

Be ye doers of
the Word and
not hearers
only...

James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

IN THIS ISSUE:

"THE END OF MEDICINE" - REUBEN ZIMMERMAN

"VICTORY OVER DEATH" - ERNEST STRUBHAR

"CHILDLIKE FAITH" - MENNO KNIGHT

"THE TREASURE IN THE CAVE" - ELIZABETH WAGLER

"TAKING THE KINGDOM BY VIOLENCE" - LEONARD HARTMAN

Letter from the Editor

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

—Revelation 22:12

The Lord willing, 23 September 2018 will be my 76th birthday. How many more birthdays I have left, I do not know—zero, five, ten, fifteen, twenty. Compared to eternity, my time on earth will be short. I want no retirement village, no nursing home, no heroic medicine, no chemotherapy, no radiation, no life-support machines, no helicopter rides, and no resuscitation. When my work on earth is done, let me die and go to my eternal reward where I can eat of the tree of life and live forever in the New Jerusalem.

It is certain the apostle Paul would have had none of it. With his ringing declaration, “For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain”, the matter was settled. If he lived longer, he wanted only to serve his fellow man with the gospel.

I, like the apostle Paul, want to spend my short remaining time on earth serving others. It is my desire that there be no retirement, no twiddling of thumbs, no worthless endeavors, no fears, and no worry. I want to completely trust the Lord to prolong my days only as long as there is work for me to do.

In this issue we are considering end-of-life issues and death. These issues are important to every man living on the earth, especially to Anabaptists. Let us think more clearly than the people of the world who have only a fearful expectation of punishment and no hope. Some people of this world want to end life with suicide while others want to prolong their breathing even when there is no earthly usefulness.

I say there is a better way; let godly people die when God calls them home. Skip the harsh medicines, the machines, and the lengthy, expensive hospital stays (see Zimmerman’s “The End of Medicine”). Remember, in only a short while we are all going to die (see Strubhar’s “Victory Over Death”). Make the most of serving while you are living and in fair health.

The Bible repeatedly tells us “the time is short.” Life is like dew on the morning grass that soon disappears when the sun comes out. Jesus said He is coming quickly.

Even so, come Lord Jesus. Come for me.

Rest in Peace,

James G. Landis

POSTSCRIPT: *Anabaptist Voice* is meant to be a magazine that inspires you as well as makes you think. For this reason we have put practical questions in at many different places. We want you to do more than just think. Write us. Share your thoughts on the various questions. The answers do not need to be contrarian; some supportive answers can also increase faith. Bless AV readers with your insights and thoughts on anything found in the magazine.

Collect Rubies. Draw. Write. We want to hear from you.

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About Anabaptist Voice

Our Mission Statement:

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

Our Purpose:

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

Our Tone:

The tone of the magazine shall be positive in that:

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

Our motto shall be words from Isaiah 30:21.

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

Our Bible Translation Policy:

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

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

Our Finances:

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

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

Our Organization:

The AV Editor is responsible for assuring that *Anabaptist Voice* adheres to the stated purpose, securing writers, and proper copyediting. 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 or through Shalom Ministries may obtain a tax deduction (see page 43 for details).

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 where a close-knit, disciplined brotherhood exists among the believers.

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



Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

In order to provide clarity about who we are, *Anabaptist Voice* lists 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 interpreted and put into practice. The Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain are the heart of Christ’s kingdom teaching for his disciples.
4. Anabaptists recognize the church as Christ’s kingdom on the earth.
5. Faithful obedience to the commands of Christ often brings persecution upon us.
6. The world (*all who do not obey God*) is evil and under the sway of Satan.
7. Our earthly conduct determines our eternal destiny. True faith must result in obedience that will be rewarded in heaven. Evil works prove a lack of faith in God and will result in eternal punishment.
8. Kingdom disciples do not participate in the civil government or “serve” in the military.



Our Readers Write

Policy Note: *Email letters to Anabaptist Voice are encouraged. All letters must be accompanied by the writer's full name and physical address (not a PO Box). If the letter is printed in the magazine, only the writer's initials and state will be attached to the comments. If you send AV a letter, we assume the right to use any part of the letter we deem of interest to our readers. AV will try to be courteous in acknowledging all letters.* - AV Editor

Wrong Picture

I am all for word pictures, but the picture for Proverbs 5:15 in the last issue is not at all what that verse is talking about. If we would draw a picture for what Proverbs 5:15-16 is saying, we would certainly not put it in a magazine where children could see it. But I realize that this picture was drawn by an 11-year-old. Let's study the context or meaning of different portions or verses of Scripture. Sometimes it is saying something quite different from what we think of at first glance.

Keep up the good work. I really appreciate *Anabaptist Voice*.

F.Y. | Montana



Contact to Encourage

I thoroughly enjoyed the latest issue of *Anabaptist Voice* (Issue 10). Thank you for the wonderful content. I especially liked "Finding God in the Netherlands" and was wondering if there is a way to contact Tama and Carmen?

I also find myself living very far from other conservative Anabaptists and, if possible, I would like to send them some words of encouragement. Thank you again for your magazine!

E.R. | Texas

Anabaptist Voice: We are happy to supply such contact information.



The Abode of the Dead

In AV Issue 9, page 9, Strubhar writes "Beginning with righteous Abel, Satan took every departed soul into the abode of the dead (Hades). When Jesus died, He entered into Satan's stronghold of death (Acts 2:27) to wrest the keys of death and Hades from the Prince of Death."

When considering this view of what happened at the death of Jesus we should take note of the following thoughts:

- Jesus said that Lazarus was carried into "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). In this case, Jesus makes no mention of Lazarus being under the domain of Satan, but says "he is comforted" (Luke 16:25).
- Jesus tells the thief on the cross, "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). This does not make sense if Jesus must first spend time in Hades.
- The *Martyrs Mirror*, on page 27, quotes the Apostles' Creed, but does not include the phrase, "He descended into hell."

I believe that Acts 2:27, a quote of Psalm 16:10, refers only to the certainty of Christ's first resurrection and not a descent into Hades. "Because You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10).

"For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 2:27).

Q.W. | Ontario, Canada

Anabaptist Voice: See Ernest's response in "Our Councilors Speak" on page 8.



False Doctrine Leads to Sin

In response to the article, "Did Jesus Pay Our Debt on the Cross?" by Ernest Strubhar in Issue 9, send him my thank-you. That is on the mark.

Years ago I attempted to live by the atonement doctrine which teaches that Jesus paid my debt on the cross. When I was tempted to sin, I rehearsed in my mind the doctrine which said, "Christ paid the penalty for my sin." This was to help me decide whether I should sin, or avoid sin.

The doctrine consistently gave me the rationale that justified choosing to sin, for if the penalty had been paid, I could sin without fear of penalty.

Through a time of crisis, God revealed to me that this was a false teaching. The gospel of salvation teaches a deliverance from sin, not the penalty of sin. This revelation was a kind of salvation experience for me.

When I studied the atonement doctrine, I discovered that most of the texts which were used to teach atonement (that is, God's wrath was appeased by the sacrifice of Christ) were not speaking of that at all, but rather, of redemption or reconciliation.

Evangelical atonement claims Christ paid for our sins, while redemption teaches that the blood of Christ purchased the church, not the sins (Acts 8:28).

The difference is astonishing. If it paid for our sins, then we can freely sin; but if His blood bought us out of sin, we belong to God and ought to avoid sin.

R.S.L. | Maryland



Thoughts on the Beard

I would like to share some thoughts on the beard.

The creation account in Genesis 1 says that God created man. In Genesis 1:31 it says, "And behold it was very good."

I believe God created man with a beard and woman without a beard. If I shave my beard off, am I saying, "No, God, it is not good"?

In another setting Romans 9:20 says, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'"

The beard should be grown in moderation. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40). We trim our hair, toenails, and fingernails respectfully. So we should trim our beard also.

G.E. | Colorado



Prefer Print

Thanks for responding to my email! I looked at your online issues; now I know for sure I want to be on your mailing list. I first considered saying I would read the online version, but quickly changed my mind—there is so much I would like to read.

I spend enough time in front of a screen with my work, so I would prefer a print copy. I'm a book-in-my-hand type of person anyway. Please send me five copies. I would very much like my first issue to be Issue 10, Summer 2018, as there's so much in that one that has piqued my interest. Thanks a million!

L.M. | Manitoba, Canada

Need More AVs!

Thank you for your convictions and continued efforts in producing a magazine dedicated to encouraging the narrow way of Jesus, while living in a world gone awry.

I would like to request that an additional two copies of *Anabaptist Voice* be added to my current mailing as I have had two individuals request them. Is it possible to send two more of the summer issue?

Thank you so much for considering this request and your continued kindness and generosity.

R.D.S.H. | New York



Anabaptists in Ukraine?

I am curious if anyone at *Anabaptist Voice* knows of real Anabaptist worshippers still working in Ukraine. Our Church has roots from the same Baptist sect of the 1600s as the Anabaptists although we do not call ourselves Anabaptists today. We call ourselves Missionary Baptist. All that aside, we are not conventionalist, and we do not believe in many of today's predominant "plans" of salvation. Jesus created his Church and provided one way.

I intend on traveling to Ukraine in October 2018 with the purpose of visiting and meeting people with our church lineage. Any help would be appreciated. I will arrive in Kyiv but feel sure that I will need to travel into the countryside to actually find those still practicing their faith in the original way. Most believers from our church lineage in the major cities are now under the influence of the Southern Baptists. I do not have any interest in meeting with them.

K.M. | Tennessee

Anabaptist Voice: Masters International Ministries has four churches in Ukraine—Kiev, Berezyanka, Shipintsi and Gorodskoye. I believe you would find these churches to be of like precious faith.



I'm Starving!

Thank you for sending me the Summer 2018 issue of *Anabaptist Voice*. I wanted to ask if there is any way I could get back issues of the magazine?

I am new to the Anabaptist way and the Mennonite church. I am trying to learn all I can. Someone has let me borrow a series of CDs from the Anabaptist Identity Conference. I want what I hear coming through the men's voices on the Anabaptist Identity Conference CDs—their

love and passion for living for Christ, for the community, and for the church.

My introduction to the Mennonite church was while I was in prison. During that time a church group would come in and do weekly Bible studies. I was incarcerated for twenty years. Since getting out of prison, I have been helped and embraced by the local Mennonite church and community. I look forward to the day when I can take the instruction class and become a member.

In the meantime, I hunger to learn all I can about living for God, the church and church history. I am like a man who is starving; I am reading and listening to everything I can get my hands on.

If you would like to pass my name on to others, I'm okay with this. I am a hungry man starving to be fed. Please keep me in your prayers.

T.S. | *North Carolina*

Anabaptist Voice: If you feel led to correspond with this hungry man, write AV and we will supply you his contact information. Extra back issues are available.



Permanent Paper

With the recent electronic publication revolution, printed magazines have fallen onto hard times. The more conservative *U.S. News and World Report* I once subscribed to ceased to be printed and went to electronic media altogether. That left me in the cold since I and many Anabaptist believers do not think it wise to become involved in the internet technology in any way. Much that is available in the media is a deadly snare. The extent to which Christians are caught by the pornography that can be accessed in private is now a known fact. I am not saying *Anabaptist Voice* should not be available electronically, but as a voice for “championing a faith that works,” it does well to sound a caution.

What is more, electronic messages are here and gone, not something that can be picked up for a few minutes of reading at odd times, carried along to share while visiting with others, and held to read until falling asleep. For me reading is soporific.

Give me books and hard copies of the *Anabaptist Voice*. They will be readable hundreds of years from now. I have books published in the 1800's that are still very useful. I have books made more valuable with notations in the margins. As I read books or magazines, I can tag pages with bookmarks, Post-Its, or dog-ears if I want to. If I don't want to keep the whole magazine, I can tear out

pages and file them. Or for significant periodicals like *Anabaptist Voice*, I want to keep every issue.

Electronic messages are liable to be temporary for two reasons. With my first computer, I stored the documents on three-inch floppy discs. Those discs deteriorated and became unreadable. And the computer I now use does not have a port for them. The modern CDs do have a more permanent record since they do not depend on magnetic endurance. But with the rapid change in technology, I wonder if the machines to read them will still be for sale fifty years from now. How many have stashes of records, tape reels, and cassettes they can no longer listen to for want of the required player?

The true place for electronic technology in publishing is preparation. In computers, writers and editors have been given the most wonderful invention since the typewriter. And since I am finished composing this script on my word processor, it will be sent by email to the editor.

L.S. | *Pennsylvania*

Anabaptist Voice: We do have all issues available on the *Anabaptist Voice* website. We agree that a printed magazine fosters more careful and enduring writing than the whatever-is-on-my-mind kind of writing where truth is often not relevant in virtual technology.



Quick to Forget

Thanks for the tribute to Hans Landis (*AV* Issue 11, page 22). I would not have known that he was my ancestor if I had not gotten interested in genealogy. The family did not pass on that information. How soon we forget!

It is ironic that my great-granddad married a woman from the same church that killed his ancestor.

I also wonder what Hans Landis would have thought if he knew his great-grandson, Eliab Negley, would serve in the militia of the Continental army in the American Revolution.

B.H. | *Pennsylvania*

Anabaptist Voice: Faith is found or lost in each generation. Each individual makes a choice to serve God or to reject Him and God holds the individual responsible for his choice. Neither the father nor the son is responsible for the choice of the other. This is also true of the grandsons and the great-grandsons.



Our Councilors Speak

Policy Note: This section is dedicated to the input of our Councilors. They provide direction to this project as well as correction and suggestions on the content. This is their platform. - AV Editor

After Death

In answer to our brother's questions on "The Abode of the Dead" (page 5), I will write a few thoughts. First, we must affirm that the only reliable description we have of what happens after death is found in the Scriptures. And the Scriptures leave a lot unsaid. Still, God tells us all that we need to know.

