

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

- "INTEGRITY OR LOYALTY" - FRANK REED
- "MOSES AND THE PROPHETS" - NORMAN WARD
- "A DREAM CALLED LIFE" - ANYA HURSH
- "THROUGH THE EYES OF ANEURIS" - JEROME MARTIN
- "A WEST VIRGINIA MISSION IN 1944" - EUNICE HARTZLER



Letter from the Editor



Spring has come to Mystic Gardens. On pretty days, we see the alligators sunning themselves on the pond banks. We hear the bulls bellow. Newly hatched little fellows appear side by side.

Usually when "The Gator" is spotted and approached, he or she dives immediately into the plant-filled water and is seen no more, but Thursday "The Gator" posed to have his picture taken.

On 8 April 2022 our children and spouses—15 in number—gathered at a rental house on Lake Hartwell in North Georgia. For three days, Doris and I enjoyed the company of our children and their spouses—the oldest of the seven children is 56 and the youngest 39; some even have grandchildren.

As we gathered around the table for great cuisine, the conversation and discussions often extended mealtime for an hour or more. I threw out several hot topics from AV to draw the crew out. The singing of old-time favorite hymns rang in the high-ceilinged house.

Various games—miniature shuffleboard, ping-pong, corn hole, chameleon, big washers—helped us know each other better and see that all were generous losers, except for the undefeated ping-pong champion!

On 13 April, this Wednesday, I had the privilege and the excitement of serving as one of four judges on debates held at the Waynesboro Mennonite High School. Four teams with three students on each side of a proposition held our attention for about two hours.

In AV25 Anya Hursh and Ernest Strubhar stir your mind with God's sovereignty and why there is war in the Ukraine. Excerpts from Michael Martin's book Why Bad Things Happen add a few thoughts on the ever present question.

Eunice Hartzler challenges us with how they did mission work in the West Virginia mountains in 1944. Jerome and Jonathan Martin look at mission work in the Dominican Republic today.

Austin Hege and Frank Reed write about how to live out the gospel in our home churches. The usual mix of "Our Readers Write," "The Round Table Discussion," "Rubies and Diamonds," and "Three Common False Beliefs" as well as "Armed" test how well you understand your faith.

Peace,

James G. Landis

Send all responses, articles, and questions to:

AV Editor

5282 Highway 56 South

Waynesboro, GA 30830

editor@anabaptistvoice.com

www.anabaptistvoice.com

Send donations and/or subscription info to:

AV Production Team

243 Partridge Road

Olar, SC 29843

subscriptions@anabaptistvoice.com

www.anabaptistvoice.com

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About Anabaptist Voice

Our Mission Statement:

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

Our Purpose:

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

Our Tone:

The tone of the magazine shall be positive in that:

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

Our motto shall be words from Isaiah 30:21.

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

Our Bible Translation Policy:

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

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



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

Fueling Stress and Division

I no longer wish to receive your publication. I have enjoyed it in the past but the content and tone has made a drastic turn from spiritual edification to anti-government rhetoric and COVID fodder that is not spiritually upbuilding or encouraging of brotherhood relationships. We have plenty of things that stress and divide without your publication fueling it.

A disappointed reader.

T. M. | Maryland



What a Privilege!

I wanted to take a minute and say "thank you" for including our email address at the end of our testimony in the *Anabaptist Voice*. We have had some dear brothers and sisters in the Lord contact us at various times since the magazine went out. Most likely we would never have connected with them had our contact information not been included with the article.

The most recent contact came in yesterday by email. A girl from a non-plain background who just began this journey last year, made our acquaintance. I look forward to getting to know her better. It was very encouraging to be reminded again that God is still calling others from the darkness of the world to come and follow Him! So what a privilege to be able to encourage each other across the miles.

Abe is asked to preach twice this coming week at youth meetings our church is hosting. There is so much potential in a gathering like this, with young people who have all their life before them. If only they will choose what God wants and follow Him wholeheartedly through life. So, pray that we may be just tools in the hand of God and that the messages God wants to speak to this group will come through clearly.

Blessings to each of you. As you think of us, you can pray for the grace of God to rest upon us through the circumstances of life that He puts before us.

E. N. | Jagueyes, Mexico



Truth Without Apology

I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for compiling and sharing AV! I have almost always appreciated your unapologetic stance as an Anabaptist and the comments and articles AV puts out to this end.

Recently I have read with interest the COVID related items in AV. Your tact and thought-provoking answers to COVID "vaccine" advocates is much agreed with by myself and others. I wholeheartedly agree with your seeming stance that the COVID "pandemic" as well as its adjuvants, COVID shots and the ineffective treatments pushed by the mainstream medical establishments are most likely a dangerous part of end-times deception. Your reply to M.D. Healer in the latest issue was spot on! There are many courageous medical professionals that are willing to call a spade a spade and speak the reality of what is going on behind the scenes with COVID. However, it saddens me immensely to also see many medical professionals from within the Anabaptist circles wholeheartedly embracing the obvious lies, half-truths and dangerous shots and treatments propagated by ungodly, atheistic men!

God bless your courage to speak truth without apology!

L. G. | Idaho



A Second Look

Thank you for the *Anabaptist Voice*.

I am taking a second look at various issues. Please send an additional five copies of AV24. And, if possible, one copy each of issues 22 and 23.

A. J. S. | California



The Spirit of Christ

I appreciate your issues of *Anabaptist Voice* and the Spirit of Christ that comes through.

Keep up the good work!

M. M. | California



Random Mutations

I am writing in response to this quote from AV24:

“The whole analogy of plants or viruses mutating or changing themselves to develop resistance to some chemical or environmental stress is bogus. This false idea goes back to a godless world created in the minds of evolutionary proponents.”

You may find the gist of an article posted on the web by the Institute for Creation Research enlightening (“Random Mutations Debunked by Secular Scientists”). In short, the article says it does not work and agrees with your statement.

My dad subscribes to *Anabaptist Voice* so I occasionally skim over them a bit. I did skim this last one and was very disappointed in the strong political tone of some of it, but perhaps I can write more about that at a later time.

J. M. | *Guatemala*



Much Good Teaching

I have been a supporter of AV from the beginning, and have promoted the magazine to others. The godly advice and thoughtful discussions have enriched my life, as I would expect it has done for many others.

There were times when it felt as if the editor gave his opinion rather strongly when publishing alternate viewpoints, but as long as he stayed within those issues that are solely based on scriptural viewpoints, I was able to overlook the tone that occasionally crept into his comments. After all, the editor has the right, as all of us have, to his own viewpoints on the many issues facing conservative Christianity in today’s permissive society. Also, the editor has the power, as editors by right do, to always have the last word in any discussion that he decides to put into print. He also has the right to make sure the readers know this.

So, in the past I was able to overlook some of the discussions where the editor seemed to come on just a little heavy-handed in his viewpoints, since the rest of the magazine was filled with such a variety of good solid biblical teaching.

Lately, however, this has changed. The tone of the controversy on the COVID situation no longer feels as though there is much humility being displayed. Rather, perhaps the opposite impression is felt.

A. H. | *Pennsylvania*



Introducing Anabaptist Beliefs

I would like a copy of any back issues you may still have. I am involved in prison ministry and have been introducing Anabaptist beliefs to the men we meet with. I am currently seeking to have future copies sent directly to them. Once that is approved, I will get you the information needed.

We have had one person in the prison that has flat out rejected non resistance, but others have been open to it as well as to the two-kingdom concept.

The temptation has been to push, but I know it is best if we allow the Holy Spirit to provide opportunities for input and allow Him to do the convicting.

By the way, I am a 1st generation Anabaptist. Just like many who are 1st generation, including those in your last two AV’s, I found that what I was hearing from the pulpit did not match what I was reading in the Bible. Nonresistance was the hardest for me to wrap my mind around and accept.

Thank you for what you do and for those that provide input and feedback. I did not grow up with this and it is not easy to find correct information online or in writing (books).

C. W. | *Kansas*



Cutting Out the Tongue

The following applies to both the political and religious worlds. Prophets, apostles, and Christian witnesses have been silenced by persecution, imprisonment, and death, and by literally cutting out the tongue of people they did not agree with.¹

When the devil cuts out the tongue of a man, he is saying he fears the truth that the honest man might speak. Satan is a liar and the father of lies.

“When you cut out the tongue of a man, you’re not convincing the world he’s a liar. You’re only telling the world you fear what he might say.” (Lesko Brandon – religious affiliation unknown)

B. H. | *Pennsylvania*

¹ The sentence of Michael Sattler, May 20, 1527: “It has been found that Michael Sattler should be given into the hands of the hangman, who shall lead him to the square and *cut off his tongue*, then chain him to a wagon, there tear his body twice with red hot tongs, and again when he is brought before the gate, five more times. When this is done to be burned to powder as a heretic.” *I Appeal to Scripture*, Andrew V. Ste. Marie, Sermon on the Mount Publishing, Manchester MI.

Moses and the Prophets

by Norman Ward



“They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.”

– Luke 16:29

In the sixteenth chapter of Luke’s gospel is recorded the account that the Lord Jesus gave us of a beggar and a rich man who resided in the same community. Suddenly that great societal leveler called “Death” visited them both. How things changed! The beggar found himself in heaven in the company of the righteous of all ages and the rich man awoke in the torments of *Hades* (Luke 16:19-31).

The rich man cried for mercy, but in *Hades* there is no mercy, so it was denied him.

Then he made another request. He thought of his five brothers who were still in the land of the living; no doubt they were still living as he had lived. The formerly rich man dreaded the thought of his five brothers also having to come to this place of despair and endless woe. He made an earnest plea that the former beggar, Lazarus, be allowed to return from the dead and warn them so they might repent and avoid the torments of *Hades*.

The answer he was given was: “They have Moses and the prophets, LET THEM HEAR THEM.”

This exchange took place before the New Testament time, but they had the Old ... and it was read regularly in the synagogues each Sabbath and taught carefully to Jewish boys by the rabbis. This awesome privilege was a blessing to them, though few probably recognized it as such. We read in Hebrews 1:1; “God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets ... ” To think that God loved the people of Israel so much that, in spite of the rebellion, waywardness and wickedness of so many, He would call from the ranks of His faithful remnant those who loved and honored Him ... prophets who were sent forth to call His people to repentance and life.

These obedient prophets proclaimed the divine message in the face of hostility, threats and even martyrdom at various times and in different ways. The Eternal God inspired their lips and spoke through them; He meant every word of what He said. No wonder this rich man who himself had ignored God’s call and

found himself in *Hades* with a concern for his brothers was told, “They have Moses and the prophets, let your brothers hear them.”

What the Five Brothers Could Have Known

Here are some of the things the rich man’s five brothers could have understood and thus were responsible for knowing from Moses and the prophets. (Under each heading are listed a few of the Scriptures that teach that particular truth.)



- The rich man’s five brothers could have understood:

The Significance of Creation

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (**Genesis 1:1**).

“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (**Job 38-4-7**).

“Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together” (**Isaiah 48:13**).



- The rich man’s five brothers could have understood:

God’s Sovereign Purpose for Man

“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (**Genesis 1:27-28**).

“This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise” (**Isaiah 43:21**).

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (**Jeremiah 29:11**).



- The rich man's five brothers could have understood:

The Seriousness of Sin

In Genesis, chapter 3, it is plainly seen how that by sin, shame, sorrow, sighing, defilement and death, sin entered into the world. The serpent was cursed, the ground was cursed. God's pristine creation was marred; man's pure conscience was scarred. In the interest of brevity, let us see how it is summed up in one New Testament verse: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (**Romans 5:12**).

“The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies” (**Psalms 58:3**).

“The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, No not one” (**Psalms 14:2-3**).

“None of them can by any means redeem his brother; nor give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their souls is costly” (**Psalms 49:7-8**).



- The rich man's five brothers could have understood:

The Solemnness of the Law

Exodus, chapter 20 gives the account of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments from the hand of God. These are stated in verses 1-17. Beginning in verse 18 we read: “Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.

“Then they said to Moses, you speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (**Exodus 20:18-20**).

“Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers” (**Deuteronomy 8:1**).

[There are a number of other Old Testament Scriptures that could be added here on this same theme. But because the Law of God is so made light of and disregarded today, I will throw in a couple of New Testament passages for our consideration.]

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (**James 2:10**).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (**Galatians 3:24**).



- The rich man's five brothers could have understood:

The Saving Power of a Merciful God

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul” (**Leviticus 17:11**).

“Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the Lord God, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?’ ” (**Ezekiel 33:11**).

“Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I am God and there is no other” (**Isaiah 45:22**).

“Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, And He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (**Isaiah 55:6-7**).



- The rich man's five brothers could have understood:

The Perfect Savior Who Was to Come (in word pictures and types)

He is seen in the following:

The perfect sacrifice of Abel.

The patient suffering of Job.

The perfect obedience of Abraham.

The pure priesthood of Melchizedek.

The willing offering of Isaac.

The steadfast integrity (and eventual exaltation) of Joseph.

The consistent faithfulness of Moses.

The glorious conquests of Joshua.

The dutiful service of Samuel.

The loyal devotion of David.
The unswerving courage of Daniel.



- The rich man's five brothers could have understood:

The Hope of Salvation

This perfect Savior is the ONLY hope of Salvation.
The ark of Noah in Genesis.
The passover lamb in Exodus.
The sin offering demanded in Leviticus.
The brazen serpent in Numbers.
Rahab's scarlet thread in Joshua.

