

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

- "CHOOSING A WIFE" - HENRY RAMOS
- "DOCTOR-IN-MY-POCKET" - SHERWIN GOERING
- "WHO OWNS YOUR FRIES?" - LYNDON RISSE
- "IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD" - THOMAS CROUTCH
- "THE PILGRIM FAITHFUL" - JOHN BUNYAN



Letter from the Editor



Fall has come to Georgia and we give thanks for moderated temperatures. Corn shelling is well underway in the large fields of Burke County. Thousands more acres of weed-free fields-peanuts and cotton-flourish under the continuing rainfall. We had eight inches in August, the highest amount in the month of August since the 10.90 inches in 2012.

Our decrepit pear tree with a hollowed-out trunk yielded an abundant harvest. Doris canned 35 pints and our daughter Fonda canned 40 quarts for her tribe. We ate some cooked and raw and gave buckets away to friends. Still there were more pears. Doris tried a new recipe called "pear/cranberry chutney." We liked it very much; she made more to give away.

Yesterday, I went on my daily walk. As I walked along the shore of our pond, I noticed some movements in the water and heard a strange chirping. I stopped. Twelve baby alligators, four to six inches long, swam about in the water and gawked at me while they made their chirping noise. I watched fascinated. Slowly a long ugly snout with two big eyes appeared in the water about seven feet away and the chirping ceased. I thought it best to move along.

I learned the difference between Old Testament law and New Testament love in our men's Sunday school class. In Old Testament law there would be a punishment if the men did not sit on the first three benches. In New Testament love the men would voluntarily crowd up on the front two benches because they want to be near each other and hear the teaching.

God has extended our lives so we (writers, reviewers, editors, designers and givers) can present you this 30th issue of Anabaptist Voice with things related to putting the gospel into practice—health, giving, marriage, business, pilgrimage, witness, worship. Let us seize the opportunities and accept the responsibilities God has called us to in these exciting times. Let us ever be watchful and ready for the Master's return.

*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

Global Warming Banter

I really enjoyed the article "God's Wondrous Carbon." It has been a real eye-opener to me; I'm glad you drew my attention to it.

For many years I have heard this banter about global warming and though I don't have a whole lot of scientific explanations to counteract their claims, I believe it is mostly a myth (especially the part that claims man is responsible for it). If global warming is, in fact, happening, I do not believe that it is due to man abusing the planet.

Rather, as I've heard explained by the *Answers In Genesis* ministry, "The planet has been gradually warming ever since the climax of the ice age several thousand years ago" (post-flood era). Obviously, industrialization and over population didn't pose a threat thousands of years ago to cause the start of this global warming, but that's beside the point at the moment.

I appreciate this article that sheds new and additional information on the issues surrounding global warming.

May God bless you richly with wisdom and inspiration as you work toward completing another issue of AV. As always, I'm looking forward to reading it cover to cover.

L. E. | Wisconsin



No Traceable Bloodlines

I am responding to Ted Byler's article (AV28, pages 7-11).

I agree with Brother Byler. There is no biblical evidence that bloodline Israel has any part in God's Kingdom. The records in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 both end with our Lord. We are all one church through the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ broke down the wall of partition between us. There is now no "Jew or Gentile" in the church.

The Old Testament Jews were meticulous in their genealogical records, but research has revealed that there are no genealogical records proving an unbroken blood lineage back to the beginning like there was in the Old Testament. A high percentage of those who call themselves blood Jews today are from a country that

adopted Judaism as their official religion around 700-800 A.D. They are known as Ashkenazi Jews. A much smaller percentage of Jews called Sephardic exists. But even they cannot trace their blood lineage back to Abraham.

In the end, everyone will be judged individually according to their works and not by their bloodlines. "So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

E. M. Yoder | Georgia



Surprised!

Thank you for publishing Chris Wyan's study on wealth (AV29, pages 7-11).

From my perspective, accumulated wealth is our #1 threat in today's Anabaptist American economy. With wealth comes independence. With independence comes self-governance. With self-governance comes idolatry. And we act surprised.

I have a thought I would like to inject into the study on the dangers of wealth. Somehow we must learn how to know when our wealth has taken control of us. We must be alert to the danger of accumulating too much wealth. Our brotherhood can help us if we open ourselves to the subject. Our children know if we are too rich. Even the world knows where our heart is.

I am passionate about this subject. I have no issue with wealth creation, but wealth accumulation is destroying our churches and youth today. It is second only to accessibility to worldly wisdom and filth on the internet. Google is not divinely inspired. Both are harvesting our children in our Anabaptist communities.

Gary Miller has done a masterful job in his books and I would like to reference his books as suggested reading on this topic:

1. *God's Will in Finances*
2. *Going Till You're Gone*
3. *It's Not Your Business*
4. *The Other Side of the Wall*

L. B. R. | Pennsylvania



In Harmony with Jesus

I want to express my appreciation for your efforts in producing such a great magazine that addresses tough questions that affect every area of our life. In *Anabaptist Voice* people can share what they have experienced and been challenged with. This inspires and encourages others to walk with Jesus and build up His kingdom.

Concerning your question on what gripped us most in AV29, it was hard for me to pin-point what it was, as several things really got my attention. However, I would probably say it was the story, “One Man – Two Lives” by Albert Stoltzfus. We read about Ralph having a wrong perspective on protecting “his stash.” What I like is how Abner presented a scenario to him, bringing Jesus into the picture, and thereby getting the point across. Abner, by the grace of God, did not pass Ralph off as a hopeless case, or try to avoid the subject, but brought it into the light. May we be more like Abner.

The life stories always amaze me, on how God works in people’s lives as they find a biblical fellowship.

Then there are the much needed stories like “More Funny Money” and “God’s Wondrous Carbon,” to help us keep some things in better perspective as we face a fearful, chaotic world.

Now concerning the recent discussion on the plain coat, I would like to suggest that it is of greater importance that we analyze how we dress throughout the whole week than of whether we wear a plain coat in church or not. I just do not like to see undue focus put on it, as it can quickly become more than a plain garment to us. Now when the plain coat gets dropped, and replaced with something more fashionable, I believe we are going the wrong direction.

May we search our hearts in everything, and keep our focus on the Kingdom of God. May the Lord bless and keep you.

D. W. Y. | *Missouri*



An Engaging Read

I am a retired school teacher in the public schools where I taught for 35 years—I had mostly Amish students. I am presently busy doing taxi work, helping on the farm, and writing letters to many different kinds of people; my letters go far and wide across age levels and cultures.

I want to write you about your magazine, *Anabaptist Voice* (Fall 2022, Issue 26). You have an impressive list of contents. Thank you for doing the people of God this service. In AV26 I found:

– “Can You Sing?” telling of Ernest Shackleton and

showing the power of a song. It was such an engaging article.

– “The People of God,” had so many good points. The amazing moving story near the end of the article told of a Ukrainian pastor and a Russian soldier coming together in peace.

– “No Matter the Cost,” was an engaging story. It had such a beautiful photo of Chris Wyan as a teenager. Then it told the story of his life and how he came into the Mennonite fold. I would like to meet him some time.

– “The Ukrainian Holodomor” was so moving. Thank you for bringing this to our attention. On the shores of time, how people have suffered.

– “New Son: The Story of Joseph Kollie.” This was a deeply moving story of a widow and her remarkable adopted son.

– “The Canoe Race,” with the accompanying photo helped us visualize how a canoe race is like successful church life where everyone must pull together.

– “A Song of Praise,” again showed the power of song. Would that I could have heard the singing of those prisoners at the top of their voices.

Please give it your consideration and prayerful thought to use the KJV in your scripture citations. That is what, as I would know it, we use in most, if not all, of our preaching services throughout our conservative brotherhoods. If I memorize scriptures, I want it to be the classic KJV. That, for me, is the standard of excellence.

Blessings on you as you carry on in your wonderful publishing way.

P. S. | *Ohio*



Deep Plowing

The Quakers had a term they often used in their services, “deep ploughing.” I especially like this aspect of the *Anabaptist Voice*. May God give you courage to continue speaking the truth of the gospel, even when it hurts. Many of the articles have caused me to do some “deep ploughing.” Pray for me, that the Lord would help me make application.

You asked that we send a note stating what most gripped us in AV29. For me it was on page 13: “We limit our usefulness in God’s service when we succumb to fleshly indulgence and self-gratification.” My resolve is to let this truth affect my future use of God’s resources entrusted to us (i.e. household purchases).

E. E. R. | *Tennessee*



Doctor-in-My-Pocket

by Sherwin Goering DNP, AGACNP-BC



Modern medicine has a dazzling array of medications, therapies, surgeries, and technologies. These wonders are often unavailable to the patient if he does not have someone to help direct him to the best treatment, the best place, and the best people for treatment. What is the best way to restore a patient to health rather than treating the symptoms with medications or unneeded therapies? How does a patient know what is best for him?

To help meet the need for aid in guiding one through the medical system, a new model of medicine is developing. This system, Direct Primary Care (DPC), allows the provider to be present, intentional, and committed to the patient's good.

DPC offers a solution that not only benefits both the patient and the provider, but also allows for a framework and foundation that allows Christian providers to reflect the values of, and act as, agents of our Creator, the Great Physician: **"If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you" (Exodus 15:26).**

How DPC Works

Here is the way DPC works: The patient pays a monthly membership fee that covers unlimited visits and a defined set of labs, procedures, and medications. The monthly fee also provides easy access to imaging and in some cases, specialists. Other specialty labs, procedures and imaging can be provided at a significantly discounted rate, and the fee charged for the service is always known beforehand.

In DPC, there are no surprise bills; you will not receive any bills from strange cities and states for DPC services. The DPC provider does not bill any third parties on a fee-for-service (FFS) basis. There are no out-of-pocket dollars spent for a deductible or co-pay.

DPC allows the provider the opportunity to practice medicine without the oversight of a secular corporate institution such as insurance, private party payers, billers, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) and many more. With a focus on providing timely access, transparency in pricing, and improved communication, DPC is changing everything about the

healthcare experience—simple, effective, and directly from your provider! DPC is a model of medicine that provides easy access in a timely manner and is hassle-free without long waits and surprise bills.

Advantages for the Patient

Ease of access and cost-savings are only a small part of the benefit of primary care. The next several paragraphs will explore the technical and practical ways that DPC can positively improve healthcare for the patient.

Most of us have had at least one experience with the current insurance or healthcare system. In the early 1900's healthcare was much simpler. It was unregulated and health insurance nonexistent. Clinicians could practice and treat patients in their clinics or homes. The patient or family would directly reimburse the clinician out-of-pocket for the services they offered. In many aspects, the DPC model returns to this style of medicine.

DPC is simple. It removes the complexity of patients filling out forms for blood work, imaging, insurance, and a host of other things. There is no need for insurance authorizations, preferred providers and inconsistent billing. Much like the convenience of Verizon or Amazon, DPC is simple, straight-forward medical care with no one standing in the way between the patient and their provider.

Multiple advantages exist for the patient member of a DPC practice. One of the many is a new (new for our generation) convenience and ease of access to their provider—not the nurse, the physician assistant, the nurse practitioner or a resident—their own personal, healthcare provider.

When a patient is sick, they often want relief of suffering and restoration of health as quickly as possible. The convenience of the patient being able to contact and even see their provider on the same day is often unheard of in the current fee-for-service (FFS) model, but is a benefit that DPC offers. Some have used the term "doctor next door" or "doctor in my pocket" as a way to describe the ease of access to their DPC provider.

DPC offers a solution that saves time and money for the member by allowing them to directly contact their provider through an encrypted application installed on their cellular device. Access may be through text

message, phone call, video call, chat and email. This is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This ability to contact your provider may save one a visit to an urgent care clinic or an emergency department for many cases. Many common patient symptoms can be handled via a phone call, video, or photo eliminating the need to establish an appointment—In traditional medicine an appointment can often be days or weeks later.

If there is a need for a patient visit, DPC practices contribute to patient autonomy by granting patient control over scheduling. Unlike many practices where patients may wait for weeks for an appointment, DPC clinics routinely offer same-day or same-week visits. While this may seem insignificant, this gives patients the freedom to choose timely visits convenient to them and consistent with the urgency of their complaint; it also allows consideration of the patient's personal schedule—childcare, time off work, transportation, etcetera.

In a DPC practice, most visits are scheduled for a minimum of 30 minutes with new patient visits scheduled for 1–2 hours as compared to the traditional FFS (fee-for-service) average of 7–15 minutes. There is no need for the provider to double book in the case of a cancellation. This basically eliminates the need for a waiting room. Whether the patient is sick, simply wants to discuss their health or is returning for a wellness check, they are allotted 30 minutes (or longer if needed). Not only do patients have the ability to spend time and develop a relationship with the provider, they can also choose the provider of their choice—male, female, religion, etcetera—versus an assigned provider determined by insurance or network status. This contributes to another benefit of the DPC model: individual patient autonomy and personalization of care.

Working for Wholeness

A cornerstone of medical ethics is patient autonomy. This means the ability of the patient to be informed about

their medical conditions, possible interventions, and their choice in their own healthcare. The time allotted for each visit allows a direct relationship between the provider and patient to focus on providing a level of care that is unlike the current model of medicine in FFS. In medicine, it's not all about treating an illness. Patients are more than simply bodies and a broken mechanism or collection of symptoms.

Time is important in developing a trusting relationship with a patient. For some this may take a few minutes, for others, this may take multiple visits. DPC allows the provider to spend the appropriate time with an individual patient or their care team (family, durable power of attorney, friends, pastor) to allow them to understand each other's goals and focus on their health, sickness, or illness. It takes time to discuss stressors, obtain a thorough history, examine, create and execute a plan for treatment. It takes time to address each question, provide health and wellness education. Each visit offers an opportunity for wellness, disease prevention, health optimization, exercise, meal planning and more. Patients may wish to consider questions or treatment options at home and return to the clinic several days later, ready for a more educated and complex discussion fostering the patient's autonomy and allowing the provider to better understand and/or treat their patient through shared decision-making.

