliation by us for their evil deeds, but instead are brought face-to-face with God.

"Live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:1-2).

The Vision of Two Kingdoms

If one wants to find any justification for Christians doing violence, he must do so from the Old Testament. Many "Christians" use Old Testament passages to justify war and all sorts of violence. There is no shortage of references to violence one can find in the Old Testament.

Jesus' quote in Matthew 5:38 ("**an eye for an eye ...**") refers directly to three Old Testament passages: Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:20; and Deuteronomy 19:21. In the Old Testament, God condoned violence and the use of force to maintain a fear of wickedness among the people of Israel and as a witness to the nations around them of God's rule over His people.

Solomon declared in Ecclesiastes 3:3, 8, "**A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.**"

Jesus in essence said, "That was the Old Testament, this is now. I am setting up a peaceable kingdom where you should love your enemies and not use the weapons of this world to maintain justice and subdue enemies. II Corinthians 10:4 says, "**The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world**" (NIV). Jesus answered Pontius Pilate, "**My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight**" [with the weapons of the world].

Yet it is the weapons of this world that all the kingdoms of this world depend on. The use of force distinguishes all political kingdoms from the Kingdom of our Lord.

The vision of the kingdoms of this world in opposition to and distinct from the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is essential if children of God want to be a gentle people and avoid

the use of all force.

I cannot find any scriptures in the New Testament that would condone violence or the use of force by a Christian for self-defense or otherwise. Rather we find many other scriptures in the New Testament that would render us as innocent and defenseless as a dove.

The political kingdoms of the world have one unifying factor. They rule by force—theft, punishment, jailing, starvation, and murder. This is the very opposite of all the qualities Jesus and the apostles outlined for His followers.

It appears self-evident that rule by the use of force and a gentle people clash with one another. One cannot use or condone force in the kingdoms of the world and still be a gentle, peaceable follower of Christ. A man in a police or soldier's uniform cannot be a follower of Christ. Neither can a political ruler who is dependent on the use of force.

To claim such a conflicting position is to violate both kingdoms. The New Testament teachings we have looked at belong not just to Anabaptists, but to all Christians who truly follow Christ.

The Old Testament records God's dealings with man from the beginning up to the coming of Christ. The New Testament records God's will for man from the advent of his Son onward to the present age. And in the New Testament a love for God and others outshines all use of force and violence.

Nowhere in the New Testament can we find a scripture where God wants His followers to join a political kingdom that rules by force. In all the nations of the times—Ethiopia, Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor, Spain, Rome, and Israel—God never advocated working through such political kingdoms. In fact, Jesus spurned being made a king over a restored Jewish nation and taught His followers that His kingdom was not a political kingdom that ruled by force. In the New Testament, God does not save or reject anyone because of their nationality or political affiliation, but now commands all men everywhere to repent and enter His peaceable kingdom of love.

Some would use Romans 13 to say that God controls the nations and gives us rulers that are ordained of God.

Therefore, they reason that good rulers can be Christians even though they rule by force. It is not so. A good ruler must use force and is compromised the day he takes office. He cannot be a gentle person like God wants His followers to be. God allows Satan to rule the kingdoms of the world. God uses evil men to control other evil men by force—Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Nero, and past and present rulers of the United States might be examples.

Christians are not to rebel against or oppose political rulers and if they themselves do what is good and right they ought have no fear of these rulers. But when evil rulers do not encourage and support the Christians as God wants them to do, the Christian can stand fearlessly before the rulers with a good conscience as Paul did.

We find in Romans 13 a clear line of separation between the rulers and the Christians. The Scripture speaks of “us,” the gentle people, and “them,” the rulers. This again shows us that the kingdoms of the world and the Kingdom of our Lord are two distinct and separate kingdoms.



*Do Good To Those
Who Hate You*

The New Covenant

The Old Covenant God made with Israel at Horeb and renewed in the land of Moab (Deuteronomy 29:1) included the physical vanquishing of their enemies. Deuteronomy 28:7 says, “**The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.**”

The Old Testament record is full of bloody warfare sanctioned by God to the defeat of Israel’s enemies. David’s prayers and actions clearly indicate that he depended on God for the physical defeat of His enemies and the establishment of his political kingdom.

But many of the prophets, notably Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah, and Joel, preached the coming of a New Covenant where peace and righteousness would reign triumphant over the hearts of the people.

Christ made it clear that God was doing away with the Old Covenant with the people of Israel where violence was condoned, and bringing in a New Covenant with His own special people, a gentle people.

In the Parable of the Tenants, Jesus told the chief priests and the elders of the people a barbed story. A landowner planted and readied a vineyard. Then he leased it out to tenants who refused to pay the rent, but instead treated the rent collectors shamefully. They even killed the owner’s son.

The obvious meaning of the parable went like this: God planted and prepared the people of Israel to glorify Him, but the Jews refused to heed the cries of the prophets and treated them shamefully. At last the Jews even killed God’s Son.

Jesus clinched the meaning of the parable for the Pharisees and the chief priests, and for us, in Matthew 21:43, “**Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.**”

Yes, the Old Covenant with a national Israel, where violence and bloodshed was sanctioned, has been replaced by a New Covenant with a peaceable and gentle people of God.

