

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

"THE WORK OF A BISHOP" - RICHARD ULRICH

"TWO HEARTS, ONE PURPOSE" PART II - ABRAM NEUFELD

"LORD, LORD" - GEORGE MACDONALD

"GUYANA - LAND OF MANY WATERS" - PHILIP NIGHSWANDER

"IS JESUS THE MESSIAH?" - BIBLE QUOTES



Letter from the Editor



Great Horned Owl
Range: from Alaska to the Straights of Magellan.

In the early morning hours, the hooting of owls in woods by our house awakened me. A bit of research made me believe the entertainment came from Great Horned Owls. Several years ago I saw two of these large birds in the daylight. These nighttime wonder-birds are another marvel of our Creator God.

In July, Doris and I traveled to Chihuahua, Mexico where surgeons performed a complete reverse shoulder replacement. The hospital and care were excellent and the surgeons very competent. The surgeons gave us an estimate of the total cost for the appliance, the hospital stay, the surgery, and the anesthesiologist before we decided to go ahead. Upon entering the hospital we paid 80% of the estimate. Before they discharged us, the business desk printed out an itemized bill and we paid the balance. Done. Finished. Behind us. Try that in the USA.

In August and September, Doris and I celebrated both our 57th wedding anniversary and my 79th birthday in the Waynesboro emergency room and Augusta University Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. This was not our idea of how to celebrate these occasions, but today we give thanks to God for His mercy during those fearful and uncertain days.

Apparently, Doris suffered a kidney failure that affected her mind and memory. Thankfully, with help from the nephrology specialists, the care of the hospital staff, all seven children who took turns standing by at home and in the hospital, and God's healing touch, Doris has recovered her normal functions except for the kidneys. At present, the dialysis machine is extracting the toxins from her system, thus doing the work of the kidneys.

Doris' sickness and my physical weakness accounts for the delay in getting another issue of Anabaptist Voice to you. I have been thrilled again by how God has caused our paths to cross with dedicated saints willing to share their lives and their thoughts with you.

All for the Glory of God,

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.



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 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.



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

Issue Idea

An idea for a special issue mentioned in AV21, page 43:

An issue with the testimonies of families or individuals who have joined Anabaptists from outside our ranks would be of interest to me.

M. Y. | *Pennsylvania*



Interesting and Encouraging

Thanks for a most interesting, encouraging, magazine. I like especially the articles written by seekers who have found the faith. In the latest issue Abram and Elisabeth Neufeld tell us their story.

L. H. | *Texas*



Striving to Do Lord's Will

Thank you very much for sending us the *Anabaptist Voice*. We have been enjoying the magazines sent to us.

In our part of Missouri we have very few Anabaptist-type churches that follow the full teachings of Christ. We currently travel 45 minutes to commune with a fellowship of Christians who are striving to do our Lord's will.

We would like to continue to subscribe and donate a check to help cover the expense of mailing, etc.

Also, if you still have copies of AV18 and AV19 we would really appreciate reading these and sharing them with our friends and family.

K. N. I. | *Missouri*



God Still Moves

I especially enjoyed the editorial in the last issue of *Anabaptist Voice* (AV22). Your glimpses into the natural world made it special to me.

I thought it providential that you could dip down into

Mexico to find writers for this issue. This shows that God still moves in the times we are living in. God brought situations and people into your life of his own choosing. This is living on the cutting edge, it is walking with God in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit of Pentecost still prevails.

P. A. S. | *Ohio*



A Unique Publication

The AV is truly a unique publication, a labor of love on your part. God bless you for that.

I feel AV is distinctive with its professional image, its interaction with the reading audience, its unique message, including voices of non-Anabaptist background people, its widespread receptive readership, its contribution to slowing the decline of the embrace of Anabaptist theology among Anabaptist people, its being free to readers, and its ability to cross over many interior Anabaptist walls.

C. W. | *Texas*



A Critical Eye

I have read through AV22 with a critical eye and jotted down some of my thoughts. The periodical is not blindly loyal to one brand of Mennonite, Amish, or other conservative groups, but is by nature diversified to embrace the wider Anabaptist audience. Some readers may be uncomfortable with this, since it encourages a broader perspective and more open thinking. It could seem like a threat to their way of doing things.

While the periodical provides a forum for discussion and broad thinking, it also unapologetically stands on the separation of church and state and non-resistance. Some of the articles in this issue come across fairly strong about this, a bit stronger than I would state things.

R. M. | *Ohio*



AV 22 Reviewer Comments

Present AV Review Practice

As AV editor, I assume full responsibility for what is published in *Anabaptist Voice*. I am less than perfect and want assistance in helping make each issue of AV stand on a solid biblical foundation. To that end we have invited different brethren to review what we are about to publish.

We have had no set group of reviewers, but have submitted the edited and laid-out copy to several interested brethren willing to take the time to review it. We take their comments seriously and try to make changes to improve each issue.

Keep in mind that many brethren and sisters have a part in forming each issue before it goes to the reviewers. Contributors, writers, design people, and copyeditors, as well as myself, often in consultation with others, spend much time in putting an issue together.

The review process is aimed at improving the content and presentation of each issue. Some items may purposely be left in an issue that not everyone agrees with. This aims to stir the reader to think and to ask himself if the practice or the interpretation presented aligns itself with the Bible. If the reader does not agree, the pages of AV are open for him to present a reasoned, biblical interpretation that differs with that presented.

We often do not publish the names of the writers because we want the reader to consider what is written without coloring it by the writer's background or particular church setting. We consider each reader to be a Berean reviewer, "who searches the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things are so" (Acts 17:11). Let us not forget the purpose of a Berean review of the Scriptures. Verse 12 says, "Therefore many of them believed [that Jesus was the Christ]."

AV22 Reviewer Comments:

Editor: *I greatly appreciate the brethren who took the time to review AV22. I want to share their comments with you.*



Foreign Missions Too

In response to "I Love Protestants, But ...," AV22, page 17, Column 2.

I don't like the paragraph that almost discourages foreign mission work, even though Bryce says he

doesn't wish to disparage sincere mission work. There is work to do at home in the USA, both in and without the church, but to say, "I cannot for the life of me understand the need to go preach elsewhere," seems too strong.

Paul himself said he wanted to preach Christ where Christ had not yet been preached.

R. M. | *Ohio*



The King's Heart

I am writing in response to "When Kingdoms Collide" (AV22, page 6).

The conclusion to the article states, "The Kingdom of our Lord is in direct conflict with the kingdoms of this earth." Is this correct? Has God not said the powers that be are ordained by Him and that rulers are ministers of His to us for good? Satan does influence men and governments, but Scriptures also say "the king's heart is in His hand." God also has His influence.

I don't think it is right to call evil that which God has put here for our good. Yes, evil men may rule and at times make it hard for us, but have we not also benefitted much by those who rule?

Romans 13:1 says that God has ordained the powers of earthly government; we are called to be subject to them. Submission is an attitude of respect and honor developed by a right view of truth in regard to God-ordained authorities in one's life. If our authorities ask us to do something contrary to the will of God that we cannot obey, we must meekly accept the consequences. Our submission to civil authorities is total, but obedience is conditional.

I Timothy 2:1-3 speaks of "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, to be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority. That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

It is not our duty to judge those without (I Corinthians 5:13). "But those who are outside, God judges." Rulers over us will stand before God one day to be judged. We are called to pray—to make intercession for them—not to hold their feet to the fire for their wrongdoing.

— Abraham, in intercessory prayer to God, moved the hand of God. Lot, at the city gates, helped no one."

– Jesus was respectful to Pilate when on trial.

– Jude 8-11 speaks of those who scorn and speak evil against those in authority. It says, “**Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’**” We should not hold ourselves to be more powerful than Michael and speak evil against rulers.

Sharing and living the gospel is our calling and will impact the world for good and have God’s blessing. To rail on those God has set up for our good, will, in time, bring upon us the wrath of our authorities and the wrath of God.

A. H. | Georgia

(See also “Round Table Discussion,” “By What Authority,” page 41”)

AV Editor:

I Corinthians 5:13 says that God judges those outside the church. This is a really good point. This does not mean that rulers are given a pass by God to sin. God will punish rulers for their sin. This means that we must not speak disrespectfully of rulers or rebel against them. We are to pray for all men and that includes rulers.

John the Baptist did “hold Herod’s feet to the fire.” God did punish Herod and destroyed him by worms.



Peace and Quiet

I am writing in response to “Bribed,” AV22, page 28.

When does fear of socialism’s inroads and government control translate into over-occupation with the kingdoms of this world and become a distraction for the pilgrim and stranger? While I don’t care for socialism and the “bribes” through which government becomes “big brother,” yet how dangerous is socialism to Christianity? Are the freedoms we enjoy in America, the capitalism, and the independent Western mindset, really more friendly to true Christianity than socialism and other forms of oppressive government? Again, I’m the first to say I’m thankful for our freedoms and opportunities, but when it comes down to it, rich capitalistic America is not a friend to kingdom Christianity, but many Anabaptists cling to it pretty tightly.

When the Dordrecht Confession was written in 1632, the Dutch government was anything but friendly to true Christianity, yet in the article about civil government,

the writers refer to “their laudable administration.” Here is the article, which I think displays a different slant than what is presented in AV22.

*We also believe and confess that God has instituted civil government, for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the pious; and also further, for the purpose of governing the world, countries and cities; and also to preserve its **subjects** in good order and under good regulations. Wherefore we are not permitted to despise, revile, or resist the same, but are to acknowledge it as a minister of God and be subject and obedient to it, in all things that do not **militate** against the law, will, and commandments of God; yea, “to be ready to every good work”; also faithfully to pay it custom, tax, and tribute; thus giving it what is its due. That we are also to pray, so that we may live under its protection, maintain ourselves, and “lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” And further, that the Lord would **recompense** them (our rulers), here and in eternity, for all the benefits, liberties, and favors which we enjoy under their **laudable** administration.”*

Paul and Peter, writing under a repressive Roman government, never seemed too concerned with whether the government was over-extending its reach or not. They didn’t discuss whether or not it ruled justly. They didn’t condemn or speak evil of it. It was appointed of God to punish evil—by bearing the sword—and to protect the good. But when the government didn’t do that, they let government do their thing and concentrated more on teaching Christians to expect suffering, to respond respectfully, to pay their taxes, to pray for leaders, and to obey.

R. M. | Ohio



“Testing the Spirits”

The editor’s reply to this article on page 34 gets into the controversial treatment of COVID-19. The 3rd paragraph gets into some treatments that may or may not work. The subject is controversial. My son is a nurse and studying to become a nurse practitioner. He would seriously question the effectiveness of some of these treatments. I’m still, to a large extent, feeling like the person who wrote the letter to the editor. I’m not against receiving the vaccine; I don’t subscribe to the many conspiracy theories out there about the vaccine. But neither have I felt compelled to immediately get the shots.

Just know that by speaking out on the subject of

treating COVID-19, you can't avoid controversy. Someone will disagree, and it's not easy to know what is true and false.



“Sowers of Seed,” “Christians in the Military,” and “Military Christians”

The editor's replies to these letters/articles are quite strong. We need to teach the truth, but not “send” anyone to heaven or hell,” as you say in the second reply. I agree with your stand on non-participation in the military, and I agree that it needs to be taught unapologetically. Yet I would hesitate to imply that everyone who doesn't come to an understanding of this truth has simply not been sincere and will be lost.

R. M. | Ohio



A Climactic End to History

I am very disturbed after reading "Menno Knight's" article “The Second Coming.” I came away with the impression that M.K. is saying there will be no spectacular, supernatural return of Christ to this earth, no climactic end to history—that Jesus' second coming is simply an allegory for each person's own death.

Am I understanding correctly? If so, this seems far outside of the historic Christian understanding. No matter what one makes of the prophecies of Revelation—whether they are symbolic or literal in some sense—both amillennial and premillennial believers seem to agree (at least in my experience) that Jesus is literally returning to earth to end history, and that there will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust to be judged.

A. V. S. M. | Michigan

AV Editor:

The above response to Menno Knight's article (AV22 page 29) called for more study that led to some changes to the article. We want all the AV articles to be on solid ground and biblically defensible.

First of all was the title, “The Second Coming.” I found “Second Coming” is not used anywhere in the Bible. The promise that the disciples would see Jesus' return “in the same manner” fit much better. Therefore, we changed the title of the article to, “The Promise.”

Next was a statement denying an “Intermediate State.” My thoughts on an intermediate state were pretty much limited to the false Catholic teaching of

purgatory. Again, I found that neither “purgatory” nor “intermediate state” are to be found in the Bible. However, some Mennonite confessions define the intermediate state as “the interval between death and a yet future resurrection.” When defined that way, it is more understandable so we deleted a statement in the article denying an intermediate state.

Next, I looked into what Mennonites say they believe happens at death and found that Menno's article agrees perfectly with these statements. Following I submit statements from two confessions in support of the article's proposition that at death people enter at once into either conscious bliss or conscious torment.

Finally, Menno's article stands firmly on the teaching that at death there is no chance of changing one's eternal destination. This is sealed and settled.

Furthermore, as far as we can see, the article makes no statement about the final consummation of all history. We cannot see how whatever one believes on this score changes anything about the call to godly living while on the earth. Or are we missing something?

1921 Garden City Confession of Faith

Adopted in 1921, Garden City, Missouri

Adopted by South Atlantic Mennonite Conference in 1996

Adopted by Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church and Related Areas in 1998

OF THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

We believe that in the interval between death and resurrection, the righteous will be with Christ in a state of conscious bliss and comfort, but that the wicked will be in a place of torment, in a state of conscious suffering and despair.