DPC Saves Money

DPC eliminates the incentive in the FFS model that causes expensive and often inappropriate testing, referrals, and treatment. Often many of these tests or prerequisites are unnecessary. In DPC, this financial incentive is eliminated due to the monthly fee and covered services. The clinician is not rewarded by ordering expensive or unnecessary tests which allows the clinician to be a steward of the patient's financial wellbeing.

Imagine not knowing the cost of fuel before filling your vehicle. Purchasing goods or a service in all other



- There are 2060 DPC practices in the US today, spanning 48 states and Washington DC.
- To qualify as a DPC practice on the DPC mapper, a clinic must meet three tests:
 - Charge a periodic fee
 - Does not bill any third parties on a fee-for-service basis
 - Ensure that any per visit charge is less than the equivalent of the periodic fee

areas of our lives without cost transparency would be unacceptable. Why is this ambiguity acceptable with healthcare?

In DPC (and direct specialty care) there is complete transparency. There are no hidden costs. The monthly, quarterly or annual subscription fee is most often based on patient age and is a set figure. This cost includes a clearly defined set of procedures, tests, lab work, imaging, etcetera.

Additional tests, imaging and procedures are often listed with fully transparent pricing. This extends to prescription medications which can often be distributed from the office, saving the patient from the need to travel and fill medications at a pharmacy. From prescription medications, labs, and imaging to complex procedures and even surgeries, the patient knows exactly what the cost is. There is no guessing, no “flying blind,” no hassle, and best of all—complete transparency and clarity for the cost of services offered. Overall, this cuts costs, decreases unnecessary testing, and as research has proven, decreases hospital admissions.

DPC and Insurance

A question that is often brought up with patients in DPC is, “Where does my health insurance fit in?” First, insurance is not health care and does not guarantee timely access to healthcare. Second, DPC can care for patients regardless of their insurance status. DPC does not bill your insurance company or collect insurance fees from you. DPC is not a replacement for insurance but is often used conjunctively with more affordable, high deductible plans or with the increasingly common health-sharing plans.

In fact, as research continues to reflect excellent care and decreased risk of hospital admissions, many sharing plans are also offering discounts to their members that are part of a DPC practice. The DPC member can benefit and participate in the primary care practice and keep insurance for specialist care, serious illness, and catastrophic events.

DPC and Kingdom Work

How does DPC fit in Kingdom Work? While the education, the tools, the medications and methods are often the same between the Christian clinician and the non-Christian, the Christian clinician provides services for a different reason and in a different manner because he recognizes the importance and role of the Creator in the patient and their soul.

In Christ’s Kingdom, the medical provider is ultimately a member of a team where titles and degrees

are secondary to belonging to the body of Christ. In DPC the practice of medicine can be Christ-centered and grounded in biblical truth and stewardship as compared to secular values—an idea that author Mark Blocher defines as “missional medicine.” Missional medicine allows the provider to place value on patient care and ministry that ultimately serves Christ.

When a patient visits a DPC clinician that provides missional medicine, there is often a layer of care that is discussed and valued—their spiritual health. Christian medical practices can vary in their approach. Scripture often mentions prayer in association with sickness. This is likely due to the fact that sickness often brings the individual into a time of reflection and allows the opportunity to consider the One who could not only heal them, but also the root causes of sickness, disease, and death.

In today’s modern healthcare industry, prayer is often discouraged and a focus on modern technology and science take the lead. The DPC clinician has the time and freedom to practice medicine and use medicine as an extension of the love of Christ. In DPC, spending time praying and discussing religion and applying biblical truths is not impeded by large corporate institutions or government regulations.

Other ethical implications and coercion from third party payers and corporate institutions are eliminated when the contract is between the provider and the patient. The ability for the provider to be the hands and feet of the Great Physician are much less hindered. As a representative of the Great Physician, the clinician can focus on caring for his patients.

Summary of DPC

Overall, the DPC model of care supports patient autonomy with improved and shared decision-making which allows for better relationships through more visits, meaningful interaction, reduced wait time, and easier access to excellent care.

In the DPC model the Christian clinician is free to discuss spiritual comfort and healing along with the treatment of the body; he can pray with his clients if he so desires. The Christian clinician’s goal is to first, serve like Christ, and second, “do no harm.”

The DPC organization “Elation” estimates that 250,000 patients now take advantage of the DPC structure.



Choosing a Wife

by Henry Ramos

This devotional was shared at a wedding on 29 July 2023.

The Guidance of God and Our Response to It

“You will show me the path of life.” (Psalm 16:11)

Probably the biggest decision that we as humans make in life, besides the decision of following Christ or not, is who we are going to spend life with in a marriage covenant-relationship.

I would like to take your minds to a very interesting story in the Old Testament found in Genesis 24. This story tells the account when Abraham sent his oldest servant back to his kindred to fetch a wife for his son Isaac.

I don't believe that this story is in the Bible to teach us how to do courtship and marriage. Matter of fact, the Bible has very little to say, if any, on how to do courtship, but we can always learn some points from stories like these and apply them to our culture.

The simple points given here can be applied in any other important decision that we might face in life where we need to seek the guidance of God.

Here are the points that I would like to draw from this story:

#1 - Concern to do God's will

And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. (Genesis 24:3)

Somehow Abraham knew that women from the pagan society around him were not going to produce what God wanted for his descendants. Maybe Abraham understood that God wanted a group of people separated unto himself and dedicated to be a light to the world around them for a testimony of God's name on the earth.

Paul, inspired by the Spirit of God, gave a little direction for the decision of whom to marry: it needs to be in the Lord.

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. **(1Corinthians 7:39)**

This should be our primary concern, when making important decisions. We need to be concerned to do God's will.

#2 - Trust God

The servant charged with this assignment had a valid concern: What if the woman was not willing to come back with him?

And the servant said unto him, “Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?” (Genesis 24:5)

The servant was asking Abraham what he should do in case of such a scenario. But we see Abraham's trust in God; He believed God would give the necessary direction and prosper the servant's journey.

The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying,



“Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.” (Genesis 24:7)

#3 - Move ahead

And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. (Genesis 24:10)

What did the servant do? He made the necessary preparations for the long journey (possibly 1,200 miles round trip) and departed. When seeking God’s direction, we make sure that we are in God’s will first, and secondly, we trust that His blessing is on our endeavors and then, guess what we need to do? Move forward.

Load up your “camels” and get moving!

#4 - Seek God’s direction for the details

And he said, “O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.” (Genesis 24:12)



I’m sure that the servant had plenty of time to strategize along the way on how this was supposed to work out.

He did not ask something out of the ordinary, like a name written in the clouds, or that God would present her in a chariot of fire. But just a simple test to show her industrious skills and her kindness. We will need to do the same as we make those important decisions.

#5 - Wait on the Lord’s answer

And the servant ran to meet her, and said, “let me I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.”

And she said, “Drink, my lord”; and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

And when she had done giving him drink, she said, “I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.” (Genesis 24:17-19)

Can you imagine what was going through the servant’s mind as he was drinking that refreshing water? He had to drink and wait to see if she would offer water for the camels also. Thankfully, she did.

Sometimes this can be the hardest test for us as we wait on God for an answer. May God give us patience to wait on Him.

#6 - Worship the Lord

And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, “Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren.” (Genesis 24:26-27)

And that’s what we need to do as well, when God has led us to make those heavy decisions, and we can see the Lord’s involvement in it. Bow down and worship the LORD.

And that’s what we want to do as we have witnessed the leading of God in our lives in finding a godly companion for us!

Blessed be the LORD God!

H. R. | Dublin, Georgia





Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“Those picking up the Bible should seek not only to know the Bible, but also the God of the Bible.”

– Sim Yoder at Santa Fe Mennonite Church, FL



“The struggles of life give us confidence of victory.”

– Earl Barnhart at Burkeland Mennonite Church, GA



“Be careful how we measure each other. One does not tend to think of Sarah or Samson as people of faith, but God saw something deeper.”

– Stephen Habegger at Caneyville Christian Community, KY



“Repentance is more than a mental acknowledgement, it is a complete change in direction of travel.”

– Richard Herr at Sparta Mennonite Church, WI



“If we do not have time to read God’s Word and pray, we are busier than God ever intended us to be.”

– Earl Ray Sensenig at Cumberland Valley Conference, MD



“Pride is when you overestimate yourself and underestimate the grace of God.

– Clark Zimmerman at Sharon Mennonite Fellowship, PA



“God does not tell us to ‘do’ and then we will ‘become.’ If we first ‘be,’ our rudder will be attached and ‘do’ actions will follow.”

– John Ray Troyer at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“Good works are not dangerous. It is pride, worldliness, and vanity that we must guard against.”

– Jonathan Stoll in The Vanguard, ME



“There is no joy in being a victim. There is joy in being an overcomer.”

– Harold Dean Miller at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“The devil does not care how he does it, all he cares about is for us to backslide.”

– Joseph Yoder at Pelkie Mennonite Church, MI

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

Who Owns Your Fries?

by Lyndon Risser



When we go to an “upscale” restaurant, my son Trevor will consistently order fries. I often reach over to sample one and he immediately pulls the bag away.

Now I am tempted to remind him they are MY fries, and I only want to sample ONE of MY fries. But rather than ruin our always present peaceful family ambience, I let it go.

I want you to ask yourself this question, “*Who owns your fries?*”

It is interesting to me that Jesus taught more about wealth than he did about heaven and hell combined—15% of His teachings.

Let us look at the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14–29 (NASB). This parable talks about talents, time, and treasure.

For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, *who* called his own slaves and *entrusted his possessions to them* (#1). To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, *each according to his own ability* (#2); and he went on his journey. The one who had received the five talents immediately went and did business with them and earned five more *talents*. In the same way the one who *had received* the two *talents* earned two more.

But he who received the one *talent* went away and dug *a hole in the ground*, and hid his master’s money. Now *after a long time* (#3) the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more

talents, saying, “Master, *you entrusted five talents to me* (#4). See, I have earned five more talents.”

His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master.”

Also the one who *had received* the two talents came up and said, “Master, *you entrusted two talents to me* (#4). See, I have earned two more talents.”

His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter the joy of your master.”

Now the one who had received the one talent also came up and said, “Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter *seed*. And I was afraid, so I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you *still* have what is yours.”

But his master answered and said to him, “You worthless, lazy slave! Did you know that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter *seed*? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival *I would have received my money back with interest*” (#5).

“Therefore: take the talent away from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For *to everyone who has, more shall be given* (#6), and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even *what he does have shall be taken away* (#6). And throw that worthless man into outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

I would like to point out a number of things in this parable.

#1. The master entrusted *his* possessions to the slaves. All the money belonged to the owner, not just part of it; he owned all the “fries.”

#2. The man entrusted different amounts of money to the different slaves according to the skills and gifts he knew each one possessed. We should not think the master was unfair because he did not entrust all the slaves with an equal amount of money. Each slave should not be jealous of another that has been entrusted with more than he has received; nor should he be proud because he was trusted with more gifts and callings than another.

#3. After a long time, the master returned. As time went by, it would have been easy for the slaves to think that at least the earnings belonged to them. After all, it was their work and management that made the money multiply, not the master's. So it took faith in the master, loyalty to him, and a willing spirit to work diligently for the master all those years and still not be certain the master would ever return. Time and distance tends to erode confidence in the master.

#4. Each of the slaves received a huge amount of money. The NIV has a footnote saying, "A talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer's wage."

The larger the amount of money entrusted to the slave, the greater was the opportunity to increase it for the master's benefit. Both the five-talent slave and the two-talent slave doubled their master's wealth. It is a known fact that a son who takes over a father's wealth can get ahead faster than a son who starts off with nothing. Here is an old saying found to be true, "It is much easier to earn the second thousand (or million) than it is to earn the first thousand (or million)."

So, the greater the opportunity for the slave to increase the master's wealth carried with it greater responsibility to use it wisely. It is not easy to use the master's money with discretion and wisdom. Some slaves can do it better than others. That is why the master passed the talents out as he did; he knew which ones would be the most dedicated and faithful in carrying out that responsibility.

#5. The master expected that his money would increase while he was gone. For the slave not to work for him and grow his "money" was a sign of laziness and a lack of dedication to the master.

#6. The great paradox is found in the parable. The wealthy slaves were both rewarded with more wealth while the one who did nothing had the original talent entrusted to him taken away.

This teaches a very serious principle. When people start misusing the Master's wealth or lazily doing nothing with it, they will lose even what they had. When people start disobeying the truth and going against their better understanding, the knowledge of the truth they formerly possessed, will be lost—forgotten, clouded-over, and blacked-out. Not only is one area of their conscience seared, but their heart becomes hardened in many areas. The punishment for this lack of diligence in the Master's service will be "outer darkness."

The lazy, worthless servant was not punished with eternal torment because he did not give the one talent away, but because he did nothing with it to earn more for the master.

Now, let us step back and think more about the meaning of this parable to us. I do not think the parable is meant to teach us just about money; there are far greater things involved—abilities, giftings, resources, faith. To put it simply, "All our fries."

Everything belongs to the Master. He owns all our fries. He figuratively bought them and gave them to us. Not even one or two fries belong to us. So it is not how much do we use for ourselves and how much do we give to God, it becomes, "How much does God want us to spend on ourselves while building His Kingdom?"

When we dedicated our lives to service in the Kingdom of God, we vowed to follow and obey Him. We surrendered everything to Him—*Time, Talent, and Treasure*.

Let us look first at our *treasure* since money is the figure used in the parable. Do you think that all "your" money belongs to the Lord when you make a purchase, invest, or put money in savings? Do you ask, "Is this really what God wants me to do with this money?"

Yes, I know that money can be a corrosion of the soul; it is a dangerous thing. So is a butcher knife. But how much more effective is a butcher knife than a stick when it comes to cutting meat. Nowhere does the parable teach that we are to give all the money away just to get rid of the filthy lucre. Rather, the parable teaches that we have a responsibility to use it to produce increase for the Master. The two servants doubled the Master's money and He commended them for it.

What an opportunity many Anabaptist Christians have today to use the Master's wealth to build His Kingdom! If we were grinding in poverty and barely able to eke out an existence, would God's name be more glorified? Instead, God has entrusted us with great wealth we can use to build schools, start savings groups, drill wells, administer relief in war-torn areas, clean-up and rebuild after floods and earthquakes, give Bibles and good literature, post billboards, run mercy ships, and preach the Good News in many dark places throughout the world. The opportunities lie before us as never before. The Master will hold us accountable with how we use His "fries."

Now let us talk about *talents*—skills and gifts. The Master has not given the same abilities or gifts to every believer. The parable teaches that not every believer's talents are the same as those of another.

To some he gave the ability to preach, to teach, to sing, to run a business, to run a track hoe, to sew, to cook, to mother children, to heal, and on and on. No one person has all the gifts. There are many different gifts in a brotherhood and we are told to consider others better than ourselves.

But whatever you are called to do with the gifts God has entrusted to you, you should do with zeal and zest in order to double the Master's wealth.

God did not make all with the same gifts. We should not covet the gifts of others or be jealous that He has entrusted more or greater gifts to other brothers and sisters in the church. Instead, we should joyfully and contentedly serve God to the max. After all, all the "fries" belong to Him.

Now let us talk about *time*, God's time. In the parable, the master was gone for a long time. But he did come back and he called each servant to account for how he had used his money while he was gone.

Our Master is also coming back. Some may be granted 60 years, some 70, some 80 and a few still more years of life. But death is certain. And the Master will want to know how each one used his time on earth.

We must be like the servant Jesus talked about in Matthew 24:45-47. *"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions"* (NIV).

Many years ago, I read an unforgettable story in a novel. As the early Christians walked the paths of Palestine, they kept looking over each hill and around the corners to see if that might be the Lord coming to meet them. It is with such expectancy that we must be looking for the Master's return. And we must never forget that all we have really belongs to Him.

So I ask, "How are you using your *talents*, *time*, and *treasure* while you are awaiting the Master's return?"

The Heart's Wealth of Love

*For Christ and the church let our voices ring,
Let us honor the name of our own blessed King;
Let us work with a will in the strength of youth,
And loyally stand for the Kingdom of truth.*

*For Christ and the church be our earnest prayer,
Let us follow His banner, the cross daily bear;
Let us yield, wholly yield, to the Spirit's power,
And faithfully serve Him in life's brightest hour.*

*For Christ and the church willing off'rings make,
Time and talents and gold for the dear Master's sake;
We will render the best we can bring to Him,
The heart's wealth of love that will never grow dim.*

*For Christ and the church let us cast aside,
By His conquering grace, chains of self, fear, and pride;
May our lives be enriched by an aim so grand;
Then happy the call to the Savior's right hand.*

Eliza Hewitt



Who owns your fries?

Separate Seating

By Sam Petershein



When we are talking about separate seating in the worship service, we are talking about men and women sitting in separate areas in the meeting place, not about class or race distinctions.

While there may not be proof texts found in the New Testament, we believe there are scriptures that support the practice in the worship service. Since we are interested in promoting New Testament teaching on experiencing true worship, we want to point out four areas where separate seating is a blessing to a congregation of believers.

1. God's order is maintained. The Scripture is clear that God made mankind equal in that both genders need to answer to Him for how they live. Moreover, both genders are responsible to God for how they fill their role under Him and the other authorities He has placed over them.

The Scripture is also clear that God assigned to the men, the responsibility of leadership in the home and in the church. This means the men have the responsibility to lead their family in the way of truth. So it is preferable that they are not distracted more than necessary from giving as full attention as possible to the message the preacher is sharing. Generally, there will be less distractions for the men when practicing segregated seating, even though they may have some of their children with them.

2. Speaking specifically to a certain group. As a former pastor, when I had something to share specifically for the men, I much preferred being able to look directly at the men. It was the same when I had something for the ladies or for the youth. I did not want them to wonder who I was talking to. It is not very impressive when someone does not look at you while they are talking to you, is it?

3. Encouraging four-part singing. As a former song leader, I believe it is advantageous to have separate seating. We are expecting a verbal response from the congregation. Our singing should be for God's glory, and I believe we should do the best we can, because He is worthy.

Normally, in our congregations, we have various age groups. Some are experienced singers and some are in the learning stage. It is very helpful for a learner to sit next to, or close to, others who are experienced and are singing the part that the less experienced are

endeavoring to learn. I would encourage those who are mature enough, to sit with older ones who are singing the part they are trying to learn or improve on. This practice fits well with the admonition in Titus 2 where Paul instructs the older men and older women to set examples for the younger ones.

There may also be times when the song leader wants to highlight a phrase or section of a song by having one or two of the parts sing that phrase and have the rest respond with another phrase. That is more easily accomplished if we have separate seating. In a congregation that promotes four-part singing, having segregated seating is highly advantageous, both for the learner and for the song leader who takes his responsibility seriously.

4. Attracting visitors to the service. Now then, how does separate seating affect visitors who come from other congregations? Hopefully our churches have ushers to help visitors find seating, especially if they appear uncertain as to where they should sit. Some things I have heard expressed by visitors are, "the singing was awesome," or, "separate seating is what caught our attention."

Separate seating gives a distinct appearance of order. This fits well with the admonition in I Corinthians 14:40, "**Let all things be done decently and in order.**"

I know a minister in a Bible-believing, Bible-practicing church who stated that separate seating is one of the things that attracted them to the Mennonite church. If we live consistently with what we are singing and with what we hear over our pulpits, separate seating can even draw others.

So let us not toss the practice of separate seating for the men and the women out the window without giving some serious thought to its many benefits in our worship services.

S. P. | Leon, Iowa

Practical Questions:

1. What additional benefits do you see in separate seating?
2. What other healthy practices often accompany separate seating?

Just Doing What Christians Do

Forgiving beheaders, praying for enemies – it's a daily reality for Coptic Christians.

The Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London speaks with Plough's Alan Koppschall about the Copts' outsized witness as a persecuted religious minority in Egypt.

Alan Koppschall: Christ calls his followers to love their enemies and those who persecute them. The Coptic Church has had to reckon with that radical enemy love in a way that almost no other church in the present age has. If we go back to the aftermath of the Arab Spring in Egypt and the political turmoil that followed, how did this affect your church and what was the response of the Coptic Christians?

Archbishop Angaelos: At the time of the uprising in Egypt, as was the case across the Middle East, there was a lot of unrest and uncertainty. Some people had high hopes of achieving political reform, others were anxious and hesitant. Still others push a personal agenda. And so for Christians it was important to continue to be Christians throughout, and that is to be constructive members of society: to be prayerful and hopeful but also strong and faithful.

At one stage, when the political situation was very tense, Islamists tried to break society apart by attacking Christians – expecting Christians would attack them in return and thereby instigate a civil war. And so, in August 2013, there were attacks on a hundred churches and places of Christian ministry across Egypt within a forty-eight-hour window. It was obviously orchestrated. And the remarkable thing was that in an incredibly inflamed political environment – it was an absolute tinderbox and anything could have ignited it – there was not one single retaliation, violent or otherwise, against any of these attacks.

No communication went out from the patriarchate or the diocese saying, “Don’t retaliate.” It was just Christians in Egypt doing what the Christians in Egypt do. And by not retaliating, they took the wind out of that initiative. By the admission of many, including

political analysts and non-Christians at every level, that’s what protected the community.

AK: The Coptic Church was brought onto the world stage more recently through the terrible act of violence carried out by ISIS against twenty-one migrant workers on a Libyan beach in February 2015. How did this incident help to demonstrate the importance of loving one’s enemies?

AA: That was a pivotal point, I think, that impacted many people around the world, religious and nonreligious. It was an act of such inhumanity that it crossed a line that many were not ready to cross. The impact the executions made had two sources. The first was the men themselves, the twenty Coptic Christians and their Ghanaian friend. Their resilience, their strength, their utterance of the name of Christ to the very end was a real display of grace.

Just as in the Book of Daniel the three young men in the fiery furnace had a fourth with them, I am sure there was a twenty-second man on that beach. Christ must have been in their midst because their peace was visible on their faces.

The second reason the execution made such an impact was the reaction of the victims’ families.

The German novelist Martin Mosebach was so



Mosaic mural at the entrance to Saint Virgin Mary's Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo, Egypt

¹ Archbishop Angaelos serves as the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London and Papal Legate to the United Kingdom.

moved by the story that he traveled to Egypt to write his book *The 21: A Journey into the Land of Coptic Martyrs* (Plough, 2019). He went to live with the families, expecting to see people broken by an act that had taken away their men, but he found them celebrating their witness and forgiving the perpetrators. I think that was an eye opener.

When word of the executions first reached Britain, I had over thirty interviews in the twenty-four hours following the announcement. And all the interviewers asked me, “How can you possibly forgive?” because in my first interview I had spoken about forgiving the perpetrators. It was such a countercultural, counterintuitive sentiment. And I think it was another display of grace. It is the grace of God in us that allows us to love as He loves and to forgive as He forgives.

Forgiveness is tied into loving God – which includes loving ourselves as the image and likeness of God. Because it is in seeing that image and likeness within us and within everybody else, including our enemies, that we are then led to love and to forgive everybody. Not forgiving the action itself but the person committing the action; never justifying or accepting the hostility itself, but recognizing human brokenness and realizing that we’re all broken and we all need God’s forgiveness. In recognizing that, we can begin to love the image and likeness of God in the perpetrators, forgive them, and pray for them that their broken humanity could one day be restored.

AK: Jesus’ commandment to love our enemies doesn’t just apply in the most extreme cases. It needs to be something that we live in our everyday lives. As a member of a church that has suffered so much persecution, how do you show love to your enemies on a daily basis?

AA: We tend to romanticize the big things – like the twenty-one martyrs, or the sacrifice of missionaries in far corners of the world. But in fact, day-to-day life, in Britain or anywhere else, means having to love those who persecute us or even just make our lives slightly more uncomfortable on a daily basis. We have to continue to live our faith, the “faith that

carries us,” because forgiveness doesn’t come out of a vacuum: forgiveness is based on love, and love is based on understanding the nature of God, who is in and of himself love. In scripture we’re told He loves us first. And when we have that realization, we’re able to see how much He loves us – and how much He has forgiven us. And how many times, as with the adulterous woman or the paralytic or others He met, He will say to us, “Your sins are forgiven. Go and sin no more.” And yet we do sin again, and He will meet us again with the same grace and the same love. So, I think it’s very important for us to continue to live the message of our Lord Jesus Christ and continue to walk in His footsteps.

AK: What about the imprecatory psalms? How should we reconcile love of enemies with the chanting of these psalms that seem to invoke judgment, calamity, and curses upon one’s enemies?

AA: The beautiful thing about our scriptures is that they’re not sanitized. They don’t tell us we’re never going to have a problem. When the psalmist is in the depths of anxiety he says: “How long, O Lord, will you forget me?” When he is in the depths of need, he says: “I will lift up my eyes to the hills.” When he is in the depths of the darkness of the journey of life, he speaks of journeying through the valley of death – with the

protection of the staff and the rod of the shepherd. All of these things are human emotions God encourages us to express in human terms.

So, no, we don’t use the psalms to curse, and we don’t use the psalms to vent. We are using the psalms to place our pain before God, because the psalms are communication with God to put our petitions before the Lord who will answer us. People sometimes weaponize scripture using verses taken out of context to justify anger and hostility. But the culmination of scripture in both the Old and New Testaments is the victory of God’s love, the victory of good over evil and of life over death.

AK: What should the church do in response to the war in Ukraine?

AA: Pray. The church must offer up prayers for those who are adversely affected, for those in power, for people who are on the frontline, for all the people who



A mosaic mural in Cairo, Egypt

suffer. Where the church can speak a good word to de-escalate or bring reconciliation, we should do that. Much of what we do will not have an immediate effect, because these wars are based on geopolitics and national interests, which people are less than willing to let go of. But we must certainly never add fuel to the fire, and we must never be a cause of greater enmity. The church has to be a presence of hope and peace.

Jesus himself doesn't tell us not to have enemies. He himself had many and still has many enemies. How do we stick uncompromisingly to the truth of the gospel while still loving our enemies?

I've struggled with this concept of "the enemy" for many years and have come to the understanding that while I myself do not have enemies, there are people in the world who consider themselves my enemy. But even so, I must still love them.

In terms of what we do, we need to be honest with ourselves. One of the requirements for a successful dialogue is to dialogue about the right thing in the right way at the right time. And so there are things we are not going to agree on, even among Christians. There are some things I, as a Coptic Orthodox Christian, cannot compromise on. Ego, status, power – all of those things

we can and should compromise on. When it comes to doctrine, there are things we cannot compromise on, but these also do not stop us from living side by side. And they do not stop us from witnessing together and living the love and grace of our Lord together – being the "light of the world."

AK: Praying for your enemies is also an important part of the gospel, isn't it?

AA: Absolutely. We need to pray for everything and everyone, which includes praying, as our Lord did, for those who consider themselves our enemies.

Even when He was on the cross, He prayed for His executioners, saying: "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." When speaking of those who are perpetrators of atrocities, there's an element of such people "not knowing what they do" because they are hitting out at what they consider to be a dehumanized entity, whereas in reality, they're attacking a full human being, someone who holds the image and likeness of God.

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About Coptic Christians

Copt and Coptic are used to denote the largest Christian body in Egypt. The Copts are descendants of pre-Islamic Egyptians, who spoke a late form of the Egyptian language known as "Coptic." The Copts are Egyptians, and not Arabs. Copts may live in some sort of cultural Arabism and may speak Arabic, but they are not Arabs.

Christianity is said to have been brought to Alexandria, Egypt by the Gospel writer Mark in the first half of the first century and spread quickly throughout Egypt.

Arabic is now used in the services of the Coptic Orthodox Church for the lessons from the Bible and for many of the variable hymns; only certain short refrains that churchgoing people all understand are not in Arabic. The Coptic Orthodox Church prefers the Septuagint (LXX) for the Old Testament and a literal translation of the Greek *Textus Receptus*, such as the New King James Version, for the New Testament.