**“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, ... Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God”
(I Peter 2:9-11).**

(Continued next page)

The Conclusion

Nonresistance and an active love for our enemies are good teachings and good principles, but we must put them into practice in everyday life. Then we will also apply them when the torturer puts the hot iron to our flesh, when he beats and abuses us, when he freezes us in the cell, when he threatens death, when enemy forces impoverish us and take away our children; then we will also live out the Gospel of the Gentle People.

We are not going to live out these New Testament teachings because our ancestors suffered imprisonment, exile, torture, and death. We will not practice these things just because our parents taught us it is the right thing to do. A government exemption from the military or a church program for COs will not steel our resolve to be God's people. Neither will we patiently suffer and

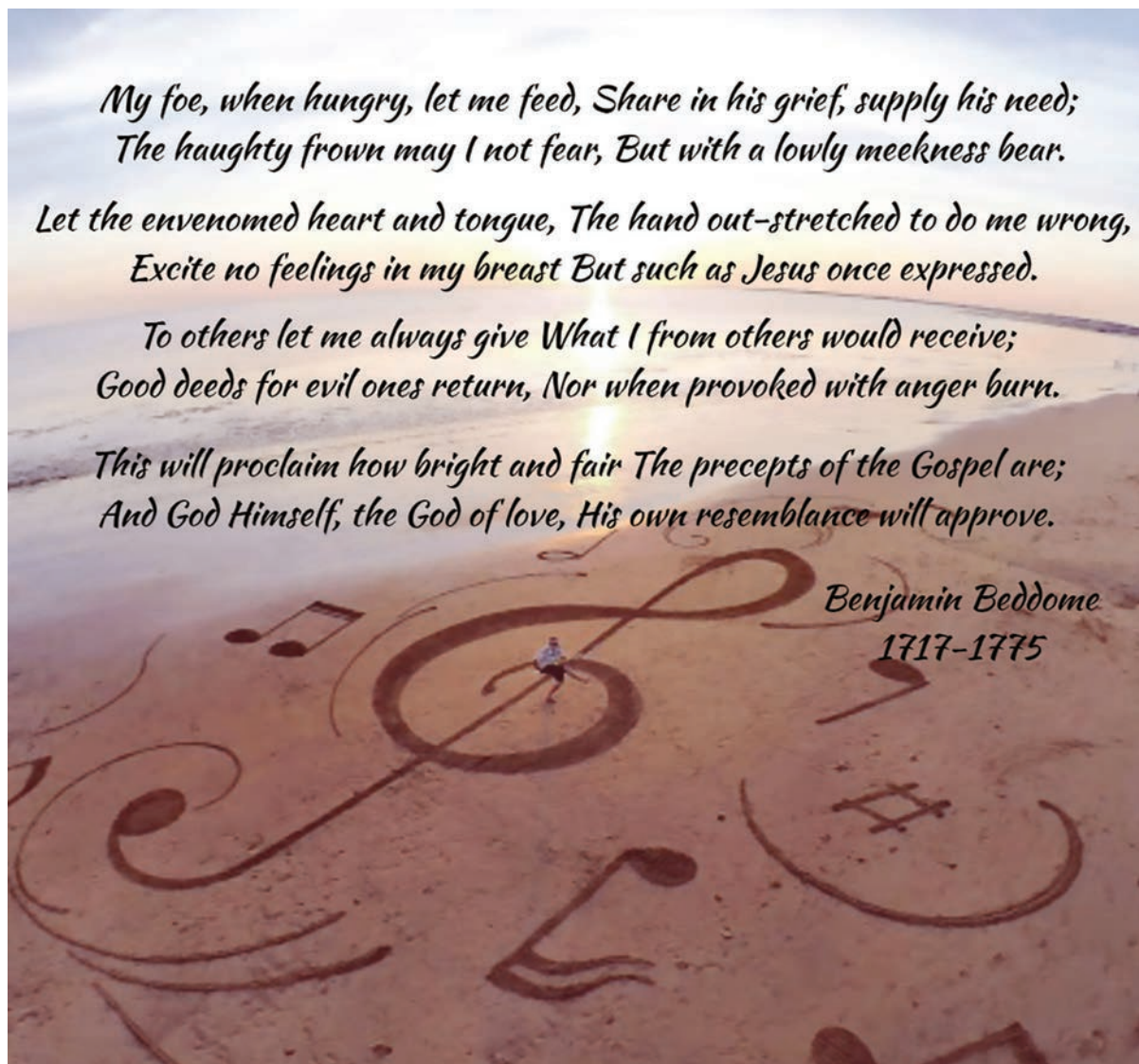
reach out to our enemies with an active love because a majority of "Christians" practice such obedience. Nor will we be kind and gentle because the mighty philosophers of this age say peace is better than war or that forgiveness frees us from the burdens of guilt and hate.

But if we are convinced in our hearts that this Bible teaching is the way God wants His people to live today, not just in some future age, we will live it out, knowing that when we are put to the test, God will be there to empower us. And if, beyond all this, we stand assured there is an eternal hope of glory awaiting us, we will live our lives as a Gentle People of God in the 21st century.

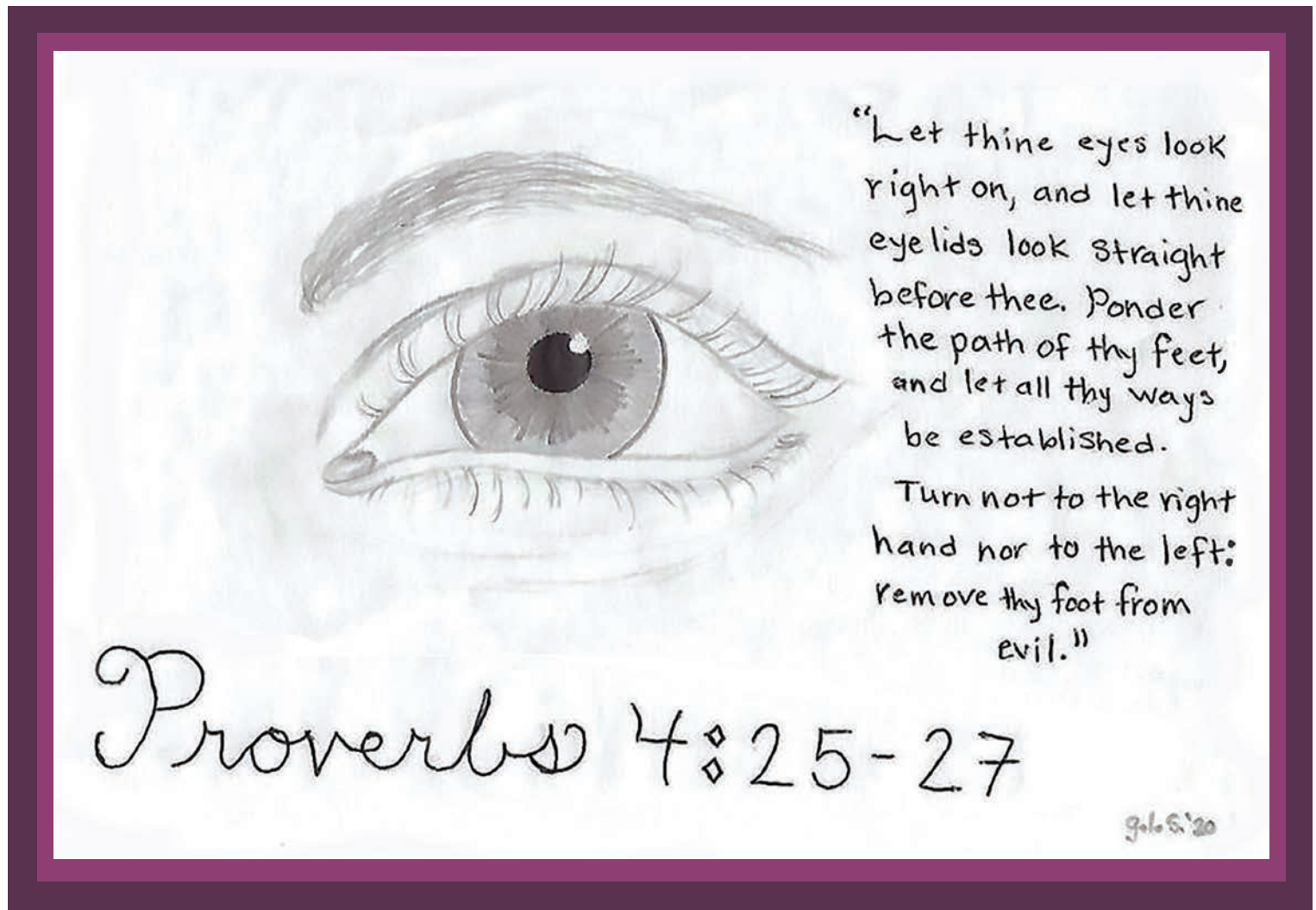
"Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand."

– Philippians 4:5

Overcome Evil with Good



Proverbs Illustrated



Grace L. Ste. Marie | *Manchester, MI*

The Eyes of the Lord

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."

– II Chronicles 16:9

"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their cry."

– Psalm 34:15

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and on the good."

– Proverbs 15:3

"The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, but He overthrows the words of the faithless."

– Proverbs 22:12



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

COVID-19 Treatments

I enjoy *Anabaptist Voice* and find the articles quite interesting. I am concerned that your information is researched and accurate. I read with interest “Ready Treatments” by D.S. Ohio and also the editor’s response. I trust that the information you mention is accurate and not just another bunny trail. If the information is correct, then we need to know what the treatment mentioned is for COVID-19, as not everybody has access to YouTube or can go online.

What are the inhaled steroids that are readily available? What about some of the other available drugs that you mention? COVID-19 has hit our family hard.

Can you please give me information on what the inhaled steroids are?

I. M. | Ohio

If you are interested in trying this treatment, you should talk to your doctor and request the drug Budesonide. He is able to prescribe the drug “off label” if he deems it will help you. You can buy a nebulizer at a drugstore for about \$40.

If your doctor is unfamiliar with this treatment, he can watch the July interview on YouTube with Dr. Abraham and Dr. Bartlett. You or your doctor can also request a full report with directions.

According to my understanding, there is no downside to this treatment as the drug has been used for many years on many patients. If you decide to pursue this treatment, please let me know how you make out.



AV Editor:

Thank you for your inquiry asking for more details.

There is no doubt in my mind that the information given is accurate and not just a promotional gimmick for the sale of some mythical miracle cure. There are reports of successfully treating hundreds of patients with good results. No one reports that the treatments did not work or that the doctors are lying. Instead the treatments with readily available drugs are countered with other accusations—we will run out of the drug, the drugs have not been adequately proven in trials or they are not labeled for COVID-19 use.

In the interview with Doctors Abraham and Bartlett the steroid particularly mentioned is Budesonide. This steroid has been used for many years to treat asthma which is similar to COVID-19 in its effect on the lungs.

One of the keys to this treatment of COVID-19, which is an inflammation of the lungs, is to inhale the drug through a nebulizer instead of taking the drug intravenously or by mouth. The drug can then go directly to the source of the problem and the results are dramatic. Healing begins immediately.

More on Ivermectin

I gave some AV18 magazines away. Is ivermectin the same drug you mentioned in AV18 on page 32)?

I saw on YouTube a statement by Dr. Pierre Kory before the Senate subcommittee. Is this man telling the truth? Who wants to take medicine before you get something?

Can we buy ivermectin or does it have to be approved by the politicians?

S. A. K | Missouri

AV Editor:

Yes, ivermectin is one of the drugs AV mentioned in AV18 on page 32.

Because medication for the treatment of COVID-19 is of vital interest to all people including Anabaptists, I shall try to answer your good questions.

Thanks for the link alerting me to the December 8, 2020 testimony of Dr. Pierre Cory before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental

Affairs. Dr. Cory is president of the Frontline COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance (FLCCC). This FLCCC Alliance, organized in March 2020, consists of a group of highly published physicians/scholars whose sole aim was to research and develop lifesaving protocols for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 in all stages of illness.

To stand before the Senate committee representing many doctors and scholars from around the world and their published research findings certainly represents a high degree of reliability and honesty. I believe Dr. Kory is telling the truth.

Taking medicine before you get a disease is very common with vaccines such as Polio, Measles, and other diseases. Dr. Kory said emphatically that if a person is treated with ivermectin, he will NOT get COVID-19. However, not everyone needs to take ivermectin. Dr. Kory identifies three groups of high risk patients: Latinos, Afro-Americans, and the elderly. It would seem wise for at least these three groups to take ivermectin before the onset of COVID-19.

The doctors of the FLCCC claim they have the data to prove that by using ivermectin they have saved the lives of tens of thousands of patients and that if their protocols were adopted the pandemic would come to an end.

With a doctor's prescription, one can buy ivermectin at almost any local pharmacy. Doctors can prescribe ivermectin off-label if it is deemed in the best interest of the patient.

There is practically no risk in taking ivermectin as it has been proven safe on millions of animals and people. Note this quote from Wikipedia: *"Ivermectin has continually proved to be astonishingly safe for human use. Indeed, it is such a safe drug, with minimal side effects, that it can be administered by non-medical staff and even illiterate individuals in remote rural communities, provided they have had some very basic, appropriate training."*

Your last question, "Does this have to be approved by the politicians?" has to do with money. But if people are willing to pay for their own treatment, the least-cost effective treatment should sound attractive to them, and that may include ivermectin.

Like with the steroid budesonide, the critics attack the people who promote ivermectin. They do not say the treatments have not worked as detailed but bring up irrelevant reasons to discredit the treatments and the people who advocate them—the drugs have not been proven in trials, there may be undiscovered side effects, the dosage could be lethal.

Jesus had a strong interest in healing people, in doing good, and in telling the truth. His healing of many cripples, the blind, the deaf, and others dangerously ill also garnered him the enmity of jealous foes. In Matthew 12:24, Mark 3:22, and Luke 11:15, the Pharisees even accused Jesus of casting out demons by using the power of Satan. In John 9:6-34 Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth. The Pharisees repeatedly questioned the healed man and finally threw Him out of the synagogue.

I find it incredible that the Pharisees criticized these wondrous acts of healing rather than rejoicing in the glory and power of God. Neither can I grasp why Anabaptists should not rejoice at proven treatments for COVID-19. Use them and give God the glory for healing.



The following information is taken from the website of the American Chemical Society (ACS). The heading at the top of the page states: *"ACS is committed to helping combat the global COVID-19 pandemic with initiatives and free resources."*

Discovery of Ivermectin

"The story is so improbable it defies belief: a soil sample from Japan stops suffering in Africa. It starts when a scientist discovers a lowly bacterium near a golf course outside Tokyo. A team of scientists in the United States finds that the bacterium produces compounds that impede the activity of nematode worms. It is developed into a drug that wards off parasites in countless pets and farm animals, averting billions of dollars in losses worldwide. Extraordinarily, the drug also prevents or treats human parasitic diseases that would otherwise cause blindness and other severe symptoms in hundreds of millions of people in many of the poorest countries on earth."

"Ivermetin has proved to be one of the most extraordinary drugs ever discovered for the treatment and control of parasitic diseases and has become an integral part of international health programs."

— Simon L. Croft and Steven Ward, "The Nobel Prize in Medicine 2015: Two drugs that changed global health," *Sci. Transl. Med.*, 2 December 2015.



Shaking My Head

I am shaking my head right now in disbelief. Let me explain.

In AV18 (page 35), “Take It or Leave It,” I agreed with your response. You quite clearly explained how government subsidies affect people. As you noted, “no matter how innocuous and legitimate a government handout may seem to the receiver, it still has an effect on the one who receives it.”