Of this much we are certain: there are but two roads and two destinations for all men. Jesus says that the narrow road leads to *life*; the broad way, to *destruction* (Matthew 7:13-14). Those who hear and do His sayings enter into *life*; those who do not do what Jesus says face *destruction* (Matthew 7:21-27). In Matthew 25, Jesus says He will welcome the righteous into "the kingdom prepared for [them] from the foundation of the world"; and consign the wicked to "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

With that foundation, I offer my understanding of what the Bible teaches about the abode of the dead until the day of judgment.

All the departed dead await the resurrection in Hades (Hebrew: Sheol). Hades is not a big dumping place where everybody is together. Jesus describes the one side of the "great gulf" in Hades as "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22). He also called this place of comfort and rest "Paradise" when He told the penitent malefactor, "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The place of torment on the other side of the "great gulf" is also part of Hades. And I suppose that both these abodes may be subdivided; God knows.

When Jesus died, He entered Hades. When he arose, He opened its sealed door and now He triumphantly proclaims, "I... was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (Revelation 1:18). Because He arose, we shall arise—all of us, righteous or wicked.

I do not want to enter into contention about all this, but I feel quite certain that the modern idea that we die and go straight to heaven is not right. We certainly will not have a new body until the great Resurrection Day.

At death, do we go to be with the Lord? Yes! Jesus entered into Hades (not hell, i.e., *gehenna*), and He is with His people in this wonderful paradise (as I understand it) until the Day of the Resurrection. He is also with us on

earth by His Spirit, and He is with His Father in heaven. That is no problem for the omnipresent One.

I do not know why the Apostles' Creed in the *Martyrs Mirror* does not mention the descent into Hades. Most do, but there are some variations in the text of the Creed.

Ernest Strubhar | *Perkins, Oklahoma*



No Other Gods

"We also will serve the Lord." – **Joshua 24:18**

In Joshua 24, Joshua retold all the blessings the Lord had bestowed on the people of Israel during his lifetime. Then he challenged them to "fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!"

To this the people readily agreed, "We also will serve the Lord."

But there was something wrong, because Joshua responded, "You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God." What the people meant by their pledge was, "Yes, we will serve God and other gods as well."

Joshua reminded the Israelites that one of the laws God had given was, "You shall have no other gods [besides] Me." And he cried out to the people, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel" (Joshua 24:23).

Joshua's cry is no less urgent among God's people today than it was to the people of Israel. His message fits our day just as well, "You cannot serve the Lord God and the foreign gods of the world around you, for He is a jealous God."

The majority of churchgoers in many lands go in and out of the church doors and then serve the gods of this world the rest of the time. Here are some modern-day examples of how churchgoers serve other gods.

- They serve the national religion and bow at the national shrines. They vote and participate in the magistracy.

- Many churchgoers will participate in the violence of war and uphold working in the military industrial complex.
- They enjoy the carnal sports arenas and the environment of the world.
- Child sacrifice (abortion) and the industry that supports it is another place where people are serving the god of Moloch and trying to serve the God of heaven at the same time.
- Serving the god of money and wealth is another way of trying to serve two gods.
- Divorce and remarriage, while professing a love for God, cannot please God.

There are many other things that can grab our attention and draw us away from a singular devotion to God, but a whole-hearted and singular devotion to the God of Heaven is what He demands.

Jesus said that the first and great commandment is: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (**Matthew 22:37-38**). Such a love for God will never allow us to serve other gods.

James G. Landis | *Waynesboro, Georgia*



Collective Repentance

“Repent and do [your] first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.” – **Revelation 2:5**

In the Old Testament God sometimes dealt with His people Israel, the church/assembly in the wilderness (Acts 7:38), on a corporate or collective basis. This is evident in His dealings with the transgression of Achan (Joshua 7). Not only did thirty six of Joshua’s people die because of Achan’s sin when they went up against Ai, but at God’s instructions, Achan was exposed before the people of Israel. We note also that “the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel” and He destroyed not only Achan but his family and possessions.

Throughout the Old Testament, similar instances are given where God brought down judgment and punishment on the people of Israel as a corporate body for the sins of a few, or of an individual.

In the New Testament, however, we do not see that level of corporate or collective punishment because the

final and ultimate sacrifice has been made by Jesus for the sins of all and now we are personally accountable. Yes, our sins may cause detriment to those around us but that is not God acting in a manner of corporate or collective punishment.

Yes, assemblies may fall apart and disintegrate but the New Testament does not show that trouble to be an act of God. Rather, the actions of the people in those assemblies cause the problems.

A careful reading of the letters to the seven churches (assemblies) shows that the admonishments are given to the people in those assemblies and by extension to all those who claim to follow Christ in all ages. The removal of the candlestick seems to signify that God is no longer present in the assembly, the assembly is not destroyed as such nor the people in it. Instead, it seems that by heeding the call to repent and amend their ways, God’s presence, signified by the candlestick, may well be restored to that assembly.

If individuals in an assembly come to the realization that the actions of an individual or a number of individuals in the assembly have caused dishonour to the name of Christ, Galatians 6:1 is the directive. “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted” (ESV).

Such Scriptures as Paul’s words to the church in Thessalonica should also be heeded, “Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us” (**II Thessalonians 3:6**, ESV).

Where the transgressions by either one or more individuals in the assembly is known, and subsequently tolerated or perhaps even condoned by the assembly as a whole, then James 5:16 would certainly be applicable. This passage speaks of a coming before God as a body and collectively repenting. “Confess to one another, therefore, your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offences, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]” (**James 5:16**, AMP).

To me, that all speaks of collective repentance.

Joseph van Loon | *Deloraine, Tasmania*



The End of Medicine

by Reuben Zimmerman

Introduction: *In the past centuries thousands of Anabaptists faced suffering and death at the hands of “righteous” zealots and cruel torturers. These suffering saints, of whom the world was not worthy, were so sure of the reward awaiting them after death that they confidently bore it all “for the joy that was set before them.”*

In contrast, many Anabaptists today want to prolong life on earth as long as possible. Some fall prey to the medical establishment and believe doctors are always right. Any expense is justifiable if it relieves the pain and promises longer life. And when the doctors acknowledge they have done all they can do, the patient resorts to still other hopeless remedies.

In this article, Reuben Zimmerman, a member of the Bruderhof community, offers a sane and more godly way to face a certain death and the life beyond.



For centuries, human beings fought against death with everything they had. Death was unavoidable, but it was still something to be feared and delayed. Now, however, some people are suddenly facilitating it, even embracing it, as a solution to the pain and the problems of living. The reason for the shift, we are told, is that advances in

modern medicine, especially life-support technologies that can postpone death indefinitely, have fundamentally changed the moral calculus. The old Hippocratic ban on causing a patient’s death must supposedly yield to today’s realities.

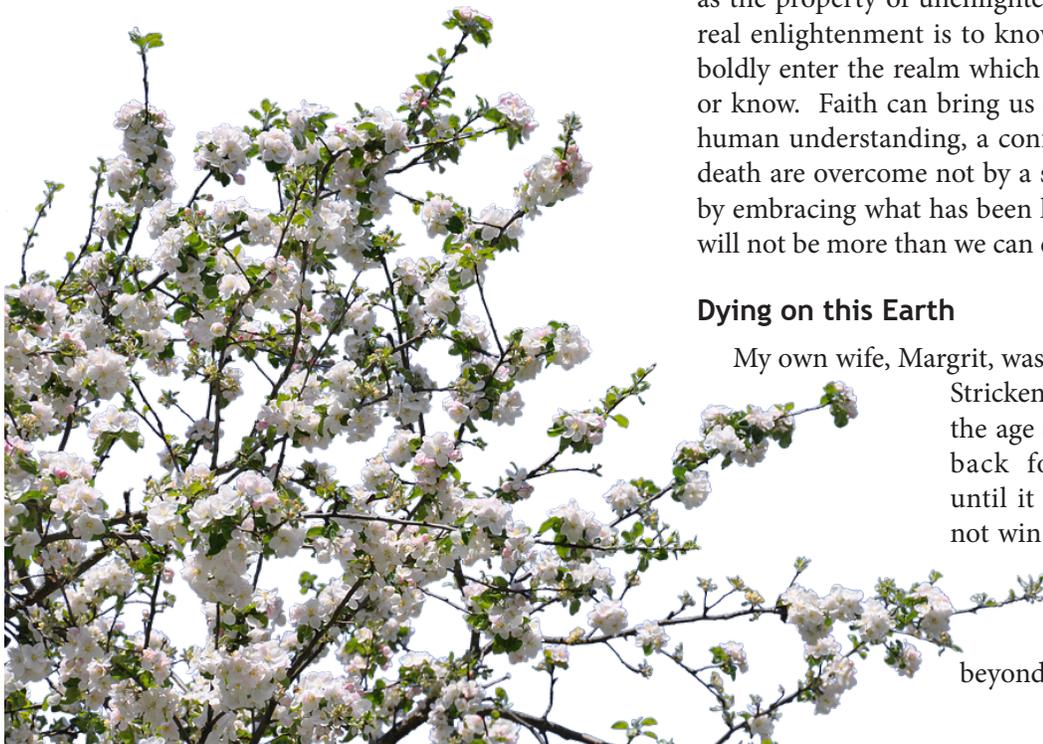
But even if suicide or euthanasia is described in comforting euphemisms and carried out on a comfortable bed in the privacy of our homes, is it really the solution to these dilemmas? Those of us who see the body as more than a mass of quivering cells must protest that it is not. If we are spiritual beings, made in the image of God, then our reasons to keep living can never depend completely on physical ability or the absence of discomfort.

All of us long for personal fulfillment, for happiness, and for good health, and we also want our lives to be meaningful. And yet such meaning cannot be measured by the absence of hearing aids and wheelchairs and oxygen tanks; rather, it must result from the knowledge that we have spent our best years in the service of God and our fellow human beings—that our lives were not lived solely for ourselves, but were in some way poured out for others.

It also depends on faith, which the apostle Paul defined as the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not yet seen. Many people today mock faith as the property of unenlightened zealots. And yet the real enlightenment is to know that with faith, we can boldly enter the realm which in this life we do not see or know. Faith can bring us a peace that surpasses all human understanding, a confidence that the throes of death are overcome not by a syringe of midazolam but by embracing what has been laid on us, trusting that it will not be more than we can endure.

Dying on this Earth

My own wife, Margrit, was an example of such faith. Stricken by small bowel cancer at the age of forty-three, she fought back for twenty-two months until it was clear that she could not win. At that point, she faced death squarely, and with a calm bravery that came from far beyond herself.



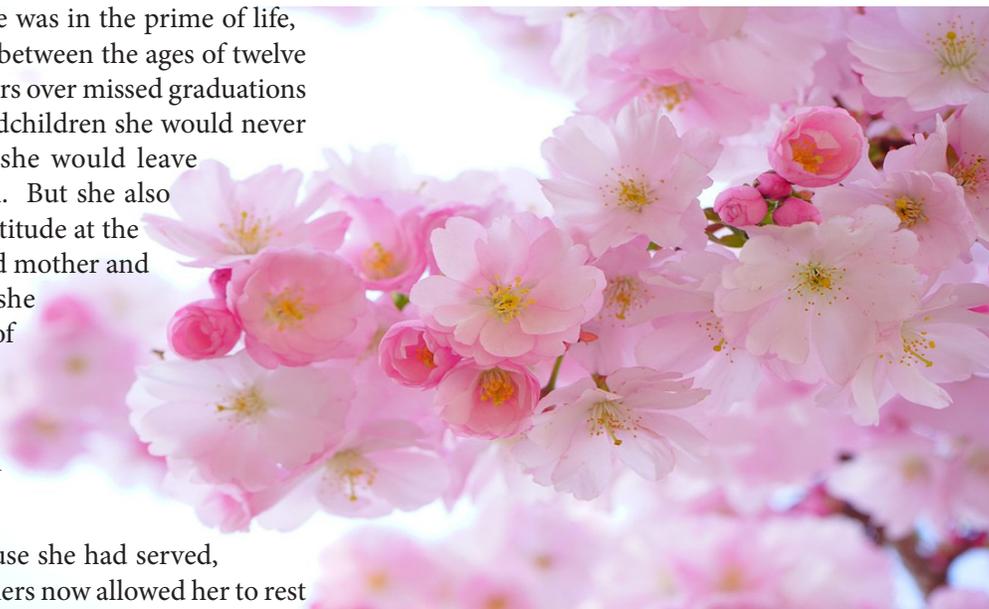
Letting go wasn't easy: she was in the prime of life, as were our five children, all between the ages of twelve and nineteen. So she shed tears over missed graduations and weddings, over the grandchildren she would never see, and over the fact that she would leave me a widower at forty-seven. But she also looked back with joy and gratitude at the life she had lived as a wife and mother and nurse: at the many births she had attended, the hundreds of patients she had cared for, and the thousands of lives she had touched, knowingly and unknowingly, over many years.

She was ready to go because she had served, and her years of service to others now allowed her to rest with a sense of peaceful (if humble) accomplishment. Thus when I asked her, weeks before the end, if she was afraid, she could answer, "No, I don't think so. I believe Jesus is coming to fetch me."

We celebrated our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary in December 2014, and by January 2015, she could manage only yogurt and broth. By February it was weak tea, fortified with honey and cream. By March, she was gone. Despite receiving the best care medicine could offer, she still suffered terribly in her last ten days: malignant small bowel obstruction, which invariably leads to vomiting, is one of the most difficult situations palliative medicine experts have to deal with. Still, she never once flinched or complained, and instead radiated peace and love, often through shining eyes, until her last agonizing breath.

She went Home surrounded by her family: her parents, my parents, her siblings, and our children. There was singing, and there were prayers, and plenty of tears, and we prayed often that she might somehow be released, but we never once contemplated pushing things along or taking things into our own hands. Like those willing to await the birth of a baby, we waited for God's moment, knowing that just as those gathered around a laboring woman rejoice when the child bursts out of the womb, those waiting for Margrit in the world beyond would break into singing when she crossed her Jordan.

