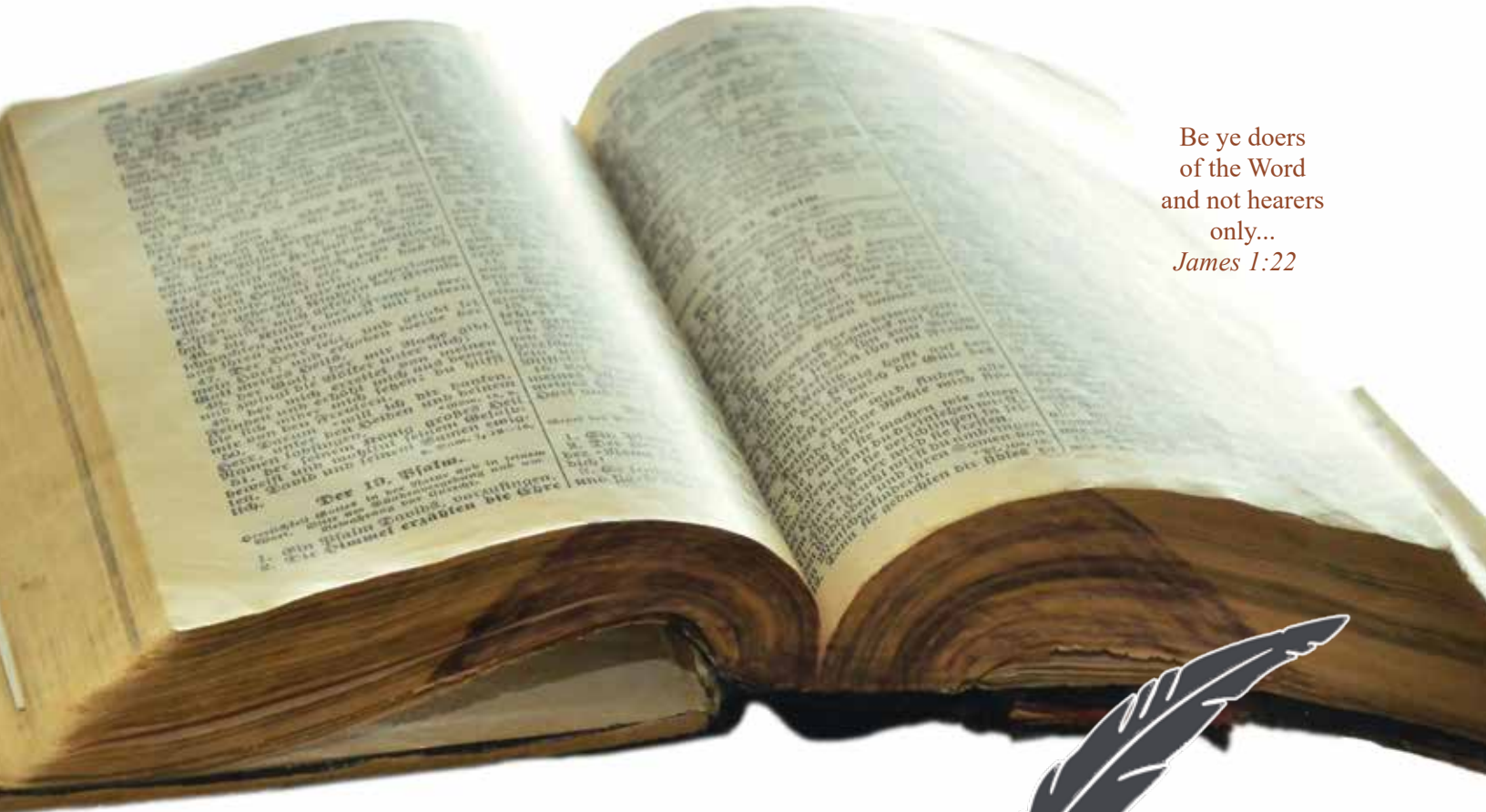




Be ye doers
of the Word
and not hearers
only...
James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works



In This Issue:

- "SERVING THE CHURCH" - JOSHUA GOOD
- "INVESTING IN HIS COMING" - ABRAM NEUFELD
- "THE LAW AND THE LAW" - MENNO KNIGHT
- "HE LIFTED ME UP" - FLOYD YODER
- "IN THE KING'S SERVICE" - CARL HEATWOLE



Letter from the Editor



I asked the Lord if I should go to Nashville, Tennessee, for a meeting with special friends. Not receiving any direct word one way or another, I boarded the plane in Augusta, Georgia, for a short flight to Charlotte, North Carolina.

While in the full waiting area for the flight to Nashville, I struck up a conversation with the head of a Baptist minister-training college. He soon found out I was a Mennonite and wanted to know if I believed a Christian could backslide and lose out, or whether he never was a Christian in the first place. I assured my friend that the Bible teaches that one can lose his faith, but that some Anabaptists would say we cannot be sure of our salvation. In the end, we would let the judge of all the earth decide which view is correct.

On the flight from Charlotte to Nashville my seatmate was a young woman studying for a master's degree in psychiatry. She hoped to begin practicing shortly after obtaining her degree. I inquired as to how she decides what is right and wrong. "It depends somewhat on your upbringing ..." seemed to be the best answer she, as an ex-Mormon, could come up with. I recommended she read the Bible beginning in Matthew, in the CEV (Contemporary English Version). She seemed highly interested in doing so.

About 20 minutes away from Nashville, the pilot announced we were in a holding pattern because of thunderstorms at the Nashville airport which, he assured us, would soon be over. After circling around for maybe 20 to 30 minutes, the pilot announced we were returning to Charlotte.

At Charlotte the stewardess told us there were three agents waiting to help us rebook. When my turn came, I told the agent I wanted to return home. She said, "That is a good plan. That's what I would do." She booked me on the next flight to Augusta, Georgia, and then said, "Just a moment and I'll get your money back for you." In a few minutes, she handed me a flight card. In handwritten capital letters were the words, "TRIP IN VAIN."

Was the trip in vain? I have been pondering the question ever since. Is everything we do in vain? Or was it with divine purpose that I made those two contacts at opposite poles of the religious spectrum? And God answered my inquiry as to whether I should travel to Nashville or not with a gentle, "No!"

Blessings,
James G. Landis

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KJV — King James Version, Public Domain. Regency Publishing House, 1976.



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 from the New American Standard Bible (1995) unless specified otherwise at the end of an article.

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

Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

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

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

Our Finances:

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

To assure an informed supporter base, each issue 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.

About *Anabaptist Voice* (extended)

Clarity in Communication

From the beginning *Anabaptist Voice* has sought to make this magazine clear and understandable to the average reader. To do this we have employed a number of techniques which you probably have not noticed. Here are some of them:

- Articles and stories of more than one page always follow on succeeding pages. Pieces are never relegated to a corner of a remote page.
- Paragraphs are properly indented with a space between them.
- Sentences use a double space between them rather than only one space.
- Pronouns used must be clear in the first reading as to the noun they refer to.
- Spacing is consistent and does not give the appearance of being cramped.
- We shy away from abbreviations of all kinds and try to write out the months of the year, the books of the Bible, and the names of states or provinces.
- We steer away from contractions, preferring to write out the words used.
- We do not list Bible references and expect the reader to know them or look them up. We almost always quote the verse in red and give the reference either before or after the quote.
- In the past we have used either the KJV or the NKJV without designation. We always tried to designate the use of any other version. This resulted in confusion to the staff and to the reader. We have to make sure the Bible quote in an article is correct, and we are not always sure where to look to find it.

My goal as a writer has always been to make the message clear to the reader or the student. And I confess it frustrates me to use outdated language when quoting Scripture.

If I were to write any other piece using outdated or substandard English, most everyone would be turned off. So why should *Anabaptist Voice* make it hard to understand with awkward sentence structure and strange verbs when quoting Scripture? Lord willing, we hope to change this in *Anabaptist Voice*.

New Practice

I have purchased a New American Standard Bible (1995) with super giant print. This large Bible makes it easy for me to read and follow along as I type. I like to read this Bible out loud and find it resounds well with the familiar wording of the KJV and the NKJV.

In order to overcome the dilemma of working with diverse Bible translations, from here on, *Anabaptist Voice* will quote only the NASB (1995), except in rare cases where we will designate from which translation it comes. We believe this will greatly simplify our editorial work as well as put Bible quotes in understandable English for most English readers. Because *Anabaptist Voice* almost always quotes the verse when a reference is given, I will always have this large print Bible to go by when doing a copyedit.

You can always compare the wording in Scripture quotes from the NASB with your favorite version. But I believe there is no doctrinal issue at stake by using the NASB (1995). But if someone finds a problem with a doctrinal issue, please be sure to bring it to the attention of *Anabaptist Voice*.

Things I Like in my – NASB Super Giant Print Reference Bible:

Uses Standard English – Understandable in today's American English.

Accents Quotes – Uses small caps and offsets when quoting other Scripture.

Proper Punctuation – Uses sentence structure that promotes smooth reading.

Helpful Capitalization – Capitalizes pronouns referring to deity and proper nouns (Law – Mosaic Law; Spirit – Holy Spirit; God – Creator God).

Section Headings – Section headings give the thrust of the following passage.

Connected References – References at the bottom of each page are connected to the verse. Literal wording in a verse is sometimes supplied.



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

ME First

By Others First

"End Matters" on page 43 of *AV* Issue 35 compared two types of Christianity. The one is about 'Jesus & Me' and the other is about 'Me & Jesus'. The difference is in who comes first. It quickly becomes obvious that one is true and the other is false. Jesus said that if we love anyone or anything more than Him, we cannot be His disciple. Also, the first commandment establishes the order of headship. It must be 'Jesus & Me'.

I liked the answer of a plainly dressed woman (who) was approached by a man with the comment, "You do not have to dress like that to be a Christian." She responded, "How did you know I was a Christian?"

Likewise, in the world today, people should know if we are male or female by the way we dress. God calls cross-dressing an abomination. The imaginary genders between male and female were created by the devil.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ pictures two women. The one is godly and the other is a harlot. They don't speak, but are known because of their appearance.

B.H. | *Pennsylvania*



Continue On

By N. Joy

Keep printing *AV*! I really enjoy it!

A.L.B. | *Virginia*



Great Encouragement

By The Twelve

Thank you for the latest editions of the *Anabaptist Voice*. They are a great encouragement to our family.

A.N. | *Mexico*

Cover to Cover

By Last Daze

Thank you for your effort in the *AV*. I appreciate it and read it from cover to cover.

God bless and keep up the good work.

We are in the last days.

D.Y. | *Ohio*



Good Practice

By I.T. Works

I write in reference to "Council Meeting" (*AV*36, Page 14).

You wrote regarding what you view as an abandonment of "council meeting" before communion. I read through the document and agree with your observations, but I have not seen this as something being discarded by those we fellowship with. Maybe you have a greater exposure than I in this matter with your work with *AV*.

My observation is that a far greater "Jude Creeper" concept that needs to be warned against is the absence of warning about the influence of Roman Catholicism, with terms like "eucharist" and "soft friendship with Catholics." I see a clear ecumenical push in the whole realm of Bible translations and Rome's heresies as a far greater threat than losing council meetings.

In our congregation we have always called it "Preparatory Service." In the past several years we alternated between having a time of public testimony, where each person is asked to give a personal testimony. The next time we, in the ministry, visit each of the homes and have a private interview. That seems to work well for us. The congregation is not so large that it takes a lot of time, but with 75, or more in the service, we skip Sunday school and use the entire service for this endeavor.

L.K. | *Arizona*

Love Others

By Az Yoself

The article “The Simple Way” in AV35, does a far superior job of expressing what I have been trying to say. Later on in AV35 in “Not Approachable” you ask me a question, “Do those who cannot be identified as Anabaptists do a better job of welcoming visitors and putting their faith into practice?”

I would say that while Protestants/Evangelicals have the wrong theology and they fail to love God enough to obey His commands, they do a better job of clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, visiting those in prison and sharing the gospel with others.

I believe Anabaptists have quite a bit right, but I want to point out, as “The Simple Way” does, what followers of Christ are called to do. I believe we all need to grapple more with what Jesus meant when He said, “Love others as you love yourself.”

C.W. | *Maryland*



Thought Provoking

By Val U. Bell

I would like you to know that I truly enjoy reading every issue of *Anabaptist Voice*. I find the insights and perspectives shared therein to be thought-provoking and inspiring. Thank you for your effort in putting together this valuable resource.

In the recent issue of AV#36, you offered to give away the Bibles that you no longer use. I would be particularly interested in receiving the ESV, NKJV, and the Parallel Bible, if they are still available. If no one has claimed so far, I would also be happy to receive the remaining five too.

I am grateful for your willingness to share these resources. I intend to share some of them in my church, as we have regular newcomers joining, mostly from South Asia. May the Lord continue to bless you and your work abundantly.

S.G. | *New Jersey*



Christian Maturity

By O. Ver Stated

Very nice article about Council Meeting (AV 36, page 14). It seems a few things may have been overstated.

Yes, Council Meeting may be counted an important meeting of God’s people, but it seems to me a Christian lives in a present state of Council Meeting at all times.

The true disciple of Jesus will daily pursue peace with all men, will live in peace and communion with God, will submit daily to the rigors of church brotherhood, will love and serve Jesus with all his heart. Our churches ought to be places of regular accountability, where members are open, honest, vulnerable, ready and willing to receive instruction, rebuke, correction.

Our churches should foster Christian maturity that rises above the need for Council Meeting. That being said, it seems there are, and will always be, Christians who need the periodic reminder of these important issues.

Thank you for the thought-provoking articles in *Anabaptist Voice*!

T.S. | *Pennsylvania*



Beautiful Design

By A. Bell Design

Got my packet of the *Anabaptist Voice* today. I could not believe the beautiful job the graphic arts folks did on “The Lord Watches” article (AV36, pages 18-19). That was really impressive.

Thank you so much. The whole issue looks great!

N.W. | *Georgia*

Hold Up the Standard

By A. Pre Shiate

I appreciate very much this publication and want to thank you for holding up the standard of the faith of our fathers.

I have written a brief article and am wondering if you are at all interested in publishing it.

J.B. | *Idaho*

Serving the Church

By Joshua Good

The following two sermons were given at ordination services at Hephzibah Mennonite Church. The first sermon focuses on the attitude of the people for their leaders. The second sermon deals with the attitude of the leaders toward the people.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." – Hebrews 13:17

Cherish Your Church Leaders

At the outset of this message, it is important to consider the foundation that enables you to truly cherish the leaders God has placed over you. That foundation is called grace. Sincere love and appreciation for your leaders flows from a life that has been captured and wondrously changed by the amazing grace of God.

When you have been gripped by God's grace, you will see all of life from a new perspective; through a different lens. That understanding directly impacts how you view and relate to others, especially those who God has placed in authority over you.

When you come to truly understand and experience God's amazing grace, you are changed from the inside out. That marvelous change will manifest itself first and foremost in your relationships; how you relate to your spouse, children, neighbors, boss, employees, and church leaders. Freely we have received, therefore, we must freely give.

I have four C's I would like to enlarge on in this message: **Cherish, Consider, Check, Challenge.** These are goals for the message. Let us look at what the Bible says about each of these items.

Cherish

We should consider how we relate to our leaders.

"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

First of all, Paul describes who these leaders are: those who labor among you. They work hard to care for

the church. Then he mentions, those who are over you in the Lord. There is a clear order of authority here—Lord, church leaders, laity. Church leaders are called by God to lead you, and are accountable to God for you.

1 Thessalonians 1:12,13 also tell us how we are to relate to our church leaders. The laity is to know (appreciate) them. That means that we recognize them and respect them and their work.

But "to know" also speaks of relationship. In Val Yoder's book, *Being the Blessing*, he writes that it is the laity's responsibility to know their pastors. "Although leaders will need to give an account for how they lead God's people, Paul lays the primary responsibility for building a meaningful relationship with the pastor at the feet of the lay person."

Do you have a personal relationship with your church leaders? Is it open and meaningful? Do you really know them? Do you know their schedules? Do you know when they are away? Do you know their struggles and needs?

And speaking of relationships, Paul says to "Esteem them (church leaders) very highly in love for their work's sake." This respect is to come from an attitude of affection for them. It is to be a continuing attitude; it does not depend on the quality of their sermon, or if we agree with their decisions, or other qualities of service. Paul taught that all should be highly respected because of the job God has called them to.

Lastly Paul seemed to add an unrelated sentence at the end of verse 13, *"Be at peace among yourselves."* But it is not unrelated to how the laity and the leadership get along. A peaceful brotherhood is one of the greatest gifts you can give your leaders.

Check

Let us check how we relate to one another. We must check our level of love and support. How does our current practice or experience compare to the standard of God's Word? Let's go again to I Thessalonians and see what verses 14 and 15 tell us.

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

These verses are full of one-anothering or ministering to each other—active, involved, responsible membership. Together you are working with your ministry team in meeting the needs of your brothers and sisters.

Here is a list of things the laity and the ministry must do together:

1. Warn them that are unruly (idle, disorganized). Stir them up to action.
2. Comfort the feebleminded (timid, fainthearted). These people tend to become easily discouraged.
3. Support the weak. The weak need regular "one-anothering" to help them live in victory.
4. Be patient with everyone.
5. Be kind to each other.

Challenge

I want to challenge us to be all we can be, and do all we can do to help our leaders love their job. One preacher is reported to have said, "I would love being a pastor if it were not for the people." Could your leaders be tempted to say that because of you? What is the challenge the Scripture holds out for the laity in I Thessalonians 5:16-24? I would label this section, "How we live personally."

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

Express your love and appreciation for your church leaders by the way you live your life. There is nothing

that brings more joy to their hearts than to see spiritual fruit that flows from a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ.

- Be a joyful member (verse 16).
- Be a praying member (verse 17).
- Be a thankful member (verse 18).
- Be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit (verse 19).
- Take God's Word to heart (verses 20-21).
- Live carefully, be discerning (verses 21-22).
- Ask God to increase your hatred for sin and love for holiness (verses 23-24).

***"TOGETHER you are working
WITH your ministry team in meeting the
needs of your brothers and sisters."***

One special way you can cherish your church leaders is by joining them in their struggle. Pray with them and for them. Some of the most precious moments in my ministry have been when a brother has called and asked if he could come and pray with me. He knew what I was going through, or he knew that I was getting ready to leave for a preaching assignment. He wanted to join me in that struggle by caring for me and praying with me.

Do you struggle at times to love and appreciate your leaders? Then get on your knees and pray for them. In Job's story we read, *"The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends"* (Job 42:10). In a similar way, the Lord changes and softens our hearts when we sincerely pray for those we struggle with. This is true with relationships in general.

Do you know your leaders well enough that your prayers go beyond, "God bless you?" Is your relationship with the ministry close enough that week after week you can pray specific prayers on their behalf? Regular, specific prayer for your church leaders will change the atmosphere in your congregation.

As you earnestly take your leaders to the throne of grace, not only will God richly meet the needs of the leaders; He will also do a work of grace in your heart.

"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."
— Romans 15:33 ¹

End of first sermon.

1 All Scriptures quoted in this condensation are taken from the KJV.

Called to Care for Christ's Body

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God." – Colossians 1:25

What an awesome privilege ... what an awesome responsibility it is to be called to care for Christ's body, the church! The reality and weight of this responsibility to lead God's people has caused many men to tremble with fear and to question their abilities.

Moses said, "Oh Lord, I am not eloquent. I am slow of speech and tongue." But God said, "Who has made man's mouth? I will be with your mouth and will teach you what to say!"

Jeremiah said, "Ah Lord, I cannot speak, for I am a child."

But God said, "Don't say that you are a child. You will go where I send you and you will speak what I command you!"

"Christ suffered for the church. Paul suffered for the church. A minister must also suffer for the church"

It is natural that anyone answering the call of caring for the church of God should tremble and wonder, "Do I have what it takes? Can I do this?" And the right answer is, "I cannot do it in my own strength. I must depend on God." It is in our weakness and inabilities that we experience a greater demonstration of God's power.

Let us think about this calling to be a minister. I would like to stress three ways a minister is called to care for Christ's body. We can glean these from our text found in Colossians 1:21-29—serve, suffer, strive.

Called to Serve

A minister is called to serve the church. In both verse 23 and verse 25 of Colossians one, Paul says, *"I am made a minister."* A minister, in Greek is a diakonos. A diakonos is one who executes the commands of another, a servant. The title itself should humble us and remind us that we serve Jesus Christ, the head of the church.

A minister is not the final authority. Ministers are here NOT to serve themselves, but are taking orders from another ... to serve others! Notice who Paul

ministered to in verses 24 and 25. *"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God."*

Paul served Christ by ministering to the people in the Colossian church.

We see that Jesus Christ expresses His tremendous love and care for His body through people, or in focus here, through ministers. He has entrusted the care of His body into the hands of men. What a sobering thought!

Our text reminds us that it is only by God's amazing grace that we are counted worthy for service. *"And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Colossians 1:21-22).* It is only when one answers the call of the gospel that he is fit to be useful in Christ's kingdom.

Mark, in his gospel, also reminds us that Jesus himself set the example for serving. Ministers should follow His example. *"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).*

Called to Suffer

Christ suffered for the church. Consider what lengths Jesus Christ went to in order to restore the severed relationship between God and man. What unimaginable horror He endured to redeem our lives from destruction!

Paul also suffered for the Colossian Church. He wrote, *"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24).*

In Colossians 2:1, Paul tells about his personal struggle and sacrifice to serve the churches at Colossae and Laodicea. "He wrote, *"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh."*

Christ called Paul to suffer for the Colossian church, and he rejoiced in it. Paul was so dedicated and so selfless that he was willing to sacrifice himself for the good of the church.

Christ suffered for the church. Paul suffered for the church. A minister must also suffer for the church.

Both the laity and the leadership must be willing to lay down their lives for the good of a congregation. For us today, suffering is often defined as sacrifice. Caring for the church effectively requires much sacrifice. A minister will never be more effective as a pastor than he is selfless.

A minister must give himself wholly to his calling. He must allow many other interests to diminish—hobbies, businesses, farming, travel. God is calling a minister to shepherd His flock and all these other interests must be sacrificed to the higher calling.

Called to Strive

A minister is called to strive for the building up of the church. Paul put it like this: *“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:27-28).*

In this passage “striving” means “continuing hard work,” not fighting like two roosters. Ministers are called to—make known, proclaim, admonish, teach, and present Christ to every man so he may be complete in Christ. Such striving is ongoing and takes a lot of hard labor. Ministers cannot do all this striving in their own strength. In Colossians 1:29, Paul points out where the strength comes from. He says, *“Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”*

Hard labor? Yes! But hard work brings satisfaction and joy. Paul wrote that he rejoiced to have the opportunity to pick up where Christ left off. The calling and the striving were worth it all if he received the crown of glory that awaited him.

Called to Preach

In Colossians 1:25 Paul testified, *“Whereof I am made a minister ... to fulfill the word of God.”* Preaching for Paul was more than an obligation. It was thrilling, inspiring, and exciting—Paul could preach all night.

What an exciting time to be called by God to care for His body! We understand things many prophets and kings longed to see. We are living in the age when the great mystery of God has been made known! This mystery is revealed to us in three parts:

- The church is the body of Christ; all true believers are members of His body.

- Christ is the head of the body; He provides life, nourishment, direction.
- Jews and Gentiles alike become members of this body by grace through faith.

In II Corinthians 10:8, Paul writes that God has given church leaders their authority for the purpose of building the church up, not tearing the church down. A minister’s preaching can have a great impact on whether a congregation goes up or down.

I encourage expository preaching (explaining a specific passage of scripture in its context). Too much of our preaching is agenda-based and out of context; therefore, it lacks true effectiveness. Too often, Scripture is twisted or wrested in an attempt to make it support the preacher’s preconceived ideas.

On the other hand, expositional preaching flows from an attitude of complete surrender to the Word. The preacher is conforming his thoughts, perspectives, and life to the Word of God. It is all about WHO is informing WHO. When one preaches the text within its proper context, the text preaches itself!

Called to Care for the Church

From this passage in Colossians 1:23-29 we have gleaned a number of things about how a minister should serve, suffer, strive, and preach.

- **The goal:** presenting every man perfect/mature in Christ
- **The method:** preaching the Gospel
- **The dimensions (two-fold):**
Warning every man – admonishing – gently reproving – putting in mind

Teaching every man – instruct and instill – explain and expound
- **The strength:** comes from God and works mightily

Caring for Christ’s body is a wonderful privilege! What an intimate invitation! What an awesome responsibility!

Therefore, the minister of God should serve: gratefully, humbly, gently, and with all His energy.²

– J. G. | Halifax, Virginia

² All Scriptures quoted in this condensation are taken from the KJV.



Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“The real test of Christianity is not loving Jesus. It is loving Judas.”

– Carl Strubhar at Susitna Valley Mennonite Church, AK



“A life following God is not easy.”

– Earl Barnhart at Burkeland Mennonite Church, GA



“Everything God does for us, He does so we can do it for someone else.”

– Aden Troyer at Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, OK



“The most important things in life are not things.”

– Zach Anderson, at Congerville Apostolic Christian Church, IL



“Walking with God will be the most expensive thing you will ever purchase. God demands all.”

– Joe Bauman at Farmington Mennonite Church, MO



“When the world touches us, it hurts. When the Word touches us, He heals.”

– Ben Haldeman at Shanks Church, PA



“If a Christian is discontented, why would anyone else want to be a Christian?”

– Martin Friesen at Horndean Mennonite Church, MB



“Jesus wants those who call themselves Christians, but do not live like Christians, to repent and change their ways.”

– Matt Drayer at Wolcott Apostolic Christian Church, IN



“Other gods do not care how many gods we serve, but God does!”

– John Mark Miller at Shekinah Mennonite Church, MO



“To plow a straight line we should focus on an object such as a tree, and head straight for it. To plow a straight line to heaven we should focus on “The Tree,” Christ’s Cross, and keep our eyes on that as we journey through life.”

– Glenn Kilmer at Sparta Mennonite Church, WI

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.

The Law and the law

By Menno Knight

Understanding that “law” usually refers to the “Law of Moses” has clarified my understanding of much of the New Testament. This distinction affects our whole concept of salvation, of faith, of works, and of grace.

Take for instance, the books of Romans, Galatians, and Philippians. I went through these books and circled in red every time the word “law” appeared. In the King James Version, the book of Romans used “law” 75 times; the book of Galatians used “law” 31 times, and the short book of Philippians used “law” three times. I determined that if “law” was used so frequently it must be a very important part of the message.

But the word “law,” as in other English words, can have different meanings—Spirit and spirit; God and god; He and he; Gospel and gospel; Kingdom and kingdom. The word “Law” when capitalized and “law” when not capitalized mean different things. In general usage, “law” means “all the rules of conduct established and enforced by the authority, legislation, or customs of a given community or other group.” In biblical terminology, “law” means right and wrong as established by God (example, the Ten Commandments).

The prominent meaning of “Law” in Romans, Galatians, Philippians, and in Acts 15 means the Law of Moses as given at Mount Sinai. This Law included all the rules, regulations, sacrifices, and offerings (works) of the Jewish nation. Linked to the “Law” but apart from it was the rite of circumcision given to Abraham. Whenever the meaning of “law” clearly refers to the Law of Moses, it makes the reading and understanding of “Law” much clearer if it is capitalized.

Since the KJV was written before the modern rules of capitalization were established, it does not distinguish between these obviously different meanings of the words “Law” and “law.” This results in great confusion as to the meaning of the Scripture text.

The Meaning of Law in the KJV

Let us look at a few examples where the meaning of “law” in the KJV text clearly means the Law of Moses. In Acts 15:5 it reads, *“But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, ‘It*

was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.’” Here the text specifically says the “Law of Moses.” As a proper noun, it could be capitalized and the meaning would be much clearer to the reader.

Acts 15:24 gives another specific example: *“Certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ‘Ye must be circumcised, and keep the Law: to whom we gave no such commandment.’”* Again this is clearly referring to the Law of Moses and not all law in general. The conference was dealing with whether Gentile believers had to be circumcised and keep the Jewish Law or whether they were free from it. The conference ruled decisively that Gentile believers were not converted to Judaism; they did not have to be circumcised or keep the Mosaic Law. This understanding underlies our whole discussion.

Paul’s listing of his credentials in Philippians 3:5,6,9 also shows that he meant the Mosaic Law when he wrote “Law.” He says, *“Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. ... And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ.”*

Throughout Romans and Galatians the discussion continues proving that the Gentiles did not have to keep



the Mosaic Law and that the Jews were not saved by keeping the Law. We will look at two passages Paul used to argue that these two statements were true. In each case, we will capitalize Law because the Scripture means the Mosaic Law and not all law in general.

The Law in Relation to Jews and Gentiles

Romans 2:12-14. *“For as many as have sinned without [the] Law shall also perish without [the] Law: and as many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law. ... For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves.”* The meaning of this passage makes sense when “Law” is understood to refer to the Mosaic Law. It is difficult to understand “the law” as referring to all law inscribed on Gentile and Jewish hearts at creation.

Law and the Prophets

Romans 3:21. *“Now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.”*

The Law and Salvation

Look at the first verse of the song “Once For All.”

*“Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.”*

Now let us make two small changes in the verse and capitalize law. Now it reads:

*“Free from the Law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;
Cursed by the Law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.”*

Instead of freeing us from all law—all rules and regulations—the meaning of the song changes to freeing us from the keeping of the Mosaic Law. This same meaning change takes place in the Scripture when we capitalize “Law” where the intended meaning is the Law of Moses.

For example, look at Romans 7:6. In the context it is clearly talking about the laws and regulations of the

Mosaic Law, so “law” could be capitalized throughout the passage; but to illustrate we will capitalize “law” in just this one verse. *“But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter”* (KJV). We have also capitalized “Spirit” because it likely refers to the Holy Spirit rather than to the spirit in one’s person.

This truth is consistent with Galatians 3:13-14 (KJV). “Spirit” referring to the Holy Spirit is already capitalized. You see how capitalization clarifies the meaning. *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law ... that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”* By capitalizing “Law” in this verse, it shows that this is referring to the Mosaic Law. In fact, “Law” should be capitalized everywhere in the whole chapter.

To summarize, we are redeemed (saved) from the curse of the Mosaic Law that no one was able to keep. *“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”* (Acts 15:10). Our redemption or salvation is not from all laws, but from the rules, regulations, and sacrifices of the Mosaic Law.

The Law and Faith

Paul writes in Romans 3:28: *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.”* What a difference it makes if we understand that “Law” in this passage refers to the Mosaic Law instead of all God’s laws. In Romans, Paul is explaining that both Jews and Gentiles must come to God through faith [belief in God and Jesus]. Neither Jews nor Gentiles can come to God by keeping all the commandments in the Mosaic Law. But God’s laws remain unchanged throughout time and eternity. Keeping God’s laws is a natural outpouring of our belief in the resurrected Jesus as the Son of God.

In Acts 13:15, after the reading of the Law and the Prophets at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul goes on to preach a sermon. Near the end of his sermon, Paul says, *“Men and brethren, through this man [Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe [have faith] are justified [saved] from all things, from which ye could not be justified [saved] by the Law of Moses.”*

The Law and Works

“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of

faith? (Galatians 3:2). Of course the answer to the question is that none of them received the Holy Spirit by circumcision, sacrifices, offerings, tithing, and obeying all the rules and regulations of the Mosaic Law. It was the belief in Jesus that had given them the Holy Spirit.

But the whole argument in Galatians that Christians did not come under the bondage of the Mosaic Law and circumcision, in no way nullifies the keeping of God's laws or "works." Galatians 5:18 says, *"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the Law."* Then he continues on with a long list of evil deeds that should not be found among Christians. In Galatians 5:22-23 he lists the unbounded works of the Spirit in the Christian's life.

If we understand that "Law" in the above writing, as well as many other places in the New Testament, applies to the Law of Moses, the controversy over faith and works should come to an end. But the epistle of James is the plain clincher. *"Seest thou how [Abraham's] faith wrought with his works, and by works was made perfect?" Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:22-26).*

The Law and Grace

"For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Yes, the Mosaic Law came through Moses. The distinction here lies between God's law inscribed in stone (the Ten Commandments) and the Law God revealed through Moses. But grace and truth did not come until the coming of Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Law.

"Moreover the Law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20-21).

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). David Bercot explains the meaning of grace in his commentary on Romans (page 93).¹

"Many Christians today have been told that grace (Greek charis) means unmerited favor. They have heard that if we must first do something, then it is no longer grace. So it will come as a surprise to many Christians that this is not the correct understanding of charis or grace. The early Christians, who spoke koiné Greek,

recognized charis (grace) as an ordinary word. It simply means favor or goodwill.

"This favor or goodwill can be either merited or unmerited. Charis can also mean a gift. Again, the gift might be given for no reason at all, or it might be an expression of appreciation for something a person has done. The gift might be completely unconditional. Or the gift might be conditioned on the recipient possessing certain qualities or taking certain actions. Either way, it is still charis (grace)."

This grace spoken of in Romans takes place in both Jews and Gentiles and is apart from the Law of Moses. Grace is favor God bestows upon those who have repented of their sins and who come to faith in Christ.

Grace is part of the initial salvation whereby a Christian begins his walk with God; it means that our salvation is incomplete. So when "law" in Romans is understood to mean all law, a great conflict occurs between "grace" and the living of a Spirit-filled life. But when we understand that "Law" refers to the doing away of the Mosaic Law, the conflict evaporates because grace does NOT cover sin, while continuing on in a sinful life.

End Notes:

We have used the KJV translation in this article for all quotes in an attempt to make the point by changing only the capitalization of words.

For easier reading, we recommend the New American Standard Bible (1995). This translation capitalizes Law whenever it is appropriate.

For a fuller understanding of The Law, see AV34, pages 12-13.

*"For the Law was
given through Moses;
grace and truth were
realized through
Jesus Christ"*

John 1:17

¹ Bercot, David. Romans, Scroll Publishing Company, P.O. Box 122, Amberson, PA 17210, 2024.

The NASB

Quoted from the front pages

Foreword to the New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Scriptural Promise

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” Isaiah 40:8

The New American Standard Bible has been produced with the conviction that the words of scripture as originally penned in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were inspired by God. Since they are the eternal Word of God, the Holy Scriptures speak with fresh power to each generation, to give wisdom that leads to salvation, that people may serve Christ to the glory of God.

The purpose of the Editorial Board in making this translation was to adhere as closely as possible to the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, and to make the translation in a fluent and readable style according to current English usage.

The Fourfold Aim of the Lockman Foundation

1. These publications shall be true to the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
2. They shall be grammatically correct.
3. They shall be understandable.
4. They shall give the Lord Jesus Christ His proper place, the place which the Word gives Him; therefore, no work will ever be personalized.¹

¹ “Personalized” means that it was designed or produced to meet someone’s individual requirements (of an issue or an argument). Personalized means “concerned with personalities or feelings rather than with general or abstract matters.”

Explanation of General NASB Format

Paragraphs are designated by bold face verse numbers or letters.

Quotation Marks are used in the text in accordance with modern English usage.

“Thou,” “Thee” and “Thy” are not used in this edition and have been rendered as “You” and “Your.”

Personal Pronouns are capitalized when pertaining to Deity. [In addition, proper nouns are capitalized when the meaning is clear.]

Italics are used in the text to indicate words which are not found in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek but implied by it.

Small Caps in the New Testament are used in the text to indicate Old Testament quotations or obvious references to Old Testament texts. ... It should be noted that modern rules for the indication of direct quotation were not used in biblical times; thus, the ancient writer would use exact quotations or references to quotation without specific indication of such.

Preface to the New American Standard Bible

In the history of English Bible translations, the King James Version is the most prestigious. This time-honored version of 1611, itself a revision of the Bishops’ Bible of 1568, became the basis for the English Revised Version appearing in 1881 (New Testament) and 1885 (Old Testament). The American counterpart of this last work was published in 1901 as the American Standard Version. The ASV, a product of both British and American scholarship, has been highly regarded for its

scholarship and accuracy. Recognizing the values of the American Standard Version, the Lockman Foundation felt an urgency to preserve these and other lasting values of the ASV by incorporating recent discoveries of Hebrew and Greek textual sources and by rendering it into more current English. Therefore, in 1959 a new translation project was launched, based on the time-honored principles of translation of the ASV and KJV. The result is the New American Standard Bible.

Translation work for the NASB was begun in 1959. In the preparation of this work, numerous other translations have been consulted along with the linguistic tools and literature of biblical scholarship. Decisions about English renderings were made by consensus of a team composed of educators and pastors. Subsequently, review and evaluation by other Hebrew and Greek scholars outside the Editorial Board were sought and carefully considered.

The Editorial Board has continued to function since publication of the complete Bible in 1971. This edition (1995) of the NASB represents revisions and refinements recommended over the last several years as well as thorough research based on modern English usage.

Principles of Translation

Modern English Usage

The attempt has been made to render the grammar and terminology in contemporary English. When it was felt that the word-for-word literalness was unacceptable to the modern reader, a change was made in the direction of a more current English idiom. In the instances where this has been done, the more literal rendering has been indicated in the notes. There are a few exceptions to this procedure. In particular, frequently “And” is not translated at the beginning of sentences because of differences in style between ancient and modern writing. Punctuation is a relatively modern invention, and ancient writers often linked most of their sentences with “and” or other connectives. Also, the Hebrew idiom “answered and said” is sometimes reduced to “answered” or “said” as demanded by the context. For current English the idiom “it came about that” has not been translated in the New Testament except when a major transition is needed.

Alternative Readings

In addition to the more literal renderings, notations have been made to include alternate translations, reading of variant manuscripts and explanatory equivalents of the

text. Only such notations have been used as have been felt justified in assisting the reader’s comprehension of the terms used by the original author.

The Proper Name of God in the Old Testament

In the Scriptures, the name of God is most significant and understandably so. It is inconceivable to think of spiritual matters without a proper designation for the Supreme Deity. Thus the most common names for the Deity is God, ... One of the titles for God is Lord. Another name which is particularly assigned God is the four letters, YHWH (Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah 42:8). This name has not been pronounced by the Jews because of reverence for the great sacredness of the divine name. Therefore, it has been consistently translated Lord.

– *Quoted from the front pages of the NASB Bible.*

Other Principles of Translation can be found in this section of the NASB under the following subheadings: Hebrew Text, Hebrew Tenses, Greek Text, Greek Tenses. However, these helpful explanations go beyond the interest level of most of our readers. But should someone desire to check further, the full information is in the front of the NASB (1995) Bible.

Isaiah 40:8
*The grass
withers,
the
flower
fades,
but the
word of
our God
stands
forever.”*

Road Signs for Better Bible Reading

Much of our Bible reading can be improved. Even if the Bible we are reading is properly punctuated, that does not help us if we pay no attention to the punctuation marks posted along the way.

Ignoring punctuation in our reading is like driving down the highway and not paying attention to the road signs. We shall compare some of these road signs to punctuation marks in our reading, particularly when reading out loud in a worship service.



COMMA:
A comma calls for a short pause in reading.



PERIOD:
Stop. End the sentence.



SEMICOLON:
A semicolon calls for a longer pause.



LONG WORDS:
Proceed with caution.
Pronounce syllables distinctly.



PARAGRAPH:
Make a short break. Take a breath.



NEW CHAPTER:
Read chapter title if there is one.



PARENTHESES:
Pause and slow down.



SLOW DOWN:
Oral reading requires a slower pace.

Practice reading the Bible out loud in your personal devotions and in family devotions. This practice will aid you when called on to read in public worship services. Observing the road signs for good oral reading can help you maintain a sense of excitement and aid in comprehension when reading the Bible.

Always remember that when reading in public places, people must be able to hear you. Open your mouth wide and speak distinctly. Bible reading especially calls for worthy enunciation in reverence to the Word of God.

Investing in His Coming

By Abram Neufeld

We have traveled thousands of miles over the last years; God continues to show us He cares. We continue to distribute thousands of Bibles, even though the mission to migrants has changed drastically. Mexico has helped Trump to almost stop the flow of migrants. Where we live, the mission to migrants is basically over. We continue giving out Bibles and sharing the Gospel, but more with the local people.

Will There be Fruit?

We ask ourselves, “Will there be fruit?” It seems we have spent so much effort, so much going and coming, so much time and effort to bring the truth to people. Where are the results? Where is the fruit? My time, my life, our lives; is it all for nothing?

One wonders, “Will there be fruit for the Lord?” God has not asked us to make the fruit in other people’s lives. He has called us to bear fruit in our lives for Him. It is not our calling to bear fruit for others; it is our calling to bear fruit personally.

What kind of fruit are we bearing in God’s time?

Not My Time

Time. Is it my time? No! Not my time. God’s time! I am a child of God. My time is not my time; it is His. I am His servant.

An accident happens. The people are okay. The thought comes, I do not have time for this. I am too busy. Whose time is it? “It is mine,” I say. But if God takes away my heartbeat, I fall. My time is over. Time for me is no more.

Whose am I? Was I serving myself or God? If I did not use “my time” for God, where will I spend eternity? Did God know me in time? Or did I not have the time to give Him my time? Will there be fruit?

Sometimes we wonder all these different thoughts. Do I have time for this? The elderly man has his walker out of the trunk of the car. He is parked on the side of a one-way street. The traffic roars by. A truck is backing into the warehouse lot. We pass by but my thoughts compel me to stop. We park the van. All twelve of us

will stop—we have ten children. Our oldest three boys and I jump out and navigate past the truck backing in.

We almost startled the elderly man. “Can we help you? We will change your tire for you”—he would have been at this for hours alone. We give out some Bibles. Was it my time? Was it our time? Whose clock am I on?

Back to the auto accident ... We find they are friends from Ukraine, refugees because of the war. We are at the right place at the right time. We look over from where we are parked and see their car is surrounded by people. I didn’t think (because of where the car was standing) that it was an accident. I tell my family we must quickly drive over there. “What is happening?” I ask. Someone says, “She hit the truck that’s sitting over there.” We look over the damages. Is everyone okay? Praise God every one is all right! Two flat tires, one on each vehicle. We help get everyone home, fix the tires, and check to make sure the car is drivable.

How did this happen that we were in the right place, at the right time? It had to be God’s timing. The girl had no phone and doesn’t speak the language here. God knows all this. As we bring the Ukrainians back to their house, the girl that had the accident shares that she just finished reading the Bible through for the first time. Who took care of them? God did. In whose time? His.

MY TIME IS
NOT MY TIME;
IT IS HIS.
I AM HIS SERVANT.

Jesus was here in this situation. Many similar situations arise in our lives. In whose time am I living? As with many things one does and the effort one makes, God is there. Some say, “Make time for God.” Paul said, *“It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).* It was Jesus living His will through

Paul. How does that fit with our thinking about whose time we are using while living?

I have been encouraged by the way the Anabaptists spent their time serving God by serving each other. They were willing to die for the faith. Is it too strong to say that they took time to die for the Kingdom of God. They did not take up excuses of being too busy with many things and then once in a while make time for God. They lived all their time for God.

When we share with others the truth, it is not a waste of time. It is to be obedient to God and to bear fruit personally for God. He commanded us to go. How am I spending God's time? Am I bearing fruit?

Yes, there will be fruit. It will come as we yield our time to God to use as He pleases. Some will do it by working and supporting others; others will bear fruit by going. All of us will do it by saying, "God, use me to be like Jesus in everyday situations." May Jesus live in us and through us glorify the Father. May God pick lovely fruit from our lives.

How We Spend God's Time

We have been sharing the Gospel with many local people in Chihuahua. One testimony recently came from a young man in Chihuahua. He called me one morning and asked if we are the ones distributing the Bibles. Then he said, "Thank you" and hung up. I called him back and asked him some questions. He is reading the Word and I encouraged him in this.

We went to the Colony of Sabinal again last weekend and had good opportunities sharing with different people there. One was the server at the local restaurant. We gave all the waitresses Bibles. When we were leaving the head waitress thanked us for the Bibles. It gave us an opportunity to share about following the Word, that the Word would not mislead us. She agreed with us.

Another young man came in while we were eating at the restaurant. When he was leaving, our children were able to hand him a Bible. We knew him from years past. His family was one of the first ones we visited years ago in that community. They were not open to the truth at the earlier time. This colony is made up of Old Colony Mennonites. May God open their eyes to the truth. We have some open doors among them.

Finding Fellowship

As for fellowship, locally we had started meeting with a few people and a family from Pennsylvania who were living here to learn Spanish. We had beautiful

fellowship with each other for a number of months while they were living here. That family had to return to where they came from.

In the past couple of months we continued to meet with brother Reinold. We also drive to New Mexico as frequently as we can for fellowship (Living Epistle, German Baptist Church). We had some good times fellowshiping with the brothers and sisters in New Mexico.

We traveled to the CAM base in San Juan, Texas, on a trip to get Bibles. We so appreciated the opportunity for good, godly fellowship there. I was asked to share on culture and the American dream with the title, "Living Counter-Culturally in 2025."

**"GOD, USE ME
TO BE LIKE JESUS IN
EVERYDAY
SITUATIONS"**

We are encouraged to keep pressing on in the work here till God changes our circumstances. We have had lots of visitors over the last eight months. A Ukrainian family moved into our area in February. Their daughter is the one who had the auto accident today.

This week we heard again from a refugee lady and her two sons whom we had in our home last summer. They are planning to return home to Venezuela. I asked if they continue to read the Word of God. She said, "Yes."

Who knows what the Lord will yet do with all the Bibles He has allowed us to distribute among the refugees from all over the world! It has all been done on God's time and for His glory.

The Bridegroom's Letter

Dear Bride,

I am busy preparing our place. The time is nearing for me to come again and receive you to our home.

How are things? What are you busy with? Are your clothes still white and unstained with the cares of life below? Have you been preparing yourself for this

special day? Do you still gather oil for the journey? Is your lamp trimmed? Are you still willing to hear my voice when I come to receive you?

Have you kept yourself pure for me? I gave everything to receive you; I did it willingly. My love for you is great—greater than you can imagine. I am looking forward to receiving you when I come.

“Dear Bride, I am coming soon. Will you be ready when I call?”

Love – Your Promised One

The Challenge

I cannot help but be challenged as I sit here to write this down and think over my life. What has happened to us that we have become so foolish in our ways as to chase the dreams of this world over being received into everlasting habitations.

Many cry, “Jesus is my Lord.” Many say that they are saved, but where are those who are willing to be so sold out for Jesus that they are constantly busy trimming their lamps and making sure their oil will last for the journey?

Losing Our Love

It looks to me as if the great majority of us are looking more and more like the five foolish virgins. We are so busy pursuing happiness, modern idolatry against our dear Savior. We have traded true riches for fluff; traded true riches for receiving a worthless crown of stuff and no oil for the journey.

I speak including myself and it repents me. Some of the decisions I have made in recent years were chasing after the world and thus forgetting my first love. Oh Lord, help us.

Where are we? This “save-me gospel” is worthless. It is a fake gospel to speak great swelling words, words of being saved and walking as enemies of the cross—walking as if to comfort ourselves, chasing after the world, and forgetting that Jesus is returning.

I am concerned that we have been deceived with the modern gospel. I am concerned we actually love the world. I am concerned we care about going to heaven at no cost and forget that Jesus said we must lose our life to gain eternal life.

It might look like I am on my way to meet Him when He calls, but how is my supply of spiritual life holding up? How are the supplies needed for the journey faring?

A Personal Examination

I am not telling anyone he is not ready to meet the bridegroom. I am calling for a personal examination.

When was the last time you and I fellowshiped with God?

When was the last time I took time to read the Word of God and asked His Spirit to lead me into all truth?

When was the last time I simply agreed with God when His word has spoken?

When was the last time I repented for chasing after the world?

When was the last time I prayed for my brothers and sisters in Christ to be able to stand in truth and not be deceived?

When was the last time I forgave like Jesus said to forgive?

When was the last time I lived like a disciple of Jesus and had pure and undefiled religion?

“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (James 1:27).

Where are we? Where are we going? With what are we busy?

Are we living as though Jesus is coming back? Or are we just too busy for Him to return now?

His return can be personal in death or in all going together.

Let us wake up, stand up, and live with purpose, awaiting our Savior. Do not waste your time investing in what is perishing. Invest into His coming.

A. N. | Chihuahua, Mexico

LET US
WAKE UP,
STAND UP,
AND
LIVE WITH PURPOSE,
AWAITING OUR SAVIOR.

The Parable of Two Roosters



*"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love;
give preference to one another in honor."* - **Romans 12:10**

I was watching two roosters as I milked one evening. One was a tiny fluff ball and the other the size of a young turkey. On the levee of the lagoon the one would not graciously step aside to let the other pass. There was a major standoff. Their heads shot forward, their neck feathers bristling, their wings scraping their legs and their

feet scratching in the dirt, dust flying. I do not know the language of roosters, and I am not sure what all they said to each other, but before long the big rooster turned and ran for all he was worth, and the little rooster was hot on his heels trying to tear him up.

Carl Heatwole | *Olar, South Carolina*

*"Just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit
but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved."* - **I Corinthians 10:33**

He Lifted Me Up: From Gutters to Church Pews¹

By Floyd Yoder

Ted Summers

Ted Summers was born in 1983, at Cabin Creek, a little village along the Kanawha River close to Charleston, West Virginia. His parents were far from godly as they provided for baby Ted and his three-year-old brother, Joel. Their knowledge of God was limited to, *If one went to church and walked straight enough, God was appeased.* Being from a church-going family, Mom did take the boys with her and went to church.

Very early in young Ted's life, the family relocated to Elkhart, Indiana—the family needed to find work. But things were beginning to slide further and further away from God. As a result, these tender young lives were increasingly exposed to the evils of a father who no longer loved their mother and went after his own selfish pursuits.

The home was cruelly severed when the parents divorced and Ted, now a three-year-old, felt the insecurity of broken trust. The Devil must have grinned to see his clutches tighten on the young family. Mom still occasionally went to church with the two little boys, but church had no effect on their lives. She, as well as Dad, who lived in the next county, began growing big patches of marijuana.

When the authorities caught on, Mom was quick to gather up what little she could get in the car and, with the boys, move to Kentucky where her family lived. But she soon found out that with the lifestyle she had formed for herself, she no longer fitted in with her family.

Seven months later, Mom again loaded the little car with their meager belongings and the threesome retraced the miles back to Elkhart. There she felt some trace of acceptance and there she knew how to make money with

“the weed.” Here, too, she could send the boys to their dad for days or even weeks at a time.

For the next eight years, life took on a pattern of being jiggled between Dad and Mom, and going to school in a hit-or-miss fashion. Both parents sold drugs. They not only handled them, but Mom started using them as well. As she sank deeper into drugs, she changed from a kind and caring mother to a figure that snapped at her bothersome young sons. No longer was there a warm supper prepared for the hungry, growing boys, nor were there freshly laundered clothes lovingly provided. Mom fended for herself and expected the boys to do the same.

Mom's lawless ways did not go unnoticed. She was caught, charged with drug use and jailed. Dad had moved back to West Virginia to his old friends. Now the boys really did have to fend for themselves.

Ted and his brother would raid recycling bins and dumpsters for tin cans, stuff the car with as many as they dared, and cross the state line into Michigan to sell them for 10 cents a can. Indiana would not pay as much. Besides, the law in Michigan would not catch on to what they were doing. Eventually, they went farther north to Kalamazoo to play it safe.

Ted was in his early teens when Mom was released from jail, and again became a part of the boys' lives. She got a part-time job, and again handled and used drugs. When the boys returned from selling their cans, she demanded their cash and used it to buy more drugs.

Ted knew of God in a vague way, but there was nothing to ignite a flame or encourage a thirst to know more. God was someone to turn to when a problem loomed taller than you could scale by yourself. Such a big problem came where Ted needed help.

One day Mom was cleaning a house where the owner had murdered someone the evening before. She

¹ All the names in these stories have been changed.

was unaware of the curse hanging over the place until the officers showed up to arrest the man. Seeing the desperate situation of everyone present being a suspect, Ted prayed to the God he hardly knew. Mom was not arrested that day and, in Ted's mind, something seemed to say that God must have had a hand in keeping her safe.

There was always a fear of the law, and no guiding influence to steer them to something better. But God had not forgotten them. In those years, though sin was tightening its grip on young Ted's life, God kept nudging him, and bringing things into play until the time when his heart would become soft and ready.

Mom stooped to shoplifting at WalMart, filling her cart and walking out the door with it. Somehow she got by with it for a while, but finally was caught, and put in jail once more.

Life for Ted at 21 took on a miserable cycle. Homeless, the brothers lived in the car. Then the car was taken for being on the road illegally, so they shacked up in an abandoned building. They stole scrap metal to sell. One time they helped themselves to metal off a parked semi. When the missing metal was found in the abandoned garage where they were hiding, Ted was arrested for being there and not necessarily for the theft. After being in jail for three months, he was released on probation. Two months into his probation period, he failed a drug test. In an effort to avoid the law, he took off for West Virginia.

In West Virginia, homeless, no friends, and running from the law, Ted tried looking up Dad's old friends; they would not take him in. He found short-term jobs at McDonalds and Shoneys. More thievery brought more jail time. Again, he failed probation. This time he sought out Uncle Jake in Sturgis, Michigan, who had a job at a pork processing plant in the bacon department. Uncle Jake allowed Ted to stay with him and his wife in their very small house.

The Scripture proved true in Ted's life. *"They do not know the way of peace, and there is no justice in their tracks; they have made their paths crooked, whoever treads on them does not know peace" (Isaiah 59:8).*

Mom was released from her two years of jail time. But the curse continued. Unrest in her life drove Mom and the boys back to Kentucky. In Kentucky, a fear of the law still overshadowed them and they had no guiding

influence to point them to something better. Sadly, it seemed Mom's life was on a hopeless, downward spiral again. She became dependent on prescriptions. Her lifestyle was taking its toll, and meds for her nerves were increasingly necessary.

One day, Ted came home and found Mom in a seizure. Although he had seen so much evil, nothing had prepared him to see her in such a terrible shape. In a few hours Mom came out of it, but the fear of another seizure haunted Ted's mind.

In 2012, his brother Joel (32 years old), started having seizures from swallowing drugs, then went into a coma for two days. When he came to consciousness, his mind was like a small child's. He recovered after a week, but it left him with lifelong seizure activity. What a price to pay for the miserable pleasures of sin!

Being alternately in and out of jail for most of his young life, Ted had a poor job history, and even worse work ethics. However, he did secure several local jobs. Then one day he was stopped on the road and found to be a wanted man in Indiana and West Virginia. He was held in the local Albany, Kentucky, jail until Indiana officials came for him. At the Albany jail those three weeks, he decided he did not want this kind of life anymore and prayed the sinner's prayer. At the time, it was the best he knew. Now he recognizes the experience as another nudge from God helping him out of trouble.

Ted was taken to Indiana for three years in prison, then released in April, 2018, for six years of probation in Kentucky.

In prison in Indiana, they had lots of faith-based programs in an effort to help the inmates. Ted remembers times when the Spirit nudged his heart. Seeds, though they had lain dormant for years, finally sprouted. At unexpected moments, truths he had heard many years earlier would be brought to his awareness; things he did not even realize were in the recesses of his mind.

When his prison term in Indiana ended, Travis came home and moved in with Mom and Joel. His probation period in Kentucky began in 2018, and this time he was determined not to break it.

Ted knew he needed work, but at 35 years of age, he was still unskilled in so many ways. Fortunately, a mini-barn shop close to his home took him in and gave him a chance. He began the job as a shop cleaner, and worked

several hours a day. This simple job gave him a great feeling of accomplishment and a sense of worth such as he had never experienced before.

Then, just two weeks after beginning his new work, the business was sold.

Now what? Would Ted be able to keep his job? Uncertainty and fear clouded Ted's sky.

— to be continued in AV38



Janet Smith

Janet Smith was born in 1994 at Thomas, Kentucky, the youngest of three children, one boy and two girls. Early childhood memories for Janet were of an angry mother and an absent father. The little girl heart that needed love and security was hungry, so hungry. At a very young age, she knew what it was to be punched and knocked around.

Janet did not know that Mom's heart had a huge void too. Her own life had held little but harsh killing words, physical and verbal abuse, and neglect. It was a horrible chain of which Janet was now another link. Was she destined to continue down the same dreadful road as her mother? God was seeing the gradual devastation of both of these souls, but the years would be many and violent until the prodigal was reclaimed.

When Janet was five, the family relocated to Boone County near Florence, Kentucky. Abuse continued at the new home, and witchcraft entered as well. Janet lived in continual fear. Everyone was angry at her; hitting and pushing was the norm. Mom was cheating on Dad.

At eight years old, Janet saw Dad and Mom get in a bad fight. The loud angry voices increased in volume until it erupted in a physical fight. When Janet realized Dad had Mom pinned against the wall, she called the cops. It was not the first time the violence in their home had solicited the attention of the authorities. The children learned very young that the cops were an option to resort to.

Mom was with another man for a while. During this time this strange man's young daughter was murdered. Seeing that young girl lying in the casket, discolored

with bruises, did something to Janet that was to haunt her for 20 years. Many were the nights when she had horrible nightmares. In her dreams, she saw that girl, over and over again, lying in the casket with those same bruises. That event shaped her young life. She trusted no one.

Janet's parents came back together when she was nine. Dad was self-employed as a welder, and worked at home. But it was still a troubled home. Both Brad and Bonnie had difficulties with life.

Janet could not sleep well because she always had to be on guard against abuse by her older brother, Brad. He was becoming violent with anger fits. Janet was growing into an exceptionally strong girl that was big for her age. She became quite deft at handling Brad in his rages by knocking him out with handles and broomsticks. When Dad found out what was going on, he promptly had Brad legally emancipated. Now Brad was free to leave home even though he was still less than eighteen-years-old.

A few years later, the family moved to California, Kentucky. One advantage of the move was that when Dad was on the road he took Brad with him. That was a lot of the time. Now sister Bonnie became unruly and violent to the point that she was taken to a correctional school. There she did not cooperate, threw tantrums, and finally ran away. (Bonnie continued her wild ways for many years. Today she is somewhat tempered but is still not softened toward God.)

In spite of the siblings not being around the home as much, Janet lived in anxiety. She found herself paranoid of so trivial a thing as a spider. Every noise set her on edge. She watched her every move, every breath, for fear of being yelled at.

In her early teens, and being big and strong, Janet started working for Uncle Alfred on the farm. Uncle Alfred went to church and would speak to her about God and her need of Him. Although Janet had a degree of respect for her uncle, most of his words did not penetrate her heart.

On the farm, Janet found a sense of satisfaction feeding the animals and splitting wood. She split the wood on shares, part of it went to Uncle Alfred and part of it went to heat the house at home. With winter coming, they now had a supply of wood, but the meat supply was down to almost nothing.

Mom demanded that Janet fill that need. In Janet's mind, that demand looked next to impossible! But fear of more harshly berating criticism if she did not meet the demand, pushed her to do something.

Mentally scratching her resources, Janet thought of prayer. Janet did not know God, yet something drove her to pray. No, she didn't know who she was praying to, but desperation made her reach out to some resource outside herself. Did God allow that need so that her hungry heart might start to reach for Him?

Just before that, Janet had been at the fair where a raffle was going to win a freezer full of meat. She had bought a ticket and entered the drawing. The day after that prayer, she received a call saying that she won the freezer! God knew the need and was drawing her, bit by bit. Her family kept the meat and sold the freezer to Uncle Alfred. Janet's heart was lightened at that answer to her prayer; she never forgot it.

Soon she was able to buy and raise goats and pigs, selling the piglets. At that time she would go to church with Jocelyn, one of the very few friends in her life. At church, Janet heard fire and brimstone preaching, but her understanding of God was so little that it did not scare her at all. In her mind, the best thing about going to church was the Chinese dinner that followed.

Aunt Nell took her to the nearby park, to the grocery store, to her house, and to other places. This helped broaden Janet's horizon as she learned that life did hold more meaning than the anger and violence at home. One of Janet's fondest memories is of going out back behind Aunt Nell's house where there was a mud hole, which to her was a frog pond. She could jump in the water and splash, or simply sit there for hours, soaking up the tranquility. Here, no one yelled or threatened, and her heart was soothed as she absorbed the reprieve.

In her mid teens, Janet began seeing her first boyfriend. Her love-starved heart grasped for the relationship. After being told all her life that she was ugly and no one would want her, she found great solace in having someone to love her. But alas, her boyfriend got hooked on heroine, so she dropped him.

Janet saw herself as just a farmhand with no self-confidence, but her sister Bonnie was beautiful and sought after. This knowledge depressed her. That's when Janet started cutting herself. To see the blood flowing brought a sense of shameful satisfaction.

At 18, Janet was a senior at high school, studying phlebotomy (drawing blood). Mom cornered her one day, announcing that she would have to leave home, since she declared Janet to be more of a burden than a help. Mom had been pushing her to leave school and sign up with Job Corps—Job Corps is a type of vocational training taking place at home. Now being pushed to it, she did sign up with Job Corps, and worked to get her diploma for phlebotomy.

With her diploma, Janet could get a real job. Then the last remaining prop got knocked from her life. Mom left Dad and went to live with her sister's ex-husband. Mentally, Janet broke down. Realty was simply too harsh to take. For the next two months, she hardly slept; consequently, she lost her mind. That started the stays in mental institutions.

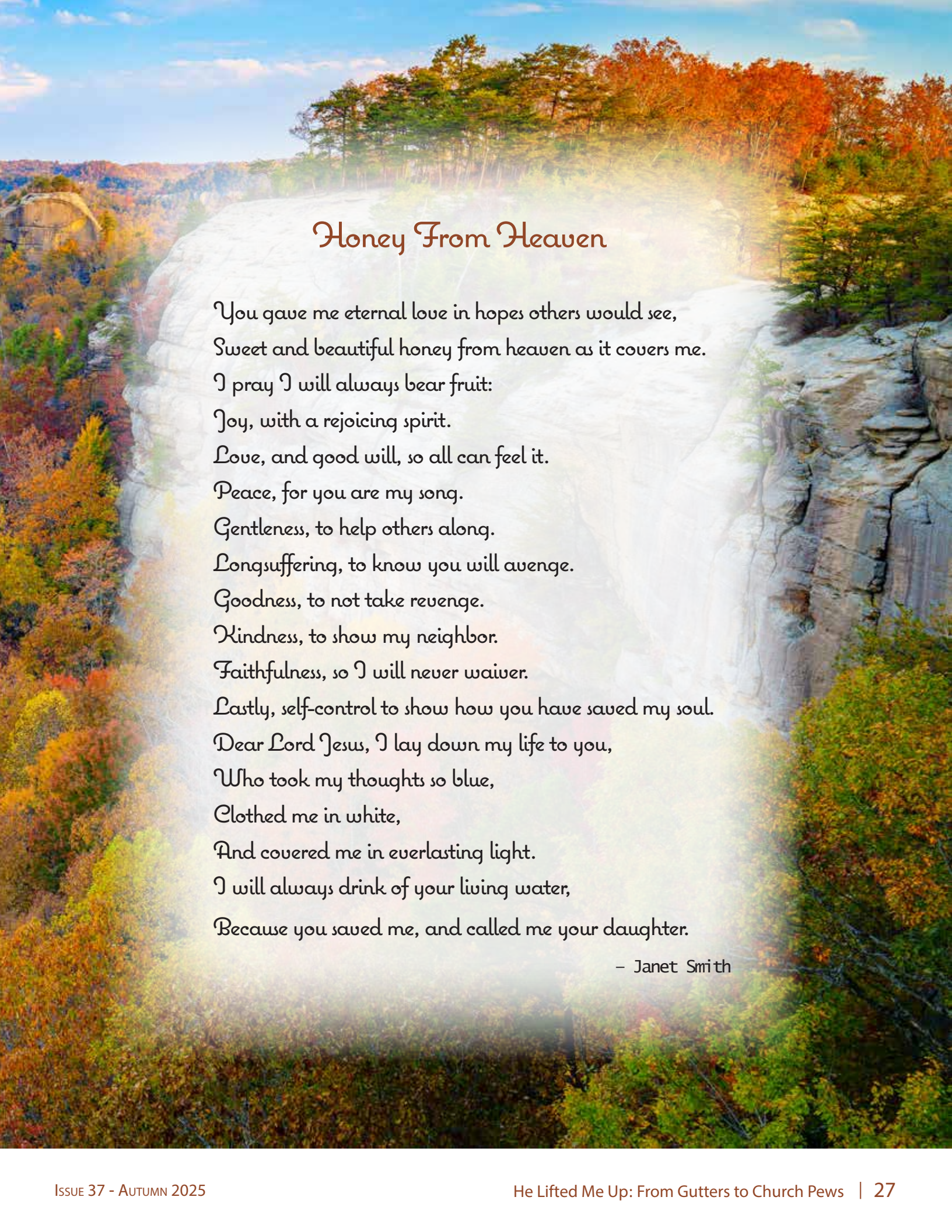
She didn't understand anxiety, she only knew that she was doomed. Mom took her for an evaluation. Mom stood outside the door as Janet told her story to the nurse. Suddenly the door burst open and Mom came in. Mom berated Janet for everything she had said. She also told the nurse that Janet had schizophrenia. So Janet was locked up and given meds she didn't need.

Where was God when such injustice was dealt out to a miserable young person in the grip of sin? Here were humans, creatures of choice, that God loves but does not govern their actions until they choose to make Him the governor of their lives.

Janet came out of the mental institution and stayed with a friend's family. She sank deeper into sin. Drugs, immorality, perverted music, thievery, and now also witchcraft, along with cutting herself. Apart from God, there was no restraint, even while her heart cried out for love and acceptance. Uncle Alfred would preach at her, telling her how she needs the Lord. Again, she tried to go back to stay with Mom.

On the way there, the car clattered, sputtered, and died. Coasting off onto the side of the busy highway, she tried in vain to start it. Nothing. From her experience at the farm, she knew now that it was unlikely she would be able to move it from the spot. So she called Mom and heard the cutting words, "THE ONLY WAY I'LL EVER BE PROUD OF YOU IS IF YOU WILL WALK TO THE BRIDGE AND JUMP OFF!"

— to be continued in AV38



Honey From Heaven

You gave me eternal love in hopes others would see,
Sweet and beautiful honey from heaven as it covers me.
I pray I will always bear fruit:
Joy, with a rejoicing spirit.
Love, and good will, so all can feel it.
Peace, for you are my song.
Gentleness, to help others along.
Longsuffering, to know you will avenge.
Goodness, to not take revenge.
Kindness, to show my neighbor.
Faithfulness, so I will never waiver.
Lastly, self-control to show how you have saved my soul.
Dear Lord Jesus, I lay down my life to you,
Who took my thoughts so blue,
Clothed me in white,
And covered me in everlasting light.
I will always drink of your living water,
Because you saved me, and called me your daughter.

– Janet Smith

In the King's Service

By Carl Heatwole

As most of you know, things do not always go smoothly, even with careful planning and noble intentions. That is the way it went for me on a recent trip. I flew to Provo, Utah, last week to help the personnel committee (subcommittee of the IGo board of directors) interview Pastor Luke and sister Beth Miller. The Millers live one mile from the Provo airport. American Airlines had just started a connection from DFW (Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas) to Provo, Utah. So my flight from Charleston, South Carolina, to DFW to Provo, Utah, was a God-send (well, at least I thought it was) and for some reason, much cheaper than to Salt Lake City, Utah.

Two of us that had come to the Miller's home in Utah were joined by an absent committee member and the Admin team in Chiang Mai, Thailand, by video call. We all had a very pleasant conversation and did our best to flush out any skunks or armadillos from under the Miller's proverbial wood pile. Within an hour, we felt that we did not want to let these devout and godly people slip away if God was calling them to the student/campus pastor position at IGo (Institute for Global Opportunities).

After the interview, I made a quick trip north to the Salt Lake, Utah airport to drop off brother Dayton Skrivseth to catch his flight home to Idaho. I then returned to Provo and spent the weekend with the Luke Miller family. He showed me several of his job sites where they were in the process of moving mountains of dirt so that others could build homes, hospitals, schools or most anything, for that matter.

To someone who is a farmer and also enjoys moving dirt and sculpturing the earth in preparation for others to build, we communicated and understood each other in an unspoken language that only earthmovers and dirt haulers can understand. Pastor Luke has enough track hoes, bulldozers, water wagons, dirt haulers, graders, low-boys and laser equipment to keep most all of the IGo staff and students very busy and occupied nonstop.

Saturday evening, the Millers invited some of the youth from their church to go along. We went up into the mountains above the city to enjoy a picnic supper that Mrs. Beth had prepared. They found a place that had water and green grass instead of the usual sagebrush and other desert flora and fauna. But there were hordes and hordes of Mormons there too. I assume that a cool

mountain breeze, green grass, food and no pavement can be enjoyed by most any religious persuasion just as all of us need Jesus regardless of cultural background or ethnicity.

The Mennonite church in Provo is planning a minister ordination in October. Pastor Luke had called ahead and wanted to know if I would preach a sermon on Sunday morning along that line of thought. Because of the short notice, I dug back in my files and found a sermon that I had prepared and given at two other churches at ordination time, "The Character of a Church Leader." I repurposed it and reanointed it for this service.

The church had a grand potluck meal after the meeting prepared by a couple from Singapore who attend there. It was similar to and of the same quality as something Mrs. Amphan—the 69-year-old Thai lady that prepares 3 meals a day 5 days a week at IGo—would have prepared on one of her best days.

I had made prior arrangements to leave after church and head to Nevada for a few days to visit Lynford and Sue Miller. They are the parents of our daughter-in-law, Marcia. Pastor Luke told me to take his Jetta—a proper motor car with a 6-speed manual transmission that handles as smooth as silk.

Driving through the desert toward Eureka, Nevada, it felt like I was on the Autobahn in Germany. Highway 50 West from Nephi, Utah, to Ely, Nevada, is called the loneliest road in America. I drove through miles and miles of nothing but sagebrush and desert. The speed limit is 80 miles/130 kilometers per hour. I was probably not going 80 mph so that I could take in more of the desert scenery—the salt flats and the occasional cow looking for an oasis.

About five miles east of the Utah/Nevada border there was a large 5th wheel travel trailer pulled off by the side of the road. As I was bearing down on them, I noticed an elderly couple step down out of the back side door and start making their way up toward the pickup truck in the front. They were walking on the cactus and sagebrush side of the camper and I would be cruising by on the pavement side. The Jetta was just naturally doing what it was meant to do, cruising. I was just about up to the pickup truck, when a very large black dog, very poised, groomed, and with a harness on its chest and

shoulders came blowing out from around the front of the pickup into the path of Pastor Luke's Jetta. He was perhaps a car length ahead of me; I looked him square in the eye.

Instantly, shrapnel and Jetta parts came flying up over the hood and windscreen. The impact felt like I had hit a very large slaughter-size hog. Almost immediately the dash light and a buzzer came on that told me I had lost the coolant in the radiator. There was a lot of scraping and dragging noises coming out from under the car as I tried to determine if there was any damage that would cause the Jetta and I to wreck.

I had many things to decide in a very short period of time. It was 100° F (38° C) and I knew I would soon need shade and water—my own little personal oasis to survive. Should I stop and go back and apologize to the grieving couple who would no doubt be planning a funeral for their child with four paws and sharp pointy teeth?

“Life is not the way it is supposed to be. It is the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes all the difference.”

Finally, the dog was spit out from under the low-slung Jetta and I got a glimpse in the rearview mirror of the corpse in the highway as it was sliding along behind me with all four legs sticking straight up in the air. He still had his very nice suit coat (harness) on.

I instantly felt very wicked for what had just taken place but I cannot raise the dead and most elderly dog people who have huge dogs (Alaskan Malamute or German shepherd) all groomed and dressed up ready as if just coming home from the morning church service, really would not have kind and encouraging things to say to the one who just murdered their child/pet.

I decided to keep moving while the engine was not over-heated and try to find an oasis. In the distance off to the west, I soon saw what appeared to be a few buildings and trees off near the mountains to the north. I wasn't sure that there would be anyone there and decided that it was probably the compound of a fundamentalist Mormon with many wives and lots of children. I just had this strong vibe to keep moving. I kept my eyes on

the temperature gauge and wondered if I would actually get to shade and water in time.

Then I saw it ... buildings shimmering in the heat and they were even along the road. I whipped into the Border Bar and Casino and shut the Jetta down. There was a gas pump and a little store attached so I was relieved to walk in and feel the air-conditioning. I bought a jug of antifreeze and they gave me some water.

The front of pastor Luke's Jetta was pretty much wasted. Everything below the bumper was either dragging on the road or shoved back against the engine. I was able to get the hood (bonnet in England) up and started to pour the coolant into the proper place in the little tank above the fender. Soon there was a trickling sound as I looked down and saw the liquid pouring onto the pavement below.

I went back into the bar and told the proprietor my problem and asked if I could just pull the Jetta around back of the casino while I worked through some of my options. One thing I was trying to avoid was being seen by the big RV, that had just lost their “child,” come loafing down the road looking for the Jetta that had taken out their dog.

I called brother Lynford Miller in Nevada at my planned destination and told him my troubles. He very quickly said that he had a trailer capable of loading and hauling the Jetta on to his place. He volunteered that he would be leaving and heading my way pronto, and that he would see me in a few hours.

I called Pastor Luke Miller from Provo and told him that I had bagged a huge dog and wasted his Jetta, that it was not drivable and that Lynford was on the way to pick up the car and myself and finish the trip to Nevada. Pastor Luke was so accommodating; he said that if the car was not repaired by Tuesday he would personally drive the 11-hour round trip to Nevada and pick me up.

The barkeeper invited me to come in and make myself at home while I waited the three hours that it took for my good Samaritan to come pick me up. I found a dark corner by a little table as far away from the bar as possible while I observed a cross section of humanity.

In order to save time and get on the road quickly, I had not changed out of my Sunday black pants and white shirt for my road trip to Nevada. After sitting in my dark corner for a while, the lady that runs the bar came over to me and in a soft and compassionate voice asked if she could get me a drink from her collection of tall glass bottles and lever-type spigots attached to fake wooden barrels. I told her “thank you,” and blessed her heart but said that I do not do alcohol. She said, “Oh sure. Yah, I figured you might want just water.” She

probably thought I was a Mormon missionary! She was so caring and kind.

The Sunday night locals were starting to drift in out of the desert. The jukebox was amping up and by then the alcohol was really starting to flow. So to avoid any more confusion, I moved outside to a picnic table to wait for my Good Samaritan.

When I saw Lynford Miller's white Ford pickup and trailer come peddling into the parking lot, I was feeling almost charismatic and had emotions that may be comparable to the saints anticipating the rapture. He was indeed a sight for sore eyes and since we are farmers, men of the soil and heavy equipment operators (sometimes with manure on our boots), we greeted each other with a cordial hand shake, and a slap on the shoulder. Soon Lynford had pulled around behind the casino and was loading up Pastor Luke's broken Jetta.

It was late when we finally pulled into the Miller's farmyard in the Diamond Valley near Eureka, Nevada, parked the truck, went into the house and went to bed. It had been a long and exhausting day but as I laid my head down on the pillow, I was overcome with a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving for God's protection and care since leaving Provo, Utah.

I had come west somewhat mentally prepared to find the Pastor Miller family scary. But here they were, wonderful, peace-loving people with a benevolent spirit towards a stranger and "they took me in."

On Monday morning we put the Jetta in the farm shop and started to cut away the debris that was dragging on the road and other pieces that were too mangled to be useful anymore, both cosmetically and otherwise. The Pastor of the local Diamond Valley Mennonite Church is an auto mechanic so he crawled down under the Jetta to have a closer look and make a judgement. His opinion was that the car was pretty much wasted and could not be patched up enough for the trip back to Provo without ordering a lot of parts and many hours of labor.

Again, I was at the mercy of sanctified brethren. Brother Lynford just piped up and said, "That's not a problem at all; we will just load that car back up on the trailer and take the car and you back to Provo tomorrow." One can never have too many friends, especially those who are part of the sanctified brethren in many communities in faraway places.

On Tuesday Brother Lynford, his wife Sue, and I made the five-hour ride back to Provo, Utah. They wanted to meet these people that had shown me such kindness and were also considering moving to Thailand to be the pastor of the Anabaptist church where their youngest daughter Angie attends.

On Wednesday I had a noon flight out of Provo to Charleston, South Carolina. Alas, it was not to be. I had gotten up early and went with Pastor Luke to visit the crews working at the different job sites. Again, I was impressed with this brother's capacity to manage a large collection of earth moving equipment at several sites at the same time, many employees, and negotiate around city ordinances and government regulations.

At the same time, he was packing for a youth mission trip to El Salvador that was leaving at 2:00 a.m. the next morning. He was also talking on the phone with many people, all the while asking me questions about IGo and Thailand. When it was time, he swung into the airport and dropped me off. A bit early perhaps, but he had to go move a bulldozer to another job site and he was not sure that we could be back in time to catch my plane home. It would not have mattered anyway.

“Difficulties come and we learn to surmount them peaceably and patiently. That is the way of our Master teacher.”

The plane came in from DFW (Texas) and unloaded its passengers. But when it was time for us to board for the trip to DFW the lady at the gate got on the intercom and said that the plane had hit a bird as it was landing in Provo (Utah) and it could not be flown until a mechanic flew down from Salt Lake City (Utah) and signed off on it as being airworthy.

When the mechanic did finally show up, my plane from DFW to Charleston, South Carolina, had already long departed. We were given "new and improved" itineraries from the carrier. Before we left Provo, the agent told me that when I got to DFW, I should go to this special place on Concourse C. There they would give me a voucher for a hotel to spend the night.

At Concourse C in Texas, a long line of very grouchy and cross people were ahead of me. The airline employees working behind the counter were long in the tooth and short-tempered as well. I thought it might help if I would hang a sign up behind the desk with the verse, "A soft answer turns away wrath," but am doubtful that anyone would read it, let alone obey it.

When it was my turn at the counter, the lady stepped out and was replaced by a fresh and well-rested employee. I am assuming that she had had her quota of abuse from irate customers and needed to step out and sing a few stanzas of “Kum by Yah” to herself to emotionally calm her frazzled nerves and be ready for the next shift.

The young man that took her place, no doubt, had been to school by the airline that has a hub in that area. I imagined they were trained to be ruthless and have the hide of an alligator. I gave him my flight number; he pulled my itinerary up on his screen and said, “Oh, you had a bird strike in Provo. Well, that lady that promised you a hotel for the night did not know what she was talking about. A bird strike is an act of God and something that this airline has no control over. Therefore, we are not at fault that you missed all your connections. NO! I will not give you a voucher to go to a motel.” My current itinerary called for a 5:00 a.m. flight to Charlotte, North Carolina. After a four-hour wait in Charlotte, I was to go on to Charleston, South Carolina where my truck was parked.

I should have sung a stanza or two of “Just as I Am” right there in the hope that he would have a “come to Jesus” moment and repent. I could feel the hot breath of other done-wrong clients behind me, so I shuffled off, looking sad and walking slowly while weighing my options. It would be several hours until they would put my gate number on the screen. I got on the sky train and visited the different concourses to look for the best chairs to spend the night. About midnight I went and looked at the screen. Sure enough, my gate number, E32 for the flight to Charlotte, North Carolina, was on the screen. I consoled myself with the thought that at least it was in the right direction and we would be going “south” not “north.”

As you can imagine, it is a long and miserable night sitting in those hard uncomfortable chairs at the high number gates that only go to small southern towns. Other people were there who were making the best of a bad situation; some were better at it than others. About 4:00 a.m. the halls started to fill up with people hurrying off to somewhere and by 5:00 a.m. we were airborne.

After another 4-hour layover in Charlotte, North Carolina, I was able to get on the little paper towel tube-looking jet made in Brazil and arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, safely and very tired. But my luggage was still in Texas. I didn’t even care anymore. All I could think of was a bed and home with Grace.

I did get home safely. The next day I went back to the airport and retrieved my luggage. I was tempted to say negative things about people that work for American

Airlines and then I remembered that my friends in Canada were going absolutely nowhere; Canadians were once again doing what Canadian workers and employees sometimes do—Air Canada had gone on strike. So what is arriving a day late with no sleep and misplaced luggage compared to going absolutely nowhere at all. At least I was home. Home is the best place!

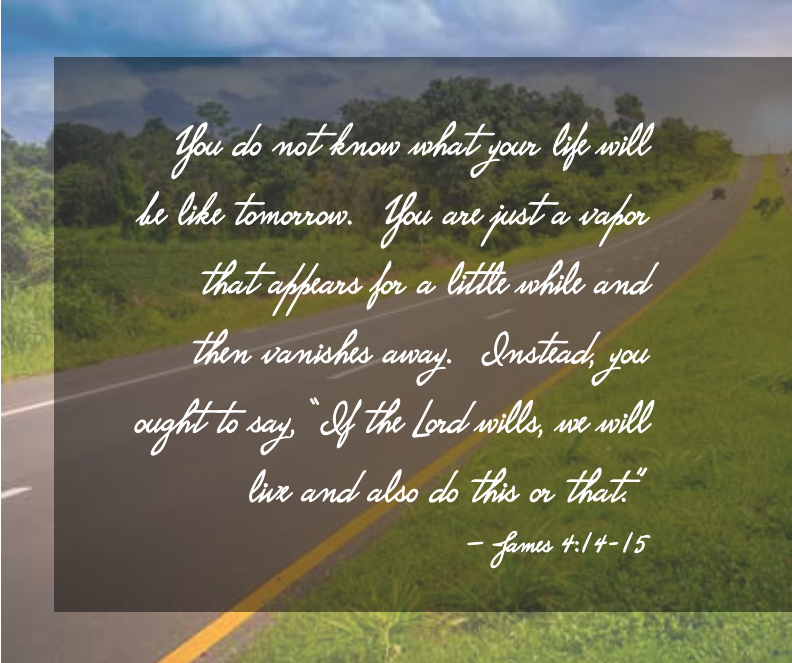
Difficulties come and we learn to surmount them peaceably and patiently. That is the way of our Master teacher. Each difficulty we encounter makes us stronger if we see in it the path to future glory. We must not focus on the difficulties of life, but on the blessings we received along with them.

On this journey I was so blessed to have met wonderful brothers and sisters in the Lord. Now they are my special friends, not Facebook-type friends, but those who will give you their car and then offer to come out in the desert and pick you up when you have just wasted their vehicle.

Or a true brother who will bring his truck and trailer three hours into the desert and haul you back to his house for the night ... all on a moment’s notice. Later, he will haul you and a wasted car five hours distant to deliver you in time for your scheduled flight. These are indeed the works of good Samaritans who did not pass by on the other side.

It all happened, “In the King’s Service.”

C. H. | South Carolina



*You do not know what your life will
be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor
that appears for a little while and
then vanishes away. Instead, you
ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will
live and also do this or that.”*

— James 4:14-15



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

The Real Gospel

by A. Gos Pell

I certainly appreciated Menno Knight's article, *The Simple Way* (AV35, pages 7-11). Right on! As he said, we don't need great cathedrals to meet in, complex creeds to define our theology, civil authorities to protect us, seminaries to train our clergy, or wealth to sustain our ministry. Brother Menno's examples from history make that clear.

We need Jesus!

We need to love Him with all our hearts. We need to obey what He says. We need to be His people and walk in a faith that works by love.

We also need to understand what the gospel is. I felt that two headings in the article brought confusion to what should be clear. I read all the verses in the article and agree that we are called to be doers—not just hearers, and not just talkers. I also agree that as Christians we may not do the works of the flesh. But the Bible never calls this “The Gospel of Doing” and “The Gospel of Not Doing”? Those headings confused me. Frankly, they disturbed me.

In I Corinthians 15 Paul makes clear that the gospel that he preached was the Good News of what Jesus has done. In his words: *“Christ died for our sins. ... He was buried ... He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. After that He appeared to [many witnesses]”* (I Corinthians 15:3-5). And he says this was “the gospel which [he] preached, ... which [they] received” and in which they stood (15:1).

We have four gospel writers that tell us all that we need to know about the gospel. They all tell us about Jesus. Mark starts his gospel with these words: *“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”* (Mark 1:1). Like Paul, Mark makes it clear: the gospel is the good news about “Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

In a quick search of the New Testament text, we find that the gospel is usually called “the Gospel of Christ” or “the Gospel of God.” Jesus himself preached “the gospel of the Kingdom” (Matthew 9:25). No “gospel of doing” here.

Here's my succinct summary of the good news of the gospel: Jesus came to bring in His kingdom and bring us into His kingdom! As Matthew 4:23 says, *“Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, ... proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom.”* That sounds quite different from “the gospel of doing,” doesn't it?

Jesus said, *“This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world ... and then the end will come”* (Matthew 24:14). Nary a word about “the gospel of doing.” Would not the “gospel of doing” be “another gospel” that “would pervert the Gospel of Christ”? In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, *“I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ”* (Galatians 1:6-7). Please understand: I am not saying that we may omit doing. I am saying that the effects that the gospel message has in our lives are not “the Gospel.” The distinction should be clear.

Without mentioning the word “gospel,” I suggest that Paul's words in Colossians 1:27 give us the essence of the Gospel: *“Christ in you the hope of glory.”* Now that is Good News! And did you notice that I capitalize the word Gospel. It is a proper name, the name of a specific thing. There is no other gospel.

AV Editor

To avoid confusion, we could change the subtitles in the article to, “The Teaching of Doing” and “The Teaching of Not Doing.” These statements not only define the gospel of Jesus, but also the practical distinction between Anabaptists and nominal Christians.

You have aptly summed up the points of the article, “The Simple Way.” “We do not need great cathedrals to meet in, complex creeds to define our theology, civil authorities to protect us, seminaries to train our clergy, or wealth to sustain our ministry. But we do need Jesus.”

Yes, we do need Jesus. We in no way minimize that need for and belief in Jesus. But Jesus is not the whole gospel. So how do we define the Gospel of Jesus and the Gospel of God? Is it not by what people do and by what they do not do?

The article (AV35, page 10) lists quite an array of New Testament Scriptures that teach about doing and not doing. In Romans 12, the apostle Paul gives practical guidance about what it means to live out the Gospel of Jesus.

Now let us look at the possibility that “The Teaching of Doing” and the “Teaching of Not Doing” might be some other gospel as mentioned in Galatians 1:6-9. As mentioned in the quote above, Paul chided them for leaving the grace of Christ for a different gospel.

From the rest of the book we would understand Paul meant they were trying to include Judaism in the gospel *“which is really not another [gospel]”* (**Galatians 1:7**). He says they distort the gospel of Christ. In **Galatians 1:8** he writes, *“If we or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!”* In the next verse Paul repeats the condemnation of those trying to present a perverted gospel.

But the “Teaching of Doing” and “The Teaching of Not Doing” are not another gospel. They do not distort the Gospel of Christ or teach anything contrary to the gospel. They teach an intrinsic *part of* the gospel as taught by Jesus and the apostles throughout the New Testament.



Perfect Farming

by Confused No More

I am responding to “Not Sinful” and “Corny” (AV35, pages 33 & 39). I would like to share my experience with you.

As a farm consultant for close to 50 years, two articles in AV35 are calling for scriptural answers. Genesis 1:12 along with Genesis 3:17-19 seem to be the set for God-fearing agriculture.

“The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them; and it was so” (**Genesis 1:12**).

“Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (**Genesis 3:17-19**).

As a servant to the ag industry, the writer has been involved in many different situations and observed many practices on both sides of the divide between godly

practices and man’s inventions. God and His Word will be the judge of the machinations of evil men. We do well to repent of listening to any other voice but His.

From 1979 till 1994 I was extremely involved in mainstream agriculture, sales and application of ag chemicals. In 1994 we made a decision to change course due to pressure to get involved in sales of gene-manipulated seeds. I felt such things were not according to truth and godliness (unethical).

We had some financial setbacks for several years, but the Lord saw us through it and blessed us with understanding and experience by relying on Him alone.

We believe God has a perfect plan for farming which does not involve the use of chemicals. If we wish to be shown the way, He will direct and bless.

AV Editor

Yes, we do want to farm God’s way and avoid evil. So the sure word that we have to go by is found in the Bible.

Let us talk first about Genesis 1:12-13 that you quoted above. Do you mean, based on this Scripture, that there should be no genetic manipulation of seeds? We agree that God made everything good and that He made everything to reproduce after its kind. But I do not see how that forbids gene alteration in plants.

Genesis 3:17-19, also quoted above, states that all men will die and that is true and will always be true. Genetic manipulation will never do away with death. Is controlling thorns and thistles with chemicals instead of “cold steel” what you believe is evil? Or is it that mankind should always sweat and labor to produce his food? Neither one of these interpretations hold up as condemning farming with chemicals. Millions of people eat without using a hoe or sweating.

Let us look at another scripture that gives mankind authority over the whole earth. It seems to me that would include genetic manipulation of seeds and chemical control of weeds.

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth’” (**Genesis 1:26**).

If God allows mankind to gain the knowledge of how to split the atom, that in itself is not sinful. If mankind uses it to build bombs and destroy cities, that is evil. But if he uses that knowledge to turn on the lights and power great motors for the benefit of all the peoples on the earth; is that not pleasing to our God who told man to multiply and fill the earth with people?

So I am grateful that God has given to men the authority to preside over His wonderful creation. Some ways of farming are better than others and God has given to those who fear Him a love for the soil and living things. To those who live in obedience to His Word, He gives a better understanding of many things. Let us use that knowledge and the tools He has given us to bring glory to His name.

We should not be fearful of every new technology that we do not understand or see the Devil behind every bush. Ours is the opportunity to bring praise and glory to God in our generation in a mighty way.

We do not want to try to falsely prove that the Scripture forbids the use of all manmade chemicals. But there may be a better way. Rotation of crops, the use of legumes like clover, vetch, and alfalfa, and many grasses, can hold the soil in place, allow the rain to soak in, and provide much food to be self-harvested by animals.

Such farming not only greatly reduces the need for chemicals, iron, and diesel, but can be highly profitable. These are proven and common-sense principles that godly people can apply in our generation.

Some manmade chemicals are harmful to the body, especially when used in excess. We are saying that the Bible does not prove them sinful. We have good evidence that alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, fentanyl, and some others, are harmful to the body and should be avoided by Christians. Almost every doctor agrees.

However, the case against glyphosate, atrazine and other field chemicals being passed through to humans is speculative at best. If there was anything to the worries and fears that surround genetically modified seeds (GMOs), chemical compounds, and carbon dioxide, millions of people would be dying with proof positive connections. Those connections are not there.

Of course, millions of people and animals are dying. It does not matter what foods people may abstain from, what drugs they take, who their doctors are, or what church they belong to, we know everyone will die. Our life is in God's hands and we should submit to His will every day.

Followers of Christ do not worship animals, plants, trees, moon, stars, or any manmade things such as temples, tractors, engines, ships, planes, computers, or chemicals. We worship the Creator God who made the earth and everything in it. "God Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:25).

So let us not be scammed by unproven theories because of fears such as carbon overload, GMOs, COVID viruses, global cooling, or global warming. The ungodly have been known to lie when it suits their purposes. Mass

hysteria over such things can deceive even the elect.

Some may actually believe what they think they know, but that does not make their beliefs correct. Today there are swarms of merchants ready to prey on peoples' fears and emotions. That does not make their products godly or evil. Let us test the spirits of our time and hold them up to the Word of God. This is the measure we use to determine whether manmade chemicals are good or evil.



Aiming for Clarity

by A Reviewer Writes

I am writing to offer my thoughts on the article, "The Law and the law" (AV37, pages 13-15).

I think that it's a great idea to show how following standard English rules for capitalization of law clarifies the meaning of Scripture. That clarity is indeed needed. Sadly, most translators have not done well. The KJV was perhaps translated before capitalization rules took their current form. So we will excuse them. But the NKJV and most others have no such excuse. Sloppy translators have let their Lutheran theology influence them!

So the article is valuable. I will offer my thoughts on how to make the article better:

I think you should clarify that original Greek did not have rules for capitalization. Everything was written in caps, no word spacing, no punctuation, no paragraphs, no chapters and verses. This is part of translation that requires some interpretation. We translate into modern English, and using capital letters for proper nouns is a necessary part of it.

When we write about the Kingdom of Heaven, it is a real and specific kingdom, and our capitalization ought to reflect that. For many people the Kingdom of God is not a real and specific kingdom. It is just an idea, or an ideal, or a dream about the future. I do not know one Bible translation that capitalizes Kingdom of God, but maybe *Anabaptist Voice* could set an example.

I would not equate keeping God's law and works. Yes, Scripture talks about "works of the law." Keeping God's law is obeying it. "Good works" in Scripture is not limited to obeying specific laws. It is more about how we live, caring for the needy and outcast with generosity.

I think it is confusing to say that Galatians 5:22-23 "lists the unbounded works of the Spirit in the Christian's life." The fruit of the Spirit might better be called virtues, not works.

I think that the biggest problem I have with the article is the artificial distinction (I call it) made between “God’s law” inscribed in stone and the Law of God revealed through Moses.” I do not recall that the Bible makes such a distinction—not clearly, anyhow. The Mosaic Law was part of the Old Testament covenant with Israel. That covenant is passed away. It is gone. The Ten Commandments were the heart and centerpiece of that covenant. Insofar as the Ten Commandments embodied laws built on God’s character, those laws carry over into the New Testament. They are changeless. But they are not the heart of the new covenant. They are eclipsed by something so much greater that their glory has faded like the glory of the moon fades when the sun arises. Paul calls the Old Testament the “ministry of death, written and engraved in stones” (II Corinthians 3:7). He includes the Ten Commandments and teaches that all the glory of it is “done away.” It is gone. It is superseded by a new covenant with a far surpassing glory. God says: *“I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ... I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Hebrews 8:8-10).*

Commenting further, if the Ten Commandments are God’s law for us, we are required to keep the 7th-day Sabbath. That’s the implication, and it causes confusion. Now, all the other commandments are repeated in the New Testament, and are required of us. But that’s another discussion. Please notice what God says in Exodus 31:16-17, *“So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath, throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever.”*

As I said, I think that separating the Old Covenant into God’s law and Moses’ Law is artificial. It’s all God’s law given to Moses.

AV Editor

Thank you for your helpful critique of “The Law and the law.” You explain well the purpose of the article—“to show how following standard English rules for capitalization of law clarifies the meaning of Scripture.”

Statement: *When we write about the Kingdom of Heaven, it is a real and specific kingdom, and our capitalization ought to reflect that. I do not know one Bible translation that capitalizes Kingdom of God, but maybe *Anabaptist Voice* could set an example. For many people the Kingdom of God is not a real and specific kingdom. It is just an idea, or an ideal, or a dream about the future.*

Answer: When we write about the Kingdom of Heaven we have made a somewhat timid effort at

capitalization. This is a good point and *Anabaptist Voice* will follow a dedicated “Kingdom” usage in the future.

Statement: *I would not equate keeping God’s law and works.*

Answer: I am sure there can be a fuller dimension to works than that found in the Old Testament. And the last part of Matthew 25 gives a nice number of things Christians want to do. Most of these same things are also found in the Old Testament law as things that God desired His people do.

Statement: *I think that it’s confusing to say that Galatians 5:22-23 “lists the unbounded works of the Spirit in the Christian’s life.” The fruit of the Spirit might better be called virtues, not works.*

Answer: Sure, the fruits of the Spirit are virtues. And no matter what you call them they are not limited in how much fruit one can produce.

Statement: *The biggest problem I have with the article is the artificial distinction (I call it) made between “God’s law” inscribed in stone and the Law of God revealed through Moses.”*

Answer: God’s law is eternal and did not change from the beginning nor will it change. It is general, unspecified, and therefore we do not capitalize it unless we refer to a select part of it such as The Ten Commandments.

My understanding is that God’s law included more than the Ten Commandments. We can point to the prohibition against the eating of blood and the violence that occurred in the antediluvian world as well as in the city of Nineveh.

There is no doubt that the Israelites, needed to keep the Ten Commandments and the males needed to be circumcised. My contention is that the Ten Commandments existed from the time of Adam but were codified and written in stone at Mt. Sinai; they were not just part of God’s special covenant with Israel. God, by engraving the Commandments in stone signified a difference between them and the Law given through Moses.

The Mosaic Law and circumcision were for the Israelites. But the Ten Commandments and not eating blood were for all men, everywhere in all time.



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 My brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it” (**Luke 8:21**).



The Practical Side: Work Shoes Required

The Practical Side: Readers Respond

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.



A reader from Idaho responds to "Learning by Doing" (AV36, page 40).

Learning by Observing

by Jeff Byler

As I reflected on the article called “Learning by Doing” (AV36, page 40), I had to ponder how true it is that achievers are often those who have the courage to step out and do what needs to be done while learning how to accomplish it along the way.

When I went to Chile, I moved to a farm but had almost no experience raising cows, sheep, and planting fields. A Chilean friend told me simply, “The farm will teach you how to farm.” That saying proved true. When the cows lost weight or the fields were not producing well, I had to learn to “fix” the situation. Neighbors, books, and simply a lot of reflecting on how things function, helped me learn how to manage resources to achieve good production. Diligence and consistency were also important.

I stood in amazement at the instinctiveness of life. Immediately after a newborn calf is born, it moves to

the hindquarters of its mother to seek nourishment; and seeds thrown onto the ground take root and grow. Jesus’ words in Mark 4:26-28 express this awe, “*The Kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head.*”

In much the same way, the new believer instinctively turns to the Word of God and digs deep to find the nourishment that the soul needs to sustain life and grow. The heart also grows upward, toward heaven and aspires to be like its Creator. Often I have stood in wonder of new believers who dig into God’s word and lift their hands upward to sustain and grow the new life within them. Instead of being a planter, I feel like a simple observer and admirer of God’s marvelous gift of life.

We can also learn other spiritual truths by observing things. In telling the parable of the sower, Jesus informed us that sometimes the good seed of the Word of God will not produce fruit when it falls upon the heart of the hearer. Satan snatches some seed away before it has a chance to grow; some seed withers away when hard times come. The seed that grows to maturity is in two categories: the seed that never produces fruit because other things choke it into a non-productive state, and

the good seed that can be harvested and put to use in the Kingdom of Heaven.

“And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”

– Matthew 13:23

Selected Essays from a writing class at Waynesboro Mennonite School. Written in response to “Learning by Doing” (AV36, page 40).



Learning by Driving

by Luke Heatwole



I can drive a truck. Or at least I thought I could. But trucks taught me I did not know it all yet.

The day I jumped into a manual-shift dump truck for the first time, I was a 50,000-pound disaster rolling down the road. No one had told me anything about shifting gears—if one does not put the clutch in at just the right time, the gear down in the floorboard makes a great scraping noise, sorta like a coffee grinder. By the time I got my silage truck to the field, I had already ground enough coffee for my mom’s morning cup.

When I arrived at the field, it got even worse. In the field, I had to go back and forth and keep up with the chopper, all the while shifting gears. Oh, the scraping noise! Then there was reverse. The lever just did not want to go in no matter how hard I pulled on it.

Thankfully, after a few days and many trips following the chopper like a hound dog, things got to where I could drive any of the dump trucks fairly well. Then one day they threw me into one of our semi-trailers by myself. A semi is about twice as long as a dump truck and the trailer is pivoting behind you while in a dump truck, the whole contraption is connected together. On one of my first loads, the chopper driver told me to turn around before I got to a power-line pole. I tried turning in good time, but the front wheels just skidded along instead of obeying me. Thankfully, I missed the pole by six inches which was way too close.

My driving of trucks over 40 feet long is going better now as I gain experience. *I am learning a lot by doing.*



Lessons from Bike Riding

By Jacob Hege



My journey to successfully ride a bike began around age four. After several falls and a few scrapes, things went better. My riding has now improved from very wobbly and frightening to nearly second nature.

Along the way I tried several stunts that I would not recommend.

- Slam on the brakes. It can cause you to slide off the seat.
- Brake hard on just the front wheel brake. The back wheel may fly up and cause you to land in an uncomfortable position.
- Ride slowly up a 12” ramp. This could cause you to slide off your seat and over the handlebars to alight on your head or back.
- Try to catch a ride on a moving golf cart. This may cause you to fall over and be ruthlessly scraped by asphalt.

Learning from the falls of others may be better than learning everything by falling yourself.



Learning to Play Chess

by Drew Heatwole



I started learning to play chess at a very young age by watching my brother, Carter, and my sister, Stephanie, play. In this way I learned how each piece moved, and that the object of the game was to capture the opponent’s king.

In the seventh grade, I really started sharpening my chess skills. My friends and I played match after match; we did not care if we won or lost. We taught anyone who wanted to learn, mostly so we could try our new

moves on them. That is when I produced a strategy I called the “One Punch”—a four-move win. It worked ... at least for a while.

The first time a player foiled my strategy was nothing. Just one horse. Then a knight moved in and landed right where I needed to strike; the whole thing fell apart. It was such a simple move, but it shut everything down. That is when I realized how fragile my strategy was, and how much more I needed to learn to master this

intriguing game.

Learning to play chess requires that you learn from studying your opponent. At the end of the day, chess is not what you know about how to move the pieces around. Chess is how you use what you know.



The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

My Gift

by Tung N. Cheek



At our church on Wednesday evenings, we have studied the Holy Spirit. When we accept Christ as Savior and Lord, He gives us the Holy Spirit. Evidence that we have received the Holy Spirit is the spiritual

fruit in our life. **Galatians 5:22-23** lists the fruits of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a gift; the Holy Spirit also gives gifts. Every Christian has received at least one spiritual gift. That gift is for the edification of the church.

It is time that we recognize our gifts and use them. I will break from tradition and talk about my spiritual gift. It is a special spiritual gift which I will call the gift of discernment. I see problems and errors in the church as well as sin in the lives of other people. Some people push the limits and break church rules. If these problems are ignored, they can only get worse. Problems don't fix themselves!

Since I have this spiritual insight, I should share my knowledge with others. **Proverbs 28:13** says that he who covers his sins shall not prosper. Maybe, eventually, the official board will address the problems. The preachers need to do their job. The deacons need to do their job. Blame them if they don't correct the problems.

I don't expect honor because of a title or my gift of discernment. So, don't nominate me for any other job. Someone else can have the honor of having the title. **Romans 12:10** says, “In honor preferring one another.” I prefer that others do the work and receive the honor.

Don't ask me to do a job with a title. If I am selected to be a trustee, I must decline. People should know that I am too old for the job. Everyone should understand that a younger person has more energy and strength than older people. However, I can use my special spiritual gift to be helpful to the trustees in pointing out problems like new cracks in the macadam parking lot, ice on the walks, a dying tree to remove, or bushes that need trimmed. I can be very useful in an advisory capacity.

When I sit toward the front of the church, it may appear that I have pride. Pride is not good. **Proverbs 16:18** says, “Pride goes before destruction.” I can show my humility by sitting in the back of the church. That would also help me to use my special spiritual gift. I can watch people better and see if they sleep or how they react to the sermon. I can also see what the people in front of me are putting in the offering plate. I doubt if they are tithing. The Lord said that we are robbing God if we don't give 1/10 of our income to the Lord.

By sitting in the back, I can also see if visitors or strangers come to church. I can show my interest by asking the person next to me who the strangers are. After services I can stand and look at them so that visitors know they are recognized.

In addition to solving problems, my special spiritual gift allows me to see good things to do. There is a vacant space beside the church building. Would it not be useful to have a picnic pavilion there? If I donate \$100,000 to build a pavilion with a sign saying, “The I. M. Special Memorial Pavilion,” it would be a way to let everyone know how much I love the Lord Jesus and the church. **Mark 8:38** says, *“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”* So, every time anyone sees the pavilion, they will know that I, Brother Special, was not ashamed!

Do you think that my church would be a lot better church if everyone had my special spiritual gift and used it?

Practical Questions:

Should everyone have the gift of discernment?

What are some ways to help a brother with a critical spirit?

Why is it a bad idea to attach the names of donors to donations?



Outfoxed

by Won Over



Sometime in the year 1969, my wife invited her uncle, Jonas Martin, to our home for Sunday dinner. Jonas was in his 80s, a widower who was living alone, and attended church not far from our place.

During our visit he told me that when he was a young man in the 1930s, he had bought a farm south of New Holland, Pennsylvania. He wondered if he had made a mistake by buying the property after he heard about a neighbor farmer, Charlie,¹ who was hard to get along with. Charlie did not respect his Amish neighbors nor their property.

¹ Not his real name.

Charlie had friends from neighboring Chester County who he would often invite to his farm for a fox hunt, and probably for drinking parties too. These men would release a fox, then have hounds chase after the fox. The hunters would then follow the hounds on horseback through the neighbors’ fields until the fox was captured. Running horses through planted fields did a lot of crop damage. It was no wonder the Amish neighbors complained about him.

Jonas decided he was going to do all he could to befriend this man. So whenever they met, Jonas spoke kindly to him. He told Charlie he was available if he needed any help.

One day Charlie came to Jonas to ask if he could borrow his hay rake. Jonas said, “Sure you may, and by the way, you may use my equipment any time you need it. My implement shed is here behind my barn. If I am not using it, help yourself to it, then put it back when you are done with it. You do not need to ask.”

One day when Charlie had his friends over for a fox hunt, Jonas heard Charlie give instruction to the men. “You may ride over any fields around here, except for the fields to the east.” (To the east was Jonas’ fields.)

One time the fox hid in Jonas’ barn. Jonas captured it, put it in a burlap bag and charged the hunters a few dollars to get their fox back.

A thunder storm came up one summer night and lightning hit Charlie’s barn, setting it on fire. The fire company put out the fire, but his barn was in shambles with wet hay, straw, and tobacco all mixed together.

Early the next morning, Jonas went to all the Amish neighbors to ask them to help clean Charlie’s barn. “You want us to help him? He does not like us and is mean to us!”

“Yes,” said Jonas, “Let us show him what neighbors are for.” They agreed to help as soon as they were done with their chores. Jonas then stopped by Charlie’s house to tell him that he and the other neighbors were going to help him clean his barn.

The Amish neighbors came and brought their boys with them. They separated the wet hay and straw bales and laid them out to dry. They cleaned away the debris and put it on piles. At noon the ladies and girls brought food for everyone. They had a good and enjoyable time together.

In the late afternoon, when the work was all done, the Amish were ready to leave to do the evening milking.

Charlie came to Jonas saying, “I want you to thank all the neighbors for helping me today.”

Jonas told Charlie, “You can thank them; they did it for you.”

“No, I cannot,” Charlie said. He was too embarrassed to face them because of his former treatment toward them.

We do not know if Charlie ever gave his heart to the Lord, but he did change his view of his Amish neighbors. The Amish no longer suffered for his treatment toward them.

Returning good for evil benefitted everyone.



The Clothes We Wear

A letter from one pastor to another



You are old and observant enough to have noticed the change in what is expected by polite Anabaptist culture and what is socially acceptable and is considered proper decorum when “oat

and a-boat” (Canadian speak).

In the early 70s, when I was 16, I was given the privilege of hauling a load of cattle to the weekly cattle auction at the sale barn in Harrisonburg, Virginia. This was before the invention of goose-neck cattle trailers; we hauled cattle in a 2-ton stake body truck. Evidently my dad was not sure if I was totally ready to take my maiden voyage alone, so he asked my grandfather to ride along.

My Grandparents

Grandfather was born in 1904 and was a properly vetted, duly ordained man in Virginia Conference. When I stopped by his house with a load of cattle to pick him up, he came out of the house in hoya stompers (work shoes), bib overalls (as they say in Virginia) and a plain suit coat. As he stepped out into the sunshine, he flipped on a pinched-in-the-front, black felt minister’s hat.

At that time Grandmother would have had long black stockings on all day and no flip-flops (not ever) and a traditional old-order-style head covering with black silk

ribbons tied under her chin. The cape was detachable so that a lady was not hindered or overheated when gardening or doing vigorous farm work. But whenever she left home she would put it back on and snap the belt that closed at the waist.

My Parents

My dad was born in 1928 and was also an ordained deacon in Virginia Conference. My mother was the daughter of one of the Virginia Conference bishops. She had abandoned the covering strings and wore capes pretty much only to church. Probably the last 30 years of her life, she wore capes all the time.

My dad always wore a proper suit when traveling on a plane, as well as to most public meetings—funerals, farm meetings, and public school functions such as at Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. In the wintertime, he wore a long overcoat and the regulation minister’s hat. He had work shoes for the barn and black shiny Sunday shoes for most all other functions. I do remember that he got some slightly casual dark shoes with softer soles, but not too sporty for some occasions. In all my lifetime, he never ever compromised himself or his office with casual, very non-churchman type running or athletic shoes. Not my dad!

My Generation

My brothers and I never wore tee shirts for outward apparel. We were told that it was immodest, suggestive and very inappropriate for serious followers of the meek and lowly Jesus to be seen in public in a tee shirt. I still do not wear them to this day.

No, I do not wear a plain suit coat to the sale barn when I haul cows there each week. But I hope and desire that when I pull in to unload cattle, there is not a doubt in anyone’s mind that the man driving that Ford truck is a serious follower of the meek and lowly Jesus and that my clothes do not send a message otherwise. If my wife would be along, there would be no doubt in anybody’s mind that she is a godly lady and that no one can accuse her of flaunting her outward beauty or sexual powers in an ungodly way.

My Sons

For my own sons, I have taught, pled, and I hope led by example, against the way many conservative Anabaptist men appear in public and sometimes even at church. We live in a warm climate in coastal South Carolina and most men never wear the official jacket

except those of us who were born in the 50s.

So you see, my brother, things change over time. But the question we wrestle with is: Do the changes reflect a more godly character, neither good or evil, or is it a cave-in to the ungodly society around us?

For the Men

Many Mennonite men in conservative churches have not worn a suit coat since Bible school; many churches have switched to vests or no jacket at all. In our churches, we ask our young men to wear suits at their weddings. Many of the young fellows chafe about it, but most quickly comply to keep the peace and get off to “happily ever after” with the young lady of his dreams.

If men are careful and discerning, they can still purchase clothes that are modest and help them to identify with the redeemed. But modest clothing does not include loud shirts or pants, belt buckles, cowboy boots, 10-gallon hats or sombreros, nor very expensive and very cool sunglasses that are used mostly for adornment.

Men need to identify with their modest and godly wives and daughters. They should hold their heads high and be counted with the redeemed instead of slouching along in the shadows afar off when in public with modest, “separated” or “called apart” ladies.

Sometimes I think that Christian women get tired of carrying the modesty and simplicity load alone. They either resist or realize that their husband is not a leader or protector of her need to look and dress differently than the airport crowd. Many men make demands of the ladies that they are unwilling to require, or live up to themselves. Men must live in modesty and purity if they expect their wives and children to live simply and scripturally.

For the Women

Most conservative Anabaptist groups have tried to have a practical and somewhat uniform approach to identity and modesty in personal appearance. Most of us understand that as a general rule women are the beautiful ones and by God’s design men find them attractive.

Women can exploit or use their natural beauty, feminine charm, and their sexual power over men in unwholesome ways. You and I know this from sitting in airports. It is beyond shocking what many women flaunt and expose.

God made women attractive and for a very good reason. But most clothing stores have no interest in selling clothes for Christian ladies that cover and do not accentuate a lady’s outward beauty in modesty and in ways that complement the quiet and submissive character the Scriptures teach. For many generations our sisters have either made their own clothes or found another sister who does it for them.

On the flip side, we have all seen very conservative men whose wives are anything but modest in their lifestyle choices, in their home decor, in the way they dress their children, and in the way they dress themselves. Women want affirmation and if they are not getting it from their husbands, they will probably seek it from others.

In some Anabaptist homes, the men do not live in harmony with what the church has asked of the sisters. The church has often attempted to maintain a good and practical application to the teachings of Scripture for the sisters. But sometimes women aren’t submissive to good leadership. These women exercise a will of their own. Sometimes, children do not follow the desires and training of their parental home or the local church’s brotherhood agreements. This, too, is painful. We are free to make choices and some insist on making poor ones.

Making Practical Applications

I think that we do well to maintain a certain humility and respect while acknowledging that other faith applications may be a bit different from ours. I hope we can learn from, accept, and appreciate others as they endeavor to make the Scriptures practical in our time.

Well my friend, ... may God give you wisdom and a heart of compassion for the sisters as we men attempt to navigate our place on the straight and narrow road to heaven.

Practical Questions:

What should determine whether change in clothing is good?

How should changes in clothing be put into practice?

Can modesty of apparel be maintained without distinctive clothing?



Anabaptist Brotherhood — Medical Aid and Alms Plan

“Bear one another’s burdens and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.” – Galatians 6:2

On 1 May 2025, *Anabaptist Brotherhood* began serving people within Anabaptist churches. This organization offers a sharing plan whereby individuals from eligible congregations join together in a true spirit of brotherhood. Individuals or families can join the plan voluntarily, but if 70% of the households of a congregation choose to join *Brotherhood*, additional benefits come by working together.

Brotherhood is committed to building a robust health-sharing infrastructure that is in tune with Anabaptist thought and practice. The aim is to meet the present-day medical challenges head-on with clarity and economic savings for members.

Below are 10 points outlining key parts of *The Plan*.

1. **Medical Aid and Alms Plan.** For mutual aid to truly work without reliance on government programs, medical aid and alms aid must be linked together and shared across a network of churches.

2. **Fair and Reasonable Pricing.** *Brotherhood* facilitates the difficult work of processing and paying a fair price for medical services and treatments.

3. **Negotiating Exorbitant and Excessive Bills.** *Brotherhood* engages in respectful bill resolution on behalf of its members. This includes interactive negotiation with providers to show medical pricing data, analytics, and industry standards.

4. **Direct Billing and Payment.** *Brotherhood* requires medical providers and facilities to send the bill directly to The Plan. After processing and negotiating the bill, The Plan makes payment directly back to the providers and facilities.

5. **Preexisting Conditions.** Preexisting conditions are accepted with an expense cap of \$10,000 per year. If more than 70% of the congregation participates in The Plan, the expense cap is removed.

6. **Referred Providers and Treatments.** *Brotherhood* publishes an annual booklet with information and pathways to preferred hospitals, providers, and clinics that offer reasonably priced services and quality treatments, prescription medications, and therapies.

7. **Discernment about Alternative Healthcare.** *Brotherhood* employs a Medical Research Committee of six to eight medical experts to perform extensive

research and analysis on evidence-based treatment and services. This includes alternative, functional, and natural providers and treatments.

8. **Health Education.** Health education is a golden thread in *Brotherhood’s* economic fabric. Our foundational mission is to help people learn how to live healthy lives. The ultimate solution to affordable healthcare is to live disciplined healthy lives!

9. **A Comprehensive Plan.** From prenatal care to death, *Brotherhood’s* plan is a comprehensive sharing plan for a wide range of medical services.

10. **Social Security Exemption.** With the above nine items, *Brotherhood* solves the long-standing problems among Anabaptists associated with the form 4029 Social Security Exemption. It provides a sustainable economic path for those that choose to be Social Security exempt.

Additional Notes:

Brotherhood serves the local church leaders by being a servant to them. For instance, we serve deacons by managing the complexity of member’s medical bills.

Contributions to *Brotherhood* for the Medical Aid and Alms Plan are paid quarterly. Request a copy of the Complete Guidelines for rates.

Brotherhood works equally well for those exempt from Social Security and those not exempt. For those seeking to become Social Security exempt, *Brotherhood* offers assistance to understand the 4029 exemption.

For more complete information contact:

Anabaptist Brotherhood

P.O. Box 144, Guys Mills PA 16237

Phone: 574-354-4449

Email: info@AnabaptistBrotherhood.org

Website: AnabaptistBrotherhood.org

Note: Anabaptist Voice is introducing Anabaptist Brotherhood because we think it worthy of further consideration. This advertisement is not an endorsement.





Circulation & Financial Statement

Income & Expense Report June 2025

July 1, 2025 Beginning Balance	\$8,741.32
Income	
Donations	\$3,905.00
Local Support*	\$5,000.00
Total Income	\$8,905.00
Beginning Balance + Income	\$17,646.32
Expenses (AV35)	
Postage	\$5,056.57
Printing & Mailing	\$6,641.00
Staff Expenses	\$1,492.50
Total Expense	\$13,190.07
June 30, 2025 Ending Balance	\$4,456.25

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ISSUE #36 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

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Cost Per Copy: \$2.57 /ea.

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

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Your gifts given to support the publication of AV38 will encourage us greatly.
All gifts given to *Anabaptist Voice* through the local church are tax deductible.



End Matters

“The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.” — Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Until He comes,

James

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*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat,
and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. ~ Genesis 8:22*