– All Bible references omitted

1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith

Adopted by Mennonite General Conference, August 1963

Adopted by Keystone Mennonite Fellowship, July 1998

ARTICLE 20. THE FINAL CONSUMMATION

We believe that in the addition to the physical order with which our senses are related, there also exists an eternal spiritual order; the realm of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the angels, and of the church triumphant. We believe that at death the righteous enter at once into conscious joy and fellowship with Christ, while the wicked are in a state of conscious suffering.

– All Bible references omitted

The Work of a Bishop

by Richard Ulrich

This message is based on I Timothy 3:1-7.

“This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work” (I Timothy 3:1).

I find this first verse a little hard to understand. Just what did Paul really mean when he talked about a man desiring the office of a bishop. Today few seem to desire the office of bishop. And for the few who do, one has to wonder if the desire is pure.

What was Paul saying when he said, “If a man desires the office of bishop, he desires a good work?” First of all, we need to understand that the office of bishop or elder was designed by God. It is not a human invention. A bishop’s work is a good work because it has to do with the salvation of souls and it has to do with the welfare of the bride of Christ. It also has to do with the testimony of the church to a lost and dying world. Is it not true that every true child of God should desire to be involved in a good work for the cause of Christ?

“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach” (I Timothy 3:2).

Consider in verse two and following, some of the qualifications Paul is teaching. We need to understand that this teaching is not just for the bishop or ministers, but for every brother in the congregation.

The first quality of character Paul mentions is **blameless**. This simply means that there is no fault that stands against him. We all have faults, so how can we be blameless? Thank God He provided a way in which we can be free of our faults. That was the purpose of the crucifixion of Christ and His shed blood. Every time we sin, we have the privilege of having our guilt removed through repentance. If we do not own our guilt, we cannot be blameless.

The next quality is **the husband of one wife** (one who is faithful to his wife, NIV). The church at this time was in a transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament. In the Old Covenant, God permitted more than one wife because of the hardness of their hearts. It is possible that in this period there were those who still had more than one wife, or had had more than one. Such did not qualify for this office. But I think this commandment implies more than that. A brother needs to be **morally sound**. He should not be one who

flirts with other women nor one who looks at things he should not. The bishop should be blameless in the area of moral purity.

Then we have the word **vigilant**. Vigilant simply means to be awake and watching. The bishop should be one who observes what is happening in the congregation. He should be alert, recognizing that the devil as a roaring lion is waiting his chance to devour the weak ones. The bishop should not be overly suspicious, but neither should he take for granted that all is well if there are telltale signs of disorder.

Next comes the word **sober-minded**. Sober has a broad range of definitions. First it means “not intoxicated.” We can be intoxicated with much more than just strong drink. We can be intoxicated with fame, our own will, money, selfishness, and more. It also signifies temperance, moderation, and self-discipline. He should be one who is a realist, restrained, rational; one who can maintain calmness during a crisis. A bishop must be one who has control of his emotions, and does not let his emotions take control of him.

In Spanish we have the word **prudent** which the KJV does not have. A bishop who is prudent shows wisdom in his decisions. He thinks things through before making decisions. He makes timely decisions with prayer, and seeks the will of God. One who is prudent remembers that the work is the Lord’s and we are only stewards of His Kingdom work. We do His work according to His will, not our own will.

Next, we have **good behavior**. This speaks of his conduct, his relationship with others, his manner of speech, his dress, his ethics, his manner in general. One who is of good behavior remembers he is a child of God. All of his life needs to reveal this good behavior. His actions tell who he really is and, are more than just a mouth profession; there is agreement between what he preaches and what he does. He actually does the things he preaches about.

Given to hospitality means one who is of a friendly disposition. His home is open to friends and strangers. He is concerned about the needs of others and may even put the needs of others before his own needs. He is one who goes out of his way and makes sacrifices for the good of others without feeling like he has done a great deed.

Able to teach. A bishop or elder is not only responsible to lead and administer, but also to preach the Word. He must be one who can explain the Scriptures in a way the message can be understood; one who can reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine; one who can face disagreement without an argument; one who can use the truth with love and compassion.

“Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous” (I Timothy 3:3). In verse three we have the words “striker” and “brawler.” These words indicate one who is not open to any challenge or rebuke. He cannot take it if someone challenges his authority. He demands respect in place of earning respect. He strikes back when falsely accused. A bishop must not be that kind of quarrelsome person but must be gentle and kind.

“One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence. (For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?” (I Timothy 3:4-5). Verse four points out the need for the bishop to have obedient children. His own house needs to be in order. Simple logic asks the question, “How can a bishop take care of the church of God if he does not know how to take care of his own family?” The simple answer is: If he cannot guide his own household, he cannot lead the church.

These qualifications are not only bishop ordination qualities but they are also qualities needed to serve in the ministry. Neither are they only for the ministry. For the church to function properly, the majority of the brethren need to have these virtues.

I would like to say something about the word “ordain.” It was brought to my attention that the word “ordain” is not in the original text. The original would have the thought of naming or appointing someone. The King James uses the word “ordain” while most English versions translate the word as “appoint.” The German does not use the word “ordain,” neither do the different Spanish versions, except for the Catholic Spanish Bible. Not that the word “ordain” is a wrong translation, but my concern is: “Have we put more weight into the word “ordain” than what the Scriptures put into it?” When the charge of the bishop becomes so loaded that he becomes almost untouchable, something is wrong. The concept that the laity is responsible to the ministry and the ministry responsible to the bishop, and the bishop responsible to God is a dangerous concept even though it might have a grain of truth to it.

There is a sense where a bishop has a heavier charge

in the congregation than others simply because he is at the front of the battle. He has a greater responsibility for the direction a congregation takes. That is why the Scriptures teach that the ministry is worthy of special respect and honor, not because of who they are but because of their responsibility that has been given them. That does not mean that bishops are exempt from accountability. In fact, the Scriptures would bear out that the more responsibility a man has the more accountable he is. Luke 12:48 says this **“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”**

Let’s consider the need for the bishop to be open for correction. I know this is somewhat of a delicate subject and hardly ever taught. Maybe it is not taught because it is not understood.

Effective leadership requires confidence. If there is not confidence in the leader, his leadership will not be very effective. Confidence cannot be demanded; confidence needs to be earned. Demanding others to be open to correction while at the same time resisting correction will not work. Confidence can only be built as one is humble and transparent about his own failures. For a leader to humbly and openly confess his own failures does not diminish his authority but, in fact, establishes his authority.

The ministry should be the first in a congregation to be an example in humility, meekness, transparency, and openness to correction. There have been brethren who, in all sincerity, have brought concerns to the ministry and the ministry took it as rebellion and disciplined the brethren for it. When the ministry feels threatened by challenges or concerns from the brethren, they have a wrong concept of their office. We all have our blind spots in life; that is why we need the brotherhood. Ordained brethren are no exemption to this need. A brother’s character and needs are not changed in ordination.

Even though the ministry is transparent and humble does not guarantee that all the brethren will have confidence in them. There have been plenty of examples of a godly ministry and yet there are those who rebel and resist.

After Paul finishes instructing Timothy concerning qualifications, he tells him in verse 15, **“But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”** In other words, the church is to present truth to a lost and dying world. So, it is very important that the elder be grounded in truth.

Another concern is the need for the congregation to support the bishop and the ministry as a whole. I don't think this concept is understood in many churches as it should be.

The work of a bishop is not just his work; it is the work of the entire brotherhood. He is only called to lead out in this work. It is not his church; it is the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, **"I will build my church."** Jesus is building **His** church. The bishop is only a steward of Christ's work. Building up the church is the work of the entire congregation, and the bishop is foremost among the brethren. When brethren sit back and just watch what the ministry is going to do and stand ready to criticize as soon as they feel something was not done right, they have an entirely wrong concept of the church. The work of maintaining the church pure and holy is the work of every member in the congregation, not just the bishop.

Last of all, every congregation needs its own bishop or elder. Paul told Titus to ordain elders in every city. Peter mentions taking the oversight thereof—neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. The work of an elder or bishop is very hard to accomplish by a nonresident bishop. Overseeing the daily needs of the church calls for someone living close by.

Summary

Because of the responsibility that leaders have in the congregation, it is very important that their character be honest and of good report before God and man. The bishop, with his responsibility to lead out and direct in the congregation, should have his family in order along with the obvious ability to teach others.

Even though a bishop's duties are multiple, he must maintain his own relationship alive with the Lord. He needs to have a deep love for the truth and a growing knowledge of the Scriptures lest he be deceived or overthrown by the false teaching and ungodly opposition of our day. Yet he must be considerate and kind to those brethren who have other ideas about how to build the church.

The responsibility of the bishop is to be an example and to lead in the congregation, not to dominate and rule. Because the bishop carries the greater part of the responsibility, he needs and deserves the support and aid of the whole congregation. **"My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment" (James 3:1).**

R. U. | *Pedernales, Mexico*



Easton's Bible Dictionary.

An overseer: In apostolic times, it is quite manifest that there was no difference as to the order between bishops and elders or presbyters (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:1, /2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3). The term "bishop" is never once used to denote a different office from that of elder or presbyter. These different names are simply titles of the same office, "bishop" designating the function, namely, that of oversight, and "presbyter" the dignity appertaining to the office. Christ is figuratively called "the bishop [episcopos] of souls" (1 Peter 2:25).

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

1. An overseer: a spiritual superintendent, ruler or director; applied to Christ.

Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the shepherd and *bishop* of your souls. (1. Peter.2).

2. In the primitive church—a spiritual overseer; an elder or presbyter; one who had the pastoral care of a church.

Both the Greek and Latin fathers do, with one consent, declare that bishops were called presbyters, and presbyters bishops, in apostolic times, the name being then common.

Smith's Bible Dictionary

The word originally signified an "overseer" or spiritual superintendent. The titles bishop and elder, or presbyter, were essentially equivalent. The duties of the bishop-elders appear to have been as follows:

General superintendence over the spiritual well-being of the flock (1 Peter 5:2).

The work of teaching, both publicly and privately (1 Thessalonians 5:12; Titus 1:9; 1 Timothy 5:17).

The work of visiting the sick, (James 5:14).

Among other acts of charity, that of receiving strangers occupied a conspicuous place (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). Peter calls Christ **"the shepherd and bishop of your souls."** (1 Peter 2:25).



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“A sheep will never dress as a wolf.”

– Ryan Miller at Plad Mennonite Church, MO



“Freedom is not the right to do as you please; it is the liberty to do as you ought.”

– Eugene King at McGaheysville Mennonite Church, VA



“He who carries an outward carnal weapon cannot carry an inner spiritual weapon.”

– Hans Friedrich Küntsche at Wolf Point, MT



“When we can no longer smell the stench of sin, it does not mean sin quit stinking. It means our smeller is not working.”

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



“Scripture is not only what God wants man to know about mankind, but also what God wants man to know about God.”

– Joel Burkholder, Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, IL



“Silence is not always golden. Sometimes it is just plain yellow.”

– Daniel Stover, Grays Prairie Mennonite Church, TX



“Compromise is a self-inflicted wound that never stops bleeding until you are completely dry spiritually.”

– Nate Nissley, Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“If you do not have enough faith to go to church, it is doubtful you have enough faith to go to heaven!”

– David Stahl, Shanks Church of the Brethren, PA



“Without Christ in us, there is no Christianity”

– Ernest Strubhar at Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, OK



“The fight is about fighting valiantly and maintaining our Captain’s honor, not about winning great victories single-handedly.”

– Bryce Geiser at Brownsville Christian Community, KY

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.

Integrity?

by Chester Weaver

On the day my father was visiting our bakery in Texas, Marvin Stone dropped by as he often did on a Saturday afternoon. Marvin was a friendly, white-haired attorney. No other customer was in the store so I decided to introduce my father to Marvin. When my father discovered that Marvin was an attorney, he said in his typically blunt manner, I hear that attorneys do not always tell the truth.

Marvin replied, “We tell the truth according to our clients.”

I will never forget the exchange because of the profundity of the experience.

With the deep political cleavage between Left and Right in American culture these days, we are impacted by the cleavage whether we realize it or not. The evidence reveals itself in the kind of news we absorb, the political comments which issue from our tongues, and in how we have navigated the Covid issue. And by way of extension, how we relate to conspiracy theories swirling around us.

We become emotionally involved with our belief systems. Why? Our belief systems are who we are at the core of our being. Since we are humans, we tend to tell the truth according to our belief systems. We speak out of who we are. We cannot do otherwise. We are who we are.

And right there lies the real issue. Who are we?

At the core of my being, am I one person or am I two?

By the standards of fallen humanity, a human being is two; one self-interested, the other a good image. It has always been this way since Creation. This double standard has been mankind’s problem through the ages. It has interrupted human relationships, it has caused wars, and it has always driven politics, regardless of the historical age.

But then Jesus showed up in human history. He was different. In no way was He double. His singleness inspired and won loyalty from some but infuriated others. Why? How does integrity both inspire and infuriate?

Integrity is all about Wholeness, about being undivided, about completeness. In our heart of hearts, the echoes of being created in God’s image still reverberate. Instinctively, we recognize the rightness of Integrity, the value of Integrity, and the importance of

Integrity. Integrity is all about identifying with the way we were originally created. It has always been this way.

When Jesus showed up, those individuals who still heard the music of Integrity reverberating in their hearts, recognized that music and rejoiced in the song that Jesus sang. The music of Integrity motivated twelve men to each do heroic deeds in this cause of Integrity. (One of the original twelve slipped back into doubleness but when he understood the enormity of what he had done, could not handle it and committed suicide.) From there, once the Holy Spirit energized the Messengers of Integrity, the Roman Empire trembled. The music of Integrity moves mountains and reshapes men. It always does.

But at the same time, it infuriates others. How can the same message do both?

Think about what happened when Jesus began His ministry among the Jews. While some heard Him gladly, others were soon plotting His death. Why such strong reaction? Why did trickery, deceit, and false accusations enter the picture? Why could the Jews only put up with Jesus for three and one-half years before they killed Him? Why did the Jews cry “Crucify Him” when Pilate declared, “I find no fault in Him?” Why did the Jews request a Roman guard for Jesus’ tomb? Why did they bribe the useless Roman guards to fabricate a false story?

All this happened because Integrity contains power within itself. The truth is the truth and will always remain the truth. Instinctively, humans understand this foundational fact. That is why students still study algebra and commerce still works.

Falseness destroys algebra and falseness interrupts commerce. Integrity in business is understood to be so foundational that commerce cannot function as commerce without financial integrity. To ensure financial integrity the law of the land enforces business integrity.

But even though Integrity reigns supreme in algebra and business, it is otherwise in human relationships. In human relationships self-interest has reigned supreme. Cain wanted to serve God in his own way and so he killed Abel. The Hebrews feared to take the land of Canaan and so they disregarded the faith of Joshua and Caleb. King David killed Uriah in order to get Bathsheba. Because the Jews did not like the messages of the prophets, they killed the messengers. And of

course, when Jesus criticized Jewish religious failure, the Jews had no other choice but to kill Him. And thus, the story goes.

Why is it this way?

Doubleness is the way of man. Self-interest and good image.

Integrity is the way of God. The two cannot mix. Doubleness fears integrity at the deepest level. Instinctively, human beings understand that integrity is good, right, and proper. Integrity is the right way, hands down. No one faults wholeness except those given over to wickedness.

Doubleness is the way of fallen mankind. Falseness and deceit cover human failure. In his crookedness, man chooses doubleness because doubleness is easier than integrity. It is easier to lie and be deceitful when ugly truth is exposed. Naturally, proud human beings hate to be exposed as false. Exposed hypocrisy must be prevented at any cost. And thus, cowardice energizes man to take drastic measures to remove the presence of integrity. Doubleness loves doubleness. When doubleness is everywhere, doubleness is understood to be the way the world works. Just put algebra and commerce in the exception boxes and go on with the game. Do anything to keep integrity at bay. Do not even think about integrity.

When Jesus appeared and insisted upon Integrity in the presence of religious doubleness, He could not be tolerated. If left unchecked, He would spoil the working system. He was such an intense threat that only three and one-half years were required to remove Him from the Jewish system.

Anabaptism was born in Europe in the 1500s. Why? Anabaptism was birthed because of the doubleness of both the Roman Catholic system and the new Protestant system. Anabaptism insisted on religious integrity. Humans should practice what they preach. Jesus Christ meant what He said. Human beings should be literal disciples of Christ because Christ had made it possible. Disobedience to the obvious words of Jesus

Christ indicated that the disobedient were not actually disciples of Jesus Christ even though they professed faith in Jesus Christ. Professed creeds meant nothing in the eyes of God; the being and the doing demonstrated actual faith. Only the integrity of faith counts.

This insistence upon religious integrity infuriated the religious establishment of Europe, both the Roman Catholic establishment and the Protestant establishment. Why? Once again, this insistence upon integrity had interrupted the religious systems. By 1600 both systems had figured out how to manage religious doubleness and make doubleness work with the masses. When Anabaptism challenged both religious systems, Anabaptism would need to be silenced. Persecution was the way to do this. And the religious systems literally annihilated Anabaptism in some quarters. Anabaptism was forced to emigrate in others.

And then Anabaptism jumped the Atlantic. In free America Anabaptism developed its own form of doubleness, usually expressed in religious formalism. Various revival movements shook the doubleness and caused some numerical loss. Materialism, so native to the American culture, created the largest expression of doubleness. The atmosphere of religious and political liberty invited doubleness to proliferate among the Mennonites in America. Some lonely voices called for integrity but they were too often ignored. Religious doubleness was the new way Anabaptists expressed themselves in America. Calls for integrity may not rock the boat. It had taken a long time to figure out how to successfully operate Anabaptist doubleness.

Today, Anabaptists too often identify with some form of doubleness. With no persecution to separate the wheat from the chaff, religious doubleness is the easier way to experience church life. Is that true of us? Are we proving to be just as human as our former persecutors? How do we respond to calls for increased integrity? For the record, some present-day Anabaptists respond with delight to such calls; why do others become infuriated? Marvin Stone said, “We tell the truth according to our clients.”

C.W. | Texas

The Meaning of Integrity:

Having integrity means that you live in accordance to your deepest values, you are honest with everyone, and you always keep your word.

“Provide for honest [honorable] things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”

– II Corinthians 8:21

Joseph's brothers are good examples of doubleness. For perhaps 10 or 15 years they lived a double standard. They wanted to appear as honest men to their father and to the world, but they lied. They said to Joseph,

“We are honest men; we are not spies”

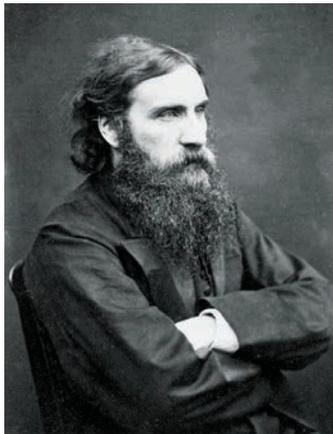
– Genesis 42:31

Lord, Lord

by George MacDonald

Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?” Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”

– Matthew 7:21-23



George MacDonald
1824–1905
Scottish author, poet, and
Christian minister.

always been presenting something else than obedience as faith in Christ. ...

Get up, and do something the Master tells you; so make yourself His disciple at once. Instead of asking yourself whether you believe or not, ask yourself whether you have this day done one thing because He said, “Do it,” or once abstained because He said, “Do not do it.” It is simply absurd to say you believe, or even want to believe in Him, if you do not anything He tells you. ...

We must learn to obey Him in everything, and so must begin somewhere: let it be at once, and in the very next thing that lies at the door of our conscience! Oh fools and slow of heart, if you think of nothing but Christ, and do not set yourselves to do His words, you but build your houses on the sand. What have such teachers not to answer for who have turned your regard away from the direct words of the Lord himself, which are spirit and life, to contemplate plans of salvation tortured out

of the words of His apostles, even were those plans as true as they are false! There is but one plan of salvation, and that is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, to take Him for what He is – our Master, and His words as if He meant them, which assuredly He did. To do His words is to enter into vital relation with Him is the only way to be one with Him. The relation between Him and us is an absolute one; it can nohow begin to live but in obedience; it is obedience. There can be no truth, no reality, in any initiation of at-one-ment with Him, that is not obedience.

What? Have I the poorest notion of a God, and dare think of entering into relations with Him, the very first of which is not that what He saith, I will do? The thing is eternally absurd, and comes of the father of lies. I know what he whispers to those to whom such teaching as this is distasteful; “It is the doctrine of works!” But one word of the Lord humbly heard and received will suffice to send all the demons of false theology into the abyss. He says the man that does not do the things He tells him, builds his house to fall in utter ruin. He instructs His messengers to go and baptize all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Tell me it is faith He requires: Do I not know it? And is not faith the highest act of which the human mind is capable? But faith in what? Faith in what He is, in what He says – a faith which can have no existence except in obedience – a faith which is obedience. To do what He wishes is to put forth faith in Him. ...

What have you done this day because it was the will of Christ? Have you dismissed, once dismissed, an anxious thought for the morrow? Have you ministered to any needy soul or body, and kept your right hand from knowing what your left hand did? Have you begun to leave all and follow Him? Did you set yourself to judge righteous judgment? Are you being ware of covetousness? Have you forgiven your enemy? Are you seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness before all other things? Are you hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Have you given to someone that asked of you? Tell me something that you have done, are doing, or are trying to do because He told you [to do it].¹

¹ George MacDonald, “The Truth in Jesus,” in *Unspoken Sermons Second Series* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1885).

Taken from, *Following the Call: Living the Sermon on the Mount Together*; a new collection of essays by Plough Publishing.

Lies and Consequences

The Language of Lies

by Dallas Witmer

Religious leaders of Jesus' day had a lot of trouble telling the truth. Christ told them that this was because they were Satan's children. The Bible says that Satan is a liar and the father of lies. Since lies are Satan's native language, and that is the way these leaders talked, it was not hard to figure out which family they belonged to (John 8:44).

Satan's children still speak his language of lies today. Someone on the phone says the check is in the mail. It sounds like plain English, and you may never suspect you are talking to Satan's son until the check doesn't show up.

Satan's children are marrying. They promise love and fidelity "till death do us part." That means marriage for life. But they have no concept of the vows they are making. They do not hesitate to break those vows, making a lie out of that promise of fidelity. So lightly does our society regard marriage commitments that some vulgarly refer to the first time around as a "starter marriage."

We did not become a nation of promise breakers overnight. Nor did our flippant attitude toward

commitments begin with breaking marriage vows. It began with simply lying. Lying, like all other sin, is a thing parents must never do and for which children must be punished. They will learn. When disciplined children become adults and sign notes for loans, they pay what they have promised. When they vow at baptism to follow Christ until death, the church knows it can count on them. And when they promise love and fidelity in marriage, their partners expect a relationship that grows closer, rather than more distant, through the storms of life.

The Bible says, "**Love the truth and peace**" (**Zechariah 8:19**). Love the truth, even when it hurts. If your language identifies you as Satan's child, don't lie again by denying it. Rather, repent of your sin and be born again. God will adopt you as His child and you will learn the truth—God's language.

"All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

- Used by permission

- *Reaching Out*, January 2020

Lies Destroy Trust

by James Landis

Animal rights activists have been using covert means to film and report what they consider animal abuse on farms. Their means of gaining access included lying on job applications so they could work on targeted farms. The problem has been addressed by a number of state legislatures.

An integral part of the ensuing court battles between the states and groups such as PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) and the ACLU of Iowa was whether or not lying on job applications was protected by the First Amendment that gives citizens the right to freedom of speech. In other words, is it legal to lie under certain conditions?

In a trial, *Animal Legal Defense Fund v. Reynolds*, the Eighth Circuit Court ruled on the constitutionality of the new Iowa law. The Court upheld the section of the Iowa statute that prohibited gaining access to agricultural production facilities by false pretenses (the access provision).

In coming to their August 10, 2021 decision, the

Eighth Circuit leaned heavily on a precedent case by the U.S. Supreme Court in *United States versus Alvarez*, decided in 2012. Of special interest to us in that case was the following argument.

"The concurrence argued that *little white lies* are essential lubrication for society to function. It also suggested that even *an intentionally false statement* might serve society well by provoking a clearer explanation of the truth. The concurrence also argued that a narrower version of the statute could ... still leaving *breathing room for useful lies*."

It should be clear to the people of God that even in the highest courts of the land, decisions are not made on the basis of biblical authority. God's standard, the Bible, governs our lives and overrules the standards of manmade laws. God's law makes no room for "white lies" or "useful lies." Our standard is found in Ephesians 4:25, "**We are part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth.**" (CEV)

All lies destroy trust in one another.

Two Hearts, One Purpose

by Abram Neufeld

“The Scriptures say, ‘God commanded light to shine in the dark.’ Now God is shining in our hearts to let you know that His glory is seen in Jesus Christ.”

– II Corinthians 4:6 (CEV)

Abram Shares Life After Conversion

After I surrendered my life to the Lord, everything changed. God called me to a different life. He filled me with peace and love.

I shared my joy with the Christians at work. It was a big greenhouse operation and some who worked there were believers. They were shocked and said to their friends, “You mean Abe Neufeld got saved?” To them the thought was almost too good to be true, but they soon realized this truly did happen.

Several weeks went by before I shared with my dad about my conversion. He got very angry and said, “If you are so good, tomorrow you will no longer live here.”

When I drank and lived a wicked life I was welcome in his house, but now that things had changed, I had no place to call home. Dad said I had to leave: he meant it.

I took my clothes and went to work. I was almost 19 years old at the time. At work I knew a young man who came from a family of believers. I asked him if I could come live with his family. He asked his parents; that night I went home to live with a Christian family.

After my conversion, I quit going to parties. But one Wednesday I decided I would go see my old friends. When I got there they had a vile video playing. God spoke to me, “You no longer belong here.”

I had just arrived: now I got up to leave. Of course these friends asked, “Where are you going?”

I told them, “I’m a Christian and I don’t belong here anymore.” Praise God for His direction, protection, and guidance through the Holy Spirit. When I left that place I went to the Wednesday meeting at church.

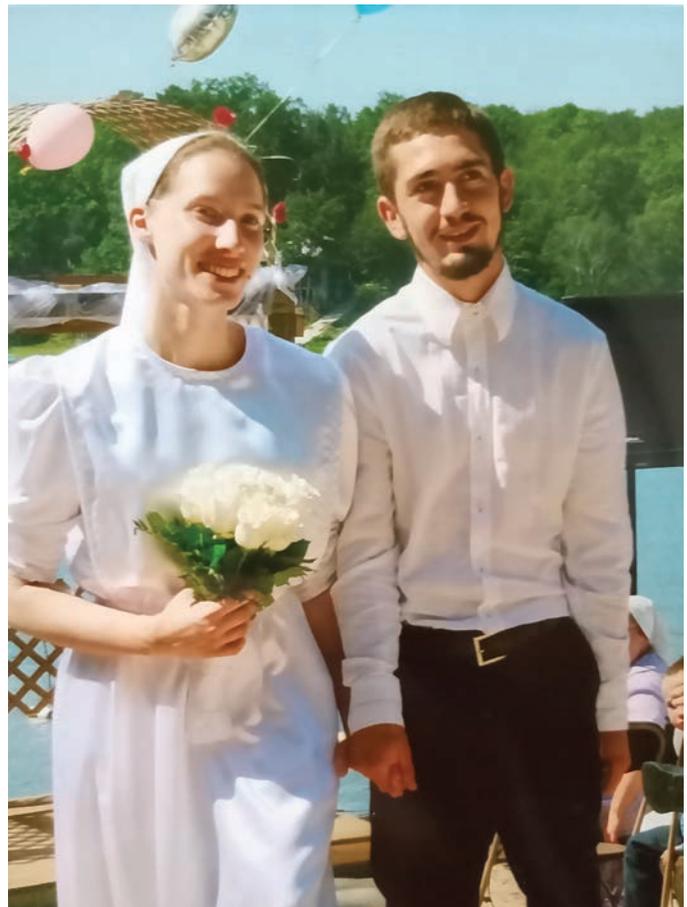
On May 16, 2004, I was baptized at the church where I had said just one year earlier, “I will never get baptized here.” How God had worked!

Now I had new friends who were believers. My old friends, cousins, aunts, and uncles hated me. God took care of what I needed and gave me fellowship with the family of God. They adopted me in as one of their own.

God also gave me a heart to share the gospel with others. I began street preaching with other brothers in the Lord. We shared with all kinds of people, but especially with the migrant workers who worked on the farms and in the greenhouses in our community.

I spent time with other youth who had a heart for God; I was encouraged. I ended up joining a Kleine Gemeinde church (small community) where I had spent time with the youth.

In 2007 I moved from Ontario to Alberta (two provinces of Canada) for work reasons. While working in Alberta I signed up to go to a revival conference in Canton, Ohio. Little did I know when I went to the conference in Ohio what God had in store for the future.



Wedding Day - June 28, 2008

The revival conference in October 2007 led to another church visit on the New Years weekend of January 2008 where I first met Elisabeth. But before I tell you how we met each other, she needs to tell you more about her life after her conversion.

Elisabeth Shares Life After Conversion

After I saw that I was a sinner in need of the Saviour too, I came to understand that each person is equally in need of repentance. Prior to my conversion my younger sister and I had some real problems getting along. She hated the changes I had been making and the embarrassment it was when we went places together. Beside that, I had been pressuring her to make these same changes. After God saved me, He showed me my sister and I were equally in need of Him. He filled my heart with love instead of self-righteousness. I realized all of us were in need of God's grace and that I was no better than my sister who was trying to be cool. Now that I had been truly saved I began to pray for my sister instead of preaching to her. One day she asked me, "What happened to you?"

I replied, "I just got saved."

A major storm erupted in our home after I shared this fact because his idea challenged eternal security and everything we had understood of salvation. Within a few months my sister was also converted on her 16th birthday. Her life changed dramatically after she confessed her sins to God and gave Him her life.

I still remember my surprise and joy when she told me she had become a Christian. Then she asked me if we could go through her closet together because she had things she needed to get rid of. She also asked me for a veil. After that we shared many times of prayer and sweet fellowship. God brought other people into our lives to encourage us. With time we heard of a small church five hours away and we got baptized there.

I lived at home for three years after I was saved; it became harder and harder to follow the Lord in that environment. Because we needed fellowship—our parents were not attending any church by that time and they didn't want us to go to church—when I was 20 I moved close to the church where I had been baptized. My sister moved there later.

We learned many good things from the families there. Little did I know at the time how much the things I was learning then would help me in the years to come once God gave me a husband and children. I helped the mothers with their little ones and worked in a bakery.

One lady I was a maid for asked me if I was praying

for my future husband. She encouraged me to pray specific prayers and totally trust God with the future. I had never had a boyfriend. It seemed like no one would want me, especially coming from a troubled home. I began to pray for a husband whose faith had cost him something, who could understand my journey and who was active in sharing the gospel with the lost. I even prayed if he was from another country that would be fine as long as he had a heart to serve God. I also prayed that when I would meet him, the Spirit of God would impress it on my heart that this was the one for me.

After I started praying specific prayers for a husband, about two years went by. Then several men from church went to a revival conference in Ohio and among the hundreds of people there they sat by some youth from Canada. Those from our church had some good conversations and the Canadian youth said they would like to come visit our church sometime. Several months after the revival conference, the Canadian youth came to visit our church over the January 1, 2008 New Year's weekend. I was peeling potatoes at the kitchen window when the group arrived for supper. I saw Abe through the window and even though I did not yet know his name, God spoke to my heart, "This is the one I have you for."

As Abe shared his testimony that weekend I knew without a doubt God was answering prayer. It was amazing how he was just what I had been praying for: we shared the same vision, purpose and convictions. The same things I had found in the Bible he had found as well.

After we met that winter I wondered how God would work this out. It was a time of prayer and trusting the Lord. God is able to do abundantly above all we can ask or think. It was as if God had been preparing each of us for each other. The Lord brought two lives from broken homes, first to Him and then to each other so that together we might serve the Lord. It was so clear we were meant for each other.

Six months after we first met we married on June 28, 2008! God blessed us with a sweet and loving marriage and eight children. With time, even my parents whose lives are very different from ours, have come to see blessings in the path God has for us.

Abe Shares About Serving God Together

When we were first married there was a time of economic recession and for work reasons we moved to Okotoks, Alberta that fall. I was framing houses and one day in a Home Depot store I met a Christian from

Romania. This brother and I had some very good times of fellowship. One of the last times I saw him we were praying about our future in terms of missions. It was as if God gave him a glimpse of things to come and he said to me, “Someday you will go back to your people and share the gospel with them.” At the time we had no idea how God would bring that to pass. Nine years later we came to understand what the brother had shared then.

In the winter of 2009 we moved back to Ontario so we could be part of a local Charity church called The Pilgrim Church. The Pilgrim church house was located at Comber, Ontario, a 15-minute drive from our house. We became members of The Pilgrim Church and served God with the believers there for seven years.

As God gave opportunity I continued to share the gospel with migrant workers. The migrants would work all week at greenhouses and on farms. On Friday nights they would go to the stores to shop for their groceries. While waiting for a taxi or bus ride back to their farm, large groups of them would stand around. While they waited for their ride was an ideal setting to have conversations with them. Sometimes we would sing (as a family or with others from our church) for the workers while they waited outside stores. We did have some of them attend services as well as have Bible studies in our home with groups of them.

In various ways we ministered to the migrants as God lead us. Once a man from Guatemala—he was already a Christian—came to our home with other coworkers. He was discouraged in his Christian life, being surrounded by evil influences at work. He told us about his family and the church group he was part of back home in Guatemala. God allowed our paths to cross at just the

right time when he needed encouragement. Within a few months he had it clear that God would have him go back home to his wife and family. Even though his wages were very low at home, he knew that his place was back in Guatemala. So through experiences like this we were encouraged to keep sharing truth with the workers in our community.



With the work among the migrant workers, I knew I really needed to learn more Spanish. One of our church brothers also saw this need. He recommended we make a trip to Mexico and spend some time learning more Spanish so that the outreach could be more effective. In January of 2013 we took a trip to Mexico. We could not have imagined how the experiences God brought us through over the years would prepare us for the work He has for us now. He does work all things out for good.

From the time I became a Christian it was as if God put a burning desire in me to share the gospel and the truths of God’s Word with those around me. That desire has always been in my heart wherever we have been, whether in Canada or Mexico. Our church in Ontario recognized this gift and desire and ordained me to evangelism.

The call to evangelism is somewhat different than the calling to minister, deacon, or bishop. As we understand it, in Scripture these callings pertain primarily to the teaching, care and shepherding of believers who are already in the church. Though the leaders of the church share the gospel too, they are often busy with the needs of the church. This is where the calling of an evangelist helps build the church and spread the gospel while helping the ministers in the home congregation to be

free to focus on the flock most of the time. We who serve in missions and evangelism seek to bring the truth of God's Word to those not yet in the church. I was ordained to be an evangelist—one who takes the gospel to the lost and brings truth to those who are seeking. As a team, we work together with each one fulfilling their part. Some give, some teach, some oversee, and prayer is made by the whole church for the work of outreach.

In 2017 some unusual events happened that made it clear we should move to Mexico permanently. We had sold our house in Ontario, and were in the process of buying another place out of town in a more ideal location. The closing for the house we were going to purchase was September 1, 2017.

Several weeks prior to the sale of our house, we heard that Ontario was passing some bills which took away the freedom of parents and churches to teach what marriage should be biblically. In Canada, it is now considered a hate crime to counsel anyone in a homosexual union to come away from that lifestyle. We saw how these changes would introduce a situation where those in ministry and parents teaching their children a biblical worldview would be very limited in what stand they could take on truth without potential issues with the law. We felt these changes would make raising a family in biblical truths even more challenging.

Because these changes were happening in our province and in Canada as a whole, I boldly prayed, "God, if you do not want us to stay in Ontario and if you have other plans for us, cause the deal on the purchase of the house to fall apart."

Two weeks before we should have gotten possession of the house we were buying, we were made aware that the real estate agent had not done her job properly. The tenants had not been informed that they must move out. Consequently, they were not planning to move out; they thought they were just getting new landlords. Despite the fact that the renters did not plan to move out of the house we had agreed to purchase, we still had to move out of the place we were living in.

In this way God answered our prayer. He put it before us plainly that we were not meant to stay in Canada. We were homeless. We sold almost everything of our furnishings and put a few things in storage and left for Mexico.

When we arrived in Jagueyes and were searching for a house there, we could find nothing to buy. People kept making excuses about why they did not want to sell to us: "They were keeping an empty house for relatives who might come back," and "they wanted to keep the place in the family."

Consequently we, Elisabeth and I and six children, lived in a one-bedroom apartment for four months. We were also expecting our 7th child.

The Lord then gave us the opportunity to buy 1.2 acres of land and build a house. With my background in framing we were able to build a simple house which was ready to move into within 60 days from when we started building. We thank the Lord for His direction, for a place to live, and for a biblical church to be part of close to our home.

Our local church is precious to us. We are eight families seeking to live out the Word of God and follow Christ wholeheartedly. Our services are in English and Plaut Dietch and some Spanish too. Depending on what background visitors come from we try to make sure the messages are translated so they can understand and be blessed.

In time, we began to understand more and more why God brought us back to Mexico. Not only are there Spanish people here who need to hear the gospel but God has opened doors for outreach to my people as well, the Old Colony Russian Mennonites. Just as the doors of some communities that were once very closed to the Scriptures were opening, God allowed us to meet people who were seeking at just the right time.

My wife and children never made much progress learning Plautdietsch in Ontario because most German families we knew preferred to speak English. Now living with some 100,000 Russian Mennonites in various settlements around us (many do not speak English) our family has been able to learn the language of my people.

We love to sing hymns in Plautdietsch as well as English. The Lord has given us an opportunity to sing and share our testimony time and time again.

The Old Colony people are continually amazed with how an English girl (as they call my wife) would come to have the convictions that we hold from the Scripture. Their own questions give us an opening to share how we came to the Lord and about His power working in our lives. Two lives, two cultures, but One Mighty God who has given us one heart and vision to serve Him. That has made all the difference!

We are not what we are today because we grew up this way. No system or culture gave us the truths we hold dear. What we have found in Christ is all because of Him and the power of His Word working in our hearts and lives. Everything we are and do has a reason that goes back to God and what is in the Bible.

So with joy we can share this story, which is all about Him, and what He has done in our lives. Even

having the family that God has given us blesses the Old Colony people in a day and age when small families are becoming the norm. It is a blessing to be raising a family of 8 children (all 12 and under) by faith. We cannot lean on our own understanding because neither of us grew up in a large family. We know God has a plan for each child and we are thankful for each one of them.

Our local church is also precious. We are committed and working together with fellow believers in ministry. As we serve the Lord together in this work we have especially seen God's blessing upon outreach. In this past year the Lord has been saving and changing more lives. We praise God that He is still calling others like us out of darkness into His marvellous Light.

To God be all the glory for what He has done and is doing!

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

Abram and Elisabeth Neufeld | *Namiquipa, (Near Jagueyes), Chihuahua, Mexico*

Note:

The Neufelds invite people to contact them:

by phone: (+52-749-101-0497)

by email: Abram Neufeld <aejmexico@gmail.com>.

Contact them to arrange for a visit and fellowship.



This family photo was taken by our minister's daughter outside their home one Sunday in September 2020 in Los Jagueyes, Mexico.

Back row, left to right:

Abram, Elisabeth Joy, Ezra Johan 9, Benaiah Jason 16, Jeremiah Abraham 12

Front row, left to right:

Channah Ruth 8 ^{1/2} months, Eberli Matthias 2, Elianna Fe 6, Zakkai Esteban 7, and Jonatan Nehemiah 5

Our Home

by Elisabeth Joy Neufeld

May our home reflect the Love of Jesus,
May it shine like a beacon in the night,
In a world that lives in fear and darkness,
May we ever shine God's light.



May our lives reflect the joy of Jesus,
May our home with praises to Him ring,
And each child entrusted to our keeping,
Ever to God praises bring.



May our home hold to the truths of Jesus,
May we love His Word and live it out each day.
And when we pass on, then may our children
Carry on for God, we pray!

The COVID Shots

by *Slm Yoder*

I have enjoyed listening and even taking part in discussions about the COVID shot, listening to why someone has gotten the shots and why the other has not received them. I venture to say we could have seven people each give their viewpoint on the subject and maybe have eight ideas.

One of the things you will notice in this writing is that I don't call the COVID shot a "vaccine," not that it doesn't technically fit the definition but because of what we have known to be the work of vaccines. I remember when I was a lad of about four years old, I went with my mother to the health department and received a vaccination in my upper arm for small pox (pock mark is still there). I remember some years later the whole community gathered at our public school for the sugar cube which was a vaccination against polio. I don't remember if I had any other vaccinations or not. My point is that these vaccinations were immunizations against a disease. We were assured we would not get small pox, polio, measles or whatever else we vaccinated our children for. And we did not. Not just a lesser amount or a case not as severe. Our mindset was that we were immunized and the fight was over.

During the current pandemic we kept hearing about the vaccination that was coming. It sounded like this was going to be the answer to this pestilence that had settled on the world. Some of us wondered if this would be as the flu shot that is targeted for certain viruses and misses the other flu viruses. As the drama unfolded, we soon began to hear of variants and the need for booster shots. We now know for sure this shot does not give an immunization for COVID-19, and hence for clarity it is better to call it a flu shot.

I remember so well farming in the early 90s and hearing of Round-Up-Ready crops. It seemed too good to be true to be able to spray glyphosate over the top of the crop and take out all the weeds while doing no harm to the crop. The manufacturer did keep telling us to spray maximum rates so as to 'kill' every weed. Theoretically they were right, if we could have killed every one, we would not have had this problem. We didn't realize how fast our troublesome pigweeds in the south would mutate and develop a resistance to glyphosate (other weeds have mutated as well). We had several good years with an easy way to keep out the weeds. Now every farmer knows about 'Palmer' amaranth pigweed. You can almost pour glyphosate on the Palmer amaranth pigweed and it thrives. They

mutated¹ very rapidly and became resistant.

I think we have a similar scenario with the COVID shot. I'm certainly not a scientist but it does seem a strong possibility since the shot admittedly now mostly reduces symptoms, it seems nearly certain the virus will speed up its mutation. This seems like the normal struggle for survival principle of life.

The rapid speed that this shot came on the market is another concern. We really don't know what all it will bring down the road nor the side effects it may cause. We don't know how many boosters will be called for. It seems the world is the test field at the moment. From what I'm seeing the shot is not working well and the people who have had the shot do not really trust it. The people who have had the virus have built an immunity that is far, far superior to the protection of the shot. We've known since childhood that when we had the flu, our body would build immunity to that strain. This is the way our Maker designed us. One of the first people I personally knew that had COVID was told they would have six months of immunity. I wondered how they figured that out so quickly. This was a new virus and we had no experience to draw on for this virus. The viruses we were familiar with gave lifetime immunity to that strain. So what science was behind this?

Hence, I think it much better to take precaution and do what we can to boost our immune system. It is an excellent time to remember we are to be stewards of the body that God gave us. It is a good time to put a plan in place of good nutrition, exercise, and weight loss. If you are overweight you are much more likely to be affected by this pestilence and many other illnesses. If you consume sugar drinks of any kind and are overweight it is an excellent time to "kick them" and reduce sugar consumption and bring your body into a condition that will be much healthier and better able to ward off this virus and many other illnesses.

My belief is that in the long run it will be safer and better to do my part and let this body build the immunities to protect itself against this virus. I realize there have been lives lost, and I don't belittle this fact and am sorry for the loss of life. I do believe too, we as Christians should constantly commit our lives to God

¹ Mutate means "to change." Technically there is no gene modification in the plant. It is only that some plants are more resistant to the chemical than others. Because the chemical does not kill certain strains of a plant, it allows that particular strain to spread very rapidly, in this case, Palmer amaranth pigweed. – JGL

and look at the whole picture of life and its preservation.

It is unprecedented that an illness with a recovery rate of 99.9% would cause a stir the world over. We know that if it wouldn't be for the invention of social media there would not have been near the stir. One of my greatest concerns is how we are being conditioned for more to come. Who would have ever thought of a flu virus being the instrument that ushers in a global push for something that will be the benchmark for whether we can travel, go to eating places, other public events and even to church? It sounds strangely similar to Revelation 13:16-17, **“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”**

I have been almost ridiculed for even mentioning the mark of the beast. Still others think this passage is to be spiritualized and has nothing to do with the end-time system of government. Still others think the bride will be raptured before this, hence nothing for us to be concerned with. I could wish one of these views would be right, then I could move along in silence hoping that all would be well.

I will hasten to say that I don't think this is the “mark of the beast,” and I will hasten to say this is not a writing to ridicule another belief or support the belief that the saints will be gone. It's time we open our eyes to the conditioning our society is having upon us in general, and the conditioning of this shot in particular. I have heard things like this: “There are all kinds of good reasons we will go ahead with it; it makes good sense; it defies science not to.” I've even heard we can be better witnesses if we have had it. All the while we are being conditioned to do what it takes to keep rolling down our economic road.

So, my plea is that we consider where we are headed.



One day God's people will need to jump off the train. Revelation 14:10-11 declares that all who take the mark seal their destiny in hell. Verse 12 says, **“Here is a call for the endurance of the saints.”** There will be hard times. Read Matthew 24:7 of the famines and pestilences and earthquakes. Jesus said all these are the beginnings of sorrows, literally birth pangs. He said along with this, **“the end is not yet.”** Our triumph will be found from Revelation 12:11. **“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”** I say again, one day the saints will need to jump off the economic train.

I think it an excellent time to take a look at our attachment and make a commitment anew to identify with our soon coming Lord and King. Also, it is an excellent time to share the gospel of Jesus' Kingdom with a society that is bent on going away from the Creator.

So for now I'm content to feel safe with the immunity in my body as God created it and in a new way seek the immunity from the ways of sin and evil and to be inoculated with the Holy Ghost from heaven.

S.Y. | East Dublin, Georgia

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

James 4:4

Is Jesus the Messiah?

A Mock Argument in 32 A.D.

If we let Him continue what He is doing, the Romans will come and destroy our temple and our nation.

He said He came not to destroy the world but to save it.

He declared that people who did not obey Him were going to hell.

If people do evil works, they are children of the devil.

He claimed to be a king. He is demon possessed

He said He came to call sinners to repentance.

His kingdom is not of this world.

He said, "I and the Father are one."

He made himself out to be the Son of God.

He and God are in total agreement; they are one.

Peter claimed He stilled a storm and walked on water.

No one can do the signs He does if God is not with Him.

He called the Jewish leaders children of the devil.

He ate with publicans and sinners.

He said He came to call sinners to repentance.

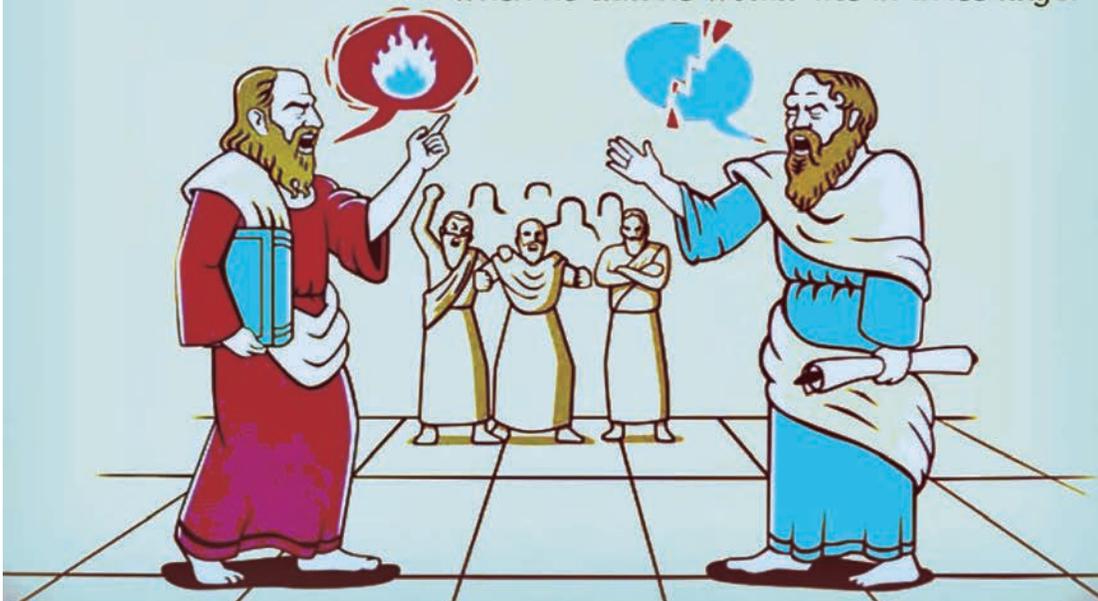
He said, "You must be born again."

When He said, "You must be born again,

He meant by water and the Spirit.

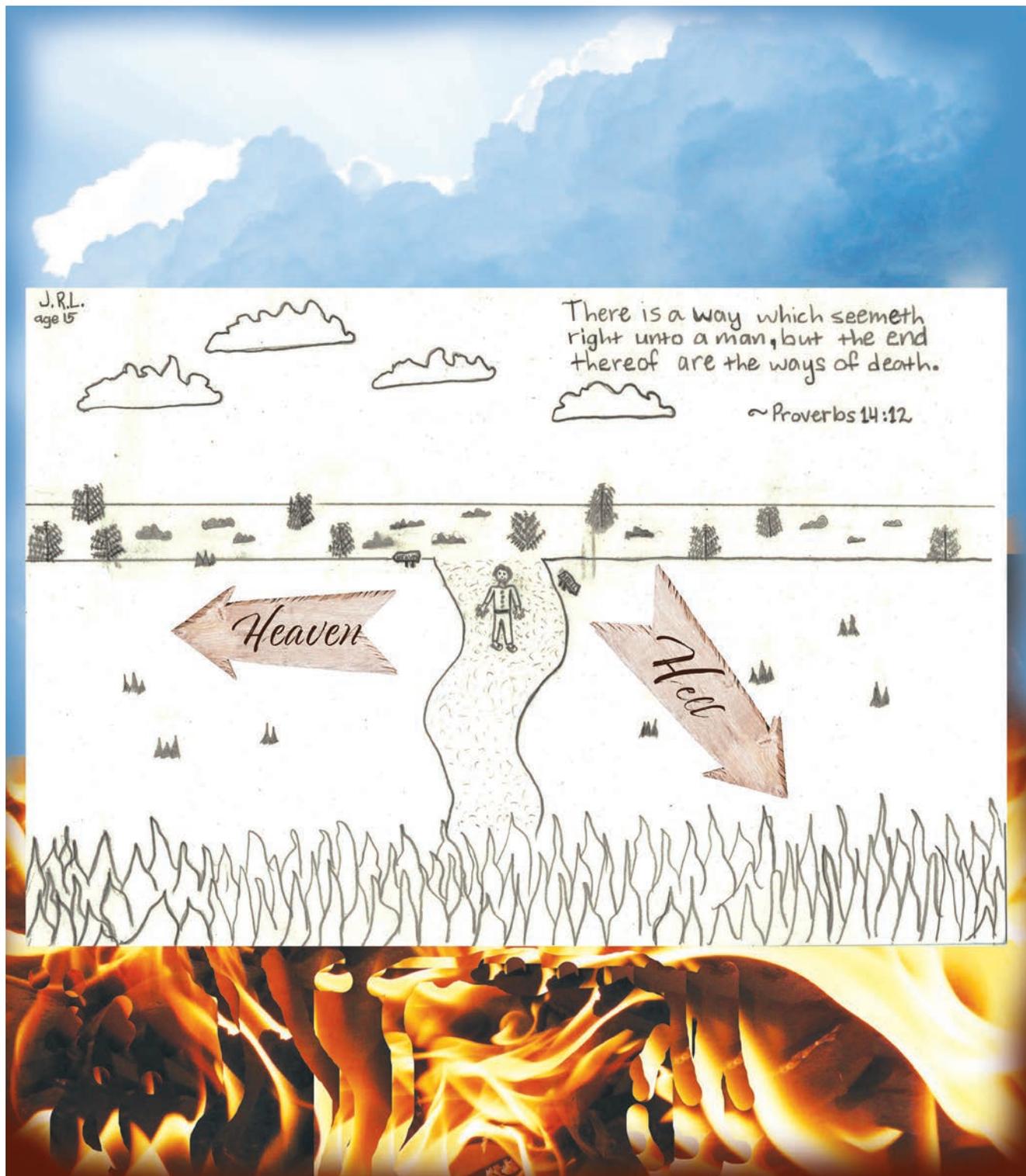
He said, "Tear down this temple and in three days I will raise it up again."

He was speaking of the temple of his body when he said he would rise in three days.



Proverbs Illustrated

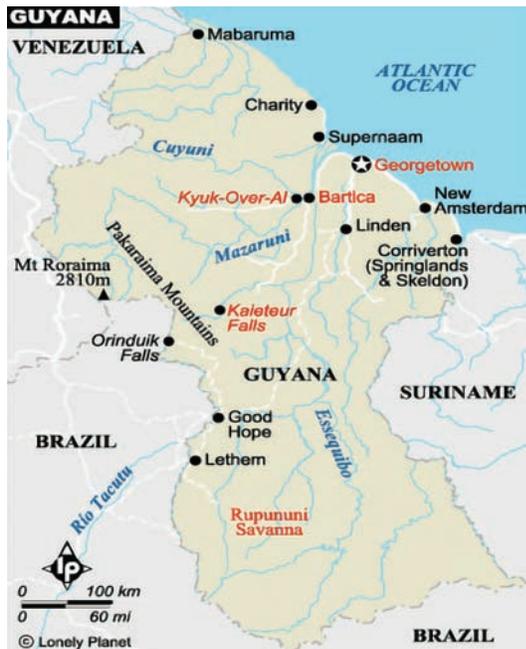
The book of Proverbs teaches many memorable lessons with word pictures. Anabaptist Voice would like to include in "Proverbs Illustrated" your original sketch illustrating some of the great truths found in this book of wisdom.



J.R. Lengacher (age 15)
14723 Doly Rd
New Haven, Indiana

Guyana - Land of Many Waters

by Philip Nighswander



Guyana is a small South American country located south of the Caribbean Sea and bordered by Venezuela, Suriname, and Brazil. I, along with several others travelled to Guyana in July of 2021 to explore the need for Bibles and Christian literature in the country and try to get a feel for the feasibility of taking literature into the country in the future. In order to better understand this report of our trip a look at a little history of the country and at other facts would be in order first.

Around 1596, a Dutchman was the first European to establish a settlement on what is now Guyana. In 1616 the Dutch established the first colony and in the mid 1600s they began to bring in African slaves to work on their ever expanding sugarcane plantations. Much of the coast is low and would be below sea level, or at least swampy, if the Dutch had not built dikes and canals to drain it. All this work was done at the time with African slaves using shovels and their bare hands.

In the early 1800s the British gained control of the area and joined the counties the Dutch had formed. In 1831 the country was named British Guiana and in 1833

slavery was abolished. Now the plantations faced a labor shortage as the freed slaves moved away from the plantations and started their own villages.

Immigrations by the British were encouraged to fill this labor void. Many came from Africa, Barbados and several European countries. But this still wasn't enough to supply the demand. Starting in 1838 and lasting till 1917 east Indian indentured laborers were brought from India. Over 239,000 immigrants arrived over a period of about 75 years.

Guyana's population is around 750,000 and 90 percent live along the coast. Seventy-five percent of the country is covered with rainforest which has over 1000 types of trees. Guyana has an abundance of wildlife which includes more than 800 species of birds.

The capitol, Georgetown, lies 7 feet below sea level and is protected from the ocean by a seawall 280 miles long. A network of canals drains excessive rainfall back to the ocean through sluices, or gates, in the seawall, during low tide, or if necessary, with large pumps.

Guyana's two largest ethnic groups are the Indian Guyanese, who are descendants of indentured east Indian labourers, and the African Guyanese, who are descendants of African slaves. These two ethnic groups comprise about 75 percent of the population. About 9 percent of the population is Amerindian, indigenous to Guyana.



Guyana - Kaieteur Falls

About 63 percent of the population profess Christianity, 25 percent Hindu, 7 percent Islam, and 3 percent profess no religion.

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

We arrived in Guyana late in the evening. Ed Plett, Nevin Bender, and Phil Nighswander (myself) had planned this trip together. Ed would like to get Mount Zion Literature (MZL) literature distribution started in the country. So the goal of our trip was to check out the country and get a feel of the needs and interests along that line.

The church at Grandview, Texas had also expressed an interest in the country and planned to be there the same time as us. Those from Grandview were: Roy and Anna Mary Huber, Milton and Lois Horst, and David Miller. Roy had arranged for us to stay at the living quarters of a small Bible college in Georgetown. Roy has been to Guyana numerous times over the past years and his insight, contacts, and past experiences in the country were valuable to our visit.

Ed's interest in the country started because of his connection with Juvenal and his family who had moved from Cuba earlier this year and now lives in Guyana. Ed already looks after literature distribution in Spanish-speaking countries for MZL and wishes for someone else to take on that responsibility in Guyana, which is an English-speaking country.

Wednesday, July 21

After having a late breakfast, we sat around the table and discussed with the Grandview brethren our interest in starting a literature distribution in Guyana, which interest they share with us. Some of them would also have interest in starting a church there in the future.

After the meetin Ed, Nevin, and I took a taxi to the Ogle airport to see about booking a flight to a couple inland locations. Then we went to Juvenal's place and took a minibus to another part of town for lunch. Even though it was a national holiday we convinced the taxi driver to take us to a travel agent and after talking to a person inside the courtyard and waiting for a response from within the building, Ed was able to obtain some maps and travel brochures. After returning to the Bible college, we all went for a walk on the seawall and then found



Guyana - Coastal Plains

a restaurant for supper.

Thursday, July 22

After breakfast, which was kindly prepared by Anna Mary and Lois, Juvenal came over and the four of us went in a taxi east to the Suriname border. The border was closed, likely due to COVID. Pretty much the whole way there is built up along the road enough so that it seems like town even in between towns. We did get to see rice fields, sugar cane, and a couple large rice processing plants. On our way back we stopped for lunch at Rose Hall. We noticed one church that had its doors open. We stopped and asked them where they get Bibles. Georgetown! And that was a question and answer that was to be repeated numerous times during our stay in Guyana. As far as we know, Georgetown is about the only place to buy Bibles and even there, in the city of 125,000, options are very slim.

We arrived back to our place of abode well before



Guyana - Street Vendors



Guyana - Savannahs

supertime so Nevin, David, and I caught a ride on a minibus going to the Stabroek market where we got some US money exchanged to Guyanese dollars by very ready money exchangers standing along the street.

Friday, July 23

We left at 8:30 for the Ogle airport for a sightseeing trip to Kaieteur Falls and Orinduik Falls. Even though sightseeing was not the purpose of our trip to Guyana, it did give us a good overview of the “endless” rainforests and was refreshing and inspiring to see the natural beauty and wonders of creation. Frank Singh, manager of Rainforest Tours, picked us up and took us to the airport. We gave our passport info and weighed in, in preparation for our flight on a twelve-passenger plane. We took off around ten o’clock and arrived at Kaieteur about an hour later.

A friendly young guide met us and took us to see the falls which was a short walking distance away. When we were back to the visitor center we had our lunch which was provided. The guide was interested in our reason for coming to Guyana. He himself is a Christian from the town of Linden. He said he bought his Bible from a bookstore there. He was very supportive of us bringing Christian literature into the country and took my contact info. He lives by the falls for three months or more at a time and gets lonely for his family. He said that if he would be at home in Linden he would be very happy to show us around.

Next we flew on to Orinduik Falls on the Brazil border. After landing on a dirt airstrip we waited for some time until two very young soldier guides came

over from a distant building. This falls is in the Ireng River amidst a backdrop of rolling grass-covered hills in the savannahs. Here the river rushes over steps and terraces of solid jasper. When we returned to the top of the riverbank we discovered two Amerindian ladies with their children had come across the river by boat from Brazil with the expectation of selling trinkets to us. Ed asked one of them if she has a Bible. Her face lit up and her response was “yes.” They also have a church in their village.

We then boarded the plane, which by that time felt like a steamy oven, and returned to the Ogle airport. Thankfully there weren’t so many clouds that we couldn’t enjoy viewing the vast expanse of forests, savannah, mountains, and coastal plains.

Here and there were the occasional dwelling or village. Some dwellings are obviously accessible only by river or trails. From the airport a taxi took us back to the Bible camp in time for supper.

Saturday, July 24

Ed, Milton, and I walked to Juvenal’s apartment and he joined us in walking around Georgetown but we didn’t find any bookstores open. Some day other than Saturday would no doubt have been more successful. We stopped at a clinic to ask about getting COVID tests.

To get back to the Bible college we found a taxi. This driver was a young married man—a Christian. He said he doesn’t have much time to read but he reads his Bible every day. He took us to a place that has four-wheel-drive vehicles for getting back into remote interior destinations but we didn’t have much success with connecting with anyone there.



Guyana - Seawall

After returning to the Bible college for lunch, Nevin and I walked to the Sheriff Medical Centre to rebook our test appointments from 1:00 on Monday to 8:00. He had booked these in the morning and we decided to get them changed to morning as not to break up our day. In the afternoon we relaxed and visited.

Sunday, July 25

Sunday, we had our own service at 8:30. Marco Kreuter and his wife and two children attended. Marco is a friend of Roy's, a contact he first made years ago. He originally came to Guyana from Germany and married a Guyanese. He is a sincere Christian although he does disagree with us in the teachings of once saved, always saved. In the lower level of the Bible college at one end is a small apartment that is rented by two young fellows who came to Georgetown for work. One of them is a Christian and came to join us in our service. After singing a few songs, David Miller preached for us.

At 11:00 we left to go to Juvenal's church. We took a minibus to the market which is a short walking distance from the Demerara River where a 35-passenger boat took us to Vreed-en-Hoop on the west side of the river. There we walked about a mile on the main street to the church. They were just finishing the English service which was then followed by a Spanish service. This service included a baptism. Before the preaching a



Guyana - Street of Georgetown

young man sang several songs accompanied by piano and drums which was uncomfortably loud. The Spanish service is attractive to folks moving from Venezuela.

On our way back to the river several men across the street called to us and wanted us to come talk with them. They recognized us as people who share the gospel! We discussed Christianity and religion with them. One was a professing Christian, and one a Hindu. They seemed fairly excited about us bringing Christian literature into the country and figured they could sell some in their small store. We got back to the Bible college around 4:30. After having supper we decided to check about attending an evening service at a church that Roy had been to on a previous visit. After several phone calls we discovered their service was on Zoom and we could not attend in person.



Guyana - Georgetown, Demerara River in foreground

Monday, July 26

We had breakfast in good time and walked to the Medical Centre to get our COVID tests. After returning, all of us but Roys got on a bus we had previously lined up and headed for Linden, two hours away. Traveling south of Georgetown the landscape began to change from flat coastal plains to white sand hills. These hills are for the most part covered with trees and vegetation. We saw numerous sawmills along the road and met trucks red with dust from the interior and loaded with logs. Here and there was an occasional dwelling beside the road or a trail leading back in to who knows where.

At Linden the bus stopped at the market, and



Guyana - Crossing Demerara River by boat

from there we scouted around in a couple directions. Ed, David, Nevin and I went one way and Milton and Lois ventured out on their own. We stopped in at a library which had very little by way of Christian books. Milton and Lois visited two bookstores, the one was Seventh Day Adventist. The lady there was sure the owner would be willing to sell our books, especially if they would be cheaper than the ones he can get. The other bookstore lady told them they badly need good Sunday School material. On the way back we stopped at a timber buyer who exports logs to China, India, and Vietnam.

We had ordered our supper before we left. Roys had picked it up and had it ready for us when we returned. Marco and his family came to join us for supper.

Tuesday, July 27

Ed, David, and I took a trip west, across two rivers and on to Charity, a trip of about 125 km. At the market we again took a boat across the Demerara River to Vreed-en-Hoop and from there we took a minibus to Parika, a town on the east shore of the Essiquibo River. This is not far from the mouth of the river where it is quite wide, approximately 15 miles. To cross we rode a 20-passenger speed boat. Once on shore we were attacked by a group of overzealous taxi drivers yelling at us. Unsure of which one to use, Ed asked if any of them read the Bible and only one of them did. He was the one we went with, much to the disappointment and laughter of the others.

This driver is a sincere Christian; we had a good time with him. He had with him a well-worn KJV Bible. He helps his Dad pastor a church in Anna Regina, a small town along the road that goes to Charity. He made it

clear that when we come back to Guyana with Bibles he wants to help distribute them. When we got to Charity we ate lunch together then walked around town just a bit. Aaron, our taxi driver, showed us a spot in the mall that used to be a bookstore run by a pastor, but it is no longer in business.

Our return to Georgetown was much the same except to cross the Demerara River we stayed on the minibus from Parika and crossed the river on the Demerara floating bridge located 4 miles south of Georgetown. This bridge was built in 1978 and was intended to last for ten years but after 40 years it is still in service. It is 1.25 miles long and has 61 spans. A raised section 26 feet high allows for small vessels to pass under, and a retractable span allows for passing of large vessels.

Back at the market we switched to another minibus which took us to the Bible college where we had supper and prepared for our trip home early the next morning.

Summary

So what did we learn from this trip? There is an openness to truth and there are few places to buy Bibles. It seems the Bibles that do exist are supplied by church pastors. As far as we know, sound Christian literature is scarce. There seems to be a spiritual openness and vacuum waiting to be filled. Much of Christianity in Guyana appears to be quite wide and shallow but from the little bit we had to do with it there seems to be an openness to more teaching. Any interest shown in our reason for coming to the country was positive. Various ones expressed a desire for us to come back. There are several suitable places we found for displaying and selling books.

Along with the need for sound Christian literature is the need for a biblical church so folks can observe first-hand the practical outworking of obedience to the whole Gospel. In fact, some have already expressed interest in such a church. Pray that the Lord would give clear direction to those who are considering the work in this corner of His harvest field.

P. N. | *Manitoba, Canada*



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

Likenesses of God

On page 5 of AV 21 you respond to a writer's query about "the errors of the Anglican Church" with a number of points with which we concur. However, after enlightening your correspondent, we find the picture on page 16, unacceptable and a form of idolatry.

We also see the picture on page 16 (AV21) as a direct contradiction of your comments regarding errors at point 4 (AV21, page 5), "use of images and recitation of liturgies."

A similar contradiction is apparent on page 31 of AV 22, where another image supposedly of the Lord, appears.

These pictures are repugnant to us. We came out of the Roman Catholic church for those very reasons and here are those who profess following the example of the Anabaptists who gave their lives because they resisted and denounced those very things being discussed.

Pictures or any images supposedly portraying our Lord are nothing short of idolatry. Where is the knowledge of Exodus 20:4 and supporting Scriptures?

In regard to pictures, we do not and have never counted all pictures as idolatry (the importance we attach to them may be). We specifically refer to the portrayals of any person of the triune god as having human forms. Yes, Jesus did appear in body amongst man but no drawings or portraits were made of Him during His ministry on earth, nor afterwards by any who walked with Him.

You are well aware we came out of the Roman Catholic church—as did most of the early Anabaptists—where idolatry was and remains alive and well. We have no reason or evidence to believe that those early Anabaptists continued to accept pictures/portraits, statues and other paraphernalia of worship prevalent in the church they came out of but utterly rejected those things.

To do otherwise for us would be a rejection of our faith in Christ Jesus alone. We reject any idea of worshipping our Savior through the use of a man-made image, no matter what form that image takes.

Regrettably, people can be and are misled by such

imagery. We speak from experience.

Please understand that we respect your right to publish as you please but we reserve the right to exclude from our home those things we have left behind and continue to reject as we follow Christ.

J.v.L. | Australia

AV Editor:

I wholeheartedly support getting rid of any pictures that you feel promote idolatry. "If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. "

If the internet leads one into porn, get rid of it. If shopping in a grocery store tempts you to buy alcoholic beverages, stop going down that aisle.

I never thought of a picture of Jesus as an idol, at least not in the biblical sense (Leviticus 26:1).

"You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God."

There is another side which you have brought out. No likenesses of Jesus or God have ever been preserved. Our God is not a God made with hands of wood and stone, but he is a living God. Therefore, we ought not make likenesses of Him. Acts 17:29 says, "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devices."

I see your point and we can profit from your experience and insight.

We will not use pictures of the Godhead in AV any more.





Wrestling Together

by Michael Strite, author of “Let Freedom Ring” (AV22, pages 18-22)

Question from AV22, page 22

“Why do you think being a part of a church where one is accountable for one’s actions and commitments is not living in bondage?”

Anyone who is serious about their Christian life and Christian walk will be serious about their actions and their behavior. It is an easy step to go from obeying God’s commands to please Him, to thinking that our obedience is the means of our salvation.

I believe that the Mennonite church with its emphasis on an accountable brotherhood is a biblical concept. I believe that it is absolutely right for the church, as a group of saved followers of Christ, to wrestle together with the substance of the gospel and to make applications from God’s Word for life today. The alternative is for each believer to make his own applications without thought for one another. Or the church can remain silent and there is no application made.

Paul makes it very clear in I Corinthians that the applications we make must be predicated on our love for, and our submission to, our brothers. If our eating meat causes a brother to stumble, then it may be sin for us as well. If our freedom in the observance of the Lord’s Day causes offense, we should be willing to submit ourselves to his more tender conscience.

Let us consider modesty for instance. I believe most of us would agree that modesty is precious in the sight of God. Yet, I am guessing that when it really comes down to specifics, each of us would have slightly different ideas about what is modest. In fact, true modesty has to originate in the heart. It is as much an attitude as it is a matter of clothes or adornment. True modesty must begin in the heart and will then manifest itself in our clothing, in our manner, and in our actions.

So we can ask, “Is modesty something that should be left entirely up to each individual?” Or is it right and valid for a group of people seeking God’s direction to wrestle with what the Bible teaches and to agree together on concrete applications that can help us together better demonstrate the principle?

The church has a responsibility to make everyday applications. Will it sometimes mean that we submit in an area that we do not think the Bible has clear direction

on? Yes, sometimes. But remember the love that is to guide our relations with our fellowman.

Will these agreed-on applications sometimes become legalism [excessive adherence to law or formula]? Paul’s own commands can also be seen as legalism if one has the wrong attitude.

Spiritual bondage can exist even in the midst of a most permissive church. True spiritual freedom can even be in a very strict and legalistic church. It all comes down to the individual’s attitude and outlook on why he does what he does. If we are submitting to a brotherhood as a means of pleasing our God who has created us, redeemed us, and lives in us, then we can be completely free in Christ. On the other hand, if we chafe at what we see as unnecessary rules and regulations and try by every means possible to circumvent the restrictions on our freedom, then we truly are living in religious bondage.

I am struck how often those who leave a more conservative setting seem to flaunt their new “freedom in Christ.” While they decry the focus on externals that marked their previous experience, they so often seem to focus just as much on those same externals, just in a different way. If dress was the sticking point, I so often see a reaction away from any biblical standards for dress, and instead, a dependence on the world to tell them how to dress. So often the perceived bondage of church standards is exchanged for the bondage of the world and its fashion industry.

That being said, I recognize that the danger for me is to decry their choices while becoming smug and self-righteous in my own. This is every bit as dangerous as doing away with all restraints. While I believe it is right and proper for us to make concrete applications as a brotherhood, we must remain vigilant that these applications flow from, and out of, our relationship with God.

It is for freedom that Christ has saved us. Our freedom is a true freedom, freeing us for holiness, for service to our fellowman, and ultimately for that relationship to God for which we were created.

M. S. | *South Carolina*



By What Authority?

I am questioning several statements in the article, “When Kingdoms Collide” (AV22, page 9, second column).

Statement #1. *“When the authority of the land does not rest on the authority of the Lawgiver, then you honor the Lawgiver.”*

Statement #2. *“Brothers and sisters, if the authorities of this land have made it very plain that they are not in tune with the authority giver, then their laws become suspect at best.”*

Question #1. Did Nero or Domitian’s authority rest on the authority of the Lawgiver?

Question #2. Were they in tune with the authority giver?

Question #3. What did the Holy Spirit tell the New Testament church under their authority (Romans 13:1-5 and 1 Peter 2:13-17)?

Question #4. Since the time of Christ, what government was in tune with the Lord and His teaching?

Question #5. So when and how do we practice these Holy Spirit commands?

M.Y. | Costa Rica

AV Editor:

Answer #1. Nero and Domitian’s authority rested on Satan’s authority. Those two rulers were definitely not a part of God’s Kingdom.

Answer #2. Nero and Domitian did evil. God permits Satan to exist in the world. God sometimes uses evil men such as Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar to carry out His designs. That in no way makes them righteous.

Answer #3. The instructions to the church were to be respectful to the king and to all men. They were never to do evil, but by their good works they were to put to silence the false accusations of evil men.

Answer #4. No government since the time of Christ has been in tune with the Lord and His teaching. All of them rule by force outside the perfection of Christ. They are not part of God’s Kingdom. Christians must always be more interested in submitting to the rules of God’s Kingdom than to earthly rulers.

Answer #5. Christians should always be the most gentle, peaceful, kind, honorable, respectful, diligent, humble, and honest of all people. They must always do good and be willing to suffer wrongfully with patience.

“For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer for it, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God” (1 Peter 2:19-20).



This letter is written in response to question from AV22, page 22

“Why do you think being a part of a church where one is accountable for one’s actions and commitments is not living in bondage?”

Not Alone

A brief description of the word “church” is needed here. The church of Jesus Christ is not a social club, a business organization, or any other worldly functioning group. The church of Jesus Christ is a living organism, a living body, receiving its life from God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the head of the church as clearly stated in Scripture. Colossians 1:18, 2:9, Ephesians 5:23, and many other Scriptures that refer to Him being over all.

So as a fully functioning body with living, reproducing cells that look after the needs of its own members, several things automatically happen to those who are attached to the body. The first thing is being identified as a member of the body and thereby receiving nourishment and instructions from the body’s central system which is connected to the head. It is simply impossible for any external member or internal organ, that is connected to the body, to not get its nourishments and job description from the head and the needs of the rest of the body.

For instance, if an object comes flying towards my eye, my eyelid will instinctively blink, the hands will immediately try to shield the eye, and the head will impulsively turn away from the impending danger. Even the feet and legs will do their duty in trying to avoid the danger. But the feet will not do what the eyelid will do. Each member operates in its own responsibility. The head will give each individual a signal and each individual member will do their God-given duty as they receive the signal.

All this is done without even a thought of “bondage.” Instead, it is a reflexive duty for the preservation of the member at risk and the body as a whole. In all of life the whole body is at rest with the fact that each individual member and organ is present and functioning properly. Even though the eyes cannot see all the individual members and their activities, the head knows what is going on at all times. That’s not bondage; that’s freedom and rest in Christ and His work in the whole body.

With the church of Jesus Christ functioning within a local body of faithful and obedient members, filled with the Holy Spirit, knowledgeable in the Holy Word of Life, there will be scrapes, bruises and illnesses happening to the members and organs of this body. But each Spirit-filled-member will fulfill their God-given role and duty to try to heal with the least amount of scar tissue possible. That’s not bondage. That’s life that brings glory to God. If each member obeys the Scriptures, it will bind the body together.

Ephesians 4:11-16. “Jesus Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

This is freeing and binding at the same time. But this bond is the binding of the heart, soul, and spirit of every member to one another and to Christ. This bond binds each member to the will of the Head, Jesus Christ, and delivers from the chains of sin, debauchery, death, and hell.

It also frees every member to not have to carry everything alone. What a blessing! It is lonely and unfulfilling to not be a member of the living local body of believers.

B. M. | Arizona



The Resurrection Is Past

In response to “The Promise” by Menno Knight (AV22, page 29).

Is Menno saying that for some “the resurrection is already past?” Is not Menno saying that a Christian who dies is immediately resurrected and given a new body? Do you know what Paul says about that in 2 Timothy 2:18? Please stop and read it in context.

“But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity’” (II Timothy 2:16-19).

E. S. | Oklahoma

AV Editor:

The context on both sides of this statement, “Hymenaeus and Philetus are destroying the faith of some” has to do with not living a godly life. Paul says, “they will increase to ungodliness” and “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” So, the context would indicate that saying the resurrection was already past somehow freed the believers from living a godly life.

If Hymenaeus and Philetus said the resurrection of Jesus was already past, that would be a true statement, so it appears that Paul was talking about a yet future resurrection. By denying a future bodily resurrection after death, they also denied the necessity of living a godly life while on earth.

Neither the verse nor the verses before and after say anything about when the bodily resurrection will take place. The thrust of the message is that because there will be a bodily resurrection after death, all believers must live a godly life while on earth.



Sowing Seed in the Pentagon

I have been following the “Round Table Discussion” in the last several issues of AV with great interest. I am the person who was invited to speak to “The Christian Men of the Pentagon” about Bookrack Evangelism. This was during the Vietnam conflict.

I operated on the promise of Jesus in Luke chapter eight about the sower. “You sow it, [the seed of the word], let God grow it.” My purpose in going was to sow the seed of the Word of God. You stated, “Most likely your friend did not teach the [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 you cannot serve in the military and still be Christians.” While your statements are basically true there is another side of truth you should be aware of.

I was not invited there to teach from the Bible, but to tell them about sowing the seed of God's Word through books. I had only a short amount of time to present the program. Several of the men then made contact and successfully got the books placed. Reviewers of books we offered were to identify any books that endorse military involvement. If a title endorsed involvement in the military, it was not approved. I actually placed a book titled, "Why I Am a Conscientious Objector."

In addition to this, I was asked to help in getting several Mennonite preachers to speak at their noon day devotional. Two different men preached on separate occasions. One very specifically stated his position relating to the military. He was very clear on his understanding and convictions relating to the teaching of Jesus and military involvement. Many years later this same minister spoke at a Bible study. An elderly man in attendance asked if he had ever spoken at the Pentagon, to which he affirmed that he had. This man now told my preacher friend that he was right in what he preached at the Pentagon. He had been present and remembered his presentation.

I remember being invited to have a snack in the Pentagon dining room with a man in uniform to discuss his discontinuing service in the military, which he did and became a member of an Anabaptist church. He later testified in our Sunday School class that he knows he was a Christian before leaving the military.

Was my friend I met at the Pentagon not a Christian till he left the military? Does a person need to wait till he is not in the military to become a believer, a Christian?

S. S. | Virginia

AV Editor:

Let us get several points in this discussion straight.

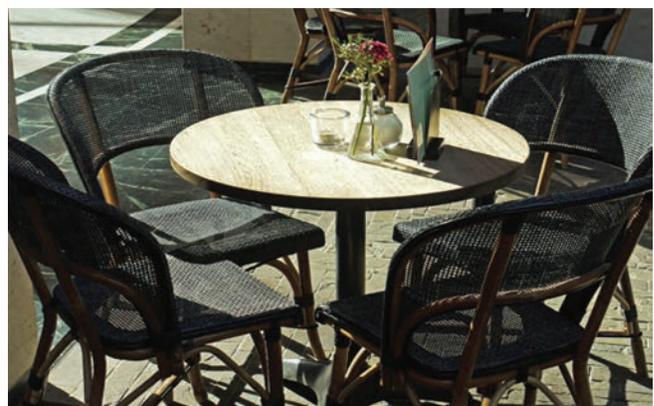
1. When a person addresses “Christians in the Pentagon,” he is judging that a person can be a Christian in the Pentagon. This judges that God accepts sinners who through ignorance do not know his commands and that as long as a “Christian” believes the right things, God will forgive their sins.

It should be clear to all that born-again Christians will not stay in the military. A drunkard cannot keep on getting drunk and be a Christian. An adulterer cannot continue in adultery and be a Christian. A thief cannot continue stealing and be a Christian...

2. There is a difference between proclaiming God's Word and making judgments about when a person was saved. Whether still in, or already out of the military, the past oath of allegiance still stands unless one repents.

Our proclamation of the gospel must be faithful in calling all men to repentance. The apostle Paul proclaimed on Mars Hill, “In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30 NIV). Repentance includes the confessing of past sin and the forsaking of sin which includes enlistment in the military.

3. We ought not forbid those who put bookracks with Bibles on them in the Pentagon. We ought to encourage them in their good witness in a needy place.



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: Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Trouble On the Highway (AV22, page 40)

by A. Soft Answer



An angry police officer was threatening to confiscate the owner’s truck because the Mennonites refused to pay fines/bribes (AV22, page 40). After a lengthy diatribe and a number of threats to seize one of the Mennonite trucks in the future,

the officer at last wound down. Now it was time for the truck owner to speak.

“Sir, thank you. Thank you for the necessary work you do whenever there is an accident and somebody needs to take charge and tell people what to do in difficult situations. And if you are finished, I have something more.”

A doubtful look flashed across his face, but he waited to see what I would say.

“Sir, I didn’t want to appear eager to break in and cut you short when you were speaking. But if we are finished, I have a loaf of homemade bread and some homemade strawberry jam from berries we raised ourselves. Would that be something you enjoy?”

I’d be happy to share them with you if it’s something you can use.”

A pleased smile settled onto his face. “This is exactly the sort of thing I’m talking about. Showing respect, being friendly, and learning to get along with me doesn’t have to involve money. Thank you! You won’t have any more trouble from me.”

I shared with him why we had come to this country, showed him the location of the church, and invited him to visit us at church or in our homes whenever he desired.

Handing over the papers, he bade me good-bye, gave me his name, and sped off, leaving me grateful, yet very shaken and weary.

Answers to Practical Questions.

1. What is the difference between a bribe and a legitimate payment?

The method of collecting tribute and taxes for the government may vary from country to country. For instance, when Jesus instructed his followers to go the

second mile if a Roman soldier compelled him to carry his burden one mile, taxes were of a different nature than they are today. The following answers reflect homespun definitions that attempt to help Christians live honest lives before God and to be honorable in the sight of all men where the method of collecting taxes is different than they are in the United States and Canada.

A bribe is a payment to an official that encourages him to do what he is not supposed to do or that is contrary to righteousness and truth. Bribery thus corrupts justice.

A fine is a payment for the neglect or violation of a rule or law that is recognized in that country as right and true and does not pervert God's standard of justice.

As the story illustrates, in Mexico a gift may be a way

to show respect to the officer and to expedite services. This also agrees with the meaning of Proverbs 18:16; "Taking a gift to an important person will help get you in to see him" (ICB).

2. How should a Christian show respect to an officer?

As the story illustrates some ways of showing respect are to pay quiet attention to what the officer says, maintain eye contact, and address him using a title. Never argue or defy his authority.

3. What are the God-ordained functions of the police?

The God ordained functions of the police are to punish the evildoer and to encourage the righteous.

The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

The Old Candy Machine (AV21 and AV22, page 39)

by Over Comer



My first experience with evil was probably when, as a child, I was teased or treated unfairly. Even as a child I knew that breaking of the Ten Commandments is great evil, but evil is not limited to that.

Jesus Christ said in Matthew 5:39 "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." To not resist evil sounds like we are to be unopposed to, or tolerant of evil.

But James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." In this verse we are told to resist evil/devil. Those are fighting words.

These two verses seem to be contradictory. How can Matthew 5:39 and James 4:7 be reconciled?

First, we need to compare 'submit' and 'resist.' We are to submit ourselves to God, but resist the devil. This is a headship issue. The God of heaven and the god of this world govern with different rules. We don't use evil methods to resist evil. We need not retaliate with force when we suffer evil, because "Vengeance is mine," says

the Lord. There is a blessing for those who overcome sin.

Second, the two conflicts are in different worlds. Being hit on the cheek is in the physical world, whereas war with the Devil is on the spiritual level. Don't use the flesh to fight a spiritual battle.

Third, don't take personal attacks personally. Jesus said that the world hated Him and it would also hate His followers. Therefore, our suffering identifies us with Christ. Jesus accepted personal attacks but He only got angry over the people's hardness of heart. When Paul and Silas sang in prison, it was resistance against the Devil with the jailer being converted.

Doing unto others as we would have them do to us requires that we resist the Devil's temptation to retaliate with evil. But doing good to others requires more than not fighting back. It means that we aggressively seek to do good for others "as we would like someone to do good to us." Bake pies, clean up your enemy's mess, feed him when he is hungry.

Doing good for others, even at the expense of our own personal satisfaction lies at the very heart of what it means to "overcome evil with good."

How have you resisted evil today ... by doing good?

The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

A Single-Use Bible

by Well Marked



Our day is so different than seventy years ago when the telephone was fastened on the wall and had a crank to notify the operator of what town you were calling so she could hook you up to that operator.

Now our device is attached to us with many functions ranging from camera, dictionary, gps, calculator, picture book, mailbox, pitch pipe, encyclopedia, plus many more. And yes, even the Bible is on this device.

So why not replace the written Word with the digital Word in our services?

The first reason I think we should not is because of what it is doing to our device and what it seems to do to the Word. Our device is so capable of so many things, and yes, it has the Bible also. It can do almost everything and anything! Our device becomes so important to us and we seemingly cannot make it without it. And yes, it seems to put the Bible on the level of all the other important functions on our phone. How many of us have picked up our phone for a specific purpose only to get sidetracked and suddenly we realized we forgot why we picked up the phone.

The written Word is a ‘one and only of its kind and purpose.’ It’s about God, nothing else, and to stay attached to His Word has a direct relationship with attachment to Him. We go to church for the one purpose of worship and nourishment. At this point all other interests need to fall below this level.

I wonder how many ‘on the phone Bible readers’ have pulled out the phone during a message, only to see a new message or notification that came in. I wonder if the preacher may be on the next point till the ‘would be reader’ gets his attention back to the service.

Phone addiction is another big issue today. In years gone by we traveled across the nation with only very limited communication to home. Now we wake to the phone and it's the last thing laid down. Addiction is defined as the compulsive need for and something habit

-forming, characterized by well defined symptoms upon withdrawal. Now imagine many of us deciding to do without our phones a day. I think there would be well-defined symptoms of addiction.

Therefore, in the fight against addiction to our device, I conclude we should keep away from the distraction of our phones during worship services. This will help us in our effort to keep God and His written Word above all else.

Remember there is something very personal about ‘my phone.’ We can argue over Android or iPhone. Likewise, there should be something very personal about our own well-marked-up, written-in-copy that the Word of God has given to us. Keep this personalized Bible closer to your heart than your phone. Divorcing yourself from your phone for several hours and staying with a single use written Word will aid us in this battle.

“Blessed is the one ... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night” (Psalm 1:1-2) NIV.

Practical Questions

1. What is the worst thing that could happen to you if you do not take your phone to worship services?
2. Can you prove you are not addicted to your phone?
3. Do you think God is pleased with how much time you spend on your phone and how you use it?
4. Do you think God is pleased with how much time you spend reading or listening to your Bible?



Evry Idle Word

by M. Vexed



Our church is against cussing. Some families are different in the words they say and allow their children to say. Some families have no problem with words like “shoot” and “darn,” but I am not comfortable using such words.

However, our church is against cussing.

That being said, I guess some words change. For example, my grandpa used to use the word “shit” when he was talking about cow manure. But today, our church would consider that a cuss word.

Another example. When I worked construction a few years ago, I worked with some Amish men who cussed a lot. I decided to bring up the subject one day and they blew me off. They didn’t see anything wrong with cussing.

Yesterday, a man was riding his bike by our house. He happened to take a break right close to our home. I went outside and offered him some water and we chatted.

The man said he was “biking for charity.” For the most part, we held an edifying conversation. His lifestyle reminds me of Francis of Assisi! But ... he used cuss words. It surprised me! He said the “F word” numerous times. One time when he was talking about all the nominal Christians in America he even placed the “F word” in front of Bible.

Jesus said, **“But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37) ESV.**

Practical Questions

1. Is it sinful to use words such as “heck, golly, shoot, darn, holy moly, and damn?”
2. What Scripture verses might apply to cussing as described here?
3. What response should one make when others cuss and swear in your presence?



The Wind and the Waves

by Hay Maker



The rains have been a real challenge to us in our custom hay-baling operation. Sometimes dark clouds and rain interrupt us before the cut forage has dried down to 18% - 20% and is ready to bale as dry hay.

In early July, Wesley and I were baling dry hay for a man south of us. He had a lot of different fields scattered all over. I raked one field a good ways south, then came back towards our house about eight miles on a maze of dirt roads to rake three more fields.

As I was raking the first one, huge black clouds rolled up; an obvious rain storm was coming. Just as I finished raking the first field, a big wind came up. It immediately scattered all the windrows back out again.

I called Wesley; he said he was on his way. I told him I’d have to wait and re-rake the hay just ahead of him so he could get it into the baler before it got blown apart again. We finished the first field by that method, but we did not get to the other two fields before it began to pour down rain.

Just then my wife called saying the wind had blown the front door off the church and she had just happened to be looking out the window when it happened. Thank the Lord, the door was leaning against another door, but it pulled all the screws in the three hinges out of the door frame. Thankfully, by the time Wesley and I arrived at the church, the wind had died somewhat and the three of us were able to stand it back in place and put the screws back in. When we had the door back in place it was still raining.

“The men were amazed and asked, ‘What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him’ (Matthew 8:27) NIV.

Practical Questions

1. Is it right to ask God to spare us from wind or rain storms?
2. Does the devil sometimes send storms on the righteous?
3. Does God sometimes punish the wicked with storms?





Upcoming Events

If you know of any meetings or events that would benefit the Kingdom of Christ and are open to attendance by the general Anabaptist community, please let us know so we can continue to feature this section in future issues.

The Shepherds Institute Meetings

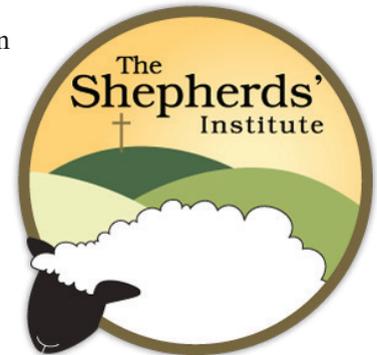
Type of Meeting: Equipping church leaders to be compassionate and wise in pastoral care, church administration, and Biblical preaching

Date: February 21 - 25, 2022.

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

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

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



Daytime Classes for Ordained & Licensed Ministers

First period: 9:00 - 10:30 am
– Servant Leadership: Milo Zehr

Second period: 10:45 - 12:15 pm
– The Preaching of the Cross: Dave Yoder

Lunch (12:15 - 1:00 pm)

Third period: 1:00 - 2:30 pm
– Introduction to Theology: Chester Weaver

Fourth period: 2:45 - 4:15 pm
– Round Table Discussion: Moderated by Milo Zehr

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

7:00 - 7:10 pm (Opening)

7:10 - 7:55 pm
– Living Into The Opportunity: Chester Weaver

8:00 - 8:45 pm
– Relating Redemptively Amidst Conflict:
Dave Yoder

Pastoring is not about learning techniques in handling people. Rather it is learning how to humbly partner with Christ so that His divine influences come to bear on human issues.



REACH 2022

Date: March 24-25, 2022

REACH brings together conservative Anabaptist ministries and Kingdom workers from all walks of life. Join us for this two-day program that includes 97 breakout sessions to support and equip people in ministry and all those with a desire for service. Over 50 participating ministries share their vision in focus sessions and displays. General sessions tie the event together with sermons, singing, and prayer. All are welcome!

Location: Calvary Church, 1051 Landis Road, Lancaster, PA 17601

Event Chair: Steven Brubaker

Event Coordinator: Matthew Mast

Program Coordinator: Lucas Hilty

Read more information and register: fbep.org/reach-2022



Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report July thru September 2021

July 1, 2021 Beginning Balance	\$4,363.00
Income	
Donations	\$3,324.50
Local Support*	\$5,000.00
Total Income	<hr/> \$8,324.50
Beginning Balance + Income	\$12,687.50
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$649.00
Postage	\$3,538.33
Printing	\$5,359.00
Staff Expenses	\$1,021.81
Total Expense	<hr/> \$10,568.14
September 30, 2021 Ending Balance	\$2,119.36

Circulation Report September 2021

ISSUE #17 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$2.08/ea.

ISSUE #19 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$2.04/ea.

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ISSUE #21 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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ISSUE #22 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,000 | Operating Cost: \$10,568.14
Cost Per Copy: \$2.11/ea.

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



End Matters

For the last several years Brother Andrew V. Ste. Marie has made a valuable contribution to the work of *Anabaptist Voice*. He has contributed articles, critiqued content, and done a superb job of copyediting.

Now Brother Andrew wishes to make the following statement:

This email serves as notice of my resignation from any and all relationship with and connection to Anabaptist Voice, effective immediately.

The main reason for my resignation is that as my other personal and work-related responsibilities seem to increase, I need to remove some things from my schedule. I have decided that AV is one of them.

Additionally, although not the main factor in my decision, I was very disappointed in the way the discussion about the "Second Coming" article was handled and the general lack of accountability which AV displays.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of AV for the past few years. It has been a valuable experience. I wish the work of AV well and hope that it can continue to perform the good work it has begun.

Anabaptist Voice is an independent publishing work without government registration or a controlling board. AV is solidly committed to the authority of Scripture and the support of its reading constituency. We depend on the input of godly men who write for us and the critique of anyone who chooses to write a scriptural, kindly, and well-reasoned response.

Everything is open about our finances. We publish with each issue the total number of copies printed and the total income and expenses. All contributions are voluntary.

Anabaptist Voice is testing whether such a bottom-up model without official endorsement from any particular board, committee, or church can endure. We desire the continued input, critiques, and financial contributions of our readers.

So, I as the imperfect editor and publisher of *Anabaptist Voice*, along with the writers and the rest of the production team cast ourselves upon God's altar and depend upon Him for continued health, strength, and wisdom. Parroting Gamaliel's words in Acts 5:39, "If AV is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God" ... it may prove a blessing to many.

– James G. Landis

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*“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest,
and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day
and night shall not cease.”*

- Genesis 8:22 (NIV)