She was blessed with a strong faith, and yet it wasn't just her faith that held her through: it was the love of the community to which we belong that carried her, and our family, through the most difficult hours. She received expert medical care, but more than that, she received pastoral care in the form of house calls and prayers, songs and services. From the moment she was diagnosed with cancer, people rallied around her.



Children brought flowers, old friends dropped by to reminisce, acquaintances we hardly knew dropped in with baskets of food. But what of the thousands of people who lack such love? And could it be the absence of this love that is driving so many of them to take matters into their own hands?

Dying in the Church

In 1651, George Fox, founder of the Quakers, famously told Oliver Cromwell's representatives that he wished to live such a life that would "take away the occasion for war." Might we now dare to live such a life that would take away the occasion for suicide and euthanasia? And if so, what might such a life look like? In an age that prizes autonomy and individualism above everything else, derides accountability, and worships self-sufficiency, creating such a life will be no easy task. But if Christ calls us to bear one another's burdens, can we do anything less?

The hospitals of medieval Europe, in fact, were established as religious communities in which monks and nuns cared for the sick and the dying; the French called them *hôtels-Dieu*, or "hostels of God." By the ninth century, Charlemagne had ordered cathedrals and monasteries to build their own hospital facilities, some of which survive to this day; the tradition has been carried on by the Catholic Church. Sadly, as medicine evolved into a largely scientific discipline, its original spiritual core, though no less needed today, has largely withered away. Thus people now die attached to machines and monitors that blink and beep, while family and friends, sequestered in plush conference rooms, wait to be called in "when it is all over." Such is the irony of modern

medicine: though aiming nobly to eliminate suffering, we have unwittingly abandoned the dying.

If we really want to take death back, we need to bring the dying back into our churches and into our homes. We need to push away those intrusions of medicine that pointlessly serve only to prolong the process of dying, even as we embrace those interventions that do relieve pain and breathlessness and nausea. We need to bring back pastors and music, but most of all, we need to invite God back into the picture and put our trust in Him, instead of in those new midwives of death, who, syringes in hand, promise a swift and painless dispatch into the unknown (and unaccompanied) night.

Margrit's dying was not quick or easy, but as I look back on it now, I am certain that it was exactly as God intended it to be. She suffered, and yet bringing God back into the picture does not mean eliminating suffering; it means discovering and learning the only real way to bear it. Thus there was deep spiritual worth in our waiting for God's moment; profound lessons learned from the mystery of not knowing, and of not being in control. We were helpless, and yet at the same time we were cushioned by unseen wings, and even as we grieved we could rejoice as hard hearts were softened, dull consciences stirred, and closed eyes opened.

The ancients believed we could learn something from the dying: that they were stretched between heaven and earth. To the extent that we ourselves resist the urge to meddle with divine timing, there is much we can learn from them still today. In the community where I live and work, almost no one dies in the hospital, much less the ICU. Most, like Margrit, die at home, in their own beds, surrounded by flowers and music and children and singing. They are very ordinary people, and they fear death and disability like anyone else, but the active love that surrounds them helps answer their fears. The prayers of those who watch with them through long days and even longer nights uphold them more powerfully than any carefully titrated medicine. They also do not die alone, and never need to organize their own wakes. This is the way of hope in life beyond death and the way of meaning in and through suffering.



Reuben & Margrit Zimmerman

The apostle Matthew shows us this way when he describes the suffering of Christ: His very human reaction to it (He prayed for deliverance) and His ultimate obedience and bravery. Incredibly, when hanging on the cross, He refused vinegar mixed with gall, a mixture which historians tell us was supposed to numb the mind and thereby dull pain. He did this so that He could face death with a clear mind: proof that He was laying down His life for us, accepting suffering voluntarily.

In this way is His death an example to those of us who claim to follow Him, and in this way will all of us, facing the inevitable pain and infirmity that is our lot, one day be faced with the same choice: to reject and avoid suffering, or to submit to it in God's name—and with His grace allow ourselves to be purified and redeemed through it.

Already in the first century, the apostle Peter exhorted his readers to submit to the discipline of suffering, suggesting that it could serve a holy purpose: “**Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin**” (1 Peter 4:1). Peter goes on to say, “**But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed**” (1 Peter 4:13). Paul similarly suggests that we should “**boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance**” (Romans 5:3).

The writers of these New Testament passages may have been talking primarily about religious persecution, but, in the end, the subjugation of the body—and the spiritual purification with which we can be blessed as a result—need not depend on the source of our pain. An example of this is Alison Davis, who, as Robert Carle writes, survived a suicide attempt and whose newfound will to live exemplifies the possibility of finding a fruitful and fulfilled life, even when that life has been physically wrecked by pain and disability.

Born in England in 1955 with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, Davis was confined to a wheelchair by the age of fourteen; by thirty, having developed emphysema, osteoporosis, and arthritis as well, she attempted suicide. At first furious that she survived, she eventually went on to experience a conversion, a pilgrimage to Lourdes, and



then twenty-eight years of service to the least and the lost, serving death row inmates in Texas and founding a charity for disabled children in India.

Such a life shows that dignity—a term much bandied about, but which comes from the Latin *dignitas* and means “virtue, worthiness, or honor”—does not depend on autonomy or independence, and certainly not on lack of suffering, but rather on our ability to accept the crosses laid on us in life, and to wait patiently for God’s hour when it comes to death.

None of us wants to suffer needlessly. But neither can we ever avoid pain and suffering completely. The very Son of God Himself had to endure the bitter agony of the cross, and it was through this ordeal that the world was redeemed. Can we presume to escape with anything less?

Alice von Hildebrand says that when we look at suffering in this way, it becomes a privilege: we suffer alongside the Savior. “Be faithful until death,” He urges us, “and I will give you the crown of life” (**Revelation 2:10**).

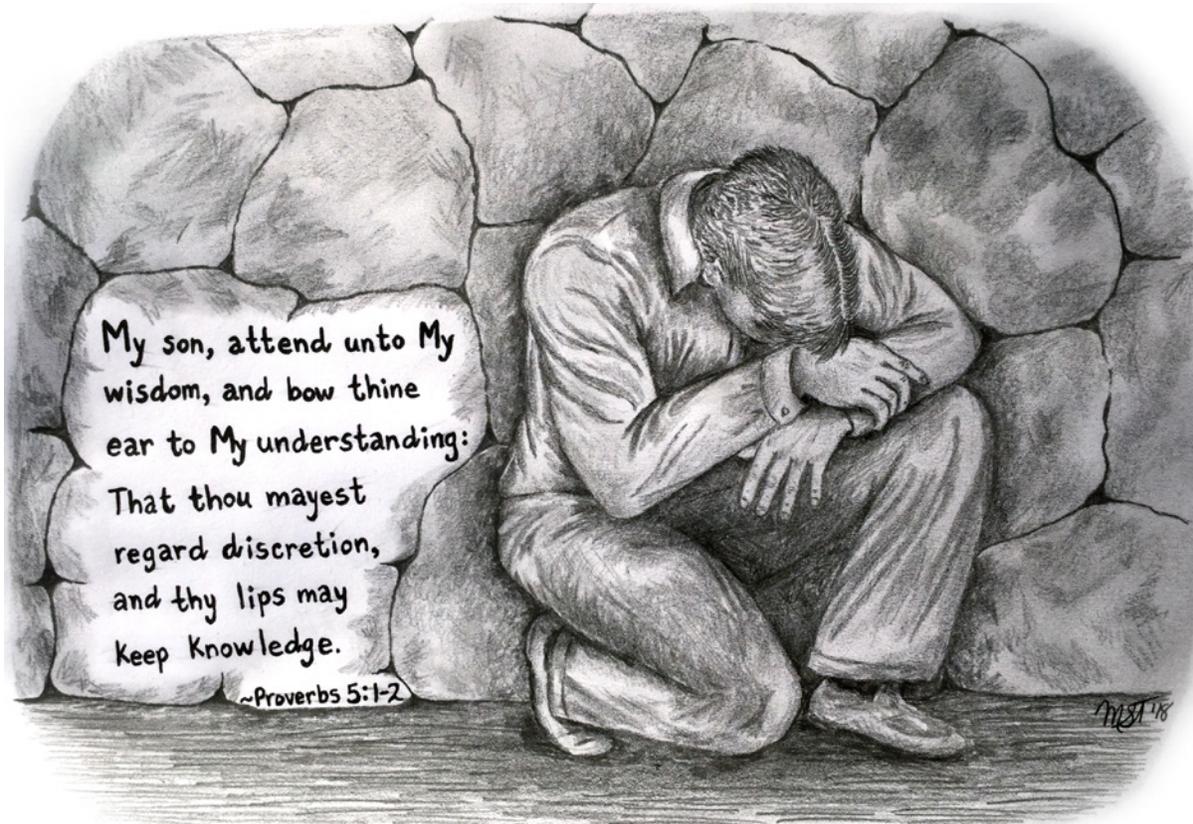
Absent a living faith, and without the surrounding love of an active community, it is entirely understandable that people want to take death back into their own hands. But as followers of Christ who have been charged with preaching the Good News to all people—who know that there is, to quote the apostle Paul, a “far better way”—we know that those hands are empty, and so we cannot stand silently by.

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Proverbs Illustrated

The book of Proverbs teaches many memorable lessons with word pictures. *Anabaptist Voice* would like to include in “Proverbs Illustrated” your original sketch illustrating some of the great truths found in this book of wisdom.



Original Sketch by Michele Thiessen, Westville, Nova Scotia, Canada

The Dutch Book of Martyrs

by Joseph Stoll

Introduction: *This article was originally published as the preface to James Lowry's book, The Martyrs' Mirror Made Plain. It is here reprinted with the permission of Pathway Publishers.*

A huge volume of more than a thousand pages, the *Martyrs Mirror* has been around for a long time, shaping lives and changing eternal destinies. It is a book that describes the suffering church down through the ages and thus has become a worthy sequel to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

And yet in our day the *Martyrs Mirror* is a neglected book that far too often merely collects dust in Grandfather's rolltop desk. As today's descendants of the Anabaptists become more like the world, more Protestant in their outlook, more liberal in their doctrine, there is less and less interest in the old martyr stories.

I was browsing one day in a large Mennonite bookstore when a man came to the customer counter and asked for a *Martyrs Mirror*. With a perplexed look, the lady at the desk replied, "I think, sir, that you're in the wrong store. We don't sell mirrors."

Although the lady was a Mennonite and worked with books every day, she was apparently ignorant of the foremost classic of her Anabaptist heritage. That is a sad commentary of our times. Even in our Old Order homes, the *Martyrs Mirror* is rarely given the serious study it deserves. For this big book has an urgent message. The message is for our young people, it is for Christian parents, and it is for the ministers of our churches. Indeed, the message is for all who would "live godly in Christ Jesus."

In the past the accounts in this book have inspired men and women to be steadfast in the faith, even unto death. The *Martyrs Mirror* has that potential still. Who knows what the future may hold? The age of tolerance in which we bask may well be an illusion. Who can tell how soon it could end and the days of the martyrs return?

Even if our times of freedom continue, we need the message of the *Martyrs Mirror*. When Thieleman van Braght wrote the introduction in 1659, he said that the danger was greater under freedom than it had been during the bloody days of persecution. "For then Satan came openly...as a roaring lion," he wrote. "His chief design then was to destroy the body, but now he comes as in the night, or in the twilight, in a strange but yet pleasing form, and...lies in wait to destroy the soul."

If we esteem our Christian heritage—the blood of the martyrs—then we will esteem the stories that tell of the martyrs' sufferings and trials. We will be inspired by their faith which was dearer to them than life itself. That is the purpose of this study guide—to prod us to become more familiar with the contents of the *Martyrs Mirror*. But that is not all, for that is only the beginning. To study will hopefully be the path to a far greater and nobler goal. May the faith of the martyrs become our very own faith, a faith that will serve us well in life and not desert us in the hour of death.

J.S. | Aylmer, Ontario

You can order a copy of *Martyrs Mirror* or *Martyr's Mirror Made Plain* from Sermon on the Mount Publishing, P.O. Box 246, Manchester, MI 48158. They are also available online at www.kingdomreading.com.

"Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment....of whom the world was not worthy.... And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better."

—Hebrews 11:35b-36, 38a-40a

The Swiss Book of Martyrs

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

The *Martyrs Mirror*, published in 1660, was compiled and illustrated by Dutch Anabaptists and most of its characters were Dutch martyrs. In 1702, forty-two years later, the Swiss Mennonites printed their own martyr book in German, titled *Golden Apples in Silver Bowls*.

By 1702 the Swiss cantons and the Reformed church no longer used the death sentence. However, they continued to persecute Anabaptists with lengthy imprisonment, economic hardship, and sometimes slavery as rowers on galley ships.

The compiler of *Golden Apples in Silver Bowls* recognized that external peace and prosperity—“peace” was only relative as some believers were still being imprisoned for their faith!—brought many dangers with it. He wrote:

...human nature is so depraved that it cannot endure good days of ease, for then, generally, the human soul is destroyed by its learning to love this world and the things of the world. For when the flesh grows fat and lascivious, it kicks and loses its hold on the rock of salvation, becoming the carnal nation which God complains about in Deuteronomy (32:15). Yes, then usually the spirit grows dry, weary, lazy and weak; it is just like a scales: when one part of the scales goes up the other comes down...

