

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

"THE GREAT PYRAMID" - NORMAN WARD

"HE SET MY FEET ON A ROCK" - TAMARA HEINEMANN

"THE ISRAEL OF GOD" - TED BYLER

"KEEPING FAITH" - DAVID BURKHOLDER

"ENCOURAGING BROTHERHOOD" - MENNO KNIGHT



Letter from the Editor



**Vintage tractor.
Allis Chalmers 170**

Last week I walked past the tractor shed and saw a five-foot black snake crawling toward the shed. I thought, "He's a good fellow," and did not bother him. After an extended walk, I returned to the shed to get the tractor for a dirt-moving project. I grabbed the steering wheel to mount and came face-to-face with the black snake curled around the steering wheel column.

My walking stick prodded the friendly creature out of his place and he disappeared. The old tractor fired promptly and out jumped a half-grown rat! The snake visit was solved.

Yesterday eight-tenths inch of rain fell from the sky in three-fourths of an hour. According to standard figures, that would mean 181,171 pounds (90.5 tons) of water fell on each acre. This amounts to four tanker-loads on each acre. On our 100-acre lot God delivered 400, 18-wheeler loads of good, clean fresh water ... in less than one hour.

Where did that water come from? Only God could devise such a marvelous plan that picks up huge quantities of clean water from the land and seas, move it hundreds of miles, and then spread it on the land ... evenly. Not only did God devise the plan but He had the power to carry it out. Even the wind and the waters obey Him.

In AV28 Ted Byler stirs us with how the glory of being God's chosen people has been extended to both Jews and Gentiles in the church.

Tamara Heinemann shares her journey of finding peace, rest, and support in a fellowship of Anabaptist believers.

Norman Ward's article on the Great Pyramid sparks an investigation that leads to an astounding conclusion.

David Burkholder and Menno Knight challenge us to keep the faith in the Anabaptist way. Iron sharpens iron in the "Round Table Discussion."

Practical teaching on child rearing comes into play from experienced parents in "The Practical Side." Start training when they are babies.

Poems, rubies, and reflections, sparkle with wisdom from our readers.

We pray AV28 will encourage you to put your faith into practice and be part of God's holy people ... every day.

Peace,

James G. Landis

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About Anabaptist Voice

Our Mission Statement:

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

Our Purpose:

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

Our Tone:

The tone of the magazine shall be positive in that:

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

Our motto shall be words from Isaiah 30:21.

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

Our Bible Translation Policy:

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

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

Our Finances:

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

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

Our Organization:

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

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

Our Audience:

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

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



Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

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

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

Our Readers Write

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

AV Editor

Living Proof

At one time I was a very confused young man with very little conviction for a conservative Anabaptist lifestyle. But thanks to God for using some bittersweet experiences in my life coupled with good resources like *Anabaptist Voice* and the Anabaptist Identity Conference, I now love our Anabaptist culture and brotherhood.

I am troubled about the many people in our Anabaptist communities who seem not to appreciate the rich godly heritage we've been blessed with; they seem to be letting it slip away little by little. That's why I have subscribed this magazine to some others in my life. Please keep the good articles coming!

Thank you for your effort and work in God's kingdom! It is not in vain; I am living proof!

Personal Letter



Two Ears

We named our last child Felix after Felix Manz.

Running the AV is a powerful ministry. I want to encourage you. I am sure you get some criticism. Everyone who is advancing God's Kingdom will get attacked. If you ever need someone to talk to, I have two ears.

Thank you for this work. Keep it up.

M. D. | *Indiana*



What a Mighty God!

Thank you to everyone at AV for producing such an uplifting magazine, your efforts are appreciated.

I give you a thumbs-up for unapologetically taking

a stand on things, even if you step on people's toes (especially about covid and its shots) although I am wondering why covid-19 is always capitalized??

I enjoyed the story, "The Battle for Sehwee" in the last issue immensely. It was a real eye opener for me! I didn't realize that witchcraft is so real as to cast spells and kill people. In the story one could almost see Satan fighting against God. I was so thankful and joyous that God showed these people what a mighty God He is; I sent a heartfelt prayer heavenward for them and the pastors right then and there.

Please keep such stories coming and also the testimonial ones.

S. E. | *Saskatchewan, Canada*



Complete Set

I've been reading your magazine for a while and I love it.

I'm trying to collect all the latest copies and am in need of some of the first ones. Is there any chance I could have copies #1 thru #18 and also #20 sent to me? Thank you.

I. S. | *Indiana*



Public Discourse

Thank you for all the time and effort you pour into the AV magazine. I believe it is a very worthwhile, upbuilding publication and also closely aligns with what our Anabaptist forebears stood for.

I admire your courage to publish some articles that touch on some very "hot button" issues facing our churches and our society today. I realize great discernment needs to be exercised when discussing some of these "touchy" subjects. But there is no point

in burying our heads in the sand and ignoring some of the greatest issues facing our day just because we are afraid we might offend a few opinionated or “thin-skinned” people.

While we as Christians ought not become conspiratorial or anti-government in our views, neither is it wise for us to gullibly consume and believe everything the mainstream media is trying to propagate today. In fact, because the mainstream media is driven primarily by ungodly men and woman with underlying and hidden agendas, is in itself, enough to cause us, as Christians, to pause and question the narrative and the information they are trying to set forth as facts. Jesus commands us in Matthew 10:16 to “be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” We do well to reckon with the fact that mainstream media is largely driven by an anti-biblical, anti-Christian worldview.

So I commend you, *Anabaptist Voice*, in your willingness to publish material that you feel is worthwhile information and upbuilding articles, while

at the same time willingly opening yourself to the comments, opinions, and criticism of your readers. I believe this is the way it should be done—it’s called “public discourse.”

We can all learn and benefit from others while they can learn and benefit from us as we share information and viewpoints. But this is only “profitable to all,” so long as we do so in a spirit of love and meekness. A lack of humility and meekness causes us to close our ears to anyone who thinks differently than we do. If we try to silence others of a different opinion than we ourselves hold, we are acting similarly to those involved in the present day “cancel culture” that is plaguing our nation.

May God give us all ears to hear and a heart that desires to understand the truth. And may we have the humility to hear what fellow believers have to share without becoming judgmental when we do not completely agree with their viewpoints.

L. E. | Wisconsin



God's True Soldier

“You therefore, endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
1 Timothy 2:3

by Faith Jansky

Would you be a soldier true
For Jesus Christ, your King?
Would you follow anywhere,
And give Him ev’rything?

God’s soldier e’er presses on,
His great weakness, knowing;
But finding His all in God,
He grows, and keeps going.

God’s soldier doesn’t worry
If others approve or frown.
He sees His Master’s smile,
And that is his great, life’s crown.

God’s soldier is ever true,
And faithful will remain.
He sees what really matters;
What is true loss, and gain.

God’s soldier faces trials,
And tests, down upon his knees.
With firm resolve, he rises,
Knowing God will meet his needs.

God’s soldier welcomes hard things,
Knowing they make him strong,
And much more like His Jesus:
His heart’s longing, and song.

God’s soldier will one day see
The battle, o’er at last;
And his great King, the Victor!
All sorrows will be past!

God’s true soldier—home at last!
He’ll see His Savior’s smile!
To hear His sweet words, “Well done!”
Will be worth ev’ry trial!

The Israel of God

by Ted Byler

March 13, 2023

Dear Brother Landis,

You wanted a clear explanation of how the New Testament Church takes the place of the Old Testament Israel in God's eternal plan. In recent times this has come to be called, "Replacement Theology," or "Supersessionism." Here are my thoughts on the subject.

First, I believe the Scriptures show that the Church does not exactly replace the Jews as God's people, but continues the ages-old *chosen generation* of God. From the very beginning, there has always been a *holy seed* unto the Lord (Genesis 4:25-26).

After the Flood, God chose the descendants of Abraham to be that seed, but all along He had planned a little surprise, a *mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now...is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith* (Romans 16:25-26). Gentiles would be adopted into the family of the Jews.

By an oath, God told Abraham that his descendants would number as the stars of the heaven (Genesis 22:15-18). And for two millennia, the Jews were God's chosen, peculiar, special people. Yet, when the *Desire of All Nations* came, they rejected Him and gave Him up to be murdered (Acts 7:52). Israel after the flesh became enemies of the Gospel and persecutors of the Church (I Thessalonians 2:15).

Down through the centuries of time, the Jewish race continues *to please not God and be contrary to all men*. Did God's promises to Abraham fail? No! God had planned from the beginning an amazing way to truly bless all nations in fulfillment of His word to Abraham.

God's New Chosen People

The book of Galatians, especially chapter three, is one of the strongest texts showing the transformation of the Old Testament *holy nation* into the Body of Christ—faithful Jews and Gentiles together. In fact, every Christian living in the New Covenant is actually a Jew, not by physical blood, but by spiritual attributes. Paul explains:

Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

(excerpts from Galatians 3).

God's promises to Abraham have fallen upon his new children, for Israel after the flesh has chosen to refuse Christ. According to Galatians, the Gentile Christian is every whit a child of Abraham and a true Jew by adoption on account of his faith in Christ. There is now no difference between blood Jews and Greeks. *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles* (I Corinthians 12:13).



Wonderfully, God did not abandon the Jews when He instituted the Church, for the same salvation and mercy is available to them also. All people groups are under the curse and that includes the Jews—not specifically for crucifying their Messiah, but for rationally choosing to reject Him again and again and again. Salvation is available, but all people must look to the One upon the tree.

During the last 2000 years the Jews after the flesh have continually rejected Jesus Christ as their promised Messiah and they have reaped the terrible consequences. Their shocking afflictions and mistreatments are a standing example to the world of what happens to those who ignore the New Covenant that God has so graciously extended to every kindred, tongue and people. Far from being a mark of God's blessing, the Jewish nation and race is a perpetual witness of the calamities and judgments destined for all those who refuse the only name whereby salvation is attained (read Deuteronomy 28-30).

God will not bless people who reject Him, nor will He extend grace to those who flat out reject it. Yet, *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ* (John 1:17). To reject Christ is to reject God's grace.

Rejecting Christ is a serious sin. God will not act contrary to His character and He cannot lie. He does not force Himself upon people who do not want Him. You will search the Scripture in vain to find one example of God forgiving or blessing someone who is rejecting Him.

Thus, the truly blessed people of God are not the natural Jews in Israel, but the spiritual Jews of the Church.

We can also appreciate the perpetuity of God's people under both testaments by seeing how the teachings of Jesus did not abolish the Law, but fulfilled and repurposed its precepts for life in the Kingdom. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ deliberately selected physical rules and precepts of the Old Covenant and refitted them to better use in a new, spiritual reality. The old, physical sacrifices for sin are now accomplished internally, by grace through faith. The rituals and feasts are no longer kept in the physical sense, but in New Testament truths of mercy, love, denying self, and worship.

The Kingdom of Christ is essentially a world-encompassing spiritual rule in the hearts and minds of all with the same faith that Abraham held. *God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him*

(Acts 10:34-35). Jews, Greeks and every other race now have equal access to God through Jesus Christ.

The Jewish Nature of the New Covenant People

The ultimate identification mark of being a Jew was to be circumcised on the eighth day. There was simply no greater proof of being a true *Hebrew of the Hebrews*. How significant then, to read:

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:3).

Christians are the truly circumcised people of God!

In Romans 2:28-29, Paul explains further:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The New Testament does not count someone to be a Jew who happens to be in Abraham's bloodline, but any person with saving faith in Abraham's God.

Paul's words are eminently clear, but Peter may have exceeded him in describing the Church with Jewish terminology.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

(I Peter 2:9-10).

These phrases were of particular pride to the Jews, for God had uniquely identified them as His own *peculiar treasure unto Me above all people* (Exodus 19:5). *Thou art an holy people...the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself* (Deuteronomy 7:6). *Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation* (Exodus 19:6). The consequence of this passage is devastating to the natural Jews' claim to being God's chosen people, for the Apostle Peter says these titles belong to the New Testament Church of Christ, both redeemed Jews and Gentiles in the Lord.

Jesus told the Jews of this coming transformation, but instead of hearing Him they were offended.

Therefore I say unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof ... Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.

(Matthew 21:43, 8:11-12).

Notice the two kingdoms. The real children of Abraham will sit down with him in the Kingdom of Heaven, but many of his children by blood will be cast out. The Jews were relying on their lineage and God's choice of them as a special people above all others. But Jesus said, *Think not to say within yourselves, "We have Abraham to our father": for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham* (Matthew 3:9). And in a way, He did.

The Refashioned Clay

If Galatians 3 teaches the doctrine of the new *Israel of God* in greatest clarity and I Peter 2:9-10 uses it in strongest application, then Romans 9-11 shows it in clearest analogy. These three chapters are Paul's emotional plea to the Jewish people to take their place in God's plan of salvation.

Earlier in Romans, he showed that sincere Jews should, by studying their Scriptures, be the first to recognize the long-foretold plan of God to offer salvation unto all men.

Now Paul's arguments find their culmination in an earnest, final effort to persuade them to choose faith in Christ. He cites more than two dozen passages from their own Scriptures to solidify the message into a clarion call for natural Jews to turn from their blindness and be saved. And in the process, he makes an impressive argument for God's wisdom, mercy and righteousness in adopting the Gentiles into His family.

The first figure that Paul used to describe what happened to national Israel is of a potter working with his clay.

Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?

(Romans 9:21).

Yes. And He did so in stunning, unthinkable fashion so as to include the Gentiles, *which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God*. He did not throw away the clay, but refashioned it into a new vessel unto honor, Jews and Gentiles together. For let

us not forget that the Church's beginning was made up entirely of devout, Christ-choosing Jews. Thousands and thousands of them. These, like Paul, renounced the works of the Law in order to receive the grace of Christ. And from that holy remnant the Church was born, and grew. These were evangelists of the highest caliber that carried the gospel of Christ to the far reaches of the world. What happened to them? Nobody knows for sure because their stories and lineage have been lost to history, but without a doubt, some of their blood flows in Christian veins today.

The Olive Tree of the Lord

Paul used another figure to describe God's people—an olive tree made up of believing Jews and Gentiles together. Not two trees, but one, with Jewish and Gentile branches growing from the same trunk.

It is a beautiful portrait of the Church that began as entirely Jewish, but then received Gentile branch-grafts into its stock (Romans 11:15-25). The *root* of the tree (referring to Abraham and the patriarchs) was *holy*, but when some of the branches did not bear good fruit, God purged them from His tree.

Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit ... If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

(John 15:2,6).

This verse applies to Jews and Gentiles alike.

Tree grafting makes a compelling analogy to the people in Christ's Kingdom, for it beautifully illustrates the origins of the New Covenant. God didn't cut down the Jewish olive tree and plant a new Gentile tree, nor did He just ignore the unfruitful Jewish tree and cultivate a new Gentile tree. Instead, He worked in a marvelous way with the Jewish tree so that it would accept and nourish Gentile branches! *For they are not all Israel which are of Israel* (Romans 9:6).

The prophets foretold of this day in words of great blessing.

And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant

of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing

(Ezekiel 34:23-26).

This promise was given about 600 years before Christ, so the description is given in figures of that day. The fulfillment however, was even greater than anyone expected. And today, even the secular world recognizes the olive branch as a symbol of peace. So are the true people of God—peaceful, quiet branches that produce the good fruit of righteousness.

The key truth in the analogy of the olive tree is that God has only one tree and by nature it is Jewish. The Jews are the original branches; the Gentile branches come from a *wild olive tree*. Together they form the Olive Tree of the Lord. This is the unfailing doctrine of the New Testament, which, as we have seen, presents the New Covenant people in Old Testament terms and identifies the children of Abraham spiritually instead of genetically.

The true Jew is determined *inwardly*. On the other hand, the people of natural Israel are all those *which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan* (Revelation 2:9; 3:9).

In the analogy of the olive tree, Gentile believers are *the circumcision made without hands* (Colossians 2:11). The Gentile with faith in Christ is a child of Abraham and thus a Jew; not by blood but by adoption, by being grafted in.

And so (or, in like manner) all Israel shall be saved. This is the conclusion of Paul's treatise in Romans 9-11. The one olive tree with Jewish branches and grafted-in Gentiles shall assuredly be gathered into the eternal Kingdom of the Father.

Excluded from Israel are the faithless Jews that rejected the Prophets, excluded are the scribes and Pharisees who condemned their Messiah to death, excluded are all those who do not confess the Lord Jesus Christ. Instead, the holy remnant according to the election of grace was saved out of natural Israel and Gentiles of faith have joined with them (Romans 11:5-11). This is the Israel of God that shall be saved.

The Hope of Israel

The incarcerated Paul preached to the Jews in Rome

regarding the *hope of Israel* (Acts 28:16-24). What did he hold forth as “the ideal Jewish hope?” Was it that they might receive again God's blessing in their land and temple? That they might return to the head of the nations? That God would renew the Israelite Covenant with them? It was none of those things. The Scriptures say that Paul,

preaching the hope of Israel ... expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets.

The real hope of Israel is to again become part of God's olive tree by choosing faith in Jesus Christ. For they also *shall be grafted in...if they abide not still in unbelief* (Romans 11:23).

The Scriptures constantly teach that the true people of God in the New Covenant are spiritual Jews and they vigorously present Jews and Gentiles as one body in Christ:

- God has **one tree, one people** (Hebrews 8:10).
- *I am the vine, ye are the branches* (John 15:5).
- There is *one fold, and one Shepherd* (John 10:16).
- He has once and for all *broken down the middle wall of partition between us* (Ephesians 2:14).
- *There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek* (Romans 10:12).
- There is **one** body, **one** Spirit, one Father of all (Ephesians 4:4-6).
- We are *God's building* (I Corinthians 3:9).

Christ has reconciled both Jew and Gentile into one body. There is just one tree. And the Keeper of this olive tree works with all the branches so that they might *bring forth good fruit*.

Some branches will not produce and must *be cut off and burned* (see Matthew 7:17-20). Other branches are grafted in wild and also *partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree*. The wild branches have become one with the natural branches. Together they receive the same blessings that were given to Abraham. We marvel to see God's hand in such wondrous design!

The New Household of God

The book of Ephesians has long been recognized as the treatise par-excellence on the Church of God. In it, the Apostle shows that from the beginning God had planned this *gather(ing) together in one all things in Christ ... such that He is head over all things to the Church* (Ephesians 1:10, 22). Then in chapter two,

the Spirit details this powerful fusion of all bloods into one body, one building, one people, one temple—the spotless, blameless and holy Church of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:27).

This is no short, obscure reference, but a careful dissertation:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... for to make in Himself of twain one new man ... and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross ... and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father ... therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but

fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

(Ephesians 2:11-21).

The Scripture here is emphatic. The Church is God's *holy nation*, His special people, His peculiar treasure, the true circumcision—Gentiles and Jews together growing into a holy temple in the Lord. By the power of God and the risen Lord, the old Kingdom of Israel has been transformed into the new *Israel of God*—the Church of Jesus Christ, the congregation of redeemed Jews and Gentiles under one Head. This is the *commonwealth of Israel*, not those circumcised in the flesh, but those that have been circumcised in heart and spirit (Romans 2:29). Together, brethren, we are one building, one blood, one people founded upon the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles. Amen.

A fellow servant,

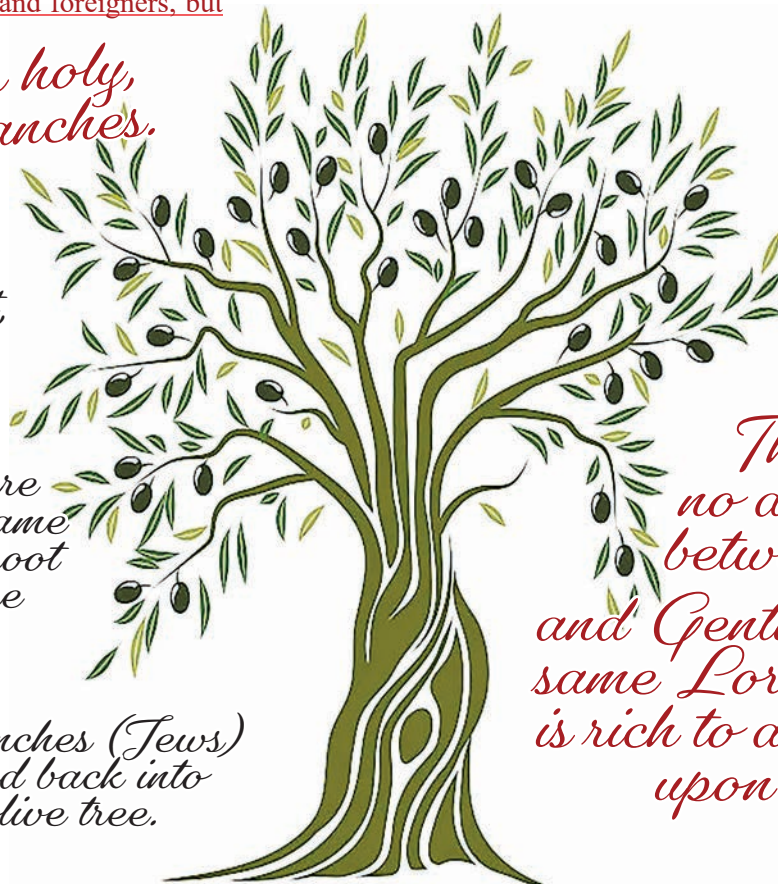
Ted Byler | Coyhaique, Chile

*If the root is holy,
so are the branches.*

*You do not
support the root,
but the root
supports you.*

*You Gentiles were
grafted in and became
a partaker of the root
and fatness of the
olive tree.*

*The natural branches (Jews)
may be grafted back into
their own olive tree.*



*There is
no distinction
between Jew
and Gentile, for the
same Lord over all
is rich to all who call
upon Him.*

The beautiful olive tree representing a church
composed of both Jews and Gentiles



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“We choose which way we will go. It is a life and death matter.”

– Joeseeph Yoder at Pelkie Mennonite Church, MI



“In order for our church to grow and thrive, we must have the mentality of WE instead of ME.”

– Clay Zimmerman at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“Blessed are you when you feel desperate, for it is the desperate who will seek freedom through Christ.”

– Solomon Stoll at Caneyville Christian Community, KY



“God delights in doing the impossible because then He receives the glory.”

– Jared Hege at Burkeland Mennonite Church, GA



“Robots do what they are programmed to do; they do not care about you. Our actions are born out of love for others.”

– Crist Miller at Faith Mission Fellowship, VA



“The narrow gate has no equal, no substitute, and no ‘half-off ticket sale.’

– Bill Miller at Son Valley Christian Fellowship, AZ



“Learning is not always easy, but it makes the yoke easier.”

– Nathan Stauffer at Plad Mennonite Church, MO



“The world is trying to pressure us to become like them.”

– Randy Hoover at Bethel Mennonite Church, GA



“Because they sense no need in their own life, the self sufficient are not thankful.”

– Anthony Martin at Texter Mountain Mennonite Church, PA



“It is not so much what we love as much as who we trust in difficult moments. That is our test.”

– Steve Zehr, Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO

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.

Encouraging Brotherhood

by Menno Knight

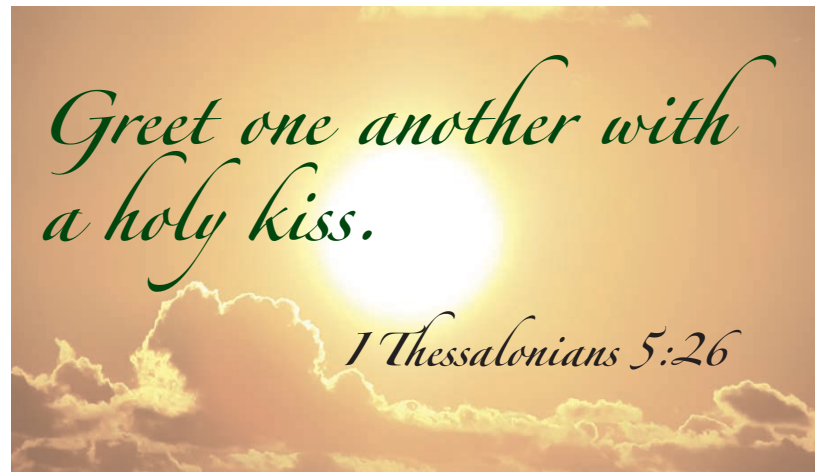
One way of encouraging brotherhood is the practice of the holy kiss. The kiss is a symbol of love, warmth, and kindness. Five times the New Testament scriptures plainly tell us to greet or salute one another with a kiss (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26; I Peter 5:14). We need to do it. We should want to do it.

We may try to replace the kiss with handshaking. We can just aim to catch the spirit of the ordinance with friendliness or brotherly kindness. But that way we will have missed the kiss. Can you imagine an anointing service without oil, communion without bread, or baptism without water? These symbols are the best means of teaching the truths that we are supposed to learn. The kiss is the same way. It is one of the best ways to teach and practice brotherly love.

Brotherly love needs to be cultivated. We should practice the ordinance frequently. The Bible says “salute” or “greet one another.” This would indicate we should kiss each other whenever a greeting is in order. When others would greet each other by shaking hands, Christians would normally greet each other with both a handshake and a kiss. It should be practiced more often than just at communion or on other special occasions.

Why is the practice of this ordinance neglected by many professing Christians? God’s people are to be a holy people. That means we are to be clean, separate, and pure. Greeting one another with a holy kiss ought to be a pleasant experience for both. Guard against bad breath and other body odors. Be aware of contagious diseases. People are not anxious to contract a cold or tuberculosis or any other ailment through the observance of this ordinance.

That places a great responsibility on each individual. First of all, he must live a holy life free from the filthiness of sin. Second, he must practice good health rules like brushing his teeth regularly and washing his face. Personal appearance should be neat and attractive rather than slovenly and unkept. It would seem that contagious ailments should be guarded against by a self-imposed quarantine. If anyone has a really dangerous disease, he should stay at home. Brethren should not be afraid to greet each other with a holy kiss when they meet.



Of course, the way many people “practice” the ordinance there is little danger. Some just shake hands. Others use what we might call a “holy hug.” Then there are those who want to reach around the side for a peck on the cheek. The Bible says this is to be a holy *kiss*.

Those who are a little observing know what a kiss is. People of the world don’t seem to have any difficulty recognizing the proper place when they want to kiss. The dictionary defines a kiss as “a caress with the lips.” This does not mean that a kiss must always be placed on the lips, but it generally is.

A holy kiss should also involve the active participation of two people. It is not a passive submission of one person to the act of another. This is what makes for the warmth and the charity between the two. Our kissing should not be like that of two children who are required by their parents to make up after a fight.

Neither should a holy kiss be a Judas type of kiss. It should be one of sincerity and love. It should not be a show of love to cover feelings and deeds of unkindness.

Maybe some do practice the kiss only because they feel it is required by God. That is not the best reason, but it can still be a source of blessing to both. Try kissing a brother whom you do not particularly like. It will help you to love him. But don’t limit yourself only to those you aren’t quite as fond of. I Thessalonians 5:26 says, “Greet *all* the brethren with an holy kiss.”

Another reason some people may miss the blessing of this ordinance is because they aren’t quite sure if the person they meet is a “worthy” brother. The holy kiss is not meant to be a means of discipline. If you stiff-

arm a brother who wants to greet you, you have not only punished him; you have also revealed your own feelings towards him. In the end, you are the one who misses the most.

In these days of wide travel, it is not always easy to know whether the person you meet desires to greet you with a holy kiss. That is where the practice of nonconformity helps. Brethren who wear the plain suit, or some other distinctive attire, generally greet each other without hesitation. Sisters who wear the veiling and the cape likewise readily respond. Where there is no distinctive attire the practice will generally be abandoned, except on very special occasions such as at feet washing—if feet washing is still practiced. In all circumstances we should be respectful of the wishes of the other person and should not force a kiss upon someone who does not desire it.

The holy kiss is to be a *holy* kiss. It is only for members of the same sex—brethren with brethren and sisters with sisters.

In this evil world where gay men and lesbian women openly declare their affection one for another—even going so far in their perversion as to unite in “legal marriages”—one may hesitate to kiss another of the same sex for fear of being identified with that sinful crowd. This concern must not stop the practice of the holy kiss among us. There is a large difference between a “caress with the lips” and a sexual kiss—dry lips and momentary contact versus wet lips and prolonged contact.

Our aversion to the sin of homosexuality and our condemnation of it should be prominent in our life, teaching, and preaching. Hateful people could claim the holy kiss to be a sign of this sin among us, but that should not stop the practice among our brotherhood. Some enemies of the early Anabaptists also accused them of free sex outside the bond of legal marriages. But false accusations did not cause them to give up fidelity in marriage. Neither should prevailing wickedness cause us to stop practicing the holy kiss. The practice of the holy kiss should not be on the street corner, but discreetly and in our private settings.

The public strength of the LGBT movement is nothing new. The sin of homosexuality existed when the apostle Paul wrote his strong condemnation of it in Romans. Yet Paul penned four of the five admonitions encouraging the saints to practice the holy kiss. The apostle Peter added the fifth. So the sin and wickedness around us should not keep us from practicing the holy kiss.

The observance of the holy kiss is a blessing to every believer who practices it. But like all applications of faith, this observance is dependent upon the truth of all the other scriptures. **PRACTICE IT.** It will warm your heart with affection for all believers and certainly it will show a bond of unity and obedience that God himself will smile upon.



Blessed Be the Tie that Binds

*Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.*

*Before our Father's throne,
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.*

*We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.*

*When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.*

John Fawcett

Keeping Faith

by David L. Burkholder

The Anabaptist movement began early in the 16th century. Its goal was to restore biblical practices to the church and the general populace. Thinking men started to understand the errors, extremes and extravagances of the State (Catholic) Church, and began a thorough examination of the Scriptures, seeking direction in forming a Bible-oriented body of believers.

Some of the errors they protested were: the baptism of infants and their immediate acceptance into the church, the selling of indulgences to lighten the penalty for sin, the use of the sword to settle conflicts, and the graded-rank structure of the State Church, as well as the sinful excesses of church leaders. All of these deviations from the Scripture worked against true Christianity, which they understood to mean, *following the path of discipleship as outlined by Jesus in the New Testament*.

As men such as Zwingli, Manz, Grebel, and Marpeck started speaking out, opposition and persecution began. Leaders from the State Church saw their authority and control of the people being threatened and they reacted violently against these “radicals.” The common man, however, saw the validity of this movement back to the Bible and away from the excesses of the Catholic Church; they embraced it in increasing numbers.

The growth of the Anabaptist movement and the increasing opposition of the State Church created conflict. Subsequently, many Anabaptists (re-baptisers, considered heretics by the established church) were imprisoned, and many were executed for their faith. It is estimated that at least 2,000 and perhaps as many as 5,000 men and women suffered martyrdom for their faith during the mid 1500’s. These were cruel deaths: drowning, burning at the stake, bodily mutilation, and various forms of cruel, inhumane torture.

But in spite of all the persecution, many refused to recant. They refused to renounce their faith even in the face of cruel torture and death. They had come to realize the glorious future that awaited them in heaven if they took Christ’s words seriously, held onto their faith in Christ’s work of salvation, and lived a life of loyalty in the practice of His teachings.

It takes firm and wholehearted conviction to stand for one’s faith in the face of extreme torture and the threat of death. But these people had such faith. They had a faith such as practiced by the martyrs of old time as recorded in Hebrews 11. They looked to the future;

they stood the test. One result of their faithfulness is that their testimony reaches down to their faith descendants today. Their testimony continues to inspire 21st century believers to remain true to the principles taught by Jesus and practiced by His Anabaptist followers for 500 years.

The Anabaptist movement was birthed in the blood of those who, understanding basic biblical doctrine and the demands of Jesus for radical discipleship, refused to compromise their beliefs in order to satisfy the demands of their surrounding culture and opposing religious sects. Many paid for their stand with their lives. I wonder if we are made of the same stuff. Do we have such a firm, Christ-centered view of New Testament doctrine and life principles that we will be able to stand firm on the Word of God in the face of ridicule, opposition, the attacks of Satan, surrounding spiritual drift, and the easy believism of general Protestantism?

There are several things which I feel are of utmost importance for affirming and maintaining our stand.

1. We need to be people of the Book. We must dedicate ourselves to the reading and study of God’s Word individually, and be fully committed to following its precepts under the direction of God’s Holy Spirit.
2. We must select teachers and ministers who are themselves fully committed and capable of interpreting and explaining the Scriptures and making them applicable to daily life.
3. We must become aware of our spiritual heritage of faith, and never forget the struggles of former generations that resulted in the formation of a solidly biblical and viable Christian brotherhood of which we are the inheritors.

Our eternal destiny rests upon:

- 1) *A deep commitment to the lordship of Jesus Christ.*
- 2) *The acceptance and practicing of the precepts of His Holy Word.*
- 3) *Being faithful and fruitful members of a live and viable Bible-oriented Christian brotherhood.*

Only so will the thrust and purpose of the Anabaptist movement survive, not only the 21st century, but all centuries until Christ returns to redeem His faithful people. Don’t miss that glorious event. Be a faithful, productive, expressive member of His household.

In Luke 18:8 Jesus asked a searching question: “When the Son of Man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?” The answer, of course, is a resounding “Yes.” There will always be those individuals who hold fast to the principles of God’s Word regardless of the compromises and drift of general Christendom. I trust that you and your posterity will be part of that great faithful and innumerable throng which will one day stand before the throne of God in heaven, singing praises to Him throughout all eternity.

To God be the Glory.

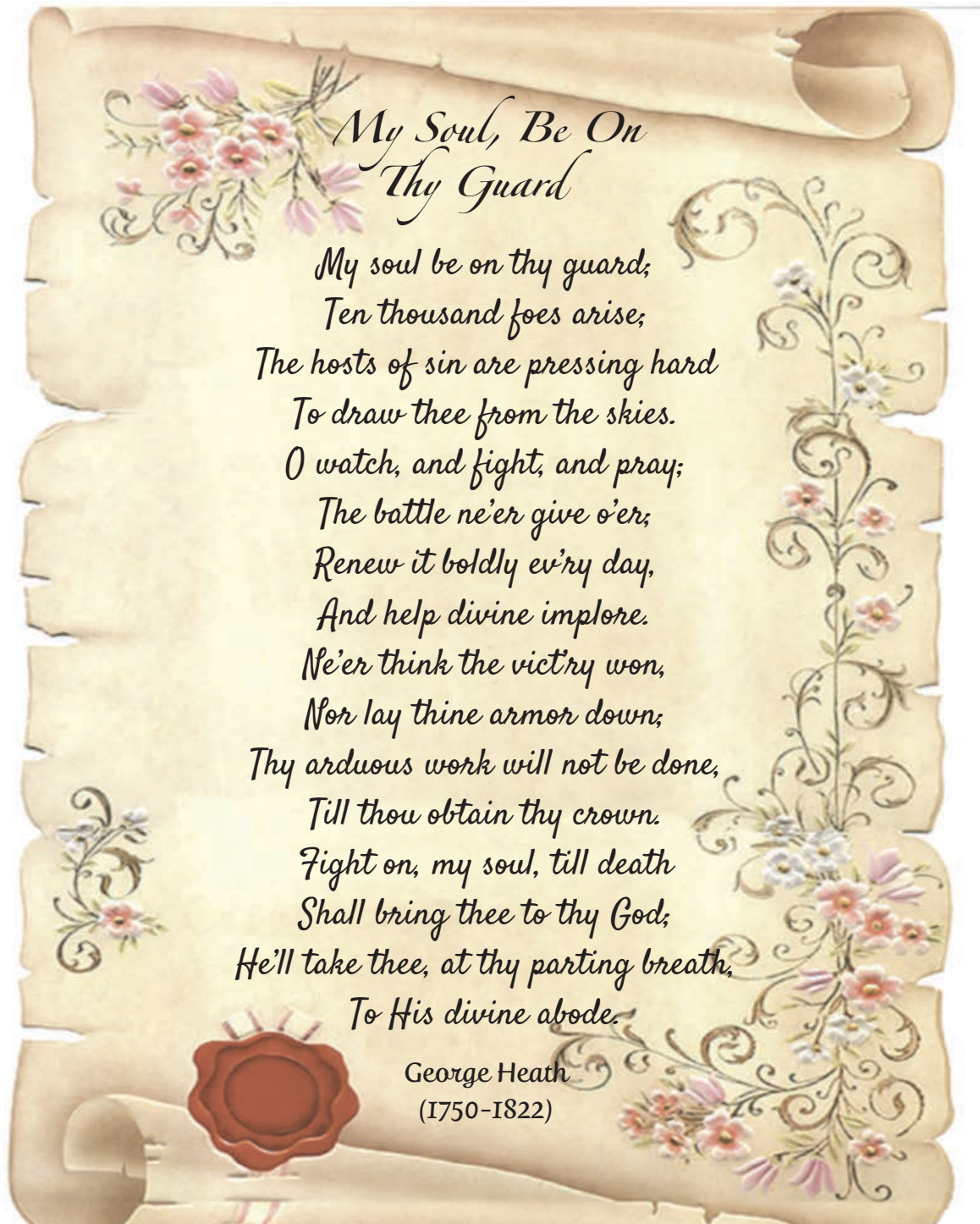
Suggested helpful reading:

The Anabaptist Vision by Harold S. Bender, Mennonite Publishing House.

Anabaptism: Past, Present, Future, a Biblical Mennonite Alliance publication.

The hymn “*My Soul, Be on Thy Guard*” also provides warning and encouragement.

D. L. B. | Virginia



He Set My Feet on a Rock

by Tamara Heinemann

In AV27, “Out of the Miry Clay,” Part I, Tamara Heinemann shared how God reached down and did an amazing work of redemption and reconciliation in her life. But her story did not end at her commitment to follow Christ. God had many more things to teach Tamara in the 20 years that followed her surrender.

Her testimony today is still, “Truly God is most magnificent. All glory be to God!”

After my commitment, I started walking. I went to Northland Pioneer College to study history. I attended off and on for 7 years before graduating with an Associate of General Studies. I thought I needed to be productive and get a career. I intended to become a college history teacher. But GOD used it for his own purposes. I was in God’s school now and He took me down a different path.

In March of 2005, we bought Don’s dream house on Amity Street in Eagar, Arizona, and moved in.

Someone gave me the book, *History of the Church Through the Ages*, by Robert H. Brumback; I started reading. It didn’t directly mention the Anabaptists, but it was the link that led me to search for their history. I discovered that there were still Anabaptists in the Amish, Mennonite, and Brethren people. The Church of Christ believes they are the one true church. I was taught that all the other denominations are wrong, but Anabaptist history never came up. I was intrigued when I saw that Anabaptists, like the Church of Christ, was basically a restoration movement. I wanted to learn more.

I found some online groups that said they were Amish-Mennonite. I was disappointed at first because they didn’t uphold the pillars of the Church of Christ—baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and weekly communion. But I kept coming back, asking tons of questions.

While discussing topics through these online forums, I would bounce what I was hearing from the Anabaptists—headship, two kingdoms, headcovering, nonresistance, not voting, divorce and remarriage, foot washing, etc—off an online Church of Christ homeschool group. My Church of Christ friends always had a clever reason wrapped in Scripture explaining why we don’t need to do these things. However, the Church of Christ adamantly teaches that Scripture is the ultimate authority. So, I put my faith in the Word. I never dreamed of leaving my church at this time, but the



more I studied these issues, the more I felt I needed to practice these “new” truths.

When I started dressing more modestly and wearing a headcovering to church, it was not well received. Tensions started to grow as I talked about “Anabaptist teachings.” I was so excited about following Jesus beyond some mental affirmation, but it hurt to be completely dismissed by everyone I knew and cared about.

The road wasn’t always clear. I went around and around as my mind went through a paradigm shift. I was terribly afraid at times because I didn’t know if I was being enlightened ... or led astray. A discussion about *The Chronicles of Narnia*, by C.S. Lewis, opened my eyes. I hadn’t read the books, but I was planning to homeschool my daughter with them. I mentioned these writings on an Anabaptist forum and was quickly challenged. They said they are not Christian books and have occult influences. After I read the resources they gave me, I was appalled. Indeed, these are not good books!

I thought I should mention this to the Church of Christ group to alert others. I was surprised at their response. One person was particularly offended that I had a problem with the books. Somewhere, during our discussion, he mentioned that a lady started clapping to the songs in their church. He felt it was his duty to tell this woman that clapping was wrong. He was clear: “I can’t worship with someone who claps.” That rocked my foundation. I knew what occult influences did to my mind and soul. So was it really okay to introduce occult influences to my children, but wrong to joyfully clap before the Lord?

For the first time, I realized my church might be wrong. I saw that the Church of Christ “Bible” was flat, not relevant in our modern world. We were strong biblicists, slaves to our motto, “Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent.” Tragically, this kept us from *applying many* biblical



principles to our lives. By default, we adopted the world's culture around us.

The Anabaptists did the opposite; they created a culture of their own, built on biblical principles, even when it ran counter to society. I was amazed when I later discovered that many early leaders in the Church of Christ taught the head covering, not voting, and non-resistance. It made me think how different my father's life might have been if the church had continued upholding these truths and he would not have fought in Vietnam.

What could I do now? If I stayed in my church, I could not hold these doctrines. If I suppressed them, I would go crazy. So I stopped going to church.

No one from the church came to talk to me, but I started getting calls from my family back home in Tucson. "We heard you've left the Lord." "You need to stop talking to those Midianites" (as they called them). "Get that rag off your head!" "You look so dumpy!" "Your face is a canvas to be painted." I was wearing simple jumpers, no make-up, and a bandana at the time.

This verse helped me see beyond the denominational walls and to look at the fruit within: "**Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous**" (1 John 3:7).

One thing the Church of Christ stressed was "not forsaking the assembly," and with that I fully agreed. So, I *knew* I had to find a church! But where? We had five hours to the nearest Anabaptist churches, and those were in the desert. My husband had no interest in going back to the desert after being in the White Mountains, hunting and fishing.

The Trek to Find a Church Home

Don and I were best friends. We went through a lot over our 11 years together. But I wasn't sure how he was going to handle my new convictions and changes in my appearance. He was always loving and kind, but to my surprise, he became even more tender towards me. In fact, he seemed to appreciate the changes in my life. He knew how important Jesus and the church were to me, so he was willing to help me find a church.

We had often struggled financially, so it was special to us that we were able to buy Don's dream house and a new car right before all this occurred. Still, he was willing to sacrifice everything we had finally built up to go find a church for me!

In 2006 our trek to find a church home began in earnest.

Trying to figure out where to go was not easy. There were not many Anabaptist churches out west. My husband had some criteria too; he wasn't willing to move just anywhere. Wherever we would go was going to be a major move.

Our girls, already 9 and 11, didn't care much about the changes I was making as long as it didn't affect them. At this time I was homeschooling Autumn, our youngest daughter. Brooke went to public school. Where would they go to school? Could they go to a church school? Usually after I told the person on the other phone line that my husband and children were not Christians, I got a similar response: "Bloom where you are, and we'll be praying for you."

This was hard for me. I didn't see how I could just stay all by myself. I knew the value of being in a church body, and feared forsaking the assembly. Plus, how could I raise my children without a church? I feared terribly that I would lose them to the world!

I heard of a Charity church in Oregon. Don loved Oregon. We had lived there twice before. So in 2006, we sold everything, bought an old suburban and a camper, loaded up our 2 girls, 4 cats, and a dog, and headed out. I wasn't too worried. If that church didn't fit, we could just keep heading on till we found the right place. BUT GOD had other plans.

Halsey, Oregon, 2006

When we visited Halsey, Oregon, we experienced culture shock. We didn't know there were Mennonites in that area. I remember that we looked around like gawking tourists. Everyone had Jesus signs in their yards. Is everyone around here Christians? The church was great. They were so welcoming. They tried to help give us some direction. We were surprised at how well their children shared and played together. The men got right to the point, asking my husband what he was searching for. They seemed to take a genuine interest in him. I had seen enough; I was good to stay right there.

Together, Don and I had moved numerous times. But never in any move before was there such a struggle to find housing and a job. We tried for weeks, but found nothing.

Life in Alpine, Arizona (2006)

Unable to find housing and a job in Oregon, we did not continue our search for a church; instead, we went back to Arizona. We rented a furnished cabin in Alpine, about 30 minutes from Eagar where we had started. Both my girls started back to public school. I felt so defeated!

A while after my father died, my mom thought about moving back to Oklahoma where she was born. Our girls and I went on this trip with her. I got to visit a homechurch in Texas and another little Charity church in Oklahoma.

When we got back from the trip to Oklahoma, I spent most of my time reading Scripture, listening to sermons, and praying about what to do. I felt such deep need that bordered on desperation. But I was still full of hope that we could find a church home; I looked to the Lord to lead.

Holmes County, Ohio (2007)

After a year, we decided to move to Holmes County, Ohio. Surely, we would find a church there. It didn't work out. After two months in Ohio, Don wanted to return home.

This time I crashed. I felt like all the life was sucked out of me. I lay in bed for three days hardly able to talk or move. Don was so worried. He called my mom, not something he often did. I think I was praying. I know that it was God who gave me the strength to get up and go back to Arizona, because it was not in me. We didn't even take our camper back, we just left it there for sale.

Lakeside Arizona (2007)

We moved to Lakeside, Arizona, in the fall of 2007, an hour west of where we first started in Eagar. Maybe I should have just "bloomed" where I was, like the people told me. Did I bring my whole family to ruin? Now we had no home and no money. We rented an apartment in a tiny triplex. Our girls went on to public school. I felt so lost and so alone.

During this time I started to doubt and question many things. BUT GOD answered my questions and transformed my doubts into strong convictions that became my own. One example was when I started questioning the headcovering. "Lord, is it really necessary?" I decided not to wear my headcovering to the store one day. It so happened that a fairly rough burly man came up to me and started running his fingers through my hair and told me how



beautiful it was. I did not like it. The Lord's answer to me on the headcovering was clear; I should wear it.

The Lord revealed new things that I didn't know I needed to do, one being confession of sins. He showed me three times this is what he wanted before I took any action. After I obeyed, I was amazed how healing that was.

Our apartment had mold, fleas, and mice. At that time, I didn't know about the dangers of mold, but after a while I started having health problems, especially increased migraines. Don was done with moving, so any hope of finding a church was gone. One day I got up and wiped my tears and thought, *If I can't go to a church, maybe a church would come here.* I called the major ministries again, but no one had any interest in that, nor did they know of any churches looking for an outreach.

We visited churches at Farmington, New Mexico and Wickenburg, Arizona but it didn't really go anywhere. It was too far, we were too broke to move, and Don had no interest in going back to a desert place. I felt I was all alone; just God and me. The hardest part was watching our children slip farther and farther away, out into the world.

Someone told us about another seeker family they knew of in Arizona. So I wrote them and we became good friends. Since they lived over 3 hours away, we rarely saw them. But GOD gave me a friend.

Floyd, Virginia (2011)

By 2010 things were hard at home. Our girls were really struggling and getting into trouble. For our girls' sake, Don wanted to move. One of his friends told him he would like Virginia. So you can imagine my joy when he came home one day and asked if there were any churches in Virginia.

We ended up settling on going to Floyd, Virginia. I had listened to a series of revival meetings from Eli Yoder, and I just knew in my heart that was where we needed to go. From past experience we got a job first. I also made contact with the church explaining our



intentions. They were open to us coming. What a confirmation!

We sold or gave away everything that we couldn't fit into our suburban and car and headed to Floyd, Virginia, in March 2011. We had a hard time trying to find housing, but finally we found a lovely farmhouse to rent in the next county. It was about an hour's drive up a winding mountain road to the church in Floyd.

I remember the first Sunday I walked into church. I was so weary, but my joy overflowed. I felt like I had finally made it to shore. As I listened to Brother Eli Yoder's sermon about an orphan, I couldn't hold back the tears. I spent the better part of the sermon in the bathroom listening through the speaker and trying to gather myself together.

After a short time, I became a member of Wills Ridge Mennonite Church. I remember one of the brothers shaking my hand that night and saying, "Welcome home." Home! After feeling like I was lost at sea and treading water for so many years without even a life boat, I finally found home!

I loved the church. I made some very near and dear friends at Wills Ridge. They *were* my family! Then I got terribly sick. I was so sick I could hardly care for myself. I believe the brothers and sisters at Wills Ridge would have stood by me and cared for me, but Don felt I should be closer to my mom so she could help me when needed. God gave me an amazing sense of peace about going back to Arizona, so I was ready to go.

Wickenburg, Arizona (2013)

One of the men from the Anabaptist church in Wickenburg, Arizona offered Don a job. So instead of returning to Tucson or the White Mountains with no church, we went to Wickenburg.

My health improved quite a bit in the dryer climate at Wickenburg, but the desert heat was hard on Don since he worked outdoors. So, we decided not to settle there.

Tucson, Arizona (2014)

Brooke moved to North Dakota and Autumn moved

to Buckeye, Arizona. It was just Don and I when we moved back to Tucson. At first, we moved in with my mother. Don had been a cook most of his life, so he got a job in a restaurant right away.

My mom was home most days and she helped care for me. But the darkness that dwelt in my parents' home as a child was still there. It didn't take long before I was facing some heavy spiritual battles. It was hard, but this time I had Jesus, and He helped me through. He did not let me fall.

When we moved out into our own apartment, things got better and brighter. I was still so physically weak though that my mom came by often to help. I was still in bed or on the couch most of the time. I relied on a wheelchair when I went outside. I focused on trying to figure out how to get better and praying for a church to come to us. I called a dear sister in Virginia often and we prayed together with tears. This time God did not let me stay all alone.

The couple I had been friends with for years moved to Tucson too. They were 45 minutes away, but they started coming over on Sundays and we would home-church. A few more couples who were scattered far and wide started coming every once in a while. It was such a time of refreshing and spiritual growth. We prayed to see if the Lord would make a way for us to move closer to one another, but the opportunity just didn't present itself.

My health had improved a lot, but toward the end of 2016 I suddenly started failing. I noticed our bookcase and some books were covered in mold and the floor was wet. I finally made the connection that mold was probably the foundational reason for all my health issues.

In addition to the mold illness, I developed Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. We had no choice but to move



The Heinemann's house today

out of the apartment that day and back in with my mom. Again, we had to get rid of just about everything we owned.

Being back at mom's house, the spiritual battles started again and continued relentlessly for the year and a half that we stayed there. Satan was especially strong, trying to call me back to him with his song. I just kept saying, "No, I belong to Jesus. I belong to Jesus!" I grew so weary—mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Spiritually I felt lost at sea, utterly exhausted, trying desperately to keep clinging to Jesus. But Jesus is strong and mighty. He did not let me fall back into the hands of my former master (the evil one).

Hereford, Arizona (2018)

We had often prayed that God would bring a church to our area. Over the years I received sermons and newsletters from a church in Arkansas, named "Little Flock." We learned Little Flock was considering an outreach in Sierra Vista, an hour and a half southeast of Tucson. When it was confirmed that indeed they were coming to that area, we bought a property in Hereford in June of 2017.

We planned to build a small, natural "safe" house that I could tolerate. The land was raw with no amenities, so we started off in a trailer park in Tombstone about 35 miles away from Sierra Vista. I couldn't drive, but the church people were so kind to help me get to church and back.

Soon the smells from the laundry room and other campers really affected my health, so we ended up moving onto our land way before we were ready. We ran electric to the camper and called it good. The day we moved from Tombstone, we drove over the San Pedro River. To me, this was like crossing Jordan. I

was able to live within the church community. The following Sunday I was taken in as a member at Desert Rose Christian Fellowship.

Home in Sierra Vista (2020)

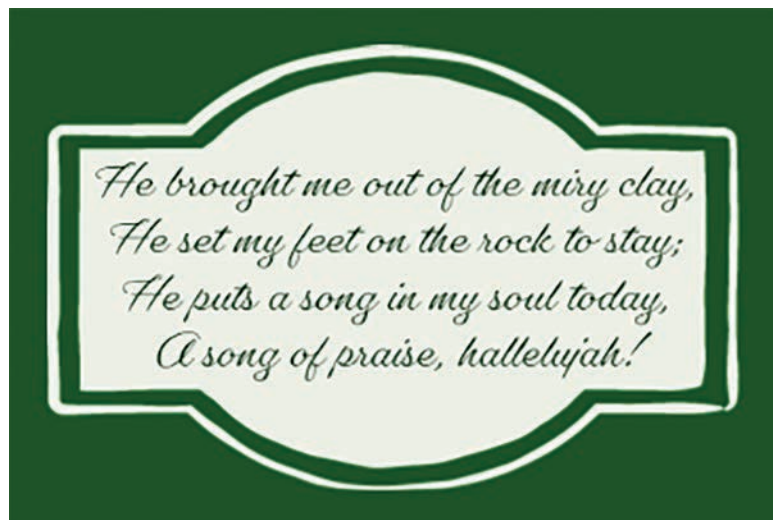
Our camper was breaking apart from moving it around and it started leaking. We really needed to get out of it, but we ran into trouble trying to get financed when our building costs came to be much higher than we first figured. But, the church people here and even some friends from afar helped us get a little house built. It's 640 sq ft and fits us perfectly.

On April 27, 2020 we moved into our new home. I never would have thought that it would be 14 years from the time we sold Don's dream house, to be able to have our own home again. Finally, one of God's sparrows had found a house. As it says in Psalm 84:3, **"Even the sparrow has found a home."**

I am turning 50 this year. I mourn that despite every effort, my husband and children have chosen to stay in the world. But I am thankful that they traveled this journey with me. I am also thankful that, as a whole, they have a very positive view of the church. Now I have two little granddaughters. I keep lifting them up to the Father.

The church here is a true blessing. I'm the least of these beautiful brethren, but my heart is full of joy to be counted with them.

I have often been encouraged by Abraham. It seems like most of his life was never about a destination; rather it was about the journey of following God. In many ways my life has been like that of Abraham who dwelled in tents and moved about from place to place. He never laid foundations for a city here. My transient lifestyle has helped me to be a spiritual nomad with nothing permanent here, but to always keep my eyes fixed on **"the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).**



I Gave to Jesus

I gave to Jesus my sorrows;
My brokenness, and tears.
I gave to Him my shattered dreams;
His presence calmed my fears!

I gave to Jesus the fierce test
He'd called me to walk through;
And I found His grace sufficient,
And His great love, so true!

I gave to Jesus my heartaches;
My heavy burden, too.
I gave Him my fears and failures;
And knew He'd see me through!

I gave to Jesus my weakness;
He gave me His power!
I gave to Him all my problems;
He was near me each hour.

I gave Jesus my confusion;
He gave wisdom, and peace.
I gave to Him my ev'rything.
His love, did never cease!

Now Jesus gives to me, so much!
His joy, beyond compare;
Peace that passes understanding;
His song, and not despair!

He gives me grace to trust in Him,
When I don't understand!
He carries me when I am weak,
And holds me in His hand.

Faith Jansky

Why I Wear a Plain Suit

by James G. Landis

The pages are yellow now. I first wrote and published this article 45 years ago, but my testimony still rings true in 2023. So, I will first reprint the article as it stood when I first wrote it in the distant past. Then I will add some additional thoughts I have had on the subject since 1977.

It's different. It's supposed to be. Herein lies its virtue and herein is the stumbling block.

God wants His people to be different from the people of the world. He wants them to act differently. He wants them to talk differently. He wants them to look different.

From the time of Israel to this present age, God knew that in times of prosperity His people face the danger of being assimilated into the world. This dare not happen. When it does, He must spue them out of His mouth.

Israel was supposed to be different from other nations. God wanted them to live separate from other people. He wanted them to plow and plant their fields in a different way. He wanted them to dress differently.

But whenever He blessed them, and they prospered, they began to intermingle with the peoples of the world. The differences began to disappear and they went “awhoring after other gods.”

Now in my mind, a person who is “going awhoring” is not going very slowly. Rather, I see people trotting with their heads bent down and a ring in their nose. And most likely their arms are linked together with other sinners. They all dress the same and like galley slaves they're all rowing to the beat of the same commander. Some irresistible force seems to be sucking them into the maelstrom of the world—and away from God.

God called me to be a part of a chosen generation, a part of a royal priesthood, a part of a holy nation, and a part of a people that God has reserved for His own possession. I don't want to be “awhoring after other gods.” I want to be different from the world and from those who go following after the ways of the world.

So, I wear a plain suit. No apologies.

The way I see it, the plain suit does this in two different ways. First of all, it reminds me that I am a child of God and that I am different from the children of the world. As such a reminder, it aids in bringing forth a standard of conduct which befits the people of God.

Sometimes my suit has helped me be a bit more

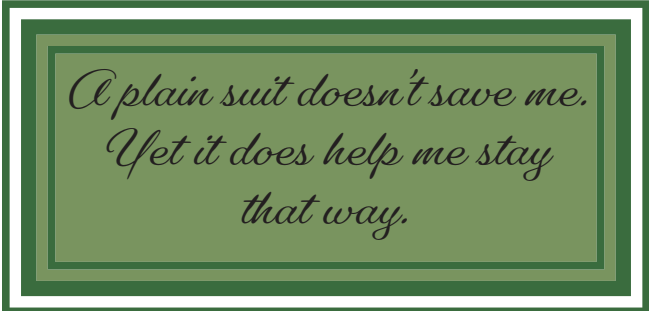
careful in my speech. Sometimes it helped me decide if I wanted to be seen in a certain place or in companion with certain people. At times it has helped me show forth the praises of Him who has called me out of darkness into His marvelous light. I can think of other times when I just kept my mouth shut and failed to give my testimony when I didn't have my plain suit on. It might have been different if my suit had reminded me and helped me.

The plain suit has been a useful aid in helping me decide if my standard of holiness and conduct has been befitting for a child of God.

My suit also tells worldly folks that I am different from them. They expect more of me, and are more careful not to run to the same excess of riot in my presence as what they are generally accustomed to. They make excuses and apologies for their evil speech when it slips out unexpectedly. One time I was rightfully embarrassed when a police officer stopped me for speeding. He didn't expect that kind of conduct from one so attired, and I knew it.

At other times, complete strangers have expressed an interest in my faith and identified me as a child of God because I was wearing my suit. Without my suit I easily could have slipped by unidentified and without giving my testimony.

As far as I know, my plain suit has never represented me as some kind of army general or a Catholic priest. I have never been mistaken for a medical doctor or hippy while wearing it. Invariably, people attach a religious significance to the garb and correctly identify the wearer



*A plain suit doesn't save me.
Yet it does help me stay
that way.*



as someone acutely interested in spiritual things. I have been mistaken for a preacher at times. This does me no harm. I can think of many other things I would rather *not* be mistaken for.

The plain suit has been a reminder to me and a witness to others of my differentness and separateness from the world. I think it's a good thing. To some who claim to be children of God, it's a big pill and hard to swallow. I've heard their arguments and watched some of their actions. I'm not ready to bite their bait or condone their actions.

Sin is always sin whether you've got a plain suit on or not. But just because a person sins with a plain suit on doesn't mean the plain suit is a bad thing. It just makes the sin or inconsistency look that much worse. So, I'm sympathetic to those who aren't in favor of wolves going around in sheep's clothing. They ought to look like wolves (and often do). But God help us if we've got a whole church full of wolves! I think the occasional wolf hiding in sheep's clothing is usually ill at ease and often one of the first to get out of those clothes. He's usually quite touchy.

I don't wear a plain suit because I have to. My parents didn't encourage it. The church didn't require it when I started wearing one. Rather, I started wearing a plain suit because I chose to do so. It identified me with the kind of people I wanted to be with.

It's not the law. It's an application of a principle that helps us maintain separation from the world. And remember, as I said earlier, we have to maintain separation from the world.

If the plain suit is going to be useful in maintaining separation, we have to wear it a number of places besides church on Sunday morning. A communion service and an occasional wedding or funeral aren't enough either. Now I'm all for having a distinctive garb or mark that will identify us all the time as the people of God. But until we come up with an agreeable, acceptable, and practical alternative, I'm not ready to abandon the plain suit for a roll collar coat, sport coat, short sleeves, neck

tie, bell bottom pants, or dungarees either. Why should I leave a tried and tested application of a principle for any other way that has proven, again and again, leads only to accommodation with the world?

There are those who just don't like the plain suit because they were forced to wear it by parents or the church at sometime during their life. Others get some kind of legalistic claustrophobia at the thought of wearing one. But I have been amazed at the ridiculousness of the attire which some of the same people have worn when they forsook the suit and adopted the ways of the world.

Let me hasten to add that I like the sense of security I get when other believers practice the same application of the principle that I do. I don't want to be the only one who wears a plain suit. And I'm not going to be. Fifteen years ago, a friend told me that nobody's wearing them anymore. He said he's about the only one left. And he was right among the brethren he fellowshiped with. He took off his plain suit and ... put on a neck tie.

About ten years after my friend quit wearing his plain suit, I saw a thousand men at one place wearing plain suits. I'm going to watch where I look and the kind of fellowship I seek.

I haven't always worn a plain suit. I put mine on about the same time my friend took his off. To me the plain suit has been a blessing and an aid in keeping me in a right standing before God.

It hasn't always been easy. Although I've never been shot at or stoned, I have been uncomfortable while wearing it. Then the words of Jesus in Mark 8:38 go through my mind. *"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."* In the honesty of the darkened prayer closet I have to suspect the weakness of the flesh and the lust thereof have made me a trifle ashamed. May God forgive me.

I want to do better. I want to be identified in my speech, my conduct, and my appearance as a part of the precious, ransomed, redeemed, and separated people of God—until He comes.

It's not the law. It's the application of a principle.

2023 Update

It is appropriate and respectful that we wear a suit to worship services. Not only do we show our respect and humility before God, but also toward others. But it is not fitting to wear a suit to the milking parlor or the bakery. So, I will suggest some other identity marks that Christian men can apply at other times.

- Long sleeves in many places mark men as modest and different.
- In public places, keep shirt collars buttoned.
- Avoid flashy and tight-fitting shirts and pants. Keep shirts modest.
- Keep hair and beard styles neat and orderly.
- Be careful that your hat does not class you with the wrong crowd.
- Remove your hat in houses, church buildings, offices, and other meeting places. Be respectful.
- Wear loose-fitting pants (not baggy) that are held up above the hips with a plain belt or suspenders (not gaudy).
- Wear plain and comfortable shoes.

The plain suit on dress occasions does not stand by itself. It should be accompanied every day of the week by plain and modest clothing backed up by respectful and consistent living.

In every culture modest and simple clothing can be God-honoring and respectful of others as well as distinctive. Men's clothing should be all three.

In American culture, the plain suit serves as a mark of separation from the world. But it stands for more than culture to other Anabaptist believers. In congregations where both young and old men consistently wear the plain suit, we generally expect to find the following godly practices:

- modesty
- purity
- simple, unadorned meeting houses without symbols
- unaccompanied congregational singing
- family life and loyalty (babies, children, youth, and seniors)
- sex distinction
- adequately veiled women
- greeting with the holy kiss
- council meeting
- foot-washing services
- brotherhood
- sharing with those in need
- honesty

- separation of church and state
- no television and accountability on internet usage
- a lay ministry

I am sure that in some congregations there may be other attributes not mentioned. But most Anabaptist congregations would agree in principle that these values should be present in our churches. But the practice of them may be quite varied in the congregation.

Men wearing the plain suit are usually united in the churches on these fundamentals. When men stop wearing the plain suit, many of these things slide away. These valued practices disappear as a united testimony and witness. Men are no longer part of a cohesive organization and become soldiers without a uniform, airline pilots without hats and stripes, and police without badges.

I have heard the argument that the plain suit is impractical and too costly. That is true in some cases. But where men desire to wear a plain suit, there are those who will help obtain one by alteration or purchase. In the end, a plain suit probably costs less in time and money than a number of neckties and the fuss of putting them on. I know a young man who wanted to rent a tuxedo for his wedding rather than purchasing a new plain suit for the occasion. The cost of both options was not that much different. The plain suit could be worn for years, the tuxedo for that one occasion. The difference was in the desire and not in the cost.

Another observation I make is that the wearing of the plain suit by men greatly encourages the women to be modest in their clothing and faithful in the wearing of a veiling that both covers the hair and symbolizes their place in God's order.

Men wearing the plain suit assume the leadership in the church. Men teach and preach in the public worship services, according to the biblical command. There is no confusion because of women asserting authority over the men.

These are some of the observations I have made in the ensuing 45 years since I wrote the first article. They are not divine oracles, but point out the value of marks of separation from the world in the generation in which we live.

J. G. L. | Georgia

*For as in the
days before
the flood, they
were eating
and drinking,
marrying
and giving
in marriage,
until the day
that Noah
entered the
ark, and did
not know until
the flood came
and took them
all away.*

Matthew 24:37-39

The Great Pyramid

By Norman Ward

*If there be any virtue, and if there be any
praise, think on these things.*

— Philippians 4:8

According to the pervasive philosophical lie called evolution, man should be getting progressively and measurably more intelligent. Conversely, the further one would go back in time, the more crude and primitive all human artifacts and other evidences of former civilizations should be.

But, there are at least two glaring problems with that theory:

(1) Even in this present day, humans in different parts of the world are functioning with various levels of technology. Technology is not universal.

(2) The second thing that gives the lie to the idea of the continual progression of man's knowledge is that archeological discoveries from the ancient past do not consistently reveal increasing technological ignorance, the further one goes back in history. It shows, instead, that a lot of knowledge once grasped by man was evidently lost somehow, then rediscovered in more recent times. (Precise map-making skills date back to a time before the North and South Poles were covered with ice.)

Consider the ancient pyramids—some of the ones in ancient Egypt date back to about 2500 B.C. (Before Christ). A thick book would be insufficient to give all the details of the astounding manner in which the pyramids were laid out and built; the precision with which the stones were cut and placed, as well as many other puzzling things. Modern science and technology cannot even explain how the pyramids were built.

We will briefly consider just one aspect of them: the Giza pyramid was originally covered with white casing stones polished to a mirror finish. Most of these were dislodged by an earthquake in 1301 A.D. and were afterwards used in the construction of buildings in the city of Cairo, but enough of them remain around the base to show

how it once was. The weight of these stones averaged between 16 and 20 tons and covered all four sides. It took about 115,000 of these stones.

The casing stones were cut and placed with such precision that the average thickness of the joints is .020 of an inch [two hundredths]. Inside that narrow gap is a type of cement that is harder than the rock itself. The composition of that cement is unknown to modern man. The largest of these casing stones measure 12' x 5' x 8'. These stones do not vary in their dimensions by more than .01 of an inch.

There is no way any of this could have been done with the technology that the ancient Egyptians are credited with having. It is doubtful that this could be duplicated with every bit of available modern technology.

So far, we're only talking about the exterior casing stones, most of which are no longer there. On these casing stones, as well as the internal structural stones (some of which are granite), there are uniform saw marks showing that power-driven rock saws had to have been employed.

Archeologists who have subscribed to the modern evolutionary lie are convinced that all humans at this early period groped about in primitive ignorance. They believe that as far as any technology is concerned, the Egyptians lacked "modern" skills and machinery. Yet they can offer no explanation as to how these massive stones were cut, much less the presence of these consistently uniform, obviously machine made saw marks.

Evolutionary "wisdom" teaches that all the metals the ancient Egyptians had to work with was copper (some concede that they possibly had bronze). I recently came across an illustrated children's book on construction equipment entitled, *Cranes, Dump Trucks, Bulldozers and other Building Machines*. The writers of the book took it upon themselves to start off by

instructing these children that “early man” began building stuff, after a fashion, about the time he lost his tail and began to walk in an upright position “about two million years ago” in East Africa. (It’s a good idea to read carefully the books you give children. A lot of them have a hidden agenda.)

Anyhow, I mention that book just to illustrate the circular reasoning of the evolutionists. They show a picture of a hand saw with a copper blade and the text says, “By 3000 B.C. early Egyptians were using copper saws. By 850 B.C. they were using iron saws to cut stones.”

*The pyramids were built
beginning back around
2500 B.C.*

But the pyramids were built beginning back around 2500 B.C., not 850 B.C.! Good luck cutting stone with any kind of hand saw, much less one with a copper blade! Even the young children that book was meant to deceive would know better, if they stopped to think about it.

In reality, they had to have had some kind of power-driven saw. Modern experts of quarrying and rock-cutting machinery, upon observing the saw marks on the pyramid stones, have unanimously declared that there is no way those stones could have been cut by hand power. The degree of accuracy in which they were cut and the consistency of the saw marks testify loudly and clearly against it. Whose word do we want to take on the subject—someone who knows what they are talking about in that field or someone who has an agenda to prove (evolution).

Of further interest is the fact that wrought iron and sheet iron have both been found embedded in some portions of these pyramids proving that the builder’s knowledge of metallurgy was far in advance of what they are credited with.

But back to rock saws: Modern ones do not have blades with teeth as rock would quickly destroy the teeth. Present-day saws operate on a kind of bandsaw principle with

a continuous loop of wire going around two wheels with one of the wheels driving it. The agent that does the cutting is not the wire, but an abrasive compound made from an extremely hard substance that is constantly applied to the wire as it moves.

“Well,” someone may say, “If they had any such machinery, what happened to it?”

One thing is certain, they would not have just left it laying around in the desert. Probably over the long centuries the same thing happened to it that befell the outer casing stones on the pyramids—they were later hauled off and used for other things. At the time of the Exodus, when God smote Egypt with all the devastating plagues, the country went from being a major world power to a kind of third-rate nation. Their day of lavish building projects was over. In fact, their latest pyramids were not as well made as the earlier ones—just the opposite of what would be the case if they were steadily “evolving” in expertise and technology.

There are a great many more marvels connected with the pyramids and other ancient megastructures found around the world. How did such massive amounts of material get moved into place? How could they build with such accuracy? Some evolutionists, lacking these answers, have said that aliens from outer space must have come to earth in space craft and showed the ancients how to do these things. It takes more faith to believe that idea than to just believe that God created man with intelligence to begin with.

For more on this fascinating subject obtain the book, *The Puzzle of Ancient Man* by Donald E. Chittick; published by Creation Compass, PO Box 993, Newberg, Oregon 97132.

Or order from: <answersingenesis.org>

N. W. | Colquitt, Georgia

*For this
they willfully
forgot that by
the heavens
were of old,
and the earth
standing out
of water, by
the world that
then existed
perished, being
flooded with
waters.*

2 Peter 3:5-6

Editor's Note:

The subject so fascinated me that I bought the book, *The Puzzle of Ancient Man*, and did some additional research. Here are some astounding facts about the Great Pyramid that support Brother Ward's thesis: "Humans had skills and technology superior to what we know today."

- The Great Pyramid was built around 2500 B.C. Joseph came to Egypt about 700 years later.

- "The technology reflects an already high state when first found by archaeology. That fact would make sense if it had already been developed before the Flood and reapplied afterwards" (page 99).

- "The Great Pyramid is the largest and most accurately constructed building in the world" (page 106). "The pyramid originally stood 147 meters (482 feet) high with four equal sides each measuring 230 meters (755 feet) at the base" (Encyclopedia Britannica).

- "The entire 13-acre base was built to a precision of seven-eighths of an inch of being perfectly flat; an error of one-thousandth of one percent. In the distance of one foot, the error would be less than half the thickness of a human hair" (page 91).

- "The sides were equal in length by a precision of one-tenth of one percent" (page 105). "Misaligning the edges at the bottom by only two degrees would have resulted in an error of almost 50 feet at the top" (page 130).

- "The casing stones were cut and joined with great accuracy. The mean thickness of the joints was a miniscule 200ths of an inch. Inside that narrow gap, was a type of cement that bonded the marble with greater strength than that of the marble itself. The composition of the cement is still a mystery" (page 103).

- Egyptologists estimate the Great Pyramid "contains 2.5 million blocks of stone, some of which are massive, especially the pink granite in the King's Chamber, a room near the top of the pyramid that houses a red granite sarcophagus."

- "The stones for this chamber weighed between 25 and 80 tonnes and were brought roughly 500 miles to the site of the pyramids. Estimates for the number of materials used are 5 million tonnes of limestone and 8,000 tonnes of granite" (Discover Walks Blog, "Top 15 Facts about the Pyramid of Giza").

- "If the stone masons worked ten hours a day for 20 years it would require that 31 blocks per hour be set in place" (page 129). This does not count the time to



quarry the stones, some of which had to be transported 100 miles to the construction site.

Practically all sources agree that the Great Pyramid was built around 2560 B.C. (Before Christ). Few agree on how the rocks were quarried and put in place with such precision. No one has been able to explain how man could do these feats using the latest technology and skills and machinery we possess today. Yet the Great Pyramid is standing there, 4580 years later.

All agree the Great Pyramid was built as a monument and a tomb to an Egyptian Pharaoh. In other words, the Great Pyramid was built by human beings for a human being. It was not built by monkeys or primitive men. It was built by men from a very advanced civilization.

How can we explain this phenomenon?¹ A Bible scholar, Brian Thomas, Ph.D., has studied the biblical chronology intensively and reconciled it with fixed historical events we are sure of, such as the year of Abraham's birth (2166 B.C.). "When we add the years listed in Genesis 11 to Abraham's birth year, we get about 2472 B.C. for the Flood year."²

What an astounding conclusion we can make from this chronology! **The Great Pyramid was built 88 years before the Universal Flood of Noah's time (2560 B.C. - 2472 B.C.).** If Brian Thomas' chronology is correct, that timing could explain the wonders associated with the Great Pyramid as well as many of the other puzzling achievements of ancient man.

Who can argue with the Great Pyramid? There the pyramid stands as a testimony to a sovereign God who destroyed a very advanced civilization because of its wickedness.

¹ phenomenon: a fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen, especially one whose cause or explanation is in question.

² Brian Thomas, Ph.D. 2018. *When Did Noah's Flood Happen? Acts and Facts*. 47 (3).

Brian Thomas is Science Writer at the Institute for Creation Research and earned his M.S. in biotechnology from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Revival Reflections

By Gerald Keller

Burkeland Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Georgia

On the evening of March 5, 2023, Brother Gerald read some verses as an introduction to his own recall of the meetings held on February 19, 2023 through February 26, 2023. Brother Wendell Heatwole of Olar, South Carolina brought the opening Sunday morning message. Brother Philip Martin of Bridgewater, Virginia brought the messages during the following week.

Personal Testimony and Reflections:

I Chronicles 16:23-25 – Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation. **Declare His glory** among the heathen; **His marvellous works** among all nations. For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised ...

Psalms 34:3 – O magnify the LORD with me, and let us **exalt His name together.**

Psalms 105:1 – O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: **make known his deeds among the people.**

Psalms 145:4 – One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall **declare thy mighty acts.**

Isaiah 12:4 – And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, **declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.**

February 19, Sunday morning message by Brother Wendell Heatwole

After God's Own Heart – Each of us should have a heart that worships God in obedience, righteousness, and with compassion.

February 20, Monday evening message by Brother Philip

The Parable of Purpose – Each one must enter at the straight gate and narrow way, and be willing to sell all; have a passion to “KNOW” God.

February 21, Tuesday evening message by Brother Philip

God's Community – Knowing our identity in Christ creates values and principles that builds “community” in relationships.

February 22, Wednesday evening message by Brother Philip

Discipleship, The Way of the Master – Having the mind of Christ allows God's Word to purify us and make of us disciples that build brotherhood.

February 23, Thursday evening message by Brother Philip

Brother Philip's Personal Testimony – A rebellious young man with carnal ambitions, pleads for truth and has his heart transformed by that truth.

February 24, Friday evening message by Brother Philip

The Signature of Christ – We must realize as Christians (little Christs), our reputation needs to be that of a meek and lowly Christ; not of ourselves.

February 25, Saturday evening message by Brother Philip

God's Call to Engage – Waking up ... walking circumspectly ... redeeming the time ... having a personal, vital relationship with Jesus Christ.

February 26, Sunday morning message by Brother Philip

The Two Kingdoms: Truth and Error – Recognizing that the foundation of our relationships is built on the two pillars of Truth and Love.

February 26, Sunday evening message by Brother Philip

Faith Perspective – The conviction that “walking by faith” ... means that knowing, desiring, and being confident that simple and obedient living, will give a vision for something beyond this life.



Jail - The Proving Ground

by Michael T. Kimble

Will It Be Heaven or Hell?

*When I was lost and living in sin,
Satan opened hundreds of doors and took me in.
I did run and I did hide,
Trying to flee that emptiness inside.*

*But I knew the truth and continued to rebel,
Until I got in trouble and ended up in jail.
I said I didn't do it, and everyone else I did blame,
But deep down inside, I knew I played a losing game.*

*After I got booked and taken back to my pod,
I looked all around; now it was just me and God.
You can reject Him or accept Him, it's all up to you;
The decisions in life we all must go through.
Now it's lock down and I'm all alone in my cell.*

*I fall to my knees and ask God for forgiveness,
And add, "please save me from hell."
Now, I know I'm at peace and on the right way;
Each morn I wake up and thank God for one more day.*

Editor's note:

– More than 12 years ago, an inmate handed this poem to me at a jail service. I have never seen him since and am at a loss to know how to secure permission to publish the poem. To God be the glory.

Round Table Discussion

by AV Readers

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

– AV Editor

Jesus' Warnings About Wealth

by Lis Tenup

I would like to respond to “Line upon line” by Good Glasses, who was responding to my statement that “Jesus taught non-accumulation as clearly as He taught non-resistance” in AV #26.

Let me start off by saying thank you for your response and I agree wholeheartedly with your conclusions [*The New Testament does teach how to use riches*]. I also want to say that I agree with the AV Editor’s response as well [*We are stewards of the Master’s wealth*]. When I made that statement, I had just finished reading *Through the Eye of a Needle* by Roger Hertzler. Since then, I have continued studying the topic and my knowledge and understanding have grown. At the time I did not have another name for the concept, but now I refer to it simply as “Jesus’ Warnings About Wealth.”

I’m not sure how much to write and I don’t want to come off as argumentative; that is not my intention. I agree with the assertion that there are other scriptures that seem to imply the need for accumulation. The biggest problem I have encountered is that instead of looking at what Jesus said in the parable of the Rich Young Ruler in Matthew 19:24 (ESV), “*Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God,*” most people consider themselves the exception to that warning.

I am not saying that all rich people are automatically condemned to hell; God can bless whomever He chooses. But Jesus warns consistently about the dangers and subtleness of the deception of wealth. Since my desire is to love God with every fiber of my being and to spend eternity with Him, I cannot fathom intentionally ignoring His warnings about something that could lead me to miss out, especially after discovering that “American Christianity,” which I used to belong to, is doing that very thing.

I’ll leave it at that as I think “Good Glasses” and

the AV Editor addressed it well enough in issue #27. I would like to see an article addressing this issue some time in the future. I believe this is something that can lead us to hear, “Depart from me you workers of iniquity,” if we get it wrong.

AV Editor

After telling a story or giving an important teaching, Jesus said a number of times, “*He that has ears to hear, let him hear.*” In contemporary English, we might say, “Listen up! This is an important teaching. Ponder it! Do not forget it!”

In Luke 14:25-35, Jesus gave a number of important teachings on discipleship—hating one’s family and one’s self, bearing one’s cross, counting the cost before starting out, the uselessness of salt without flavor. Next to the last on the list Jesus issued this veiled warning, “*So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*” After Jesus finished these special teachings He said, “*He that has ears to hear, let him hear!*”

Let us “listen up” to this passage. If Jesus meant that one must literally get rid of all his earthly possessions in order to be a disciple of Jesus, then to be consistent with the rest of the passage it would mean that one should literally hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also.

Rather, Jesus is warning all would-be disciples that the cost of being one of His disciples is very high. If they wish to follow Him, nothing—family or possessions—dare stand in the way or come ahead of complete love and service to Him. Everyone should consider this high cost before making a commitment so one does not lose out after they have been baptized.

The title, “Jesus’ Warnings about Wealth” correctly sums up the New Testament teaching on riches and their use. Let us keep in mind that wealth in the Master’s control can also be a blessing to many and a means of laying up treasure in heaven.

Jesus stunned His disciples when He told them it was hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. They were exceedingly amazed and asked, “Who then can be saved?”

Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:25-26). So, by the power of God even a rich man can be saved. Do you know of anyone who can be saved without the power of God? I do not.

Lis Tenup is calling for an article in Anabaptist Voice, entitled, “Jesus’ Warnings about Wealth.” It is a good idea and we would welcome several articles on the subject, especially one from Lis Tenup. Several stories or testimonies on the subject for “The Practical Side” could also be helpful as wealth lies close to everyone’s life experience.



Rules About Wealth

by Con Cerned

Many people cannot afford to live up to our church guidelines. For example, how can a person from a third-world country afford a black automobile, a black velvet hat, a suit coat for church, or a headcovering made to our specs? Many times, they cannot even buy the basics to survive.

Would it not be better for us to obey Jesus’ teachings on not accumulating wealth rather than making many rules on how to live with these riches?

AV Editor

“A certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”

And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Matthew 8:19-20).

Jesus was not saying that all His followers must be penniless without a home or place of shelter. But He did want this scribe to understand that he would have to give up everything to become one of His followers. It would take more than lip service to join His band of kingdom students (disciples).

I do not know of anywhere in the New Testament where it commands all believers to live in tents or mud huts or caves with outdoor toilets. God has placed each of us in different circumstances with different skills and opportunities. Thank God that many Christians have been placed in circumstances where we have the *opportunity and responsibility* to provide for our own basic needs and to share with those in need. We will have to answer for how faithful we have been in living up to the opportunities God has given us, not in how poor we have been in this world’s goods.

In John 21:18, Jesus revealed to Peter the horrible death by which he would glorify God. Then He followed up with the command, “Follow Me.” Then Peter, turning around saw John and said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?” Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remains till I come, what is that to you? You follow me” (John 21:19, 22).

This command to Peter to follow Jesus, regardless of problems we see in others, is still one that challenges every kingdom disciple today.



Pray for Each Other

by For Given

The purpose of this letter is to respond to statements published in AV27, page 32, under “Pray for Each Other.”

– It is technically incorrect to say there are no human priests in the New Testament. All believers are called to this work, which is why they are called a royal priesthood.

– The remark, “We need no go-between to plead our case with God, as we have Jesus now, *has some limitations.*” The apostle Paul prayed for the newly formed congregations, and gave instructions that prayers are to be offered up on each others behalf.

AV Editor

These two points are correct, but I feel they need additional explanation. I would understand that the work of the Old Testament priest was to ask God to forgive

the sin of the sinner. Yet Hebrews 10 tells us that the sacrifices offered up by the priest could never take away sin. Therefore, the priest had to offer the same sacrifice again and again. “Every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which *can never take away sins*. But this Man (Jesus), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:11-14). So, in that one sacrifice, Jesus made the work of the priest as an intermediary between God and man, unnecessary.

For Given is correct when he says we are to pray for each other and for the newly formed congregations. But how should we pray for them? We should pray that they might repent and have their sins forgiven.

I do not understand that I should pray that God would forgive their sins. Paul wrote in Romans 1:9, “I make mention of you always in my prayers.” Paul did not say, “I pray God will forgive your sins.” He consistently taught that sinners must repent and stop sinning or they will be judged by an almighty God and punished for their sins. Neither do I pray God to forgive the sins of others.

Jesus prayed while on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Stephen prayed for his persecutors, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin” (Acts 7:60). Whether God forgave the sins of those murderers or held them accountable, we do not know. However, in both cases it was a statement of total forgiveness on the part of the dying one toward their murderers. In that light, they themselves received complete forgiveness by the Father in heaven.

This would agree with what Jesus taught in Matthew 6:14: “If you forgive men their trespasses (against you), your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”



God and Satan at War

by Allis Love

I am writing about the article titled, “Sinners that War with God” (AV27, pages 7-11).

The preacher is a straight-shooter. But what is he saying? The title doesn’t seem to me to fit the content, but that’s just one small problem. The preacher is not talking about mankind as being at war with God. Satan

is at war with God. And he uses many human pawns in his war who then come under God’s wrath.

In reality Satan is at war with us, too—all humanity, because we are God’s creation, made in God’s image. And Satan hates all of God’s good creation. He hates us! God is at war with Satan who wants to destroy us, but God is not at war with humanity. God is at war with evil, with sin, with rebellion, with wickedness, with corruption, with deception—because Satan uses them to destroy us.

It is not correct to say, “God is anger,” or “God is wrath.” But that is sort of what I hear in the article, and that message is a destructive message. It is foundational and imperative that we say again and again that “God is love!” Satan attacked God’s love when he tempted Eve. He still is attacking God’s love. He doesn’t want us to believe that God loves us. He wants us to see God as an angry god. I don’t think that we should help him spread his lies--not one little bit.

God is love. Because of His love God hates all that destroys love, all that destroys those He created and loves. So, God is angry with wickedness every day, and with the source of it—the devil himself. I agree that the “wrath of God” is real. But, “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18). Men come under God’s wrath because they cling to *ungodliness and unrighteousness*.

But God is always ever loving and redemptive. That is His nature, His character, His essence. Jesus reveals that in His life. Does that mean that there is no wrath of God? No. But even His wrath is directed by His love. It is not contrary to His love. There is nothing in God that is contrary to anything else in God. We may think so, but that’s our problem, not God’s.

AV Editor

It seems you may be grappling with what the preacher in this message described when he said, “The wrath of God is just as indescribable as the love of God. It’s just as wide and deep and glorious as the love of God.” Maybe our human minds just cannot comprehend it.

I do not understand what you mean when you say “sinners war with Satan.” The very essence of sin is disobedience to God, not disobedience to Satan. The preacher does not say that God is at war with humanity, but that wicked mankind is at war with God. This is a crucial difference.

Satan wars with God, but God made mankind to be creatures of choice and He holds them accountable for their disobedience (sin). This brings sinners under God's wrath and His punishment. Throughout the Scripture God's warnings against punishment for sin stand; starkly, boldly, in the open.

We are not pawns of Satan, moved about under his control, but are held responsible by God for the choices we make to accept or reject Him. That does not mean God wants to "get us" or destroy us. According to II Peter 3:8-10, God does not wish to destroy anyone, but wants all men to come to repentance. Yes, according to John 3:16, God is love, but John 3:36 warns, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who

does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the *wrath of God abides on him.*"

The preacher is on solid ground when he urges people to fear God. This is what the Scripture says in Matthew 10:28. "Don't be afraid of people. They can kill you, but they cannot harm your soul. Instead, you should fear God who can destroy both your body and your soul in hell" (CEV). Fear of punishment often brings men to repentance; that is why it is good for us to proclaim a holy and righteous God to sinners who war with God.



Community of Goods

"As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."
- II Corinthians 6:10

*If I live in a community of goods where
I own nothing,
Am I rich or am I poor?*

*Jesus beheld the rich, young ruler
Who had great possessions.
Jesus beheld him, loved him, and said,
"One thing you don't have,
Treasure in heaven.
Go and sell and give,
Then thou shalt have treasure in heaven.
Take up the cross,
Follow me."*

*Jesus loved the widow's offering.
Two mites—next to nothing—
Yet more than everyone else.
Because it was her everything,
She gave more.
She gave her everything!*

*Those that missed the wedding feast
They had excuses—
One had a wife,
The other oxen,
The third lands.
They missed the wedding feast
Because of family and possessions.*

*I want to give an offering that Jesus loves.
I want to have treasure in heaven.
I am invited to the wedding and I want to go.*

*I give my car and cards,
Cash and coins,
House and posterity,
Oxen and land.
I give it all.*

*I give my plans too—
My dreams, education,
Future destinations.
I give even my choice
to have a choice.
I have no more money.
I own no thing.*

*The needle's eye is so small.
The camel must be unloaded.
The camel must be given too.*

*Am I poor?
Does giving make one poor?
How can a poor man never have hungered?
How can he never have suffered cold?
How can a poor man be content in his poverty?
How can a poor man be rich?*

*I live well—Due to the love
of my brotherhood.
What I receive from the community
I receive with thankfulness.
It is given and received
in honesty.
My basic needs are met.*

*I am well provided for
(better than well).
Food: fresh, local, and healthy.
Clothing: new, warm, even handmade.
Shelter: furnished, spacious, and clean.
Work: non-competitive, brotherly work.
Worship: wholesome, serious, daily.
Family: close, spiritual brothers and sisters.*

*With my brothers
I have nothing,
yet I have it all.
Without them,
I stand destitute.
With them, I can enjoy all things
And thrive.
Without them,
I suffer to survive.*

*Am I rich?
How can I be rich
when I own nothing?
Am I poor?
How can I be poor
when I enjoy all things?
What do you think?
Am I rich or am I poor?*

AV Editor

Jesus explained a paradox to His disciples in Matthew 16:25-26. “For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” (NIV). Were Christ’s disciples poor or rich? Peter said, “Lord, we have left everything to follow you!” Jesus answered Him, “No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields *for me and the gospel* will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life” (Mark 10:28-30) NIV.

Paul explained another paradox in II Corinthians 6:10 where he describes many of his sufferings for Christ—beatings, imprisonments and riots; hard work, sleepless nights, hunger; ... regarded as imposters ... sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything (NIV).

I believe it is the author’s intent to cause us to think about what it means for the Christian today to give up everything and yet still be exceedingly rich. It is hard for the carnal man to understand paradoxes such as this since he has never experienced the richness of new life in Christ, sins forgiven, and true joy versus fleeting happiness.



Practical Question:

The author’s question is up for discussion, “*Is he rich or poor?*”





The Practical Side:

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

— Colossians 3:17

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

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

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

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



The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today’s Anabaptists.

Train Up a Child

by XPerienced

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”
— Proverbs 22:6



I am not a psychology teacher, or even a psychology student, but I have observed many things as the 400+ years of our children and grandchildren’s lives have developed around us. My wife and I have had many opportunities to “try” things. We usually learned from these “trials.” Sometimes we learned how to do, sometimes how *not* to do!

Fathers, take the lead here. Training, in large part, should be done by the father. Mothers are for nurturing. Do not allow these roles to be reversed. Parents, you are adults and governed by morality and God’s commands. In some marriages, these roles can be more difficult to keep in their proper place because of differing temperaments. However, as I just mentioned, you are self-aware adults and can choose to do the right thing ... even if it is not your primary gifting. Mothers

need to be obeyed and respected as well as the father, but it is the father’s responsibility to make this happen. Fathers, train your children to instantly obey, not only your orders, but also Mother’s commands. Mother’s nurturing may not overshadow obedience, and father’s authority must not overshadow his unconditional love.

My experience and observation tells me there is a difference between training a child and teaching them the difference between right and wrong. I will explain.

When a child is born, he is completely selfish. According to his “mind,” everything in his world is there only to satisfy his wants. Any dissatisfaction is met with strong reactions. Every human is born in this condition. There are varying degrees of willfulness that govern this selfishness. Some children require more training and patience, some less. However, the basic principle is the same. Until the child is self-aware, his whole universe exists only for his pleasure. He will do anything in his power to please himself. This foundational and simple truth can be used to help a child become a productive member of society. It is a constant that can form the basis for shaping a selfish brat into a pleasantly rewarding and obedient child.



Babies are not Christians. They are humans. Young humans need training. Most of what I write here applies to children before they reach their second birthday. The selfish nature is present in all humans. A selfish child

is easy to train if you think about using his selfishness. The child will do what he perceives to be in his own best interest. He will do what he thinks is good for himself. The child may not be “thinking,” but he will instinctively do what benefits him. If grabbing a cookie off the table after being told, “no,” gives him a bad feeling, he will stop grabbing. This young child is not concerned about honoring his parents or pleasing God. He does not care about respect for authority or any other moral or biblical command. He responds only to the stinging sensation on the back of his hand. This displeases him and does not make him happy. He wants to be happy and experience pleasant feelings. He will modify his behavior accordingly.

Dogs are also selfish; they will do what it takes to benefit themselves. A well-trained dog can be obedient, useful, and almost polite. Is this because it now understands The Golden Rule? Is it honoring God and wanting to please Him? Is the dog useful and pleasant because it can see right from wrong? Of course not. The dog is all those things because it is concerned about itself. The innate and complete selfishness is the foundation for this dog’s behavior just as it was before it was trained. Simple obedience comes from punishment and/or rewards. It works because the dog is selfish. The dog has learned certain actions and reactions produce favorable conditions. Maybe something as simple as sitting down produces a doggy treat. Maybe obeying brings affection from its master. It makes the dog happy. I maintain it is still selfishness at the core of this behavior. The selfishness is still there, but we use it to produce desirable actions.

Untrained dogs or puppies are an annoyance and can be a serious liability. The same thing is true for an untrained child. When an untrained and overly friendly puppy expresses his happiness at visitors stopping in by jumping up and scratching the shiny new Ford, it becomes a liability. When an



untrained child climbs into this car and takes it for a spin, that is a liability. When an exuberant but untrained dog jumps up and knocks down a visiting child, that is a liability. When an untrained child convinces a visiting child to climb up into a nice big tree and there is a fall, this too is a liability. Training is an absolute necessity for all children. Training is a prerequisite for teaching morality.

The “terrible twos” are a product of poor parenting, not an inevitable event caused by the fall of man, or “The Curse.” The “terrible twos” will not happen if proper training takes place. Be intentional. Make time for this. The time for training is not when the friend’s

car is in your driveway! The time for training is when you are rested and feeling peaceful and patient.



The best time for training starts before the child is one year old. I have a mental picture of my wife holding one of our first children—still a small baby—at the table one Sunday morning. The clock was ticking, but there was time for a bit of breakfast. The young child

was grabbing at the “cereal bowl.” Mama scooted her chair back so the short little arms could not reach the bowl. Mama reached out to eat the “granola” at arm’s length. Now the baby’s attention switches to the spoon. Suddenly, the baby grabs the spoon and there is a wreck. The granola and the milk spills on momma’s dress. The incident occurred under pressure. We did not want to be late for church!

This situation can easily be avoided with a few minutes of training at a convenient time. You will need a cereal bowl with water, a spoon, and a small flat wooden stick or 12” ruler. A few splashes with the spoon will soon attract the baby’s attention. A quiet “no” is spoken as baby’s hand starts grabbing. This “no” is followed quickly with a sting on the back of his grabbing hand. Baby does not really see the little stick appear or disappear. Repeat this a few times and maybe include a physical pull back of the hand once or so. The sting will soon be associated with the “no.” If there is even the slightest hesitation of baby’s hand after the “no” is given, hold off with the sting until, or if, the grabbing resumes. No multi-syllable commands or explanations, just a “no” the child can easily hear and recognize. No demanding voice or yelling.

As the child grows a bit, details change, but the

method remains the same. A “no” is spoken (never loudly) followed by an instant reaction by the child, or a sting, his choice. At our house, anything on the highchair tray was fair game for the child’s grabbing ... anything on the edge of the table was off-limits, even if it was within reach. A few sessions with tempting treats was all it took. We did this deliberately, at home, without guests at the table. The flat side of a table knife can replace the ruler if handled carefully.

Have Mom and Dad alternate saying “no.” A quiet but distinct “no,” needs to bring an instant reaction no matter who says it. Our younger children soon learned to obey the “no” even if it was spoken by one of our older children. I believe it works best if the sting comes from a mostly “invisible source,” and is related only to the spoken “no.” Do not make threatening gestures with the stick. Just the “no,” and the sting. It is helpful to sometimes have the “no”



spoken by someone other than the “stinger.” Someone saying “no” from further away works to disconnect the “no” from a looming parent with a ruler.

When your child learns to crawl, put a small potted plant on the floor close to him when he is not looking. (An easy to clean floor is recommended). When he reaches for the plant say “no” in a quiet and non-threatening voice. If the hand does not stop, an immediate sting on the back of the hand with a wooden ruler should get a reaction.

Your child should be reacting positively to the spoken “no” by now, but sometimes different situations need additional lessons. If a sting is still needed at this stage, be sure the sting is severe enough to cause an immediate reaction, but not so severe as to cause lasting pain or injury. The innate selfishness of the child will take over and his behavior will be modified, maybe crying, maybe turning away, maybe both.

Positive training is needed also. If the child is old enough to crawl, he will be old enough to recognize his name. Get down on the floor close to the child, but where he does not immediately see



you. Say the child’s name, maybe tap on shoulder or back. When baby looks at you, say “come” and hold out your hands. Help him to come, but do not force him. You want the child to *choose* to come. Reward the child with a hug and nippy, or special “blanky.” Kind and loving words are appropriate also.



The goal is to produce an immediate reaction in the child when he hears his name spoken. The child must learn to put aside his own world immediately whenever he hears his name spoken by an authority figure. It is important to have the child recognize both parents as authority

figures. Sometimes a physical picking up of the child is needed at first, but the goal is to produce an immediate reaction to his name being spoken.

The small child may be focused and engrossed in his own little world, but he must be trained to abandon his world immediately and always when he hears his name. Speak his name loud enough so he can easily hear, but not in a threatening or demanding voice. Reward any favorable response immediately.

Punishment such as taking away favorite toys may be needed to help produce desired behavior. The toy can be given back when the child comes easily and quickly. Name recognition may take numerous sessions, but is crucial. It must be done. Find creative ways to make this happen. It should be solidly in place by the time the child starts walking.

When the child is old enough to run, he must learn to stop immediately and turn towards his called name. Continue to reinforce this behavior with regular testing during non-stressful times. Shopping at Walmart is **not** the right time! Remember to always reward them when you ask them to come. Use cookies or special treats, even coins for their piggy bank ... and always kind words and hugs.



Name recognition needs to produce an instinctive reaction in the child. This means a reaction before the child has time to think. As the child matures, reasoning and explanations will be appropriate and necessary.

Moral teachings of right and wrong, and responsibility before God need to be carefully introduced and become a part of obedience and respect for authority. This is beyond the scope of this article.

Most children will remember very few events that happened during their first four years of childhood.

They will, however, form behavioral patterns and responses to life that will affect them into adulthood. Bad attitudes and other mistakes by parents will not be remembered, but the training will stay.

Bad attitudes and inconsistent training are not to be accepted or excused but mistakes will be made. All parents fall short of perfection. Training needs to be consistent even if you are tired and don't feel like dealing with the problem. Inconsistent rule enforcement will confuse a child.

Be Consistent Always

Even if you are “just too tired.” It is always right to stop a child from running into the path of a speeding truck, even if you are in a bad mood and may react with anger. Apologies can be given later, but obedience does not hinge on the attitude or the “perfectness” of the authority figure.

In our home, I was too demanding and unyielding many times. I trained our children for my own convenience, not because I wanted what was best for them. I would not tolerate unruly or churlish behavior because I wanted to live in a peaceful place. I believe my children benefited from my training even though many times it was done in an improper way.

Mother's constant affirming love held our family together—even with Dad's unreasonableness. This love was given and demonstrated without negating Dad's sometimes harsh training. The children were not faced with “choosing sides.” I insisted that our children obey Mom because I loved her and wanted only the best for her.

Mom was strong and consistent in supporting Dad, always. The children knew we were together in caring for them even though our temperaments and methods were different—very different. I could have done much better.

This is not meant to oversimplify or make child

rearing appear easy. However, I believe these basic principles will give a good starting point for an enjoyable and successful family life. My wife and I had seven children in an eleven year span. This was during the first 12 years of marriage. We have very few, if any, bad memories of the times we grew together as a family. It would have been better for all of us if we would have known even some of what we know now. Somehow God thinks it okay to have children raised by inexperienced parents. You cannot change your lack of experience, but you can avoid ignorance. Grandparents may be able to help with that.

Our observations may align with teachings found in the Bible, but this article is not meant to be a biblical exposition on this subject. We made many mistakes and see things much clearer now, but grandmother and I will not get a chance to redo our childrearing.

We hope you will benefit from us sharing a bit of our experience.

Train children to obey while they are “babies.” Love them always.

Teach them right and wrong when they become children. Love them unconditionally.

SHOW them the right path ... ALWAYS. Demonstrate forgiving love always.

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it”

(Proverbs 22:6 NIV)

Anabaptist Voice would like you to share more practical experiences, observations, and thoughts you have or have had on child training. AV29, “The Practical Side: Readers Respond” is wide open.



The Practical Side: Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Did Dad's Philosophy Work?

– Some thoughts from the youngest child in the family:



Even though Dad was unyielding and at times seemed unreasonable, I now see the tremendous value in the finality of that. There was no doubt in our minds that when dad said something, that's just the way it was going to be. Always.

Strangely enough, to a child there's a certain comfort in knowing that his/her parents aren't wishy-washy or easily swayed! I now have four children of my own (ages 8 and under, with number five due next month).

Our 7-year-old son, in particular, likes to try to negotiate. For instance, if he asks for a particular snack and I say, "No, no snack right now," he'll try asking for something healthier, maybe a banana or something. While a banana is a perfectly reasonable thing for a child to have as a snack, I've already told him we're not having a snack right now. That needs to be the end of the discussion.

As dad mentioned, *consistency* in everything is SO crucial! If I bend in one small, 'harmless' little area, you can be sure he'll try it again and again ... and in bigger matters that aren't harmless. Negotiating may be okay in certain instances in business, but it is not okay for a child to see how far he can push his parents. Always mean what you say, and do not go back on your word—even the slightest little bit.

We are still "in the trenches," and we don't have this child training thing all figured out. But if we've learned anything so far, I think it would be that children thrive on consistency and the stability that brings. When a parent is resolved in what they say, the child can rest in knowing things will not suddenly change. And this goes for a "yes," too. When you say you are going to do something—take your child (children) somewhere—you must follow through.

God is faithful; let us be faithful to Him as we strive to train and nurture our children for His glory.



Did Dad's Philosophy Work?

– Some thoughts from the oldest child in the family:



I was asked to write a few paragraphs as the oldest child (1 of 7) of the author, and father of five children (ages 11-20). Here are three points:

1) In general, I recall my childhood as a positive experience. This means I make decisions, establish goals, stand on principles, and identify core values for my own family based on what I experienced rather than based on what I DID NOT experience. In other words, I would like to give my children the *things I had* versus give my children the *things I did NOT have* (understand "things" to mean more than material stuff).

2) I recall our "house rules" as being clear, but not overbearing. These rules were never blamed on the church, or others around us. Our "house rules" were what they were because of the choices of my parents, and if I wanted to be a part of the household, they were to be abided by. The world operates with rules and boundaries and "yes" and "no" and "do" and "do not" ... so does this house. I felt no surprises and no micromanaging. It was clear and simple.

3) If I would boil down to one word my significant childhood memories, I would use the word, "**opportunity**." Things like the opportunity for *responsibility*, the opportunity for *experience*, the opportunity to *learn*, the opportunity to *contribute*, the opportunity to *engage*, the opportunity to *take risks*. And yet, it was about more than just opportunity, because with the opportunity came the necessary *assistance*, *teaching*, *guidance*, *warnings*, and *encouragement*.

The lens through which I recall these things is obviously colored by who I am now; which is some combination (ironically) of my training, my personality, my journey, and my current position in life.

And lastly, this was all the result of my father and mother working as a team. In many things, I could not tell you who was the responsible party. It was both. And that team, that partnership, is exactly how the Creator made it to be. Operate accordingly.



PCWW Report

A report from the 2023 Plain Communities Writers Workshop
by Sue Weaver

"I am a writer. We are the people who stay up past midnight to finish a story. We spend our free time securing plot bunnies and bringing to life a world of characters that society never knew about. We are misunderstood and underpaid, but we remember wanting to escape reality. I am a writer, and I love it."

I laughed as I read the quote above. Whoever would come up with something like that? As I reread the quote, I found myself agreeing with every word. It must have been a writer. Nobody else could be that accurate. I don't mind staying up after midnight if my creative juices are flowing. I don't have any free time, but the craving to create is constant. When I have a minute to spare, I am jotting thoughts and spinning stories.

"How do you ever find the time to write?" The frequent question always makes me smile. To folks who don't understand, writing thousands of words looks like an enormous crag, impossible to climb. But I am passionate about words, expressions, and silent conversations, so I make time to write. It's just like anything else. If you enjoy cooking and baking, your family eats gourmet style. If you appreciate plants and working outdoors, your gardens are immaculate. For me there is nothing better than a steaming mug of chai, a few hours of quiet time, and my keyboard in front of me. What bliss!

But that doesn't mean writing is always easy. Writing commitments do have a way of robbing some of the joy, especially when those obligations cramp your style. Occasionally writers are misunderstood, and some of the negative feedback

wrenches the words from your heart, leaving you reeling with regrets, fears, and major writer's block. It is then when the art of writing means gluing yourself to the seat of your chair and sticking to it until you're done.

Still, we write on. We think, we type, and we pray for the right words. "Lord, I need another miracle," is my plea when I sit wordless in front of an imminent deadline. The Lord always delivers, sometimes by steering my thoughts in the right direction, other times an impromptu phone call or an encouraging note from a friend supplies the words. I think that most writers would agree that the best time to write is when you're on a roll and the words flow faster than you can type. That's when the warm glow of accomplishment feels the best.

So where are all these writers? How many manuscripts are hidden in a drawer never to see the light of day? How many would-be writers are too fearful to step outside their comfort zone? Is it justifiable to conceal our talents and hide behind a veil of fear when there's a tremendous demand for clean, well-written literature? What can be done to flush these writers out of the woodwork?

A few years ago, a small group of flourishing writers put their heads together, conspiring for a solution. Why not create an event where a bunch of introverted writers can get together and talk shop? But what could they offer

that would intrigue experienced writers and authors without intimidating new writers? After many months of meetings, phone calls, and email exchanges, the workshop idea was born.



Free resource table where writers guidelines, magazines, and books were on display



The Gym set up for public workshop



Illustrators share their work

The first year was a tryout of sorts. Unsure what to expect, they hosted the workshop in a committee member's personal shop. The event was well thought out. The first evening of classes was on a Tuesday evening from 6:00 – 9:00. They advertised, devised a workable plan, invited the speakers, and hustled up a stage and AV system along one wall. Tables and chairs lined the floor, inviting guests to sit with their notebooks and pens in hand while they listened to the speakers. A "Give & Take" table displaying free information and literature for the guests to pick up lined another wall. The committee members' wives prepared a smorgasbord of delicious, nourishing snacks. It was a delightful, welcoming atmosphere for new and experienced writers alike.

They were unprepared, however, for the number of guests that showed up to participate in the event. The 20-40 people they anticipated mushroomed to 150. The line extended out the door and through the yard, as folks waited to pick up their name tags and find a seat. The chairs alongside the tables filled up quickly, and soon all the extra chairs filled up as well. The next two evenings of classes were just as well attended; an overwhelming expanse of writers poured in.

The speakers covered a wide range of writing topics, from the writer's toolbox to the publishing aspect. One interesting feature was the invitation to write a story for the first annual Plain Community's Writer's Workshop (PCWW) storybook. There were three photos to choose from, and every guest selected one to take home as a muse for their story.

The smashing success revved the engines for a second workshop, this time in a bigger facility. The 2022 PCWW was held in Holmes County, and even better attended than the year before. Two hundred and fifty writers gathered for inspiration, encouragement, and meeting new friends. Authors and publishers were invited to bring their books and magazines to sell, and to show beginners that publishing is possible. Everyone agreed that we had another productive workshop.

To date, the third annual writers' workshop is history. This year's workshop was hosted on March 17-18th at United Dayspring Church in Berlin, Ohio. The committee invited speakers to whet the audience's appetite for words, by inspiring them as well as offering practical tips to improve their skills.

A new feature this year was the smaller, private classes offered in answer to requests for more practical content that can be taken home and applied to one's writing. Students pre-registered and chose the classes they wanted to participate in. Then on Friday afternoon, six authors / publishers shared their knowledge with the

attendees. The topics included writing for children, self-editing, preparing your manuscript for publishing, and writing devotionals. Daniel Miller taught "The Art of Crafting a Story," and Amy Schlabach invited her students to explore the vast realm of poetry.

Each teacher taught three consecutive one-hour classes. Each class lasted for an hour, then the students switched classes, and the whole program began again. The teachers provided handouts for in-class writing and editing and invited their students to engage in open discussions with the rest of the class.

After the classes that afternoon, everyone gathered in the gym for a delicious meal of chipotle with all the trimmings, and yummy desserts. There was time to chat and browse the book fair before other writers arrived for the public workshop. At 6:00 p.m. the committee called everyone together and began with the announcements.

Soon the gym was filled with song, as hundreds of voices lifted together in praise to God. Minister Ray Yoder Jr. began the workshop with *The Wonder of Words*. "Recently, my mother-in-law showed me a letter that my mom had written to her many years ago when she needed encouragement. The letter was filled with inspiration, and even though my mom is gone now, her message spoke volumes to my heart. It made me think about the power of the written word. She could have verbally encouraged her friend, but because she took time to write the words, we can still glean from them today."

The entire evening and the next day were packed with inspiration. Each speaker shared bits of wisdom that the audience could apply to their writing. Reuben Shetler shared his journey in becoming a published author, and Steve Jones talked about riding "your" own horse. "It is important to read a wide variety of books so you can learn what you like and dislike about writing styles. But in the end, each writer must find their own writing style."

One speaker shared Ecclesiastes 12:11. "Make your words count," he urged, "like using a goad to prod oxen, we want to nudge our readers to live for the Lord."

As the final crescendo of the parting song faded, my heart felt a tinge of sadness. Another workshop was past. But the greater part by far held hope and inspiration for another year. The committee members' efforts had been worth the price. We had inspired.

– S. W. | Berlin, Ohio

– A report from the third *Plain Communities Writers Workshop* (PCWW).



Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report

January thru March 2023

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1 January 2023 Beginning Balance | \$9,567.96 |
| Income | |
| Donations | \$4,875.50 |
| Local Support* | \$1,000.00 |
| Total Income | <hr/> \$5,875.50 |
| Beginning Balance + Income | \$15,443.46 |
| Expenses | |
| Handling & Packaging | \$678.00 |
| Postage | \$3,781.86 |
| Printing | \$6,023.00 |
| Staff Expenses | \$827.40 |
| Total Expense | <hr/> \$11,310.26 |
| 31 March 2023 Ending Balance | \$4,133.20 |

Circulation Report

March 2023

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.

ISSUE #25 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$11,163.95

Cost Per Copy: \$2.30/ea.

ISSUE #26 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$10,995.60

Cost Per Copy: \$2.27/ea.

ISSUE #27 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,925 | Operating Cost: \$11,310.26

Cost Per Copy: \$2.30/ea.

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

We thank our supporters for the \$ 4,875.50 given to help with the cost of publishing AV28. If you wish to share in the publishing cost of AV29 it will be much appreciated.

All gifts given to *Anabaptist Voice* through the local church are tax deductible.



End Matters

We have completed Issue 28 of *Anabaptist Voice*. (8 May 2023). We pray that it will fan the flames of your burning heart and push you into putting your faith into practice ... every day.

We know we are behind schedule ... again. But we shall follow the example of the apostle Paul who "forgot what was behind and strained forward toward the goal." We will press on to have AV29 print-ready as soon as we can.

Here are some ideas to be developed in AV29:

– A request has come in to reprint "Funny Money" (AV17, Spring 2020). Surely an update is in order. What will be the end result of the continuing tsunami of fake dollars?

– I found two unanswered "Practical Questions" (AV26, page 37) that need discussion. 1) In what ways does your faith contradict climate change theory? 2) How will climate change practices affect your life?

Surely, you have something to say on these issues.

– I am excited about God's wondrous works "in the earth and sea and sky." Lord willing, we will discuss the air you breathe and how the air affects your life.

– The war in the Ukraine makes separation of the Christian and the world a live issue. How should a child of God live in such a conflict?

– Computers and sensors are forging a new age in healing. What does this mean to your health?

Send in your thoughts on these issues. We do not specialize in articles by dead theologians but on the responses of living Anabaptists and how they put their faith into practice.

Until He comes,
James G. Landis

PS: Notice. A special sale on any back issues still in print (\$1.00 each).

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“The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.”

- Song of Solomon 2:12



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