In light of that I was quite sure that your reasoning about the stimulus checks was simply making a point, especially when you followed it with, “Do you see what I mean? Taking direct government payments influences one’s mind and softens one’s heart.”

So perhaps you understand why I was surprised to find out that you did actually cash the check. Let me make clear that I don’t believe this puts one in the same class as the sorcerers, adulterers, murderers, and idolators. It remains, however, that it does cloud our judgment and alter our reasoning. And you provided a vivid real time example.

We agree that direct payments are not good for a Christian.

But the reasoning that this particular check is a “tax credit” or “refund” is similarly bogus. A tax credit lowers the tax you owe, perhaps even down to zero dollars. Here is an example: Suppose I have an income tax liability of \$800 and a child tax credit of \$1200. That credit will completely eliminate the tax due. But I do not get \$400 back from the IRS.

Similarly, a refund will only give back what you have already paid, not more. And since these checks are (were) being sent to all tax payers—even those who need not pay—it cannot be classed as a refund.

There are many good things about AV. I appreciate the practical, the working out, the shoe leather part. I believe it is important to love God and live what we know than to have a perfect understanding.

Thank you for the timely articles on voting and government participation and separation, and nonresistance. They are very needed.

May God bless you.

S. W. | Pennsylvania

AV Editor:

I am still opposed to government payments because of what they do to the recipient. Government payments

weaken the dependence on the brotherhood.

For instance, medicare and medicaid payments change our attitude toward the medical profession. How often we go to the doctor and the hospital, changes if we think the government or the insurance company will pay for it (it’s free). Everyone becomes a candidate for heart surgery, liver transplants, dialysis, and outrageously expensive cancer treatments. And the church cannot advise about such treatments because they are not asked about it until the treatments are done. Then maybe some will expect additional help from the church.

Government payments change the way people farm. People farm the government rather than the land. Many farms the way they can get the most dollars from the government rather than for what makes economic sense. The system fosters cheating and dishonesty whereby the intent of the law is completely circumvented.

These are just two examples of the many ways government subsidies influence godly people. Godly people should order their lives and their livelihoods so as to keep government influence to a minimum.

COVID-19 is an extreme example of just how far the evil one through governments will go to control people. In many cases it seems apparent that it is better to starve millions than to suffer through the results of a disease that is not that deadly and, in many cases, can be treated.

I think our allegiance to Christ and his kingdom, the church, should be our first consideration in all things, rather than if the government will support or control our way of life. And direct government payments as well as indirect government payments can have a bearing on what we do or don’t do to keep our lives honest and holy before God.

And yes, I did not angle in any way for the stimulus check of \$2400. We did add it to a gift to a worthwhile charity. And we are doing nothing to receive another stimulus check.

I consider the addition of over \$3 trillion of bogus money to the money supply as a work of the evil one. It should be a warning to the people of God that severe consequences for such profligate action will come in the future. Hold earthly things lightly for it is certain that we will soon leave it all behind.



Time to Stop

I perceive from reading some of your books on Native American history that you are an avid historian and count history on any subject to be very important. I have immensely enjoyed reading those books. I appreciate and enjoy AV. Thank you for your work in this endeavor.

I appreciate the mission statement in every issue. I agree with it and do not wish to improve on the AV, except in the issue of treating all Bible translations equally.

Not all translations are equal, considering the fact that the KJV was taken from a different set of manuscripts than the new translations.

I would appreciate your take on these facts. How do you explain them? Why your unwavering support for Bibles taken from corrupted manuscripts? And why do you think that the new Bible translators do NOT use the same text that was used for the KJV?

Our bishop asked me recently if I thought our church should discontinue getting the AV because of the anti-inerrant Bible bias found in the magazine. My advice to him was for the church to continue getting it because this subject will not always be in the magazine. There is much good in the magazine. It was then announced to the church at our fall council meeting that we would continue getting it despite this bias.

God's blessing on you as you continue as editor of the AV!

E. M. Y. | Georgia

AV Editor:

The saying is, "The proof is in the pudding." So the question is, "Are all the newer Bible translations corrupted because they used different texts?" I do not think so.

It is my understanding that many scholars did their best to take into consideration all the ancient texts, including the Received Text while making their translations. Many of the translators worked under the influence of the Holy Spirit to convey the meaning of the Bible into the language of the people today. We can say the same thing for those who translated the KJV.

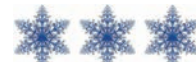
I agree there are faulty English translations due to the bias of the translators, not due to corrupted texts. Some translations do promote teaching to support their specific church doctrines. Do not use such translations.

I do not see any evidence in the 20th century

translations of a concerted plot to bolster the false teachings of the Roman Catholic Church or to uphold the errors of the English Anglican church. Rather I see an honest effort, in most cases, to make God's message available to English readers in their own language.

At the same time, let us understand that to find the real meaning of the Scripture in any translation will always be dependent on a "want to" in the heart, obedience to the things we know, and the operation of the Holy Spirit in one's life. Without these three factors, one will never find the truth in any translation in any language.

I think you are right. It is time to drop the KJV subject from AV. I will say in the language of the man born blind, "Whether this text or that text is corrupted, I know not, but this I know, the Word of God is inspired and God breathed. Give glory to God!"