To be sure, it is true that outward peace causes the number of confessing Christians to grow, but it is also true that at such times of ease Satan instigates all kinds of evil counsel, and manages in the most subtle ways, with love of self, of the world and of money, and such kinds of most dangerous devices, to entice the believers of truth (Ezekiel 16:49).*

What to do about the temptation of spiritual laxity? Surely, the writings and examples of the brave ones who had gone before, pressing their way into the kingdom of heaven, could be held up as examples for the present day. To that end, *Golden Apples* begins with an epistle from, and the court record of Michael Sattler. Next are presented several edifying writings from another Swiss Brethren martyr, Thomas von Imbroich, who wrote a confession of faith and several epistles while in prison. These writings present a well-thought-through defense of believer’s baptism as well as much edifying encouragement. Letters from other martyrs are included as well.

*Leonard Gross, editor, *Golden Apples in Silver Bowls*, 1999, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, pp. 34-35.

In the next section, the editor included the *Dortrecht Confession of Faith*—a Dutch Mennonite confession adopted on April 21, 1632—known today by some Amish as the Eighteen Articles. But this version has nineteen articles! The editor modified the *Dortrecht Confession*, making additions and deletions which brought it more in line with the thought of the Swiss Brethren, and added an article “On the Holy Spirit.”

Golden Apples in Silver Bowls concludes with several prayers, some of which were written by Leenaert Clock. (Clock also wrote the *Lob Leid* that is sung in every Amish service). *Golden Apples* also includes eleven questions and answers on Christian singing, including the following:

Question: Is it not sufficient for a beautiful melody simply to be heard?

Answer: Oh no! Paul says, sing to the Lord in or with your hearts. Even the lips of the ungodly are able to produce a lovely voice.*

As Mennonites and Amish left Europe and came to America, they continued to value *Golden Apples in Silver Bowls*. In 1745 the Mennonites had the monks and nuns of the Ephrata Cloister reprint the book for them in the original German.

In 1999, *Golden Apples* was rescued from obscurity by being translated into English. If you get a copy and read it, what will you find there? In the words of its eighteenth-century editor,

Here the kind reader will find not only our oral confession but also the true faith of the heart which fulfills itself in love—as noted in the various examples of genuine disciples of Christ presented below, who demonstrated genuine heroic courage amidst grave tribulation. Here, we may find ourselves reflected in the footsteps of our Anointed One, and will thus find the means to stir our hearts to obedience to the truth.*

You can order a copy of *Golden Apples in Silver Bowls* from Sermon on the Mount Publishing, P.O. Box 246, Manchester, MI 48158. It is also available online at www.kingdomreading.com.

A.V.S. | Manchester, Michigan

* *Ibid.*, p. 290.

* *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Victory Over Death

by Ernest Strubhar

Introduction: *This article is a transcript/summary of the sermon preached at my mother's funeral on July 21, 2018.*

“For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:25-26).

We are here because of death. Death took my mother. Death is our enemy, but Death is a defeated enemy.

My mother lived 94 years of life, and she died. Her father, Albert, lived 84 years, and he died. Her mother, Rachel, lived 92 years, and she died. My mother's six children are all here, but we will die (unless Christ comes first). And so will you.

The first man Adam lived 930 years, and he died. His son Seth lived 912 years, and he died. Methuselah lived 969 years, and he died. Ten generations lived before the Great Flood. Many men and women lived, and died.

In the Flood multitudes more, both men and women, young and old, died. All died in that flood except one righteous man, Noah, and his family. But though Noah survived the Great Flood and lived 950 years, he too died.

Death Reigned

Why do living men die?

God said to Adam, **“If you eat of that tree, you will die.”** Adam ate; he died. Eve ate; she died. The forbidden fruit they ate was not a poisoned apple. It was the pursuit of personal autonomy—the right to rule their own lives. Their choice brought death as a consequence. They cut themselves off from Life. They turned their back on Life. They believed the devil's lie: **“You can sin and get by; you can sin and not die.”** But just as God said, they died.

Paul wrote about Adam in Romans 5:10, **“Through this one man sin entered the world and death entered through sin. Thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”**

And Death reigned!

Men fathered children. Mothers bore children. Children were born. They lived and they died, generation after generation. They all died for thousands of years—because Death reigned.

Life Came

Then 2000 years ago Life and the Kingdom of God broke into the world. The Virgin Mary conceived a child by the Spirit of God. An angel named her child. **“You shall call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sin.”** Jesus was born like any other child, but He lived a life like no other man has lived or can live.

After 33 years of living on earth as a man, this man Jesus also died. But His death was unlike any other. He did not die because of His own sin: He had no sin.

Why then did He die? While some say He was killed by the Jews, He would not have been had He not voluntarily surrendered Himself to death. No, though He was unjustly condemned to death and was crucified, they did not take His life on their own accord. He was Life. Death did not reign over Him. It had no power over Him. None!

How then could He die? He tells us in John 10:17-18, **“I lay down My life.... No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.”**

This man Jesus—behold Him and stand in awe. Even His enemies testified of Him, **“Never has a man spoken like this man,”** And never has a man lived like this man. Never has a man died like this man. Never! Never before. Never again.

“Behold the man,” I say. **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** Sin brings death. Sin cuts us off from Life. And this man Jesus takes away sin—our sin, mine and yours.

God Made us for Life

God created us for life. He formed the first body of dust, molded it and made a man. He breathed into that body the breath of life, life from the living God.

This living God calls us as He did Israel of old: **“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death” (Deuteronomy 30:19).**

The eternal Son who spoke those words became the second Adam in the incarnation. Hear what He says: **“I am the living bread, the bread of life. I am the living water, the water of life. I am the light of life, the resurrection and the life—the way, the truth, and the life.”**

Of Him John writes, “He who has the Son of God has life. He who does not have the Son of God, does not have life.”

We all love life. Life is for living. Though not all know it, and none of us can understand it fully, “In Him we live, and move, and have our being. . . . We are His offspring” (Acts 17:28).

Life and Death

War rages on planet Earth. Life struggles against Death, and Death against Life. We who are alive find ourselves pursued by Death, and sooner or later Death overtakes us, as it did my mother.

Why must it be so?

The Prince of Death is still going to and fro on the earth—as a lion, seeking whom he may devour; as an angel of light, seeking whom he can deceive. He still seeks to steal, to kill and to destroy. He does it through any means possible. But his primary weapon is still “the lie.” He still says in both slanderous and subtle ways, “God does not mean what He says. You can sin and get by. You can sin and not die.”

This Deceiver says, “Come on! Come with me and I’ll give you ‘life.’ Live your own life. Do as you please. I offer peace and plenty, power and pleasure, wine and women, dining and dancing—a fling and some fun.” But it’s all a lie. He wants us to die.

Jesus Christ, our Creator God, wants us to partake of Him, to live in Him—by Him and for Him—and some day receive the crown of life that never fades away.

Choose Life

He who says, “I have set before you life and death,” immediately pleads, “Choose life” (Deuteronomy 30:19). He then tells us how to choose life: “Love the LORD your God, obey His voice, and cling to Him, for He is your life” (Deuteronomy 30:20).

Friends, choose life!

Choose Christ, for He is your life. Choose to surrender to Him, for He is King. Choose to take up your cross and follow Him. Choose to die to yourself because only in dying to self can you live to God.

Going Home

The last time I saw my mother, she told me, “I want to go home. I just want to go home.”

What could I say? I told her, “Mother, we must trust God. Life and death are in God’s hands, not ours. He will take you home in His time.”

God has taken her home! Death is the door to home.

Sometimes we speak of death as crossing the river to the land that lies beyond. That river runs through a dark valley. The descent into this valley may be steep and sudden. Many reach the river without warning. Other times the descent is gradual and slow. And some, like my mother, long to cross over. She went without fear, in peace, raising her hand in a signal of victory as she passed over the river.

Listen to Jesus!

The eternal Son of God came from the other side, from eternity into time. He knows what lies beyond the door of death. If we, like my mother, would pass over the river in peace, we must listen to Jesus.

Jesus tells us, “You must be born again if you would enter the Kingdom of God.” As death is the door into eternity, so the new birth is the door into the Kingdom of God!

Are you born again by the Spirit of God, born into a new life in the Kingdom? If so, praise God. But by all means, don’t stand in the door! No man wants to linger long in death, the door to eternity. And no man should linger long focused on the door to the Kingdom.

Life is for living. The Kingdom is a great house, full of mysteries and marvels. Live life!

We live in the Kingdom by living in the King. He who abides in the Son has Life. He who is cut off from the Son of God does not have Life.

Embrace Life by choosing Jesus, all that He is and all that He says.

Jesus says, “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is here.” Turn around. Leave the way of the world where good and evil mix.

Jesus says, “Follow Me! Be my disciple; become like me.”

Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for their sins, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for right living, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Such is life in the Kingdom.

Jesus says, “Do not lay up treasures on earth. Do not worry about your life. Seek first the Kingdom of God and the necessary things of life will be supplied by your Father in heaven.”

Jesus says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden. Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me. I will give you rest.”

Jesus says, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”

Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live.”

A saving faith disconnects us from the world and its lusts; it connects us to Christ and His life. Such a faith establishes a life-giving union, a vine-and-branches connection. “In Him we live.” Without Him we wither and die.

Life Conquers Death

Jesus gave His life. He voluntarily entered into Hades, the prison of the dead. Why? “That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (**Hebrews 2:14-15**).

But Hades could not hold Him! Praise God!

Peter applied the prophesy of Psalm 22 to Christ: “You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” Then he adds, “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.” This Jesus ascended to the Father and was “exalted to the right hand of God” (**Acts 2:27-33**).

This Jesus “must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (**1 Corinthians 15:25-26**).

But for now we live in the land of the dying. There is coming a day “when this corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal will put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”

In that day we shall sing in triumph, “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin. . . . But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

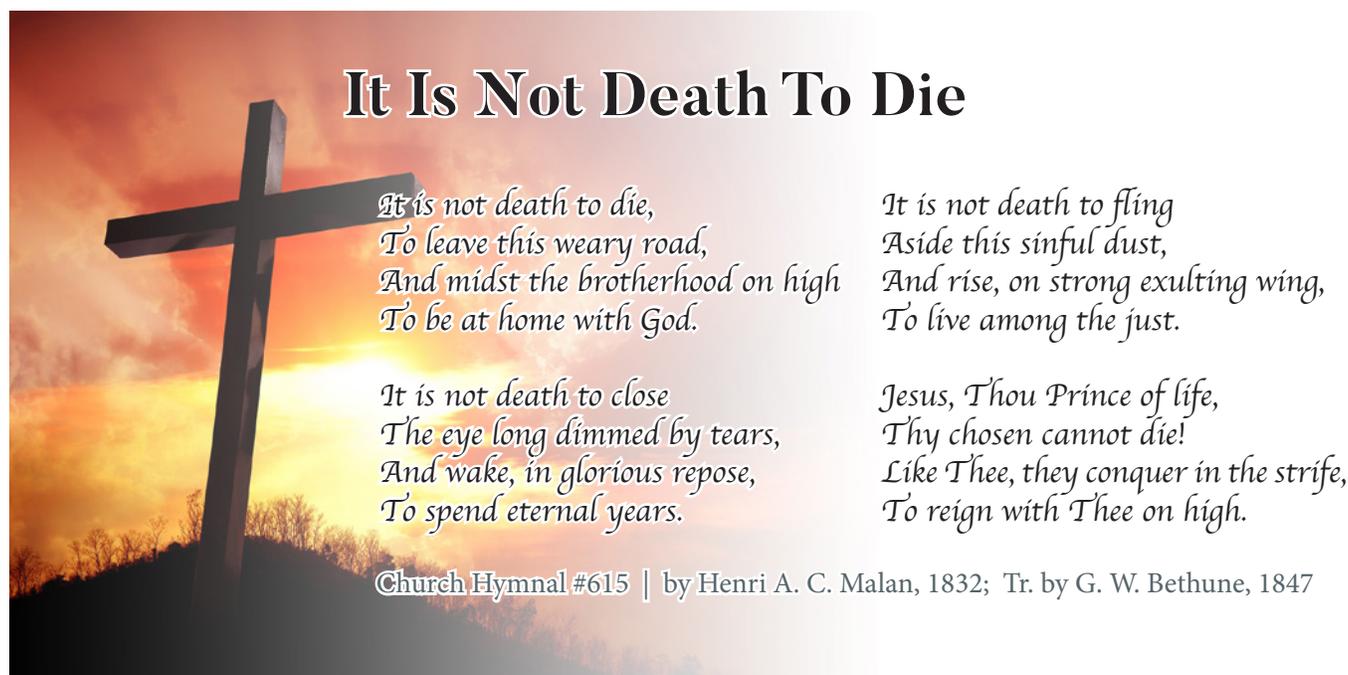
No wonder Jesus said, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (**Matthew 16:18**). Though we who are sons of Life may die, Death has no power over us.

My mother has died, as did her forefathers; as will we, her children. But Hades cannot hold my mother, nor us, in its grip. There will be a resurrection of the dead in the last day—both of the wicked, unto condemnation; and of the righteous, into Life.

Therefore, my dear friends, hear the call of the King who conquered Death and offers His people Life in His Kingdom. “Come unto Me. Come and die. Come and live!”

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

E.S. | Perkins, Oklahoma



It Is Not Death To Die

*It is not death to die,
To leave this weary road,
And midst the brotherhood on high
To be at home with God.*

*It is not death to close
The eye long dimmed by tears,
And wake, in glorious repose,
To spend eternal years.*

*It is not death to fling
Aside this sinful dust,
And rise, on strong exulting wing,
To live among the just.*

*Jesus, Thou Prince of life,
Thy chosen cannot die!
Like Thee, they conquer in the strife,
To reign with Thee on high.*

Church Hymnal #615 | by Henri A. C. Malan, 1832; Tr. by G. W. Bethune, 1847

A Cappella Music in Our Churches

by Enos Heatwole, Reprinted from *Faith Builder*, May 1989

Many North American Mennonites have a 450-year heritage of congregational singing without instruments. What started and preserved this heritage? Should it continue to be preserved and if so, how?