The five brothers of the rich man in *Hades* were denied a warning visit by someone returned from the dead on the grounds that they had Moses and the prophets and were, therefore, responsible to hear them.

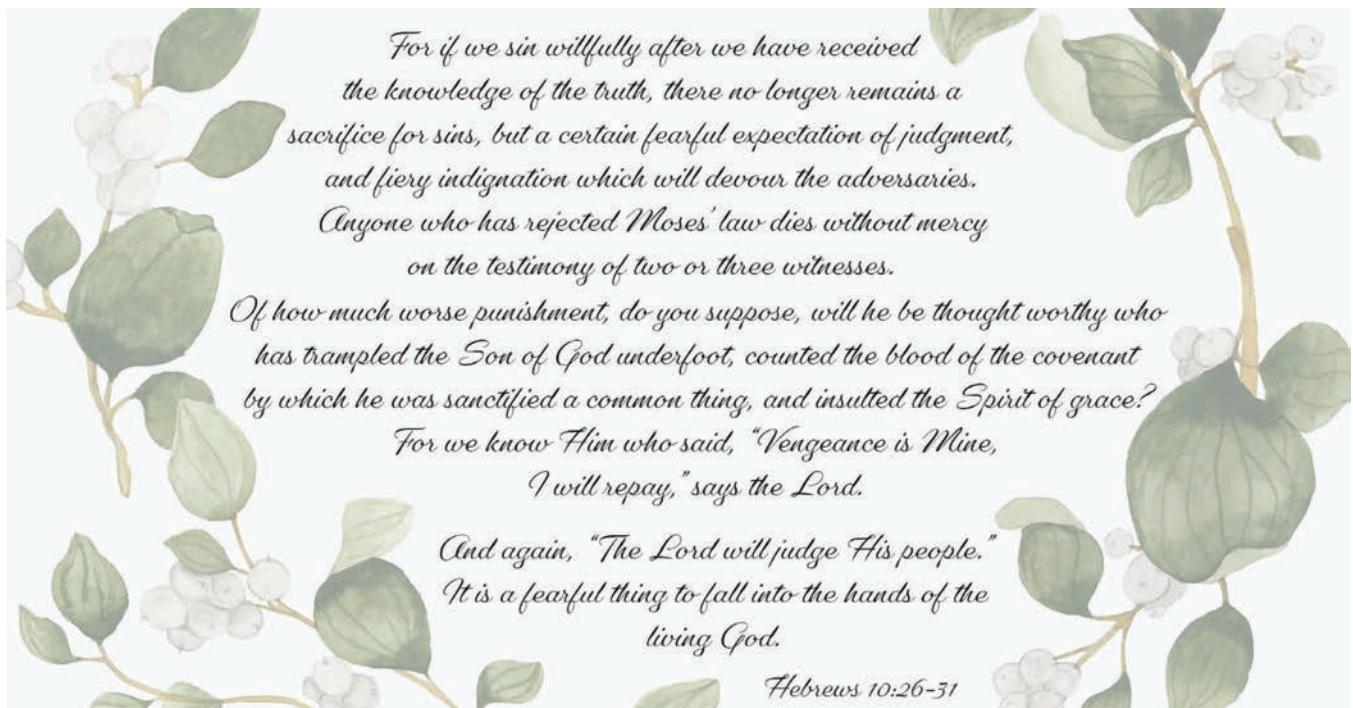
Yes, Hebrews 1:1-2 solemnly says to us: "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets"—but it goes on to say—"HATH IN THESE LAST DAYS SPOKEN UNTO US BY HIS SON."

If those of old time were held responsible to walk in the light that was available to them, how much more responsible will we be for what is available to us? We have not only the Old Testament, but the fulfillment of all that which is gloriously revealed in the New.

When your life comes to a close, will someone be able to write with their finger in the dust on your neglected Bible: "*They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them*"?

Have you responded to the Son of God, our all-sufficient and only Savior?

N. W. | Georgia





Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“God’s way never needs maintenance. You will never need to detour”

– John Ray Troyer at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“God will never give us a counterfeit.”

– Joseph Yoder at Pelkie Mennonite Church, MI



“The Ten Commandments are not a checklist, rather they are a call from God to a holy life.”

– Barry Zeiset, New Haven Mennonite Church, PA



“When we fear God we need not fear anything else. When people do not fear God they fear everything.”

– Tim Groff at Burkeland Mennonite Church, GA



“Truth does not wait on an effective exposition. It waits on obedience.”

– Rodney Witmer at Farmington Mennonite Church, NM



“We must choose to move toward God’s standard or we will take the downward path with the world’s standard.”

– Clifford Martin at Living Hope Mennonite Church, IA



“Do not turn away God’s voice by dismissing it as being the evil intent of others.”

– Luke Geiser at Caneyville Christian Community, KY



“Heat, light, and love all take energy to produce. Cold, darkness, and hate are the absence of these and take no energy whatsoever.”

– Tom Byler at Carlton Old Order Amish, PA



“A servant is not a good servant if he is not completely sold out to his master.”

– Clay Zimmerman at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“Some husbands do not understand how difficult it would be if they had to submit to someone like themselves.”

– David Alsbaugh at Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, OK

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

Integrity or Loyalty

by Frank Reed

Integrity or Loyalty? Which will it be? What is the difference? Does it matter? It matters. Integrity and loyalty are vastly different.

Integrity is the result of a life of principle.

Loyalty is the result of a life of following policy or ideology.

First, a disclaimer - Loyalty is not necessarily wrong and evil. *Loyalty can be good and useful if it follows and supports integrity and fidelity.* It is important to be loyal to a spouse or to a personal commitment that you have made. That is a good use of loyalty. In marriage, loyalty to spouse trumps all other affections. But, even there, loyalty must follow and support integrity and fidelity.

Loyalty dare not stand alone. When it does, it is destructive. If you are loyal to a friend no-matter-what, you will make wrong choices. You will typically defend the friend no matter what he/she does, right or wrong. That violates integrity.

Integrity, on the other hand, is *doing and living what is right at all times.* It is uncompromising. It is teaching and defending the truth and right. It is refusing to be loyal to anything that is wrong. It stands unflinchingly for truth and righteousness.

A Major Change in our Churches

The move from principle to policy – from integrity to loyalty – is impacting many churches from the very conservative ones to the liberal ones. In many churches loyalty is now demanded – you are guilty if you are not loyal. In a system based on loyalty, disloyalty becomes sin.

That is not a surprise. Disloyalty was the charge against Jeremiah – “he speaks against this city, – (Jerusalem)” (Jeremiah 26:8). Jeremiah even advocated going out and surrendering to the Babylonians (Jeremiah 38:2, 17). Was Jeremiah disloyal? He told the truth as God told him to say it. Is that disloyal? Apparently so in the eyes of the leaders. Because of his apparent disloyalty, the leaders said that he must die. Jeremiah was not disloyal. Telling the truth is not disloyalty. Jeremiah faced that charge several times in his life.

Ideology Is the Basis of Loyalty

Ideology is a set of accepted beliefs based on human reasoning. Those ideas are built into a structure by people who believe or hope to benefit from the ideas. Ideology replaces truth and then truth is lost because the ideas are seen as more valuable than the truth. As long as truth is primary, we can depend on truth to defend us.

When ideology becomes primary, truth is lost and loyalty trumps integrity. The Catholic Church experienced this. When they could not defend their system with truth, they switched to dogma. ‘It is not true because the Bible teaches it. It is true because the church says so.’

Ideology takes over when truth is lost. Ideology demands loyalty. That is what makes the loyalty system function. Loyalty to a system of ideology is what promotes the ideology and truth is lost.

In this column are a number of verses that illustrate how the Jewish leaders demanded loyalty and compromised integrity. These passages illustrate what happens when loyalty is demanded and integrity is missing.

When Loyalty Defends the Power Structure – (John 12:10-11) “But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.”

When Loyalty Disregards the Truth – (John 11:45-50) “Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, ‘What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will

Characteristics of Loyalty

- Loyalty is typically a system created by well-meaning people.
- Loyalty can produce a very impressive appearance.
- Loyalty can create a culture of compliance and defensiveness.
- Loyalty can pressure people into compliance.
- Loyalty can suppress and destroy truth.
- Loyalty can quiet dissenting voices.
- Loyalty can demand support for its agendas.
- Loyalty can destroy discernment.
- Loyalty can demand control and compliance.
- Loyalty can mean unquestioned allegiance to a system.
- Loyalty can create internal conflicts that defend the system.
- Loyalty can produce an allegiance that eventually becomes the “truth”.
- Loyalty can place politicians in charge and leave people in confusion.
- Loyalty can create a “not on my watch” mentality among leaders.
- Loyalty can create polarization.
- Loyalty can masquerade as submission.
- Loyalty without integrity is an inadequate basis for life and ministry.
- In a loyalty system, people are guilty based on a lack of conformity.

The motive of a loyalty system is to create a uniform society by making the people controllable. The motive may be noble but the methods are subversive and the result is bondage. Without the tribal markers of inclusion and/or exclusion these ideas could not survive. Arbitrary and artificial and untrue practices are now defended as the “way we have always done it.”

A loyalty system is very resistant to anyone who would challenge the ideology. An integrity system, on the other hand, welcomes all who will love and identify with truth.

Integrity Is Based on Truth

William Penn famously declared, “Right is right, even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong, even if everyone is for it.” That is not such a difficult concept. Growing up in a healthy home and healthy culture, right and wrong are immediately apparent. That type of growing up produces integrity because it is based on biblical truth.

The modern world has no agreement on what is right and what is wrong. Any system can and will create its own definitions. This results in the loss of the internal compass. The internal sense of right and wrong is replaced by the agreements and definitions of the system. Hitler’s Germany was a classic and drastic example of this. Loyalty to Hitler’s Germany took precedence over truth. Truth was lost. Loyalty was demanded. Integrity was lost.

believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.’ And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, ‘You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.’”

When Loyalty Seeks the Praise of Men – (John 12:42-43) “Nevertheless, even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

When Loyalty Seeks Honor – (John 5:44) “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?”

When Loyalty Rules Through Fear – (John 9:22, 34) “His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. ... They answered and said to him, ‘You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?’ And they cast him out.”

When Loyalty Hides in Darkness – (John 7:13) “However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.”

When Integrity and Loyalty Work Together – (Acts 5:34-40) “Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people ‘And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.’”

Characteristics of Integrity

- Integrity welcomes truth.
- Integrity insists on truth.
- Integrity is who you are when no one is looking.
- Integrity is who you are even when you know you will not get caught.
- Integrity is who you are on the remotest island on the darkest night.
- Integrity will die for truth.
- Integrity knows that truth is more valuable than life.
- Integrity knows that “truth is immortal.”
- Integrity supports and defends the innocent.
- Integrity cares for others more than for self.
- Integrity stands up for the less fortunate.
- Integrity does not abuse.
- Integrity does not manipulate.
- Integrity never takes unfair advantage of anyone.
- Integrity is courage lived out.
- Integrity is love lived out.
- Integrity is justice lived out.
- Integrity is respect lived out.
- Integrity is honesty lived out.
- Integrity is holiness lived out.
- Integrity is being absolutely trustworthy.
- Integrity sets the agenda for doing what is right.
- Integrity is God-likeness lived out.
- Integrity is the essence of truth.
- Integrity is not required in a loyalty system.

In the world of integrity no one argued that they could do anything they wanted and it was okay. No one! Real men with real convictions lived godly lives without being poured into a mold that made them all alike. They were not cookie-cutter men. These men were not all identical but they had the same gentleman’s code of conduct and life. They lived that way before their God and their fellow man. The common thread in their lives was integrity, not mindless uniformity.

A World of Integrity

I remember a world of integrity. Not the whole world, of course, but the world in which I grew up. A world where injustice and wrong were the exception, not the rule. A world where you did not always have to watch your back. A world where mine was yours and yours was mine. A world of community. A world where men honored and protected women and children. A world where Christ was King. A world where you knew the Church was your most valuable asset in this life and your only path to the next.

Somehow, we have gotten the idea that we can legislate morality and produce a system that will prevent wrong and sin. That is not true. Integrity can only come from a committed heart and a disciplined life. Compliance with a system, no matter how fool-proof, will never produce the same results as a culture and a life of integrity.

The way we are doing church is not “the way we have always done church.” That is why we should study history. History produces cycles. The part of the cycle we are in now does not work. We need repentance and revival. Revival is to return to truth and the integrity that truth produces.

Loyalty systems do not produce holiness. We need to restore godliness and holiness to the biblical culture we have inherited. We can return to the era of integrity. We can create a culture of integrity and holiness. We do not have to decide between life and truth. They belong together and they can be together again today.

F. R. | *Pennsylvania*

Some Additional Thoughts:

- Loyalty needs to be subordinate to integrity.
- Loyalty must always follow integrity.
- Integrity cannot follow loyalty.

When church members feel that their leaders demand a loyalty that trumps their integrity, God’s glory will be marred.

Wherever we have placed blind loyalty above integrity, we need to repent of the compromises that blind loyalty genders and help restore integrity to the church.

E.S. | *Oklahoma*



The Sovereign God

by Ernest Strubhar

Purpose Statement:

To exalt the sovereignty of God and bring us rest even when we suffer unjustly.

Where Is God?

We grieve with those who suffer the war in the Ukraine. Galya Gladko wants to know how to answer her son in the army when he calls home. “Mama, where is your God now? How can He allow such suffering? Innocent children are dying. Do they deserve that? I thought you said that your God loves and cares about people.”

Galya’s eyes reflected the hopelessness and desperation of so many as she said, “I don’t know how to answer my son. Where is God in this war?”¹

What Does God’s Sovereignty Mean?

God rules. He rules over everything, over the whole universe. Nothing lies outside the sphere of His governing rule. Nothing.

Does He rule over human affairs, too? Yes, He does.

But the questions persist: If He is good (and He is), and if He rules in this world (yes, He does), why is there evil? Why does He not just destroy the Devil and stop the evil and the suffering that results?

God is infinite. He exists far above us, outside of time and space. His thoughts are as far above our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth (Isaiah 58:8-9). We can know Him, but we simply cannot answer all our questions about Him and His sovereignty.

God’s Sovereignty in Creation

Before creation, God was, and God ruled as sovereign. In all eternity He existed. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ... The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ... Let there be light. ... Let there be a firmament. ... Let the dry land appear. ...” Sun and moon, plants and animals; God made them all. “And God saw that it was good,” a beautiful world reflecting His own harmony (See Genesis 1).

¹ Quote from “A Dream Called Life” (AV25, page 18).



Why Did God Make Us?

Think about who God is. The Father delighted in the Son. The eternal Son, personified as Wisdom in Proverbs 8, testifies, “I was daily His delight” (Proverbs 8:30). And at Jesus’ baptism the Father says, “**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased**” (Mark 1:11).

God’s nature is love. The Father loved His Son. The Father wanted more sons on whom to shower His love. So on the sixth day of creation, He said to His eternal Son, “Let us make man (Hebrew: adam) in our image” (Genesis 1:26). Yes, Adam “was the son of God” (Luke 3:38). We are all sons of Adam, created to be God’s sons, and Jesus is not ashamed to call us His brethren (Hebrews 2:11).

God Longed for a Family

Now we know why the triune God created us. He wanted a family of sons and daughters to love, sons and daughters who would bear the image of His beloved Son. God has one purpose for all of us, a predestination (predetermined destination) that Paul describes in Romans 8:28-29. We are “**predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.**” Amazing! Brothers to Jesus, sons and daughters of the heavenly Father! All of us becoming more and more like Jesus, the eternal Son!

God created us to be His family so that He could shower His wonderful love on us. That has implications. Love that is not reciprocal has no meaning. For all the fanfare about AI (artificial intelligence), would you choose a robot to be your spouse? Neither did God make robots to “love” Him. He made humans in His image, with the power to choose. “Free will” we call it.

God wants us to love Him. He made us to love Him. Perhaps we can understand God’s love for us better if we use the analogy that God also uses in Scripture. God is our bridegroom; we are the bride. In human

experience the bridegroom wins the love of the bride by loving her. He tries to convince her that he can provide for her and make her happy. She feels his love, learns to trust him, and reciprocates. He does not grab his shotgun and go bang on her door at midnight to demand her love. He does not threaten her, screaming, “I love you, and if you don’t love me, I will smash this door down, and take you by force to be my wife.” That’s not love. Love is won, not forced.

We know how love works because we are made in the image of God, the first Lover. A man who seeks a wife does what he is taught of God to do. He woos a woman to be his bride. He shows her tenderness, care, concern, favor, appreciation, affection. No demands. No threats. No coercion. She can accept his love, or she can reject it. Forced “love” is not love.

That is the way love works. Love works that way because we are humans, made in the image of God. And that is the way Jesus loves and woos His bride. The Scripture tells us how God loves us. “**God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**” (Romans 5:8).

Man Can Choose to Reject God’s Love

How can humans choose without infringing on God’s sovereignty?

God, the great Sovereign, made us. God sovereignly designed us so that each person has the power to choose good or evil, even though it goes against God’s good will for mankind.

God Determines the Consequences

Even though God our Creator, in His sovereignty, has given mankind choice, He reserves to Himself the authority to determine the consequences of our choices. In fact, the consequences are built into the created order. They are based on God’s character and person, who He is—His nature and being. So they are as immutable as He is immutable. Let’s notice a few of these attributes of God and the consequences we suffer if we reject Him.

God is love. If we choose to love Him, we learn to love. But if we reject His love, we invite selfishness and hatred into our hearts. Then we experience suffering and evil. We have chosen it by rejecting God’s love.

God is light. If we turn toward the light and walk in the light, we learn to love the light of goodness and righteousness and truth. But if we turn away from the light, and walk away from it, we see only darkness and

walk into darkness. And we learn to love the “cover” darkness gives to our evil deeds. More than that, we become very blind to the suffering our sins bring on us and those around us.

God is life. If we receive His life, we live. We know all the joys and blessings of life. If we refuse His life, we die. God spoke of this in Eden: death is the consequence that must follow the choice to reject God, the source of life.

We make choices. God determines the consequences. He tells us plainly what they will be because He loves us.

The Sovereign’s Decrees

The sovereign God has decreed, “**The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.**” Nothing can change that. If we choose to walk in sin, we reap the consequences. If we turn away from sin (repent), we receive God’s gift of life.

The sovereign God has decreed, “**He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit. . . . If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered**” (John 15:5-6). We choose: we abide in Christ, or we do not. By abiding, we choose fruitfulness. By seeking independence, we choose rejection and destruction.

The sovereign God has decreed, “**My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand**” (John 10:27-28). We choose to hear His voice and follow Him, or to not hear and not follow. This choice is ours.

The sovereign God has decreed, “**He who has the Son, has life; he who does not have the Son does not have life. . . . that you may know that you have eternal life**” (1 John 5:12, 13). We choose life, or death. It’s our choice.

What the sovereign God decrees, we can never change. Each man can make choices because God in His sovereignty wants us to love and serve Him of our own free will. Just remember, we cannot escape the consequences of our choices because those are fixed by the sovereign God.

What Will You Choose?

Will you choose to serve the sovereign Creator God who made you? He made you because He wants to shower His infinite love upon you. He made you to respond to that love and love Him in return. He made

you to be a beloved son or daughter, and to serve Him, while He gives you everything you need to live, and live well.

You do not have to choose to serve your sovereign Creator God. You can choose to serve yourself. But if you do, you choose darkness and death. It's your choice.

The Sovereign Lord says, *"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live"* (**Deuteronomy 30:19**).

God Is Ever on His Throne!

Back to the war in Ukraine.

Though injustice abounds in the present world, God still rules. Man's choices have made the world a mess. Man's choices cause suffering. True, not all the suffering we experience results from our personal sins. But one thing we know: soon, very soon, our sovereign King Jesus will come and restore all things (Acts 3:21). This world order, and all the suffering in it, will come to an end. We will enter into a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells (II Peter 3:13). We as our Father's family will reign with Him forever! Glory, glory, glory to the sovereign God!

E. S. | Oklahoma

Editor's Addition

The Sovereign God chooses to allow Satan to be loose in the world. That is why war rages in the Ukraine and why evil men do many evil things in the world. However, sometimes God does allow suffering and bad things to happen to His children. Yet God is not the source of evil. Michael Martin tells us in His

book *Why Bad Things Happen*, "God should *NEVER* be credited for bad things."

Many times God shields His children from the injustices and wickedness in the world, but not always. The thing we must always remember during times of suffering is that God's love for His children never fails them.

God does not immediately take his beloved children out of this world to a better place, but the apostle Paul's writings assure us of a future hope that makes the present suffering worthwhile.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Romans 8:35, 38-39**).

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (**I Corinthians 15:19**).

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (**II Corinthians 4:17-18**).

For More on the Subject see also:

- AV18 "If Job Had Known," page 19.
- *When Bad Things Happen: And What Is Our Comfort* by Michael S. Martin (AV25, page 42).

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live"

—Deuteronomy 30:19

Love the Brotherhood

by Austin Hege

These are the points of a sermon given at the Burkeland Mennonite Church on 27 February 2022. Brother Austin used many more appropriate scriptures in his presentation. Take a pen and paper and jot down other fitting scriptures that come to your mind.

“Love the Brotherhood” (I Peter 2:17)

1. Why Should I Love the Brotherhood?

– Because it is our God-given duty. “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

– Because Christ loved the brotherhood. “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25).

– Because of the witness it sends forth. “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another” (John 13:35).

2. How Does One Love the Brotherhood?

– By unselfishly giving of ourselves to needs within. “Now all who believed ... sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all as anyone had need” (Acts 2:44-45).

– By submitting to one another. “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another” (I Peter 5:5).

– By giving reproof and by exhorting. “Exhort one another daily ... lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).

– By forgiving and disregarding offenses done to us. “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

3. What Will Be the Results if I Do Not Love the Brotherhood?

– Christ will hold us accountable. “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar” (I John 4:20).

– The witness of the church will be hindered. “If you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth ... Where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there” (James 3:14-16).



– Spiritual and physical needs will be neglected. “If you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another” (Galatians 5:15).

– The blood of others may stain my hands. “Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the judge is standing at the door” (James 5:9).

4. What Will Happen if I Love the Brotherhood?

– God’s kingdom will be increased. “So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people” (Acts 2:47).

– The blessing of the Lord will rest upon us. “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing” (I Peter 3:8-9).

– Peace and harmony will be the rule. “Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 6:23).

– The church can effectively meet the physical and spiritual needs of many. “With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33).

A Dream Called Life

by Anya Hursh

I have read many war memoirs, never dreaming that I would live through war myself, that my world and the world of the people I love would be turned upside down, or that my village could become a battlefield. It feels surreal. Surely, I will wake up soon and find it a dream: one of those nightmares that haunted me as a child.

Perhaps one day I will awaken and find it was all just a dream, a dream called Life, a little dot in the vastness of eternity. Perhaps one day I will awake and find that these horrors were nothing in comparison to the glory of eternity. I will be satisfied when I awake in His likeness. Then this life will truly be just a dream ...

But until I awake in His likeness, I must live with reality. And reality looks ugly these days.

People are starving to death. Russian criminals have been sent from prison to Ukraine with instructions to kill and destroy, while kind-hearted Russians are either disappearing or being put into jail because they dare to go against the President's command to fight their neighbors. Children are suffering; many are dying. People, driven by desperation, are stooping to inhumane behavior.

I see the ugly reality of war creating havoc, hatred, and heartbreak. But I also see the beautiful reality of God, the Redeemer, taking the horror of war and bringing hope, healing, and holiness. I am surrounded by His redeeming grace. God is at work, redeeming the pain and refining His children.

But I still find it hard to be at peace. Some days I cope by blocking out the pain and not letting my mind wrap around the ache, the uncertainty, and the horror of this war. I close my eyes to the suffering around me and pretend that life is normal. But when I'm living in denial, I rob myself

of His grace and His healing presence.

Other times I wallow in the horrible stories I hear. My imagination runs wild as I think of all the terrible things that could happen to me and my loved ones. Then the sorrow that is pressing Ukraine presses my own soul, covering me in the darkness of depression and despair.

However, there is a beautiful place of surrender, of acknowledging the pain that cuts the world and recognizing the possibility of death and separation, of releasing my grip on the things and the people I hold dear, while clinging tightly to the hand of the One who holds the world. There is sweet surrender when trusting His heart and remembering who He really is—the Creator and Sustainer of life, the Almighty, the Lord of Hosts, the Prince of Peace. When I focus on who He is, it helps put the rest of life in perspective.

But so quickly I slip out of the feeling of blessedness



Buckwheat being packaged for the food parcels



Volunteers who have spent hours packaging food for the parcels

and fall into either of those miry ditches. God help me!

I felt God's redeeming grace as I sat in church today, surrounded by church family and seeking refugees. The messages rang with hope and courage. "God is good," shared one brother, "even in the middle of this war." Although there was an undercurrent of apprehension and uncertainty of what the coming days may bring, the tears that shone in many eyes were not of despondency and sorrow, but of gratefulness and joy.

Today in church there was a new refugee, an elderly woman, who gave her testimony. "I'm from Kiev and live in one of the areas with the hottest fighting. But I grew up in this village. When I was a child, there was a small group of believers that gathered regularly for worship. My grandmother was a believer and I attended the services with her. But as time went on, the group dwindled and eventually disappeared. For years, I've been praying for a revival for this village. Now war has brought me back, and I rejoice to see that God has answered my prayer." Communism may have smothered the faith of the believers in our village for a time, but God has again kindled His fire in the hearts of many here.

This afternoon our family and the youth went door-to-door through Berezyanka handing out garden seeds and literature. While walking down the cobblestone streets, one could almost forget about the war. The air carried a hint of spring, and shoots of green told of tulips and daffodils braving the cold in confidence of warmer weather ahead. The return of the swans to the

village lakes is a sure sign that spring will come. The wells, the houses, and the barns looked nearly the same as they had for the past years. Men chopped wood, *babushkas* hobbled to the gate to meet us, and children ran and played.

The bombs and tanks have not yet reached this village, but the effects of war have. The war has shaken us all and left us reeling in shock and groping for light. Never before were the seeds and literature so eagerly received as today, when everyone seemed thirsty for fellowship, for hope, and for encouragement.

The reality of the war shook me this evening when I met Olya Makavetska. Our friendship goes back to nearly twenty years ago when we went to Sunday school together. Back then, we were little girls who could communicate without words. A hug and smile went a long way. This evening, although we now speak the same language, I was at a loss for words. What do you say when you find your friend weeping because she had just received the phone call which many women across the country dread? My Russian, Ukrainian, or English vocabulary has no words for such a heartbreaking situation. A hug and smile worked when we were little girls. This evening it was a hug and tears.

She cried on my shoulder, heartbroken and discouraged, because she had just received notice that her husband is missing in action. The chance of him being alive is slim. She is grief-stricken and devastated, but has to be strong for her three young children. My heart aches for her and for the countless widows on



A Sunday morning worship service in Krivoshientsi

both sides of the battlefield. Oh, when will this horrid war end?

Galya Gladko, a villager who used to attend our church regularly, said her son in the army calls her with questions. “Mama, where is your God now? How can He allow such suffering? Innocent children are dying. Do they deserve that? I thought you said that your God loves and cares about people.” Galya’s eyes reflected the hopelessness and desperation of so many as she said, “I don’t know how to answer my son. Where is God in this war?”

Sometimes I wonder the same thing. I know that this war is a result of sin, but I wonder why so many have to suffer. I know that God can bring beauty from ashes and that He can redeem the pain, but I wonder why He allows the fire to burn so hot and so long. I know that this war has been purging hearts and turning our faces toward God, but sometimes I am at a loss to know how to comfort the grieving hearts around me.

Pray that God would give wisdom to know how to respond to the seeking souls around us, and that we could find the courage to share in others’ pain without becoming depressed and disillusioned ourselves. Pray, too, that we could remain nonresistant, not only in our actions, but also in our hearts.

I like the way my sister Veronica described the tension of life. *Some days I wish life would return*

to normal, but the next day I cannot even do normal activities without feeling guilty, because others’ lives have been turned upside down with so much suffering.

Yet I would not trade this experience for anything. It has forced me to reevaluate my life, motives, hopes, and dreams. Should I still plan a trip to Ireland/England or shop for a new camera? I would give all I have to stop this suffering, but things have so little value when lives are in danger. It hurts to see the fear and uncertainty in the eyes of so many. The courage of those who stayed behind when others fled is so encouraging!

We all want to be the hero who is meeting the needs around us, but someone needs to do the cooking, cleaning, and washing. Will I be content to teach the few students who are left behind?

I am tempted to keep myself so busy that I do not have time to think about what is happening around me, but then I am not taking time to process my feelings. I become calloused to the news and blockades where our neighbors are fighting for victory, not for peace. God, we pray for peace!

Feelings of loneliness surface when we think of our friends across the border who have found a new normal ... yet I wouldn’t trade places with them either. The future looks just as uncertain and indefinite there. We are so thankful for our dear brothers and sisters who picked up for all those who have left and that our group

which gathers three times a week is growing!

Many hours have been spent at the print shop where the tons of food are being packaged. It is a beautiful way for the church to serve together, as young and old help to bring food and relief to their countrymen. Some evenings, the volunteers are covered with flour dust, and dark hair is streaked gray. Thankfully, rice, buckwheat, sugar, and oatmeal are not quite as challenging to package as the flour.

The other day, Dad and some of the other brothers took two loads of food parcels to the Kiev mission where other local brothers will deliver them to the needy families in the city. I worried for them as they

traveled, but God blessed their mission and they not only returned home safely, but also came back loaded with literature salvaged from the Grace Press warehouse that burned. The fire and water damage was not as serious as we feared, and much literature was spared. Join us in praying that the food parcels and literature will safely reach the hands of the needy and the hearts of those who are hungry for hope.

Thank you for lifting us to the throne of grace. God has been faithful in supplying our needs.

A. H. | Ukraine

Photo credits: Veronica Hursh March 20, 2022



Spring is coming – swans on a lake in Krivoshientsi

"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look!' I see the heavens opened and the son of man standing at the right hand of God!"

—Acts 7:55-56



Safe in My Savior's Hand

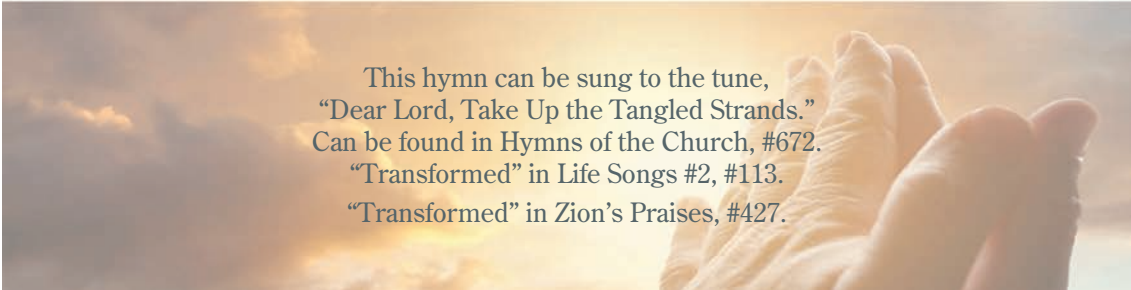
by Anya Hursh

*My times are in your hand O Lord,
for you are in control.
Though war may rage and troubles surge,
I know you keep my soul.*

*Chorus:
I need not fear this war,
I need not doubt your power
For this I know you're in control.
You'll keep me every hour.*

*Within your hand O God, I rest,
Secure and free from harm.
I rest in peace within your hand.
My heart knows no alarm.*

*Within your hand is life and death.
Though friends may need to flee,
I know that we can still be one,
Within your hand are we.*



This hymn can be sung to the tune,
“Dear Lord, Take Up the Tangled Strands.”
Can be found in Hymns of the Church, #672.
“Transformed” in Life Songs #2, #113.
“Transformed” in Zion’s Praises, #427.

Church Extension in the Dominican Republic

by Jonathan Martin

Both Jonathan Martin and his son, Jerome, have spent many years in the Dominican Republic (DR). Jonathan has lived in the DR 33 years and Jerome has lived there all of his 31 years except for four years. DR shares an island in the Caribbean Sea with the country of Haiti. Here they share some of their insights on the mission outreach in that country.

A Bit of History

From 1929-1960, the Dominican Republic had a Dictator, Trujillo. He made an agreement with the Vatican to support the Catholic Church in the DR. Trujillo financed the Catholic schools and universities and paid their officials according to rank. He then realized he had given a lot for little gain and asked the pope to honor him with the title, Benefactor of the Catholic Church. The pope did not comply, so Trujillo became angry with the pope, and began to work against the Catholic Church. He finally declared religious freedom to all religions about 1956.

Before this, Evangelicals and Pentecostals were liable to be tied in the corral behind the police station where stray animals were kept. (Incidentally, the day he signed a warrant for the arrest of several Catholic priests, conspirators who were not linked to the Catholic Church, shot him). The older Dominicans say, "He did as he pleased till he went against the Catholic church; then he lost his life." About this time (mid 1930s), the Egli Amish from Indiana changed their name to "Defenseless Christians." After their youth entered the armed forces during WWII, they changed their name again to Evangelical Mennonites. Then the group needed a place to evangelize, so they could live up to their name. This group then established several churches in the DR in the general area where our churches are located today.

The Opening

In the 1970s, the Evangelical Mennonites began to introduce the doctrine of Calvinism, much to the consternation of some of their native ministers. Also during this period, Rod and Staff and Lamp and Light began to offer free Luz de la Vida (Light of Life) and other literature, and DR became one of their largest customers. As the orders grew in size, these publishing houses began to look for someone who could find out what was being accomplished with all the free literature. Elmer Weaver, who was involved with translation along with Eugene Campbell, developed contacts among

some of the Dominican pastors and became aware of the need. Elmer Weaver, Harvey Witmer, and Dallas Witmer went down to see what should be done and contact some of the pastors. This was early 1979.

Then came Hurricane David in August of 1979. The capital city suffered much damage and hit the news, and uninformed Mennonites pulled out their maps to find out where DR was. Several brethren went down with a double intent, to see what relief efforts were needed, and what was being accomplished with the free literature. Elmer Weaver, Eugene Campbell, and Dallas Witmer went on this trip. It seemed that a biblical Mennonite witness was needed, and native leaders were inviting our involvement.

The Plan

The churches under bishop Loyal Troyer were asked to consider this work. At that time these churches were Grandin MO, Farmington NM, and Unity WI. Brothers Harvey and Dallas Witmer were the ordained brethren asked to go. Brethren Harvey and Dallas with their wives, Brother Eugene Campbell, and Brother James Landis went down November 19. Most had plans of staying a month to decide where to begin an outreach.



A remodeled house serves as the Jorgillo meeting house.

James Landis left after two weeks and Loyal Troyers came. The group traveled extensively, preached in some of the Evangelical Mennonite churches, and decided to start work in the San Juan valley. In May of 1980, the first workers began moving down.

A new organization formed and the name the group chose for it was “West Indies Witness” (WIW). The general purpose for the work in the Dominican Republic was “church extension.” The new WIW Newsletter was more specific. The January 1980 issue stated, “The organization of the WIW is to facilitate the establishment of sound local churches there, and in no way to supplant the work, witness, or authority of those churches.”

When I arrived in May of 1981, Harold Heges, Philip Danners, and Clarence Eberlys, were also there. Eugene Campell had been there for a time as translator.

The Euphoria

“The work in the Dominican Republic is mushrooming” (November 1980 Newsletter). “The congregation at La Estancia numbers 46. In San Juan, the membership is now 19...Present enrollment in the five instruction classes totals more than 100” (June 1981 Newsletter). The report in October was of three Christian schools begun and five organized churches. “Fifteen baptisms at La Estancia and eleven at El Portón, plus one young man at El Portón received from another church, brings the total Dominican membership up to 142. Most of these are young people” (January 1982 Newsletter). The next Newsletter announced the results of ordinations, with two natives and an American brother being ordained. Six months later, two more young native brethren were ordained. By then, membership and those entering instruction classes had begun to level out, and excommunications were becoming a painful reality, not always leading to repentance and restoration.

The Sifting

Eventually and inevitably, a time of sifting came. A program to help needy fathers and young men to develop a small business or better their farming was set up to administer small loans. It soon became evident that this was a drawing card that competed with a focus on Christ, and had to be abandoned.

The promises of easier living through accredited higher education pulled some back into the state schools and worldly patterns of thought. The enthrallment of identifying with Americans began to wear thin, especially if they were seen to be possessive of their

money and goods.

Recently ordained pastors and deacons showed themselves to be not only human and weak, but even unfaithful. Eventually, a core constituency that could be trusted was identified. Church life took on a “normal” routine, and our hopes turned to growth out of the offspring of these faithful few.

The Heartbreak

But that was not to be. Close to 90% of the youth from these families who went through our schools and were baptized into our churches did not make it through the challenges that faced them. We continued to look for those who would turn the tide and give a better example to those growing up among us, but the exceptions to the rule were only enough to confirm the trend.

I will not go into detail as to what I view as some of the possible reasons for the decline. But I will quote our Lord: “**Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**” Although the results coming from the homes of the faithful few were disappointing, some did continue to enter the church from the surrounding communities, and some youth did make it. We do have some stable homes and younger church members, but in place of the seven churches and large instruction classes of yesteryear are four congregations and a few receiving instruction for baptism.

To get a glimpse of the continuing challenges, let us go to the story of Aneuris (Ah nay OO rees—sound the OO as in “moon”) and see how life appears through his eyes.

Through the Eyes of Aneuris

by Jerome Martin

Bright sunshine streams over the freshly-planted rice field and warms up the little block house that I call home. I can hear my oldest brother washing his face and hair in the canal across the road right in front of our American neighbor’s house. The television blares inside our house where my mom and sister are occupied. I wonder if my other brother has begun his day at Grandma’s house in town.

Suddenly, I spy my father moving the cows and goats to new spots in the just-harvested cornfield. With eight-year-old enthusiasm, I run to take a ride on our big white goat. As I lurch over the rugged terrain, I notice the neighbor man heading toward town on his motorcycle.



The house where Aneuris lives with two brothers, one sister, and parents. The family lives mostly outdoors. All the openings where there could be windows are closed over with tin. The family is connected to the powerline has a fridge, lights, TV, and radio. The road past the house was prepared for paving of two lanes, but only one lane was paved before COVID prevented its completion.

Until recently, we were alone on this little stretch of road. But now we have close neighbors. They milk cows and sell milk, cheese, and yogurt. Our cow never gave much milk, and we quit milking her.

It seems our neighbors are always busy. I never see them sitting and watching the people go past on the road like my parents do sometimes. I liked to watch



Aneuris and his father with their hair sheep.

them work when they were fixing up their house. It seems our neighbors live so comfortably. I never see the lady rinsing her clothes and dishes in the canal like we sometimes do.

If we need a tool or some nails or paint, we go to the neighbors, and it seems they always have what we need. Yesterday, when my mom needed some sour oranges, I went to the neighbors and they let me climb their tree and knock some down.

I reach into my pocket and jingle the pesos I got yesterday from selling some junk metal to the truck that goes by. This afternoon I want to buy some ice cream from the man that pushes a little cart down the road.

I see my dad loading his backpack sprayer and a 55-gallon barrel on the cycle to go and spray someone's cornfield. I wonder what I'll do today. It's boring being the youngest child.

I hear the neighbor's cycle slowing down to turn in at their place and my thoughts return to our neighbors and their strange ways. I know tomorrow they will go to church. My brother used to go with them, but I never did. My mother said I get carsick too easily. I don't remember getting carsick even on the longest trip I took, which was twenty kilometers (12.4 miles) to Las Matas.

I do wonder why our neighbors always wear the same kind of clothes and why the lady wears a white thing on her head. They seem so happy. I don't hear them yelling at each other.

My stomach rumbles. I'm going to see if my mom has the cooking fire going to cook some food for today.

* Pray for Aneuris and many other children like him in the Dominican Republic. Pray that their observations would eventually draw them to the truth. Pray for us, as we are being watched, that we would live a consistent life.

J. M. | Dominican Republic



Aneuris and his father cutting brush in order to plant pumpkins. The soil between the rocks is very fertile. These eating pumpkins are planted about 10' apart and flourish amid the rocks. After harvest the pumpkins are cooked with salt and eaten with eggs or cheese along with smoked herring from Norway. These pumpkins do not taste like squash in the States but when served in this way make a delicious meal.

The Task for Today

by Jonathan Martin

So, the task of church building today is as hard as it ever was. Here are some of the challenges Mennonite missionaries to the DR have faced. I drew the following illustrations directly out of the story of Aneuris.

1. A blaring radio and TV have been so close and so loud that we are exposed to a deluge of shockingly depraved sexual messages. If a drinking party chose to indulge in their favorite song, we heard it again and again—perhaps from three in the afternoon to twelve thirty or later the next morning.

2. Bathing in plain view from the window or play area of your children? The washing of face and hair in the canal in front of the house did not meet our standards of modesty.

Over the years, American and Dominican Christians have found it necessary to move at times, or build walls that will reflect some of the blaring music and indecent dress or undress. Perhaps a bar has started up; will it soon die, or should I relocate?

3. My brother lives at Grandma's house. This simple fact might not be so simple. What does it mean in the DR culture? Perhaps he is a brother through my father, but not a son of my mother. The family in the DR is maternally oriented. The nucleus of the family is a mother and her children. The father is almost relegated to a place in the larger extended family. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles compete with the father for a share of influence in the home. A man may have several acknowledged "women" with whom he lives.

Having said all this, the fact that my brother lives with Grandma may be only a way to have him closer to school, and at the same time be a way to help Grandma with the many chores that are becoming difficult for her. It may be the way his father looks after his mother, making sure she is not too lonely and that if she is sick or in need, someone can run for help.

4. It seems our neighbors are always busy. The difference in the work ethic and habits are a continual challenge. They say we are too busy, we think they are too easygoing. Maybe our work ethic shows more influence of the American dream of "getting ahead" than that of the gospel.

Maybe they are living closer to Jesus' teaching, "take no thought for the things of tomorrow." Their business overhead might consist of a backpack sprayer, a 55-gallon tank, and an old motorcycle, together worth less than \$1,000. With that amount of money they can put food on the table. In light of that, does our \$15,000,



Merquik Ogando is a former church member sitting outside her cook-shack. She is illiterate but perhaps can read phone numbers.

or \$50, 000, or \$150,000 dollar investment make sense?

Of a more somber note is the question, "Does our large outlay of capital feed discontent and a desire for more material things in our brethren?" These issues continue to challenge our ability to relate properly to the neighbor and to my brother in the faith.

5. "It seems they always have what we need." This was said in regards to nails, a bit of paint, tools, and even sour oranges in the tree. Perhaps their tree has no oranges because their neighbors knew they were expected to help themselves. When they decided to fix the door, they bought one pound of nails. Then they had a few left over and decided to fix the window shutter as well. Now the pound of nails does not quite reach, and a few from the neighbor comes in handy.

Once done with a project, they do not worry about the boards that were left over. They become playthings for the children. So, the next time they need a board,



These men are preparing the ground to plant corn on 29 November 2019. The DR government imports large amounts of hybrid seed corn. About 70-90 days after planting (late February or March) the ears of corn will be hand-plucked, with each truck carrying 17,000 ears each to a factory. This corn is a large part of the diet in the DR.



Jerome milks five cows by hand. He sells milk to customers in town. Excess milk goes to the Cooperative (Coop) that collects and buys milk from many farms. The Coop heats the milk to 300° F for nine minutes (ultra-high-temperature, UHT) and can keep for long periods without refrigeration. Most cows are milked by hand, but two brethren do use machines.

Cattle are usually treated twice a year for parasite infection.

Most people drink bottled water to avoid parasite infection from water-borne diseases.

the neighbor has what they need. That neighbor may be a Dominican, or an American. Can the American part with his nails as cheerfully as his unbelieving neighbor? If he cannot, his integrity as a Christian could well be called into question.

6. The junk metal that Aneuris sells to get change to buy ice cream; did it perhaps include the brake pedal that the missionary neighbor changed on his cycle? Might it include as well a piece of pipe that the missionary neighbor had laid behind the house for when he would need it? How is a Christian to relate to petty thievery? What if it is only thievery in his eyes, but the neighbor has concluded that, “he doesn’t need it, he’ll never miss it?” To love your neighbor as yourself, and call your neighbor to the same is a task that at times takes more grace and mercy than we normally have available. This is the time when we truly must have what the neighbor needs, Bible truth.

7. My mom said I get carsick too easily. The truth is, she was afraid that an eight-year-old might not know how to behave, or would be a bother. But she felt that the lie might serve the purpose easier than the truth, and she said it without giving it a second thought.

To help newly converted natives break the habit of unconscious lying, to relate to neighbors who are accustomed to lies as a “gentle” way to get out of a bind, to keep ourselves free from that habit, even when

they “coach” you to use a lie when it would “help” neighborhood relationships; these are day-to-day challenges.

For instance, if someone were to ask to borrow the neighbor’s backpack sprayer, he would probably say that he has a job to do in just a little while, when in reality he does not. He would counsel you to not loan your hoe to that neighbor because he never brings it back. “Just tell him you already loaned it to me for the day.” To face up the irresponsible neighbor with his irresponsibility for his own good, and in a Christ-like way, is part of our Christian duty. And yet we must do it within the context of their culture, so that they can understand and appreciate our concern for them.

Our daily duty is to keep that happy face even as we sort out life’s perplexities in a foreign country. We want to look at their problems as they see them before trying to give an answer, and to portray Christ and His teachings in our daily life. This is beyond our capacity, but it is not beyond the grace of God.

J. M. | *Wisconsin*

Practical Questions:

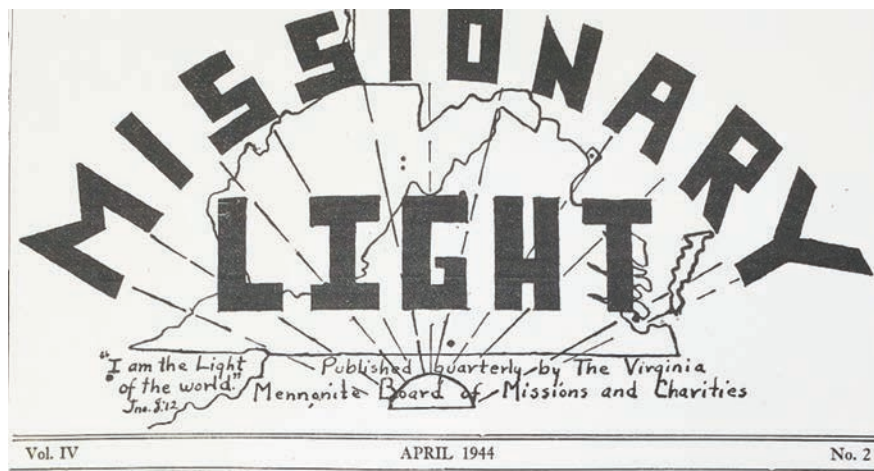
Give answers as to how you would handle the real life situations the DR missionaries encountered.



Jerome and Kendra Martin with Jotham and Marita. Their lemon orchard is in the background.

West Virginia Missions in 1944

by Mrs. Earl J. Hartzler



Sunday is a full day for Roaring Mission Workers. We conduct Sunday school at two different places, and Brother Hartzler preaches at two places. Twice a month we have preaching at night besides the morning and afternoon services. We are responsible for four different places—**Roaring, Brushy Run, Carr, and Spruce Mountain.**

At Carr and on Spruce Mountain the Sunday schools are conducted entirely by the native Christians. The same could be said of Roaring and Brushy Run if it were not for the fact that many of our members have moved to Mennonite communities in another state.

During the past year while we still had our faithful mission girls, Sister Martha Wert and Sister Mary Martin, the week's schedule was arranged so that the girls could be out in visitation work two days a week and Earl and I could be out any of the other days it suited. That way many homes were reached each week. The house work here at home was divided up in a systematic way among us girls so that each one would know just when we were responsible for each duty. While one was in the kitchen, another one was in the laundry, and another one at the cleaning or in visitation work, etc.

Last winter we did all the sewing for our family for the summer, as well as a great deal of sewing for other people. In the spring we made maple syrup from the trees on the mission property here. We also had one series of evangelistic meetings before the summer rush came on. Gardening, too, is not forgotten here in the spring.

During the summer we had two series of meetings and two Bible schools which meant far more hard labor, Christian fellowship, and true joy than we can describe here. In each ten-day series of meetings we visited

from thirty to sixty homes with the evangelist. In order to reach many of the homes we must walk for miles over beautiful, narrow, steep, rocky mountain paths. We often see breathtaking scenery; and when we reach the homes, we receive a most hearty welcome, and many times partake of a most delicious meal. The old-time hospitality is what we find here among these people.

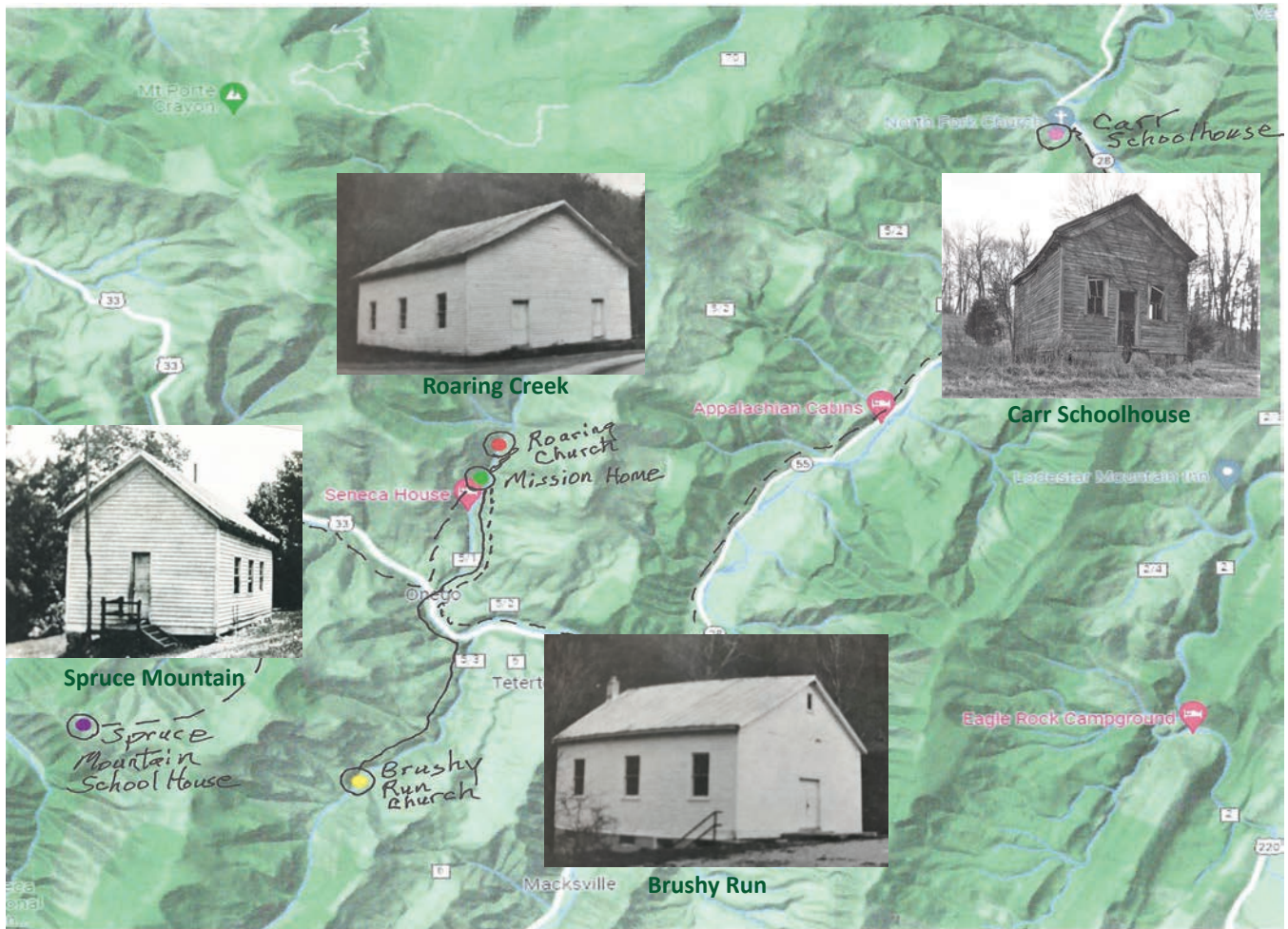
Through some of our revival meetings we are away from home over choring time in the evening. The result is that Brother Hartzler must walk up the steep mountain pasture at eleven or eleven thirty o'clock at night, hunting the cow to milk her. Accordingly then, he milks her at 11:00 the next forenoon. He often remarks at such times that only a mission cow could keep on giving milk under such treatment.

During our Bible schools the teachers visit in almost every home represented in the school. This, together, with the necessary study, makes each afternoon quite full.

The fall is the time when the winter's wood supply is to be gotten down off the mountain. Since we burn nothing but wood, it takes a great deal of work. The trees are sawed down. Then a number of logs and tops are fastened together with coupling grabs, making the length about one hundred feet for the horse to pull down the mountainside. When the slope becomes so steep that the logs "run," the horse is put aside and the logs are sent down over the hill by themselves. Besides our own sawing, Earl does some custom work with his buzz saw.

Since the forty-year-old barn roof had seen its best days, Earl replaced it (as well as the chicken house roof) this past fall with another homemade shingle roof. Taking people to Franklin (thirty miles away), Petersburg (twenty-five miles away), and Harman (ten miles away) to see the different doctors; taking others to Harrisonburg (70 miles away across three mountains) to the hospital; and attending funerals are tasks which we cannot plan for in our week's schedule, but which we are many times called to do.

The Lord has called us to this work. May he help us to be faithful.



Earl and Eunice Hartzler
40th wedding anniversary 1975

Hinton, Virginia. The Mission Board asked us to live in West Virginia.

Within two weeks after the ordination we had sold the furniture we would not be needing in West Virginia, our livestock, and our machinery. Dan Hartman moved us to the Roaring Creek Mission Home on March 4, 1941.

We ministered there for 23 years. During that time

we served on **Roaring Creek, Brushy Run, Spruce Mountain,¹ Carr School House,** and opened work in **Smoke Hole and Simoda.**

The new Roaring Mission home was built during World War II; restrictions made it difficult to secure materials. In 1947 the North Fork Church was built to accommodate the congregation worshipping in Carr Schoolhouse. West Virginia and Virginia brethren donated many hours of labor on these building projects.

On April 1, 1964, we responded to the call to pastor the flock at Hephzibah, Georgia.

— based on an autobiographical account in

*Leaders and Institutions of the Southeastern
Mennonite Conference*

¹ In a little cleared spot on Spruce Mt is located this little white school house. It serves the purpose (to seven or eight families there) of school and their place of worship. Every fourth Sunday the people eagerly gathered here for preaching service. No regular Sunday School is conducted there

Three Common False Beliefs

by Menno Knight

“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”

(Psalm 14:1)

1. Eating Animals Is Wrong

Peter Singer, a professor of bioethics at Princeton University, is considered the modern guru of animal rights: his thinking and writing fuel the no-livestock agenda. In a debate with Joel Salatin recorded in *The Stockman Grass Farmer* (March 2022), Mr. Singer sums up his position with this statement: “My major argument is to see animals as having lives to lead that can go well or badly and we as humans have no right to use them for our benefit.”

Notice that Mr. Singer clearly contradicts the Creator’s God-given gift of the plants and animals to be used for man’s benefit found in Genesis 9:3. “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs” (Genesis 9:3).

Neither does Mr. Singer recognize man as created in the image of God and distinct from all the animals. This failure to recognize the Creator God’s order undercuts all the other arguments Mr. Singer may marshal to support his position. He has no ethics (a knowledge of right and wrong) other than what comes out of his own thinking. It is the same for all philosophers who reject God and His authority over His creation.

The Christian bows before the Creator God and recognizes His authority over His creation. In His Word He said, that the people of God accept this God-given authority to use the plants and animals for the benefit of man. Christians know that in God’s plan it is good for man to drink milk, eat cheese, butter, eggs, beef, fish, mutton, pork, and venison; yes, all plants and animals and products made from them. God has plainly given all these animals and their products into the hands of mankind to be used for his sustenance.

God has said that both man and animals should multiply on the earth (Genesis 9:1). Where man follows God’s will, both animals and plants flourish on the earth and abundance reigns. Where godless men promote plans contrary to God’s order, scarcity and fear take over. In their reprobate minds, they forecast that mankind will run out of water, air, food, energy, space, and so on. Many of the former forecasts of godless men have not come to pass, but they go right on making new



gloom-and-doom forecasts for the earth and its people.

God has given mankind the right to use the fuels, the animals, the plants, and the other things he created for the benefit of mankind.

2. Carbon Will Destroy the Earth

“Scientists” have convinced many people that human uses of earth’s resources like burning fossil fuels (coal and oil), growing crops, raising livestock, and transporting goods to markets are raising the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere to such an extent that climate catastrophe will sweep in and destroy the earth. Notice that these scenarios are calculations based on unproven theories of what will happen in the future. The promoted remedy for the supposed oncoming climate disaster is that drastic measures must be taken to lower man-made carbon releases. Listen to this explanation of the scenario.

“Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, when people first started burning fossil fuels, carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere have risen from about 280 parts per million to 387 parts per million, a 39 percent increase. This means that for every million molecules in the atmosphere, 387 of them are now carbon dioxide—the highest concentration in two million years. Methane concentrations have risen from 715 parts per billion in 2005, the highest concentration in at least 650,000 years.”¹

Really? Who measured carbon dioxide levels two million or even 650,000 years ago? But taken at face value, the theory proves that more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere enhances the environment, not destroys it. I read that without any carbon dioxide in the air there would be no atmosphere on the earth; as a result

¹ Taken from the website, <earthobservatory.nasa.gov>. Not updated since 2011.

it would be as barren and hot as the planet Venus (750 degrees fahrenheit).

One explanation for the concentration of carbon found in fossil fuels such as coal and oil lies in the worldwide flood of Noah's time. This agrees with the Scripture found in II Peter 3:3 that says, **"For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God heavens were of old ... , by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water."**

In the minds of some, the whole idea that increases in carbon on the earth's surface will be bad for all living things, demands that man should stop burning fossil fuels, plant trees instead of crops, and stop all deforestation. But hold on. The same website as the quote above says:

"In general, the world's plants have increased the amount of carbon dioxide they absorb since 1960. Only some of this increase occurred as a direct result of fossil fuel emissions. With more atmospheric carbon dioxide available to convert to plant matter in photosynthesis, plants were able to grow more. This increased growth is referred to as carbon fertilization. Models predict that plants might grow anywhere from 12 to 76 percent more if atmospheric carbon dioxide is doubled, as long as nothing else, like water shortages, limits their growth."

The upshot of increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere may be that it helps plants grow faster. The world can grow enough food for all its people. God has ordained that man should be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with living things. There should be, as there is among godly people, a profound respect and reverence for living things and the wonders of God's creation. Where godly people live in accord with God's way, the earth prospers and there is abundance.

Too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, so far, has not caused man to go hungry; wars and fighting have. Burning fossil fuels by driving cars, heating homes, and powering electric generators are not sin. War that causes murder, destruction, and starvation come from the evil hearts of men; they are sin and will send men to hell.

3. Women Can Direct Men

It has become commonplace for women to be in charge in banks, stores, hospitals, courts, and government offices. And women often do a good job as managers of men and other women. That does not make it right.

As a Christian man, I am uncomfortable with the

reversal of what I understand to be the God-ordained order. The immodest attire, jewelry, decorated fingernails and eyelashes bother me. And they should.

These manager women do not wear a headship veiling; it would be out of place. In one instance, a sister explained to a co-worker what her veiling represented – submission to God and man. The other lady responded, "Don't tell my husband. He would really be into that."

In Kenya, when walking together, the man goes ahead and the woman follows behind. This may not give due courtesy to the weaker vessel, but it does help reinforce the idea of who is the leader. As the Bible says of Sarah, **"as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" (I Peter 3:6).**

This God-ordained order of a woman's role as being in subjection to the man and the man being held responsible for the two, started in Genesis 2, but is reinforced in I Corinthians 11:7-8. **"Woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man."**

I Corinthians 11 also sets forth clear gender distinction. Men and women were created differently and are to dress differently, showing their defined roles before God and man. This flies in the face of so many common practices of our day where women pretend to be equal with men—soldiers, athletes, executives, managers.

We must not let these common practices derail us from the pursuit of the godly example for women set forth in Titus 2:4-5. This passage shows that the older women are to teach the younger women **"to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."**

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you know the above teachings are wrong?
2. What additional scriptures support the above teachings?
3. How can being "practical" override truth?

Please respond with your thoughts in response to these questions.

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

Lynn Wadel, a grandson, asked to interview me on the subject of music.

The Effects of Music

LW. 1. What do you think is the main purpose of music?

AV. For the Christian, music encourages the soul and expresses the emotions of the body.

LW. 2. Do you think music opens us in a special way to the spiritual world?

AV. It can open us to the influence of good and evil spirits.

LW. 2A. Do you view singing as a powerful weapon against spiritual forces?

AV. Singing opens our emotions and is an expression of feeling. I do not see it as a strong weapon to combat evil.

LW. 3. Some people have said they do not care what the government tells people if they can control the music people listen to. Do you think music is a key to the direction a nation will go?

AV. All music is important to one's spiritual health. All religious teaching (including music) is important to atheistic government that worships other gods.

LW. 4. What should we value or what is important about a capella singing in church?

AV. A capella music involves the congregation in participation. It is active, not passive.

LW. 5. How do instruments affect our music?

AV. When an instrument is involved, the instrument invariably takes the lead and the nature of the singing changes both in quality and participation.

LW. 6. Should the music we listen to on a daily basis be different than what we sing on Sunday morning?

AV. Good congregational singing begins and is nurtured in the home. Some songs other than church music can be used at home, but psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs should be a large part of the singing at home (Ephesians 5:19).

LW. 7. What were your views on music as a young man and have they changed?

AV. Yes, I listened to some wicked and worldly music of which I have now repented. Some good instrumental (chamber) music can be entertaining and enjoyable, but I have no appreciation for jazz, rock-n-roll, dance music, and the likes thereof.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are ways to enhance congregational singing in a small congregation?

2. What are hindrances to good congregational singing?

3. How does shaped-note singing help a person to learn new songs?

4. Do instruments in the home help our people to learn new songs in the congregation?

5. How does segregated seating aid a cappella music in the meeting place?

Please respond with your thoughts in response to these questions.

A journal designed to further the writing and singing of Godly a cappella music among believers is: *Hearts and Voices*, Lamp and Light Publishers, 26 Road 5577, Farmington, NM 87401. Phone: 505-632-3521.



Full-Time Christian

by Round The Clock

I would like to comment on both “Government Obedience” (AV24 page 5) and on “Stay With Religion” (AV24 page 32).

I agree with the article “Government Obedience.” I am afraid some of our people are guilty of having more fear of the civil government authorities than of God our Father. We believe that “social distancing” is clearly not true science.



In I Timothy we are warned about the danger of following false science. “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babbling, and *oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith*” (1 Timothy 6:20). So we are warned in the New Testament about false science which can cause us to err in our faith.

In the second article, “Stay With Religion,” I am greatly disturbed by this very non-Christian, Protestant concept. The Christianity I embraced years ago is a 24/7 Christianity. A true Anabaptist Christian holds to 24/7 Christianity. Check the New Testament out! “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17). “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Corinthians 10:31-33). The Bible also tells us that what is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23).

The current COVID protocols and the preoccupation with COVID flies in the face of New Testament scriptures such as these... “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7), and “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear: because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).

I find it very fascinating that somehow those individuals and businesses with the greatest fears about COVID are strangely the ones most affected as well! Individuals and businesses that are not preoccupied about COVID testify to either not experiencing COVID or that they have not been hit hard with it. Amazing! Is our trust really in our Creator God or is it not?

May God give us all the very needed spiritual discernment for these times!



Adapt or Mutate?

by Gene Doctor

This is in response to the comments from the AV editor regarding M. D. Healer’s comments (AV24, pages 33-34). I found it interesting that your opinions on this topic are so strongly stated, while almost every

child who has taken a biology class would disagree with you, not to mention the many doctors, nurses, and researchers in the medical and genetics fields. God created organisms with the ability to mutate or adapt. Evolve: no; adapt: yes. Even gardeners and farmers recognize this ability.

Blessings on your future walk with the Lord, the Master Scientist, Engineer, and Builder of creation.

B. L. | Pennsylvania

AV Editor:

Apparently, there is a misunderstanding of the terms “adapt” and “mutate.”

“Mutate” in this usage means that a given plant or animal will alter its genes so that it will reproduce plants or animals with a different genetic structure than the parent. In other words, their progeny will be able to withstand the chemicals that the parent plant could not. This is the heart of evolution. One species gradually evolves into another species. Yet evidence of these intermediate species has never been found.

Man can select plants and species and breed plants and animals with different genetic makeups. God gave man the authority and understanding so he can do this. This is part of “having dominion over the earth.” Common examples of this might be a mule and hybrid seed corn, neither of which can reproduce themselves after their kind. In very recent times, man has found a way to tamper with the genetic makeup of plants and animals. But as for natural selection and genetic mutation, the cornerstones of evolution, this ability has not been found.

“Adapt” in this usage is proven accurate. When good and palatable grass is not available, cattle will eat less desirable species. That is adapting to the environment. And when cattle or plants cannot adapt to the environment, without man’s intervention, they will die. This too, is part of the theory of evolution. It is called “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest.” Plants and animals do not have the ability to change their genes to survive in an undesirable environment.

Discussion Questions:

1. Does anyone have information that disagrees with this explanation?
2. Can anyone add information that supports this explanation?

Wicked Imaginations

by Clean Heart

We are writing about our concern of the approach you are taking on the COVID issue in AV24; the suspicion aspects you are following.

“Suspicion: imagination of something wrong, without proof, or on slight evidence; also mental uneasiness aroused in one who suspects; mistrust.”

In Proverbs 6:16-19, we read of six things – yes, seven things that the Lord hates. Among those seven things is listed “an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations.”

Where do we as professing Christians find ourselves? What message are we giving out concerning COVID? Are we as nonresistant people taking sides on worldly, questionable matters where seeds of suspicion are being sown? Certainly, there is danger in being too trusting, but usually as a situation matures, the fruit will bear witness to the true nature of the matter.

R. S. | Virginia

AV Editor:

I am sorry the magazine offended you. It does seem to me that you are misinterpreting Proverbs 6:18. My understanding of this verse is “to devise wicked plans in order to do evil.” To question the intentions of evil and ungodly men in order to know the truth does not fall into that category.

My intent is to know the truth and present it boldly to our readers. If readers do not agree with our understanding, we have tried to fairly present other interpretations of the Scripture.



Zimbabwe Trillions

by Iwas Theré

In AV24 under “Living with the Consequences,” page 34, you mentioned the African country of Zimbabwe as an example where hyperinflation happened. Here are some real-life stories from that sad time.



I was in Zimbabwe in 2008 and at that time the 10 trillion note was worth US \$5. The date printed on the bills shows, the Z \$5 was printed in 2007 and was worth US \$5 at that time. The dates on the Z\$ 5 billion and 10 trillion notes were both printed in 2008 and they were also worth US \$5 at one time during that year. [Notice how that within one year’s time the real value of a Z\$ went down from Z \$5 to Z \$10 trillion. Hyperinflation comes upon a people very swiftly.]

In late 2008 I found the Z \$5 billion “Special Agrocheque” note as litter on the street. What is interesting on this is that it was printed 15th May 2008 and expired on 31 December 2008. When I found the Z \$5 billion note, it would have been worth 1/400 of a US\$ or a quarter of a cent!

The transport industry (buses and taxis) forced the issue by only accepting US dollars for fares, so in one sense, the US dollar saved the Zimbabwe economy. Of course, there were limited available bills and no change so you got a hand-written slip of paper for change or you picked up the equivalent in candy.

On our trips into the country, we had to bring in our funds in US\$. One time, I had not hidden the spare cash well enough. When I returned to the place I was staying, I was a few hundred dollars lighter.

There were many police road blocks at the time and most of the time we were waved through as we were in a ‘foreign’ vehicle (Republic of South Africa). One time, however, we were stopped at the last checkpoint before the border. The policeman said that our van was in violation as it did not have a reflective triangle under the headlight to show if the headlight was burned out. I told him that it was an out-of-country vehicle and so did not qualify. But to keep the peace, I asked him what the fine was. He said \$5 so I asked if it was Z\$ or US\$. He said Z\$ and that I could go (1/10 trillion of a US\$). The government had not updated the laws and the police tried to collect the fines in US\$ instead.

AV Editor:

“We must remember not to trust in riches for as

Proverbs 23:4-5 says, “Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle” (NIV).



Science Behind Ivermectin

by M. D. Healer

I am writing in response to “The Science behind Ivermectin” article (AV24, page 28).

Would I not have a good regard for AV, I would likely just leave this alone as just another biased, limited information parroting of someone else’s misreads. While I cannot save the world, I do my part in the daily pursuit of peoples’ health and wellbeing. The vast majority of us actually want to do well for those that come to us for help.

I understand the suspicion of blindly following “science.” It takes a discerning mind to sort it out. Complicating the quandary of who is right, is brought about by individual scientists/doctors, some of whom are otherwise reputable. Some having various agendas, go about taking bits and pieces of truth, (as do other ‘cults’) and rearranging the information according to their own devices/wishes.

False teachers and “prophets” are not limited to the realm of religion. So, I address some of these indiscretions.

FLCCC is a group that has been largely discredited by the medical community, many of whom have been banned from their respective hospital affiliations.

Ivermectin. There may actually be a small benefit; the jury is still out. It is interesting that the application of meta-analysis that they use to support their claims, actually does just the opposite.

If a doctor prescribes ivermectin, it is outside of proven benefit, and outside of approval of the drug for this purpose. We, as doctors, hesitate to prescribe

drugs outside of their approved use for a host of reasons: safety, efficacy, legal considerations, trust. If ivermectin is used, it must be with the caveat that it has not been proven, and with the above noted risks. It is interesting that even FLCCC recommends “discussion with your own physician,” a disclaimer, not wanting to take responsibility for their own position.

Vaccines are not expensive, certainly not compared to hospital and drug costs used. It is strange that many who decline vaccines then want the monoclonal antibodies, which are very expensive.

What about “changing” recommendations? Doctors must embrace data as it is discovered. Thus, since we do not know all at the beginning of something new, recommendations change with evidence, not at simple whims. We don’t make recommendations, then look for data to support it: recommendation must follow evidence.

Should we not wait until there are more randomized trials? No, they say. For good reason: for the fear that they might be found out, which is the case for a substantial number of their claims. (The Egyptian study, HCQ, the withdrawal by Mexico City of ivermectin as a viable treatment, and the Brazilian “COVID Kits”, and now the Brazilian reversal of their previous COVID recommendation for ivermectin.) *Yes, we should do careful studies to determine the true science of the drug.* And yes, there is known drug toxicity with ivermectin.

AV Editor:

Please forgive me. I do not want to include all those who disagree with my thoughts as godless atheists. So, I am glad you did not dump AV but expressed your opposing viewpoints.

I am surprised that you include all those involved in the FLCCC and the AAPS as misinformed and discredited people. Many of these are physicians and medically involved people like yourself who want to do the best for their patients. Many of them say they had good results treating their patients with repurposed drugs such as ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, budesonide, and dexamethasone.

Doctors who use these medications also have careful protocols to follow when they recommend them, for it is true that all drugs can be harmful if used in exorbitant amounts and ineffective if given on one’s deathbed.

I am also surprised that you have not read the book, *Ivermectin for the World* and at least considered the evidences of healing presented there.

In John 9:2, the disciples brought a man to Jesus who

was blind from birth. Then they asked, “Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?”

Jesus healed the 40-plus-year-old-man by spitting on the ground and then placing it on his eyes. Then He told the man, “Go wash in the pool of Siloam.” The man went and washed and came back seeing.

Now one would think that everyone would have rejoiced that a well-known, formerly blind beggar had received his sight. But it was not so. Here are some of the incredulous objections raised by those who did not want to believe in Jesus.

1. “This is not the man who was blind. He just looks like him.”
2. The rulers said Jesus was a sinner.
3. The rulers attacked the healed man and his parents.
4. The rulers reviled the healed man.
5. The rulers ostracized the healed man by casting him out of the synagogue.

Most doubters cannot deny that notable healing of COVID-19 patients have taken place using these repurposed drugs (perhaps in combination with other aids). Thousands and perhaps millions of people have experienced healing firsthand. Yet some use the same tactics the Jews and the Pharisees used to attack the man born blind. They say:

1. These medicines and treatments are not officially approved.
2. These protocols are not sufficiently tested.
3. These medicines are not safe.
4. The doctors who use them are charlatans who have been discredited by the profession.
5. You are not scientists and know nothing about treatments for COVID.

Yes, sometimes it can be difficult to know the truth. Sometimes it stares us in the face and we have only to believe the obvious. In any event, when great good is done we do well to praise God rather than to doubt the intentions of all those who have been part of the healing.



Truth Rejected for More than Twenty Years

by Simone Scully

“Today we know that washing our hands is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs.” It was not always so.

In 1846, a Hungarian doctor, Ignaz Semmelweis,

observed something strange. Women in a maternity clinic staffed by doctors and medical students were dying at a rate five times higher than a clinic in the same hospital staffed by midwives. Doctor Semmelweis wanted to know why. He found out that the doctors and medical students worked on cadavers, and then went directly to the maternity ward without washing their hands or changing their clothes.

Doctor Semmelweis theorized that some “morbid poison” was being transferred on the hands of the physicians from the autopsies to the women during childbirth. He noticed the midwives did not do autopsies and had a much lower death rate in their ward. Doctor Semmelweis immediately ordered the medical staff to start cleaning their hands and instruments before delivering babies.

It worked. The death rate dropped drastically in the doctor’s ward.

Unfortunately, Semmelweis’s colleagues did not embrace his findings – they were enraged at the suggestion that they were the cause of their patients’ deaths. Semmelweis was fired from the hospital staff and eventually committed to an insane asylum where he died two weeks after being admitted.

– Adapted from the website <upworthy.com>

AV Editor:

How many randomized scientific trials should the doctors and medical students at the hospital have insisted on before washing their hands and instruments? If the practice worked and saved lives, what was the harm in adopting the procedure? It seems to me it is the same with the use of repurposed drugs available in the taming of COVID-19.





The Practical Side:

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

— Colossians 3:17

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

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

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

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



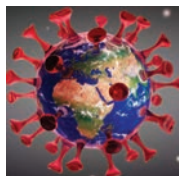
The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

Only Assumptions

by A. Doubter



I am amazed at some of the conclusions that were drawn from some of the reports (AV24, pages 38-40). Were they put in to see if readers were awake and discerning? Assumptions must be regarded as such.

Report by Close Friends

1. From the information given, how do you know the hospital does not have a reliable protocol for treating COVID?

Answer: Both patients died.

3. The account says nothing about vaccines being given after the onset of COVID.

Answer: You are right. This conclusion is unwarranted. See editor’s note with “Wrong Conclusion.”

Burke County Surge

1. Doesn’t a change from 17 cases to 91 cases seem like a “drastic increase”? **Answer: The numbers are suspect. See AV24, page 39, “Business Associate.”**

Report from a fertilizer salesman

2. The account says nothing about accurate reporting of adverse reactions. **Answer: Reports of adverse reactions to the shots are seldom seen.**

Report about a local plumber

3. The account says nothing about deaths being counted as from COVID.

Answer: See AV24, page39, “Business Associate” and “Close Friends.”

Whom do I believe? I believe someone I know and can trust. But I need information from people I do not know. I want to know where he got his information, and whether that is a reliable source. I question whether he is knowledgeable in the subject and what his personal biases are. First-hand information is always more reliable, but can also come from a biased perspective. Just because someone is a professing Christian does not make him an authority in everything, he may be telling me.

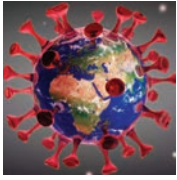
Answer. The question we are trying to answer is, “Who is telling the truth, not, “Do you know how to build an engine or can you engineer a vaccine?”

I appreciate AV. Thank you for your dedication.



Wrong Conclusion

by Good Observer



I was glad that you included “COVID Report” (AV 24, pages 38-40) with the comments you made. I expect that it will generate varied responses.

I wonder if something got missed in the second one written “by Close Friends.” I did not see anything in the report that warranted the third conclusion: “The vaccines cannot save a patient after the onset of the disease.” Was something missed in the story? Though true, I suppose, I wonder what facts generated this conclusion?

I hope people start thinking and researching, not just believing the narrative that is being promoted.

Editor’s note:

Good observation. There is nothing in the report to warrant the conclusion that the vaccines cannot save a patient after the onset of the disease. This conclusion would fit better with the M. D. Healer explanation of how the vaccines work (AV24, page 33). I have not heard of anyone recommending the vaccines as a *treatment* for COVID. They are only touted as a *preventative* that might work to prevent the onset of the disease or to keep the sickness in a milder form.

The thrust of the COVID pieces (AV24 top of page 28) is, “Praise God! Repurposed available medications have proven effective in the treatment of COVID-19.”



No Shots, No Job

by Con Sequences



I just felt to encourage you in the work you are doing, and to share my own experiences with you and the readership of *Anabaptist Voice*.

I was employed by Tyson Foods, Inc. first week of September 2017, and was there until October 29, 2021. I worked at Green Forest Plant One and was fired because I refused to comply with Tyson’s mandatory COVID vaccination policy. Even though I had perfect attendance and had zero points to my name and my record, I was forced out of Tyson Foods, Inc.

I don’t know science, and I am not a doctor. However, I do know the ways of God, and I know how Satan works! During the summer of 2021, I was made uneasy

when I was asked, not just once, but several times, by supervisors at Green Forest, if I would be willing to sign up for the COVID shots? I consistently responded in the negative. However, when I was approached additional times on this matter, I became more and more “on edge.” It just seemed that Tyson was hoping to get all their workers to voluntarily submit to what corporate, evidently, wanted? Tyson Foods claims to be a “faith friendly” corporation. This has proven to be false with the matter of COVID vaccination.

One evening in early August of 2021, we workers were called into the office after our shift. Upon coming to the office, we were given forms to sign that informed us that if we will remain employed by Tyson, we will consent to being vaccinated against COVID. I immediately told the bosses in the office that I guess this means my job is terminated because I cannot/will not be vaccinated against COVID. I was trembling; this stand was not easy to take, but I felt I must do so. One of the bosses told me that there are two exemptions, religious and medical! She said to write a letter, and bring it to HR (Human Resources) tomorrow, and that HR will help me with this. So, I did that! Well, it turns out in just a couple of weeks, Green Forest got word from headquarters in Springdale, Arkansas, “There are no exemptions!” Tyson Foods gave the date of November 1, 2021 as to when any of us who refused COVID vaccination could no longer work for them.

I have many reasons why I am against the COVID vaccines. The abortion connection is certainly a significant reason; however, another one is the simple observation that God gently prods; Satan coerces. What have we been seeing with COVID vaccination? It is being coerced upon many people by businesses or/and governments.

A local live blood cell microscopy specialist is very hard against these vaccines, and says we don’t want these vaccines for our own health; he opposes abortion as well.

I appreciate the practical questions raised in AV24, page 40 (“Whom Do You Believe?”). Amen and amen! I will most definitely believe what a local evangelical nutritionist and live blood cell microscopy specialist tells me about these COVID vaccinations before I will believe what non-believing scientists, medical workers, and government officials tell me!

It troubles me that some of our people trust the medical profession, the government, and scientists more than Bible-believing and practicing Christians on this matter.

Keep up the good work with *Anabaptist Voice*. May God bless you! Be faithful!

The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

Armed

by Dis Turbed



Recently a brother from a neighboring Mennonite congregation asked my opinion and thoughts on the moral ethics of carrying a concealed weapon. It seems two brethren from their

congregation have, of their own private will, chosen to be armed with a hand weapon during their church services.

My friend wanted me to speak from an Anabaptist perspective. So I asked myself, “Can New Testament Christians who are opposed to warfare and the military, really carry hand guns into the worship service ... at any time?”

Several scriptures came to mind when I thought of the ramifications of such a choice. One was Matt. 26:51-55 where Christ kindly rebuked Peter for attempting to take the life of the high priest’s servant to protect Jesus’ life. Was the rebuke and admonition given to Peter by Jesus simply for the fulfillment of prophecy, or was it also part of the beginning and ushering in of the New Covenant of “better things”? I think it was the ushering in of the New Covenant.

Jesus’ garden teaching was a visible and practical application in those last crucial moments and days before the temple veil was rent in two, of how Christians would need to face opposition and persecution, turning “the other cheek” and loving our enemies.

Instead of continuing to focus on Peter, Jesus challenged the arresting force by asking, “Did you not have many opportunities to take Me by force with weapons while I taught openly in the synagogues?”

What scriptures has Christ laid out for Christians of this age who have named the name of Christ and are willing to bear their cross?

Were the scriptures and commands delivered to the early church relevant only to that church age? I don’t think so. Let’s look at some of them:

– Matthew 5:11. “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.”

– Matthew 5:44. “But I say to you, ‘love your

enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.’”

– Luke 6:22. “Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake.”

– John 15:18. “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.”

– Romans 8:35. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

– Romans 12:14. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”

– II Corinthians 12:10. “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake, For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Or were these verses prescribed for a futuristic millennial church age, perhaps for a people that may not yet have been born? Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount and other such commands, as difficult as they may appear, are teachings given by our Heavenly Father to apply here and now. These teachings have actually been practiced by a remnant of believers for over 6,000 years.

The radical Reformation during the 1500s was an example of believers from our Anabaptist heritage, along with many others from years since, who were faithful, diligent, and willing to give up their lives if need be, for the sake of the Gospel. The early church until the time of Constantine, a period of approximately 300 years, would not allow its members to serve in the military which prompted Constantine to baptize his soldiers “en masse” in order to integrate the church and state so he would have sufficient military numbers to support his agenda.

How do we juxtapose the above scriptures with the command that Jesus gave His disciples shortly before His death in preparing them for the great commission given in Luke 22:35-38 . . . “he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.” They responded immediately that they already have *two swords* in their possession, to which Jesus replied, “*It is enough.*” Was

Jesus simply being facetious here, or . . . choosing to inject a little humor?” Or was there a practical reason not given in scripture?

This unique command was given by Christ to His disciples and is found only once in the New Testament and not mentioned or alluded to again. Maybe using a sword (or machete as we may consider today) would have been helpful in harvesting food or procuring and processing meat as well as safety in the threat of wild animals. Many of us today carry small weapons in the form of a pocket knife depending on our occupation. Hunting or harvesting game, butchering, dispatching crippled animals is usually best accomplished with a firearm which is always considered “an instrument of death.”

Conversely, those who may feel it is their God-given duty and responsibility to be prepared to protect families, women and children, the following arguments would most likely be given:

- God expects you to preserve the innocent life of children, women and the elderly who might become victims. . . .

- God’s agenda to preserve goodness is for Christians to destroy evil and the perpetrators thereof. When Christians do nothing in the face of evil . . . unrighteousness will more and more abound.

- Some would say it is hypocritical to not possess a weapon or to be prepared in the event of a mass shooting in a church or other sacred place of worship and then to immediately call 911 and expect civil authority to come and do the job. Would it be fair to beg the question that maybe it is the role and duty of civil authority as defined in scripture, and maybe the church should be doing their job a bit better in filling the church pews and being more involved in introducing people to the Kingdom of God.

- If such a tragic and emotional event were to occur, could one with a weapon have the emotional restraint, resolve or fortitude to only cripple or disable instead of actually killing? Who faces the consequences of blame or judgment in sending a soul to the grave who is unprepared to meet their maker?

Regardless of where you stand in these two positions of being willing to “take life” or . . . “to give ones life,” it would be wise and prudent that we not be hasty in making strong hypothetical projections of what we would or would not do in the heat of the moment. We can, however, always be assured that God is in control and His grace will always sustain us in whatever the difficult situations we are asked to face.

Practical Questions:

1. If one brother carries a pistol to church, how might that affect other areas of his life? Would he carry a pistol only to worship services?

2. If the rest of the congregation knows that one of their members carries a weapon to church, how would that affect the congregation?

3. If the congregation felt a brother carrying a weapon threatened their testimony and witness, what must be done to stop carrying weapons?



The Trucker Convoy *from the internet*



On January 15, 2022, the Trudeau government in Canada put into effect a mandate that truckers crossing into Canada from the United States would have to show proof they had been vaccinated against COVID-19.

One week later this mandate triggered hundreds of Canadian truckers to form a convoy and use their big rigs to blockade and snarl traffic as they made their way toward the Canadian capital at Ottawa. Along the way they were met by enthusiastic crowds of thousands while they garnered support for their continued protest.

The protest grew into blockading traffic at US border crossings and greatly hampered trade with the US. In time the truckers were able to raise millions of dollars to support their cause.

Eventually, government action forced the end of the protest and caused the truckers to return home.



What Would Jesus Do? *by Stay A. Way*



I don’t know where you would post this question or concern, but it’s very real to some of us Hutterites. Not as

much so since things have sort of settled down. I'm torn between two opinions in this business concerning the truckers convoy here in Canada. Everyone is fed up with the way things have been going since COVID first appeared. Many of us are sympathetic to the protests of the truckers, but I am not sure how much support we should give them.

I was wondering if it is crossing the line for Hutterites to help serve meals to those involved. As Anabaptists, should we stay out of it and pray? Or should we write to the MLA? ¹ Or would the verse : *cast your bread upon the waters ...* fit this situation better? Or should we *make friends with the ungerechten Mammon* (unrighteous mammon)?

To me it's like picking a side, and we should be nonresistant. Are we doing good deeds by serving food, singing, and talking to people on the street about Jesus? Or do our good deeds and peaceful ways get lost when the truckers block off roads? (I can't quite picture Jesus doing that). While we are doing these good deeds, we are being posted on social media.

¹ MLA stands for "Member of the Legislative Assembly." In Canada such a person is a representative elected by the voters of an electoral district (constituency) to the legislature of state government, modeled after the Indian system of government.



Most of the time when we cannot decide what is the right thing to do, it helps to place Jesus in the picture and ask what would Jesus do? He did not join the Zealots—a political movement in first century Judaism which sought to rebel against the Roman Empire and expel it by force of arms. No, Jesus did not join the Zealots, but He asked one of them to be His disciple.

Practical Questions:

1. What happened to Simon the Zealot when he became a disciple of Jesus?
2. How can we be kind and supportive of “peaceful” protests without losing our peace testimony?
3. What dangers await the church if some members support a protest movement while others do not?
4. Why would Jesus not preach to the truckers?
5. What would Jesus say to those who did good deeds and “witnessed” to the truckers?

What are some things Jesus might have taught Simon the Zealot when Simon became one of His disciples?

Simon, do you remember the story of how a great army with horses and chariots surrounded the city of Dotham? They came to capture the prophet Elisha and his servant was terrified. He cried out to Elisha, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?”

Then Elisha answered him, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

And Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray open his eyes that he may see.” Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

“Simon, can you not see the chariots and horses of fire surrounding us? Do you not know my kingdom is much greater than that of the Romans?”

– II Kings 6:14-17

“Simon, put your sword in its place Do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?”

(Matthew 26:52-53).

“Simon, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here”

(John 18:36).

Book Reviews



Yuscht un Bava Bo (Just a Farm Boy)

by Ivan N. Weaver

This autobiography tells the story of an ordinary farm boy from Pennsylvania who grew into a useful servant of the living God.

Drafted because of the Vietnam War, in 1966 Ivan left the farm for 1-W service in a hospital in Baltimore, Maryland. During his time working in the emergency room, he decided that a country boy did not need to know everything that happened in the city. Ivan was on duty when riots caused by the death of Martin Luther King started in Baltimore. Martial law and curfews ruled the city for a few days.

God used Ivan as a church leader in his home area beginning with his ordination as deacon, June 4, 1974.

Subsequent ordinations (June 6, 1976 for minister) and (bishop in 1992) called him to Christian service that dominated his life for 42 years.

This book tells some of the joys and sorrows of serving Christ in the ministry in the home churches.

In 1980 Ivan held his first week-end revival meeting. Over the ensuing 38 years Brother Ivan also served the church as an evangelist at more than 80 different congregations. The book recounts some experiences at these many events.

If you want to learn more about the Spirit-directed life of this former farm boy who God raised up and used, this book is for you.



Why Bad Things Happen

by Michael S. Martin

An excerpt from the introduction:

"We cannot overcome by mental power [while] in suffering. We cannot 'get over' this thing; we cannot go 'back to normal.' But we can go forward with truth. Truth

comes slowly and with difficulty, but as it comes, it works its way into our hearts and becomes a sustaining faith in the Rock of Ages.

"If you search for answers in the Rock of Ages, you will find all you need. God may not give all the answers you long for, but He will give all you *need* to live in hope until the suffering of this life ends.

"Though the harsh fact is that innocence can never last, the beautiful truth is that for the child of God, bad things will not last. The wreckage of sin on this earth is overwhelming, but it is temporary. The Bible glows with evidence of a new day just over the horizon. The Son is coming! The eternal God will wipe away all tears."

Several paragraphs from the end of the book:

"Yet to understand the big picture--the war between Satan and God and the absolute truth of God's final victory--is the greatest comfort you can have in suffering. Don't feel ignored when God leads you [like He did Job] to the big picture.

"The idea that everything that happens to me is in the plan and will of God, and is woven by His hand in the tapestry of my life, is without biblical support. The devil, other people, and our own carnal wills sew many things into our lives. So why are we so desperate to see the other side of the canvas?

"The sight would not satisfy. Those details would not bring us the comfort we long for. The comfort we need comes from seeing our personal situation in relation to the big picture of God, Satan, and war of the worlds. "The big picture is far more important than my situation . . ."

Where to buy?

Yuscht un Bava Bo (Just a Farm Boy)

You can order this book at <weaverivan1947@yahoo.com>.

Ivan N. Weaver

1275 Airport Road - Bethel PA 19507

Phone: (717) 933-4917

Paperback, 91 pages.

The cost of the book is \$10.00 plus postage.

Why Bad Things Happen

Michael S. Martin, 43265 CR 83, Mazeppa MN 55956.

Phone :507-273-6107.

email: eaglevalleyranch@nutelecom.net.

Book price, US\$14.60

In Canada:

Living Waters Book Store Phone: 877-595-7593

Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report January thru March 2022

January 1, 2022 Beginning Balance	\$5,422.43
Income	
Donations	\$3,229.50
Local Support*	\$4,000.00
Total Income	\$7,229.50
Beginning Balance + Income	\$12,651.93
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$672.00
Postage	\$3,667.65
Printing	\$5,547.00
Staff Expenses	\$829.30
Total Expense	\$10,715.95
March 31, 2022 Ending Balance	\$1,935.98

Circulation Report March 2022

ISSUE #19 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,750 | Operating Cost: \$9,734.65
Cost Per Copy: \$2.04/ea.

ISSUE #20 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$9,682.20
Cost Per Copy: \$2.00/ea.

ISSUE #21 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,760 | Operating Cost: \$9,722.67
Cost Per Copy: \$2.05/ea.

ISSUE #22 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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

ISSUE #23 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,000 | Operating Cost: \$10,559.39
Cost Per Copy: \$2.11 /ea.

ISSUE #24 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,000 | Operating Cost: \$10,715.95
Cost Per Copy: \$2.11/ea.

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



What Then?

When the plants of our mighty cities
Have turned out their last finished work;
When our merchants have sold their last yardage
And have dismissed the last tired clerk,
When our banks have raked in their last dollar
And paid out their last dividend;
When the Judge of the earth says,
 "Closed for the night."
And asks for a balance—what then?

When the choir has sung its last anthem
And the preacher has made his last prayer,
When the people have heard their last sermon
And the sound has died out on the air;
When the Bible lies closed on the altar,
And the pews are all empty of men,
And each one stands facing his record,
And the Great Book is opened—what then?

When the actors have played their last drama,
And the mimic has made his last pun;
When the film has flashed its last picture,
And the scoreboard displayed its last run,
When the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished
And gone out in the darkness again,
When the Trumpet of the Ages has sounded,
And we stand up before Him—what then?

When the bugle's call sinks into silence,
And the long marching columns stand still;
When the captain has given his last orders,
And they've captured the last fort and hill,
And the flag has been hauled in from the mast head
And the wounded afield have checked in,
And a world rejected its Savior,
Is asked for a reason—what then?

— Henry Blank | Pennsylvania

Anabaptist Voice
5282 Hwy. 56 South
Waynesboro, GA 30830

editor@anabaptistvoice.com

www.anabaptistvoice.com

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*“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant
places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.”*

– Psalm 16:6



Manchester, Kentucky