Watch Out for All-inclusive Statements

"God never did want a king for the Israelites. ... God's kingdom was not ... a political kingdom" (AV19, page 13).

This certainly would not have been my first impression in reading the Bible story, but neither is it the first time I have heard this idea proposed.

I tend to be a little skeptical of categorical statements about God's ways, His thoughts, or His intentions, so I have been doing a little studying to "try the spirit" and see if it comes from God. I have a few questions before I can embrace this teaching.

How could the promises of God to the patriarchs not require a political kingdom?

How could something that God never wanted become the very heart of the Messiah's claim to authority and authenticity?

Would the titles such as "King of the Jews," "Son of David," and "Lion of the tribe of Judah" have any meaning without the kingship of David and the kingly line of Judah?

S. N. | Idaho

AV Editor:

I would say it had been better if the writer had started off the article with, "God did not want a king

for the Israelites.” Then the following account from I Samuel would have stood its ground. This was not putting words in the mouth of God. God told Samuel, “They have not rejected you, they have rejected Me that I should not reign over them” (I Samuel 8:7).

I believe God did condone some violence in the Old Testament along with the harems of the kings and the enslaving of the people. But a great cleavage separates the Old Testament standards of an earthly kingdom from the New Testament standards of Christ’s peaceable kingdom.

However, it was exceedingly clear throughout the Old Testament that God wanted the people of the earthly kingdom to worship and obey only Him. And when the people miserably failed to obey Him, God destroyed the political kingdom and sent His Son to inaugurate a new and everlasting kingdom of peace.



Modern Versions Deceive Us

I have received four issues of the AV which I have read and I appreciate the honest desire of the Brethren to know and practice truth as found in God’s holy Word.

I am writing about a question that was asked and has arisen more than once, “How do modern versions affect doctrine or our beliefs”? In the following attachment you will find vital areas in which the modern versions change or place subtle doubts about Christ’s virgin birth, and other vital beliefs.

We do not attend the SDA church because of acceptance of the leaders of modern versions of the Bible. Recently an SDA pastor, along with an elder, tried to convince us of a new doctrine coming into the church, “once saved always saved.” He was using a new version of the Bible.

I am sending an attachment that shows the subtle plan to attack the KJV and correct the KJV Bible back to the Catholic Douay translation.

I hope you see your responsibility to educate your people on this purposeful plan of Westcott and Hort along with his other agnostic translators to bring the world back to the worship of Mary and into the Catholic Church.

M. P. | Idaho

AV Editor:

I am rather simple in my understanding of the Bible and how to put it into practice. I do not know Greek or Latin or Aramaic, but I can understand plain English fairly well.

In the “modern versions” I have read, Matthew 1:22, 25 leaves no doubt that Mary was a virgin and that Joseph was not the physical father of Jesus. So I believe in the virgin birth. In the “modern versions” I use, I can find no evidence that would suggest that Christians should pray to or worship Mary.

The teaching “once saved always saved” is defended by many Christians using the King James Version. So false teaching is not dependent on a corrupted text or “erroneous translation.” False teachers and damnable heresies were already evident in the New Testament churches.

I find no fundamental differences between the King James Version and most of the modern English translations. There are differences in words and grammar which is natural and effective in accurately conveying the meaning God intended. I cannot see any plot or plan to restore Catholicism and its false teachings—transubstantiation, priesthood, popery, purgatory, idolatry, veneration of saints, last rites, indulgences, rosaries, infant baptism, and so on.

We are confident that the Holy Spirit can, and will, open our understanding to more truth if we are obedient in doing the things we know. “We are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:32).





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: New Stories

Real world situations met by today’s Anabaptists.

Usury Condemned

by Dodge Ball



The whole subject of usury deserves to receive more attention than it does in our times. Nominal Christians are steeped in the *sin of money-traffic to the injury of their neighbors* on a

gigantic scale. God’s Word clearly rebukes this sin.

This sin is defined by the spirit of the gospel as well as by the letter of the law. To maintain the letter of the law and then by sophisticated reasoning explain it all away does not fulfill the spirit of the law. Jesus condemned this kind of sophistry in Mark chapter seven. “**All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition ... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down**” (**Mark 7:9, 13**). Jesus intended that His followers practice the spirit of the law and thus keep the meaning of the intended law rather than evading its practice.

This same principle applies to usury. We must practice the spirit of what the Bible teaches rather than trying to reason usury away.

The following Scriptures talk about usury:

– **Nehemiah 5:6-13.** In this account Nehemiah

equates the charging of interest to fellow Israelites with selling them into slavery. Then he extracted a promise from those who were charging usury of their fellow Israelites that they would stop the practice.

– **Psalm 15:5.** “**He who does not put out his money at usury.**” This psalm lists a number of things that God approves of in a righteous person. Not taking usury is one of them.

– **Proverbs 28:8.** “**One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion gathers it for him who will pity the poor.**”

– **Jeremiah 15:10.** “**I have neither lent for interest, nor have men lent to me for interest.**” In this verse Jeremiah bemoans how everyone is against him and yet he has not sinned by charging or paying interest.

– **Ezekiel 18:8-18.** This passage again lists marks of a righteous person and some sins of an evil person. How one treats the poor by not charging usury or increase is one of the marks of a righteous person. “**Who has withdrawn his hand from the poor and not received usury or increase**” (**Ezekiel 18:17**).

I have listed these five Old Testament scriptures dealing with usury. They show a clear indication that God did not want the Israelites to charge usury of the poor. We also have some clear teaching on the subject from our Anabaptist forefathers.

(Continued next page)

– **Conrad Grebel (1525).** “To be baptized, a person must stop fornicating, drinking and charging interest on his money. ... Whoever is a coveter, usurer, gambler or the like, should never be included among Christians, but be excluded by the bann, as taught in Scripture ...”

– **German Baptist Minutes (1783).** “Concerning taking interest, it is considered that no member should take interest for his money, inasmuch in the law of God it was expressly forbidden, and Christ says the Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

– **German Baptist Minutes (1822).** “Whether it be right for a follower of Jesus to take interest was considered, that neither the law nor the gospel gives us such privilege and that it should not be among the membership.”

– ***A Mirror of Truth* (1878).** “Now arises the question if the Gospel allows us to take interest from our neighbor and to profit from his goods. The gospel does not permit us to charge interest of our enemy, much less of our brethren” (John Holdeman).

– **Luke 19:22-23.** “You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected

it with interest?” In other words, “If I am as greedy and unscrupulous as you say, then I would be okay with profiting from usury.”

– ***Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs.*** Although the word “usury” has come to mean an exorbitant rate of interest on a loan, it originally meant “any interest” on a loan.

This fragmentary list of sources and examples are not all of them. Many more could be added. They are not hard to find or difficult to understand.

The will of God is that His people should not charge nor receive interest.

S. H. | *Pennsylvania*

Practical Questions:

1. What places in the Old Testament state specifically that it is all right to charge or pay interest?
2. What is the “sin of money traffic to the injury of their neighbors?”
3. What differences do you see between renting a tractor from a brother and renting him money so he can buy a tractor?
4. In the parables of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-26), what did the Master expect his servants to do with his money?



Teaching Shamefacedness



“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array”

– **I Timothy 2:9**

Teaching Bible memory and Scripture recitation to my first and second graders is a joy to me. The Bible is far from a worn-out collection of anecdotes from centuries ago, so why do so many Christians read it that way? I stand before my class and together we practice Scripture passages, along with motions to fit the phrases. “Blessed are they that mourn,” we say, with a catch in our throats and a few swipes at our eyes to wipe imaginary tears away, “for they shall be comforted.” Our voices relax as we cross our arms over our chests.

After a week or two of recitation at school and practice at home, each child gets the privilege of attempting the passage on his own. So I go to the back of the room and let the children take a turn at the front. Besides testing their memory, these exercises give a public speaking introduction to the little people. I want

them to learn that it really is possible to stand before a group and calmly share without dissolving into tears or tittering with nervous giggles.

I mean, I thought it was good to begin teaching these skills at an early age. One day, a school-board member kindly shared some thoughts regarding my recitation practices. In his own words:

It is my persuasion that public speaking is close to the bottom of the list of what little folks need to learn. Especially little girls. If God has so graciously endowed our little girls with shamefacedness, we do them a disfavor to try to train that out of them. Personalities differ, but a certain amount of shamefacedness (even bashfulness to a degree) is comely to a girl and woman, and indeed must be trained into some.

I had never thought of it in that light before. I certainly don’t want to be training little girls to become un-womanly women, lacking in humility and shamefacedness.

But I remember the time when I was in third grade and I was assigned my first speech to present to the class. I stood up front and got so nervous that I laughed

hysterically and did a terrible job on my three-sentence speech. Would a few times of reciting memory in front of my classmates have helped me to keep calm and cool? Or what about the time when, years later, I conducted my first school program as a teacher? Before we ever even got on stage, two of my students were crying and we teachers weren't sure how to continue our agenda.

Practical Questions

1. Why is oral reading in front of the class a good practice?
2. How should students be taught to read the Bible with expression?
3. What is a good way to teach children self-confidence on the floor?

B. K. | *New Mexico*



Building Corncribs



“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”

– Matthew 18:17

Around 1860, some eighty years after the Revolutionary War when red-coated soldiers and blue coated soldiers had shot at each other, Gabriel kept on wearing the same red coat he had worn in the old country. Some think Gabriel had inherited the coat from his father while others think it was a black coat that faded into a red color. In any event, in the old country no one had complained about his red coat, but in Ohio his brethren kept reminding him of it. Gabriel tired of all the fuss over the color of his coat and became angry.

His fellow brethren did not see things the same way Gabriel did. They wanted him to stop wearing the red coat. Gabriel became resentful and bitter. Mose Miller, with the backing of the church, excommunicated Gabriel.

It seems Gabriel pretty well removed himself from the church and likewise the brotherhood also removed themselves from Gabriel. Then Gabriel decided to build a corn crib, but he had no help.

Elder Mose Miller found out about Gabriel's plight. Early the next morning Elder Mose showed up at Gabriel's farm to help him. The two men made good progress, but by evening it was evident that more help would be needed the next day.

Elder Mose promised to come again the next day.

He did come and helped on the corncrib the second day and again the third day. During the three pleasant days of working together, Elder Mose never mentioned Gabriel's standing in the church. At the end of the third day Gabriel told Elder Mose he could finish the rest of it by himself. But Gabriel had more to say. As Mose was hitching his horse, Gabriel said, “I plan to be in church on Sunday and I want to confess my sins and be reinstated into the brotherhood.”

No doubt it was difficult and unpleasant to excommunicate a brother. Mose could have overruled the voice of the church and permissively allowed him to remain in fellowship. If he had, might there still be red coats in the Amish congregations of Holmes County, Ohio?

The facts are, Gabriel rebelled, Elder Mose and the church excommunicated him. But Mose kept on showing love to his wayward member. Gabriel repented and was restored into full fellowship. Thus the bann worked as it scripturally was supposed to work. As a result there have been many staunch church builders among Gabriel's descendants.

D. L.H. | *Ohio*



Stuck in the Mud



“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to

give his life as a ransom for many.”

– Matthew 20:26-28 (NIV)

The army captain was exasperated. Apparently his men were not trying hard enough. In spite of all his shouting, the wagon refused to budge. The captain's public image was at stake. He expected the commanding general to arrive at any time, and it was of utmost importance to have the camp in order.

A stranger rode up and surveyed the scene. His actions were immediate. He jumped off his horse, took off his coat and waded into the mud to help. With his help and encouragement the wagon was soon on solid ground. The captain walked up to the stranger to thank him. The stranger introduced himself as George Washington.

The commanding general had arrived.

D. L.H. | *Ohio*



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.

The Shepherds Institute Meetings

Type of Meeting: Equipping church leaders to be compassionate and wise in pastoral care, church administration, and Biblical preaching

Date: February 22 - 26, 2021.

Location: Harvest Mennonite Church, 34985 Hwy, 5, Fortuna, MO 65034

Contact: Chester Weaver (817) 648-1863 - www.theshepherdsinstitute.org



We believe the Bible is the inspired and complete Word of God and that it is our guide for faith and practice in all cultures for all time.

Daytime Classes for Ordained & Licensed Ministers

First period: 9:00 - 10:30 am

– Principles of Growth and Change (Pastoring): *Milo Zehr*

Second period: 10:45 - 12:15 pm

– Studying and Communicating Biblical Truth Effectively (Preaching): *Dave Yoder*

Lunch (12:15 - 1:00 pm)

Third period: 1:00 - 2:30 pm

– Introduction to World Views (Theology): *Chester Weaver*

Fourth period: 2:45 - 4:15 pm

– Round Table Discussion: *Moderated by Milo Zehr*

Evenings Are Open to the Public (7:00 pm)

7:00 - 7:10 pm (Opening)

7:10 - 7:55 pm

– Anabaptist Identity Crisis: *Chester Weaver*

In Theology; In Education; With Technology; With History; With the Two-Kingdom Concept

8:00 - 8:45 pm

– The Freedom of Modest Living: *Dave Yoder*

Pastoring is not about learning techniques in handling people.

Rather it is learning how to humbly partner with Christ so that His divine influences come to bear on human issues.



Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report

October thru December 2020

1 October 2020 Beginning Balance	\$3,248.88
Income	
Donations	\$3,597.50
Local Support*	\$6,500.00
Total Income	\$13,346.38
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$608.00
Postage	\$3,031.16
Printing	\$5,071.00
Staff Expenses	\$1,024.49
Total Expense	\$9,734.65
31 December 2020 Ending Balance	\$3,611.73

Circulation Report

December 2020

ISSUE #14 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$1.90/ea.

ISSUE #15 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$1.98/ea.

ISSUE #16 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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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.

ISSUE #18 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$2.08/ea.

ISSUE #19 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,750 | Operating Cost: \$9,734.65

Cost Per Copy: \$2.04/ea.

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



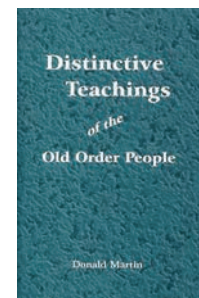
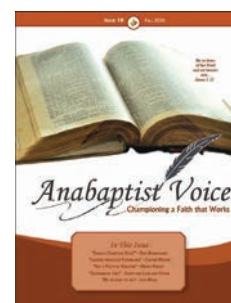
End Matters

We marvel that so many copies of AV can go out and be received in good shape. However, we have replaced two defective copies of AV19; we wonder if there were more copies people did not report. Please let us know if you receive a damaged copy of *Anabaptist Voice*; we will gladly send you a good copy.

Another matter calling for attention is extra copies of AV accumulating under the table in my office. Our printer has graciously sent us overruns from each printing. We hate to commit them to the fire. If you can use them in any way—samples to friends, Bible studies, extension, evangelism—we will gladly forward them to you free of charge.

Also occupying space under my table is a box of the booklet, *Distinctive Teachings of the Old Order People* by Donald Martin (AV16, page 13). I thought it to be such a good booklet for Anabaptists, I bought 100 of them with the intention of passing them out free at the Anabaptist Identity Conference. The conference was cancelled due to COVID-19, and I still had my books. If you are interested in free copies of this booklet for personal or group Bible study, please feel free to send us your mailing address and the desired number of copies.

J. G. L. | Georgia



Anabaptist Voice
5282 Hwy. 56 South
Waynesboro, GA 30830

editor@anabaptistvoice.com

www.anabaptistvoice.com

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

- Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