During the Middle Ages, music in the western churches became a function of only the church leaders. Music was sung in the Latin language, and the congregation did not participate. This was changed by the Reformation when Luther and others introduced singing in the common tongue to the whole congregation.

The 16th century Anabaptists insisted that all congregational singing should be in a cappella form, that is, without instrumental accompaniment. This form of a cappella singing served the Anabaptist Mennonite forefathers well as they were forced by persecution to hiding places of forests, mountains and caves. When our spiritual forebears came to this country and settled in the wilderness, they could meet anywhere to worship and sing their praise to God because, as a group, they could sing without instruments. Even today this ability to sing a cappella is adaptable to every situation from street to skyscraper, from park to prison, and from home to church.

A cappella singing has been preserved even though important changes have affected our singing. Over a century ago shaped notes and four-part harmony were introduced. Most observers will agree that these changes have improved the quality of our church music. This heritage is valuable and can be maintained.

We need to be humble with this gift, but we should prize it and see that congregational singing does not die in our generation. Its transmission is not automatic and will only be preserved if we value it and cultivate it.

What methods can be used to maintain four-part a cappella music in our congregations? It has been almost one hundred fifty years since Joseph Funk of Singers Glen, Virginia introduced a musical scale of shaped notes with each shape representing a different tone on the musical scale. This had a great impact on Mennonite church music because he not only introduced a method for non-professional musicians to learn to read music, but he taught this method through singing schools. Many of Funk's students became teachers who taught a cappella music in most Mennonite communities in the United States and Canada by the turn of the 20th century.

This shaped-note method can be learned quickly by most people in a congregation. With the use of words in the musical scale (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do), new tunes can be learned precisely and quickly. Without knowing the lines and spaces, a person who knows the distance between the various notes on the tonal scale can quickly learn a new song. Since the majority of our people have had no formal musical training and do not know how to read round notes, by learning the shaped notes and the distance between the notes on the tonal scale, our people can still be musically literate.

While it would be difficult to duplicate the singing schools of fifty or one hundred years ago, we do have opportunities to teach this method of learning music. Many of our churches have Christian day schools which afford an opportunity to train the upcoming generation. We have many short-term Bible schools where music is being taught. Sometimes it may be necessary for a congregation or group of congregations to conduct a four to six-day music school for adults where shaped-note music is taught and practiced.

This heritage of good singing can be broken by one generation; and if this skill is lost, it will be very difficult to revive. Beside the problem of neglect, probably the greatest damage that can come to a cappella singing in our churches is the introduction of instruments into the worship service. In a *Gospel Herald* article entitled "Singing Mennonites," Alice Parker wrote, "The introduction of a piano or organ divides the responsibility for the sound between the voices and the instrument, lessening the need for total congregational involvement. When a group gets used to 'following' a piano or organ, the ensemble skills disappear; listening to each other is no longer important."

Our goal should be to unite the whole congregation in its worship to God. The singing should not only bring praise to God, but stimulate fellow worshipers. We should work for quality of expression which communicates with both the words and the music. In doing this, we need to be careful not to allow a kind of professionalism to overtake us where we begin to exclude some in the congregation and where the emphasis is on performance instead of on worship.

May God be praised as we unite our voices in song to worship and praise Him.

E. H. | Denmark, South Carolina

A Heritage of Song

by James G. Landis

Probably one of the most common marks of an Anabaptist congregation of believers is how they sing together without instruments. This harmonious singing of hymns as a congregation helps bind a people of God together.

This is true because each voice must be subsumed by the group. Each person must sing the same song, use the same timing, and blend his voice with that of others.

Congregational singing draws people together. When the meeting place is full of people, the singing goes much better. And if the people sit close together when a smaller congregation meets in a larger room, the singing goes better and helps meld them closer in heart and soul, as well.

Another value of congregational singing is that it encourages the participation of everyone. When people slouch down in their seats, do not follow along in the song books, sit in the back of the meeting room, and gawk around, it is pretty evident they are not an active part of the worship service. But when one joins in, or at least follows along, he is not just a spectator watching a performance; he becomes an active part of the congregation.

We are convinced that good singing should be encouraged in our churches. It is a heritage of song we want to perpetuate. And I can assure you that beautiful music in song can slip away in less than one generation. When former Anabaptists attend churches that do not have congregational singing without instruments, they soon get out of practice and their children never learn how to sing well.

So it is important to Anabaptist believers that this heritage of song be passed on to our children. But how do we do that? We want to pass on some good suggestions found on the bulletin of the “The Christian Hymnary Hymn Conference” (June 1-3, 2018) held at the Roxbury Campground, Pennsylvania.

- Promote enthusiastic “heart” singing, avoiding singing with overemphasis on the voice.
- Remember that singing well is not a spiritual gift and can be learned, just like brushing your teeth: practice, practice, practice!
- Make family meal times and devotional times happy and memorable! Singing creates an emotional bond.
- Create good acoustics to make singing enjoyable. Rip out the carpet [and make the ceiling hard] if you need to.
- Look for ways to take the gospel in song to the world around—neighbors, shut-ins, nursing homes, streets and prisons.
- Treasure the old songs and hymns and write new ones!
- Focus on the beauty of simplicity when writing hymns. Difficult choral music is ineffective in ministering to the lost or producing a changed life and focuses on the vehicle/voice rather than the message.
- Promote interaction among plain Anabaptist groups so that we can be encouraged by, and learn from, each other.

Practical Questions:

1. What factors make good acoustics in a meeting room?
2. Why is (or is not) separate seating important for good singing?
3. Can a church have good congregational singing if families do not sing hymns at home?
4. How do shaped notes enhance the ability to sing new songs?



The basis of all Anabaptist beliefs is the two-kingdom concept. You cannot live in both kingdoms with divided loyalties. You must make a choice. Are you in the kingdom of this world or are you in the Kingdom of God?

~ Frank Reed



THE WORD OF GOD

The word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. - I Pet. 1:25

REJOICE, REJOICE, YE CHRISTIANS ALL

WALDIS 8. 7. 8. 7. D.

Balthasar Hubmaier, d. 1528
Die Lieder der Hutterischen Bruder, 23
Tr. Henry C. Vedder, 1853-1935, alt.

Burkhard Waldis, 1553

1. Re - joyce, re - joyce, ye Chris-tians all, And break forth in - to sing - ing!
2. Ah, man, blind man, now hear the Word, Make sure your state and call - ing;
3. O Je - sus Christ, Thou Son of God, Let us not lack Thy fa - vor,
4. Praise God, praise God in u - ni - ty, Ye Chris-tian peo - ple sweet - ly,

Since far and wide on ev - 'ry side The Word of God is ring - ing.
Be - lieve the Word, it is the pow'r By which we're kept from fall - ing.
For what shall be our just re - ward If salt shall lose its sa - vor?
That He His Word has spread a - broad—His Word, His work com - plete - ly.

And well ye know, no hu - man foe Our souls from Christ can sev - er;
Your val - ued lore at once give o'er, Re - nounce your vain en - deav - or;
With an - gry flame t'ef - face Thy Name In vain shall men en - deav - or;
No hu - man hand can Him with - stand, No name how high so - ev - er;

For to the base and men of grace, God's Word stands sure for - ev - er.
This shows the way, no long - er stray, God's Word stands sure for - ev - er.
Not for a day, the same for aye, God's Word stands sure for - ev - er.
And sing we then our glad A - men. God's Word stands sure for - ev - er.



Childlike Faith

by Menno Knight

Few things set me off as quickly as self-styled Anabaptists dismissing Protestants haphazardly in response to the nominal “churchianity” they see across much of America. I say, “Don’t paint them all with such a broad brush.” I also say, “Don’t be so quick to assume the same problems don’t exist within Anabaptism.”

I once saw this posted on social media. Following is my response to the above post.

I think we would agree that when we speak of Protestants we are including a very wide theological body under one umbrella. Protestants would include anything from Southern Baptists to Methodists to Episcopalians. While these groups are quite different from each other, there is also one common thread. The similarity between all Protestants that causes me to lump them in one group is their approach to interpreting and applying Scripture. Their approach to interpreting/applying Scripture is different than Anabaptists—and yes, there is a big difference among Anabaptist groups.

Jesus said in Matthew 18:3, “Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” There are many ways a converted person needs to become “as a little child.” One of these ways is in interpreting/applying Scripture. The converted child of God looks at Scripture as a child looks at Scripture. Read Matthew 5:44 to a child, “But I say unto you, ‘Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.’” Ask a child what that verse means. They will reply, “It means we are to love those who do not like us.”

Ask them, “So can we join the army and go fight the enemy?” A child will say, “No, because we are to love them.”

That is the difference between an Anabaptist and a Protestant. An Anabaptist reads God Word and asks the simple question, “How can I live this out in a simple, childlike way?” Protestants will sift Scripture through several filters to take out what they don’t like or want to do.

Let us look at another passage in God’s Word to see how the difference between an Anabaptist and a Protestant manifests itself. Consider the first sixteen verses of I Corinthians 11. An Anabaptist looks at these verses and in a childlike way says a woman should cover her head. A Protestant filters this passage through several filters and concludes that this message was for another day and age. Anabaptists may disagree on how big and what type of covering is to be worn, but they all agree God’s Word says a woman should be covered when praying/prophesying. A Protestant dismisses the passage as not being relevant and will often hurl accusations such as “legalists” and “works religion” on those who apply it.

The approach to interpreting/applying Scripture has many implications in everyday life. While Anabaptists and Protestants may have many similar beliefs, they end

up being vastly different because of how they interpret/apply Scripture. Consider from the list below how different many of our beliefs end up being. Anabaptists understand Scripture to teach the following:

1. Divorce and remarriage is sin.
2. Jesus’ teaching on “love your enemies” is meant to be lived out in life, even when it is hard. Christians

do not take up the sword against another fellow man.

3. Christians are citizens of a different country and are not patriotic towards their earthly country. They do not give their allegiance to a country but only to God.
4. Modesty is an important principle missing in today’s world and we need to be careful in properly covering our bodies no matter where we appear. This includes around bodies of water where the opposite sex may be present (the ocean, swimming pool, etc.).
5. Christians do not adorn the outward appearance with wearing jewelry and/or makeup.



Trusting, joyful, and beaming; do you look like this?

6. The church and the world are polar opposites. Christians will not involve themselves with the commercial/professional/carnal sports, entertainments, and recreations of this world.
7. Eternal security is a lie from Satan that weakens the Christian's resolve to live a holy life.
8. Partaking of communion unworthily is a damnable act. Examination needs to be given beforehand and those living in sin excluded.
9. The swearing of oaths is forbidden.
10. Women will pray/prophesy with covered heads, men with uncovered heads.
11. Feet-washing is a symbolic practice that is to be literally kept.
12. Anointing with oil is literally practiced by those who call for it.
13. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" has many practical applications that we should try to uphold today.
14. Women are not to speak or teach in church.

Thus we see that the difference between Anabaptists and Protestants on all these issues is in interpretation. Anabaptists seek to read Scripture in a childlike way. Protestants bring in many other reasonings to dismiss what is clearly written. When I paint Protestants with one brush, I am doing so because of the difference in approach to interpreting Scripture. Jesus said, **"Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand" (Matthew 7:21)**. Many verses like this one stir Anabaptists to carefully obey all the Scripture. We take Jesus' words very seriously. However, with Protestants, if one gets too radical and starts obeying Scripture in too literal of a way, then the cry goes out: "legalism." Is obedience really legalism?

My goal is not to promote Anabaptism over Protestantism but rather my goal is to promote a childlike faith and obedience to all of Scripture. It's not a matter of us versus them, but a matter of obedience.

Can I accept Protestants as brethren when they seem to ignore the following:

- Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage?
- Jesus' teaching on loving your enemies?
- Women speaking in church and everything in between?

When we start, where do we stop? It's not my job to judge and to say how far God's mercy will reach to those

who don't believe the way I do. It is my job to warn others about what Jesus said, **"Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7:21)**.

Now I would like to briefly address your comment, "Don't be so quick to assume the same problems do not exist within Anabaptism." I agree. We Anabaptists are not perfect people. We struggle with the flesh and interpersonal relationships like other red-blooded humans do.

I can accept other Anabaptists as brethren even though there may be quite a few differences in practical applications. What I am alarmed about is that many Anabaptists today are following down Protestant paths. Many are using human reasoning instead of a simple, childlike faith; many spend more time reading "Christian" books than they spend reading their Bible.

When we read other books we need to be very careful about picking only those which are written by authors who interpret Scripture in a simple, childlike way. If an author accepts divorce and remarriage, that sends up a host of warning flags that their approach to interpreting Scripture is vastly different from mine. When we hang out in a crowd of authors who do not concern themselves with interpreting Scripture in a childlike way, we need to be warned that their influence will rub off on us. I Corinthians 15:33 says, **"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."**

True Christianity is not found by debating theological terms or in lengthy doctrinal discourses. Such things are what the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees did to nullify the Word of God.

True Christianity is found among people who have a simple, childlike faith in God. Those who read, believe, and apply the Scriptures can accept being labeled as a works religion while they go about living out Jesus' teaching in everyday life.

There is a difference between the way Protestants and Anabaptists interpret the Scriptures and it results in a completely different lifestyle. Be of good cheer. God will not judge us because we are Protestants or Anabaptists. He will judge every man according to His work. Revelation 22:12-14 says, **"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."** So as long as one has life, he is able, in a childlike way, to do those things that are pleasing to God.



On The War Front: *In Panama*

by James Troyer & Nathanael Yoder

Panama Mission Report

Every year since 2010, some brethren from the church at Santiago, Costa Rica have been going on a yearly mission into Panama to distribute CAM’s “101 Bible Stories” to Indian schoolchildren.

