

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

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

In This Issue:

- "WHAT IS OUR CALLING?" - GLENN M. WENGER
- "THE ADVERSARY OF OUR SOULS" - AUSTIN HEGE
- "IN THE BEGINNING" - MENNO KNIGHT
- "EVERLASTING LOVE" - HAVALAH MYERS
- "AROUND THE WORLD IN 1900" - A. D. WENGER



Letter from the Editor



Wood Pile, January 24, 2024

We have enjoyed a relatively mild winter thus far with low temperatures hovering around freezing. However, this week temperatures have dropped into the low 20s with 17° F. (-10° C.) forecast for Sunday. That's cold and we hope the wind will not blow during the drop.

Our woodshed is well-stocked and we have had an abundance of firewood to share with others. A snug and warm house is certainly appreciated in cold weather. In Georgia, the dampness at 40° F. makes it feel much colder.

The 2023 rainfall in this small corner of God's world totaled 54.7" (1389 mm). This is the highest amount in the last ten years. This past summer the rains came with nice spacing so that the irrigation systems ran far less than usual. The cotton, peanut, and corn farmers of the area have generally reported good yields once again. The harvest is over, but the gins that extract the seed from the lint are still running.

We have one cow-and-calf pair that got left behind when the herd moved to other fields. The calf is threatening to die and there seems to be little we can do to save it. It is always a humbling experience to face death. In the event that the calf dies, I am again faced with the fact that the breath of life is given by God and will one day depart from every creature. So the death of living creatures is a schoolmaster to prepare me for the day when I also will die.

I celebrated my eighty-first birthday back in September. I do not have to look in Revelation to know that my days on earth are numbered. In the words of King David, I will shortly "go the way of all the earth." I am at peace and my life and breath are in God's hands.

God has extended my life to see yet another issue of Anabaptist Voice completed. May it be a blessing that stirs you to "be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only."

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

Strong Points

I agree with Bowing Out (AV30, page 36). "The focus on AV seems to be waxing toward social issues ..." Articles on COVID, climate change, fiat money, DPC's, etc. should not have part in AV. While those are issues a Christian may at times discuss, there is a higher calling that AV should focus on.

Another thought I'd like to share is related to the "Separate Seating" article (AV30, page 16). I think the strongest point for separate seating is left out—that is, separation for temptation of morals.

With mixed seating, you may end up one foot from your neighbor's wife (seldom happens, but it has). This can be a distraction. Also, seated behind your neighbor's wife can be a distraction. I have also seen a person go out during the service and have to squeeze past the opposite gender.

After a church service, conversation is also better with separate seating. In mixed seating, there can be awkwardness when surrounded by several members of the opposite sex.

P. H. | Georgia



Being Righteous

I appreciate AV because of its variety and subjects. What other publication will address the interests of Anabaptists? Reader concerns, *The Dangers of Wealth*, *Consecrated to God*, *The Promised Rest*, memorable quotes, *More Funny Money*, *God's Wondrous Carbon*, poetry, a personal conversion testimony, excerpt from *'Pilgrim's Progress'*, a round table discussion, practical life situations, a book review, and a financial statement are all in AV29.

Taxes Give Value! – "More Funny Money" provides knowledge that everyone should know. Money is worthless, unless someone will exchange something of value for it.

In "God's Perfect Will" (AV30, page 33), Sep A. Rated says we should not talk about funny money in *Anabaptist Voice*. I wonder what kind of money our brother uses to trade with. Barter will work to a degree. I feel sure he does not use electronic money. Probably he uses cash which bears the image of political leaders. So what kind of money should we use?

I believe a financial system that can track all transactions is coming. Since we have that knowledge, we should share it. Paul and Silas were imprisoned because they spoke the truth and it hurt the profits of the idol makers.

Greenhouse Gases – The world's concern about greenhouse gas has puzzled me. Greenhouses grow plants whereas deserts grow little. Greenhouses seem desirable. In school, I learned that plants breathe in carbon dioxide and breathe out oxygen. Whereas, people breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. That seems to work well.

Anabaptist Salvation – "Pilgrim's Progress" is an allegory of salvation as understood by Anabaptists. The excerpt from "Pilgrim's Progress" of walking with Talkative is challenging. Walking with Talkative is not as much danger as *being talkative*. Talk is cheap. It is easy to have an opinion on everything and talk about it. In matters of religion, a person can be theologically correct and not practice what he preaches. *Being religious is easier than being righteous*.

Distinction of Sexes – I also want to mention the article "Separate Seating" (AV30, page 16). This article listed four good and valid reasons for having men and women seated separately. A fifth reason could be that it honors the God who created us male and female.

A clear distinction of the sexes and their different roles should be evident in the people of God. And separate seating in the worship services can help keep that distinction clear.

B. H. | Pennsylvania



Do What Is Right

I would like to respond to the comment, “Not What Jesus Meant” (AV29, page 5). Having grown up in a Hutterite colony, I would not want to live anywhere else. Maybe it is not for everybody—it involves a lot of sacrifice but is very rewarding. Communal living is a work of the Holy Spirit, but those misusing it should not be the reason others disregard it.

In the last decade we’ve come into contact with Korean families living communally. They moved from South Korea to the United States, then Manitoba and now they are in Vancouver, British Columbia. They had never heard of Hutterites or Anabaptists until 15 years ago when they met an Amish man in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They continued their search till they came in contact with Hutterites and then spent a lot of time at colonies.

There is also a movement in South Korea where there is a lot of interest in communal living with some communities pooling together 25% of their income and wanting to work towards 100% communal living. For more info check out Oneul Community, South Korea.

These visitors said, “If you follow the Sermon on the Mount, you don’t stop till the result is living communally.” For those of us born into such a lifestyle, living in community certainly seems to be the right way. But when we learn, search, and stumble like other fellow pilgrims, we hesitate to judge a different way of living.

Let us learn from each other and help each other when we fall. *But in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him” (Acts 10:35).* May we never stop searching for the truth and walk in His light.

M. H. | *Manitoba, Canada*



The Truth Remains

I would like to respond to the article “God’s Wondrous Carbon” (AV29, page 20) and “Wise Caretakers” by Cal Culate (AV30, page 35).

When we are talking about facts, science, and measurable things, let us leave our doubts out of the discussion. While you are correct that we do not understand what all is affected by a warming environment, it is true that CO₂ levels are measurable.

Whatever you or I believe about a warming environment does not change reality. The consequences

of man’s choices are real.

The carbon cycle as mentioned in the article is true. But the question scientists are asking now is what happens when all the stored carbon—fossil fuels, coal, etc.—is burned and released back into circulation? This stored carbon is being added into our atmosphere.

Truth may be inconvenient at times. But ignoring something or making light of another’s viewpoint does not make truth go away.

M. S. | *Missouri*



In-Depth Bible Study

We had two sets of interesting Korean visitors at Horizon Colony. One group came in August (from a small intentional Christian community in Vancouver. Another group came from the Oneul [Today] Community in Seoul, South Korea earlier this month. They both gave a presentation at Horizon.

The minister from South Korea’s presentation was about their history. He explained (through a translator) how disappointed he had been with Christianity after finishing seminary at the top Presbyterian seminary in South Korea.

Consequently, he decided to do an in-depth Bible study of the four gospels with the young people at the church he founded. After five years of study, they saw several things emphasized—serving one another, sharing possessions, and the concept of the Kingdom of God.

We asked him why he didn’t learn about the Kingdom of God in seminary. He said it was looked on as solely a future event.

P. M. | *Manitoba, Canada*



Ultimate Rest

Thank you for your magazine and all the work you all are putting into it. May the Lord reward you as you labor for Him.

I was a little flabbergasted when I read, “The Promised Rest” (AV29, pages 14-15). Certainly, our ultimate rest is in heaven! Yet in my opinion, the context of Hebrews 3 and 4 and of Psalm 95 would indicate a warning to the people of God to live each day in faith rather than unbelief.

Can I really expect to rest in heaven if I do not find a measure of it here? Jesus said in Matthew 11, **“Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”** Is Jesus only speaking of our rest in heaven? Of course, we believe He is referring to the peace that passes understanding in this life also. However, in the daily grind of life, it is easy to become weighed down and live more in a frenzy than restfully. The works we do can gradually become our works rather than His work through us. But when we come back and recognize our faithlessness and turn to Him in repentance and trust, then we cease from our works and enter into that rest again that we had and where He wants us to live. I believe this rest is one and the same thing as abiding in Christ.

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming” (1Jn 2:28 KJV).

V. M. | *Arkansas*

(See “A Present Rest” in “The Round Table” on page 38.)



Veil Is Taken Away

Thanks for publishing “Just Doing What Christians Do” (AV30, pages 17-19). Do the Jews of today see the same grace of God working in our witness as they saw in the Coptic Christian response to their murderers? Or in the response of the Amish in the Nickel Mines community? Contrast these forgiving responses with that of “Christian” Europe from the Crusaders to Hitler’s “Final Solution.”

I want to affirm my 100% agreement with the editor’s response to “Jews of the Heart” (AV29, page 37). Both Jews and Gentiles must come to God through faith in Jesus Christ. There is no exception to this.

“Israel, according to the flesh” has not attained to the righteousness of God, because they sought it not by faith, but stumbling in the darkness of unbelief, they were rejected. They are the natural branches. But we, the wild branch Gentiles, by faith in the Word of God, were grafted into the good olive tree, Jesus Christ. However, we are not to be high-minded, but should realize that if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare us either if we fall away from the saving faith. We also realize God is able to graft those dried up, rejected branches back in, if they leave off their unbelief, and come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The present situation for national Israel reveals their unbelief. When an attack by Hamas killed a thousand Israelis, they declared war on Hamas. Within a few

weeks, 11,000 Palestinians had died. This reveals the pre-flood Lamech’s nature. The way of peace have they not known, for the very obvious and simple reason that they rejected the Messiah, and to this day the veil of unbelief still blinds them.

Paul writes in II Corinthians 3:14-16, **“For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away” (NKJV).**

It has been thus for nearly 2,000 years. But a remnant shall be saved. Some are known as Messianic Jews; these retain their nationality, but accept the New Testament as their authority and guide. Others of Jewish descent are assimilated into local churches.

J. D. B. | *Virginia*



More Benefits

I enjoy reading the *Anabaptist Voice*.

I am writing about “Separate Seating” (AV Issue 30, page 16).

I understand God’s order for worship in the church, brotherhood—brethren sit with brethren and sisters sit with sisters—and we dress for the occasion.

The responsibility of the ordained men as servants of God (Hebrews 13:7, 17) says, “rule over” or “be an example,” how to worship in reverence. This passage tells how to behave ourselves in the house of God. **“I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (I Timothy 3:15).**

I Timothy 3:15, is on a different level than family worship. It seems to me that many churches are replacing the brotherhood worship with the family worship structure. Moving away from separate seating is one of the many steps that lead away from a more reverent and formal worship service to a looser congregational style.

Another benefit of separate seating is for widows and widowers. Where there is no married partner or when a spouse dies, with separate seating they still know where to sit in the assembly. Part of the comfort for the remaining spouse is that the seating arrangement does not change, but the sense to belong, remains.

J. M. | *Tennessee*

What is Our Calling?

by Glenn M. Wenger

Before Jesus ascended into heaven he gave a charge to His disciples: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Notice, He did not say, “change the world,” but preach the gospel to “every creature.” The word here translated “creature” is used 19 times in the New Testament, and seems to refer specifically to individual people as a creation of God. II Corinthians 5:17 also translates the same Greek word as “creature” and definitely means, “individual people”: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature”—a new special creation of God.

We quickly notice that the Great Commission calls us not to “change society,” but to convert individuals. The change the first century church exerted on society was the result of individuals being convicted of their sins and turning their lives to Jesus Christ. Our calling is not to persuade sinners to live like Christians, but to call them to heavenly citizenship through “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Did you ever notice that Jesus sent His disciples out into all the world? He did not mean to groups of people such as nations or ethnic groups; He sent His disciples to preach the gospel to “every creature.”

Man's method and God's method of causing change in the world are different. The world's method would necessarily focus on the group—maybe legislation backed by police force or marching to protest social injustice. Our calling is not to change society, but to call the people of the world to repentance.

Jesus' way was to convert individuals. This was the only way He used. As Jesus did, so we ought to do. Our calling is to “preach the gospel to every creature.” When God gives individuals a new heart, they will become living clusters of believers that change the world.

The world is not changed by our efforts to change it. The world is changed when many individuals become vibrant Christians. When there is enough salt in the mixture of the world, it will change the flavor. When there are enough reflectors of God's light, it will light the darkness of this world that more and more people will come to that light.

Right before Christ ascended into heaven He made their calling clear to His disciples. “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

... And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.” (Luke 24:45, 47). Today, our calling is still to preach the gospel of repentance and forgiveness of sins to individuals from every nationality. In that way, God's people will be the light and salt that changes the world.

Meaning of “Creature” in Mark 16:15

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). The King James Bible translates the Greek word in this verse as “creature.” The clear meaning of “creature” is “human beings.” We are not to preach the gospel to cows and horses, cats and dogs, or lions and wolves, but to people.

This meaning is brought out in a number of freer translations of which we list three examples.

“Then he told them: Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world.”

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

“He said to them, Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all people.”

Good News Translation (GNT)

“And then he told them, You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere.”

The Living Bible (TLB)

Meaning of “Creature” or “Creation” in Other References

According to Strong's Concordance <2937>, the same Greek word is used 19 times in the New Testament. In the King James Version this word is translated as “creature,” or “creation,” 17 times. Let us look briefly at ten of the KJV references that translate the Greek word as “creature.” Each of these ten refers directly or indirectly to “mankind.”

— *Mark 16:15 and II Corinthians 5:17.* “Creature” has already been explained on this page as meaning “human beings.”

— *Romans 1:25.* “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature <2937> more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” This verse is sandwiched between two verses describing

men of evil passions and the consequences of such actions. The “creature” here refers to evil men who worship and serve themselves rather than God.

– *Romans 8:19.* “For the earnest expectation of the creature <2937> waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” The creature, or mankind, eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. Only human beings await redemption, not animals or plants.

– *Romans 8:20.* “For the creature <2937> was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.” Only human beings are subject to vanity or sin.

– *Romans 8:21.* “Because the creature <2937> itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” “Creature” means human beings. Only mankind can experience deliverance from corruption into glorious liberty.

– *Romans 8:39.* “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature <2937>, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Substitute “man” for “creature” in this verse and the meaning comes clear.

– *Galatians 6:15.* “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature <2937>.” Neither Jew nor Gentile means anything in God’s sight. God desires a new man.

– *Colossians 1:23.* “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature <2937> which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” Substitute “man” for “creature” and you will have the right understanding of the verse.

– *Hebrews 4:13.* “Neither is there any creature <2937> that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” Man is the only creature that must give account to God for his actions.

Conclusion:

Our calling is to preach the gospel to people of every tribe and nation.