Like the early Anabaptists, persecution is pivotal to Coptic Christians' sense of identity. *Anabaptist Voice* believes the interview demonstrates the faithfulness of Coptic Christians to put the New Testament teaching of nonresistance into practice.

- AV Editor



Pharos of Alexandria, Egypt.
The most famous lighthouse of the ancient world, built about 280 BC on the island of Pharos of Alexandria.

It was estimated to have been over 100 meters (325 ft.) in height. The lighthouse collapsed from earthquakes in 1303 and 1323. This landmark would have been well known to the people of New Testament times and for 1000 years thereafter.

The Pilgrim Faithful

by John Bunyan

Editor's note: When John Bunyan wrote his classic (1672), *"The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to That Which Is to Come,"* he was well acquainted with the English judicial system. Bunyan endured several trials and twelve years in prison because he would not promise to stop preaching.

In this selection from his book, he well portrays the friction between the ungodly and the faithful pilgrim. Bunyan knew that unjust treatment to a faithful pilgrim can be expected during his journey to the Celestial City.

Vanity Fair

Then I saw in my dream, that, when Christian and Faithful were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair. It is kept all the year long. This fair is no new erected business, but a thing of ancient standing. I will show you the original of it.

Almost five thousand years ago, there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City, as these two honest persons are; Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, perceived that the path the pilgrims took lay through the town of Vanity.

So these evil ones contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore, at this fair all such merchandise is sold as houses, lands, trades, places, honors, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives,

blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And moreover, at this fair there are at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind. Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, adulteries, false swearers, and that of a blood-red color.



Superstition

Passing Through the Fair

Now as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies through the town where this lusty fair is kept; and he that would go to the city, and yet not go through this town, "must needs go out of the world." So these pilgrims attempted to pass through the fair on their way to the city, but, behold, as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved and the town itself, as it were, in a hubbub about them, and that for several reasons.

First – The pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that trade in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair, made a great gazing upon them: some said they were fools; some, they were bedlams; and some, they were outlandish men.

Second – As the people wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said. They naturally spoke the language of Canaan; but they that kept the fair were the men of this world. So that from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed barbarians each to the other.

Third – But that which did not amuse the merchandisers was that these pilgrims were not interested in all their wares. They cared not so much as to look upon the goods for sale; and if the merchants called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, "Turn away mine eyes from



Pickthank

beholding vanity,” and look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic were in heaven.

One, beholding the carriage of the men, chanced to say unto them, “What will you buy?” But they, looking gravely upon him, said, “We buy the truth.” At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more: some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling on others to smite them. At last things came to a hubbub and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded.

Accused of Causing Trouble

Now was word presently brought to the great one of the fair, who quickly came down, and deputed some of his most trusted friends to take these men into examination about whom the fair was almost overturned. So the men were brought to examination; and they that set upon them asked them whence they came, whither they went and what they did there in such an unusual garb.

The men told them that they were pilgrims and strangers in the world, and that they were going to their own country; this place was the heavenly Jerusalem. They declared they had given no occasion to the men of the town, nor to the merchandisers, thus to abuse them or to hinder them in their journey; except it was for that, when one asked them what they would buy, they said they would buy the truth.

Suffering Unjustly

They that were appointed to examine them did not believe them to be any other than bedlams and mad,

or else such as came to put all things into a confusion in the fair. Therefore, they took them and beat them, besmeared them with dirt, and put them into the cage; the officials wanted to make them a spectacle to all the men of the fair. There the two men lay for some time, and they were made the objects of any man’s sport, or malice, or revenge; the great one of the fair laughing still at all that befell them.



Envy

But, the two pilgrims being patient, and “not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing,” gave good words for bad, and kindness for injuries done.

Some men in the fair were more observing and less prejudiced than the rest; they began to blame the baser sort for their continual

abuses done by them to the men. Then the abusers, in an angry manner, let fly at the more just ones, counting them as bad as the men in the cage, and telling them that they seemed confederates, and should be made partakers of the misfortunes of the pilgrims.

The more just ones replied, that, for ought they could see, the pilgrims were quiet and sober, and intended nobody any harm; and that there were many that traded in their fair that were more worthy to be put into the cage, yea, and pillory too, than were the men that they abused. Thus, after divers words had passed on both sides (the pilgrims behaving themselves all the while very wisely and soberly before them), they fell to some blows, and did harm to one another.

Then were these two poor men brought before their examiners again, and there charged as being guilty of the late hubbub that had been in the fair. So they beat them pitifully, and hanged irons upon them, and led them in chains up and down the fair, for an example and terror to others, lest any should speak in their behalf, or join themselves unto them.

Instead, the opposite thing happened, several of the men in the fair were won to the side of the pilgrims. This put the abusers in yet a greater rage. Wherefore, they threatened that neither cage nor irons should serve their turn, but that they should die for the abuse they had done, and for deluding the men of the fair.

Then were the pilgrims remanded to the cage again, until further order should be taken with them. They committed themselves to the all-wise disposal of Him that ruleth all things; with much content they abode in the condition in which they were until they should be otherwise disposed of.



Judge Hate-Good

Coming to Trial

When a convenient time had been appointed, they brought the pilgrims forth to their trial. The judge's name was Lord Hate-Good: their indictment was one and the same in substance, though somewhat varying in form; the contents whereof were this: "That they were enemies to and disturbers of their trade; that they had made commotions and divisions in the town, and had won a party to their own most dangerous opinions, in contempt of the law of their prince."

Then Faithful began to answer, that he had only set himself against that which had set itself against Him that is higher than the highest. "And," said he, "as for disturbance, I made none, being myself a man of peace; the parties that were won to us, were won by beholding our truth and innocence, and they are only turned from the worse to the better. And, to the king you talk of, since he is Beelzebub, the enemy of our Lord, I defy him and all his angels."

Witnesses Brought In

Then proclamation was made, that if any had aught to say for their lord the king against the prisoner at the bar, they should forthwith appear and give in their evidence. So there came in three witnesses; to wit, Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank. They were then asked if they knew the prisoner at the bar, and what they had to say for their lord the king against him.

Then stood forth Envy, and said to this effect: "My lord, I have known this man a long time, and will attest upon my oath before this honorable bench that he is—"

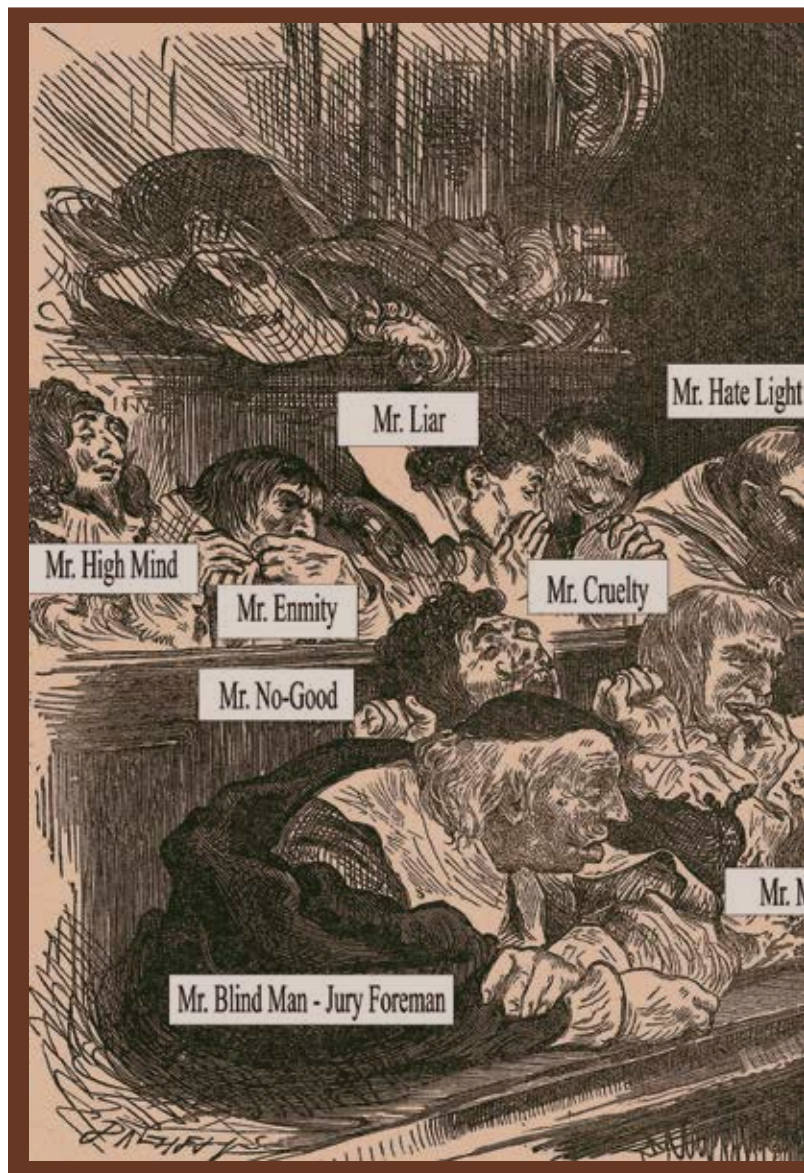
Judge Lord Hate-good – Hold! Give him his oath.

Envy – So they sware him. Then said he, "My Lord, this man is one of the vilest men in our country. He neither regardeth prince nor people, law nor custom, but doth all that he can to possess all men with certain of his disloyal notions, which he in the general calls principles of faith and holiness. And in particular, I heard him once myself affirm that Christianity and the customs of our town of Vanity were diametrically opposite, and could not be reconciled. By which saying, my lord, he doth at once not only condemn all our laudable doings, but us in the doing of them."

Then they called Superstition, and bade him look upon the prisoner. They also asked what he could say for their lord the king against him.

Superstition – Then they sware him. So he began: "My lord, I have no great acquaintance with this man, nor do I desire to have further knowledge of him. However, this I know, that he is a very pestilent fellow.

When talking with him in this town, I heard him say that our religion was naught, and such by which a man could by no means please God. My lord, your lordship very well knows what necessarily thence will follow; to wit, that we still do worship in vain, are yet in our sins, and finally shall be damned: and this is that which I have to say."



The Twelve

Then was Pickthank sworn, and bid say what he knew, in behalf of their lord the king, against the prisoner at the bar.

Pickthank – My lord, and you gentlemen all, this fellow I have known a long time, and have heard him speak things that ought not to be spoken, for he hath railed on our noble Prince Beelzebub, and hath spoken

contemptuously of his honorable friends, whose names are, the Lord Old-man, the Lord Carnal-Delight, the Lord Luxurious, the Lord Desire-of-Vain-Glory, my old Lord Lechery, Sir Having Greedy, with all the rest of our nobility; and he hath said, moreover, that, if all men were of his mind, if possible there is not one of these noblemen should have any understanding, if possible there is not one of these noblemen should have any

Hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?”

Making a Defense

Faithful – May I speak a few words in my own defense?

Judge Hate-Good – Sirrah, sirrah, thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place; yet that all men may see our gentleness towards thee, let us hear what thou, vile runagate, hast to say.

Faithful – I say then, in answer to what Mr. Envy hath spoken:

1. I have never said aught but this, that what rule, or laws, or custom, or people were flat against the Word of God, are diametrically opposite to Christianity. If I have said amiss in this, convince me of my error, and I am ready here before you to make my recantation.

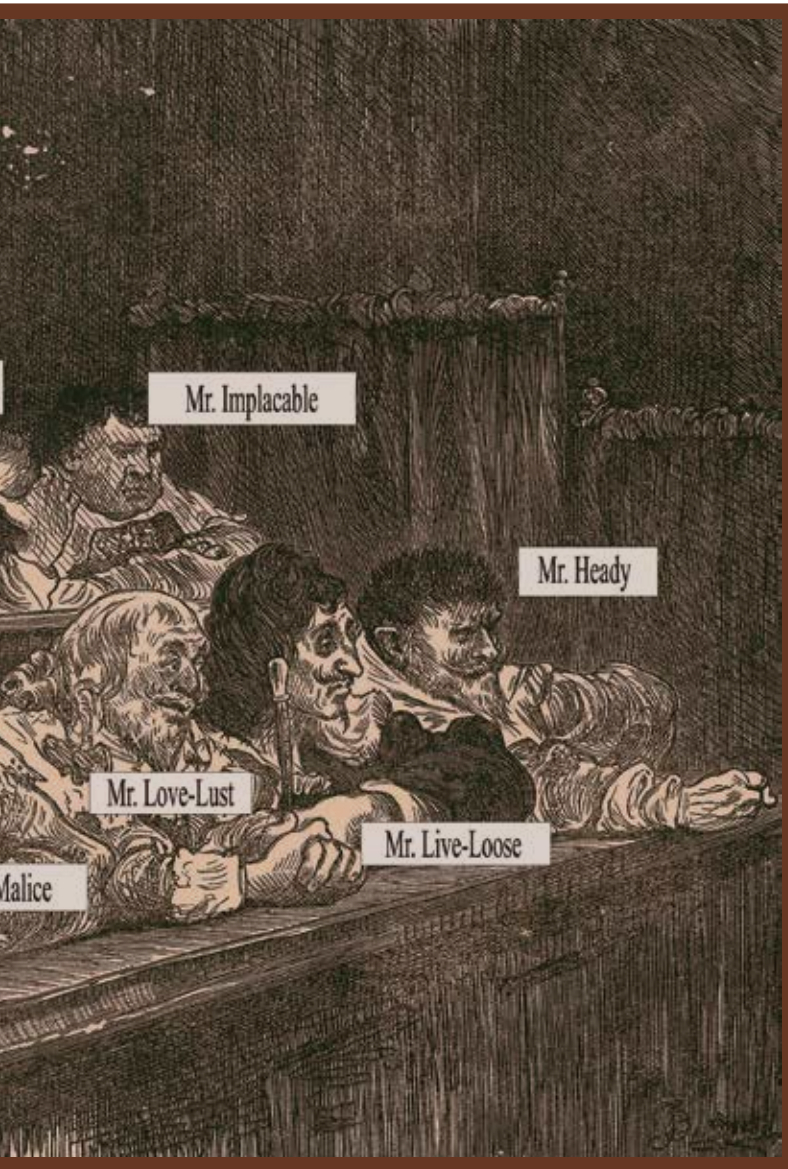
2. As to Mr. Superstition and his charge against me, I said only this, “In the worship of God there is required a divine faith. But there can be no divine faith without a divine revelation of the will of God. Therefore, whatever is thrust into the worship of God that is not agreeable to divine revelation, cannot be done but by a human faith, which faith will not profit to eternal life.”

3. As to what Mr. Pickthank hath said, I say that the prince of this town, with all the rabblement his attendants, by this gentleman named, are more fit for a being in hell than in this town and country. And so the Lord have mercy upon me!

The Judge and the Law

Then the judge called to the jury (who all this while stood by to hear and observe), “Gentlemen of the jury, you see this man about whom so great an uproar hath been made in this town; you have also heard what these worthy gentlemen have witnessed against him; also you have heard his reply and confession. It lieth now in your breast to hang him or to save his life; but yet I think meet to instruct you into our law.

“There was an act made in the days of Pharaoh, the great servant to our prince, that, lest those of a contrary religion should multiply and grow too strong for him, their males should be thrown into the river. There was also an act made in the days of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, another of his servants, that whoever would not fall down and worship his golden image should be thrown into a fiery furnace. There was also an act made in the days of Darius, that whoso for some time called upon any god but him should be cast into the lions’ den.



Man Jury

longer a being in this town. Besides, he has not been afraid to rail on you, my lord, who are now appointed to be his judge, calling you an ungodly villain, with many other such-like vilifying terms, with which he hath bespattered most of the gentry of our town.

Judge Hate-Good – When this Pickthank had told his tale, the judge directed his speech to the prisoner at the bar, saying, “Thou runagate, heretic, and traitor!

Now, the substance of these laws this rebel has broken, not only in thought (which is not to be borne), but also in word and deed, which must, therefore, needs be intolerable.

“For that of Pharaoh, his law was made upon a supposition, to prevent mischief, no crime being yet apparent; but here is a crime apparent. For the second and third, you see he disputeth against our religion; and for the reason that he hath confessed he deserveth to die the death.”

The Jury Decides

Then the jury went out, who everyone gave in his private verdict against him among themselves, and afterwards unanimously concluded to bring him in guilty before the Judge. And first among themselves, the foreman gave his verdict.

Mr. Blind-man – “I see clearly that this man is a heretic.”

Mr. No-good – “Away with such a fellow from the earth!”

Mr. Malice – “Ay, I hate the very look of him.”

Mr. Love-lust – “I could never endure him.”

Mr. Live-loose – “Nor I, for he would always be condemning my way.”

Mr. Heady – “Hang him, hang him!”

Mr. High-mind – “A sorry scrub.”

Mr. Enmity – “My heart riseth against him.”

Mr. Liar – “He is a rogue.”

Mr. Cruelty – “Hanging is too good for him.”

Mr. Hate-light – “Let us dispatch him out of the way.”

Mr. Implacable – “Might I have all the world given to me, I could not be reconciled to him; therefore let us forthwith bring him in guilty of death.”

Death at the Stake

And so they did: therefore he was presently condemned to be had from the place where he was, to the place from whence he came, and there to be put to the most cruel death that could be invented.

They therefore brought him out, to do with him according to their law; and first they scourged him, then they buffeted him, then they lanced his flesh with knives; after that they stoned him with stones then pricked him with their swords, and, last of all, they burned him to

ashes at the stake. Thus came Faithful to his end.

Up Through the Clouds

Now, I saw that there stood behind the multitude a chariot and a couple of horses waiting for Faithful, who (so soon as his adversaries had dispatched him) was taken up into it, and straightway was, carried up through the clouds with sound of trumpet, the nearest way to the Celestial Gate.

– Taken from: *The Child's Pilgrim's Progress*

John C. Winston & Company, 1893



Pilgrim Faithful burns at the stake.

In the Providence of God

By Thomas Crouch

“Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings” (Psalm 17:8).

God watched over me from the beginning of my life. It happened like this:

Bad blood between the Regans and the Edwardses clouded my impending arrival. The current sore spot went back two years earlier when my Edwards grandparents went to see their newborn grandson, Ronald. Because the grandfather Walter Edwards did not feel the baby boy was being cared for properly, he took Ronald home to raise as his own.

My father, a devout Roman Catholic, had no great love for the strict Methodist Edwards. He determined that what had happened with his son Ronald, would not happen again. So when, in the providence of God, I made my appearance on September 14, 1934—during the hard times of the Great Depression—at Toronto’s Women’s College Hospital,¹ my parents, William Regan and Beatrice [Edwards], named me “Robert Douglas” and whisked me away to become a ward of the Toronto Children’s Aid Society.

Six months later, in the providence of God, the society placed me in a childless God-fearing home in West Toronto with T. Herbert and Doris Augusta Croutch. When I was 35 months of age, this God-fearing family officially adopted me for a fee of three dollars. My new parents changed my name to Thomas Herbert Croutch; in this way, I became part of a larger family of uncles and aunts—Grandparents Cottrell had two daughters and Grandparents Croutch had eight children. I was the first Cottrell grandson and the oldest Croutch grandchild.

My parents, siblings, cousins, or grandparents never told me I was adopted. Everyone accepted me as belonging to the family. I only learned these things much later in life.

August 1937 at the Age of Three

My new parents moved to Lansing, Ontario. There my siblings Larry and Betty Ann were born.

¹ Toronto, is the provincial capital of Ontario and is Canada’s most populous city with well over

3 million people. It is located on Lake Ontario where it is a major port.

In the providence of God, our white stucco cottage was beside a two-story brick home housing a friendly old Baptist couple, Ira and Mabel Gooderham. Mabel especially loved children, often hosting tea parties for me and a neighbor boy, Donnie Thomas. Mabel taught us table prayers, told us Bible stories, and began praying for our souls.

August 1940 Nigh the Age of Six

Shortly before I entered first grade, our family moved from rural North York Township to built-up urbanized East York Township. At Mrs. Gooderham’s pleading I was allowed to visit her home during Christmas, Easter, and summer breaks.

When I visited the Gooderhams, they took me along with them to tiny York Mills Baptist Church. I was the only child there, but I enjoyed it because Mr. Gooderham always seemed to have an endless supply of peppermint. On these visits Mrs. Gooderham started buying all my dress clothes as part of her love for “her boy.” This lasted until I entered high school.

A terrible childhood experience had longtime effects on my personality. Mummy went shopping in downtown Toronto, and I was to eat lunch at nearby Aunt Ilda’s. En route, several big boys flung me to the ground and began kneeling me in the abdomen. From her back stoop Aunt Ilda started screaming. Her elderly neighbor ran out, scattered the attackers and carried me to Aunt Ilda’s. This whole incident added a fear to my already-present shyness, and a dread of any play involving rowdiness.

As Grade 2 began, my teacher, Miss Ollis, classified her 35 pupils as Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor. Following Scripture reading, prayer and singing the anthem, she told our two “dumb rows” to get ready. We then lined up to get a crack on each hand to “tune us up for the day.”

Mid year we moved a few streets away where kind Miss Rowan became my ideal teacher at Secord School.

Daddy’s new milk route with a horse and wagon included our own street, so I helped him deliver milk each weekend (until 2:00 p.m. on Sundays). Then I went home to change for 3:00 p.m. Sunday school at All Hallows Anglo-Catholic Church. The parish priest

once said, “No one can know if he is going to heaven—the Pope doesn’t even know!” So I knew there was no hope for a little boy.

After my Cottrell grandparents, my mother’s parents, moved into part of our house, their first visit to All Hallows Church resulted in Grandpa demanding that we stop going there. Grandpa had grown up Anglo-Catholic in Chichester Cathedral, but this church was even more Romanish than that. Later we all began attending Church of the Resurrection where I joined the all-boys choir.

At school, I was in seventh grade for only one-half hour when, because of my good grades, I was moved to Grade 8. At age 11, my classmates in eighth grade were all 13 and older; I was the smallest boy in the class. But by the time I reached 14, I was taller than all my relatives. All of them were dark-haired; I was blonde like a Swede. The Croutches were very swarthy while I was fair-skinned. I figured out that I must be adopted. But I said to myself, “So what? They all love me!” I paid no further attention to being adopted, until many years later our daughter Lydia had me go for a DNA test.

Upon reaching Grade 9, I became delivery boy with the Tamblyn drug store chain. My pay was 25 cents an hour except Sundays when it was a flat fee of \$1.00 for seven hours. That ended my church going! Fellow workers, Eddie and Tommy shared stolen candy and cigarettes. They then taught me their “art.”

Because I was the oldest in the family, I had to help do many chores—washing and drying the supper dishes, turning the manually-operated washing machine, helping Mum in her large garden. When I also had a part-time job I had to turn my earnings over to my parents. Larry and Betty Ann never had to help out like this. Resentment built in my heart and I began to sass Mum—even though I deeply loved her—even when she gave me any correction. Betty Ann even became afraid of me.

Whenever I could, I would ride my Raleigh bike a bit uphill for 34 miles to Grandad’s farm to work all day and then bike home again that evening. Thankfully the ride home was mostly downhill!

In Grade 11 my work changed to indoor pre-wrapping varied sale goods and boxed items. Ten months later I became a sales clerk (with four ladies) at \$1.00 per hour. For two summers I was vacation relief for all eastern city stores.

By Grade 13 two stores vied for my services, with 45 hours served per week. My income always went to buy clothes and pay for my school fees.

August 1951 at the Age of 17

By this time I had drifted away from God and spent little time thinking about Him. Then in the providence of God, He brought me into contact with Christians who knew Him well.

With Mum against my attending Agriculture College, I grabbed the offer of a six-week cram course for grades 12 and 13 graduates to provide enough teachers for needy one-room schools in both the Separate and public school systems.

Around 130 French and English-speaking students—all knew English—gathered at a huge downtown high school. Arranged by surnames, my class listed some foreign-sounding names that were new to me—Dueck, Durksen, Enns, Fast, Friesen. These people were from the Niagara region. I soon noticed these and others met down the hall at break time to discuss what I realized was New Testament scripture. What I heard whetted my desire to know more; I started reading my brother Larry’s Gideon New Testament.²

One day I opened the New Testament’s back cover. There I saw verses listing man’s need, God’s provision, and man’s need to respond. It was as if I heard a voice saying, “*This is what you need to do.*” How could I pray with no prayer book? The Holy Spirit guided me. Somehow, I uttered a few feeble words and immediately I had unspeakable peace and knew I was forgiven. Peace and forgiveness, yes. Yet I knew I needed a church to feed my new faith; I prayed God would direct me to a good church.

One of the students—Paul Fast became my mentor—invited me to a thrice-weekly Bible study after classes. I thrived on those Bible studies. One day Grandma Cottrell said she and Grandpa did not understand what was being said in our quarters. But they sensed I was trying to do right and urged me not to give it up! That greatly encouraged me.

August 1952 at the Age of 18

About this time, Dad told me that for Mum’s sake I could no longer live at home. Visits would still be allowed. Although I knew previous disrespect warranted this, it still hurt.

I had overheard a classmate, Walter Dueck say he had plans to teach near Coldwater. To me, that meant

² Gideons are part of an organization who place Bibles in many public places. These Bibles are free to anyone who wants to take one. A Gideon Bible is not a particular translation.

there was a Bible-teaching church somewhere near there. I checked teacher needs in the Coldwater area and found an opening on Lake Huron's large Georgian Bay near Waubaushene. Since it was close to Coldwater, I accepted the position to teach for Rosemont Public School.

Dad and Mum drove me the hundred miles from home and I met with the school board secretary who told me I would board with the Gratrix family. Dad and Mum dropped me off at the Gratrixes. It was a hard parting for the three of us. I was told that Mum cried all the way home.

One Saturday evening I went with the Gratrixes to Coldwater. While the Gratrixes shopped, I went off to see if I could find Walter Dueck. Upon enquiring for Walter Dueck, I was referred to Henry Dick, a Mennonite minister who lived on John Street. That was the first time I ever heard the word "Mennonite." I had no idea what the word meant.

I found John Street and Henry Dick's house. I timidly knocked on the door. Clara Durksen opened the door and greeted me by my name; then she called Vera Kroeker, Anne Schmidt, and Laura Braun, all emergency teachers from the summer school. Flustered, I tried escaping, but it did not work. No, they insisted I was to come in and meet Henry and Erica Dick and their three preschoolers. I was overwhelmed by four girls and all strangers to me. As soon as I could, I stated my mission only to be told Walter Dueck was 12 miles away, close to the "Chapel." I soon fled!

One Indian summer evening I had just gotten a double dip cone at Coldwater Dairy. As I went down the sidewalk, a hand shot out from a parked car, grabbing my arm. Walter Dueck, Paul Fast, Alfred Friesen, and Henry Enns soon emerged to question me. Then came the best question—would I want to join them for church tomorrow? Trying to keep calm, I assented. God had heard my prayers!

Early the next day I hiked the two miles down to Coldwater to join my friends at the Chapel. After church, we nine teachers joined the Dicks for a hearty meal, then went to the one-room Mount Stephen School for an afternoon service. The school was packed with about 50 attendees from two country churches that had been closed. All nine teachers returned to the Henry Dicks and enjoyed a tasty supper. Then we went back to the Chapel for an evening service.

The preaching and total fellowship fed my soul! Through the messages I was faced with two challenges—restitution and believer's baptism. Three letters with

funds took care of the restitution. But how could I dare ask for baptism? Finally, I decided I would write my request next summer after I arrived back in Toronto.



Thomas Croutch near 84 years, August 2018

Post Script:

Thomas Croutch was baptized near the "Chapel" and later taken in as a member at St. Catharines (Ontario) Mennonite Brethren Church. His commitment to a life of full obedience to God, His word, and His people has been ongoing ever since.

God gifted and led Thomas to be a teacher. He has taught in ten different school settings; public schools, Catholic schools, and Christian schools. He has taught school in Ontario (11 terms), Pennsylvania (two terms), and Maryland (eight terms). He has also taught at Messiah Bible School, a winter Bible school for youth.

Thomas not only taught school. He also worked 14.5 years at the parts counter and as administrative assistant at Martin Truck Service in Hagerstown, Maryland.

Following his work at Martin Truck Service, Thomas served 12 years as a houseparent at a home for recovering youthful alcoholics and drug addicts. The state-owned facility accommodated 24 teenagers.

Thomas married Lucille Martin in 1968. God has blessed their union with five married children, 17 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

They have been members at Antrim Mennonite Church for the last 45 years and rejoice in God's ongoing care and providence as they await His return.



Strong Godly Men

by Sister Uneasy

***Editor's Note:** As an Anabaptist believer convinced that separation from the world in our attire is a biblical principle, I have long wondered, what comes first when people begin to abandon that principle. Do men stop believing modesty is really an essential part of their faith? Do the women press the issue at the edges and the men just sort of give in? Or do the men lead the way?*

Do the men encourage their wives and daughters to shorten their sleeves and dresses, decrease the size of their veilings, wear tight-fitting clothes, brighten the colors of their materials with loud prints—and sometimes bright red. Little by little and more and more a general progression moves toward store bought clothes until the clothes and the hairdos look like that of the general society. Of course, the veiling diminishes in size until it becomes a mockery and then disappears.

Or is it just ignorance about what both men and women are doing and where they are going?

I have seen this progression away from simplicity and modesty and separation happen in a number of churches during my lifetime. It is a real give-in to the devil and the allurements of the flesh and the ways of the world. And it is a cave-in to the faith-only doctrine where believers fail to put their faith into practice.

But the question I am asking here is, “Does the trend in clothing styles away from separation begin with the men or the women? One uneasy sister wrote in and shares her experience in regards to this question. Here are her thoughts.

**“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men be strong.”
— I Corinthians 16:13**

The topic of dress and modesty has usually had its focus on girls and women. And rightfully so. But over the last couple years, I find myself asking, “What is happening to our boys and men?” I notice trendy hair cuts, some that require gels and hairsprays, tight-fitting pants, sleek shiny fabrics—all of them a shift away from the various traditional dress styles among the plain churches and a shift toward the attire of various worldly sects.

Before you just brush me off as an old stickler, please consider: I grew up with the teaching that skirts and dresses were, at best, for church and special occasions. But outside of church, shorts and tank tops were never considered as anything but normal. I was completely oblivious to the fact that we were naked. Growing up, I changed styles and social circles many times, but I gravitated toward the rock scene of the 80's and '90's. I thought long-haired boys and men clothed in ripped-up jeans, a rock T-shirt, occasional makeup, and piercings was quite attractive. I also thought beards of any kind were quite distasteful.

When I became a Christian around the age of 30, it was easier for me to put on a veil than it was to accept that God wanted short hair on men. I would have tried to hold up Absalom and Samson as my defense. But I was going through the process of leaving a worldly culture and adopting a new identity in Christ, becoming someone else. The closer I got to God, the more

wholesomeness and purity became beautiful and what I once thought beautiful became vile. It took a number of years, but I came to actually prefer the hymns and sought to purge secular rock music from my life. As I continued to be exposed to godliness, my tastes continued to change.

When I saw godly men kneel in prayer, I remember thinking to myself that I'd never seen such strength in men before. My husband is not a professing Christian, but he came to church with me one day. When I saw him kneel in prayer, I can't think of a time when I saw him with more reverence than I did that day. Over time, I saw men in various styles—plain suits, slacks, solid button-down shirts, vests, some suspenders, full beards to clean shaven, with simple timeless haircuts that looked wholesome; they were neither defiant nor ignorant of worldly vanities. Though our men still wore shirts and pants like their community counterparts, they were purposely generic in such a way that our men still matched our women.

I didn't realize how much I had grown to appreciate our men's simplicity in dress until I started seeing the shiny shirts and slicked hair, or the “beach worthy” casual attire coming through in various places. I had already been to the nominal churches where men with blue hair wore shorts and flip flops. I had also been to the churches where men were decked out in costly array. Their interests outside of church often matched their attire. “Jesus” was quick on their tongues but their lives were indulgent with many vanities.

Dear brothers, it is not easy for us ladies to stand alone. If you are the only Christian in your household and in your community, you might know how it feels to go it alone. But it is so much nicer to live in the midst of the support and love of a like-minded church family. I don't want to presume to speak for other sisters, But I believe that if you men start leaving the women behind and taking on the fashions and interests of the world, it won't take us very long to figure out that you do not value our modesty and you can bet our insecurities will soon lead us to try to impress you with more worldly adornments.

It's a strange thing that we can read the scriptures over and over and still be blinded to what it says. Before I came in contact with the plain churches and the Anabaptist people, I had earnestly read over the many places in scripture that spoke of modesty, purity, and the like. But I did not understand what modesty was until I saw it practiced by YOU. In your churches I found refuge and safety from the spirit of this world. Your example taught me that the scriptures are timeless and can indeed be lived out in our modern day.

Dear brothers, please don't become enchanted by the examples of faithless well-dressed men, found in Ezekiel 23, men dressed in vermillion and purple and



riding on fancy horses. It seems the whole nation of Israel was enamored by the glitz of the attire of this foreign worldly culture and sought to emulate it.

God was not pleased with the resulting adultery and punished the Israelites severely for their disobedience. God said, *“Then I alienated myself from her [Israel and Samaria] (Ezekiel 23:18).*

So my Christian brothers, do not follow the ways of the world in your attire. We women depend on you to set us a godly example and to lead and encourage us in a life separated unto God; a life visibly different from the ways of the world.

Please don't take off your armor just as the battle is gearing up. Your strength, your beauty, your admiration is tied up in your ability to stand strong against the powers of the world, showing forth the characteristics of Christ—sober, grave, wholesome, pure, righteous, holy, kind, gentle enough to hold babies, chaste enough to talk to the woman at the well, yet zealous enough to overturn tables, shepherds willing to chase the wolves away. Working men, not “pretty boys.” Men of God.

Practical Questions:

1. How do the brothers begin the trend away from godly separation in their clothing?
2. Why do the sisters lead or follow the trend away from simplicity and modesty in their attire?
3. What is the root problem causing the shift away from godly attire?

Brave Men Are Needed for Christ Today

Author: Hannah Thurston

1. *Brave men are needed for Christ today,
Out where the battle is long;
Forth at the summons, the call obey,
Quit you like men, be strong!*

Refrain:

*Quit you like men, be strong,
Hard is the fight and long;
Onward and fail not,
Forward and quail not,
Quit you like men, be strong!*

2. *Seeking not ease nor applause of men,
Enter the fight against wrong;
Suffering defeat, but to rise again,
Quit you like men, be strong!*

3. *What tho' you suffer, do not complain;
Cheer your faint heart with a song;
Let not your courage grow slack and wane,
Quit you like men, be strong!*

4. *Steadfast, unyielding, the battle press,
You to God's army belong;
Clad in his armor of righteousness,
Victory's assured, be strong!*

The Temple of God

by James G. Landis

“Who is able to build God a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him?”

— II Chronicles 2:5-6

King David wanted to build a temple for God in Jerusalem. For a period of around 280 years (1290 B.C. to 970 B.C.) God had dwelt among the Israelites in a movable tent. David wanted something more permanent and he wanted it to be in Jerusalem.

King David told his son Solomon, **“My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the Lord my God” (I Chronicles 22:7).** Let us look at several reasons why David had this desire in his heart.

A Place Where God Dwelled

David knew how the glory of the Lord had filled the tabernacle when it was completed. **“Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34-35).** God’s presence dwelled in the completed tabernacle.

King David proposed building a temple in Jerusalem where God’s presence would dwell. In II Samuel 7:2, David told Nathan the prophet, **“See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.”**

A Place Where God Had Appeared to Him

David sinned by numbering the soldiers in Israel. As punishment, the Lord’s angel swept over the land of Israel and 70,000 men died in three days—a real pandemic! But when God’s angel stretched out his sword over Jerusalem, God saw the penitence of David. The angel told him to go to Mount Moriah—the same place God had told Abraham to offer Isaac—and erect an altar on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

At the threshing floor, the vivid presence of the angel with his sword stretched out over Jerusalem so terrified the four sons of Ornan that they ran and hid. Along came King David with his impressive retinue. Then the king paid Ornan for his threshing floor, the oxen, the threshing equipment and the wheat. Then David built an altar and prepared the offerings upon it.

King David undoubtedly knew how God had poured down fire from heaven upon the altar of Elijah on Mount Carmel. Now David called on God; the Lord answered

him by sending down fire from heaven. Then the Lord commanded the angel to return his sword to its sheath. The plague was stopped and Jerusalem was saved.

Then David declared, **“This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel” (I Chronicles 22:1).** It seems that this declaration meant that the temple was to be built there on Mount Moriah because God had appeared to him at that place.

A Place of Worship

David wanted the temple to be a holy place where the people would bring their sacrifices and offerings to God. The temple was to be not only a reminder of the need for God’s forgiveness, but a continuing call to obedience. In I Chronicles 22:11-13 David charged his son Solomon, **“May you prosper and build the house of the Lord your God, as He has said to you. ... that you may keep the law of the Lord your God. Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the Lord charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed.”**

By coming into God’s presence at an awesome temple, David thought this would remind the Israelites they must be obedient to God’s laws if God was to place his blessing upon them.

A Place of Witness

David wanted his proposed temple to be a witness to the greatness of the God of Israel. He told Solomon, **“The house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries” (I Chronicles 22:5).**

Therefore David “took much trouble” to prepare for the building of this glorious temple. He amassed 100



Solomon's Temple

thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver and bronze and iron beyond measure. And he prepared some timber and stone as well.

To get some idea of the immense treasure David had accumulated to build the temple—or to store in its treasuries—let us consider how much the gold and silver was worth in today’s dollars. The NIV Bible has footnotes saying the talents of gold equaled 3,750 tons. My friend who buys and sells gold and silver, says that amount of gold is worth 174 billion, 960 million US dollars. The 37,500 tons of silver would be worth 22 billion, 300 million US dollars. What astounding wealth to go into one building.

But that was not all; the huge amount of bronze and iron was not even measured. In addition, David told Solomon to obtain hewers of wood and workers of stone and all types of skillful men of every kind. In II Chronicles 2:2 we see how Solomon conscripted 150,000 men and placed 3,600 foremen over them.

To put all this in perspective, alongside the Savannah River in Georgia, various power companies, along with help from state and federal grants, have just completed Units 3 & 4 of a nuclear power plant. The project ran seven years longer than projected with billions of dollars in cost overruns. At its peak, some 8,000 people were involved in the project. The total cost of the project is said to be 35 billion US dollars.

The Plant Vogtle atomic power plant can be described as a huge undertaking, but it pales in comparison to the temple David wanted to build. Just in terms of the gold David laid in store, the temple was seven times more costly. The temple used over 20 times more laborers in its construction than Plant Vogtle used.

The Famous Temples

After Solomon prayed at the dedication of the completed temple, “**fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord’s house. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: ‘For He is good, For His mercy endures forever’**” (II Chronicles 7:1-3).

God came to Solomon’s temple and placed His glory there. The people worshipped the one true God there. This temple became famous throughout the world. Thus, the temple Solomon built fulfilled the vision of King David—a place where God dwelled, a place of worship, and a place of witness.

However, the people of Judah did not obey God’s command to worship only Him. They worshipped other gods. They did not keep the statutes and judgments which Moses commanded them to keep. Therefore, God sent Nebuchadnezzar and his army to destroy this famous and magnificent temple.

Seventy years later God allowed many Jews from Babylon to return and rebuild the temple, albeit one far inferior to Solomon’s temple.

About 480 years later, King Herod the Great restored the beauty and much of the grandeur of “The Temple.” The Jews told Jesus the rebuilding effort took 46 years (John 2:20). The disciples pointed out to Jesus the beautiful stones and buildings of the refurbished Temple (Matthew 24:1-2). Jesus was unimpressed. Instead, He correctly predicted the complete destruction of the temple when “**not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.**” The Romans under Titus fulfilled Jesus’ prophecy and destroyed this beautiful temple in 70 A.D.



Herod's Temple

The Temple of Your Body

So God abolished those two ornate, costly temples in Jerusalem where sacrifices and offerings had been made. He no longer dwells in temples made with human hands. Paul in I Corinthians 3:16 tells us, “**You are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you. If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.**”

How amazing! God now chooses to dwell in living temples instead of the most beautiful, costly, and elaborate buildings. I Corinthians 6:19 reads, “**Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God. ... Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.**”



Things I Never Heard Before

by Jonathan Dayton Alexander Casavez



"All belongs to God."

"For we are laborers
together with God: Ye are
God's husbandry. Ye are
God's building"
(1 Corinthians 3:9).



"Go to the ant, thou
slugard; consider her
ways, and be wise: which
is having no guide,
overseer, or ruler,
provideth her meat in the
summer, and gathereth
her food in the harvest."
(Proverbs 6:6-8).



A steward is content,
thankful, moderate, and
humble. He takes care of
his Brothers who are also
followers of Christ Jesus



"So is he that layeth up
treasure for himself, and is not
rich toward God" **(Luke 12:21).**



Family is
God's
design.



"There is treasure to be
desired and oil in the
dwelling of the wise,
but a foolish man
spendeth it up"
(Proverbs 21-20).



On Friday and Saturday, April 21-22, 2023; Anabaptist Financial sponsored a "Young Family Finance and Budgeting Seminar" at Burkeland Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Georgia. Jonathan attended the seminar and wrote down the above comments shortly afterward.

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

God's Perfect Will

by Sep A. Rated

We find the effort put into this magazine very encouraging and foundational for the church of tomorrow. Yet we are disappointed to find the subject of “funny money” being a part of its content.

We as a called-out people are opposed to political involvement with our government. The epistles state we should pray for God's perfect will to take place in our government. “Funny Money” violates that principle.

The teaching of not taking government “free money” is sound and right. Yet where is the meaning of “not my will but thine”?

I am an elder in a fellowship of four different congregations in four different states. Our brotherhood would request that you not print this subject in this publication.

We thank God for *Anabaptist Voice* and pray for the continuation of this work.

AV Editor

We agree that there should be no political involvement in the government. I am not leading a rebellion or favoring one politician over another. The rulers of the governments of this world are under the sway of Satan; we are in the Kingdom of God and serve Him.

The selection from Pilgrim's Progress (pages 20-24) names the rulers of the town of Vanity as Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion with their companions. They are recognized as evil and wicked in a town where sin and wickedness prevail.

As in the selection from Pilgrim's Progress, it should not be a difficult concept for us that the two kingdoms—the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of Satan—stand opposed to each other.

I am at a loss to know where the epistles teach that “God's perfect will should take place in our government.” I Timothy 2:1-2 says, “I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of

thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” This verse states that we should pray and give thanks for all men, not just for those in authority. But special prayers are made for rulers “so that Christians may lead a quiet and peaceable life.”

I Timothy 2:4 says, “Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” This passage gives two directions as to how we should pray for government rulers:

- *That they may be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.*
- *That they may allow us to live quietly and peaceably.*

Another passage in I Peter 2:17 also says, “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.” This is telling us to be respectful to all men including the king.



Servants of a Heavenly Kingdom

by My Duty

I am writing in response to the article, “More Funny Money” (AV29, page 17).

The last section of this article gives us some very wise and biblical teaching as to how God's people should live and respond in the face of financial temptation and deception. However, much of the article seems to be an effort to take U.S. leaders to task for their “unethical and unconstitutional” abuse of the money supply. As Christians we are not called to hold government leaders accountable for how they handle the money system.

Being pilgrims and strangers, we use money that civil governments make available as a method of exchange for goods to provide for ourselves and our families. By this money system we can give to the needs of others and to the Lord's work. But we have no right to tell government leaders how or what to do with the money supply. It belongs to an earthly kingdom. We, as Christians, are not servants of such, but are servants of a heavenly kingdom.

Currently there is much political debate concerning the growing national debt. (What should be done to make America great again and how can America bring back stability to the financial markets?) As Christians, it is not our fight. Like Abraham, we must keep ourselves free from the politics of Sodom that destroyed Lot's influence and his family. Lot did not reform Sodom by sitting in the gate of Sodom. But Abraham's intercession to God saved Lot in the overthrow.

What Is My Duty?

- It is my duty to preach the gospel to warn sinful men and women of the wrath of God that will come upon all who do not repent and believe.

- It is my duty to warn against putting our trust in uncertain riches.

- It is my duty to warn of God's law of sowing and reaping.

- It is my duty to be a good steward of the wealth God has entrusted to me.

- It is not my duty to tell Caesar how to regulate the money supply. That is his responsibility and He must one day give account to God for his stewardship of it. We, as God's children, must also give an account of that which we are stewards of. May we keep the lines clear as to our work and the work that belongs to Caesar.

AV Editor

I agree, the carnal government and the church should be totally separate. Christians are not to be a part of an evil kingdom under the dominion of Satan. Christians should not use force against their fellowmen, vote in elections, go to war, or be part of jury service. God's kingdom and the kingdoms of this world are to be totally separate.

However, as you point out, the Christian does have a responsibility to warn sinful men and women of the wrath of God that will come upon all who do not repent and believe. This includes all men and does not exempt those operating as part of the government. We should call sin "sin," wherever it is found.

We have the examples of John the Baptist and the apostle Paul who warned rulers of the coming judgment of God against their sins. John rebuked King Herod for marrying his brother's wife, and "for all the evils which he had done" (Luke 3:19). Paul spoke to the Roman ruler Felix "about righteousness, self control, and the judgment to come" until he trembled and sent Paul away (Acts 24:25).

So rulers are not exempt from God's laws of

righteousness and truthfulness. But they operate in Satan's kingdom and are subject to the wrath of God when they lie, steal, murder, and commit adultery. If the Christians do not preach righteousness and truth to the rulers, who will warn them of the wrath to come?



A Living Church

by Conrad Goodwin

I am excited about the items to look for in a church. So in response to your practical question, "What are things you hope to find and share in a godly congregation?" (AV29, page 35), I have written down some things I think about in this regard.

I. Spiritual Life:

A. Teaching to be born again:

1. Teaching about the new birth
2. Evidence of born-again people showing their spiritual understanding by talk and walk
3. Consecration through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ: "For by one offering he has made perfect forever those who are being consecrated. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us... 'I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them upon their minds'" (Hebrews 10:14-15).

B. Testimony:

1. Thought, speech and deed brought into captivity to Christ, under the guidance of his Holy Spirit
2. Personal prayer and praise, as well as in the group context
3. The fear of the Lord
4. Unity in the congregation ("one accord" and "one mind" are two biblical expressions to remember). That takes some working out!
5. Recognition of Jesus' name and Lordship, and faith in His power to save from sin and condemnation
6. Hope of the Lord's return

II. Structure:

A. Church Government:

1. Plural ministry
2. Appointed by the Lord and recognized by the congregation
3. Local (living among their people, usually from the same congregation)
4. Masculine
5. Under headship of Jesus
6. Ministers of the Word, providing guidance to the church

B. In Congregational Life

1. Recognizable membership
2. Due process per Matthew 18
3. Personal accountability, confession of faults

4. Communal involvement in individual lives
5. Pursuit of holiness
6. Justice – not “social,” “economic,” or “moral” justice, just justice
7. Loyalty to Christ as soldiers (II Timothy 2:4)

III. Practice:

- A. In the assemblies of the Christians, conducted in Jesus’ name
 1. Per Paul’s instructions, “decent and in order” (I Corinthians 10)
 2. Not focused on any earthly building, but on the spiritual temple, built up of living stones
 3. Preaching of the gospel in the meetings inside and out
 4. Teaching and studying the scriptures (like the Bereans)
 5. Baptism of believers
 6. Solemn observance of the Lord’s supper in local congregation.
- B. Recognition and practice of the worldwide church’s nationhood; separate from the rest of nations. “**My kingdom is not of this world**”; and “**The kingdom of God is among/within you**” (Luke 17:2). Includes:
 1. Respect and obedience to local government, with humility, as foreigners
 2. Avoidance of commitment to the military-industrial complex
 3. Careful analysis of customs like education, business and other societal norms, to not invest in human “systems” but to “make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well-pleasing to God.”
- C. To study and obey/follow Christ’s teaching, apostolic teaching, and apostolic example, as doctrine for the church today. Especially:
 1. Christ’s teaching in the so-called “Sermon on the Mount”
 2. The commandments of the Apostles from the “Council at Jerusalem”

IV. General:

- A. Focus on family as basic unit of society, instituted by God. “**Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh**” (Matthew 19:5-6; Ephesians 5:31-6:4).
- B. Hospitality and kindness, especially to those of the house of faith.

AV Editor

Thank you for this positive view of the church and what it can be under the direction and power of the Holy Spirit. “May the God of peace ... make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever” (Hebrews 13:20-21).



Wise Caretakers

by Cal Culate

I would like to respond to the article on God’s Wondrous Carbon” by J.G.L. in AV 29.

In the 1700’s the atmospheric CO₂ level was 280 ppm or about 0.03%. In 1900 it was still below 0.03%. Today it exceeds 400 ppm or 0.04%. Using J.G.L.’s numbers this amounts to about 500 billion tons of CO₂ that we put into the air since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. We can calculate exactly how much CO₂ is produced when we burn a ton of any fossil fuel based on well-established facts. The only guess is how much fossil fuel has been burned.

The earth’s temperature has been rising along with the increase of CO₂ in the air. CO₂ is wonderful and good but too much is harmful. We are the main cause of this increase.

We can affect God’s wonderful creation. Let us wisely care for it.

AV Editor

I will express my doubts as to the reality of any man-caused climate crisis caused by burning fossil fuels.

1. I doubt there is any common and consistent means of measuring 300 or 400 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide in the air. This takes a rather sophisticated instrument and test. The actual stated measurements I have found are based mainly on one observatory in Hawaii. So I doubt the figure of 462 ppm represents any accurate change in the amount of carbon dioxide in the air on the whole earth.

2. I doubt that any stated increase of CO₂ from 280 ppm at the beginning of the industrial revolution to 462 ppm today has any bad impact on the climate. It could even be for the good.

3. I doubt that a supposed increase of 182 ppm over 200 years is bad for the earth or its people. It is a long-standing scientific understanding that living animals (including humans) exhale carbon dioxide when they breathe. So in theory, the great increase in the billions of humans and animals on the earth in the last 200 years would naturally increase the amount of CO₂ available for plants to thrive on. And the more plants, the more oxygen they give off for humans and animals to use.

4. I doubt that those who come up with these strange theories of man-caused climate change are telling the truth. Many voices in science are telling us there is

no man-caused climate change ahead. And those who predict these catastrophic changes ahead for the earth caused by burning fossil fuels are the same people and groups who predicted false calamities before: global cooling, ozone holes, glaciers melting, oceans rising, and a global pandemic. I do not believe them now.

Practical Question:

- 1. Should the people of God stop driving cars, trucks, and tractors?*
- 2. Does it matter to the people of God if predictions of future calamity for the earth are not true?*
- 3. How do we wisely care for God's wonderful creation?*



Highly Nuanced Right and Wrong by Bowing Out

I would like to discontinue our subscription to the *Anabaptist Voice* publication, including all three copies currently being sent to our address.

Our family was one of the original AV subscribers and we loved those early publications. I have often lovingly referred to AV as “the periodical for the prophets.” Regrettably, the spirit of AV is increasingly heading in a direction that is different from our family’s approach to Christianity. Like you, we are trying to work out our faith in Jesus in practical ways. However, we are increasingly uncomfortable with the publication’s focus and tone.

The focus of AV seems to be waxing towards social issues that are extremely complicated and highly nuanced. While I sometimes agree with certain elements of the arguments presented by AV, I am often uncomfortable with the overall conclusion and the lack of comprehensive coverage of the complex topic. I shudder to think that conservative Anabaptists might be using this publication as a primary source for their conclusions on matters such as COVID policy and vaccines, climate change, and government debt and monetary/fiscal policy. While I am college-educated, I know little about the first two issues. So I try to responsibly hold my meager opinions loosely and quietly.

I am a banker though, so I do have a decent understanding of government debt and money supply ... and it is much more complicated than was recently presented by AV. For example, while much was said about the societal risks of inflation, nothing was

said about the profound impact that a deflationary environment might have (the Great Depression, etc). Nor was it pointed out that governments use the money supply to manage both inflation and deflation, and that most of the recent surge in U.S. government debt was related to avoiding deflation. I’m not sure we would have derived this heightened focus or level of concern from scripture.

I worry that if we use our voice in matters where we aren’t fully informed or in matters where we are inflamed, but not scripture-inflamed, society will stop listening to conservative Anabaptists altogether ... even in matters where we do have authority and credibility. And society desperately needs our voice.

Regarding tone, it seems that AV will sometimes attack the intentions and integrity of the major players involved in these societal issues (“unethical, unconstitutional, obvious to any thinking person, an immoral act that has evil consequences”) rather than simply disagreeing with the policies.

We appreciate all of the good that AV has done in promoting a faith that works. Hopefully these comments can be an encouragement to stick to Jesus’ issues, to strike a more generous and unassuming tone, and to be careful when lending our prophetic voice to societal issues that require significant technical expertise and nuance.

AV Editor

One always does well to test the spirits of the prophets, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1). Two tests can help determine who is a true prophet:

- 1. “Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God He who knows God hears us By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:2-6).*
- 2. “When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him” (Deuteronomy 18:22).*

You have mentioned several areas where you disagreed with the tone and the conclusions of Anabaptist Voice. In most cases we were not making predictions about the future, we were trying to determine what was true and what was false.

We admit that most issues are complex and highly nuanced. That should not keep us from determining right and wrong. For instance, take a car. It is a

very complex piece of machinery. I can tell if it runs smoothly, if it takes a lot of gas, if it starts; but I cannot repair it when something goes wrong. I can tell if the car works or it does not.

In the same way, a Christian is aided by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit in determining right from wrong. It is a trick of the Devil to make issues sound so complex that we are not able to tell good from evil. Does the car work or does it not? What is true and what is a lie? So who should we believe—ungodly media and ungodly government officials, or the people of God with their Spirit-filled discernment?

You have expressed concern that Anabaptist Voice should not be speaking out about societal issues. The big concern should be that we speak the truth. We believe there is no one better prepared to determine right and wrong than the people of God. We have the unchanging Word of God to go by. Our voice should proclaim what is displeasing to God and what is right and good in His sight. So there should be no “societal issue” beyond the scope of our vision.

I think of the prophet Jeremiah who spoke to a very real societal issue. He told the people, “Go out of Jerusalem and surrender to the Babylonians and you will live. Stay in the city and you will die.” The people did not like Jeremiah’s message so they threw him in the cistern to die, but that did not change the word of the Lord; they remained in Jerusalem and suffered terribly and died.

Let us be careful that we test the spirits of the prophets and do not discard the word of the Lord because we do not like it.



Handling the Lord's Goods

by Bee Steward

This is a response to E.R. from Tennessee (AV29, “It Works Too Well,” page 6) asking for more teaching on how to use our Lord’s goods. I’ll share a bit of my life story and hope it can inspire others.

In my youth I wanted Proverbs 3:8b to be my life’s goal, “Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.” I came from a lineage that was once very wealthy and I saw how riches can destroy a person. Building wealth was something I did not desire; I wanted to serve the Lord more than anything.

After I was married several years, we went through some lean financial times. We served in missions and upon returning home found it difficult getting

established in an occupation again. It seemed my prayer was not being answered; we were living close to poverty.

During this time I read the book “*God Owns My Business*” by Stanley Tam. It is an older book written in the 1960’s. I was inspired by Stanley’s life. I too wanted to live on a modest income and give the rest away. At the time it had no relevance to my life because we were hardly making enough to live on.

As time went by, I got into a business that I thought would be a simple, modest business. When I first started, I hoped it would be enough to provide for my family but wasn’t even sure of that. After a couple of years the business started growing and I could hardly believe it when we surpassed \$100,000 in income.

We used some of the income to keep the business growing, but that really was not our goal. Church and family always came first. Our income has multiplied so that numbers hardly make sense, yet it is still God’s business. We don’t use His money for investment properties, fancy vacations, hobbies, or expensive toys.

Most Christians agree that God owns everything, but too many Christians spend like it is all theirs. This is unfortunate. God has given some of us here in America the ability to make far more money than we need. We truly have been given ten talents. Will we use them on ourselves or to build God’s kingdom?

Let us rise to the challenge and be faithful stewards of our Lord’s money.

AV Editor

Being good and faithful stewards of the Lord’s money is the right challenge. How much of the Lord’s money we spend on ourselves is a key test of our stewardship.



The Practical Side

**“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
— Colossians 3:17**

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

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

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

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



The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

The Practical Side: Rest of the Story

Real world situations met by today’s Anabaptists.

Agree with Your Adversary

by Over Hasty



The lawyer, on behalf of the owner, had asked for a settlement figure. I added up my expenses for what we had paid out—bulldozer work, custom hire for planting and tending the crop, the river screen, the survey. The total came to \$70,000. The owner promptly put \$70,000 in the lawyer’s account and notified us that a local farmer was taking over the crop.

My preacher friend happened by the soybean field the same morning I received the phone call telling me the owner was taking over the crop. I told my friend the situation and asked him what I should do. He replied, “The Bible says to agree with thine adversary quickly.” So we did.

I called the owner and told him I would explain the irrigation system to the farmer if he would send him around. The farmer came by and I gave him a few pointers.

We had another site where we could put the house

trailer; it got moved within the week.

I went to my lawyer and offered to pay him for his services in recording the lien against the crop. He mysteriously said, “You don’t owe me anything for my trouble. I just wanted to help you out.” Lawyers don’t usually show such unusual kindness.

Now everyone understood that the lien on the crop needed to be released before the money would be paid to us. But the sum offered now, was not \$70,000, but \$65,000. I was learning how lawyers get paid.

Quite a few months passed. Finally, I wrote the owner a letter and said I had still not received the payment. Would he like to start the negotiations over again? In short order, we received the settlement check for \$65,000. We signed the release and the matter was closed.

As I look back and examine where I went wrong and what should have been done differently, I have three observations.

— I do not believe the owner ever intended to really sell the land. He always intended to keep it through a default of the purchaser. He acquired many thousands of acres through some of the same kind of deals.

— I should never have touched the place until we had a signed and sealed deed. If the agreement to purchase the land was not for real, no contract was valid; smooth lawyers can always cancel the agreement. The

owner had a “good” lawyer well-experienced in doing whatever was necessary, at the owner’s command.

— Most of the time a good realtor is well worth the money he gets.



The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

One Man-Two Lives

by Into Light



Concerning your question on what gripped us most in AV29, it was hard for me to pinpoint what it was. However, I would probably say it was the story, “One Man-Two Lives” by Albert Stoltzfus.

We read about Ralph having a wrong perspective on protecting “his stash.” What I like is how Abner presented a scenario to him, bringing Jesus into the picture, and thereby getting the point across. Abner, by the grace of God, did not pass Ralph off as a hopeless case, or try to avoid the subject, but brought it into the light. May we be more like Abner.

A Slippery Slope

by A Ming High

I am writing in response to the article on “The Dangers of Wealth” (AV29, pages 7-11).

There is nothing wrong with wealth creation. The slippery slope is wealth accumulation.

The graph at the bottom of this piece attempts to help us orient ourselves in our relationship with God. How good a steward are we of His wealth?

We must all come to peace with where we are on this scale as a steward of the resources God has entrusted to us—our time, talent, treasure, people, and pain. If we are not in battle for the self-sacrifice, we will be drifting toward self-preservation. We will begin losing the battle and establishing a precedent and lifestyle standard away from God in our generation. We need to always be asking ourselves, “Is this good stewardship?”

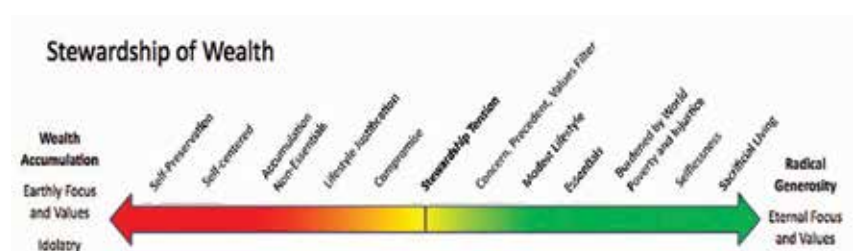
It is human nature to hold up the wealthiest members as our standard for wisdom and success, but Jesus told us when everyone has given their opinion, ask the “least among you.” After all, the poor have nothing to lose—money or status.

When we give up what is “rightfully” or justifiably ours, we move closer to God and God’s children. There is no higher price for relationship than for a man to give up his life for God or his brother. The best organizations are made up of selflessness. Radical only happens when selflessness is our focus.

Matthew 25: 34–40 (NASB) puts wealth in a proper perspective:

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me *something* to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me *something* to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ ... And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did *it* for one of the least of these brothers *or sisters* of Mine, you did *it for Me*.’ ”

One day we will lose it all. Everything. Only what has been done for Christ will last. We should model this truth for our children and grandchildren to follow. Our lifestyle—giving, not consuming—should be part of the legacy left to our children and grandchildren so they too will become effective Kingdom builders.



The Practical Side: New Story

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists

A Mock Jury

by Never Promise



I was tricked into it. I should not have been there.

Over 15 years ago, early one week-day morning along with 35 other people from our local town and surrounding areas we had gathered in a local meeting room. The invitation letter

had vaguely stated that if I was interested in discussing business in the local area, they would pay me \$150 for attending a one-day meeting. Well, I was interested in bettering business in our town and \$150 was not bad pay for one day. So, there I was.

The first order of events was to get everyone at the meeting to sign a pledge saying they would not discuss the events of the day with anyone at or after the meeting! Big red flag. I should not have signed the pledge and just walked out. But I signed and stayed.

Now, the real purpose of the meeting came out. The sponsoring organization was a conflict resolution business from the state capitol and they claimed to be trying to bring two conflicting parties together. That did not sound too bad. But as things progressed, I understood something else was going on.

There had been an explosion in a car repair shop early one morning. Several people were badly injured. So, it had not been determined what had caused the explosion. Witnesses were called in on screen and questioned. Some were doctors, injured people who hid behind curtains and read prepared script, lowly mechanics and welders were called in to testify about welded joints versus fitted joints in a pipeline. The gas company had a lawyer in person present their case.

Everything presented was used to place the blame for the explosion on a gas pipeline twelve feet from the building. I had trouble understanding how gas leaked from a pipeline fitting twelve feet from the building, got inside the building, and caused the explosion. I knew enough about the practical mechanics involved that I just could not agree to place the blame on the gas company.

After listening to the lawyers and viewing the assembled witnesses on screen for about four or five hours (I think they furnished us lunch), we were asked to fill out questionnaires about our take on the “evidence.” After viewing the responses, those in charge of the meeting, divided us into three groups of twelve each. Then they told us we were to go into separate rooms and serve as mock jurors to decide the case. Each room would be monitored by video.

Our group chose a foreman and we proceeded to discuss the case. I started pointing out to the ten ladies and the foreman some of the difficulties with the leak in the pipeline theory. The door opened and in walked a company rep. He said that all parties had agreed that the pipeline leak was the cause of the explosion. The jury could not discuss this.

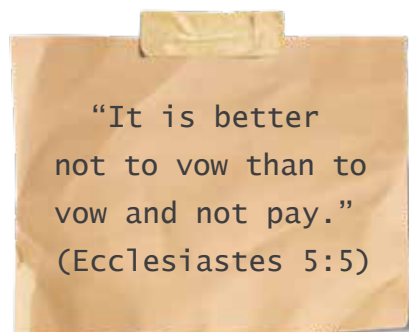
I replied that, as I understood things, a jury could do anything they wanted to do.

When the mock juries were called back to the room, not one jury foreman gave the decision of his group. Thirty-six people collected their \$150 and went home. I am sure the lawyers received their pay, and the resolution company received a handsome check.

Practical Questions

1. Who paid all the money for the mock trial?
2. What was the real purpose of the day's events?
3. What caused the explosion?

See AV31 for “The Practical Side: The Rest of the Story.”



At The Intersection

By Andrew Headings

My name is Andrew Headings. I am working with an advisory board, staff members, many authors and others to start a new, ad-free, health education magazine for conservative Christian communities. I want to introduce myself to AV readers and share my faith and vision.

As a young teenager, I had an inborn interest in science, along with an insatiable curiosity. My curiosity and interests led me into the study of physics and relativity as well as a serious zeal for gardening. I loved soil health and its relation to nutritious food. I still do. In 2015, my wife and I married and started raising a family. Our firstborn son died at birth from a neural tube defect called “anencephaly” which is caused by a folate deficiency in the mother. Since then we have been blessed with four healthy children.

Also, in the first few years of our marriage, I was licensed in the state of Wisconsin as an EMR (emergency medical responder) and have been responding to 911 calls for five years as a volunteer.

Getting inside the homes in my community has had a tremendous impact on me and has greatly increased my appreciation for the culture and values we Anabaptists espouse. Truly, sin is an abomination. Truly, sin is a reproach. Truly, the Devil is an incredibly heartless slave master. I fear that many of us have not seen enough of the suffering occurring right next door to truly appreciate the freedom of living under the commands of God.

Later, I spent a winter or two reading through thousands of pages of books on healthcare and the American healthcare system, often written by people in it or who once were in it. This extensive reading taught me many things about the present healthcare system—over-diagnosing, over-treatment, financial conflicts of interest, untraceable medical billing, and government regulation—all part of the present system.

Two winters ago, I took several college courses at our local tech college, one on anatomy and physiology, and one on biochemistry.

As I continue my intensifying foray into these matters, I have found myself at the intersection of faith, people, science, and medicine. I believe my life is to be spent at this intersection, and desire to maximize

the good I can do for my neighbor in this arena during the short time available to me on this earth. This year I started “Anabaptist Health Ministries.” This is a non-profit organization focused on two missions.

Mission Number One

The mission in front of us right now is health education. Thus, the magazine, *Our Health*. If we can teach people the principles of human well-being, we can help them achieve better health and spend less money as they do so. The foundation for flourishing health is God and His principles. That is our starting point. The magazine will have an emphasis on faith, disease prevention, and providing comprehensive health education in a friendly environment.

Mission Number Two

Our second mission is healthcare. Our vision for a healthcare model is based on three core concepts:

- Faith. A healthcare model that is founded on God’s values and principles.
- Tradition. A healthcare model that uses and updates medicine that works, whether conventional or natural.
- Reason. A healthcare model that incorporates many biblical and common-sense ideas, such as: disease prevention, comprehensive patient education, a sanitary and godly lifestyle, and patient autonomy. The list is not complete.

Mission two is a long-range goal. It’s a goal of developing a healthcare model that can ultimately be replicated across this country and still provide excellent faith-based, evidence-based, and sustainable healthcare. The healing of people and the nursing of the wounded is first, and foremost, a Christian enterprise. At its very roots, healing is an act of God.

We have left the institution of healthcare in the hands of the world for decades, if not centuries. It’s time to claim medicine as primarily a Christian occupation and show by our actions that it can only be done well through the power, compassion, and knowledge of God. After all, God is the Creator of everything: people, medicine, and science.

A. H. | Gleason, Wisconsin

AV Disclaimer: The following page is an introductory announcement and not an endorsement. We think Our Health to be a worthy effort, but leave the evaluation thereof up to the reader.

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Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report

July thru September 2023

Circulation Report

June 2023

July 1, 2023 Beginning Balance \$2,266.59

Income

Donations \$2,502.00

Local Support* \$8,000.00

Total Income \$10,502.00

Beginning Balance + Income \$12,768.59

Expenses

Handling & Packaging \$683.00

Postage \$3,982.56

Printing \$5,996.00

Staff Expenses \$930.00

Total Expense \$11,591.56

September, 30 2023 Ending Balance \$1,177.03

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.

ISSUE #28 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,850 | Operating Cost: \$11,006.61

Cost Per Copy: \$2.27/ea.

ISSUE #29 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,975 | Operating Cost: \$11,591.56

Cost Per Copy: \$2.33 /ea.

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

We thank our supporters for the \$ 2,502.00 given to help with the cost of publishing AV30. If you wish to share in the publishing cost of AV31 it will be much appreciated.

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



End Matters

One news item of the day caught my attention. "After 12 years of construction the second largest Hindu temple in the world has opened in New Jersey. The temple spans more than 180 acres and boasts 10,000 statues and the largest elliptical dome ever constructed from stone. This Hindu temple, along with several others, is called "The Abode of the Divine."

Our God does not dwell in this temple, but in the bodies of the saints. According to II Peter 3:10, this massive and beautiful temple, built by human hands and full of dead idols, will be destroyed. It will become like the temples of Solomon and Herod (See pages 30-31).

Since we know of this coming destruction and that our bodies are the temple of God, we should consider what kind of people we ought to be. Peter tells us how we should live while on the earth. He says, "You ought to live holy and godly lives. ... Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him. ...

Dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen" (II Peter 3:11-18 NIV).



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*“The earth is the Lord’s.
and the fulness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein.”
~ Psalm 24:1–10*