I was thrilled to be involved again this year, after several years of not participating. We left Costa Rica Monday July 9, finished by Wednesday, and returned home Thursday, July 12 (2018). Much has changed since the early days of this mission... instead of the endless waiting and legal hassles to get the books from the US into Costa Rica and then on into Panama, we now ship the books directly from the United States to Panama. It is as easy as pulling up to a warehouse in David, Panama, and loading them onto the pickup with a forklift... no hassles.

With the constantly improving roads and infrastructure of Panama, distribution continues to get easier as well. This year we were able to drive to all the schools we visited... albeit with a little mudslinging (it wouldn’t be complete without that!). The main road from Tolé up into the reservation has been paved, but the side roads leading back to many of the villages are as rough as ever.

We worked in the Tolé district, in the Ngoble Bugle reserve, an area comprising about 7000 square kilometers, with a population of some 150,000 indigenous people, and approximately 35,000 children between the ages of 6 to 11, which are the ones who usually receive the Bible story books. To date we have taken approximately 18,000 books to this area; however this distribution has been spread out over a 9-year span, so the children within this age bracket have now been replaced by younger ones; so we are not much nearer finished than when we started!

We took 2000 books this year; the first school we visited had 1000 students! So that was quick work getting rid of half our books the first forenoon. We visited 5 schools. In every case, directors and teachers were very

receptive; children are delighted to receive their own personal copy of this beautiful book. As is so often the case, the more remote and poor the area, the more excited and receptive they are!

The usual procedure is to pull up to a school, get the director’s permission, then divide into teams, with one brother and a helper visiting each classroom. We introduce ourselves to the teacher, give her a personal

copy of the book, then speak to the students, telling them a story from the book and asking them some questions; and then handing out the books to the outstretched arms. It is especially rewarding, after we leave a room, to see the teacher with the book in her hand, telling the children how to care for their books, helping them write their names in them, etc.



Visiting the schools in remote villages.

So once again we have sown the seed in a few hearts, and we pray that God will give the increase; we ask you to pray with us. For me, personally, this has been an extremely rewarding experience, and I look forward to being involved again in coming years.

Currently there are no Anabaptist churches in Panama, but hopefully, the seed being sown will bring forth fruit some day.

James Troyer | *Santiago, Costa Rica*

A Two-Hour Walk

“How long does it take you to walk to school?” I asked as I walked around a dirt-floor classroom of about 25 students. The answers I received from six little girls varied anywhere from a 30-minute walk to a two-hour walk! I thought we were already about as far back into the jungle as a human being could get in those Tole Mountains of northern Panama! I couldn’t doubt the sincerity of two little girls because it seemed they were from the same

area and they kind of did the math among themselves. Since school started at 7:30 they had to leave their hut around 5:15 a.m.

As we left that school of 400 children, I concluded that the most efficient way of getting Bibles into thousands of Indian huts in the heart of the Panama mountains was through visiting schools. If we gave the precious seed to the children, they would carry the holy cargo hours into the jungle.

In July 2018, after a number of years of missing out on the Panama book distribution, I was again able to help in this ministry. A group from our church in Santiago, Costa Rica, went to Panama for a good part of a week.

It is impossible to speak with each child on a personal level as we pass out the books, but I try to give a little presentation in each classroom which I hope the children will remember.

First, I introduce the group by giving our names. Then I tell them where we are from and what our mission is. Next I tell them of an organization in the States that donates the books and another one that helps with the expense of getting the books to them. I say, “These books are free and are yours to keep. All we ask is that you take good care of them.”

Next I ask them, “What is 4 plus 4? I usually get a quick raise of hands and get the correct answer, “8.”

Then I ask, “From where did you pull that answer so quickly? I notice you did not ask your teacher nor did you open a book to find it. So where did you get the answer?” Right away they point to the side of their head, meaning they got the answer from their mind.

Then I say, “Exactly! That is exactly where God wants us to store this little book! When God’s Word is stored in our minds, thieves cannot steal it from us, it will not get wet, it will not get lost, torn or burned. And whenever we need answers from the Bible at any time in life, we can pull them from our memory.”

I like to show them the picture and tell them the story of the Tower of Babel where God confounded the language of the people; that is why there are so many languages today. I especially like to tell them this story when there is an English class. Then I switch from speaking Spanish to English and watch their faces light up.

I also like to ask them, “How do you say my name in your Indian tongue?” By the time I try to pronounce my name the way they say it several times, the tension has completely left and we are all laughing.

When I am ready to leave each classroom, I like to ask if anyone remembers my name or my son’s name from the introduction. Usually a couple children remember it; to each one of these I give a \$1 bill—in Panama the currency is the US dollar called a *Balboa*. That really gets them excited!

In one classroom, after a couple of others had already said my name and gotten their \$1 bills, I saw a boy muttering something. So I asked him, “Do you remember my name?” I could see the boy was really wrestling with the temptation to say that he had remembered, but then honesty won out and he admitted that he did not remember.

Then I said, “Look children, it is important to remember people’s names but it is more important to be honest. I am out of \$1 bills so this boy who is honest gets a \$5 bill!” Talk about a class uproar! I was amazed that I could actually get timid, expressionless Panamanian Indians to clap and cheer.

Every time we pulled up to a school building, I sensed a heavy burden come over me. This burden was that the effort of all involved—CAM, MZL, and time the distribution team invests—would stick in

the minds of at least some of the children. None of us can make that happen, but there is One who can. He moves through prayer. As I walked those covered porches from classroom to classroom, I prayed—I prayed in faith—prayers I know God heard.

In only two days we saw thousands of children’s faces. But even now, one face I saw still makes me tear up as I write this. I hardly remember what her face looked like, but on the last day as I was scanning a sea of faces in this one large classroom, for a reason I don’t understand, I locked eyes for a brief second with a girl. I thought that she was about the same age as our 10-year-old Lydia. I don’t understand why it happened but in that brief moment, an involuntary sob shook me and sudden tears flooded my eyes. I sensed an immediate urge to pray. I closed my eyes in silent prayer for this lone little girl in the jungle who had such a big impact on my spirit.



A book AND a sweet treat!

According to Revelation, millions of prayers over the last 2,000 years have ascended to the throne. None of these prayers have been ignored. None have been lost or forgotten. Not one prayer has been ineffectual or pointless. Brethren, not one God-exalting prayer has ever been in vain! They have all been gathering on the altar before the throne of God. This past July several thousand Indian children in the mountains of Panama were added to the list on God's throne in intercessory prayer, thanks to the continued effort of all involved!

Nathanael Yoder | *Santiago, Costa Rica*

"I have been on a number of these trips. We are grateful that MZL and CAM make the *101 Favorite Bible Stories* books available in this way. We pass out the literature in elementary schools in Indian reservations in Panama, mostly to children ages 6-12. The books are to be the property of the child, not the school. However, many teachers have asked our permission to use the books for a class in school. The schools range in size from 100 to 1000 students. No school or teacher has yet refused the books."

- James Troyer



Interesting facts about Panama.

1. Panama's population is 3.3 million people, just less than Connecticut, the 30th most populous US state.
2. Panama's size is 29,157 sq. miles which is a bit more than West Virginia, the 41st largest US state.



The Ngobe Buglé reservation in western Panama, is where books were distributed this year.

3. The highest mountain in Panama is 11,700 feet above sea level.
4. At its narrowest distance, only 80 kilometers separate the Atlantic from the Pacific Ocean.
5. Panama has over 1200 varieties of orchids.
6. The Panama Canal has been called one of the seven wonders of the modern world and powers 1/3 of Panama's entire economy.
7. Three locks up, three locks down, lift ships 85' above sea level to Gatun Lake and then lower them again. It takes 11.38 hours to pass from ocean to ocean via the canal. The total length of the canal is 50 miles. About 14,000 ships pass through the canal each year, which is over 38 per day.



Treasured gifts held high!



Passing out the books.

The Treasure in the Cave

by Elizabeth Wagler

On this drowsy spring afternoon in 1947, the desert bordering the Dead Sea was as desolate and sunbaked as it had been for thousands of years. Mohammed Dib, a young Arab goatherd, reached slowly for his shepherd's crook. It was time to take the herd back to camp at the Ain Freshka well. He shaded his eyes and looked across the barren Wadi Qumran to the sheer yellow sandstone cliffs rising to the desert above. He could see several of his goats perched on narrow ledges halfway up the cliff. "Why did they have to climb way up there?" he thought impatiently.

Placing two fingers in his mouth, he gave a long, piercing whistle. The black-and-white animals stopped pulling at the dry scrub and lifted their heads. Mohammed whistled again. One by one the goats began picking their way nimbly down the steep slope. "Good!" thought the goatherd. "They're coming by themselves. It is too hot to climb today." He drew the end of his full cloth turban over his face and stood waiting for the goats. As they leaped and skipped across the dry, rock-strewn wadi, Mohammed began counting, "One, two, three ... fifteen ... Where is the sixteenth?" His eyes scanned the cliffs again. No sign of a goat there. But the hillside was rocky, with many large boulders and outcroppings behind which a small animal could hide. And there were the caves, black holes which dotted the cliffside. Some were the entrances to large caves; some were merely shallow holes. As a little boy, Mohammed had explored in and around some of these caves, but now the prospect of searching them for a lost goat dismayed him. Yet that could not be helped. The Taamirah tribe was not wealthy, and the loss of a milking goat was no small matter.

Leading the flock to a thin patch of dried grass, he ordered, "Now stay here." Then he tucked his long robes into his waistband and strode resolutely toward the rocky hillside. Hot and panting, he scrambled up the slope, calling as he went.

After an hour of fruitless searching, Mohammed was ready to quit. He had called until he was hoarse. He had whistled at the entrance of a dozen caves and searched behind countless outcroppings. Now his arms and legs were scratched and bruised, and his throat parched.

Far below him Mohammed could see his goats feeding in a huddle on the desert floor. Farther down the wadi, the black tents of his tribe were sprawled around the Ain Freshka well, the only source of fresh water in the

area. Off in the distance shimmered the glassy, salt-laden waters of the Dead Sea, the lowest spot on earth, and one of the hottest places.

Slowly Mohammed started down. To his right he noticed a small hole in the rock that he had not seen before. It was hardly big enough for him to enter, but a curious goat might crawl into it. Picking up a good-sized rock, he flung it into the hole, shouting, "Come out of there, you pesky beast!" But instead of the dull thud of rock on rock or the frightened bleat of a goat, the sound that issued from the cave was a tinkling crash as of a crock breaking.

Mohammed was frightened. Had he disturbed an ancient desert spirit? He fled, slipping and sliding down the cliff as fast as he could go.

Later that evening he told his best friend about the strange noise in the cave. To his surprise, his friend became excited. "It might be a treasure cave!" he said. "It may be full of jewels and money. Could you find it again?"

"I think so," replied Mohammed.

"I'll come with you tomorrow, and we'll see what is in there," promised his friend.

Early the next morning, before the sun had climbed too high, the two boys made their way to Mohammed's cave. The entrance was so small they had to crawl on their hands and knees to get through. This they did with some anxiety, not knowing what evil spirits they might encounter.

A few feet beyond the opening, the passage suddenly widened, and the boys were able to stand. From the dim light that filtered through the tunnel behind them, they saw that they were standing in a long, narrow room. As their eyes slowly adjusted to the gloom, they perceived what appeared to be rows of tall, narrow clay jars lining the walls. Pieces of broken crockery lay on the floor.

"That's what made the strange noise you heard yesterday!" exclaimed his friend, kicking at the broken shards.

"Let's look inside the jars," suggested Mohammed.

Together they lifted the heavy flat lid of one jar. A terrible rotten stench rose to their nostrils, and they drew back, coughing and choking. Holding their noses, they

laid the jar on its side and then dumped it upside down. Several strange black objects slid onto the floor.

The boys crouched beside their find, almost afraid to touch it. Whatever the things were, they were covered with dust and smelled frightful. The cylindrical objects were about twelve inches around and from twelve to eighteen inches long. The boys crawled out into the sunlight, dragging the unusual treasures with them. There they could see that the objects had been wrapped in strips of cloth. Unwinding the reeking binding from one bundle, the boys soon saw that it covered a roll of leather.

“It is a scroll!” cried Mohammed excitedly.

“It has writing on it,” added his friend. But since neither boy could read, the strange marks meant nothing to them.

“I have heard that sometimes people in town pay much money for old writings,” said Mohammed.

“I don’t think anyone would want such a smelly old rotten thing,” his friend objected, wrinkling his nose.

“Let’s take them to Sheik Abdullah. He might be able to read the words.” Mohammed lifted two of the scrolls and tucked them under his arm.

Later, in the shade of the goat-hair tents, the boys revealed their find to their sheik and the other men of the tribe. The largest scroll was unwound on the sand. It stretched the length of the tent. It was made of pieces of leather, sewn together, and was covered with columns of fine writing. The men were curious, but no one was able to read the marks. They agreed, however, that it was not Arabic writing.

The sheik gave orders for several camels to be loaded with goods for trade. The next morning he and the boys started for Bethlehem, hoping to find someone interested in purchasing the scrolls.

The Bedouins spent the greater part of the day in the noisy marketplace at Bethlehem. Mohammed waited impatiently while the sheik traded goats for millet and barley and sold cheese and butter. Finally the day’s business was finished, and the group set out to find a buyer for the scrolls.

Sheik Abdullah went first to a Syrian trader who sometimes dealt in old things. This man was not impressed with the scrolls. He agreed to keep them and consult with a friend in Jerusalem before making an offer to buy them. The Bedouins were instructed to return in several weeks, when he would have learned more of their real value. He suggested that they might bring more

scrolls, if there were more to be found, in case they proved to be valuable.

A disappointed Mohammed returned to the camp at Ain Freshka. He had dreamed of great wealth coming to him from the discovery of the scrolls. Now it seemed as though they were worthless. Nevertheless, along with his friend and an older man, Mohammed did scale the cliff to the cave once more. This time they opened every one of the jars. Many were empty. Most of them shattered when they were bumped. The boys found two more scrolls, and the older tribesman found three. They left thousands of brittle scraps of leather and sharp pottery shards scattered over the floor of the cave.

Unfortunately for Mohammed Dib and his tribe, the city of Jerusalem was in a state of turmoil at this time. Because of the hatred between Jews and Arabs, there was so much fighting that it was hardly safe to move about in the city.

The Syrian trader eventually found a buyer for the scrolls. It was the archbishop of the Syrian Monastery, who, suspecting their value, paid him about one hundred dollars. Due to a misunderstanding, however, the second set of scrolls found by the Bedouins never reached the archbishop but fell into the hands of an archaeologist at the Hebrew University.

In the next few years, as reports spread of treasures to be found in the Dead Sea caves, archaeologists, historians, and Bedouins themselves scoured all the caves in the area. They gathered every leather or parchment fragment and every bit of pottery that was to be found.

It was seven years before the treasures of the caves, now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, were brought together in a special museum in Jerusalem for repair and study. And although Mohammed Dib never did become rich, his accidental discovery of that first scroll proved to be the greatest archaeological find in modern times. For those brittle, reeking pieces of leather were covered with an ancient Hebrew script—the oldest copies of the Holy Scriptures in existence.

E. W. | *Eden, Manitoba, Canada*

From *A Time of Peace*. Used by permission of Rod and Staff Publishers, Crockett, Kentucky.



The Wonder of the Dead Sea Scrolls

by James G. Landis

We wonder at the marvel of God's work in preserving authentic Scriptures till our day. Think of it. God preserved these Scriptures for over 2,000 years; that is over 1,000 years longer than the oldest preserved Old Testament manuscripts man had up to the time of this discovery. Furthermore, God hid these leather parchments in a dry desert climate, probably the only place they could have survived for 2,000 years. But when the fulness of time had come, a wandering goat and a curious shepherd boy brought them out of hiding to confirm that God's Word will endure forever.

Fascinating facts about the Dead Sea Scrolls:

- The scrolls were written between 250 B.C. and 68 A.D. They were hidden in the caves because of the advancing Roman army against Jerusalem.
- The caves are located 13 miles east of Jerusalem within sight of the Dead Sea. The area is 1300 feet below the Mediterranean Sea and 110 feet above the Dead Sea.
- The scrolls are mostly made of animal skins and the writing was with a carbon-based ink. The writing is from right to left and uses no punctuation. Sometimes there are no spaces between words.
- The scrolls are mostly written in Hebrew, but many are also written in Aramaic. Aramaic was the common language of the Jews of Palestine for two centuries before and after Christ. A few fragments are in Greek.
- Some manuscripts were relatively intact but thousands were only fragments. Using very

sophisticated cameras that used special lighting and taking pictures at various angles, the researchers have been able to read script that was otherwise unintelligible. Many of these fragments are now electronically pieced together; all are available to scholars through digital imagery.

- The following have been identified among the scrolls: 19 copies of the Book of Isaiah, 25 copies of Deuteronomy and 30 copies of the Psalms.
- Although some of the scrolls existed during the time of Jesus' ministry, none of the scrolls refer to Him nor do they mention any of His followers described in the New Testament.
- Scholars have identified the remains of about 825-870 separate scrolls.
- The Dead Sea Scrolls enhance our knowledge of both Judaism and Christianity.
- The scrolls from Caves 1 & 11 are now housed in the Shrine of the Book museum in Jerusalem.
- The Dead Sea Scrolls were most likely written by the Essenes who were a strict Torah-observant, Messianic, apocalyptic, baptist, wilderness, Jewish sect. They were led by a priest they called the "Teacher of Righteousness," who was opposed and possibly killed by the establishment priesthood in Jerusalem.

*Facts taken from "25 Fascinating Facts about the Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran" and published by CenturyOne Bookstore.

The Qumran Caves are a series of caves in the Judean Desert of the West Bank. It is in a number of these caves that the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. The cave known as 4Q is visible in the right side of this picture, and contained about 3/4 of all the scrolls found in the area.



Pressing into the Kingdom

by Leonard Hartman

“From the time of John the Baptist until now, violent people have been trying to take over the kingdom of heaven by force.”

– **Matthew 11:12 (CEV)**

Jesus made the above statement to a crowd of listeners while telling them how great John the Baptist was. He said, “Among men born of women there is none greater than John: yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist.”

One interpretation of “the violent taking the kingdom of heaven by force” might be that the Jews were trying to set up an earthly kingdom using violence. There is no other way to set up an earthly kingdom than by using force.

I would like to offer a different interpretation of what Jesus taught in this verse.

At the beginning of the New Testament era, John the Baptist and Jesus both came preaching the Kingdom of Heaven. In Matthew 3:1-2 we read, “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Then Matthew 4:17 tells us, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, ‘Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’” When the Pharisees asked Jesus about the Kingdom of God, His response was that its coming could not be seen physically, but that “the kingdom of God is within you” (**Luke 17:21**).

When John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus whether He was the Messiah, Jesus asked the multitude about John. During His discourse, Jesus made this statement about the Kingdom of Heaven: “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force” (**Matthew 11:12**). Part of Jesus’ instructions to the twelve when sending them out included this warning: “I came not to send peace, but a sword” (**Matthew 10:34**).

When Jesus said, “from the days of John the Baptist,” we are made to understand that a change had come in the way that the Lord governs His people. Ezekiel had prophesied, “And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (**Ezekiel 36:27**). And so Ezekiel’s prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus set up His kingdom on the earth. The manner of Jesus’ leadership is by “a new heart” so that the heart is in tune with God’s heart and beats with holy, rather than carnal, desires. This new heart involves a heart transplant, not a physical one but one performed by the Holy Spirit, a spiritual operation.

How is “violence” part of this? Repentance does violence first to self. This must be accomplished before we can be violent in kingdom efforts. A soldier in any army must be enlisted into the ranks before he is permitted to go into battle for his country. Jesus makes it very clear in Matthew 6:24 that “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he

TAKE UP THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD.

Ephesians 6:14



Shield of Faith

Helmet of Salvation

Sword is the Word of God

Belt of Truth

Breastplate of Righteousness

Boots of Peace

will hold to the one, and despise the other.” In a physical battle the warriors hate the enemy; in the violence of the Kingdom of Heaven, the enemy is within us. One is not prepared to do battle for the King until we have the enemy within us conquered; **“You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).**

In this article we will use the term “violence” since that is the word that the King James Version uses in Matthew 11:12. One definition for violence that is found in Webster’s dictionary is, “a vehement feeling or expression.” A better synonym may be “forceful,” or we may say “holy boldness.” Love is not violent in the sense of physical aggression. John the Baptist told the soldiers to **“Do violence to no man” (Luke 3:14).**

For the believer in Jesus, love is permitting the Holy Spirit to reign within through the love of God. The love of our Lord and the type of love that He asks of His followers is a love that may express itself in a forceful manner when the Holy Spirit prompts.

The Old Testament prophets wished they could understand some of the things they were foretelling, but they only wrote as the Holy Spirit instructed them. We read their writings in amazement and see how the things they prophesied came to pass.

In a very similar manner, we may wonder at the things the Spirit asks of us. We have no idea what the outcome will be when we follow His leading. Sometimes our flesh will revolt at the prompting of the Spirit and in these times it could mean we need to be violent with our fleshly feelings. As we walk in obedience, the Lord is able to show himself mighty.

John the Baptist himself was “violent” in this sense when he told Herod it was not right that he had his brother Philip’s wife. When Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost he was telling of the love of God, wielding the Sword of the Spirit violently so that those who heard his message were **“pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:37).**

In Acts 4:13, it was the “violence” of Peter and John that caused those who questioned them to marvel. To the rulers it was obvious that these men had been with Jesus. They were teaching with the same forthrightness that Jesus had used. Again, when Peter was brought before the council and the high priest to make his defense, we read that **“they were cut to the heart”**—we could say by his “violence.”

Five young men went to Ecuador in the 1960’s to contact a tribe of savage Indians and bring them the gospel. After several flights over their villages and dropping gifts to show friendliness, they decided to land their aircraft on a beach near one of the villages to be with them for a weekend.

When no word was received from the men, a search party found that all five men had been killed. The men had a gun along for protection from the creatures found in the jungle but did not use it in self-defense against fellow men.

In this way of looking at it, we can say it was “violence” in Kingdom of Heaven pursuits that caused a number of the Indians in the tribe, including one of the men that had helped kill the missionaries, to later accept Jesus as their Messiah.

The gospel message calls us to slay self, put an end to selfish pursuits, be valiant in the Kingdom, and a “violent” soldier for Jesus our King. This type of violence is not an in-your-face, abrupt, rude emotion. We don’t think of John the Baptist as being this type of person when he accused Herod of adultery. **“For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and Herod protected John. And when he heard John, he did many things, and heard him gladly” (Mark 6:20).** Farther on in the same chapter we read that the king was exceedingly sorry for what he had done.

It is imperative when we wield the Sword of the Spirit that we rightly apply the Word of Life. We must allow the Spirit to guide us. We must give all the credit for anything accomplished in the battle to Him who alone is worthy.

L.H. | Edmonson, Texas

Practical Questions:

1. What is your explanation for the meaning of the statement by Jesus found in Matthew 11:12? How were the violent taking the Kingdom of God by force since the days of John the Baptist?
2. Why did Jesus say, “Since the days of John the Baptist?” Had something changed in the Kingdom of Heaven or was it in how one entered it?
3. Are the violent still trying to “take the Kingdom of Heaven by force” today?



Teachings on Eternal Security

based on an article by Gilbert Miller Jr.

The Parable of the Soils

According to many popular religious teachers, if a person once believes and has spiritual life, he can never fall away and become a lost unbeliever again. However, in the Parable of the Soils in Luke 8:11-15, Jesus taught that people who once believed can fall away.

1. Some people “believe for a while” then cease believing.
2. The “falling away” which these people experience is equated in this parable to the plant dying (Matthew 13:20-21).
3. Their initial faith did produce life—the plant did grow.
4. This life was spiritual life, since it was produced by the Word of God (the seed) and came from their personal faith in Christ.
5. Persecution is a test that causes some true Christians to fall away or die spiritually (Matthew 13:22).

Some People Were Deceived by False Prophets

While many today teach that it is not possible to know God and have true salvation, then lose it, Peter taught in II Peter 2:20-22 about some who had been deceived by false prophets and returned to sinful living.

1. The people that Peter wrote of had escaped “the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (verse 20).
2. They knew “the way of righteousness” before they were entangled in sin for the second time (verses 20-21).
3. These people were at one time “washed,” when they knew the way of righteousness and escaped the corruption of the world by knowing Jesus Christ (verse 22).
4. The people Peter wrote about could not have been washed in anything other than Jesus’ blood.

Jesus Taught People Can Lose Their Salvation

Jesus gave many other teachings which show us the importance of steadfast endurance in the faith and the possibility of falling away and losing salvation.

1. Disciples of Christ are compared to salt that can lose its saltiness to the point that it is no longer good for anything (Luke 14:34).
2. Jesus said, “He who stands firm to the end shall be saved,” not “He who stands firm to the end will not lose his rewards” (Matthew 10:22; 24:13).
3. Jesus taught that fruitless Christians are in danger of being thrown into the fire and burned (John 15:1-6).
4. Jesus taught that we must be faithful to the point of death to receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10).
5. Jesus said we must obey His commandments to remain in His love (John 15:10).



“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.... But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.”

(Luke 8:11-15 NKJV)

“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”

(II Peter 2:20-22 NIV)

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”

(John 15:5-6 NIV)

People Can Depart from the Christian Faith

While many people think Paul taught “salvation by faith alone,” he warned that if Christians return to sinful living, they will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

1. Paul repeatedly warned true Christians that certain sinful activities would cause them to “not inherit the kingdom of God” (**Galatians 5:19-21**).
2. When Paul taught this, he knew that “neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation” could separate the Galatian Christians from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ, as stated in Romans 8:38-39.
3. It is, therefore, impossible that he intended Romans 8:38-39 to mean that a Christian is unconditionally and eternally secure, in the light of Galatians 5:21, but rather that the Christian’s security is conditioned upon his faithful obedience to God’s commandments.
4. Paul knew of some younger Christian widows who turned from Jesus and started to “follow Satan” (**I Timothy 5:11-15**).
5. Paul personally knew of some Christians who were “eager for money” and consequently wandered from the Christian faith (I Timothy 6:10).

A Christian Can Become an Enemy of God

John and James also give serious warnings to Christians to remain in Christ and to not love the world.

1. The apostle John taught that believing certain false doctrines could cause the Christian not to remain in Christ (I John 2:24; II John 1:9).
2. It is possible for a Christian to “become an enemy of God” again (James 4:4).

The True Grace of God

Many today teach that God’s grace means that Christians can continue in sinful living, because they are saved by “grace” not “works.” The Scriptures, however, teach a far different view of God’s grace and what it does.

1. The true grace of God promotes holy living (Titus 2:12).
2. False teachings about grace promote immorality (Jude 1:4).

Practical Questions:

1. How does the teaching of unconditional eternal security militate against holy living?
2. Can one be truly saved from God’s eternal punishment without good works?

G.M. | Nappanee, Indiana

“Now the works of the flesh are evident.... of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

(**Galatians 5:19-21**)

“Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan.”

(**I Timothy 5:14-15**)

“Some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

(**I Timothy 6:10**)

“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”

(**II John 1:9**)

“Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

(**James 4:4**)

“For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(**Jude 1:4**)





Rubies & Diamonds

Memorable quotes that speak to the heart.



“The Christian is part of a continually growing company and the most unstoppable force in the world—the Kingdom of God!”

– Gordon Amstutz at Burkeland Mennonite Church, Georgia



“No one in the darkness is drawn to the lantern, but to the light.”

– Dale Heisey at Kingdom Fellowship Weekend, Pennsylvania



“We cannot love God any more than the person we love the least.”

– Eugene Sommers at Hartville Conservative Mennonite Church, Ohio



“Good character is like steel in a concrete structure. You can’t see it, but without the steel, a concrete structure is weak; it will crack and crumble if it comes under any kind of pressure.”

– Laverne Ropp of Walton, Ontario, Canada



“If you want to love Jesus, you must love and value the things that He loves and values. For instance, which do you think Jesus would do—go visit a sick neighbor, or plant some more flowers?”

– Duane Eby at Pilgrim Mennonite Conference, Pennsylvania



“Materialism is nothing more than being in the world with a wrong focus.”

– Dale Heisey at Kingdom Fellowship Weekend, Pennsylvania



“Brokenness produces tears, but tears do not produce brokenness.”

– Eugene Sommers, at Hartville, Ohio



“The Spirit of God will not force what your will does not enforce.”

– Raymond Fisher, Kingdom Discipleship for Ministers 2018 (Mendon, Ohio)



“Faith is obeying in spite of the consequences.”

– Ernest Strubhar, Cimarron Christian Brotherhood, Oklahoma



“Are you interested in leadership? You will be able to serve to the degree you are willing to suffer.”

– Duane Eby at Pilgrim Mennonite Conference, Pennsylvania

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



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 complicated theological questions with no good answers—for example, the woman who had seven brothers as husbands (Matthew 22:24-28).

Remember the words of Jesus when He told the packed-out house, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s Word and *put it into practice*” (Luke 8:21).



The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

Drill Bitten

by Let Go



None of the suggested responses seem to me a valid approach.

I would, first of all, bathe the situation in prayer, asking God for direction and grace. Then I would make a casual inquiry of the other man something like this: “The other

day we were both working on the restaurant job. I left some tools out when we went for lunch. When I returned, some of them were missing. Did you perchance see anyone around who might have picked them up?”

If he says, “No, I have no idea what happened to them,” let it go. Then go out and buy another set of tools. A relationship with an unbeliever is certainly not worth losing over an argument or an accusation.

We are representatives of the Lord Jesus, the One who came to make peace between men. You will never influence such a person toward the Lord if you antagonize or blame or accuse him.

Next time, mark your tools in some way. That will deter theft and be a proof case should your tools ever go missing again.

Book Sale

by Let Go



This would be my response. When the lady comes to get the books, I would gently ask her how she feels about certain biblical principles taught by Jesus, specifically mentioning divorce and remarriage. Find out what she thinks on Bible issues.

Tell her what you discovered in the books you ordered for her. Explain your position from the Scripture. If she still wants the books, I would let her have them, but I would not charge her for them. I would tell her I would not be comfortable making a profit off a product I could not endorse.

If she rejects the books, pitch them. Or send them back to the supplier. Jesus said it would be costly to be His disciple. Our testimony is worth more than the profit from the books.



A Gifted Picker of Nits

by Woody B. Healer



In reading “A Gifted Picker of Nits” in AV10, I had a couple things come to mind. The first is the misconception that seeing these faults in others is insightful. In reality, what the person has is a critical spirit. A critical spirit is often disguised as spiritual insight, but it couldn’t be further from the truth.

The writer admits that it is hard to love his brothers and sisters. The opposite of love is hate. I John 2:11 says, “But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

The person with a critical spirit (or hateful spirit) is walking in darkness. Someone who walks in darkness has no insight on anything. While a broken clock is technically correct two minutes out of the day, it cannot be depended upon. The two minutes it’s correct must be referenced against another working clock. In the same way, a critical person will have rare moments of being correct about a situation, but they’ve lost their ability to be depended upon.

Walking in darkness indicates unexposed sin. Someone walking in unexposed sin will often be critical of others. It gives them a false sense of spirituality and keeps others from probing into their life.

Those who are critical only diagnose “problems” but don’t provide practical solutions. They are as useful as the mechanic that says your car’s engine is making an awful noise, but can’t fix the problem; or the doctor that tells you your leg shouldn’t be sticking out at that odd angle, but can’t set the broken bone. Those who have true insight will identify true problems and offer loving solutions to keep them on the path of life.

The second thought is that an unknown person asking these questions for responses from other unknown people, probably will not get lasting help.

His lasting help will come from bowing his heart in repentance to his local brothers. Those whom he knows and who know him best will be able to see the specific needs in his life and provide practical solutions.



Off Track

by Ob Server



When I read “OffTrack” (AV10 page 39) about youth who were taken in by mass baptisms, spirit signs, and “people on fire for Jesus,” I thought I would like to help some youth of today avoid the doubt and turmoil of those years. What was it that caused youth to leave the faith of their fathers? I believe there is something we can learn from the past that will help some today. I propose three things that might help young people of today.

1. Youth need to have a solid grounding in the Word of God. If youth think the faith of their fathers is only tradition and rules to keep, they will quickly abandon those traditions when they are free. We must impress upon them that disobedience to the Word of God is sin, and God will hold them accountable.

2. We need to show today’s youth how joyful, Christian living results in true freedom and happiness. Some youth think that casting aside the seemingly staid religion and practice of their parents promises liberation and freedom. It is the “in thing” of the era. In my day it was the counter-culture hippie movement, the gospel singers, and the emotional appeal of a salvation “experience.” Some think they can throw all restraint away and replace it with the sinful practices of contemporary culture.

3. Youth like people that are on fire for God. Passion is always attractive to youth. There should be enough passion in our homes, churches, and evangelism that it excites youth.



Inside or Outside?

by O. Pen Doors



I must confess to being dismayed at your latest letter in AV10. I pray that the editorial staff of *Anabaptist Voice* rethink this “us and them” stance.

It is one thing to be separate from the world. It is another to regard secular society and the people within it as somehow “against us” or “out to get us.”

Jesus recognized that the gospel was to be spread throughout the world, not simply shared within “safe” Anabaptist communities. If Jesus had adopted the attitude voiced in your letter in AV10, would the multitude have

heard His Sermon on the Mount? Would He have dined with sinners? Would the Great Commission have been commanded?

You are a voice in the Anabaptist community and as such, I would again caution you and your readers to build up the Kingdom of God first within yourselves, then within your own church communities. I truly believe that the Holy Spirit will let your deeds speak for themselves and that those around you—yes, even those “in the world” as I was—will recognize a true church of God when they see it.

Practical Questions:

1. When you go to a Wal-Mart store, can you tell the difference between a professing Christian and an unbeliever? Should you be able to?
2. Do you see all unbelievers as going to hell and in need of a Savior?
3. Why did multitudes go out to hear John and Jesus? What was the answer both John and Jesus gave to those who heard them?
4. Why did Jesus and the disciples heal the sick?
5. Why did the Jews try to push Jesus over the edge of a cliff (Luke 4:29)? Why did many of His disciples leave Jesus (John 6:66)?
6. What did Jesus mean when He said, “**I did not come to bring peace but a sword ... A man’s foes will be those of his own household**” (**Matthew 10:34-36**)?
7. Can we win the world by being nice to them?
8. Should genuine followers of Christ have an “us and them” mindset?

A Gifted Picker of Nits

by A. Falt Finder



“Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things”

– James 3:5

As a reforming nitpicker, I have found the following code of conduct helpful.

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help.

This seems like such an insignificant problem and not something I might be inclined to even trouble the sovereign God of the universe with; certainly He has more pressing issues. However, James 3:6 says, “**And the**

tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.” Sins of the tongue are especially difficult. We need the help of God to overcome the often sinful habit of nitpicking.

Wait before you talk.

This means that I need to stop dealing with issues that are not related to health or safety in the moment in which they take place. Make a note of the perceived problem if you are concerned you’ll forget. Then later on, write down the problem at the top of a page. Require yourself to answer some questions about that problem: Why do I feel this is a problem? What are the real consequences if I do nothing? Who is being impacted by this “problem”?

This may seem like a very formal way to deal with a seemingly insignificant problem. However, this is the key to overcoming nitpicking. You see, the real problem in this situation isn’t the person being corrected. The problem is the person doing the relentless correcting.

I have learned a valuable lesson as I watched my mom interact with my children. She rarely corrects them for anything, and when she does, it is for health or safety issues and is always done gently. For example, as they prepare a meal in the kitchen and someone makes a mess, Grannie seems not to notice. Instead, she comments on how good a job they are doing and how wonderful the food will be.

When it comes to nitpicking, probably 95% of the things I might try to correct as a nitpicker will make no difference a year from now. In reality, if I just let the problem go, it will not make a difference ten minutes from now. *However, the damage done by relentless overcorrecting can take years to heal.*

Therefore, take the time to require yourself to think this through. Does it really matter? If so, go to step three. If not, celebrate your victory as being one step closer to being a reformed nitpicker.

Size up the Problem.

If this really is a problem that should be corrected, ask yourself what is your goal and write it down. The act of writing things down forces us to clarify our thinking and will enable us to come up with a solution that addresses a clearly defined problem rather than responding with emotion. As you think about your plan to address the problem, keep in mind that the person in question and your relationship with him is the most important aspect of this. So be gentle. You will honor God as you are on your way to being a reformed nitpicker.

I recognize that if you're an amateur nitpicker, this may seem to be strong medicine and an onerous path to follow. However, for those who have refined their nitpicking skills to that of the professional, you understand this is what's needed. The Apostle Paul teaches us in Romans 2:4 "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" I'm so thankful that God isn't a nitpicker, but in His kindness He draws us. I find it is worth the effort to follow God's example of patience and kindness and place my nitpicking habit under His authority.

"Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble."

– Proverbs 21:23 (ESV)

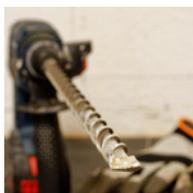


The Practical Side: The Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Drill Bitten

by Iza Goner



I opened the unlocked hatchback, gathered up my tools and locked them in my tool box.

Then I went to the contractor in whose vehicle I found my tools and asked him how my tools got in his vehicle. He gathered his employees around and asked them about the tools; no one knew anything about it.

The contractor himself declared he had no idea how the tools got in his vehicle. We had our tools and nobody was hurt so we said no more about the incident after that. After that we tried to not let our tools lay around unattended on the job.

But I have wondered since, "Did I do the right thing?" Maybe somebody had placed the tools in the contractor's vehicle thinking they belonged to him. Or maybe our vehicles were locked and they could not put them in ours to safeguard them while we were gone so they put them in the contractor's.

I believe now it would have been better to go get the contractor and ask him if it would be all right to remove my tools out of his vehicle. Then we would not have had to worry about how they got there and I believe it would have resulted in a peaceable relationship thereafter.

Practical Questions:

1. When is correcting someone else Scriptural, and to fail to correct would be to shirk one's duty?
2. How should such correction be done?
3. How should one receive correction in a spiritual way, whether it is coming from a critical spirit or not?
4. Is it right to dismiss someone else's concerns by saying "he is being critical"?

Book Sale

by M. A. Watchman



Several days later, the woman came back to the store to pick up the books she had ordered. I had prayed about how to handle the situation, and knew what I was going to do.

I told her that I had indeed ordered the books for her, but that I had leafed through them and found that they portrayed Jesus as approving of divorce and remarriage. I told her I did not feel right about selling these books. But since I had given my word that I would get them for her, I did get them, and if she still wanted them I would sell them to her at my cost.

The woman was horrified to hear what the book said. She had not remembered the book said such a thing when she read it many years ago. She assured me that she did not want her grandchildren to read such unbiblical teachings so the books went into the garbage.



The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today's Anabaptists.

Entangled

by Chris Crossed



This was a real-life situation and I have tried to keep the facts straight. All names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

– Fred and Betty married (a first-time marriage for both) and had two children. Then they divorced.

– Richard married Jane. Both had never been married before. They had two children before they divorced.

Time passed.

– Now Fred who was divorced from Betty, enticed Sally, a single woman working as a nurse in a hospital, to marry him. Fred and Sally had two children.

– Richard, divorced from Jane, now married Betty who was divorced from Fred. They had two children.

We now have eight children from homes where one or both of the parents have been divorced and remarried. A revival swept through the area; Fred, Betty, and Richard became converted. These three knew they were living in sin and wanted to do something about it.

– Richard and Betty separated.

– Fred separated from Sally.

Throughout the turmoil and anxiety that followed, the church helped care for the children.

– Fred and Betty now wanted to be reunited in their first marriage.

– Richard wanted to remarry Jane, but Jane had no interest in remarriage.

– Sally was left stranded with two children.

Practical Questions:

1. Should the church allow Fred and Betty to remarry?
2. If Fred and Betty are allowed to remarry, would Sally also be free to marry another partner?
3. What is the only consistent biblical position in all three situations?

Rest For The Weary?

by Pert Turbed



We were working with a hard-driving wealthy businessman from New York City. I will call him JM. He came to our shop in Pennsylvania to work out some contract details. It was to be a multi-day meeting with some of our production team. He

had been there numerous times before and eaten meals at our house. He enjoyed interacting with our family of four small children.

This particular time he brought his “wife” with him. The nearest motels were about 20 miles away so my wife and I invited them to eat with us and stay at our house overnight. We offered to let them sleep in the master bedroom while my wife and I planned to sleep in one of the children’s rooms. They decided to stay for the weekend and go with us on Sunday morning to our very conservative Beachy Amish church.

JM was a secular Jew who practiced his religion when it was convenient or served some business purpose. As an insight into his Jewish “faith,” JM told me that he felt like, “We had our chance, but we killed Jesus.” It seemed to me to be a handy “copout” for him.

After some good meetings on Friday, and a good night’s rest, we discovered on Saturday that the lady with him was NOT his wife. JM said they were thinking about getting married sometime.

What now? Our position on live-in girlfriends was clear. We knew that JM was aware of our “Amish” view of marriage. He appreciated our Christian worldview in general. