

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

- "WHEN KINGDOMS CLASH" - MIKE ATNIP
- "THINGS POLLUTED BY IDOLS" - ERNEST STRUBHAR
- "THE RISEN LORD" - DAVID PEACHEY
- "A LINE IN THE SAND" - MENNO KNIGHT
- "TAKING WING UPWARD II" - JAY AND KAITY JOHNSON



Letter from the Editor



**Forest Pansy Redbud
Beef Cattle Grazing Rye**

Spring has come to Mystic Gardens. Bushes and trees awaken from their winter slumber and burst into flowering bloom—loropetalum, Forest Pansy redbud, crab apple, Lady Banks rose, cherry, saucer magnolia. All proclaim our great God's glory on this, the 22nd day of March, 2021.

Black and red angus crossbreeds are grazing off the luscious cereal rye on the seventy acres behind our house for the third and final time, in preparation for corn planting. Most likely some field corn seed will go in the ground this week.

In this life, changes come. Where black-and-white dairy heifers once grazed on the fields behind our house, red beef and black beef animals now harvest the sunshine. Market realities have decreed that our grazing model does not fit the desired pattern of an even flow of milk throughout the year. We calve the entire dairy herd in the fall of the year and "tail-end" the herd in the heat of the summer months. We have no desire to lose operating efficiency by building expensive barns and calving throughout the year. Therefore, we change.

Today, changes in political attitudes toward Christians have come to many parts of the world. It may be tempting to pray that a change of government would bring about a reasonable and less hostile attitude toward God's people. But let us remember, the New Testament tells us to pray that we may be able to live Godly, holy, peaceful, and quiet lives so that all people might come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved (1 Timothy 2:2-4).

In Issue 21, Anabaptist Voice again brings you articles and stories telling you what to expect when kingdoms clash, the cost of discipleship, arguments to use when preaching to Gentiles, what it was like during that fateful crucifixion and resurrection week, and how to harmonize "seemingly" contradictory Scriptures. Again, we take a look at how to make the Scriptures practical for today and listen closely to what our readers have to say.

Love your enemies. Bless and do not curse.

Peace,

James G. Landis

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About Anabaptist Voice

Our Mission Statement:

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

Our Purpose:

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

Our Tone:

The tone of the magazine shall be positive in that:

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

Our motto shall be words from Isaiah 30:21.

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

Our Bible Translation Policy:

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

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

Our Finances:

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

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

Our Organization:

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

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

Our Audience:

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

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



Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

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

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

Our Readers Write

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

AV Editor

Anglican Errors

Thank you for printing my letter. I look forward to any responses!

Also, on AV20, page 37, the editor mentioned "the errors of the English Anglican Church." Would he be more specific as to what they are?

K.B | *New York*

AV Editor:

I am not well-versed in Anglican traditions and beliefs. But according to my research, the Anglican Church is very similar in structure and teaching to Roman Catholicism. Among its many errors are:

- 1. There are priests and layers of clerical offices.*
- 2. Electing women as priests and bishops.*
- 3. Favoring the homosexual cause.*
- 4. Use of images and recitations of liturgies.*
- 5. Militarism and Nationalism.*

These are evident false practices that result because Christ is not the head of the church and the Word of God is not the final rule of faith and practice.



The Use of the Bann

I appreciated reading about the bann in AV Issue 20. My understanding of the bann was that it restricted preachers of erroneous doctrine from preaching in the church. Whereas, I thought that shunning was the avoidance of disobedient church members by members in good standing. Both should be used to maintain the purity of the church. A more biblical practice of these two items would probably have helped prevent church-splits later on as experienced by my church. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Corinthians 11:2).

B. H. | *Pennsylvania*

Interest on a Business Loan

Some think the Bible prohibits usury. When loaning money to an impoverished brother, that is correct. If I loan a bushel of potatoes until next year's harvest, I should not expect more than a bushel of potatoes in return. If I loan some silver coins, I should expect no more than silver coins in return.

Recently the U.S. government handed out "free money." It had no real value, but it diluted the value of existing dollars. Therefore, any money you now receive from work, services, or have in savings has less value than previously. The result being that prices will increase.

With this knowledge I [could supposedly] go to my brother who charges no interest and borrow money. When I pay it back at a later time, it [will have] only a fraction of the value it did when I borrowed it. Therefore, I have defrauded my brother if I don't pay him interest.

The U.S. dollar is only of value because the government requires that you pay taxes with U.S. dollars. If the government would instead require that taxes be paid in silver, gold, Bitcoin, or services, then the U.S. dollar would become worthless. Meanwhile it becomes worth less each year. Paying or receiving interest on the dollar-loan is fair.

B. H. | *Pennsylvania*



Passing Out Magazines

Greetings and God bless you for your labors and work on an excellent magazine. It is by far the best one I receive.

I don't have issues 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8. I'd really be glad to have those if possible. I have been sharing my AVs with many friends. I would gladly take more of any other issues to hand out, especially #15.

An avid reader.

D. G. | *Pennsylvania*

AV Encourages Us

We appreciate AV and would like to receive two copies sent to us on a regular basis.

God's blessing to you as you encourage us on our journey of faith in Jesus Christ.

D. E. Y. | *Delaware*



People Need More Teaching

We truly appreciate *Anabaptist Voice*.

I agree that we, as conservative Anabaptist people, need more teaching on forgiveness, being ambassadors, especially among our own brotherhoods, homes, and churches!

I agree we have had enough discussion on the true version. Many times it is not the ability to understand we lack, but the willingness to do what we know.

Some time ago you had an issue with an article written on Revelation. I so enjoyed it and I put it away "carefully." Now I cannot find it! I would sure like a copy of it if you still have any.

I am afraid our nonresistance has given way to resistance in obeying our government on COVID restrictions.

Enclosed find check. It is hard for me to write and express myself clearly. I enjoy *Anabaptist Voice* because you make it clear.

Have your loins girt about with truth and your light shining. The Master is near.

G. T. | *Nebraska*



Do Not Be Distressed

In response to the letter in Issue 20, "God Never Does Evil," this writer expresses the troubling thought that God created both good and evil.

Our KJV Bible translates the word in the above verse as "evil." However, this word does not necessarily have the ethical connotations of our English word "evil." It can refer to destruction from God, or to fruit that is overripe and going bad.

I do not want the writer of "God Never Does Evil" to be distressed over God's morality [See "God Is Good All the Time" in the "Round Table", page 34].

R. S. L. | *Maryland*

Belonging to Jesus

Thank you for such a kindness to send a copy of the book on Old Order people. I really gleaned a lot from this book so far and only got to page 18!

I belong to a non-denominational small group called "One Faith–One Body" out here in Missouri. I really belong to Jesus, not the group, but we are trying to do the teachings in the Bible. We are learning and growing, individually and collectively, as we try to serve one another.

May the Lord Jesus continue to bless your journey in Him.

M. K. | *Missouri*



Finding a Place

Please find a check enclosed to order the book *Expository Preaching* by Ivan Weaver and to make a donation toward future issues of *Anabaptist Voice*.

I have so much appreciated the articles featuring individuals coming from worldly society and finding a place among a conservative Anabaptist-founded congregation.

We presently have a family taking direct steps to join our congregation. The father of the home grew up in worldly society. Indeed, it is a bittersweet experience for them. Many times the experiences seem more painful than pleasant. Truly, these are the ways of our great God.

M. R. W. | *New York*



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I would like to get four copies of *Distinctive Teachings of the Old Order People* and six copies of *Anabaptist Voice* if you can send different issues; if all one issue, just send two.

I appreciate that *Anabaptist Voice* is not copyrighted and that you are not registered as a 501(c)3!

S. S. | *Kentucky*



When Kingdoms Clash

by Mike Atnip



Rap, rap, rap, rap.

Something about the urgency and the firmness of the knocks on your front door tell you that whoever is standing out there needs help. Even though your digital clock gleams 1:38 a.m., you are immediately out of bed and the adrenalin flow sweeps the drowsiness from your mind.

Rap, rap, rap, rap.

Whoever is standing outside means business! Not a trace of hesitancy in those knocks!

You open the door to find the young lady from three houses down the street standing there with an anguished look in her eyes. “Oh, I am sorry to bother you in the middle of the night. But will you please help me ...”

Her story spills out. Here in the Guangxi region of China, government officials have been putting the pressure on to enforce the one-child limit. She has already had two children and paid several fines, and is now expecting the third. And just this evening a friend who works in the enforcement department has dropped in after dark to secretly inform her that tomorrow they plan to take her for a forced abortion if she doesn’t volunteer to do it herself.

Now she is at your door asking for refuge. You know that helping to hide her is against the law.

Would you, as a disciple of Jesus, help her? Even if it was illegal to help her?

A Confrontation of Values

It is a clash of kingdoms. No, our war does not involve guns and ballistic missiles. This war is a collision of values and virtues. God said, “Go forth and

multiply and fill the earth,” and “no murderer shall be a part of heaven.” The opposing kingdom says, “We are fearful of overpopulation. You will kill your baby or we will kill it for you.”

And the battle is on. Christ’s kingdom against the kingdoms of this world. Christ’s righteousness against the self-righteousness of those who choose their own standard of right and wrong instead of submitting to the righteousness He has spelled out in His teachings.

As citizens of Christ’s kingdom, Christians are caught up in the clash with the values of earthly kingdoms in many fronts. One continuing thorny issue with the kingdoms of this world has been of self-defense and war. Jesus’ ethic is to overcome evil with good. The kingdoms of this world try to quell evil with punishment and revenge. A very recent example of this is the revenge killing of Osama bin Laden. Jesus’ method of conquering Osama would have been to win his heart by love, changing it from strife and warfare to one of peace and love. The kingdoms of this world “triumphed” over the hatred of Osama with a revenge killing.

But sad to say, it is very likely that the revenge will be revenged, and the hatred will be perpetuated. Hatred does not conquer hatred. Only love conquers hatred.

The Clash in History

An example of a historical clash of kingdoms occurred when Europeans kidnapped (or bought kidnapped) Africans and shipped them to various parts of the world as slaves. Such morally twisted values can never be accepted by disciples of Jesus, and some of these disciples began to speak up. In 1688, the first antislavery statement in what would later become the United States of America was issued. A group of Mennonite/Quakers near Philadelphia wrote a letter

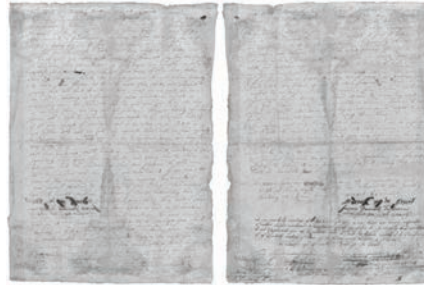
addressed to other Quakers, reproving them for accepting slavery. The following is a portion of the letter, set in modern English:

These are the reasons why we are against the traffic of humans: Is there anyone that would like to be sold or made a slave for all of his life? How fearful and fainthearted are many on sea when they see a strange ship—being afraid it should be a Turk, and they should be taken, and sold for slaves into Turkey. Now how is enslaving Africans doing better than Turks do? Yea, rather it is worse for them, which say they are Christians; for we hear that the most part of such Negroes are brought here against their will and consent, and that many of them are stolen. There is a saying that we shall do to all men like as we will be done ourselves; making no difference of what generation, descent, or color they are. And those who steal or rob men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike? But to bring men here, or to rob and sell them against their will, we stand against. Pray, what thing in the world can be done worse towards us, than if men should rob or steal us away, and sell us for slaves to strange countries; separating husbands from their wives and children? Since this is not done as we would have done to us, therefore we contradict and are against this buying and selling of humans. And we who profess that it is not lawful to steal, must, likewise, avoid purchasing such things as are stolen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible. And such men ought to be delivered out of the hands of the robbers, and set free.

The brave men who signed the document started at the right place. This letter was sent to fellow believers who had gotten sucked into the values and ethics of this world. Imagine, Quakers buying and selling slaves! *The letter was a rebuke directed toward other believers, not a political statement directed toward the government.*

Even so, the letter did militate against the political kingdoms of this world. It suggested that Christians ought to “help stop this robbing and stealing” and that “such men ought to be delivered out of the hands of the

robbers.” After all, if you were the one who had been kidnapped from your family and sold as a slave, would you not appreciate a helping hand if you escaped? The letter was not a call to armed rebellion, not even political involvement. It was a call for Christians to repent of their involvement in this sin of legalized kidnapping and to be ready to help those who knocked on their door in the middle of the night needing refuge.



A few Quakers and Mennonites framed this first public antislavery statement in North America (1688).

During the next 150 years, some of the American colonies and the later United States of America would make it illegal for anyone to help a slave escape. George Washington himself (who owned or leased over 300 slaves at his death) had signed the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act that slapped a \$500 fine (approximately \$50,000 in today's value) on those who “shall harbor or conceal such person after notice that he or she was a fugitive from labor.” The State of South Carolina even had a death

penalty for helping slaves escape.

Yet many Quakers and other believers felt a moral obligation to help those who were being unjustly kidnapped—even though the kingdom of this world called *The United States of America* made it illegal to extend the hand of love and compassion. John Greenleaf Whittier, a Quaker, put the national shame of slavery to verse in a poem titled *For Righteousness Sake*. The first of the five stanzas—dedicated to “friends under arrest for treason against the slave power”—runs like this:

The age is dull and mean. Men creep,
Not walk; with blood too pale and tame
To pay the debt they owe to shame;
Buy cheap, sell dear; eat, drink, and sleep
Down-pillowed, deaf to moaning want;
Pay tithes for soul-insurance; keep
Six days to Mammon, one to Cant.¹

In 1850, another Fugitive Slave Act was passed into federal law. Called “The Bloodhound Law” by abolitionists, this new law increased the fine to \$1,000 and 6 months in jail for aiding an escaping slave, and gave authorities the right to deputize any citizen and force that person to aid in capturing escaping slaves. This meant that if the local sheriff came along and told you that you were now deputized to look for slaves, you were obligated by law to help capture runaway slaves, like it or not.

1. A “cant” can be a façade, or religious talk. I don’t know which definition he intended here. But either way, Whittier seems to have felt that going to church while owning slaves was a “Cant.”

Those U.S. citizens who realized that Christ's kingdom rejects legalized kidnapping and cruel mistreatment of slaves were forced to choose whose laws they would allow to govern their choices: the kingdom of Christ or the kingdom of The United States of America. It was, once again, a clash of kingdoms.

A Recent Clash

Another very recent example of the clash of kingdoms involves an Anabaptist minister named Timothy (Timo) Miller, missionary to Nicaragua. When Timothy saw the opportunity to help a former lesbian remove her child from what appeared to be a forced acceptance of homosexual “marriage,” Timothy extended his helping hand. He now faces the possibility of a 3-year prison term for helping the mother of the child escape from being forced to do things contrary to God’s decrees. The values and ethics of Christ’s kingdom—which has not and never will accept homosexual “marriages” as legitimate—has clashed with a kingdom that says everyone must accept the validity of those “marriages.”

And with a clash and a bang, the war is on. Whose law trumps the other? Does the law of Vermont, which says that homosexual “marriages” are as legitimate and binding as God-ordained heterosexual marriages? Or does the law of Christ trump the self-righteous proclamations of a perverted nation? In the mind of Christ’s followers, there is no question.

A Modern Mars’ Hill

Like Paul preaching on Mars’ Hill, I recently went to a place I do not normally spend a lot of time with, to “preach.” I went online and joined in on some discussion on a national news media comment section concerning the Timothy Miller case. The following are some edited excerpts from that forum:

Mike Atnip. *People like Timothy Miller can be looked upon as kidnappers and terrible criminals, or they can be seen in the light of his Mennonite forefathers who along with Quakers helped form the Underground Railroad, in spite of President George Washington himself (who owned, leased, and used over 300 slaves at his death) signing the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act that fined those who helped slaves to escape up to \$500.*

Lisa Miller has felt that she cannot morally accept the court rulings and must do as those who could not

morally accept the 1793 Fugitive Slave Act and must do what they felt morally right to do—help slaves escape.

Commentator 1. *“Tim Miller belongs in prison, as does Lisa Miller (who also needs mental health counseling). Hopefully the child survives the ordeal.”*

Commentator 2. *“Kidnapping in the name of Jesus!! Thank God I’m a Christian!!”*

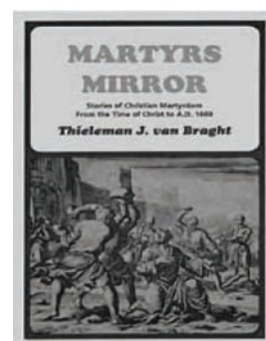
Commentator 3. *“In Mike we see yet another example of a “good Christian”—one who justifies kidnapping a child from her legal parent² by comparing that crime to freeing the slaves.*

“Kidnappers for Jesus! ... Given the severity of the problem, I’m wondering if all Christian clergy should be required to wear GPS tracking ankle bracelets, and we should establish a 2,000 foot “no-clergy zone” around areas frequented by children like schools, playgrounds, and residential housing? The “no-clergy zone” also needs to include hospital maternity wards and daycare centers.”

Mike Atnip. *Hmm. What about those who use the legal system to abduct a child from her biological parent? Suppose that ever has happened? Legalized abduction!*

Commentator 1. *“Mike, that happens every day in family law court. As this case proves, some biological parents are unfit and can’t be trusted with the welfare of their children.”*

Mike Atnip. *Timo Miller will be in court tomorrow. Timo is an honest man, a so-called “Anabaptist.” He will not lie about his involvement in this. (He may plead the 5th ... I don’t know.) But he is not expected to deny the fact that he and quite a large number of us who were not involved feel a conscientious and ethical imperative to aid biological parents keep their children from being turned over to those who are not the biological parent [on the basis of homosexual unions].*



The Martyrs Mirror is a history of the clash between Christ’s kingdom and the kingdoms of this world.

2. At the time of her leaving the USA, Lisa Miller still had legal custody of her child. The commentator here (and other places) makes some broad statements, maybe just to be inflammatory.



The Isaac Wenger home was a stop in the Mennonite Underground Railroad in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. This “line” helped conscientious objectors escape to the North during the Civil War.

Civil law always subjects itself to the higher law of conscience. While we as “Anabaptists” do strive to obey civil law, we have a history book 1000 pages thick (called *Martyrs Mirror*) of those who have suffered imprisonment, beheadings, and other harassments from civil governments for doing what we feel was a moral and ethical imperative. We are thankful that the US government has treated us with the greatest respect in these areas, better than any other government has.

We do not generally take part in civil government, we do not take up arms (some of us have sat in jails in practically all the wars of the USA for being conscientious objectors, and two of our young men died from mistreatment by US officials during WW I for refusing to take arms) and we do not sue at courts.

Want to join us? It’s a voluntary society that overcomes evil with good and does not take revenge when misunderstood. We have sat the equivalent of thousands of years in jails for our beliefs and actions. We may add a few more to that number in the case of Timo Miller.

Call it “Christian Sharia” or call it what you want. We firmly believe that conscience trumps human institutions called civil law. And we have committed ourselves to die for that, if those who do not agree decide to kill us or punish us for our ethical standards.

But we do not fight back in the flesh. We will not take up arms. We will not mount a political campaign to force our convictions on others. We choose to live them and invite others to join us, but we do not force. Like our Master, we do what we understand to be right, and expect to suffer for it from those who do not understand.

Commentator 1. “Our secular civil law trumps your Christian Sharia law every time. You have no more right to violate our civil laws than does Scott Roeder.”³

Hopefully the other members of the child abduction ring will be captured and imprisoned too. They deserve justice.”

Mike Atnip. Scott Roeder violated civil law, and the ethics and teachings of Jesus’ law. I am sorry to have to say it for the name “Christian,” but 90% of those who claim that name do not follow Jesus’ teaching.

And neither do I want to say that we “Anabaptists” do it perfectly. But Scott Roeder would have been excommunicated from our congregations if he had been a member (As would have been George Tiller).⁴

We call it “the doctrine of the two kingdoms.” We live in Jesus’ kingdom by His laws, and strive to obey the civil kingdom we also live in. Sometimes the laws of the two kingdoms conflict—as in Timo Miller’s case—and we recognize that we will have to suffer from the earthly kingdom. But we have absolutely no intention of extending Jesus’ law by force; neither military nor political force.”

Commentator 1. “I wasn’t aware that the US constitution had an exemption for Anabaptists, or that civil crimes were graded on theological effort. I think it’s more of a pass/fail kind of thing.

“Hopefully the other cult members will be captured quickly and given lengthy sentences so that they can’t harm any more innocent children.”

Commentator 2. “Jerry Falwell’s ministries/Liberty University with a big batch of “lawyers” (if you can call them that) are trying to keep a child from her other parent by illegal means.”

Mike Atnip. We are not a part of what Falwell/Liberty University does. Our methods and ethics are distinct from theirs. While we may both be on the same side of moral issues in some cases, our view of following Christ is quite distinct. It is a case of Baptist versus Anabaptist in this situation.

We recognize that civil governments do not make exemptions, although in some cases they have, like in giving us conscientious objector status when we tell them we cannot, in good conscience, kill another human. But we fully expect that civil governments not understand us in some cases. And we will have to suffer without resistance for doing what we understand as right. Even so, we have no intentions of trying to force the civil government to our ethics. Ethical and moral decisions made by force are not a part of Christ’s kingdom.

You are still invited to join us! Be forewarned. One has to take up a thing called a cross to join us. That



Two Hutterites, Joseph and Michael Hofer, died at Leavenworth Military Prison in Kansas from mistreatment received from US military officials for refusing to bear arms in WW I.

3. Scott Roeder murdered George Tiller on 31 May, 2009.

4. George Tiller was a late-term abortion doctor from Wichita, Kansas.

means you have to give up all rights to self-defense and accept the lordship of Someone higher. It hurts, believe me. I mean, like Timo Miller. It sure would be a lot easier to lie to the judge, to sue back, to fight with a gun ...

Commentator 1. *“Hmmm ... sounds like we need to put GPS ankle bracelets on all Anabaptists and monitor them closely. I was hoping we could limit it to the clergy, but it looks like the entire cult might be involved.*

Now Timo’s the victim? ROFLOL (Rolling On Floor, Laughing Out Loud)?

I hope as a homophobe he enjoys prison life for many years.

[End of discussion.]

Christian Sharia

What do Muslims, Jews, Catholics, Mormons, Evangelicals, and the homosexual movement have in common? They are all perpetrators of their values by the use of force. Each band uses political, judicial, and/or military power to enforce its moral and ethical standard on others. Judges with gavels, prisons, lawsuits, political campaigns ... these are the signs of a worldly kingdom. Both a strict Muslim kingdom and a liberal gay-rights depend on coercion.

As much enmity as there is between homosexuals and organized religions that ban their perverted deeds, they all operate outside the kingdom of God when they use force to push their morality—or the lack thereof—on those who differ. In the case of Timo Miller, the State of Vermont and the homosexual movement seem bent on forcing everyone to accept the validity of their immorality. A big batch of lawyers and law enforcement officers will try to force acceptance of their moral standards on everyone ... like it or not.

It is at this point that the kingdom of God differs from the kingdoms of this world. While the kingdom of God has what is probably the highest moral and ethical standard in the world, force is never used to propagate the kingdom. It is voluntary. Either one freely decides (by faith) to become part of the kingdom of God, or he simply does not enter in. No one will force him with a sword or a lawsuit to walk in the teachings of Jesus.

And it is at this point that “kingdom Christianity” parts ways with Evangelicals, Catholics, Orthodox, and other “Christians.” The only tools used to propagate the

5. This statement is highly debatable considering the treatment of Indians, slaves, and the murder and destruction of all American wars, both domestic and foreign.

kingdom of God are teaching and example. The only “discipline” is the purposeful withdrawal of fellowship from those who say, but do not do. Where the political campaigns begin and the war drums start to roll, or the sheriff slaps on the handcuffs, or the fines are imposed, there the kingdom of God ends.

The Two Kingdoms

The saints of God realize that they live in a world of two kingdoms. Their first allegiance is to King Jesus and His values, teachings, and ethics. If the civil kingdom that they reside in happens to allow the citizens of Christ’s kingdom to live their principles in peace, so be it! Historically, though, the majority of the time there has been a continuous battle for allegiance between the kingdom of God and the civil kingdom that Christians reside in.

We here in the USA have been blessed to live under a civil government that has been probably more favorable towards Christ’s ethics than any government in history.⁵ However, things are changing fast. One or two generations ago would probably have never seen Timo Miller getting arrested for helping a mother keep her child from being forced to leave her child with an unrelated lesbian. From the looks of things, it will not get any better in the following decades. The day may well come—sooner than we think—when children will be required by law to be indoctrinated with the perverted values of the pagan society that the USA is becoming. Either make “Heather Has Two Mommies” a part of your homeschool curriculum, or the Social Services will take your children ... and place them with Frank and Joe, the new “couple” just down the street who have recently been given foster care rights.

When your children are taken and placed in such an environment, the clash of the kingdoms will suddenly ring loud and clear! You will then have to make a decision as to which kingdom you will adhere to. And adhering to Christ’s kingdom may find you facing a stern judge with a big gavel.

Thump!!! “Guilty! Two years of suspended jail and the loss of parental rights for ...”

Are we ready?

— First printed in *The Remnant* in May/June 2011

Editor’s Note: *This article does a good job of showing the hostility of sinners in the kingdoms of the world toward those living in the Kingdom of God. The article is not so clear about confronting sinners with the need for repentance and the coming judgment (Acts 17:30-31).*



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“The more things you own, the more things own you.”

– Joe Bauman at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“Everyone belongs to the same race—a race created in the image of God.”

– Tim Miller at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“Ask not how much of my money shall I give to God, but how much of God’s money shall I keep for myself.”

– Anthony Martin at Texter Mountain Mennonite Church, PA



“Faith requires action. You cannot learn to bike if you do not get onto the bike.”

– Abel Cardos at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“Guilt looks backward. Forgiveness looks forward.”

– Teddy Allen at Stricklers Mennonite Church, PA



“Over the years of my life I have discovered one of the highest pleasures I can experience is to do something for someone else.”

– Mose Stoltzfus at Charity Christian Fellowship, PA



“The hardest work of any church leader is the hard work of dealing with his own heart issues.”

– David Yoder at Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, OK



“If you could choose either to go back in time to see your ancestors or ahead to see your descendants, which would you choose?”

– Tom Byler at Carlton Old Order Amish, PA



“In true giving, one is more interested in the welfare of the recipient than about receiving anything back.”

– Finny Kuruvilla at Followers of the Way, MA



“Many people are afraid of global warming. I am more afraid of spiritual cooling.”

– John Lengacher at Lenawee Mennonite Church, MI

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

Things Polluted by Idols

by Ernest Strubhar

A response to the question in AV 20, page 9: *How do you reconcile the seeming contradiction between Paul's "concerning the eating of things offered to idols" (1 Corinthians 8:4) and the command "to abstain from things polluted by idols" (Acts 15:20)?*

Scripture Does Not Contradict Itself

I start with the presupposition that the Holy Scriptures, properly understood, do not contradict themselves. The Holy Spirit who guided the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 15:28) also inspired Paul to write I Corinthians. He does not change; He does not contradict himself. I cannot imagine that Paul, man though he was, would ever contradict the apostolic decree. So I look for an interpretation that reconciles the seeming contradiction. I try to do what we should always do to interpret Scripture: (1) examine the full context, and (2) compare the Scriptures in focus with other relevant Scriptures.

A Decree to Keep

Acts 15:1 reports a big problem in Antioch: *"Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"*

The question was simple: Must Gentile Christians become Jewish proselytes and keep the Law of Moses? The future of Jesus' church was at stake.

Paul and Barnabas opposed those teachers and took the question right back to Jerusalem. The apostles, at least many of them, were still there. They led the church to a decision that settled this question and blessed the church (See Acts 15; 16:4-5).

Acts 15:28-29 records their decision: *"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."*
[italics added].

That's it. Simple and straightforward. But this question of eating foods offered to idols kept coming up. In fact, Paul devotes three chapters of I Corinthians to it.