Adapted from The Way of Truth, October – December 2023

For the full story of the Abram Neufeld family, see AV23, page 17.

Abram, Elisabeth, and family live near Jagueyes, Chihuahua, Mexico. Abram was ordained as an evangelist and has been active in that calling. Recently, Abram took his two oldest boys along on an outreach trip to the US/ Mexico border towns.



In recent weeks a large number of refugees have come to the border towns. By a divine appointment and miracle, thousands of Spanish Bibles were donated and shipped to the Neufelds. As they have opportunity, the Neufelds are busy distributing the Bibles and preaching to the refugees.

Many refugees travel on top of train cars to get to the border, especially if they have no money. So Abram saw the opportunity and climbed up on a stopped train to share the gospel.

The Value of Brotherhood

By Norman Ward

Some individuals who come to follow Christ in the Anabaptist way, highly value the closeness of brotherhood—live teaching in the Sunday school, practical preaching, a cappella singing, fellowship after the worship services, fellowship meals, interest in their personal lives, support in medical crises, church school, and the strength found in united applications of Bible principles. These individuals have never experienced this kind of spiritual life and brotherhood before ... and they love it.

Other individuals, desiring full faith and fellowship with the Lord Jesus, back off from this kind of close brotherhood. They are not ready for submitting their lives to the closeness of brotherhood and the inspection of others. They want to go it alone in their own way. They see the faults of individuals in the brotherhood and rightfully want to avoid those faults in their own life. And some of these converted believers live a consecrated life according to their own thinking. But it is difficult to maintain a right relation with the Lord without regular treasured time with other believers.

The following playful “sput” takes aim at excuses often given for not regularly attending worship services with other believers.

A Lone Believer

by Norman Ward

Let’s take the ten most popular excuses for not attending church and apply the same excuses as reasons for not taking baths and see how sensible they sound:

Ten Reasons Why I Never Wash

1. I was made to wash as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites.
3. Those who wash think they are cleaner than other people.
4. There are so many different brands of soap I could never decide which one was right.
5. What’s the use? You wash once and everybody will expect you to keep it up.
6. I used to wash, but it got boring, so I quit.
7. I still wash on Christmas and Easter.
8. None of my friends wash.
9. I’m still young. When I’m older and dirtier I might start washing.
10. Soap makers are only after your money.
11. Some people who never wash are nice people.
12. I’m allergic to many brands of soap.

– Echoes from the Mount, Colquit, Georgia

*A believer without a church is
like a bee without a hive.*

– Calvary Messenger, January 2024



*One stick of wood does not
burn well by itself.*

– Menno S. Brunk (1909-2000), Virginia

The Adversary of Our Souls

By Austin Hege

Satan's Influence in the World Today

Satan's name is freely used in connection with the food we eat and the tools we buy and use.

- People speak of preparing and eating “deviled eggs.”
- People speak of “devil’s food cake,” a rich chocolate cake.
- People speak of eating out at Diablos which is the Spanish name for “devils.”
- Locally, you can have your “chicken devil” dusted or regular.
- Drill bits, saw blades, and other items are sold under the brand name “Diablo.” Some even have the face of a devil on the package.

Let us be careful as to what we give support in what we buy and consume, or sell. I feel there is an effort today to desensitize us to evil and the father of such. Let us not become careless in our view of the Adversary of our souls.

I Peter 5:8 warns us, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*

II Corinthians 11:14-15 warns, *“And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.”*

In verse 13 Paul was warning the church of false apostles, deceitful workers, who transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ. Be aware: men who make a pretense of being godly, even within the church, but walk not according to the gospel, can fake it. If Satan can fake it, do not be surprised when his followers do the same.

We should not be deceived into thinking Satan is not active in the world today. He is out to deceive us, to lead us away from God. He wants to cause us to give up the faith and face eternal destruction. To be banished from God eternally is his goal for every man and woman.

Satan Is a Real Being

The name “Satan” means “enemy.” Satan is the archenemy or chief enemy of human souls. He is the

slanderer or accuser both of God and man. He is driven by an unrelenting hatred against God and all goodness—the father of all evil. Satan is engaged in a worldwide and age-long struggle against God. He desires to defeat God’s plan for man.

Satan is not just an evil influence—an evil force that works in man. He is a created being who turned against his creator.

The Scripture gives Satan many different names and titles—Lucifer, Accuser, Adversary, Angel of the bottomless pit, Apollyon, Belial, Beelzebub, Devil, God of this World, Murderer, Prince of Devils, Prince of the Power of the Air, Prince of this World, Ruler of Darkness, Serpent, Tempter, Unclean Spirit, Wicked One.

Job, chapters one and two, give us a glimpse into the spirit world. These chapters reveal Satan as a real being who wanted to destroy Job. The passage of Job 1:6-12 also shows us that Satan is limited in power by God.

Jude 9 records Satan and Michael, the archangel, contending over the body of Moses following his death. This passage warns us that Satan is very powerful and cannot be put down by human strength. Even Michael the archangel did not contend with Satan, but said, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

We do not understand much of what goes on in the spirit world about us. Yet, we must believe and understand that Satan is a real being. He is not just some make-believe character with a tail and a pitch fork in his hand.



Where Does Satan Spend His Time?

Someone has said, “Satan’s chief place of abode is within six feet from the surface of the earth.” In other words, if he is not abiding in the hearts of men, he is not far away, and is constantly seeking an entrance.

In Job 1:7 the Lord asked Satan, *“From where do you come?”*

Satan replied, *“From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”*

Ephesians 2:2 calls him, *“The prince of the power of the air.”*

II Corinthians 4:4 calls him *“The god of this world (age).”*

John 14:30 calls him, *“The prince (ruler) of this world.”*

Although Scripture shows hell is Satan’s eternal dwelling place—that is his destiny—yet Scripture would show that for now, Satan is free to roam the earth.

I Peter 5:8 records that he is walking about as a roaring lion, *“seeking whom he may devour.”*

Satan is the ruler of a powerful kingdom—one that stands in opposition to the Kingdom of God. In Matthew 12:26 Jesus responded to the Pharisees who accused Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub. Jesus said, *“If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?”*

– Satan is Beelzebub. He is *“the prince of devils” (Matthew 12:24)*, and *“the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)*.

– Satan is Belial. He is worthless, reckless, lawless (II Corinthians 6:15).

– Satan is the dragon. He is the monster that seeks admission into every human heart. *“He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years” (Revelation 20:2)*.

– Satan is the god of this world. He is the prince of demons before whom every fallen creature bows his

knees. *“Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God should shine on them” (II Corinthians 4:4)*.

– Satan heads a vast group of spirit beings or “fallen angels.” *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41)*.

– Satan is the prince of the power of the air. He directs and organizes a host of wicked spirits in the heavenlies who do his bidding. *“You once walked according to the prince of the power of the air; the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2)*.

– Satan has his limits. He is not omnipresent—he cannot be everywhere at the same time. But through his wicked fallen angels, he makes his influence felt worldwide.

– Satan exercises dominion over all lost humanity. Those who do not know God, are captive to him.

How Does Satan Work?

II Corinthians 11:14. *“And no wonder! For Satan transforms himself into an angel of light.”* Yes, Satan often appears as an angel of light. This is how Satan came to Eve in the garden of Eden. He deceived her into thinking he had something to impart to her that was to be preferred to anything she then enjoyed; she was deceived.

Someone compared Satan’s work to a fisherman who tries to hook a great fish.

“As a fisherman, when he has a great fish on his hook, lets out the line, so that the fish may swallow the hook, and be more surely caught; even so the devil, when he has a poor sinner upon his hook, does not at the first treat him roughly, but stretches out rod, line and all, that he may make the surer of him, and hold him the faster.”

Satan knows how to fish for men:

- * Dangle the tempting bait.
- * Wait for a strike.
- * Set the hook.
- * Reel them in close.
- * Lift them out of the water.

Satan is still dangling his bait in front of us today. The bait conceals a hook that will draw us into his possession.

One of his deceptive baits is “new liberty.” People tell you, “All that really matters is the condition of your heart.” You will hear that you do not need to listen to the authorities in your life—just praise God and do your own thing.

Satan may make you think you are wise enough to go it alone. Church membership is unimportant—rules and regulations can be ignored because you “got the Spirit.”

Another deceptive bait is, “Others out there are sincere Christians and they do it. Why should you make life hard on yourself by not taking part?” Satan will not remind you of the verse in James 4:17, *“To him that knows to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”* The more light given to us, the more responsible we are.

The bait can be lust. For us as men to look lustfully upon a woman we meet, Satan will tell us “Just the thought is doing no harm.” But Jesus tells us, *“Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. And if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:28-29).* How is our conduct around the opposite sex? Do our minds control our eyes?

The bait for our sisters might be for them to make form-fitting, fancied-up dresses because others are doing it; they do not want to be old-fashioned. But I Peter 3:3-4 says, *“Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold or of putting on fine apparel. But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”*

These are some of the baits Satan uses to lure us away from obedience to God and His Word. When a fish takes the bait and realizes it is hooked, it will put up a fight. Some fish fight harder than others and are able to get loose. Yet for some, the hook is set so deep, that in time, they give up the fight.

People are like fish if they take the bait. Some may

be able to get away, but when Satan sees he has us in his control—that is when he often becomes the roaring lion. He no longer needs to wait patiently on us; we are already under his control. It becomes much easier for him to get us to follow him. The person Satan tempts to go against their own conscience in small matters will soon be in open rebellion. The one who harbors lustful thoughts will progress to the point of indulging in immoral behavior, with no shame.

The one who Satan tempts to follow fads and fashions will, in time, openly rebel against the rules and regulations of the church and encourage others to follow them.

I know a man with a background like mine, who shook his fist at authority. He scorned the rules and regulations of the church. He followed the lust of his heart. Today he is on his third marriage. Yet he would tell you he is a Christian. The “god of this world,” if you give him the opportunity, will blind you spiritually.

Someone has said, “It is as an angel of light that Satan gets people started; as a roaring lion he accomplishes their finish.”

The question might be asked, “With Satan having nothing to offer after this life but damnation and destruction, why does anyone allow themselves to become his victim?”

1. “The god of this world has blinded their eyes.” Like Eve, many today turn their eyes from all the real blessings God has to offer, to gaze upon the forbidden fruit Satan holds before their eyes.

2. Satan as an angel of light is able to take some captive by offering them what he calls enlightening light, more liberty, and they forsake true faith to follow their fleshly desires.

3. Through fleshly temptations in an hour of weakness, many are defeated when they are not on their guard.

4. Ephesians 5:14 says, *“Awake you who sleep.”* Many are taken captive because they have been lulled to sleep by a life of ease and comfort. While they sleep, Satan sows the tares (Matthew 13:25).

Overcoming Our Adversary

Yes, Satan is a dangerous adversary. But we need not fear that we will not be able to withstand his every attack. Picture it like this: After one has surrendered his will and life to God, he is now walking through life with a great giant beside him. There is none like Him. As long as we, like little children, stay close to that all-powerful, loving Heavenly Father, Satan’s attacks will fail.

Stay Close to the Heavenly Father. The apostle John stated it thus: *“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4).* Yes, like little children we want to stay close to that giant who is greater than the adversary of our souls.

We stay close to our Heavenly Father by daily communion with Him. We listen to, and meditate on, His Word. We worship Him with other saints who also want to be in His presence. We daily obey His precepts and adore Him.

We are not told to fear Satan; we are told to *“fear God who is able to cast both soul and body into hell” (Matthew 10:28).* Fear Him! Respect Him. Honor Him. He is our Lord and Master. Our Savior. Our protector. Stay close to Him. But if we wander off from God, we open ourselves to all the temptations and deceptions Satan can throw at us. James warns us, *“Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:14).*

If we want to be protected from Satan’s power, we must stay close to our Heavenly Father.

Resist Satan. Another way we can be overcomers is to resist Satan. James 4:7 says, *“Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”* This passage points out several particular ways we can resist the Devil.

- Do not seek carnal selfish pleasures. If the internet with YouTube and social media tempts you to sin, get rid of it. It is better to do without it than to go to hell with it. If you are tempted to lust by ungodly music and scantily clad women, do your shopping when the crowds are not present. Do not try to be like the world. Stay away from the immorality of professional sports. You know your weak points. Resist the Devil and the result is that he will flee from you.

- Do not be proud of your own standing. Be humble. Submit to God.

- Do not speak evil of one another. We need each other to resist the Devil.

Death to self and submission to God’s will for my life is a must before I can resist the Devil.

Satan will fight you for control of your mind. Many years ago I confessed to listening to ungodly music. Then one day at work, a plumber I knew had his radio playing very loudly. I kindly asked him if he could turn it down. His response was to crank it up louder and to work like he was possessed.

I remember sitting in my living room one evening

and hearing music and words coming from the other end of my house. I went back the hall but nothing was on. Some of these happenings convinced me I could not resist Satan in my own power.

Flee Temptation. When Joseph was tempted to do evil, the way of escape was to flee. When tempted of the Devil, remember to look for the escape God has for you.

Give No Place to the Devil. Do not make room in your life for the Devil. Fill your daily activities with good things. *“Put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:25).*

- Stop lying and speak the truth. Watch those fantasy stories and exaggerations.
- Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. Do not hold grudges.
- Do not steal but work so you can give to the needy ones. The old proverb says, “Idleness is the Devil’s workshop.” Stay busy.
- Put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking.
- Be kind to one another, tenderhearted and forgiving one another. Fill your days with acts of kindness.

Stay Close to the Brotherhood. I Peter 5:8-9 also tells us to resist our adversary, the Devil. *“Resist him, [remain] steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”* Do not let the Devil scare you into submitting to him. We have a lot of support from others in the brotherhood who are also undergoing the same attacks. You are not alone in the struggle against the wiles of the Devil. Stand together. If you are the only one who determines what is right and wrong, perhaps the Devil has already deceived you.

Often we shy away from asking a brother or sister to pray for us. In resisting the Devil we need the prayers of one another. If you do not share with others the struggles you are going through in resisting the Devil, it is going to hinder them in holding you up in prayer.

Use the Scripture. When Jesus faced the Devil in the wilderness temptation (Matthew 4), Jesus used the Scripture to combat the Devil’s lies and half truths. Finally the Devil left Him. *“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him” (Matthew 4:11).*

Knowing and using the Scripture is a powerful weapon against the Devil.

Remember, this is a spiritual battle. *“Put on the whole*

armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:11-12). The fight against the Devil is not with the person who may be abusing us or persecuting us or with the brother we strongly disagree with. Our fight is with the Devil and the demons causing people to do evil.

To do spiritual warfare, we must be fully equipped and protected for battle against the Adversary of our souls. Put on the whole armor—truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God—with these *“you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one” (Ephesians 6:16).*



The above list does not mention prayer. But prayer is a vital part of the spiritual battle. Verse 18 is often overlooked. It calls us to *“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.”* Someone has said, “Prayer is our secret weapon.”

Consider His End. The Christian is on the winning side in this great battle with the Devil and his demons. Jesus tells us what the final end of the Devil will be. *“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, “Depart from Me, you cursed into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).*

Jesus confirmed that the enemy who sowed the tares is the Devil and both he and those who obey him will be cast into hell. *“The enemy who sowed the tares is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age. ... The Son of*

Man will send out His angels ... and will cast them into the furnace of fire” (Matthew 13:38-39).

Victory Is Possible. God desires His children to be overcomers. He wants us to live in victory each day. But our adversary, the Devil, stands ready to do all he can to trip us up, to wear us down, to destroy our relationship with God and take us captive and make us his servants.

For the believer, the battle against Satan is not hopeless. We have the confidence that God will not allow us to be tried *“beyond what we are able to bear, but will with every temptation also make a way of escape” (I Corinthians 10:13).* Sometimes the Holy Spirit has helped me by bringing a verse to my mind. At other times a godly song came to mind to dispel a song from memory that was not in obedience to Christ.

When my life is in submission to God and I resist the Devil, I have the wonderful promise that he will flee from me. Not because of my power, but because of the power of God at work in my life.

Controlling my thought life is very important work in resisting the Devil and being an overcomer. II Corinthians 10:5 calls us to *“bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”*

Philippians 4:8 spells out what things we should allow our minds to think on—things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report.

Every thought of mine must be to the obedience of Christ. Does Christ approve of my thoughts? Pure thought life is a must to overcome the Adversary of our souls.

This promise to overcomers is found in Revelation 21:7. *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”* The inheritance for those who overcome is “all things,” and the blessing of being counted a son of God.

Remember, God’s Holy Spirit lives within us. He will aid us in resisting the Devil’s temptations.

By the grace and power of God, we can be overcomers.

Based on 8 October 2023 sermon
at Burkland Mennonite Church,
Waynesboro, Georgia



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“Bitterness is an acid that does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored, than to anything on which it is poured.”

– Kelvin Mast from Rancho Reflections, MX



“Gentleness is a strong hand with a soft touch.”

– Chad Brubaker at Burkeland Mennonite Church, GA



“When Isaiah got a glimpse of God, he recognized God’s great holiness and his own uncleanness.”

– Paul Kaufman at Boyer Hill Mennonite Church, WV



“If you want to hear an audible message from God, read His Word out loud.”

– Darrel Barker at Barnwell Mennonite Church, SC



“Guidelines are not our salvation. They are guardrails to alert us of dangers.”

– Sheldon Mast at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



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

– Clark Zimmerman at Sharon Mennonite Fellowship, PA



“Often God wants to give us something, but He cannot because our hands are full.”

– Harold Dean Miller at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“Because we do not have long to live, we should invest heavily in the youth of today; they will be the church of tomorrow.”

– Sim Yoder at Santa Fe Mennonite Church, FL



“If one does not experience a restful relationship with his brothers and sisters in the church, it often reveals a heart that is not at rest with God.”

– Glenn Kilmer at Sparta Mennonite Church, WI



“Some people love to talk about the Bible, but as soon as you mention the church, they back off.”

– Joseph Yoder at Pelkie Mennonite Church, MI

We welcome additional quotes to add to our file. If you do not see a ruby or diamond listed from your state and your congregation, please send us at least one. That way Anabaptist Voice knows you are alive and listening. Please send in your quote followed by the name of the speaker and the name of the congregation where it was given. For our records, we would also like to have the name and address of the person sending in the quote.

Bongo's Conscience

By James Landis



Have you ever gone down the road and seen something dead in the road—armadillo, deer, opossum, raccoon, squirrel? Maybe it was even your kitty or your dog! Oh how sad! Animals are just no match for an 18-wheeler going sixty-miles-an-hour. Like my Mexican helper, Gustavo, says, “He finish.”

I do not know why these living animals want to run out and play on the road when they have so many other places where they can roam. Maybe some are enchanted by the lights, the warmth of the pavement, the road noise, or have a fascination with turning wheels.

When our Bongo was still a puppy, he showed a very keen interest in the traffic zooming down the busy highway past our house. We feared for his life if he were to get out on the highway just one time, one time too many. He finish.

So we kept Bongo chained to his doghouse all the time except when I put him on a leash and went for a walk with him. I had heard that a dog can be trained to stay inside a certain boundary if you walked him around the perimeter of his imaginary yard every day for a while. So we walked and I talked to Bongo. “Bongo, now you can play anywhere you want to inside this line, but do not go outside. You can chase squirrels, catch possums, dig up moles; have fun. But do not run out on the highway. The cars and trucks will finish you.”

But we did not trust that Bongo understood the seriousness of the situation. My grandson, Bradlyn, helped me bury a wire in a shallow trench around the perimeter of Bongo’s yard. Then Bongo and I walked and I talked. With his curled tail held high and his ears

neatly perked up, Bongo marched proudly along ... on a leash.

Since I did not trust Bongo to stay inside his boundary, if he was not on a leash, I gave him a conscience. It works like this: If Bongo goes near the boundary wire, his conscience emits a high-pitched warning signal that he can hear. If he ignores the warning and persists in continuing across the line, those two metal points against his neck will zap him. And it is painful.

After several training trials, Bongo stays happily inside his boundary. His conscience has matured. He knows exactly where the boundary is and seldom tests it. With his conscience in place, I do not need to worry that he will get run over by a truck. But that does not mean he must always stay inside his yard. He can ride on the back of my truck across the wire; he can ride joyously down the road and see the sights and sounds of the highway. As long as he is with me, Bongo is safe on the back of the truck.

Your conscience operates much like Bongo’s conscience. The underground wire is like the Word of God that determines what is right and wrong; lines that God has established and can keep you off the broad highway that leads to death.

When the power of God is “on” in your life, your conscience emits a warning signal when you near danger. And if you persist in ignoring the warning, your conscience may need to zap you to get you back inside the safety of the boundaries God has established for you. Thank God for your conscience.

But remember, your batteries can go dead and your conscience does not work anymore. Keep your batteries charged up with the power of the Holy Spirit in your heart and in your daily life.

And anywhere you ride on the back of the Master’s “truck” you will be safe from the trucks that roar down the highway past you.

It is such a joyous journey when your conscience is happy and healthy.

Keep your heart [conscience] with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

– Proverbs 4:23

J.G.L. | Georgia

Pros & Cons of Separate Seating

By Philip Hess

Some Historical Background

In the past, Anabaptist churches took for granted that worshippers in a meetinghouse should sit with men at one spot, and women at another. This arrangement has a long history in the church, going back to Ante-Nicene times. It is hard to imagine that as Paul met with people by riversides or in houses, and preached the gospel to them, that there was a formal arrangement of a middle aisle with men on one side and women on the other. However, as the Christian churches developed, they conformed in some ways to the earlier pattern of synagogue worship, which included segregation between men and women.



Augustine

Witness to this is borne by early church fathers such as Hippolytus (217-235 CE) [Christian Era, years after Christ]: “And let the women stand in the assembly by themselves, both the baptized women and the women catechumens” (those undergoing instruction prior to baptism).

Around the year 380 CE, Augustine noted that, “the masses flock to the churches and their chaste acts of worship, where a seemly separation of the sexes is observed.”

Some of the Reformers carried the tradition forward (1500s). Martin Luther wrote, “For the sake of good order and discipline in going up [for the Sacrament], not men and women together but the women after the men. Men and women should have separate places in different parts of the church.”

From the time of the Reformation onward, many Protestant churches observed gender segregation in seating, but in recent times this has largely been abandoned.

The rest of this article will look at reasons to encourage the practice, and also give two reasons that might be advanced against it.



Martin Luther

Seven Reasons for Segregated Seating:

A Long History – As noted above, gender segregated seating has a long history in the church, and has been present in Anabaptist churches since the beginning of the movement. Historical practices should not be lightly abandoned unless there are good reasons to do so.

Inevitable Social Dynamics – Probably the initial reason that gender segregation was implemented was a recognition of the inevitable social dynamics between men and women. Men and women find each other interesting and distracting. Particularly for the young adults, but to a certain extent for all, the sexual attraction that the sexes wrestle with is only a distraction during times of worship. Segregated seating is at least one way of minimizing this reality during times when the worshipper is trying to focus his mind on worship.

More compact – Segregated seating allows many more people to fit into the same space. When men sit with men and women sit with women, they may sit quite close together without awkwardness. When space constraints require that chairs or pews be in rows, if a person needs to get up and exit, he is only brushing against adults of his or her own gender; he is not being socially inappropriate. However, if the genders are not generally segregated, much more space needs to be left to maintain proper social boundaries. Segregated seating thus uses space much more efficiently. Another thing that happens in mixed seating is that large families tend to use up most of a bench or row, perhaps leaving a seat or two. In segregated seating families are broken in half, making smaller social units that fit more easily in two or three spaces. With non-segregated seating, there may not be enough social units to fill in the small spaces left over in rows, so families end up splitting up or seating gets left unused.

Fosters Better Discipline – It is my observation that segregated seating fosters better discipline and training of children. In a worship service, often the little ones become restless or fussy. If the parent is alone, he/she will generally work with the child or end up taking the child out as necessary for discipline. When couples sit together, they tend to bounce restless children back and forth between them as a distraction for the child. The child is delayed in learning how to sit still and quietly.

Single People Fit Better – Segregated seating helps single people find a place to fit in more easily. If the majority of people in the church are in families, single people can feel like they don't have a place to belong. Coming in and not having a particular social group to sit with may reinforce their sense of loneliness. If seating is segregated, distinctions between married and single people disappear. If seating is already segregated, a single person does not have to consider whether they are going to end up sitting beside someone of the opposite gender and sending an unintended signal of sexual interest.

Better Conversation – Segregated seating helps facilitate conversations before and after the worship service. Fellowship and conversation tend to naturally segregate along gender lines. This varies by person and his or her interests, of course. For most people, it is easier and more relaxing to engage someone of their own gender.

Clearer Roles for Men and Women – Segregated seating helps women to keep silent in the church. In a church service where lay members have the opportunity to speak or give testimony, segregated seating helps reinforce the idea that it is the men who are tasked with speaking. What I am trying to describe here is the “feel” of the worship service, not something that can be quantified or proven. The reality that men and women have different roles in the church is reinforced by segregated seating, but not reinforced by non-segregated seating. The difference may be slight, but I think it is tangible.

Two Objections Often Raised

The World Has Changed – Segregated seating may have felt culturally appropriate in the past to society in general, but seems strange now. Of course, the world does not tell the church how to relate to culture. However, the church is free to use wisdom to make decisions about how it will operate, as long as these decisions are in keeping with New Testament teaching.

In the early church, probably due to persecution, worship services became closed to outsiders. Worship services were seen as being for the edification of the believers. Catechumens could attend the preaching part of the worship, but were dismissed when it came time to share the Eucharist. However, in I Corinthians 14:23, Paul describes a possibility that unbelievers may come into the worship service. So clearly, that is something that may be provided for.

If a congregation wishes to use their worship service for evangelistic purposes, they may wish to consider how segregated seating may impact that. Segregated seating may provide an initial cultural stumbling block for seekers or non-plain visitors.

A More Casual Style – If a more informal worship atmosphere is desired, segregated seating works against that. If a congregation is small or desires a style of worship that is more “family focused” and perhaps a bit more casual, they may prefer mixed seating.



Hidden church in Pingjum, Netherlands.

This hidden church is near the town of Witmarsum, the home town of Menno Simons. The building was built by followers of Menno Simons in the 1600s. A striking feature of the building is that the women and children sat in a square in the center of the room, while the men stood along all four sides of the room.

The Conclusion

In conclusion, gender-segregated seating is not something that is commanded in the New Testament. Under the New Covenant, Jesus described righteousness of the heart and right living. He also gave us case examples of how we are to work it out. Then, He gave us freedom to apply these truths to our lives, and make decisions for how we will relate to one another. It is an extension of this expectation, that a church would have some latitude in the way it orders its worship service, as long as it makes no decisions contrary to the spirit of grace and the gospel of Christ. We have given reasons why or why not a church may wish to consider segregated seating. May God give the churches wisdom as they think about this.

P. H. | *State College, Pennsylvania*

In the Beginning

by Menno Knight

I would like to gently prod our thinking on this subject while still leaving room for other interpretations. This understanding exalts and magnifies our Creator God as the eternal maker of all things.

When the Scripture says, *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1)*, it does not mean the beginning of God. It means the beginning of life on the earth. Genesis 1:2 says, *“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”* Three times in verse two God used the verb “was,” indicating that the earth itself already existed when the creation account begins.

So if “*in the beginning*” does not mean the creation of the universe, what does it mean? Genesis 1:1-2 gives us the answer. It means the beginning of life on earth; not the creation of the earth that was “without form and void.” That bare planet already existed.

Genesis 1:7-8 explains that the changes described in the creation account are taking place on the earth and not throughout the universe. *“Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.”* In this verse “heaven” or “heavens” means the atmosphere enveloping the earth; it does not mean the vast spaces of the universe or the place where God dwells. This interpretation of three heavens agrees with what the apostle Paul wrote in II Corinthians 12:2, *“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.”*

The cosmos testify that the six-day Genesis account took place some time after the creation of the stars and the planets in their turn. According to the laws of physics, as we understand them, the light from far distant stars began its journey to earth many, many years before God created life on earth. This could be true.

Since God always was, it is very possible that He flung the stars and comets into space long before he created life on the earth. God did not have to create the whole universe at one time.

Believing that the meaning of “in the beginning” in many scriptures refers to the six day creation of life on the earth is not an attack on faith. Faith does not mean there is no evidence to support our understanding; it means we cannot prove what we believe to be true. And we cannot prove in a scientific way that God exists. We

believe the evidence strongly supports the existence of an almighty, eternal creator God; a God *“who is, and who was, and who is to come” (Revelation 1:8)*. This God is not limited to 6,000 or 8,000 years of life on earth, but spans time and eternity.

According to Genesis 1:16, God made the stars; we are not told when he made them. But it seems evident that the statement—“He made the stars also”—is an aside from the statement of the surrounding verses which tell what God did on the fourth day of the creation.

The understanding that “*in the beginning*” refers to the Genesis account is not an attempt to find a way to reconcile the millions and billions of years of “scientists” with the creation account. This understanding wants to correctly interpret the Scripture; and we believe God existed for millions and billions of earth years (forever). So this interpretation of Scripture fits with the observable evidence found in the cosmos.

So what has been revealed to us in the Bible is only a small glimpse of eternity and God. But the Bible tells us faith is needed before we can grasp the greatness of God. Hebrews 11:3 says, *“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”* When God made the worlds, He had to have existed before He made them.

Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes Psalm 102:25. Both scriptures support the understanding that, “*in the beginning*” refers to the forming of the earth and its works and not the beginning of God. *“You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth. And the heavens are the work of your hands.”*

The belief that “*in the beginning*” as used in the Genesis account has a number of practical applications for Bible believers today.

1. No Big Bang. Believers in an eternal God accept the truth that with God there is no beginning or end of days. He always was and always will be. This frees the believer from endless speculations about how and when the cosmos came into being. We are freed from ridiculous hypotheses such as the idea that exceedingly complex worlds began with a big bang and order came out of chaos. We can simply declare to the unbelieving philosophers, “An eternal God made it all.”

When we accept the truth that an eternal God created the cosmos, we can marvel at its vastness and wonders. With David we can say, *"Lord, our Lord, ... You have set your glory in the heavens. The moon and the stars, which you have set in place. ... How majestic is your name in all the earth!"* (Psalm 8:1-3, 9; NIV).

2. No Specie Crossovers. God moved to create an abundance of living things, living things that could reproduce after their kind: grass, herbs, fruit trees, sea creatures, birds of the air, tame animals, wild animals. The account makes it clear that all species reproduced *after their kind*. There was no crossing over from one specie to another or no gradual transition from a lower form to a more complex form. Right *in the beginning*, God made each specie complete and able to reproduce things after its own kind.

3. Marriage for Life. In the beginning, God also made mankind, male and female, in His own likeness. These two humans were complete. God told them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with people like themselves. Furthermore, they were not to be like the animals, but they were to mate for life. God's design was, *"A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"* (Genesis 2:23).

Jesus reaffirmed this divine principle of mating for life that was established *in the beginning*. Jesus said, *"Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so"* (Matthew 19:8).

4. Mankind Has Dominion. In the beginning, God created man distinctly different from all the other living things on the earth. He gave man a power which no other living thing possessed and then He gave man the authority and power to rule over the whole earth which

included all the living things He had made. God put nothing beyond man's dominion, except that man was to use his authority to subdue the earth and to do good for all mankind.

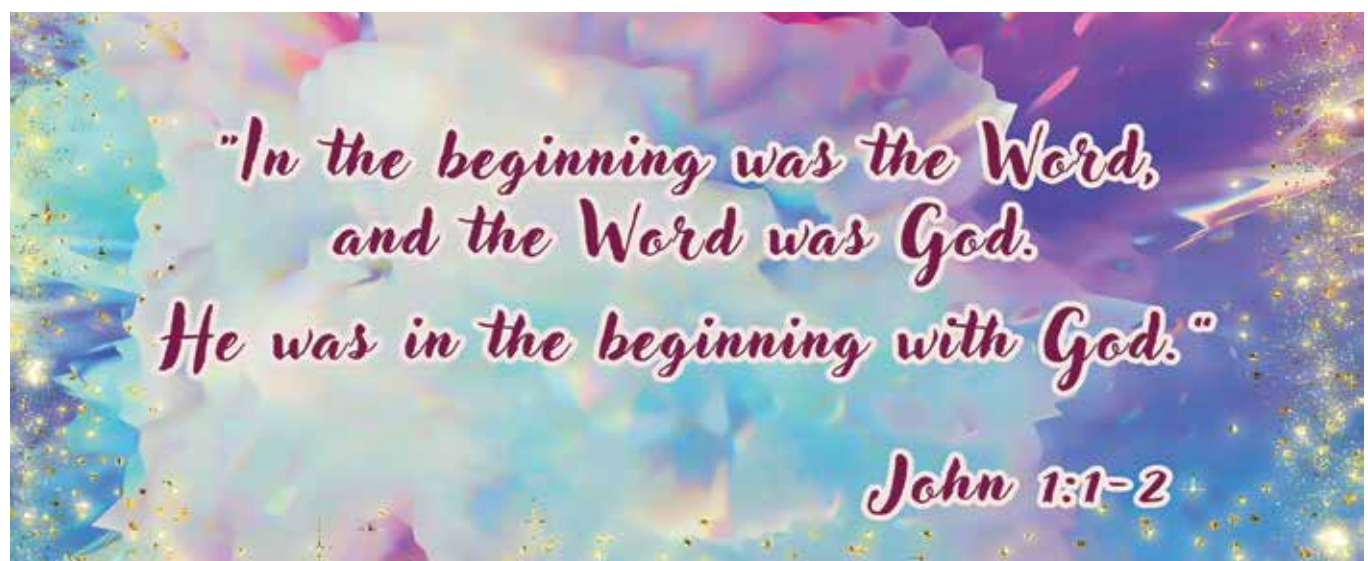
5. Six Days to Labor. Right *in the beginning*, God created the seven-day week with one day blessed and sanctified as a day of rest. This meant one day set aside out of every seven when man was to cease from physical work and rest his body. In so doing, man not only invigorates his own body but also honors the Creator who made the seventh day a holy day.

In the context of the Ten Commandments God made this declaration, *"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day"* (Exodus 20:11).

Jesus said, *"The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath"* (Mark 2:27). God set aside this special day when man profits by resting his body from his regular work. From the beginning God created man with a need for one day of rest every week. Those who disregard this inherent principle suffer in their own bodies and spirits. Plus, they dishonor the God who made them.

6. Worship the Creator. Right *from the beginning*, the almighty Creator God did not want mankind to worship the sun, moon, planets, and stars, nor did He want them to worship the wondrous living things He created on earth; he wanted the human beings He had created to honor and worship Him. The apostle Paul made this clear in the town of Lystra. He preached to the adoring mob, *"You should turn from these vain things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them"* (Acts 14:15).

Worship God.



God Created Life in the Beginning

*God who made the world and
everything in it, since He is the Lord of heaven and
earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.*

*Nor is He worshipped with men's hands, as though
He needed anything, since He gives to all life,
breath and all things...*



*He is not far from each of us, for in Him we live
and move and have our being.*

Ruins of Parthenon on Mars Hill, Greece,
where Paul preached these words
found in Acts 17:24-25, 27-28

Everlasting Love

By Havalah Myers

I did not care. I would not care. I had made my decision. I was going to go my way. I felt excitement tingle through me. I was glad to finally have it settled.

I lay in bed planning my future. It was going to be just what I wanted. I was finally going to be happy. I would forget everything that had happened in my life up to this point and create a life that would make me feel secure, and fulfilled. I would no longer be torn between trying to please Papa, Mama or God. It was just me.

As I sank into sleep, I felt a twinge. I missed something. What was missing?

I was walking down a path that twisted through a woods. I could see a break in the trees ahead and knew I was coming to a meadow. I was also coming to a fork in the path. The meadow looked peaceful and inviting, but the other way was the way I wanted to go. I turned my face and started with a resolute step.

But then I heard something. I turned back hesitantly, listening. It had sounded almost like a cry of pain. As I paused, I heard it again. It cut into my heart, that intense cry of loss. I hurried toward the meadow. The path was very narrow, but was soft. I hurried up a slight hill. As I crested the top, I suddenly saw an old apple tree. It was half dead, but the part that was still alive was in fresh, pink blossoms.

But that was not what caused me to catch my breath and stop. There, leaning against the tree was a man. I had never heard a man cry before. It was terrifying. He was in great agony. My sympathetic heart swelled and I wanted to rush to him and comfort him, but I paused shyly. Then I heard him speak.

“I have lost her! I have lost her!” The intensity of longing and love in those words pierced my heart. He turned slightly and I recognized him. It was the same gentle man that had been haunting my dreams so often lately and thwarting my plans in the most charming manner. I could not be angry at him, because I knew it was Jesus and He loved me.

Did my choice to turn my back on all that I had learned about God, really matter to Him? God seemed so big and far away and busy running His world. But Jesus, my big brother, He seemed truly hurt by my rejection. If He cared so much to keep entering my

dreams while I slept, then He must love me. And love was what was missing from my plans.

Suddenly it became very clear! Love, to be loved by God and to love God were all that mattered. That was what my heart had been crying out for all these years. I was twenty-seven and God had been faithfully pursuing me, wooing me with His love.

“God, Lover of my heart, I am sorry, sorry I have caused You pain. I will turn back and go with Jesus. I will follow Him to You, if You will have me. Show me how,” I prayed.

It had been a long, long journey. I had tried several times before to truly yield, but something was always in the way of a complete surrender. It is amazing how many things Satan offers us to fill our “love tank.” It is even more amazing that as those things leave us more empty, we keep trying just one more thing Satan offers. Now I was ready to let God’s love into every corner of my heart. I started at the beginning of my life and showed God things He already knew, but it was so healing to go through the hurts together.

I was born May 16, 1984. Papa was a landscape artist and Mama was a homemaker.

When I was two weeks old. Papa moved out. He didn’t want to stay and face the hard work of being a husband and a father. He thought we would be better without him. When I was two, Mama finally gave in and my parents were divorced. Papa kept the big comfortable farmhouse in Allendale, Michigan, while Mama



Havalah (5) with her parents, Stephen and Maureen, 1989



Aug Havalah (3) and Adelle (6)

wanted to get far away from the happy memories. She moved to a little house in Holland, Michigan, which was about 45 minutes away.

When I was four, my sister became terribly sick. The doctors finally found the cause—a cancerous tumor in the cerebellum. Adelle was seven when she had her first surgery. It took nine long months before she started feeling better. Three years later the symptoms came back; this time the cancer had embedded itself in Adelle’s brain stem. The surgeon cut her open, decided it was inoperable, and closed her right back up again. He told my parents that Adelle had 4-6 months to live.

Adelle was the one to tell me. I found her crying in the living room. She clung to me as she told me she was going to die. I am ashamed to say that I struggled to get free from her grip. I did not understand what the word “die” meant. I was tired of her being sick. I was tired of her taking all my parents’ attention, everyone’s attention. I knew she was very important and that I was not. I even thought she was sick on purpose to get more attention.

I started trying to get my parents to notice me. But Mama was busy caring for Adelle, and Papa was busy trying to find a doctor—anywhere in the world—who could save his little girl’s life. I played quietly by myself, imagining myself out of the horrible situation.

A month and a half later, Papa found a surgeon who said he could do the operation. Adelle was scheduled for another surgery in New York City. I stayed with my best friend’s family while my family was gone for ten

days. The glimpse into a complete family circle made me want the same.

Doctor Epstein was successful! I was glad to hear that Adelle would get well. But I was not happy to find her still sick when she came home. I did not understand that it would take time for Adelle to recover. Once again, I thought she was just hogging all the attention for herself. Some day Mama would have time for me again. Someday I would make Papa love me.

Papa was relieved at having “saved” his daughter, but was left with a mountain of debt that dragged him down for years. There is a saying, “the starving artist.” It is true; artists do not make much money. Neither do single moms. If it had not been for the help of Mama’s brother bringing her food, I wonder what we would have eaten at times.

I was about seven when it hit me that my best friend’s parents lived at the same place. As I rode with Papa in his car, I was thinking very hard. I could just see out the Honda’s back seat window. I knew we were getting close to the little duplex on the dead-end road where Mama lived. I was very aware of the pain cutting into my little heart. I wanted my parents at the same place, at the same time!

“Papa!” I exclaimed, “I figured it out! Why don’t you come live with Mama or we could all live in your big house. Then we wouldn’t have to do all this driving or have to ever say good bye!” I nearly jumped off my seat just to tell Papa my wonderful idea. I was sitting behind him and could not see his face.

I leaned forward until I could see his eyes in the review mirror. I was shocked. Instead of delight, his blue eyes met mine with deep pain. I was confused. How had I hurt him? I started to feel insecure.

“Sweetie-pie,” he spoke slowly, “that just won’t work.”

“Why?” I whispered. I thought it would solve everything. I hated going to sleep without Mama and would cry and cry. But I also hated going to sleep without that last hug and kiss from Papa. If only they both could tuck me in each night. “Why?” I asked a little louder.

While I was still seven, Papa started dating another woman. This brought more insecurity into my already shaky life. Mama started dating as well. I hardly knew where I belonged, since both people my parents were dating had children too. I began to wonder if my parents would ever love me again.

Mama had turned her back on God and the Dutch Reformed Church when she was young, but through

Adelle's sickness, God brought Mama to the end of herself. When I was ten she accepted God as her Father and Jesus as her Savior.

After Mama became a Christian, she made abrupt changes. Suddenly everything normal and fun were done away with. We stayed at home while Mama poured through her Bible. She told us she was reading the Bible as if it were the first time. She explained that she had told God she knew nothing; she gave up her preconceived ideas about God, Jesus, the Bible and religion. At that point, everything in my unstable world became chaos.

In Mama's mind, she was finally making order out of her ruined life. But I grew very insecure as the TV (we never watched much anyway), music, books, clothes, etc. disappeared. I did not understand that these changes were because Mama loved God and wanted to follow Him.

By the time I did understand, I really didn't think I liked God much. I thought He was pretty mean, since He seemed to take everything away. It did not help that Papa was not happy with Mama's decision. I caught the chance to make him like me. Yet I wanted to do what was right. Mama's love was powerful and I wanted her to be happy with me. So started an intense tug of war that lasted the next seventeen years.

Mama took us to church most of the time during my early years. Hope Church was a liberal Reformed church. One did not have to believe the Bible was true or that Jesus was the Son of God. And they had a woman pastor. To me church was just another fun social event.

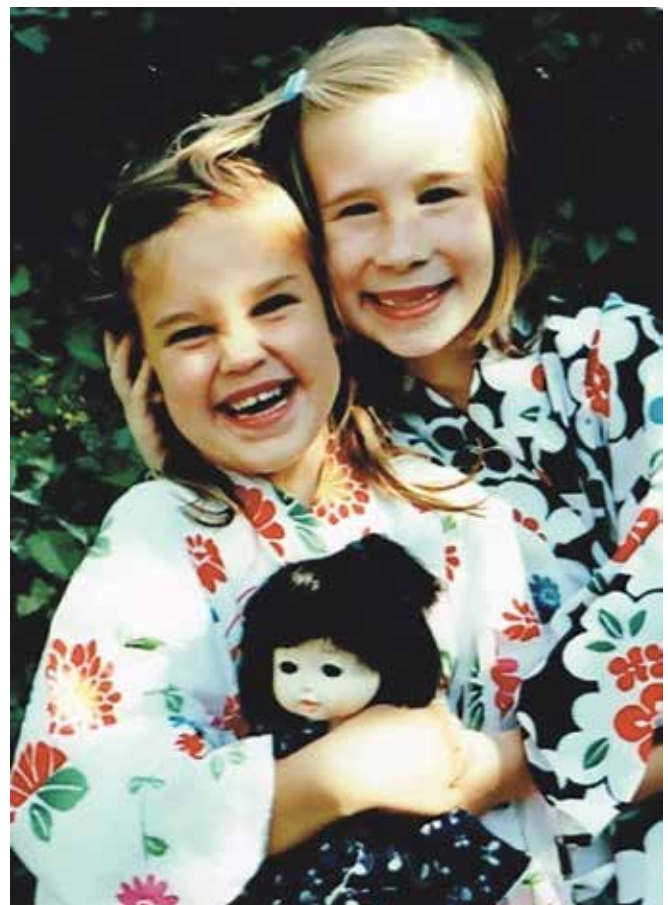
After Mama became a real Christian, she told us we were going to look for a Bible-believing church. Blankly, I wondered what she meant. I was nervous. I assumed it would be uncomfortable. It was.

The next big change came on March 10, 1994, when we started visiting an Amish family several hours north of where we lived. Everything was so different from anything we had ever experienced. The simplicity, the godliness, the peace and harmony in the family drew Mama to search the Bible to find out why the Chupps lived this way. Mama thought she would like to become Amish. Adelle was thrilled; I was not. Papa refused to let us; I was relieved.

During this year I had a lot of pressure to "get saved." I figured it would be in my best interest to be saved from hell, so I said the sinner's prayer. I did not understand the concept of accepting Jesus as my Savior. However, I felt a sense of relief and basked in the joy of Mama's attention.

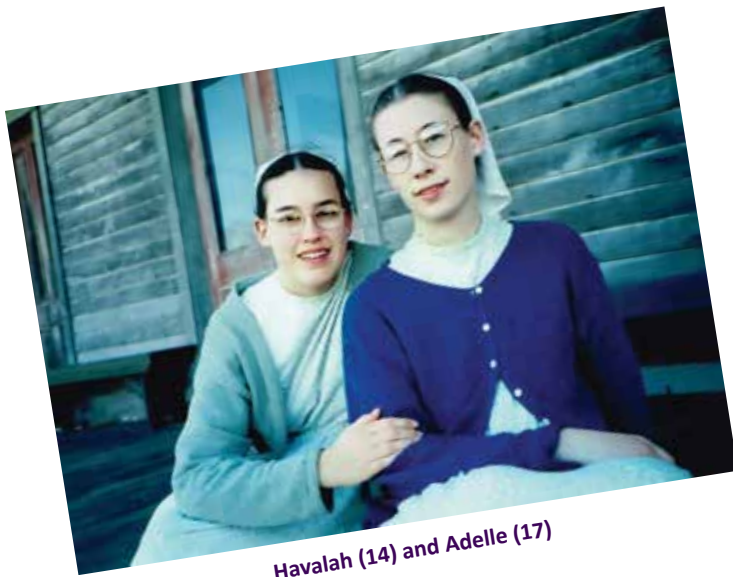
I knew Papa would not be happy. I had seen his reaction to Adelle's conversion. I began to practice deceit. When with Mama, I said the right things (most of the time) and acted like a Christian. When I was with Papa, I let myself be free and told Papa how I really felt.

In the fall of 1994, we met some Plymouth Brethren homeschoolers who invited us to go to their church. We started going to a Plymouth Brethren Church in Holland, called Holland Gospel Chapel. Several of the families wore head coverings all the time. I liked these people better than my Amish friends because several of the families were divorced and remarried. These people did not think we were strange because we came from a broken home.



Havalah (4) and Adelle (7) wearing Kimonos that Mama brought back from her trip to Japan.

Then Papa did something that broke my heart. He got remarried in August of 1995. His love was taken from Mama, Adelle, and me. Now his love mostly included his new wife and stepdaughter. Papa sold the beautiful house in Allendale and bought a big house in the country.



Havalah (14) and Adelle (17)

Adelle and I tried to fit into Papa's new married life. Adelle soon asked Papa to release her from regular visitations—because he was living in adultery. He let her off even though she was not yet 18. Papa was not happy to be losing his daughter to church and a selfish God whom Adelle called Father. I saw how it hurt Papa and I decided I would never hurt him that way; so I placed Papa first in my heart.

Mama decided we needed to leave our house in downtown Holland, Michigan, because she felt the city was no place to raise her girls. She bought a little camper trailer for \$900 and set it up in the back corner of her brother's yard. It was tucked under some poplar trees by the pond. It was only temporary.

In April 1996, we moved into Mama's parent's place on forty-seven acres. We put almost everything we had into storage and moved into the four upstairs bedrooms of the big old farm house. For Mama it was wonderful. She was coming home. Adelle and I were dreading it, because we did not want to live with my grandparents. Mama promised it would only be for a couple months—only until we could find another place to live. That temporary stay turned into nine years. Thankfully, the time with my grandparents became a special time, though it was not without its challenges.

Between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, we usually visited a conservative Mennonite church three hours north of us. But when my Grandma became sick with cancer, we stayed home to take care of her. Mama cared for her mother until she died in December of 2002.

I was glad to stop going to the Mennonite church. I went from being a friendly, outgoing child to a very shy child. The more time we had spent with the Mennonites, the more I felt my fatherlessness. I became ashamed of

being from a divorced family. I felt the Mennonites were unjust since they didn't understand. I couldn't help that my Father had left my mother. Besides, he was nice! I reacted by becoming tenaciously loyal to him.

Several small home churches sprang up among our homeschool friends. We visited these until they died out. Then we visited a Reformed Baptist church in the area. They were fairly conservative and the people were very nice. But they did not choose to obey the Bible completely. This added to my confusion and discouragement with the authenticity of the Christian life and the truth about God.

My teen years were spent in two totally different worlds. When I was with Mama I lived like a conservative homeschooler and Christian. When I was with Papa I lived without many rules and learned how enjoyable it was to cater to my flesh. I would soon learn the Bible truth that one cannot serve two masters.

My flesh was gaining strength and I was pretty certain this was the way I wanted to go. On the other hand, I was so tired of living a lie. I was not a Christian and didn't want to be one. I was eighteen and ready to start living my life. I started spending more time with Papa.

When I was twenty, I made the decision to move in with Papa and his family. I was so excited to be free from what I thought was bondage to rules. After all, most of the Christians I knew were either hypocrites or seemed so conservative and gloomy; I didn't want to be like them.

At Papa's house, I had no rules. I had no chores. At first, I spent a lot of time with Papa in his big barn studio. I went everywhere with him. It was wonderful to finally have no time limit for visiting with Papa. We had such fun. We played ping-pong. I went with him when he went out into nature to paint. We baked and cooked together. We ate banana splits while watching movies.

Journal entry— August 2004, Age 20

Well, I don't even know the date. I have lost track of time and have lost myself to the joy of doing what I please, if it can honestly be called joy. But so far, I have enjoyed it.

But my stepmom put a damper on our fun. She was jealous. She saw how much Papa was enjoying me. She saw how I loved him and admired him. I don't blame her for getting jealous. Papa started to withdraw from me. He tried to explain that he had to think of his wife. I was hurt deeply. I understood, but I felt so utterly rejected ... again.

Lindsey, my stepsister, had been trying to show me life. Now that I couldn't spend much time with Papa, Lindsey stepped right in and became a great "friend." She showed me lots of movies. I thought I was catching up with the modern world. However, my innocence was being taken away as I saw the evil of this world. The body was used to get attention, which it was what women used to get love.

I grew insecure and discontented with my shape, and size. I began to feel I was worthless and that a man would never want to marry me. All the godly things I had learned faded into the background of my mind.

Lindsey decided that I needed a job. Besides, I wanted to be independent. So Lindsey got me a job where she worked at Starbucks in the Grand Rapids, Michigan airport. That meant early hours and going through high security every time I went to work.

I was not really excited about the job. But the manager liked me and I was hired. I remember him introducing me to some other workers and saying, "Now be careful with this girl." I soon learned why. After my first day at work, I went home crying. I had been overwhelmed by the talk of my coworkers. They had been at a party the previous weekend. They talked about the drinking, drugs, and immorality they had enjoyed there.

Interestingly enough, the roughest guy turned out to be my protector. When the others tried to get me to come to their parties, Tim would say, "No." He told me I was too sweet and he did not want me ruined.

There was one Christian at Starbucks. Deanna worked there to try to help all those poor lost young people. Deanna was a minister's wife and in her fifties. She was a wonderful friend, although at the time I felt a little like, "I cannot get away from Christians." Deanna kindly told me that in order to have true peace and happiness I needed to return home and make things right with Mama and God. I did not want to hear that, but it planted a seed in my heart.

Journal Entry – September 18, 2004, Saturday 9:20 pm; age 20.

I feel utterly exhausted. I feel as if I have walked far out into the middle of a desert and now I realize my supply of water is gone. I feel as if I am lying on my back staring up at the big star-speckled sky and wondering which way is the best way to die.

Should I go on in hopes that things may turn out and I'll find water? Or should I go back down the path I have struggled up? For somewhere back there I know there is water.



Havalah on her 19th Birthday. At Williamsburg, Virginia

The answer may seem easy, but now I feel as if I have no strength to even get up. Lying here seems as good as continuing on, for I am wasting valuable time and strength either way. I want to cry and cry.

"O God if ever someone needed your hidden work, your little girl needs it now."

God had already heard my heart cry and was at work to bring me to Himself.

– To be continued



Daniel & Havalah with their two sons, Clark (2) and Forest (1)

The Gift of Healing

An interview with Sherwin Goering



Anabaptist Voice: Tell us about your past training and experience working in healthcare.

Sherwin Goering: I started undergraduate work in June of 2010 at Augusta State University in Augusta, GA. In 2015 I graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and started working in Emergency Medicine, Cardiac Telemetry and Cardiac Intensive Care. The same fall I started my graduate studies focusing on Adult Gerontology and Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (AG-ACNP). In May of 2019 I graduated with my doctorate in nursing practice (DNP). Since then, I have been working in Emergency Medicine and have spent several trips practicing international and tropical medicine.

AV: You have just returned from another mission trip to Peru. How does this mission apply to your personal view of healthcare?

SG: I was one of fifteen who spent one week providing healthcare and sharing the love of Christ in Arequipa, Peru, and surrounding villages. We worked with two international organizations [Medical Ministry International (MMI) and Mission To the World (MTW)] who helped coordinate locations, supplies, advertising campaigns, and logistics such as travel and lodging. This allowed us to simply arrive in the country and focus on preparing ourselves for patient care and being able to care for, and pray with, each patient.

My mission in healthcare is to be the hands and feet of Jesus wherever I am. Infirmities and illnesses often allow for a time of reflection and will elicit questions such as, *Why am I here? Who made me? What is my purpose?* These questions open the door for ministry and oftentimes a relationship which allows the opportunity to share Christ. In Peru, many were familiar with Jesus, but did not understand the concept of His life, death, and resurrection. Many we saw had a Catholic and/or Tribalistic worldview and perception of Scripture. For example, many traditional Catholic rituals and prayers, in addition to sun god and mother earth worship, were used in their weekly services.

Healthcare is a tool that can be used to access many locations and opens the doors to ministry and evangelism. This can be used locally as well as abroad.

AV: In I Corinthians 12:4-11 we read about diversities of gifts that are given to different people in the church. Verse nine specifically mentions gifts of healing. What do you understand this gift of healing to be?

SG: I believe this verse is speaking of a supernatural gift that was given to Jesus' disciples to restore someone to health. These gifts are a work entirely of God and reflective of *Exodus 15:26*, "*For I am the LORD, who heals you.*"

This gift seems to overlap with the gift of miracles as evidenced in Peter and the lame man (Acts 3:6-8) as well as Paul and his handkerchiefs (Acts 19:11-12).

I think these are temporary gifts that are given of God and can be used for the furtherance of His kingdom.

AV: When and why did you decide to pursue training in the medical field.

SG: The winter of 2009 I decided to attend Heritage Bible School (HBS). I had been dairy and crop farming for several years and was seeking the Lord's will in my life. Medicine and pre-hospital medicine had always been an interest of mine. As a small child I remember being intrigued with my father's stories as a first responder and the first aid manuals on his bookshelf.

During the Bible school term at Heritage, I remember when one of the professors came to the door in tears. He was in quite a bit of distress. His home country of Haiti had been devastated by an earthquake. My teacher's heartache for the many hurting and the lack of medical access and treatment for the people of his home country, created in me a heartache for them as well.

That was the beginning of my healthcare journey. After completing that term of Bible school, I researched avenues of healthcare and started my formal training in the summer of 2010.

AV: What special beliefs set an Anabaptist clinician apart from other healthcare professionals?

SG: In Christ's Kingdom, the Anabaptist clinician recognizes the importance and role of our Creator both in a patient's physical well-being, mental health, and spiritual health. While the education, the tools, the medications and the methods are often the same

between the Anabaptist clinician and the non-Christian, the Anabaptist clinician often provides services for a different reason—caring for a patient’s soul. In DPC the practice of medicine can be Christ-centered and grounded in biblical truth and stewardship as compared to secular values.

AV: *A growing number of medical models are accepting only self-pay patients. Is this a viable option in today’s high-tech medical world? Your office in Waynesboro bills only the patient. Explain the system.*

SG: The office I have opened is a relatively new model of practice called Direct Primary Care (DPC). To briefly summarize, the patient pays a monthly membership fee that covers unlimited office visits, phone calls, video calls, and a defined set of labs, and procedures. It provides easy access to imaging, in-house medications, and in some cases specialty services. Other specialty labs, procedures and imaging can be provided at a significantly discounted rate.

In our clinic each of my patients will be able to directly access me via text message at any time. We are available to help our patients avoid unnecessary testing and to guide them through the bewildering maze of emergency room and hospital visits when necessary.

AV: *How does the DPC model enable you to build a caring and spiritual relationship with your clients?*

SG: The first thought is time. It takes time to care for a person’s physical and spiritual well-being. The DPC model allows the clinician to determine the amount of time he would like to spend with a patient.

Ministry and caring for my patients is an important component of my practice and personal mission. This requires time. The DPC model allows me the needed time. I thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to develop relationships with my patients and to help care for their physical well-being.

AV: *Does DPC offer Christian providers a good opportunity to promote high moral and spiritual values to their patients?*

SG: A Christian provider in direct primary care is not hindered by third party oversight and requirements (government and insurance). In DPC the practice of medicine can be Christ-centered and grounded in biblical truth and stewardship as compared to secular

values, incentives, and reimbursement. The DPC clinician has the time and freedom to practice medicine and use medicine as an extension of the love of Christ.

AV: *Can you give us an example of where your Anabaptist beliefs made a real life difference in your medical experience?*

SG: One particular instance stands out. This was a young female who presented with nausea and vomiting and no clear cause of her symptoms. Her pregnancy test was positive. When I relayed this as the likely cause of her symptoms, she immediately asked me if I could prescribe abortion medications or refer her to an abortion specialist. I was surprised by this but it opened the door for me to address an underlying concern—fear. She was scared. Her future, her dreams, her plans were wrecked. We were able to pray and I was able to refer her to a woman and baby advocacy center. God knows the rest of the story.

AV: *What is the overriding goal of your medical practice?*

SG: The goal of my clinic in Waynesboro is to build an authentic relationship between me and my patients. We will strive to empower the patient so he or she can achieve superior health outcomes, lower and save costs, and improve their experience with healthcare. As far as possible, our goal is wholeness of body, soul, and spirit; not simply the treatment of disease.

For additional information, visit the WelcomeHealth website at <www.welcomehealth.net> or send questions by email or letter to *Anabaptist Voice*.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. There are diversities of activities. But it is the same God who works all in all.

— I Corinthians 12:4-6



Responses Wanted for AV32:

How do you understand I Corinthians 12:9 where it talks about “gifts of healing”? How are the gifts of healing manifested in 2024?

Around the World in 1900

by A.D. Wenger



Around the World in 1900: A young Mennonite preacher travels around the world when there were no cars, trucks or airplanes.

Amos Daniel Wenger, born and raised at Edom, Virginia, was ordained as a Mennonite minister at the age of 27. As a single man, he soon found a ready calling as an evangelist and preached in pulpits in Missouri, Iowa, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. In one year's time (1896-1897) he preached more than 365 sermons.

On July 1, 1897, A. D. Wenger—as he was known—married Mary H. Hostetter of Millersburg, Pennsylvania. For two months they traveled to the West Coast where he preached in churches in Oregon; then the couple returned to Mary's home at Millersburg, Pennsylvania. Just two weeks after one year of marriage (14 July 1898) Mary died of chronic Bright's disease. Two weeks later (28 July 1898) Brother Wenger resumed his preaching.

Just six months after Mary's death (21 January 1899), Brother Wenger left on a tour that took him around the world in fourteen months less six days. During his travel he spent 40 days on trains, 70 days on water; he estimated he traveled 35,000 to 40,000 miles and spent about \$1,000.

His chief purpose in the trip was to visit the Bible Lands; accordingly, six months of his journey were spent in Italy, Greece, Constantinople, Damascus, Palestine, and Egypt. Following his return home, Brother Wenger recorded his unique insights in a book, *Six Months in Bible Lands and Around the World in Fourteen Months*. The title page states, "Moral, Practical and Religious Subjects are Treated in Harmony With the Bible."

The book takes the armchair traveler back to the Bible Lands before two World Wars reshaped the political boundaries and control of the various nations. A. D. Wenger's relation of Bible events to the places he visited, furnish a fascinating commentary on Bible stories. As a seasoned Mennonite preacher, he often ties correct doctrine and local experiences together.

Reading the book 122 years after its publication is like being able to see the world as it was in 1900, and then prophesy what would happen in the twentieth century. I want to share two selections from A. D. Wenger's book, published in 1902 by Joseph Steiner (a Mennonite Publisher) in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

The Mount of Olives (pages 268–274)

The Mount of Olives is only a small mountain after all. It has a southern shoulder over which passes the old road to Bethany and a northern extension called the "Hill of Scopus," besides other small spurs on the east. It is considerably higher than Mount Moriah and Mount Zion and commands the best view in the neighborhood. Scattered over it are a thousand or more olive trees, some fig trees and vineyards. There is an immense stone olive mill, broken and deserted, against the foot of the mountain north of Gethsemane. The word Gethsemane means "oil-press," and we have abundant proof that the mountain was rightly named in ancient times when it probably yielded a much larger crop of the valuable fruit than it does now. In recent years, a number of residences and places of worship have been erected on its top and against the west side facing Jerusalem. We would like to see things stay just as they were and look just as they did in Bible times.



The Mount of Olives

These physical descriptions would be of little interest to us were it not that these places are so closely associated with patriarchs, prophets, priest and kings; and above all else that they were made so sacred by the hallowed presence of our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ...

Nearly nineteen hundred years have rolled away since Jesus was here, yet very precious to us are the deeds He performed within sweep of mortal vision from this mount. Other mountains are higher than Olivet, and other cities were larger at that time than Jerusalem, but to this chosen part of the great earth, the Lord came to redeem a world of humanity. This way all Christian

eyes have turned these ages past. Now in Africa, India, China, Japan, Europe and America, many look to the offering up of the Son of God as the crowning event in the world's history. Nations have been born in a day and crushed at a blow, but all national events and deeds of great men sink almost to insignificance when compared with the redemption scheme. The world has had its great leaders, with more followers even than Jesus has, but His earthly mission has been the means of lifting mankind to a state of great joy and sweet peace far beyond the conception of those who follow other leaders.

Shall we go in our minds beyond the centuries and follow Jesus in some of the closing scenes of His earthly life? ... For the last time before His crucifixion Jesus crosses this mountain with His disciples. He goes to keep the Passover made ready by Peter and John. These two were sent ahead to make the preparation as Jesus had commanded them, for He wishes to keep the feast once more and fulfill it by so doing. Luke, John, and Paul call it supper, as well as Passover, but it is the Jewish Passover because it is the **"first day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed" (Luke 22:7)**. Many passages prove that the regular time for the Jewish Passover had come (Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12). ... When some read of the Jews keeping from defilement that they might eat the Passover after Christ had eaten it, as in John 18:28 and a few similar passages, they get confused on the subject, and think that Christ ate the Passover before the proper time. When we remember that all the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread in connection with the Passover were sometimes also called Passover as in Luke 22:1 and Ezekiel 45:21, all the apparent difficulties are nicely cleared away. The Jews then must have eaten the Passover proper when Christ did, but wished to keep from defilement that they might keep the Passover of unleavened bread for nearly a week. ...

In the upper room, the Lord then holds a blessed service of sermon, prayer and song with the eleven disciples. The closing hymn is finished and they proceed on their way to the Mount of Olives. From a position on the mountain, by the aid of the full moon-light of Easter, see them coming from the city gate down yonder hill into the valley of Jehosaphat and "over the brook Cedron" to the garden of Gethsemane.¹

Our Savior's heart was heavy and He was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. Eight disciples were left to themselves and the three most able to sympathize were

taken to watch with Him. The disciples slept when Jesus alone, just a little way from them, agonized in earnest prayer till His sweat became as great drops of blood. He prayed, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done." An angel came from heaven to give Him strength. Jesus found the disciples sleeping for a sorrow that was not intense enough to drive away sleep. The cold world seemed to have left Him in His hours of great suffering and the man of sorrows and grief trod the wine-press alone. There are times in our own lives when the world seems cold and distant, and language is not strong enough to make even our nearest friends fully acquainted with the burdens of our hearts. But He who suffered in Gethsemane, already the agonies of the cross, knows all our hearts and gives us more comfort than all the world can give.

The wicked multitude comes with Judas as their leader and take Jesus. The disciples flee. See them leading the Savior into the city while Peter is following "afar off."



Thebes Temple Ruins

Thebes on the Upper Nile (pages 408–413)

The trip up the Nile was quite difficult and expensive until recent years. At my lodgings (in Cairo) I had become well acquainted with several young men from different European countries. ... When I told them I would be gone for some time on a trip up the Nile, they asked me if I had a revolver. The reply of course was, "No." An Englishman then offered to loan me his weapon saying that he would not risk it without one, but it was refused. Their preachers carried revolvers for such trips and why should not this one from America? Nonresistance was a strange thing to them. The world sometimes seems so hopelessly lost to the teachings of Christ that we lack courage in proclaiming the messages of eternal truth. ...

Having arrived at the village of Luxor on the east

¹ The Garden of Gethsemane sits at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

side of the Nile, I spent a few days visiting the ruins of the ancient city of Thebes (THEEBZ).² For a while, Thebes was the greatest city in the world. It stretched along both banks of the Nile for a distance of thirty-three miles.

Homer, who lived about a thousand years before Christ wrote that Thebes had a hundred gates and two hundred valiant soldiers to march forth from each gate to defend the city. It also had 20,000 chariots of war. Its wonderful temples and its stately monuments adorned with gold, silver and ivory, and its numerous great statues and obelisks, cut out of one stone, made it famous in all the known world. It was the capital of Egypt during the reign of many Pharaohs. The ruins that may still be seen, abundantly testify that it was a wonderful city for that age of the world. It was a wicked city and God sent His judgments upon it. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both prophesied against it under the name of “No” (Jeremiah 46:25; Ezekiel 30:15-16).

A mile or two north of Luxor is the wonderful Temple of Amon. It was officially styled the “Throne of the World.” Pharaoh after Pharaoh added to the temple until it was nearly two miles in circumference. A large portion of the wealth of the rulers was bestowed upon it to adorn it and increase its magnitude. There were five entrances to the temple with avenues leading up to them each of which were lined with two hundred sphinxes. A wall eighty feet high and twenty-four feet thick surrounded it. It is now said to be the greatest ruin in the world, surpassing even the Coliseum of Rome and the ruins of Baalbek. If I could I would like to tell you how many thousands of car-loads of massive stones are still in the walls nicely fitted together and on the ground tilted in every angle. There are hundreds of huge columns. The twelve largest are each thirty-three feet in circumference and sixty-nine feet high.

Obelisks, columns and walls are all covered with hieroglyphics and sculpture describing and illustrating events in the lives of the Pharaohs. There is one representation confirming the Scripture account of a conquest of the Jews by a king of Egypt. “**And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king’s house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made**” (**I Kings 14:25-26; II Chronicles 12:2-9**). This representation of the temple wall commemorates

the victory of Shishak over Rehoboam.

In the illustration, Shishak is dealing cruelly with the captured Jews; a Theban goddess is leading five rows of captured Jews; and the god Amon, in large form wearing a large crown, is grasping in his right hand the sword of victory and in his left hand are five cords binding five rows of towns in Palestine that have been conquered. Each town is represented as having a circular wall around it in which the name is enclosed. Some of the towns named are Rabbath, Shunem, Rehob, Gibeon, Beth Horon and Ajalon. The captives wear full beards and their features are Jewish. This is a remarkable testimony of the authenticity of God’s Word.



**Mummy of the Pharaoh
of the Oppression**

We became tired of wandering through the forests of columns and massive ruins that cover perhaps more than a hundred acres, and turn away with the impression that the word of the Lord against idolatry and the power of the Pharaohs has come to pass. “**Thus saith the Lord God; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince in the land of Egypt**” (**Ezekiel 30:13**). There are no people in Egypt now who worship the images of the Pharaohs or any other images.

The Pharaohs (pages 414–440)

No one knows how many Pharaohs there were, but we know there were a great many. We know of thirty-one dynasties or different lines of kings of ancient Egypt. There were possibly more than a hundred rulers. A tablet may be seen at Abydos, Egypt upon which is

² Thebes is located about 500 miles south of the Mediterranean Sea. It was at its greatest wealth and power during the Middle Kingdom, (2040 to 1750 Before Christ) and the New Kingdom (1550 to 1070 B. C.)

found in hieroglyphic characters the names of seventy-six Pharaohs.

At least ten different Pharaohs are mentioned in the Bible:

- When Abraham and Sarah went down into Egypt they were at the palace of a Pharaoh (Genesis 12:15-20).

- About 200 years later when Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was exalted to be ruler over all the land by another Pharaoh (Genesis 41:41).

- Several generations later a new king arose **“which knew not Joseph.”** He was the Pharaoh who made the lives of the Israelites “bitter with hard bondage” and from whom Moses fled away to the land of Midian (Exodus 1:8).

- While Moses was in Midian Pharaoh died (Exodus 2:23), and when he came back to deliver Israel, another Pharaoh reigned (Exodus 5:1).

- Of the fifth Pharaoh, mention is made in I Chronicles 4:18.

- Of the sixth Pharaoh mention is made in I Kings 11:19.

- Of the seventh mention is made in I Kings 9:16.

- Of the eighth mention is made in Isaiah 36:6.

- Of the ninth, mention is made in II Kings 23:29.

- Of the tenth, Ezekiel 17:17.

Between some of these rulers there were periods of a few hundred years. In some of these periods of Scripture silence, a half dozen or more Pharaohs may have ruled.

The two Pharaohs with whom Moses dealt in Egypt are of great interest to the Bible reader, especially since the body of one and the tombs of both have been found. Of these two rulers we write principally in this chapter.

In the time of Moses, a powerful and haughty monarch, was on the throne of Egypt. According to the hieroglyphics now found on the walls of ruins, he was the greatest builder. Judging from the great stone statues of himself in many parts of Egypt, he was the proudest of the Pharaohs. He was the Pharaoh who instituted the oppression of Israel, the one believed by all who investigate, to be Rameses II. The people of God were prospering. The reigning king saw that the children of Israel had become more and mightier than the Egyptians, so he said to his people, **“Come on, let us deal wisely with them” (Exodus 1:10).**

Now we will make a visit to the Tombs of the Kings where a number of the Pharaohs were laid to rest. Leaving the ruins on the western side of ancient Thebes we started up a mountain gorge of the desert. The sun’s

rays seemed blazing hot as they poured down on the sand and rocks about us. What little air was stirring came to our faces in waves of burning heat instead of cooling breezes. In that solitary gorge a death-like quiet reigned. No life was to be seen except our little party of three and the donkey. Not even a spear of grass or a bush could be seen. Everything looked as dry as if it had never been moistened by a shower. No sign of a cloud was to be seen and perhaps had not been seen for the greater part of a year, for there is little rain and that only for a day or two in mid-winter.

After going some distance into the wild desert, we came to the place where the Pharaohs were buried. It is a strange, weird graveyard in the mountain fastnesses. Not only the kings were buried there but queens, princes, priests, and nobles also found a resting-place in this hidden spot. Where we visited the graves of those who died three and four thousand years ago, their bodies are not there now. They have been taken away.

We visited several of the tombs, among them the tomb of Menephtha, the Pharaoh whose army tried to follow the children of Israel across the Red Sea. If he was drowned in the sea, why did he need a tomb? The kings, as well as many others with means, prepared their tombs before death. It took many years to hew them out of the solid rock. Menephtha’s tomb was never quite finished and we have no evidence that his body was ever placed in it. It seems very probable that he met an untimely death in the Red Sea and that his body will never be found.

The walls of the tombs are full of paintings and sculpture giving the history of the lives of the great men for whom they were made and representing their faith in the gods. These representations are drawn true to life and faith and make the tombs very interesting to the traveler. There are pictures of gods and goddesses, of the sacred boat with the souls of men sailing to the Underworld, of the sun in its boat passing around through the Underworld to arise in the morning, of gigantic serpents, of scarabs, apes, jackals, oxen, lions, and many other animals and of the scenes of life and of death.

Would you like to know the interesting story of why the mummified Pharaohs were not in their tombs? This story is one of the strangest and most interesting stories we have ever heard outside of the Bible. Of its truthfulness there can be no doubt. For most of it we acknowledge our indebtedness to the writings of Edward L. Wilson and Professor Maspero.

Scholars were searching through Egypt for the records of the past. Mummies had been found in many places with names and dates on the coffin lids.

Why should not some Pharaoh of whom we read in the Scriptures be found? The tombs of Menephtha I, Rameses II, Seti I and of many other Pharaohs had long been discovered in the mountains west of Thebes, but the bodies were not there. The tombs had been deprived of all their contents, and what had become of the embalmed bodies of the Pharaohs, no one knew. ...

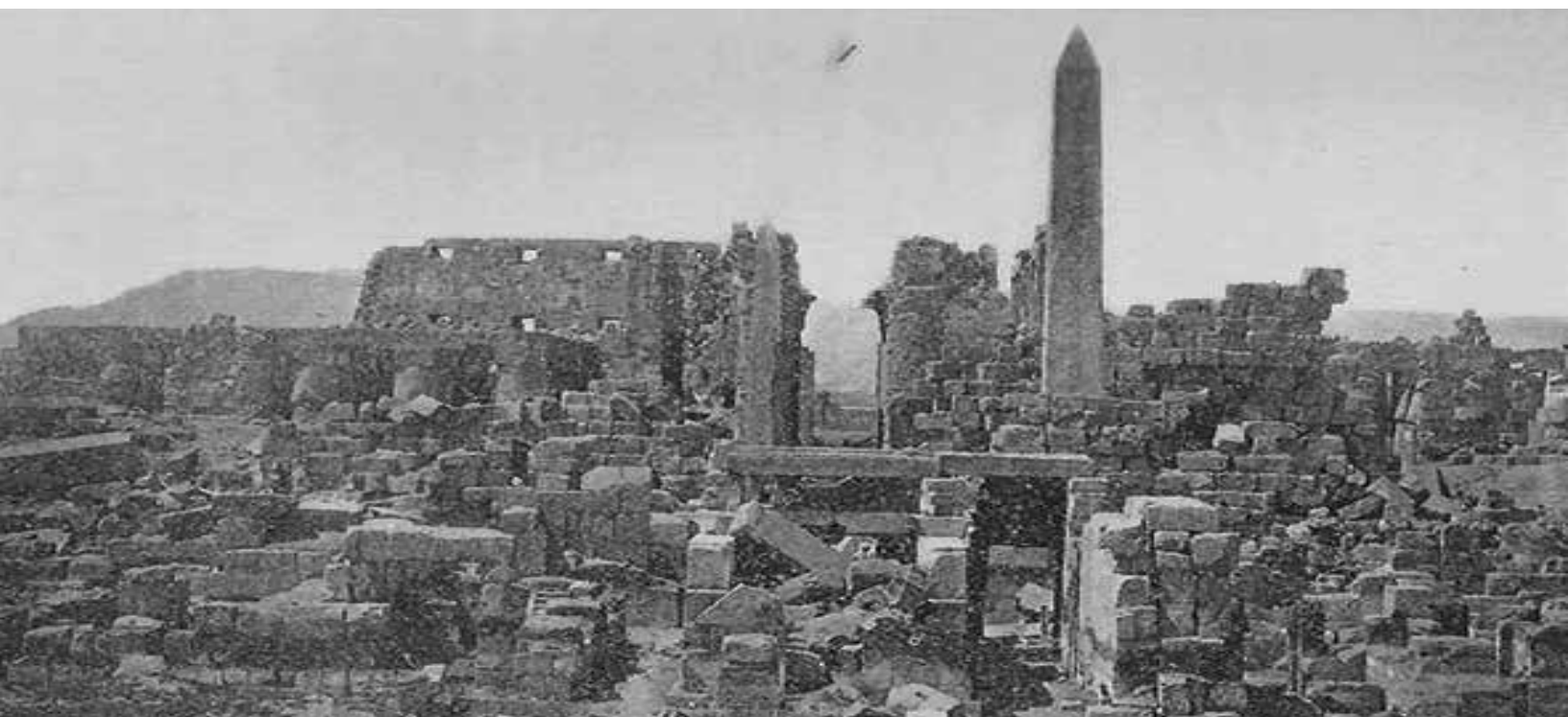
Early in 1881, it was believed that one of four Arab brothers knew more about the mummies than he would tell. Ahmed was arrested and severely punished, but he would not tell. But for a good sum of money his brother Mohammed revealed the whole secret.

Just above a high cliff on a western mountain a large stone had been placed over the entrance of the hidden tomb. Beneath the large stone, other stones had been cunningly placed in the entrance. The entrance was opened and they looked down the mouth of a shaft that was forty feet deep and six feet square. ... At the bottom of the shaft was a passage leading westward for twenty-four feet. The passage then turned northward and continued for hundreds of feet into the heart of the mountain where lay a marvelous death chamber—13' x 23' and six feet in height. Inside the chamber were 38 coffins containing the bodies of so many kings, queens, princes and priests, including the Pharaoh of the Oppression (Ramses II, 1290—1224 B.C.) and his father Seti I. [The Pharaoh of the Exodus (Menephtha I) was not among them. It is believed he perished in the Red Sea when the Egyptians pursued the fleeing Israelites.]

We are glad these mummies have been found as they furnish so strong a witness to the truths of the Bible. They were once kings, princes and priests, monarchs, tyrants and oppressors, worshiped as the gods, but now they are in glass cases labeled and numbered as antiquities, where all who desire may go and face them without fear.

When the Pharaohs were removed in 1881, there were many things found with them, among which were rolls of papyrus paper on which were written many of the deeds of the ancients. These rolls were their books. Two of the books called “Abbot” and “Amherst” tell of the robbing of the tombs in ancient times. It was thought that the tombs of the Pharaohs were not safe, so the priests of Herhor prepared a hiding-place near Der el-bahri. It took much preparation. The well forty feet deep and the tunnel which led from the bottom of it a distance of hundreds of feet into the bowels of the mountain, were cut through solid rock. One by one the coffins were removed from the Tombs of the Kings and borne across the mountain by night to the hidden spot where they were let down by ropes and carried far back to the inner chamber where they rested for nearly 3,000 years. The priests had closed the entrance so that it might not be discovered. When they died away their secret died and no man living knew what had become of the mummies of the Pharaohs until the four Arab brothers found them.

J.G.L. | Georgia



Ruins of Karnak Temple

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

Not Accepted

by Ez Stranged

Thank you for publishing AV. We enjoy reading it in the Netherlands for several years now. Yes, that is how far the AV goes.

Now you probably know that the situation in other parts of the world regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage can be quite different. This is true in Europe (and especially in the Netherlands where we live).

We as followers of Christ, after coming out of the world, feel most at home in the Anabaptist/Amish corner. Rebekah and I have accepted God as our Giver of Life and Christ as our Savior and turned our lives and actions towards Him.

Like many others, we were once married and divorced in the world and are now remarried in the Lord. Unfortunately, we are not accepted by the Anabaptist communities in the USA.

Any sin we have done in the world, repented of, and let go of—even though there are things we can never “fix”—is forgiven by Anabaptist communities in the USA, except being remarried in the Lord after a worldly marriage. I Corinthians 6:9-11 says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. In light of that Scripture, is it not strange that we are not forgiven and accepted by Anabaptist communities in America?

AV Editor

I accept the plain teaching found in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 as authoritative on the matter of divorce and remarriage while the first partner is still living. “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.” It seems apparent that whatever the meaning of the exception clauses in Matthew 5:32 and Matthew

19:9, they do not contradict the truth taught in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18.

When one becomes a child of God he stops smoking, drinking, lying, swearing, and any other sins that were present in his former life. Remarriage while the former partner is still living is not a one-time sin of breaking a vow at the marriage altar. Instead, it is a continuing action of living in a state of adultery. Like a person who continues lying or murdering after “accepting God as the Giver of Life and Christ as the Savior,” the remarried person, while the first partner still lives, continues living in sin.

Remarriage while the first partner still lives has consequences. Like a forgiven smoker who has ruined his lungs or an alcoholic who ruined his liver prior to turning back to God, one still suffers because of his former sins. Former marriages can cause lasting mental and physical problems—children, poverty, disease, guilt—not done away with by repentance.

Forgiveness and consequences are two different things. Forgiveness for past sins by the brethren is required. That does not remove the after-effects of past sins. God can heal the body and the mind, but man cannot.

However, when man continues to willfully sin,—living in a state of adultery—according to Hebrews 10:19-31, Christ’s sacrifice no longer covers that sin. “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” (**Hebrews 10:26**).

I have tried to spell out a scriptural understanding of why Anabaptist churches in the USA do not generally accept divorced and remarried persons into their fellowships. This does not mean that a divorced and remarried person is doomed. It is possible to separate and stop living together. Neither does this mean going back to one’s former partner. It means living a celibate life in chastity and purity. One should still feel responsible to physically support one’s former partner and children; this means accepting one’s responsibility for former actions.

Such action will enable one to live in all good conscience before God and the brotherhood. But if one is unwilling to live separately, that responsibility is between you and the judgment of God.

Let me add, there are hundreds of churches that will accept divorced and remarried persons into their fellowships. That does not make it right in God's sight. Remarriage while a former partner is still living remains a distinguishing characteristic of those servants of God who do not believe it to be right in God's sight, be they Anabaptist or any other church.



Not the Only Way

by In Comity

Thank you for your hard work on the AV publication.

In a small effort to eliminate some confusion about the way Hutterites apply Jesus' teachings on wealth, I would like to respond to the reader's comment titled, "Not What Jesus Meant" (AV29, page 5).

In this short comment, there is much that the writer has right, but also much that they are in error. I am the author of the poem "Am I Rich or Am I Poor?" (AV28, page 34). The reader rightly assumes me to be Hutterite. He also states that we are commanded by Jesus not to accumulate wealth on earth, to give freely and expect nothing in return, and that His teachings are for all mankind. All of this is true.

However, I must offer correction to the thoughts that it is not practical for all the Christians in the world to live as the Hutterites. I want to point out the witness of the early church as recorded in the book of Acts. There was a time when ALL who believed in Jesus lived together in community of goods. All of them. They were of one mind, heart, and soul and they lived out Christ's law of love by living together, pooling their possessions and sharing with one another as each one had need. This is what the Spirit provoked them to do. This is how they understood "what Jesus meant" and their witness is rock solid.

Similarly to the early Christians, the Hutterites have reached sound conclusions as to how Christ's law of love is to be lived out in today's world. Contrary to the thoughts of the reader, their communities do not function like a co-op, where each member owns a part of the "kitty." In legal terms, they are a corporation,

where each member willingly relinquishes their right to private ownership and lives to serve the community in love. The community then provides the necessities of life which are shared among believers. So, in reality, it is not done for personal gain, rather, it is a life of full surrender to God and to the church in which it is possible to give, serve, help, share and love every single day. This is the life that God wants for His children.

Hutterites are not ashamed of an immediate association with community of goods by onlookers. Truly, it is a core belief to them. However, it must not be thought that Hutterites "own" community of goods. Theirs is one model of how it is lived out, though *not necessarily the only one*. Community of goods in any model should be the inner longing, and the outer expression, of every true follower of Christ, because He lived it with His little band of disciples, and when He sent His Spirit, the believers were led to the same life. The selfish, individualistic mindset of this contemporary world hates this message, just like it hates Him. In order to break free from this mindset, we must ask ourselves, "What is the Spirit leading me to?"

AV Editor

Anabaptist Voice wants to champion full obedience and full surrender to the way of Christ. On the front cover of each issue is the verse, "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only."

The Hutterite way of living in community may be commended. It can be a good way of "putting faith into practice" in the handling of material goods. In working together in love, the Hutterites can be a great witness to the world of how true followers of Christ live and work together peaceably.

However, I am glad you say the Hutterite way is not the only way of fully following Christ. The New Testament also teaches individual responsibility in the handling of material goods. I will list a few of them:

- The parables of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27 both teach individual responsibility in how one uses material wealth.
- Collections from individuals were taken up from individuals and pooled with the church to send aid to other believers (I Corinthians 16:1-2).
- The Lord loves a cheerful giver (II Corinthians 9:6-15).
- "Command those that are rich" indicates a different

level of wealth among the believers (I Timothy 6:17-19).

So, whether we live in physical community or in a congregation gathered from separate homes, let us do all to the honor and glory of God. “*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Colossians 3:17).



Passing Bible Practices On

by O. Pen Eyes

Greetings to you in Jesus’ Name: the Great Teacher who has said I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Knock and you shall find. May God open our eyes to the truths as we seek in His Word.

As a fellow Pilgrim we have much to learn from each other; like the holy kiss as mentioned in AV28. I had known it was still practiced by the Amish and Old Order Mennonites and was wondering if it is only practiced when meeting each other at church or communion and baptism or also when you meet each other at family gatherings and in town? For us it is practiced by some at baptism services. We meet each other a dozen times or more each day so when would it be practical? We “kiss” each other by daily acts of serving, fellowshiping, working and eating together.

Also, I was wondering when and how is a good time to teach core Anabaptist beliefs? For example, not wearing jewelry (wedding ring), the reason why we wear head coverings, a simple lifestyle with modest, unworldly clothing (some say it’s not the outside that counts), not having any part with the government (voting, running to be a rep in one’s municipality), using instruments... we need advice on how to pass on to our younger generation what the word “Anabaptist” means and how it should be expressed in our lives.

AV Editor

As you suggest in your letter, it is not always appropriate to greet one another with a holy kiss every time we meet. To greet friends on the street with a kiss would seldom be a holy kiss in the eyes of onlookers. A common custom is to practice the holy kiss at the close of a worship service and at special occasions such as at baptism. Maybe when among believers who are

visitors, it is also fitting.

Yes, we show our love for others by serving, working, and talking together, but that is not filling the Bible command to kiss one another. We do not want to miss out on the blessing of expressing our love for one another by neglecting this five-times-commanded Bible teaching.

Now you ask how and when do we pass Anabaptist teachings on to the next generation. First of all, there may be some cultural practices that are distinctly Anabaptist—a type of godly clothing. But symbolized by the culture should be Bible teachings such as honesty, diligence, service, peaceableness, and separation from worldly practices such as the wearing of wedding rings.

We should not be bashful or ashamed to teach these godly values at all times, by our practice and by our life. Wearing a worthy head veiling is a Bible commanded practice and not just an Anabaptist practice. We should be faithful in teaching that our practice is undergirded by Bible principles and not by the dictates of a cultural practice.



Rest Now and in the Future

by Heavy Heart

I am writing regarding the article on rest (AV #29, pages 14-15).

It has been hard on my heart that you kind of dismissed the “rest” that we should be in here and now in this life. You basically said that “rest” will only be for us after we finish our life here on earth.

I submit that the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-34 spell REST for the believer here and now. But I believe that the rest spoken of in Hebrews 4 also applies to here and now. I cannot put my thoughts on Hebrews 4 better than this quote:

The Rest that Joshua Could Not Give
(Hebrews 4:1-10)

The good news of Canaan’s rest was preached to Israel but availed nothing, because the hearers were destitute of faith. They said, *Can God?* instead of, *God can!* They thought of their enemies as giants and themselves as grasshoppers, because they left God out of the account. Take God into the account and then we are giants and our enemies grasshoppers.

“To all of us Christ offers *rest*, not in the other life only, but in this life as well. **Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience (Hebrews 4:11).**

Rest from the weight of sin, from care and worry, from the load of daily anxiety and foreboding. The rest that arrives from handing all worries over to Christ, and receiving from Christ all we need. Have we entered into that experience? In both Hebrews 4:6 and Hebrews 4:11, where KJV reads, “*unbelief*,” RV and NKJV read, “*disobedience*.” If we disobey, we cannot believe; but when we believe we are sure to obey. In Hebrews 4:10 we are directed to our risen Lord, who has finished the work of redemption and rests, as God did when He pronounced Creation to be “*very good*.” When we understand what He meant by “It is finished,” we, too, shall “*rest*.”

AV Editor

I agree that the words of Jesus in Matthew 6 speak of a different life than the troubled life of a worrying individual. In that sense there is “rest” for the soul and body. The teaching of the Matthew 6 passage is that believers should not worry about things because our heavenly Father cares for us; not that we should stop working with our minds and hands.

The interpretation of the passage in Hebrews 4 can be looked at as speaking of stopping working now so that we enjoy soul rest when we leave the life of sin. Your quote indicates this passage also includes a future rest after death.

The interpretation of Hebrews 4 as referring to a future rest for the people of God, in no way encourages people not to obey the commandments of God ... NOW, in this life. This understanding warns people of the dangers of disobedience and encourages people to live a holy life. In addition, this view encourages people to work with their hands six days a week and then to rest one day a week as God did at the creation.

So, both interpretations of Hebrews 4 actually come out at the same place. Both understandings of the passage require that we believe, obey, and live a holy life so that we may enjoy a life of rest.



A Present Rest

by Promise Stands

I am writing in response to the article, “The Promised Rest” (AV29, page 14). I share the author’s concern that we do not explain away the importance of good works, diligence, and faithfulness. That being said, I feel he is misunderstanding the message of Hebrews 4. The key verse in the article is verse nine, “**So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God**” (ESV).

The author of the article strongly argues that the rest spoken of in the chapter refers solely to the future rest of heaven, but I see no evidence for such an idea in the text. The rest God offers His people throughout all ages, the rest that comes through Him, remains available for us; the promise of entering his rest still stands (Hebrews 4:1). The writer to the Hebrews clearly shows that the Israelites “were unable to enter because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:19), and it is still unbelief, not failure to work hard enough, that prevents people from experiencing God’s rest today.

It is obvious that the writer to the Hebrews is not teaching we enter God’s rest by a superficial lip service, after which we go on living life our own way instead of yielding to a life of obedience. The Bible does not view believing and obeying as distinct concepts the way we tend to.

An AV Writer Responds

So the question is, “Does Hebrews 4 speak only of a future rest, only of a present rest, or does it speak of both a present and a future rest? We believe the passage speaks of a future rest.

To understand the “rest” in Hebrews 4 we have to start in Hebrews 3. The subject at the beginning of Hebrews 3 is faithfulness. We are called to consider Jesus Christ, who was faithful as also Moses was faithful. We are part of Christ’s household if we too are faithful (verse 6). Hebrews 3:7-11 quotes from Psalm 95:7-11 and draws our mind to the Israelites in the wilderness. Many of those who came out of Egypt were not able to enter into Canaan (God’s rest) because of unbelief. This unbelief showed itself in many ways; lusting, idolatry, fornication, tempting, and murmuring (I Corinthians 10:6-10). Their provoking finally resulted in God cutting them off from His promise of rest (Hebrews 3:11).

The Israelites are used as an example of warning for us today. We may have experienced deliverance from Egypt (sin), and have a promise of eternal rest (heaven), but it is possible to lose the promise because of unbelief. Hebrews 3:12-19 clearly sounds this warning. Hebrews 4 then continues with the warning that we should have a reverential fear lest we, like the Israelites, lose our promise of rest.

Not all who have heard the Gospel have believed and have this promise of a future rest (Hebrews 4:2). It is only given to them whose hearing is mixed with faith. Hebrews 4:3 says, “We which have believed do enter into rest” and is referring to a future rest. It is best understood as “we which have believed shall enter into rest.”

Hebrews 4:4 then draws our mind to the creation account where God rested after He worked. This is a universal principle, rest follows work. We who believe anticipate a rest after our work here on earth is done.

Hebrews 4, verses 5 and 7, reference again the Psalm of David that was quoted in Hebrews 3:7-11. The rest of Canaan was not the final and only rest for God’s people. It says that when Joshua had brought the people into the land of Canaan, there was still another rest for the Israelites (Hebrews 4:8-9). It is the same for the people of God. *Though they have entered the “promised land,” there is still a future rest for them* (Hebrews 4:10-11).

Furthermore, we which are alive on earth are still working. Our works are our daily life; it is how we live. Nowhere does the Bible command that the people of God should stop doing good works while we are living. While alive we are always commanded to stop doing evil works. We cease from our works when we take our last breath. He who has entered into that rest has passed from this life and ceased from his labors as God did from His (Hebrews 4:10).

In the letters to the seven churches of Revelation it is often said “I know thy works.” Revelation 20:12 says “... the dead were judged ... according to their works.” Every day a person’s life is full of works, whether good or bad. The admonition is then given, “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.”

Not everyone will experience that promised rest. Jesus said, “Strive to enter in by the narrow door” (Luke 13:24a). It takes deliberate effort to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him.

It should be clear this “rest” in Hebrews 4 is a future rest to the people of God. In looking at numerous English translations of verse 9 it is unanimous the verse should be understood as “There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.” A rest that follows a period of works. Let us be careful not to misunderstand this admonition for works. It’s not that we’re trying to commit so many righteous deeds to earn that rest. Christians have already been delivered from sin (Egypt). We have that promise of heaven (Canaan). It is ours as long as we do not fall into unbelief like the Israelites did in the wilderness. Their example of unbelief should cause us to fear, lest we too lose that promise. We can live in peace knowing we will experience that future promise of rest (heaven) if we keep our lives free of sin.

The Calvinist does not agree with this interpretation of Hebrews 4. They do not feel that those who have been freed from sin have anything to fear on losing out on heaven. This simply goes against what is clearly taught in God’s Word. That is why modern commentators look for other interpretations on the rest in Hebrews 4. The old commentaries, not slanted by eternal security, understand this rest to be a future eternal rest.

We are not trying to cause unrest for the true believer, but rather teach what Scripture clearly teaches. We need to have a proper balance of peace and fear. Peace, knowing that we have the promise of His rest. Fear, lest we lose that promise because of unbelief.



The Practical Side

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

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

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

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

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



The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

Bloodcurdling!

by Caught B. Tween



The Sunday morning was a routine one for us in our small community in northern Guatemala. I arose at the morning light to enjoy some quiet time in the Word with coffee and a pan tostado (toast). I lifted my Bible from the block wall and placed it on the table inside.

There was a hint of anticipation in the air. At noon everyone in town was invited to Don Adán’s fiftieth birthday party. An occasional whoop floated to my ears from across town. Friends or family of Don Adán were already arriving. Don Adán is a well known cattle dealer. He and his sons do business with other ranchers from miles around.

A whoop came from those who had come early to help with preparations; they needed someone to bring them a boat from the other side of the river. I hurried back to the house, it was nearing time to make the trip upriver in the motor canoe.

It was a blessing to be able to be on the river. The river brings a little freshness to the hot and muggy climate. Soon the sisters were stepping off of the canoe

and heading up toward the meeting house. I tied the boat and followed them up the path to the Rivers of Living Water church house.

After the service ended we joined the celebration lunch with Don Adán and his friends. It was a pleasant time as we all enjoyed the tasty grilled beef and the unique experience. It was a blessing to see everyone included, rich and poor alike. Soon the main dish was eaten and it was time for the birthday man to take a bite of the cake. Everyone crowded around. Would anyone have the courage to give him the traditional face-plant in the cake as he took his bite? There was a shriek, and laughter. Sure enough, someone had made the quick move. Don Adán grinned and wiped the smudge of icing from his nose.

We left the celebration with the majority of the crowd. The mission house was just up the dirt street from where the celebration was taking place. Soon we observed that there was only a group of men left milling around the fire. Several of them soon came out with some drinks. By mid-afternoon a group of men stumbled up the street past the mission house. This second party made us nervous, especially so close to the house.

We mission staff joined Dean’s family at the mission

house for supper. We were enjoying the normal discussion around the table. Dean's four young children offered their input to the discussion. Elsie passed the macaroni and hot dogs around again.

Suddenly we were interrupted by someone at the door. A man shuffled nervously on the porch outside of the screen door. "Help, Help," he mumbled. Dean rose quickly and went to the door. "Could I help you with anything?" asked Dean pleasantly. The confused man shuffled across the porch in the other direction beer bottle in hand. "Leave him alone, Leave him alone," someone hollered from the street. A few men had followed the drunken man up to the house. Dean stood uneasily in the doorway. Suddenly the drunk turned on his heels. His glazed eyes were full of fear and confusion. When his eyes rested on Dean a vicious look covered his face. He raised his beer bottle over head and charged toward his culprit. Dean had no time to think, He made a quick move back into the house and slammed the screen-door. As the offender crashed through the screen-door he tripped and tumbled to the floor.

Startled shrieks erupted from the children around me. I jumped up from the table, unaware of the vicious composure of the highly intoxicated intruder. In a

moment I was at Dean's side between the drunk and the supper table. The two townsmen who had given the warning from the street were now inside the door prepared to aid in getting the confused individual back to a safe place. As the man scrambled to his feet he turned toward the kitchen sink. In it he found an eight-inch kitchen knife which had been used to slice the watermelon for supper. The two townsmen gave a terrifying exclamation, "*Cuchillo! Cuchillo!*" ("Knife! Knife!") while frantically backing out the door to safety. Dean and I froze for a second as the drunk turned toward us.

The words echoed in my mind, "Knife, knife." The response of the townsmen was to flee through the door putting a safe distance between the mad man and themselves. Should I turn and run? If I escaped would he harm the others in the house? Should I try to wrench the knife from his hand? Should I simply put myself between the man and the rest of those in the house? I made a quick decision to do what I could to keep the man from proceeding further into the house or harming anyone else. He was charging toward me now, arms raised, knife gripped in his right hand.

[See "The Rest of the Story" in AV32]

The Practical Side: Rest of the Story

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

A Mock Jury

by Never Promise



I concluded the aim of the day's meeting with mock juries never was to find out the truth and make a just judgment. The aim appeared to be to bludgeon the gas company into settling for a huge sum out of court. The

reconciliation company orchestrated the whole deal—professional witnesses—doctors in white gowns—on the one side, and ordinary plumbers and gas line workers on the other side.

My guess is that in the end, the gas company paid all the costs of the day's events and the cost of the reconciliation company. Maybe some attack lawyers paid part of the costs in the hope of extracting a huge settlement later.

All the deliberations still left the question in my mind as to what really caused the explosion in the old block building that seriously hurt several people. I kept my ears open and one day it came out from a person active in the drug business. They were making meth in the old car garage.

I learned this from the Oxford Treatment Center. "Illicitly manufactured meth is usually made by combining ephedrine or pseudoephedrine with other chemicals that are often poisonous or highly flammable. The mixture is then added to a solvent such as gasoline and heated to crystalize.

"The heating process is particularly dangerous, as there is significant risk of fire and explosion."

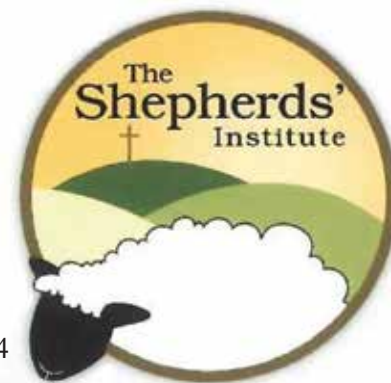
"For nothing is secret ...

that will not be known and come to light."

Luke 8:17

Upcoming Events

The Shepherds Institute Meetings



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

Date: February 19 - 23, 2024

Location: Cornerstone Mennonite Church, 2000 County Rd 655, Memphis, MO 65034

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

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

Daytime Classes for Ordained & Licensed Ministers

Devotions (8:45 am)

First Period (9:00 – 10:30 am) Principles of Growth and Change (Pastoring) Instructor: Milo Zehr

This course considers the process of growth and change in sanctification, the working of God's grace as believers cooperate with God, and the role of community in spiritual growth and change.

Second Period (10:45 am – 12:15 pm) Studying & Communicating Biblical Truth Effectively (Preaching)

Instructor: Dave Yoder

What all of us need the most is truth. And that truth comes to us in a Person and in a Book. In this course we will look at how we can effectively communicate the unchanging truth of the Living Word of God to a dying world that seems to be forever changing.

Lunch (12:15 - 1:00 pm)

Third Period (1:00 – 2:30 pm) Introduction to World Views (Theology) Instructor: Chester Weaver

What are the prevailing world views in our western culture today? The course examines several worldviews and concludes that the Theistic worldview is the only adequate worldview to explain reality.

Fourth Period (2:45 – 4:15 pm)

Round Table Discussion

The Round Table Discussion will be moderated by Milo Zehr and Chester Weaver.

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

7:00 – 7:10 pm (Opening)

7:10 – 7:55 pm

Core Mennonite Beliefs

Instructor: Milo Zehr

Mennonites who live in 2024 have inherited beliefs that developed 500 years ago. What did Anabaptists/Mennonites believe in the 16th century and what importance and implications do these beliefs have for us today?

8:00 – 8:45 pm

Christian Liberty in the Context of Brotherhood

Instructor: Dave Yoder

The New Testament teaches both the concepts of Christian liberty and of Brotherhood. How can these two be brought into a peaceful working unity, particularly in the context of differing convictions, viewpoints, and personal preferences?

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



Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report July thru September 2023

Circulation Report September 2023

October 1, 2023 Beginning Balance	\$1,177.03
Income	
Donations	\$28,799.59
Local Support*	\$1,000.00
Total Income	\$29,799.59
Beginning Balance + Income	\$30,976.62
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$683.00
Postage	\$4,380.58
Printing	\$6,030.00
Staff Expenses	\$850.80
Total Expense	\$11,944.38
December, 31 2023 Ending Balance	\$19,032.24

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.

ISSUE #30 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,960 | Operating Cost: \$11,944.38
Cost Per Copy: \$2.41/ea.

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

We thank our supporters for the \$ 28,799.59 given to help with the cost of publishing AV31. If you wish to share in the publishing cost of AV32 it will be much appreciated.

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



End Matters

Another issue of *Anabaptist Voice* is nearly ready to go to the printer. Many have worked to bring it to fruition—liberal and unknown givers, dedicated writers, skilled designers, relentless copyeditors, honest bookkeepers, resourceful printers, and tech specialists. We all planted, watered, pruned and labored together as workers in the Lord's vineyard.

I like what Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3:5-9:

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is any thing, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

May the increase be in the hearts of those who read this 31st issue of *Anabaptist Voice*. May all the glory and praise resound to God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit who guided us each step of the way.

Until He comes,

James

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*God shall bless us, and all the ends
of earth shall fear Him.
~ Psalm 67-7*