Putting Events in Order

Before we look at the different passages that refer to "things offered to idols," let us get a clear timeline of the events and Scriptures I reference. The following dates put events in order, but the years are approximate:

- A.D.46- Paul begins his first missionary journey
- A.D.48- The Acts 15 "Jerusalem Council"
- A.D.50- Paul preaches in Corinth on his second missionary journey
- A.D.55- Paul writes I Corinthians from Ephesus (third missionary journey)
- A.D.88- John writes his first epistle
- A.D.95- Jesus gave His message to the churches (Revelation 2-3)

Commands for All the Churches

Think about it. When Paul left the Jerusalem Council, he took the letter written by the apostles as he started his second missionary journey. In that journey, he read that letter to the churches as "decrees to keep" (Acts 16:4) including, I suppose, to the newly founded church in Corinth. Perhaps five years later, Paul got a letter from Corinth with several questions (see I Corinthians 7:1). One of those questions was about eating foods offered to idols.

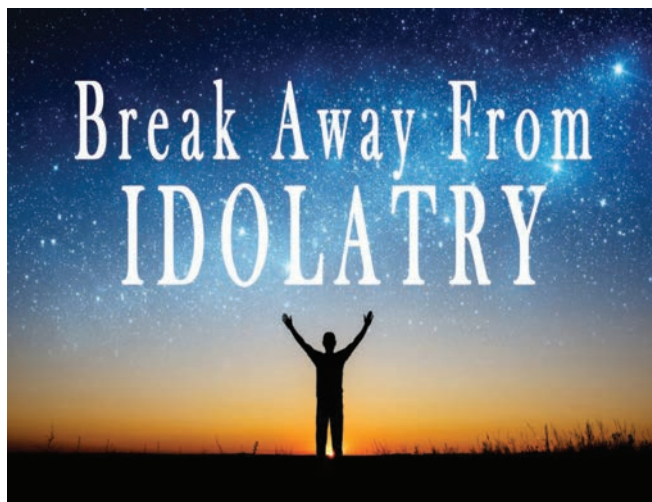
We don't have the questions they asked in that letter, but we can guess what they were, based on Paul's reply. So let's look at Paul's answer to the Corinthians' question.

Three Chapters: One Subject

To understand what Paul says about the foods-offered-to-idols question, we must read I Corinthians 8:1 to 11:1 as a unit. We often miss this because Paul "detours" in 9:1 to 10:10 to seemingly unrelated material. As I see it, Paul uses that long "detour" to explain the strong statement he makes in the last verse of chapter 8: *"Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble."* Then in 10:11 to 11:1, he returns to the food-and-idols question he introduced in chapter 8.

"I Stand with the Other Apostles"

So let's look first at I Corinthians 8. Paul begins in 8:1, *"Now concerning things sacrificed to idols."* Similarly, in 8:4, *"Concerning, then, the eating of things sacrificed to idols."* Immediately after both these statements, Paul says, *"We know."*



That gives us a clue. I think the Corinthians were saying, “We all have knowledge, not just you apostles who met in Jerusalem. In fact, we have superior knowledge that contradicts what you apostles decided.”

Paul could have exercised his apostolic authority and ordered them to “shape up and submit.” He understood what many of us need to learn: many challenges to church leaders’ decisions are better met by appeals than by a display of authority. So in this chapter, Paul reasons with the Corinthians, in essence saying—“Just a minute; what you know, we know, too.”

Paul has more to say to those who opposed the decrees given by the apostles. “Your knowledge is puffing you up. But you lack love that builds up. You who boast of your knowledge do not know anything yet that you ought to know, not until you know how to love” (8:1-3).

In verse 4 he turns what the Corinthians said right back to them: “We know [just as well as you do] that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.”

Then in verse 7 Paul, in effect asks, “You who know so much, do you know that your brothers with weak consciences are being defiled by you eating foods sacrificed to idols?”

In this chapter, we need to see how Paul gently reasons with those who opposed the Jerusalem decrees. He does not whip them into submission. He deals with their immaturity redemptively. One more example: In verse 8:8, Paul again agrees with what they said, “Eating, or not eating, does not make us better or worse before God.”

However, in the rest of that paragraph (8:9-12), Paul says, “Yes, but ... what you do affects others. If you take this liberty, you may make your brother perish, and

in the process you sin against Christ.”

At the end of this “yes-but” chapter, Paul stakes out a strong position: “If eating food sacrificed to idols causes someone to stumble, I will never again eat meat [*offered to idols*]” (8:13). There he says it! Paul stands firmly with the Acts 15 apostolic decrees, “I will not knowingly eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols.”

Paul could have stopped there, but he didn’t—we shouldn’t either. Paul wants his readers to understand why he takes this position.

Paul’s Personal Example

In chapter 9, Paul uses his own example to show the Corinthians how he lives by this principle of avoiding offense, always refraining from anything that would make another stumble.

First, Paul says, “I have a right, as an apostle and as the founder of your church, to tell you what to do, but I am not using that right.” Then he adds, “Barnabas and I have the right to marry, like the other apostles, but we have not exercised that right for the sake of the Gospel” (9:1-7).

Paul goes on: “I have a right to be supported in my ministry, but I would rather die than demand support” (9:8-18).

In the final verses of the chapter, Paul says, “I limit my liberties. I make myself a servant of all. I do it for the Gospel’s sake. Though I am an apostle, I discipline my body and spare no effort to make my life and ministry a blessing to all. No sacrifice is too great” (9:19-27).

And remember, Paul wrote this whole chapter to show those who argued that they could eat food sacrificed to idols that they were forgetting to love their brothers sacrificially. He ends chapter 9 in the same way that he ends chapter 8, with an appeal to his own example: “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (verse 27).

But that’s not all.

The Example of Ancient Israel

In I Corinthians 10, Paul begins with the glorious, yet tragic story of Israel’s exodus. What a powerful display of God’s glory those people saw! What deliverance! What salvation! And it parallels Christian experience: baptism, spiritual food and drink. What an amazing account!

But then what happened? Those Israelites who experienced all of that salvation and glory got tangled up in idolatry and immorality. And they perished! Why did Paul write this? He wrote to warn the folks who said that idols are nothing and food is good, even if it is sacrificed to idols. “Yes,” he says, “you have a point. But beware. You are no better than those Israelites. Take heed lest you, too, fall” (10:11-12).

The Point of It All

At the end of his long detour of supporting examples, Paul drives home his point: **“Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry” (11:14).** “Flee!” (a strong word). “Flee!” not just for your brother’s sake, but for your own sake.

This Lines Up with Other Scriptures

Many years later, John ended his epistle with the same message: **“Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).**

Near the end of the first century, our Lord Jesus, who has all authority in heaven and on earth, makes it clear in His messages to the seven churches: “Those who eat foods sacrificed to idols, and those who teach that you may, need to repent!” (See Revelation 2:14, 20). After all, it was His Spirit who directed the apostles to write the Acts 15:29 decree, **“Abstain from things offered to idols.”**

But we are not yet to the end of the three-chapter unit in I Corinthians.

Paul’s Conclusion

Paul wraps up his teaching about eating foods offered to idols in I Corinthians 10:16-11:1. Let me tell you what I see there:

“I speak to wise men. Think through what I am saying. We Christians eat and drink at a spiritual altar in our communion service, like the ancient Israelites ate at the altar where they made their sacrifices (see, for example, Exodus 29:31-33). We who are the body of Christ partake of Christ. When I warn you to stay away from foods sacrificed to idols, am I saying that an idol is anything? No! Am I saying that the food is contaminated? Not really. But the Gentiles who sacrifice food to idols are actually sacrificing it to demons” (see I Corinthians 10:15-20).¹

Did you get that? “Flee from idols because demons lurk behind those idols.”

With that clarified, Paul moves beyond his kind appeals and gentle reasoning. He speaks authoritatively and emphatically: “You cannot eat and drink with demons at their table, and then come and eat and drink at the table of our Lord. That would provoke the Lord to jealousy!” (see 10:21-22).

Paul anticipates the Corinthians’ reaction: “All things are lawful to me.” I believe that me-centered Corinthians were saying this, not Paul. Paul tells them, in essence: “You are missing the point. Ask not, “Is it lawful?” but ask, “Is it profitable? Is it edifying to the [church] body?” (10:23-24).

Having spoken so clearly, Paul does not want his readers to live in paralyzing fear that they might partake with demons unknowingly. So he adds, “You may eat whatever is sold in the marketplace, or whatever is set before you, without asking questions because it belongs to God. However, as soon as you become aware that what you are eating was sacrificed to idols, stop eating it” (10:25-30).

In Paul’s Own Words

In this article, I have abridged and paraphrased the message to make it easier to capture the flow of thought. Now, let me quote Paul’s final words on eating foods sacrificed to idols straight from Scripture. Notice how Paul moves past gentle appeals to three clear commands I have placed in boldface type.

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ” (I Corinthians 10:31 to 11:1 NKJV).

Questions for AV22 “Round Table Discussion”

1. How is American culture today similar to Corinthian culture?
2. What idols do Americans worship?
3. How can the church avoid American idol worship?

1. The Corinthians would have read this in the Septuagint Scriptures: “All the gods of the nations are demons” (Psalm 96:5).

The Mystery of Christ

by Daniel Stutzman

One of the reasons a mystery exists is that there are things hidden from our eyes or understanding. Paul says he was given the opportunity to see into this mystery and to make it known to the sons of men. “God, who created everything, wanted me to help everyone understand the mysterious plan that had always been hidden in God’s mind” (Ephesians 3:9 CEV).

God revealed to Paul the mystery of Christ, “which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men ... but has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 3:3-5).

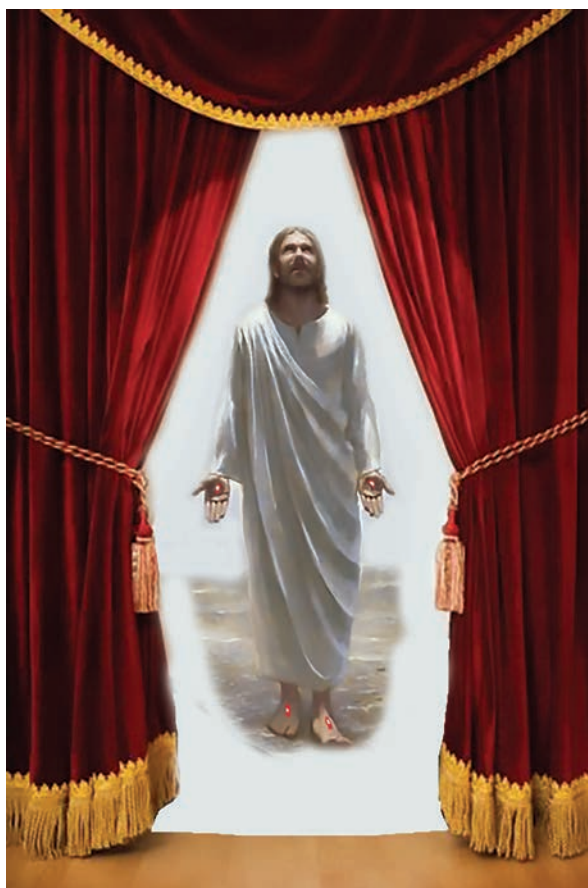
In Paul’s view, the mystery of Christ was what had been revealed to him in direct conflict with his talented learning of the Scriptures. This Jesus whom he was persecuting was the thread of hope shining through the 4000 years previous, and interwoven in the 1000 years of Law and Prophets.

I Peter 1 tells us that until Christ came, Christ remained a mystery to the Old Testament prophets—and the angels—even though they desired to understand these things. Peter wrote, “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” (I Peter 1:10-12). Yes, even God’s chosen vessels could not fathom the riches that are open to us today.

Another reason the mystery remained until the coming of Christ, was God’s unique ability to reveal truth and to hide the mystery from those He wanted to remain in darkness.

In Matthew 13:10 Jesus’ disciples asked, “Why do you speak in parables?” Jesus answered them, “Because

it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Matthew 13:11).



The Mystery of Christ Revealed

Jesus is also spoken of as revealing things which had “been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:35). Until Christ died and rose again from the dead, even the disciples did not understand the mystery of Christ.

Yes, the mystery of Christ is revealed in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. When the shrouds of death fell away from Jesus and He burst with life from the tomb, the shrouds of mystery began to fall away. It was a plan of redemption and restoration, marvelous in both its brilliance and its simplicity.

This is what the two on the way to Emmaus felt burning in their breasts as Jesus “opened to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:32).

Later that day these same truths excited the disciples in the upper room when Jesus appeared to them and removed the mystery about himself. “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.

“And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45).

In conclusion, the mystery of Christ is the eternal purpose which God had/has for a people—called out, precious, and peculiar—as a result of His only begotten Son who gave His life for us (Ephesians 3:11). In short, ALL of the truths concerning Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures stand revealed to us in the New Testament.

D. S. | Belize

The King Is Coming

by James G. Landis

An imaginary story of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem based on the four gospel accounts.

My name is Cleopas. I am a disciple of the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee. I want to tell you some of the stirring events that happened in Jerusalem recently.¹ Jews from all over the world came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. People filled all the inns and food became scarce in some areas.

This year was different from other years. For several years now, we have heard of the miracles and teachings of Jesus, but at Passover we usually do not hear or see much of him in Jerusalem. Yes, we normally hear Jesus has been around, but not much is said about him. This year many people were talking about him.

Many Jews thought Jesus must be the promised Messiah because of all the wonderful signs He had done. He had even raised Lazarus from the dead. Beyond that, His glorious teaching about his coming kingdom of righteousness and justice for all men would throw off the yoke which the Jewish leaders put upon us. And of course, a popular Jewish king would also free Israel from the imperial Romans.

I got word that Jesus and His disciples had arrived at Bethany, only two miles from Jerusalem. I and a great number of other Jews hurried to Bethany. We wanted to see both Jesus and Lazarus because many of us had been present when Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb.²

At Bethany, Mary and Martha served Jesus and his disciples a dinner in His honor while Lazarus reclined at the table with Jesus. During the meal Mary poured a pint of pure nard—this nard was worth about a year's wages—on Jesus' feet and then wiped them with her hair. The fragrance of the perfume filled the house and some even drifted outside where the crowd gathered.

Mary's act of devotion incensed Judas Iscariot. Jesus said a strange thing: "Let her alone, Judas; she has done this for me instead of waiting for my burial. You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me." We passed this saying on to all the Jews in the crowd, but none of us understood what it meant.³

Because of Lazarus, many of the Jews who saw him believed in Jesus as the Messiah. When we returned to Jerusalem, those of us who believed in Jesus continued to spread the word that "the prophet" was at Bethany.

The next day a great crowd went out to meet Jesus and His disciples as they made their way toward Jerusalem. Jesus rode on a donkey colt while its mother walked quietly along beside it. Jesus sat on the cloaks of his disciples and many people threw their garments on the road ahead of him. Some cut palm branches from the trees along the way and laid them on the road for the colt to walk on.

The crowd cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!" The cries grew louder and louder as the excitement mounted. Jesus smiled and waved at the crowd as he rode slowly along. It was all just like the prophet Zechariah had said it would be: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt." Everything fit Zechariah's words. The day had finally come. The prophet Jesus must be the Messiah!

As Jesus drew near to the city, He looked out over Jerusalem. He began to weep. As He gazed at Jerusalem in all its glory He cried out, "O Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets. The days will come when your enemies will surround you and close you in on every side. They will not leave one stone upon another because you did not recognize that I have come."⁴ Ah, I thought. *Jesus is the King of the Jews, the Messiah.* But why then is He weeping and predicting such awful things about Jerusalem? I just did not understand.

Some Pharisees came out of the city to see what was going on. They were not smiling at the tumult. Some of them cried from the crowd, "Master, rebuke your disciples." But Jesus shouted back at them, "I tell you that if these people should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."⁵

When Jesus arrived at the Eastern Gate, the gate into Jerusalem closest to the temple, Jesus turned His donkey to face the following crowd and held up his hand. The cheering thousands quieted. Jesus shouted, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

1. Jesus' public ministry is thought to have ended around AD 33. The population during the Passover of this year was likely over one million people, while the normal population of Jerusalem might have been 600,000.

2. John 12:9. | 3. John 12:16 | 4. Luke 19:41-44 | 5. Luke 19:39-40

“If anyone serves me, let him follow me; and where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, him my Father will honor. Now my soul is troubled, and should I say, ‘Father save me from this hour’? No, for this purpose I came into the world.”

Then looking up to heaven, Jesus shouted, “FATHER, GLORIFY YOUR NAME.”

In response to his prayer, it thundered long and loud, even though no clouds blotted out the sun. I was not sure, but I believed an angel had spoken to Jesus.⁶ I was ready to honor Him, to follow Him, to serve Him. I just waited for Him to declare himself King.

Jesus again turned His donkey around and entered the city. Slowly Jesus and the throng surrounding Him moved noisily toward the temple.

My spine tingled. I knew something big would happen when Jesus, the Son of David, reached the temple. And it did.

When Jesus drew up to the temple gates he stopped his donkey and surveyed the scene inside. With all the buying and selling going on within, it resembled a town marketplace. Money changers were seated at their

tables changing money into temple coins. Merchants sold lambs and doves to pilgrims from afar. Noise and chaos seemed to rule the place. The noise from the approaching multitude added to the confusion. Shouts of “HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST” and “HOSANNA TO THE SON OF DAVID” overrode the other noise.

Then Jesus acted and the crowd cheered. He got off his donkey and angrily entered the temple courtyard. He shouted, “IT IS WRITTEN, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER,’ BUT YOU HAVE MADE IT A DEN OF THIEVES.” Then he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves and drove the animals from the temple. The great crowd, including children, packed into the temple and kept shouting, “HOSANNA TO THE SON OF DAVID.”

The moneychangers stooped down and gathered up the coins the best they could and quickly exited the temple. The merchants fled lest they be trampled under foot. No-one liked these temple hucksters because they knew these men cheated them.

The Pharisees were indignant. “Master, do you hear what these children are saying right here in the temple?”

Jesus answered them, “Yes, I hear. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants God has perfected praise?’”⁷ The Pharisees could do nothing against what Jesus had done in the temple because they knew the people would stone them.⁸

After things had quieted down, the blind and the lame came into the temple and Jesus healed them. The whole crowd watched in amazement at the wonderful signs Jesus did. Everyone praised God and a swelling undercurrent determined to make Jesus king.

But Jesus told his admirers, “If I am lifted up, I will draw all peoples to myself.”



The people answered Jesus, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; how can you say, ‘The son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”

Jesus answered them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”⁹

The crowd pressed in closer. Someone spoke, “We believe in the light and we believe you are the Son of David who is to be the King of Israel. We will make you king.”

But Jesus suddenly disappeared.¹⁰

I, Cleopas, saw all the wonderful signs Jesus had done among the people and I believed He was the Son of God. I saw His glory. I believed Jesus was the one who would redeem Israel from the bondage of the Romans.¹¹ But I could not make sense of the things that happened that day, so I took all these things and pondered them in my heart.

6. John 12:23-29 | 7. Matthew 21:12-16 | 8. Mark 11:15-17 | 9. John 12:32-36 | 10. John 12:36 | 11. Luke 24:21

The Risen Lord

by David Peachey

“I am the resurrection and the life.”

– John 11:25

Let us dive into the Living Water of the Word and get a glimpse of how God worked in one of the most exciting times in history. On a certain first day of the week almost 2000 years ago, two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. This was a special first day of the week. It was Resurrection Day!

It appears that the two disciples were not totally convinced Jesus had actually risen from the dead. You see, their eyes had not been opened yet. Along came a “stranger” who walked with them, and asked about their conversation and their sadness. After listening to them He had this to say, **“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”** (Luke 24:25-26 NIV).

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27).

“Scriptures?” you ask. “What Scriptures—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?” No, it was Scriptures taken from the Old Testament. Check out Luke 24:44. **“And he said unto them, ‘These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.’”**

Many times, Jesus told the crowds and His disciples, “It happened like this that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.” Jesus said it in John 13:18 when speaking of Judas while teaching His disciples to serve one another: **“That the Scripture may be fulfilled, ‘He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.’ Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.”** The reason Jesus pointed to the Old Testament Scriptures was so that when the disciples saw those prophecies fulfilled in Him, they would believe He was who He said He was: *the Son of God*.

Another example where Jesus talked about the Scripture being fulfilled is found in Matthew 26:54. When the mob came to arrest Jesus in the Garden, He asked, **“How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”** (NIV).

As Jesus walked with the two on the way to Emmaus,

He explained to them what was said about himself in the Scriptures. Their hearts throbbed within them as they began to understand what those Scriptures meant. The two rushed back to Jerusalem where the disciples were gathered and they began to unfold the wonders of their new understanding. Then Jesus suddenly appeared in person.

They were all filled with joy and amazement as they watched Him eat a piece of broiled fish. I can picture them gathered around Him with their mouths open and their eyes fixed upon Him. As He sat, perhaps on a bench in their midst with the palms of His hands turned up, He said, *“Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.”*¹ Perhaps the whole congregation seated themselves on the floor ready to listen so that not one of Jesus’ words would “fall to the ground.” A holy stillness permeated the room.

At that point Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. As the ten disciples pressed in upon Him so they might not miss one word, Jesus said, “My death and resurrection should not surprise you. I told you before, *‘The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.’*”² At that time I told you not to tell anyone, but now you must tell everyone.

“Why are you so incredulous? I told you these things not just once, but many times. Matthew, do you not remember the day I plainly told you I must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that I must be killed and on the third day be raised to life?

“Peter, do you remember how, after I told you this, you took me aside and told me, ‘Never, Lord; this shall never happen to you!’ Do you remember what I told you? ‘Get behind me Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.’”³

“And the young man Mark who was in and out among us heard me say I must suffer and die. He too, heard my rebuke to Peter.”⁴

1. Luke 24:44 | 2. Matthew 16:21 | 3. Matthew 16:21-23 | 4. Mark 9:31

“Matthew, did you not hear me say the same thing a second time? ‘The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill Him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.’⁵

“Why are you so astounded by my death and resurrection? Just a few days ago when we were on the way up to Jerusalem, I plainly told all ten of you, ‘The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!’⁶

All twelve of you were there, but none of you could understand it. Why were you so slow to believe what I myself have told you?⁷

“Yes, you did not believe after I was dead and in the tomb, that on the third day God would raise me from the dead. But the chief priests and Pharisees heard my words and feared me. They went to Pilate and said, ‘Sir, we remember that while He was still alive that deceiver said, After three days I will rise again. So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.

“Pilate mocked them, ‘Take a guard,’ he said. ‘Go make the tomb as secure as you know how.’

“Peter, do you remember how in the Garden of Gethsemane that I told you to put your sword back in its sheath? I told you, ‘Do you not know that I can pray to the Father and he will send more than twelve legions of angels to protect me?’⁸

Pontius Pilate knew that the Jews could do nothing against the power of God. That is the reason he said, ‘as secure as you can’.

“Peter, James, and John, do you still not understand? I am the Son of God. I am your risen Lord and Master. I am all powerful. I have conquered sin, death, hell, and the grave.”

John, sitting on Jesus’ right side, and James, sitting on Jesus’ left side, crowded in a little tighter. “Lord,” John asked, “Are you going to restore David’s kingdom to Israel now?”

“James and John, open your ears. Do you not remember that I told you the kingdom of God would require service and suffering. If you want to be great in my kingdom, you must be slaves of one another. But whoever sits on my right hand and on my left hand when I come into my glory, is up to my Father. I came to earth to suffer and die and then to rise from the dead

that God’s kingdom might be established on earth.”⁹

“Simon Peter, are you listening? Let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David. King David was born 1,000 years ago. He reigned forty years over Israel and died at the age of 70. He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is still here in Jerusalem to this day.

“Being a prophet, David wrote in the Psalms concerning Me. ‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’¹⁰

“God had promised David on oath that one of His descendants would sit on David’s throne. Because David saw what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that He was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor would his body see decay. God has raised Me to life, and now you are all witnesses of it.”¹¹

“I see you believe in me, but you still do not understand. I will be with you a little while and then I must ascend unto the Father. But do not be alarmed. I will send you the Holy Spirit and He will guide you into all truth. After I leave, you must wait a few days right here in Jerusalem until the Feast of Firstfruits. The prophet Joel has foretold the coming of this great and glorious day.

“ ‘After My departure, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

“I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.”¹²

“Dear ones, I have told all of you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the

5. Matthew 17:22-23 | 6. Matthew 20:18-19 | 7. Luke 18:31-34
8. Matthew 26:52-53

9. Matthew 20:20-28. Mark 10:35-37 | 10. Psalm 16:8-11
11. Acts 2:25-32 | 12. Joel 2:28-32

world.” After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven, and all in the room fell before Jesus with their faces touching the floor. And Jesus prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those you have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave Me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent Me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave Me, so that they may be one as we are one.

“While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Set them apart by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For I set them apart myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given Me because you loved Me before the creation of the world.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love you have for Me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” ¹³

When He had said this, He breathed the breath of life upon them, and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” ¹⁴

Then silence. Eyes opened as the familiar and loving voice of the Master ceased. Jesus was gone! The awe and reverence among all those gathered in the room continued while the glory of the resurrected Lord lingered. The sun dropped over the horizon and the light in the room slowly dimmed.

Peter spoke. “The Lord is risen as He said.”

A muffled chorus rose from the throats of excited worshipers, “He is risen indeed.” After they had sung a hymn they unlocked the doors and two by two the rejoicing worshipers departed into the night.

*On the first day of the week,
a New Creation began
with the resurrection
of Jesus from the dead!
“If anyone is in Christ, the
new creation has come.”
2 Corinthians 5:17”
The old has gone,
the new is here!*

13. John 17:1-26 | 14. John 20:21-23



Taking Wing Upward: Part II

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

Review of Part I:

Jay Johnson and Katherine Ryther meet in Texas while both are committed to terms of service in the US Air Force. Kaity has already made a decision to serve the Lord while Jay is largely indifferent to the Bible and the knowledge of God. Through reading the Bible as his current novel, Jay comes to believe the Bible is true and more than just a story book. After he and Kaity hear a stirring message recounting Christ's mission on earth, Jay tells Kaity in the parking lot that he, too, is committing his life to following Christ.

Step by step God then leads them to Bible truths and to people who set an example for them that challenges and changes their conception of Christianity. The two of them see that practices of their many Christian

friends do not line up with Bible teaching. When they ask a particularly well-versed Christian friend why most Christians do not obey these Bible teachings, he gives them the stunning reply, “I don't know.”

Jay and Kaity wanted to live out the true gospel wherever that would take them. God was faithful in leading them along when they willingly obeyed Him. Jay made this wonderful statement: “We find that things become more clear to us the more we do what He says.”

One test came when they moved with two small children to San Antonio, Texas. All the churches they attended in the area wanted them to put their children in the nursery during the worship service while Jay and Kaity were determined to keep Caleb and Hannah with them.

April 1998

“After trying five different churches with the same result,” Kaity whimpered through her tears, “nobody wants our children.”

“God will help us,” I assured her. And He did teach us many things about a godly way to raise children.

One afternoon while strolling through the Riverwalk Mall in San Antonio, we spied a woman and her little girl leaving a store called “The Purple Store.” Coincidentally, the two were both dressed in simple purple dresses. What really caught our attention was that they looked similar to the way the people dressed at Charity in Pennsylvania. They both were neatly dressed in modest dresses and had a white cap on their heads.

Kaity elbowed me gently and whispered, “I wonder where they go to church.”

Thoroughly frustrated with our church searching, I said emphatically, “Why don't you go up and ask them?”

We learned the two were visiting from Pennsylvania, but the woman's brother was in a Mennonite church at Bastrop, Texas. The woman called later and gave Kaity her brother's phone number. Kaity rang the number.

Fearing more rejection, she timidly began, “We would like to visit your church on Sunday, but we have two small children. Would it be alright if we kept them with us during the service?”

On the other end of the line came the excited reply, “A baby! We haven't had a baby in our church for a long time. We would be glad if you all joined us this Sunday!”

Although I worked 12-hour days while flying in Texas, I had nearly every weekend and holiday off. We drove the hour and a half to Bastrop on Sunday. I am not sure what I was expecting since I knew nothing about Mennonites. Thirty people were present. The service was held in what appeared to be a storage shed on the edge of the pastor's land. We were warmly welcomed.

I listened intently during the service for anything that might not match up with the Bible. I found nothing unscriptural; they truly loved Jesus and preached His Good News. After the service, they wanted to get to know us. Nothing they said sounded judgmental, arrogant, or unkind. It was one of the most positive church experiences I had ever had, and after only one day I felt unconditionally accepted. Kaity was impressed at how the men were masculine, yet gentle.

During the drive to Bastrop, Kaity and I had listened to preaching tapes. After each practical teaching message, we discussed and cross-checked everything in the Bible. We asked each other these questions: Why does the Bible say to do such-and-such, and we don't see it in our Christian churches? Why do we hear good, biblical sermons and don't see the teachings acted upon? Why does Christianity seem like simply a Sunday activity? Where is God during the rest of the week? What in our life needs to be changed?



Grace Mennonite Fellowship at Bastrop, Texas

Each Sunday was a blessing with the group of Christians at Bastrop. Without exception, they invited us to their homes after the service for lunch and a time of sharing. The atmosphere in their homes was like what I had witnessed at Aaron's home in Pennsylvania. There was no television, the people lived simply but not austere, and the children were well-behaved. They laughed easily, but the jokes were clean and not silly. Often they would pick up hymn books and sing for the enjoyment of it. We would talk about our faith and how it impacted our lives. The discussions were often deep and rich in wisdom. Sometimes in the late afternoon a small group would go to the local nursing home and sing. Each Sunday was full of learning about God.

As a military officer, I understood the concept—chain of command and obedience to authority. I thought of the centurion in Matthew chapter 8. I took a simple approach to my faith. If a truth from the Bible presented itself, either from a sermon or from other Christians, I felt it my duty to research and obey it if the statement proved to be God's truth. My benchmark was always the Word of God.

For example, was the television good for my family? Obviously, the TV is not evil in and of itself; it is just an object, but the programming seemed generally not healthy for my family. I asked myself, "Should my family be spending their time watching television or are there better ways to utilize our time?" My way of

obeying God in this area of my life was to get rid of the TV.

What about the way we dressed? How would God want Kaity and me to dress? I never thought He wanted us to wear robes and sandals, but men should dress like men and women should dress like women. Because of verses referring to discreetness and modesty, Kaity began wearing dresses and I wore slacks and button-down shirts. This was our way of obeying God in this area.

We analyzed each aspect of our lives and took action if we felt it would please God. If Jesus himself walked into our house, would He be pleased with what He saw? For example, we threw out books we thought He might not like. I had already given up alcohol before I got married to honor Kaity and prevent any temptation; thankfully, alcohol was not an issue.

In August 1998, we moved to Laughlin AFB in Texas and I began my work as a flight instructor. Now Bastrop was four hours away, so we only visited the Mennonite church once or twice a month. Usually, we arrived Saturday evening and spent the night at someone's house, then went to church and drove home Sunday evening. Each time we called to say we would visit, there seemed to be a kind-hearted "argument" among the families about who would host the Johnsons. We were honored to always be so welcome.



Beechcraft T-1A: USAF Advanced Flight Trainer

1999

Inspired by the Bible and our church experience, Kaity and I were each confronted by a truth that tested our obedience to God. After digging into the book of First Corinthians chapter eleven, Kaity was confronted with the doctrine of the headship veiling.

The Bible states that a Christian woman should cover her head. The Mennonites at our church chose to obey these verses by putting a small cloth, usually white in color, on their head and hair. This veiling combined

with modest, homemade dresses, distinguishes the conservative Mennonites. Our question was, “Is this a Mennonite tradition or Bible truth?”

Many of our friends and family were Christian, yet they did not follow what seemed clear in the Bible. Kaity felt that if she put a veil on her head, she truly needed to be convinced that it was the right thing to do. She also knew that if she wore a veil, her friends and family could not keep from noticing it. What would they think? How would they react, especially those who knew her since childhood? How would our Christian friends react?

The decision for Kaity to wear the Christian woman’s veil was a serious one. I was convinced that it would please God, yet I wanted the decision to be Kaity’s. I would stand behind her no matter what she decided. She made the decision to wear the veil based on her own conviction, without any pressure from church, friends, or me. She seemed to garner extra courtesy in public; there was no serious backlash from our family and friends. Overall, everyone was very respectful. We have been blessed to this day in ways that cannot be described.



Family reunion (1998) in Cody, Wyoming – the first time my family saw me with a veiling

At some point, it became obvious that the Mennonites did not believe in serving in the military. Also, I had read Charity Christian Fellowship’s statement of faith and knew they believed in the Christian doctrine of nonresistance. To their credit, the Mennonites warmly welcomed us always, and never pressured me with their belief in nonresistance. Yet this doctrine stared me in the face while I flew T-1A. Like Kaity with the veil, I had to learn if this was a Mennonite belief or from the heart of God. I truly wanted to follow Jesus and knew from Scripture that it might not be easy.

2000

In early 2000, while driving on a family vacation, I was discussing nonresistance with Kaity. I was wrestling with its truth and all the Bible verses that seemed to support it. How did flying the T-1A contradict Christ’s words, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you...”? I was teaching USAF pilots and never came in contact with America’s enemies.

Suddenly, I thought of my *Oath of Office*. The issue was not about whether I was teaching student pilots versus an army guy in a foxhole on the front lines in a war. The issue was my Oath of Office which I took when I joined the USAF and also each time I was promoted. I swore that I would “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. SO HELP ME GOD.”

I had to admit to myself that my true faith and allegiance belonged to Jesus Christ, not the United States, nor the Constitution. I could not defend the Constitution against all enemies and simultaneously obey Christ’s commands to “resist not evil,” and “love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.” I realized that I cannot “well and faithfully discharge my duties” and obey God’s command to practice nonresistance. As a member of the military, I was contributing to the overall goal of national offense/defense which, in the end, results in the taking of human life. Also, there is no person in the Air Force who is not part of the USAF mission. “*The Mission of the United States Air Force is to organize, train, and equip air forces for the conduct of prompt and sustained combat operations in the air.*”

This was all a sobering realization. I was depressed when I came to this conclusion. I really liked my job. I really liked the USAF and I still believed in the principles of the United States. I even still believed in defending the freedom we enjoy in this country. I didn’t want to get out of the Air Force, yet God’s authority trumps the authority of the United States. *I wanted to obey God and follow Him. In a way, I feared not obeying Him and losing a clear vision of His truth.*

I prayed, “Lord, I believe your doctrine of nonresistance is true. I want to obey You and will obey You, but please give me time to thoroughly research this. This is one of the biggest decisions of my life.” I felt God gave me this time, yet in my heart I wanted

to find a way to stay in the USAF with a clear conscience. I spent the next four months reading the Bible cover to cover in the light of nonresistance. I could not find a way that would biblically allow a Christian to serve in the military.

Without a doubt God has set up governments, including the military and police forces, to prevent chaos and punish criminals. However, *I do not see where Christians should be part of those forces.* Even today, I am pro-military and believe in the basic principles of the United States; however, as a Christian, I wanted to obey God above all.

I even talked to other Christians and wanted them to talk me out of taking a stand. “Please, using the Bible, convince me that the doctrine of nonresistance is not God’s truth.” Even my good friend, John, who is a Baptist missionary and knows the Bible extremely well, could not convince me that nonresistance is not God’s way. I also confided in an Air Force chaplain and asked him to convince me that it was God’s will for Christians to serve in the military. His arguments did not hold up to Scripture.

I wrote a position paper outlining my beliefs [see following page]. When I could delay no longer, I walked into my commander’s office on March 28, 2000. I cannot express how nervous I was. Nearly 13 years of service to my country was torpedoed in one day. I respectfully asked to be relieved of my commitment to the USAF. I stressed that my motives were pure and I would continue my duties to the best of my ability. I harbored absolutely no ill will toward the USAF or the United States; in fact, I loved my country and even the USAF. I was simply trying to obey God with a pure heart.

I was immediately grounded and told to continue fulltime as squadron scheduler while my commanders considered my case. As word spread to my colleagues, I was surprised at how respectful they were. I expected a severe backlash such as I had read from other conscientious objectors in history. I told my commander that I would not “spread” my views and had no intention of affecting morale; but if anyone asked, I would tell the truth about why I was grounded. My commander respected my decision, but obviously did not agree.

In the next four months, I was investigated to see if what I believed was consistent with my lifestyle. Our dress, Kaity’s veil, our children’s behavior and choice of entertainment helped convince the authorities that I was honest. It helped that I had a spotless military record and there was no imminent combat. I was interviewed by the base psychologist and given extensive psychological testing. The doctor even said, “You’re the most normal person I have ever met.”

Finally, a court hearing was held, directed by the base’s chief lawyer. My files were reviewed, the investigation results were presented, and several people were interviewed. They did not need to agree with me; they just needed to believe that I was sincere in my position.

All the evidence was compiled and sent to the Secretary of the Air Force. As the number three authority in the USAF, it was his decision to waive my commitment and let me out. In my heart, I wouldn’t have minded if they rejected my request, but I knew my Air Force career was ruined; if I stayed in the Air Force I would be ostracized and would never fly again.

On July 27, 2000, I received a call while on vacation in New Hampshire. I was given two weeks to vacate our government house and leave the USAF. It would take a week just to drive back to southwest Texas. With the help of relatives, we packed up the moving truck and I out-processed. To me it was a sad week; however, I could only look forward. There was no turning back.

End Note:

The Johnsons have continued their journey of trust in God as they traveled and lived for Him in various U.S. States and foreign countries as far away as China and Mongolia. They prized their 11 children and sought to give each one the best love and care that a godly home should have.

Kaity has this to say: “So many fellow pilgrims have taught, helped, and encouraged us along in our journey. We thank God for each of them.”

Today they live in Cheyenne, WY and attend Abundant Life Church in Cheyenne.



**Jay and Katie Johnson and their 11 children
together for Thanksgiving in Versailles, MO (2020)**

The Christian Doctrine of Nonresistance:

Why I Cannot Continue to Serve in the Military

Part of Jay's Personal Testimony

My family and I have had the blessed privilege of periodically attending Grace Mennonite Fellowship in Bastrop, Texas. The Christians at Grace truly have a heart to follow Jesus in literal, wholehearted obedience to His Word. This church has traditionally held to the doctrine of nonresistance and after careful examination of Scriptures, I came to the conclusion that the doctrine is true.

This is not a denominational doctrine; this is a Bible doctrine. I believe it is as basic a doctrine as Christ's virgin birth. Jesus Christ's life and death on the cross are the epitome of nonresistance. He clearly taught it to His disciples, and the early Christian church was undeniably nonresistant. *I truly believe it is a commandment of God that is required of all Christians.*

As a Christian and an officer in the United States Air Force, the realization of the doctrine of nonresistance left me in a very precarious situation. How could I justify my divided loyalty? How could I obey God and serve in the military with a clear conscience? The answer came in September 1999—I could not honestly do it. Based on Scripture, it is the will of God that all Christians are nonresistant. *Ideally, there should not be any Christians in the military or any occupation that requires the use of force against other people.*

Please understand, I have thoroughly enjoyed serving in the United States Air Force, and these issues are not related to my job satisfaction. Each job I have had has been very rewarding and challenging. Also, I realize as a T-1A instructor pilot I am already in a non-combatant role in the military.

Given the current political and economic climate, the likelihood of being called to a job in which I actually had to bear arms is very remote. However, as an officer in the Air Force I could be called at any time to take up arms and kill an enemy. In obedience to Jesus Christ I would not kill anyone. In fact, I would be obligated to help the needy and bless my enemy. With these beliefs, I cannot follow through with the Oath of Allegiance to the United States that I last swore in May 1996.

Knowing ahead of time that I would disobey a direct order to kill, I would be dishonest and double-minded if I were to hide my beliefs just to finish my commitment and get out of the US Air Force. Additionally, how

could I expect the other members of the military to trust me if my actions contradict my beliefs?

As an instructor pilot at Laughlin AFB, Texas, I was still doing my best to train pilots who could either drop bombs or directly contribute to the war effort, when there is one. I realize I signed a commitment to the U.S. Air Force through February 2002. However, since I have come to the knowledge of this truth in the Bible, I will obey God rather than an order that is clearly contrary to His Word (Acts 5:29).

As a Christian, I believe that no matter what military capacity I serve in, it is wrong in the sight of God. I am a soldier contributing to the execution of the nation's policy and my loyalty should not be divided between Jesus Christ and the USAF. ...

Nonresistance...

*I truly believe it is a
commandment of God
that is required of all
Christians.*

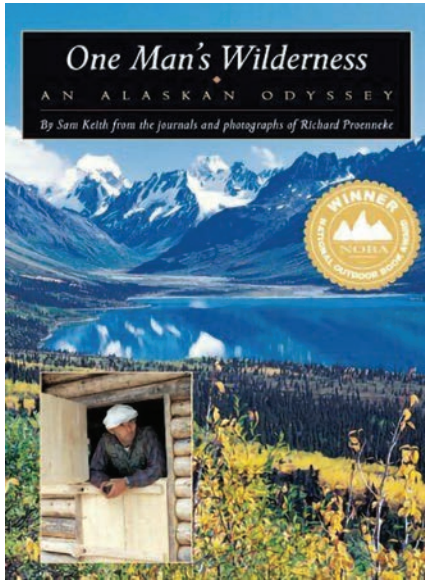
Summary

Once I became a Christian and began searching the truths of the Bible, I discovered the doctrine of nonresistance. The Scriptures are clear in showing how a Christian should relate to other people and the world around them. God has defined distinct roles for the Christian church and the state. As a member of the Kingdom of God, my responsibility is to submit to the authorities that are appointed over me as long as their requirements do not conflict with God's moral commands...

The doctrine of nonresistance is a command that I must follow as a Christian. ... As I consider my role in the Air Force and the Oath of Allegiance to the United States, I cannot honestly serve in the Air Force with a clear conscience.

One Man's Wilderness

Book report by Elijah Gray, age 14



One Man's Wilderness is a very interesting book, written by Sam Keith. Sam based the book on the real-life journals and photographs of Richard Proenneke.

The book follows the life of Richard as he lives in the isolated wilds of Alaska. The only other human character is a man called Babe who brings Richard supplies using a small airplane.

Richard was a single man when he moved to a remote region of Alaska in the year 1968. He loved nature and by building his own log cabin in the middle of it, he could enjoy it to the fullest.

Richard had many adventures during the decades he spent there, including the time a bear tried to break into the cabin right after he built it. The temperatures reached the extremes, going down to 50° degrees below zero (Fahrenheit).

My favorite part is when Richard rescues a baby moose after watching a brown bear kill its parent.

Towards the end of the book, Richard meets an angry grizzly bear while hiking up a mountain. Richard has nothing with him but a walking stick. He must either fight, or die trying.

I think others should read this book, not only to find out how Richard overcame the grizzly bear, but also because of its educational value in teaching people how to survive in the wild. I also think living in the wild could bring people closer to God.

This book was copyrighted in 1999, by Alaska Northwest Books. It can be purchased at Bob Swerer Productions by calling 1-800-737-0239.

E.G. | *Pennsylvania*

Appropriate for boys 12-16 years of age

Books Worth Reading

AV would like to expand our list of good books. We want parents and teachers 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 a 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 of the main character and story
- Lessons you learned by reading the book

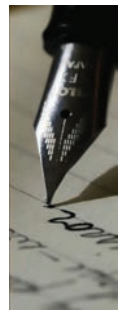
Elijah Gray has responded with a book report that fills all of the above parts of a good book report. I think it worthy of an A+. We will add this book to the list.

The Editor



Responses to the “Challenge Question”

“God called Paul to be the Apostle to the *Gentiles*. What arguments did Paul use when he preached to *Gentile* audiences?” (AV20, page 18)



Paul Taught the Gospel Was for Gentiles

by Jonathan Hofer

Paul knew clearly that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was for everyone, not only the Jews but also the Gentiles. He wrote in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

It seems the Gentiles had many legends on creation and therefore had many different gods. Those legends were passed on from generation to generation. When Paul perceived their false legends, he usually began his argument by explaining the real creation story and the real infinite God and compared him with their gods.

In Acts 17:26 he began an argument with, “The God who made the world and everything in it ... [including you, O Gentile!]” (ESV). This God cannot be limited to images of gold, silver or graven images; God is too big or Almighty. Creation begs for better reasoning than a graven image for a Creator. Paul probably used the argument from Habakkuk 2:18, “What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher

of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols!” (ESV).

In his letter to the Romans his argument was similar to the above one. Romans 1:18-20, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, ... because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

Paul taught that God is strongly displeased with everybody who doesn’t acknowledge Him as Creator and God. God is so holy and righteous he wants everybody to see their own unholiness and unworthiness to stand before Him in righteousness. Gentiles, like Jews, must receive the righteousness of God that can only be obtained through faith in Jesus Christ. All men alike are “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:22,24).

J. H. | Saskatchewan



The Apostle Paul Preached to the Gentiles

by Tim Myers

Paul addressed Gentiles differently than he did those of Jewish background.

Since the Greeks and Romans had little knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures, or faith in them, Paul used logical arguments and statements about the supernatural power and greatness of Christ to convince them of the truthfulness of the gospel. He stressed the attributes of Jesus Christ: He came back to life after dying, He was the creator, the life-giver, the ultimate director of the affairs of man, and the final judge of one’s eternal destiny.

Let’s consider these five core themes found in Paul’s messages to the Gentiles.

I. Jesus Christ’s Resurrection from the Dead

Paul’s first and strongest argument for the divinity of Christ was His resurrection. The appearances of Christ

to people who knew Him were the ultimate proof that He was alive. Paul connected much of his preaching to the hope of eternal life, pre-figured in Christ’s resurrection.

I Corinthians 15:3–5. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received ... and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Paul followed these verses with an extensive list of some who saw the resurrected Christ.

Acts 17:18. “Because [Paul] preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.”

Acts 24:15. “There will be a resurrection of the dead.”

II. Jesus Christ Is the Creator of the Earth and Everything in It

Colossians 1:16. “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth,

visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”

Christ had a hand in the creation of the entire universe as described in Genesis 1 and 2. All is precisely engineered. Christ even involves himself in the political realm, allotting power to whom He wishes.

III. Jesus Christ Is the Giver of Life

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

Acts 17:25. “Nor is He [God] worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”

I Corinthians 6:11. “And such [sinners] were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

Christ gives physical life to every person, and He offers redemption and eternal life to all. He is “not far from every one of us,” Jew or Gentile (Acts 17:27). Those who accept Him are redeemed from their former depravity and given a new clean life, pleasing to God.

IV. Jesus Christ Is the Ultimate Director of the Affairs of Men

Philippians 2:9-11. “Wherefore God also hath

highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Paul here states another proof of the authority of Christ over the lives of men: all men will ultimately acknowledge His supremacy. Angels always rejected worship as they went about their duties as the messengers of God, but Christ never did.

V. Jesus Christ is the Final Judge

Acts 17:31. “God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.”

II Corinthians 5:10. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

After death all will stand before God, and Christ will pass judgment on all, either to eternal life or to eternal death.

We encounter an increasing number of people who have little background in the Christian faith. Perhaps the points that Paul made in relating to the Gentiles will give us a starting place to reach them for Christ.

T. J. M. | Georgia



Paul Testified to Roman Rulers

by James Landis

Acts 24:10-16; 24-25. Paul took the opportunity to testify before the Gentile Roman governor and judge, Felix. Instead of Felix being the judge of Paul, Felix saw himself as under the forthcoming judgment of God. Here are the arguments Paul used:

- There will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.
- I always strive to keep a clear conscience before God and man.
- He talked about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.

Acts 25:8-11. Paul used these arguments before Governor Festus.

- I have done nothing wrong against Jewish or Roman law, or the temple.
- A dead man named Jesus was now alive.

Acts 26. In this chapter Paul testified before Roman authorities and King Herod Agrippa. He again convinced the rulers of his innocence before God and man. Here are his arguments.

- I am on trial because of what God has promised our ancestors.
- Why consider it incredible that God raises the dead?
- Prophets foretold that the Messiah was to suffer and rise from the dead.
- Gentiles can have their sins forgiven and receive an inheritance.
- Gentiles can be delivered from Satan’s power.
- Gentiles should repent, turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.

J. G. L. | Georgia

A Line in the Sand

by Menno Knight

“I would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

— II Corinthians 5:8-10

The Tension Between Living and Loving

Albert E. Brumley put the above words of the apostle Paul into verse, “This world is not my home, I am just passing through ... And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.” This tension between living in the world and desiring something far better affects every one of us.

How can we live in this world without loving it while we travel through it? The world is passing by and it will be easier to see it passing and disappearing if we do not love it too much. It may not be easy, for this world full of temptations is bringing us closer to the world than we think. We find it easy for the allurements in the world to draw us away from God.

We must remember that man-created possessions in the world can disappear in the blink of an eye, while our eternal Kingdom is real and everlasting. I John 2:17 tells us, *“The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.”*

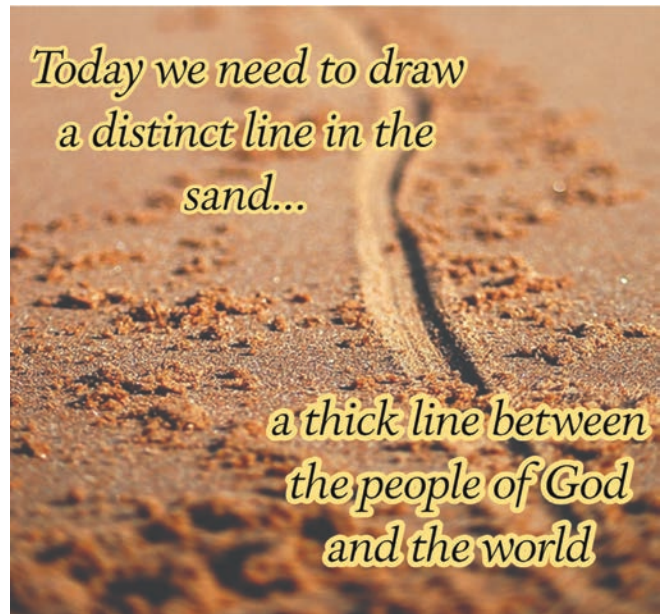
A Line in the Sand

I will always remember the last sermon I heard from our late bishop, William Bear; he was such an inspiration in our journey. On that day he said, “Anabaptists in the past drew a distinct line between themselves and the world; today the line is becoming thinner and thinner.”

Today I believe that we again need to draw a distinct line in the sand, a thick line between the people of God and the world. We do not want to be deceived about which kingdom we are in. Our concern flares up because we have seen people in our congregations bending toward the sinful World, little by little, until they reach a point where they “break up” and leave the church.

The Yokel

I have a good example of a line in the sand, a distinction between the people of the world and the people of God. A long time ago in Europe, Christians were recognized in the streets of small villages by the way they dressed with humility, by the way they behaved with others, and by the way they used things from the world. People



coming and visiting the countryside used to call them the “yokels of the village” because they were different. “Yokel” is “a country bumpkin used contemptuously.”

Big Trucks

I recollect another example of drawing close to the world from my own experience. Some time ago I had a discussion with a brother who was telling me he needed a big truck for his work because he needed to haul heavy equipment. Then he proceeded to show me all the attributes of his top-of-the-line truck with all its fancy gadgets, such as extra-large shiny wheels, electronics-ready equipped dashboard, leather, heated seats, satellite radio, etc.

I understood exactly what my brother was saying because it was the same way I thought when I was in the world. Then I remembered how my thinking had changed. “Do I really need that big truck with such power?” I asked myself. “Or do I want power to make *noise* and a truck that looks *cool*?” I could not honestly convince myself that I really needed such a fancy, expensive truck.

But I did not give up. I tried to persuade myself that I needed that truck, when in fact, I wanted it and thus had created a need for it. We can tow or carry equipment with a less fancy and expensive vehicle, a humbler truck that is needed only for my work and not to drive around the city for show.

Thinking All Is Normal

In a way, vehicles can be a very subtle but real way of mixing with the world—a way of crossing the line in the sand. If we justify the use of things

from the world because we created the need for it in our hearts, we are hypocrites. “But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?” (Matthew 22:18).

Another possibility is that we do not want to see the reality of mixing with the world. Satan uses a self-created “need” to get us used to some distractions and comforts from today’s world. Then step-by-step, little-by-little, we begin to think all is normal and okay.

The Thinner Line

But mixing our lives up with the world is not okay unless we are ashamed of the Lord within us. In that case, we may be tempted to blend into the world by dressing in a simple manner, but be indistinguishable from the people in the general society around us. We may feel more comfortable by dressing like everybody else we see around us during the week, but then on Sunday we slip into our plain clothes so we can feel that we are part of a biblical church. In time, we see no need for any distinctive clothing for the Anabaptist Christian. That is an example of the “thinner” line in the sand which our bishop brother talked about.

Other examples of the thin line between us and the sinful world could be the kind of cars we drive, the kind of houses we live in, and where we go and what we do on vacation trips. Can your neighbors observe that you live differently from the world? Are you satisfied with being called the “yokel of the village”?

What God Wants Us to Be

Let’s not make excuses for being different than the world. My family and I came from the world and we know the tricks, traps, deceptions and failures of it; we are not going to turn back for certain. There is no turning back from the way of Jesus.

It breaks my heart when I see the world entering our churches because we then may not fulfill what God wants us to become. The churches should be a beacon to share love and show compassion to a world that needs it. If we are not ashamed of Him, we should not be afraid of simplicity and humility. We should show the world that we are part of His Kingdom.

Not Comfortable with Sin

When we talk about “the world,” we are not talking about the wonderful things God has created—the earth and all its living creatures, including mankind. The world we are talking about is a world of sin, dominated

by people who do not recognize God or His dominion over all of life. Jesus made this clear when he prayed to the Father for His disciples, “Father I don’t ask you to take my followers out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one” (John 17:15, CEV).

We do not want to withdraw completely from the sinful people of the world, but from following their sinful ways of disobedience to the God of heaven. We want to know God well enough so we can rebuke distractions and temptations from the Evil One.

Early Christians, Anabaptist Christians, and other communities have done it by keeping Jesus’ commandment to move away from the world, drawing a sharp and distinctive line between the two kingdoms. As children of God, we do not want to get comfortable with sin and be ensnared by the Devil.

Pleasing Our Father

The Father wants His children to respect all His creation. He gave men the ability to use and improve things in their lives, as well as to help others. God is happy when we are using our potential to help other people—the poor, the widows, the orphans, and other helpless ones are especially mentioned. Helping others is honoring God. “As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; He hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever” (II Corinthians 9:9).

Our main focus should be to please the Lord and to help one another in our quest of knowing and serving God. In reality, all God wants us to do is honor and bow before Him, because He is All-in-All.

Focused on a Better World

My hope and prayer for all of us is to stay focused on Jesus Christ until the end. We want to be children of God’s Kingdom and not of the worldly kings and princes under the control of the Evil One.

“Do not love the world or anything that belongs to the world. If you love the world, you cannot love the Father. Our foolish pride comes from this world, and so do our selfish desires and our desire to have everything we see. None of this comes from the Father. The world and the desires it causes are disappearing. But if we obey God, we will live forever” (I John 2:15-17, CEV).





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

Christians in the Military

In the article, “More Than Nonresistance” (AV20, page 28), this statement appears: “A man in a police or soldier’s uniform cannot be a follower of Christ.” In my opinion this statement is too judgmental. If the writer had phrased his statement more moderately, that would have been appropriate. I’m sure you are aware that some (possibly many) men in the U.S. military and police forces profess to be Christians, and I do not doubt that some of them are. That is certainly not the way we understand the teachings of Jesus, but I think Romans 14:4 applies to this situation. *“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls.”*

A close friend of mine once had the privilege to address the “Christian Men of the Pentagon.” As a result of that presentation, he was given permission to place a book rack in the Pentagon. That book rack is still being serviced today. My friend was/is convinced that some of those men gave evidence of the New Birth. Please understand that I am not defending serving in the military. I am only suggesting that we do not know the hearts of those in the military who profess to be Christians to rightly judge their relationship with Jesus.

I. M. | Ohio

AV Editor:

God will certainly be the judge of every man, including those in the military. But to teach that a Christian cannot be in a police or soldier’s uniform is not being judgmental; it is teaching a Bible truth and not simply what we believe.

Most so-called Christians in America would agree that Christ’s followers can be in uniform and still be a Christian. They would not teach that, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3,5). Many ministers today preach that serving your country in the military is a Christian duty.

To say it is too judgmental to teach that a Christian cannot serve in the military means we do not really believe what we ourselves profess. The false hope of Christians everywhere is that God’s mercy excuses sin. A person cannot be a part of the Mafia or any other secret society and be a Christian. God’s Word says the

same is true of the military. Only God knows if a soul repents of his sin, but the Bible says unrepentant sinners will not go to heaven.

Also, a “Christian” in the military is an impossibility because of the Oath of Enlistment. One cannot “swear to obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me ...” (see AV02 page 24), and still be a soldier in the Kingdom of God. Or do you believe a soldier in China’s army could make a similar vow and still be a Christian?

This is not a popular teaching and most likely your friend did not teach this truth to the “Christians” in the Pentagon. Neither do I believe the literature on the bookrack in the Pentagon contains any books that say one cannot serve in the military and still be a Christian.



Caution on Ivermectin

The discussion about ivermectin in AV intrigued me, and I asked my father his opinion—he has worked in the medical field for over 20 years. He did some research and found there are serious concerns with promoting ivermectin as a COVID cure or prevention. For one, the theoretical dose necessary to treat COVID might be high enough to be toxic to humans. (I emphasize theoretical dose because proper dosing has not been studied for COVID.) Another concern is that ivermectin has negative drug interactions with cholesterol and blood pressure medications.

These are just a few concerns. I feel uncomfortable with the idea of AV dispensing medical advice.

A. V. S. | Michigan

AV Editor:

Anabaptist Voice is serving more as a reporter than as a dispenser of medical advice.

We are reporting there are doctors who have successfully treated thousands of COVID patients using ivermectin. We are reporting the drug is very safe and has been used on millions of animals and people with minimal side effects.

Evangelical Discipline

I appreciated the effort to think through the issues of brotherly and church discernment, especially in relation to disciplining and banning individuals or groups in ongoing church life (AV20). When we seek to be a biblical brotherhood, we need to be careful we do not make ourselves out to be an all-knowing God.

We must always follow scriptural methods of discipline. Some believers have deliberately chosen to use less judgmental forms of discipline than excommunication and the bann for resolving disagreements concerning how to best apply the Scriptures to today's issues.

For example, it is possible to use separation in fellowship and church functions to resolve disagreements. They may accept withdrawals from membership as individuals from a church, or as a church withdrawing from a larger organization, without condemning the party in disagreement as "heathen and publicans."

We believe this more moderate form of discipline is scriptural; that is, for less than such sins as adultery, fornication, stealing, kidnapping, robbery, murder, hurtful physical attacks including military service, unrepentant lying, and nudity.

To maintain truth in doctrine and practice, excommunication and the bann may need to occur. But simple disagreements call for other types of redemptive love; we do not always know the mind of God relative to details. Let brotherly love continue in all forms of discipline.

To put a whole group under an excommunication or strict bann does not make sense, since some individuals in the group may have little responsibility or "say" in the decision. They are too innocent to denounce.

There may be ignorance or carnality or immaturity on the part of the group performing the discipline that complicates and puts in question the wholesomeness and rightness of the actions taken. Even Jacob Ammann, repented of administering rash pronouncements without proper steps and order. Personal or group absolutism in "sins not unto death" is very dangerous.

Humility calls for doing the best we know when disagreements arise, and leaving judgment to the mind of God.

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure

transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (1 Corinthians 4:5-6).

L. E. | Wisconsin

AV Editor:

A church dare not use unscriptural methods of church discipline and expect the blessing of God to be upon them.

Neither can a church neglect to confront sin and rebellion in the ranks and remain a disciplined brotherhood. Everything must be done by the authority of the Scripture and not solely by the authority of an office.

The burden in the above letter is that disagreements of operation or methods do not escalate into ungodly clashes over matters that, in themselves, are not sinful. These matters should be judged by the saints collectively.

The saints should certainly be able to discern between differences in earthly matters that are not sinful. All church membership and activity remains voluntary and people are free to leave when they no longer feel freedom of conscience in a particular congregation.

However, if one does not submit to the counsels of the church here on earth, he must remember that the matter will come under the scrutiny of the saints after death. "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).



God Is Good All the Time

I am writing in response to the letter of K.B. in New York (AV 20, page 5) and E.S. in Oklahoma (AV19, page 6). Both articles conclude with the big unanswered question of why God ever allowed Satan in the Garden of Eden in the first place!

We believe that God's Word gives the answer to this question in a satisfying measure to those who seek Him and yet an answer that does not make sense to the worldly wise (1 Corinthians 1:19-29).

So why did God allow Satan in the Garden of Eden? More particularly, why does God allow Satan in the world today?

Without the evil of Satan in the world we would not

be able to choose between good and evil, between God's way and our ways. From this perspective we no longer need to “bring God to task” for all that He does which we do not understand. To understand all that God is doing in and around me is of minor importance compared to a continual response of faith and trust in my perfect (holy, loving, all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present) Father in heaven.

Victory in the struggle is possible only because of the victory of Jesus over Satan at His death and resurrection. *“Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (John 12:31).*

Like Job, we begin to recognize that we are invited to know God in suffering without necessarily “figuring Him out.” *“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6).*

I believe that God is good ... all the time. Abraham asked, *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25).* Yet many times I cannot understand or explain why God allows what he does. What do we do with verses like Isaiah 45:7 where it talks about God creating evil? *“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”*

Amos 3:6 also mentions the word “evil” in the context of God destroying a city. *“Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?”*

I would understand both the above verses in the same way as I look at Exodus 9:16. *“For this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.”* God in His wisdom used an evil man like Pharaoh to accomplish His own purposes without taking away Pharaoh's choice.

In Egypt, was God not the doer of the “evil” that was done there? (Or was he not sovereign over it?) Romans 11:33 says, *“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”*

Knowing how God does evil defies my natural understanding! But He gives peace that passes understanding (Philippians. 4:7)! *“My Lord and my God, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24)!*

V. M. | Arkansas

AV Editor:

Understanding the meaning of “evil” in present-day English might help clear up your uncertainty about God's nature. Here is a list of synonyms for “evil”:

Wicked, bad, wrong, morally wrong, wrongful, immoral, sinful, ungodly, unholy, foul, vile, base, ignoble, dishonorable, corrupt, iniquitous, depraved, degenerate, villainous, nefarious, sinister, vicious, malicious, malevolent, demonic, devilish, diabolic, diabolical, fiendish, dark, black-hearted, monstrous, shocking, despicable, atrocious, heinous, odious, contemptible, horrible, execrable, lowdown, stinking, dirty, shady, warped, bent, crooked, black, egregious, flagitious, peccable.

Not one of these words can be used to describe the character of God. All of them refer to things against God and the commandments He gave to His people. God cannot be evil or do evil things. Satan does evil things, not God.

Some translations do not use “evil” in the two verses you mentioned (Isaiah 45:7; Amos 3:6), but substitute “disaster” for “evil.”

We must never confuse God's wrath and His punishment upon people who do evil with His own character and nature. God does not want anyone to perish, but wants all men to come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). God's kind and good nature does not extend to the disobedient and unlawful who do not acknowledge Him as God.



Non-aggressive Resistance

The article “More Than Nonresistance” (AV20, page 28) was a well-written article, bringing out a very important part of who Jesus Christ is. There is another part of Jesus that is important to realize: on earth Jesus was not nonresistant. The #1 Dictionary definition of nonresistant is, “not resisting.” The #2 definition is, passively obedient or submissive to authority or force.

If we look at the life of Jesus we find that Jesus was not a passive person. When the question came up about the washing of hands before eating, Jesus challenged the authorities. This was not passive, but resistant.

When he cleansed the temple we find Jesus in active resistance.

At His trial when they struck Him on the cheek, He did not turn the other cheek, but challenged the aggressor with these words: *“If I have spoken evil, show me that it is evil; if I spoke the truth why do you hit me?”* This was not passive in any sense of the word.

So this brings us to the big question: Was Jesus nonresistant? The answer is: Jesus practiced non-aggressive resistance, not passive nonresistance. It was the same with the apostles when they were in front of the Jewish authorities. They said, “**We have to obey God rather than man.**” Peter and John did not passively submit to the commands of the Council, they resisted.

Where are we today? Are we willing to be resistant when it comes to issues of truth or God’s Word? A case in point is where the health department tells us not to have church or not to greet each other. Will we be like Jesus and His apostles and resist? Or will we be passive and disobedient to God’s Word?

Let us seek to be true followers of Jesus Christ.

D. L. H. | Ohio

AV Editor:

Let us not be carried away with technical terms. The plain command of Jesus is to love our enemies. He tells us to do good to them that shamefully treat us. He says we are to bless and curse not.

Aggressive love is better than “resistant non-aggression.”

If for conscience sake we choose to obey God rather than man, we do not want to make a big show of our disobedience before authorities. For instance, if open church services are forbidden in regular places of worship, it may be necessary to meet secretly in smaller groups.

We must always be respectful toward a brother and sister if we might pass on a disease to them by a holy kiss. However, a decree by civil authorities does not override New Testament obedience. In such cases we are called to obey God rather than man.



No Concern

When considering the Equality Act, a bill which would make it illegal to discriminate against homosexual and transgender individuals, Representative Jerry Nadler of New York made the following statement: “What any religious tradition ascribes as God’s will is no concern of this Congress.”

– World Magazine, 3.27.21, page 17.

AV Editor:

Apparently 224 members of Congress agreed with Representative Nadler; as they voted for the bill. What the ramifications of the bill will be in the land cannot yet be determined. But the open rejection of God’s law by government ought to “wake up” any sleeping Christians about which kingdom they belong to and which God they serve.

A true Christian cannot be a part of both kingdoms.

Be ready to suffer because of righteous living.



Inflation by the Trillions

The U.S. debt officially stands at \$22.8 trillion. The U.S. government debt has increased by \$3.1 trillion in the 2020 fiscal year.

Total federal government spending in the 2020 fiscal year amounted to \$6.55 trillion. This means the government paid for 47% of its spending with fake money backed by nothing but “IOUs.”

AV Editor:

The huge amount of money the government spends exerts a large influence on all its people. And the more money people take from the government, the larger its control over their lives.

Christians should be hesitant to reach out to the government for help. The old saying is, “The hand that feeds you, leads you.” Do not be deceived. Taking government subsidies and payments, grants government the power to control your life.





The Practical Side:

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

— Colossians 3:17

This recurring feature in *Anabaptist Voice* consists of three parts.

1. **Reader Responses**—feedback on previous stories
2. **The Rest of the Story**—what actually happened
3. **New Stories**—situations met by today’s Anabaptists

Here is your chance to help others live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ “right in the corner where they are.” This section is not for some idealistic future kingdom posing theological complicated questions with no good answers—for example, the woman who had seven brothers as husbands (*Matthew 22:24-28*).

Take the time to write *Anabaptist Voice* and share your situations where you faced a difficulty... and failed, or won a victory. As you ponder the situations in these stories and then share your answers and experiences with others, remember the words of Jesus when He told the packed-out house, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s Word and *put it into practice*” (**Luke 8:21**).



The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

Building Corncribs (AV20, page 41)

by Elder Jacob



In the “Building Corncribs” article, Elder Mose did a very Christian thing by helping Gabriel build his corn crib. That good deed caused the story to

have a good conclusion.

There could be another side to the story. If Gabriel’s red coat offended his brethren, he should have gotten rid of it to keep the peace. “**Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble**” (**1 Corinthians 8:13**). [“Things Polluted by Idols”, page 13.] Matthew 5:9 also speaks to the point: “**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**”

I wonder what would have happened if Gabriel had been treated differently. Was he wearing the red coat out of necessity or because of conviction? If it was because of conviction, then he needed to “**be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear**” (**1 Peter 3:15**). If he was wearing the red coat out of necessity, then his alienated brothers should have

lovingly offered Gabriel a proper new coat in exchange for the old red coat. Or, the red coat could have been dyed to an acceptable color. In those ways, the brethren would have been lifting a finger to help carry the burden they had placed on Gabriel. Matthew 23:4 reads, “**For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.**”

B. H. | *Pennsylvania*

Practical Questions

1. Why was wearing a red coat an offense the church needed to deal with?
2. What would have happened if the church did not excommunicate Gabriel?
3. What different steps should be taken before excommunication takes place?
4. Who should be involved in dealing with a transgressor?
5. What is the purpose of excommunication and the bann?

Usury Condemned (AV20, page 39)

by Elder Hans



The question of whether it is right for a Christian to charge interest is one that comes up from time to time. Sometimes our position depends on whether we are the one loaning or the one borrowing.

The principle of not taking advantage of the poor is a timeless principle that needs to be maintained by Christians everywhere.

Some things have changed since Bible times. The principle of not charging interest makes sense when we have real money (gold and silver), but when dealing with fiat currency (paper money backed by debt), some challenges arise.

With fiat currency, the money [the U.S. dollar] is losing its value faster than the measly amount of interest that is charged. I struggle with, “Can I honestly request an interest-free loan when I know that the older individual is putting his retirement money at risk to help me? Am I being fair if I know that his funds will be worth quite a bit less when I repay them than when I borrowed the money?”

Perhaps if we want to maintain the principle of interest-free loans, we should loan in gold? If we had borrowed gold in 1970 (just before the U.S. dollar came off the gold standard) at about \$35 an ounce, we would have to repay today at over \$1800 an ounce. Ouch! That is about 100% interest per year just so the dollar being returned is worth as much as the dollar that was borrowed.

Are the lenders taking advantage of the poor? Or are the borrowers taking advantage of the elderly and those who are lending by paying a measly interest? At any rate, it doesn’t seem like I as a borrower should be complaining about a few percent of interest that isn’t nearly keeping up with the rate of inflation.

I’m sure there are situations where a lender will wish to loan interest-free due to hardship or goodwill. But in such situations, the lender is in effect giving a donation. It is not ripping off the borrower to charge interest on business loans.

A. H. | *Pennsylvania*



Teaching Shamefacedness (AV20, page 40)

by Elder Abe



Having been a classroom teacher for more than half of my adult life, I agree with the teacher in this situation. Some of those girls may become teachers of children’s or women’s Sunday School classes. Hopefully, some of them will become classroom teachers. Some of them may be a pastor’s wife and be called upon to teach other women. Reciting

Bible memory passages to fellow students is minimal preparation.

While it may be true that shamefacedness “must be trained into some,” I would argue reciting Bible memory passages in a classroom setting is hardly “training it out of them.” I would offer this suggestion: if it is considered objectionable to have the girls stand in front of the class to give the recitation, have each student stand by his or her desk to give the recitation.

The Practical Side: Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Teaching Shamefacedness (AV20, page 40)

by Teacher Mary



“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 boys and girls proper decorum in public speaking is really not such a big deal. Brother School Board had a good point, so I changed my method. Now while the rest of the class works on assignments at their desks each child takes a turn reciting to me at my desk. If God wants them to be a preacher or a teacher, they can learn how later on in life.

The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

The Old Candy Machine

by Larry M. Dentler



My brother Lewie is eight years older than me. When he was a teenager, maybe 16 or 17 (making me 8 or 9), he worked at a gas station. For you young ones, these were the days before self-service. When cars came into a gas station they drove over a tube on the driveway that caused a “ding-ding” inside the station and an attendant came out to pump your gas.

While your gas was pumping the attendants would clean your windshield and even check your oil, or the air pressure of your tires if you asked. When done, they would take your money, often give you S&H green stamps, and perhaps a free premium that the station was offering, like a glass tumbler. And oh yes, gas was about 27 cents a gallon. Ah, the good ole days!

On this evening I was at the station with Lewie. I don't remember why, but it was just he and I in the station. Somewhere through the evening, he pointed to the quintessential candy vending machine in the station. Lewie explained that one of the other boys who worked there would just go to the machine, reach up inside, and pull something, and a candy bar would come out. Free candy!

Lewie tried but his arms were too big, so he asked me to try. I got down on my knees in front of the machine and put my scrawny arms up inside. I felt around and tugged but couldn't feel anything that moved.

Lewie suggested that if he put coins in, with my hands still up inside the machine, I could feel what the moving parts were. He put in the coins, pulled the lever, and the machine began to whirr and grind!

Yes! I could feel the moving parts! I felt one part in particular move, a candy bar fell down, and then the moving part slammed shut with a thud—right on my young fingers, trapping them tight up inside the machine. No matter what I did I couldn't get my fingers free! I started to panic ... and then “ding-ding” a car had pulled up to the pumps for gas. So Lewie left me on my knees, elbows deep in the machine, with fingers pinched tight.

When he returned ... I might have been in tears. He smeared his arms with grease from the service

station and forced his arms into the machine, found the offending part, pulled on it, and released my fingers. So much for free candy. And this became the full extent of Lewie and my criminal careers!

We laugh about the story today. It is hilarious to remember. I can't help but reflect how gullible I was to do what Lewie suggested. He was my big brother. He's always been my hero. Even though I knew better, I followed his lead.

L. M. D. | *Pennsylvania*

Practical Questions:

1. Who do you trust?
2. Who do you follow?



Convicted

by James G. Landis



I answered the doorbell on a sunny February day.

Two men greeted me; the one immediately started talking. “We want to dress up your front beds out by the highway. We have nice fresh long-needle pine for low prices. We'll blow the beds off and put it down for \$4.25 per bale.”

I eyed the two men suspiciously. I'd been taken before on the number of bales crews put down. “How many bales do you have on your trailer?” I asked.

“The trailer is just up the road, but it's good long-needle pine straw—bright and fresh.”

“We're not ready for pine straw yet,” I answered. “We have a lot of work to do on the beds before we want to put any straw down.”

“We'll blow off all the beds,” he repeated. “I'll clean out all your gutters, we'll really do a nice job, fix the place up.” He leaned in close. “Tell you what,” he said confidentially, “I'll let you have it for \$2.50 a bale, but don't tell anybody.” His buddy nodded in agreement.

“No,” I repeated, “we’re not ready yet. If you come back tomorrow and blow off our flower beds, clean the gutters, and gather up the leaves and really clean the place up, I’ll buy my straw from you when we’re ready. How can I get in touch with you when we’re ready?”

He handed me a pretty yellow and green calling card, “SG Landscapes. 478-206-3942.” There was no name or address on the card.

“Where is this?” I asked.

“We’re staying in a motel,” he answered. The two finally left and I doubted they would return for the pre-cleanup.

It rained for the next two or three days. The pair returned the day after the rains ended. This time they pulled a small trailer with some bales of pine straw stacked on it. “Look,” I began, “I’m not here to take advantage of anybody. I’ll pay you for the cleanup. How much an hour do you want? We’ll pay you for the straw later when we have the beds ready.”

We agreed on \$15 an hour for the work. The two set to work immediately on the beds around the house. The one scratched some of the wet leaves off the beds while the other started pulling bales off the trailer and spreading them on the beds. When I saw what was happening, I asked, “How many bales do you have on the trailer?”

He answered promptly, “165. They come from a round baler and there are three bales in one.” I couldn’t see the bales were especially dense or large, but I thought, well I guess I can stand the bill one time, $165 \times \$4.25 = \701.25 .

This wasn’t going the way I thought we had agreed on, but I let them finish.

In less than two hours the men had finished and said they were ready to be paid. They told me the bill was \$2,123.

“You told me there were 165 bales on the trailer. At \$4.25 per bale this doesn’t come out to \$2,123.”

“Yes, sir. I told you there were three bales in each bale,” he declared.

“I don’t understand,” I pleaded. “I never agreed to such a deal.”

“That’s the way it is,” the big talker said. His short stocky partner agreed with him, \$2,123.

J. G. L. | Georgia

Practical Questions:

1. How should a peaceable lover of God settle the deal?
 - a. Pay the two men for their time and \$500 for the straw?
 - b. Pay for 165 bales of straw and give them some tracts?
 - c. Pay one-half the requested amount and pray with them?
 - d. Pay the full amount and invite them to church?



God's Paymaster

by Norman Ward



Is anyone reading this paper old enough to remember the tiny economy car called the “Crosley?” An American industrialist, Powell Crosley, Jr., started manufacturing this model car in 1947. The funny-looking little thing, sort of like a roller skate with a dog house on top of it, was only 48” wide, and it squeezed 40 miles out of one gallon of gas.

One of my high school teachers owned a Crosley car (one “s”). He was a big, heavy-set man and it was a lot of fun watching him get in or out of it.

I want to tell you the story of another Crossley (two “sses”), industrialist from Manchester, England, who also manufactured cars and huge engines that powered giant generators. This company was a very prosperous company.

In this story we want to take a brief look at Frank Crossley, one of the two brothers who founded the company. Frank Crossley was born into a devoutly Christian home in northern Ireland in 1839. Already at seven years of age, it became apparent that Frank was a hot-tempered, strong-willed, and hard-to-control lad who wanted things his own way.

From early childhood, anything mechanical fascinated Frank and his brother Will—Will later became Frank’s partner in Crossley Ltd. As boys growing up, the two brothers cobbled together many interesting contraptions. If they were assigned some job to do, they would work twice as hard and take twice as long contriving some “labor-saving” invention to use in accomplishing the task.

If they had spent the same effort and time in doing the job as they did in working on their “invention,” they would have been done in half the time.

When Frank went away from home to engineering school, he was almost overcome by loneliness and homesickness. This caused him to do some serious soul-searching and he found his formal, nominal Christian profession was totally inadequate. For the first time, he saw the ugliness of his own heart and he began to earnestly seek the Lord in true repentance.

Soon he graduated from “seeker” to “finder,” and his conversion totally transformed his life. On his next visit home, his whole family was amazed at the change. The hard-to-handle boy had become a mild-mannered, loving, caring man—a worthy representative of his new Master.

Shortly after Frank and Will graduated from their engineering schools, the two borrowed some money for machinery and entered into a manufacturing business together in Manchester, England. Frank was blessed with inventiveness and before long the Crossley firm held patents on several industrial products.

Their real success was achieved when they came up with an efficient internal combustion engine and began manufacturing these in various sizes for use in running machinery in factories, mills, and other industrial applications.

The firm’s reputation for honesty and standing by their products became well-known. A writer of that time period shared this story:

I was waiting for a train at the Manchester railway station when I noticed a man leaning against the wall weeping. I went to him and asked if he was in great distress. He said, “No, not now, thank God. I just came away from a man whom I believe must be the most like Jesus Christ in the business world of today.

“A short time ago my brother and I started up a small manufacturing business. We bought a Crossley engine to power our plant, but since we were short on money we bought a smaller engine than we knew our machinery required. The engine was under a terrible strain all the time and finally it just quit after being run hot so many times. Because of the engine failure we could not keep going and faced bankruptcy.

“It was all our fault, of course, because we knew we needed a larger horsepower engine, but could not afford one. I came down here to talk with Mr. Frank Crossley. I told him the whole story of our struggle to get our business going and of how we foolishly tried to save money by making the smaller engine do more than it was designed to do.

“Do you know what that man did? He said, *Sir, my brother and I know what it is to start up a business from scratch. I will send a man down to your plant to look at your equipment and see what size engine will be adequate and we will swap out your ruined engine with a new one suited for the job at no cost to you and your brother.*

“Oh sir, I cannot help but weep.”

Frank Crossley’s compassion for the lost and his free-hearted giving to the work of the Lord was done as he was led of the Spirit to do so. His prayer life was one of intimate communion with the Lord. He did not want to miss any prompts from the Holy Spirit as he daily looked for opportunities to help others.

Frank became acquainted with William Booth and the great work the Salvation Army was doing at that time. He saw how the Salvation Army reached out to the desperately poor and often addiction-bound residents of the London slums with the glorious gospel that frees from sin. Frank gave generously of his means to help in this work and often visited the various Salvation Army “halls” (as their mission buildings were called).

On the home front in England and on foreign fields around the world, Frank Crossley freely shared what God had blessed him with to make Christ known to the lost.

Frank Crossley did not content himself with just writing checks. Frank moved his family out of their rather elegant home and into an ordinary house in an extremely poor neighborhood so they could be near those they wanted to win to Jesus. He and his family held gospel services there and also night school for children who worked in the sweat-shop factories and had no other way to learn.

Frank Crossley was surely the exact opposite of the rich man the Lord Jesus spoke of in Luke 16:19-31 who “fared sumptuously every day” and begrudged a beggar named Lazarus crumbs from his table.

N. W. | Georgia



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.

Faith Builders Training Institute



The application for Faith Builders' Summer Term 2021 is now available!
Summer Term is a five-week term running
June 28 – July 30, 2021
at our campus in Guys Mills, PA

Faith Builders
Educational Programs
(814) 789-4518
www.fbep.org

Summer Term offers courses designed to prepare and equip teachers for teaching in Christian day schools. Courses to be offered in 2021 include:

- Principles of Teaching (Patrick Heatwole)
- Foundations of Education (Steven Brubaker)
- Child Development (Jonas Sauder)
- Course Development Practicum (Gerald Miller)
- Teaching Reading (Anna Zehr)
- Teaching Diverse Learners (Becky Bollinger)
- The Exceptional Learner (Lynell Nissley)
- Mathematics for Elementary Teachers (Lynell Nissley)
- Teaching Secondary Mathematics (John Mark Kuhns)
- Teaching Secondary Language Arts and Literature (Josh Nisley)
- Science for the Non-Scientist (John Mark Kuhns)
- Teaching Secondary Music (Lyle Stutzman)
- Music Fundamentals (Lyle Stutzman)

Good teachers are always learning and growing, increasing their knowledge and skills while developing as individuals. Summer Term provides an opportunity for teachers to invest in their capabilities as a teacher.

To request an application, contact Vivian Mast at 814-789-4518 extension 220 or fbep@fbep.org. The application is also on our website (fbep.org/st).

Summer Term is a program of Faith Builders Training Institute, part of Faith Builders Educational Programs. The Institute offers an education that aims to shape students toward whole-hearted love for God and faithful commitment to His church. In addition to Summer Term, the Institute offers a five-week Winter Term in January. We also offer three two-year tracks of study: Teacher Apprenticing; Christian Ministries; and General Studies.

Each two-year track includes our core curriculum that helps students to see themselves and the world in proper relation to God. We want our students to develop the capacities and skills they need to join the work God is doing in the world through His church.



Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report

January thru March 2021

1 January 2021 Beginning Balance	\$3,611.73
Income	
Donations	\$6,964.64
Local Support*	\$5,000.00
Total Income	\$11,964.64
Beginning Balance + Income	\$15,576.37
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$626.00
Postage	\$3,175.20
Printing	\$5,071.00
Staff Expenses	\$810.00
Total Expense	\$9,682.20
31 March 2021 Ending Balance	\$5,894.17

Circulation Report

March 2021

ISSUE #15 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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ISSUE #17 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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ISSUE #18 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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ISSUE #19 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$2.04/ea.

ISSUE #20 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$2.00/ea.

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



End Matters

We have given out all the copies of *Distinctive Teachings of the Old Order People* by Donald Martin. However, you can now order additional copies of this wonderful booklet from: Sermon on the Mount Publishing, P. O. Box 246, Manchester, MI 48158. The cost of the booklet is \$7.40 plus \$4.25 shipping.

We still have more than 100 copies of the following issues: AV18, AV19, AV20. 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.

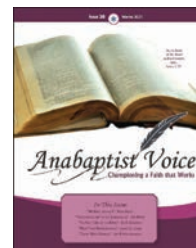
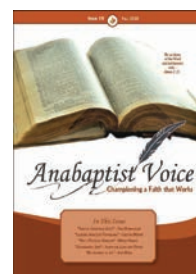
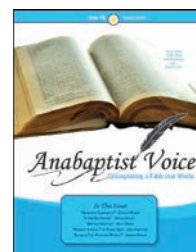
We prick up our ears whenever suggestions come in from our readers. One of our close friends and supporters has suggested an idea for a future AV issue. He threw out the idea of reprinting a number of favorites from the 21 issues we have published this far and rolling them together into one issue. If you have any particular stories or articles that have been a special blessing to you, let us know which ones they are.

The AV team of writers, editors, designers, copyeditors, and reviewers, thanks each one for your prayers, gifts, and words of encouragement. We declare our dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us in the production of this magazine. Without Him our work will amount to nothing.

It is certain the Lord will come for me soon. But if He tarries until 1 July 2021, we will visit you again with AV22.

In His service,

James



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“What does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

- Deuteronomy 10:12 (NIV)



Spring Blossoms - Japan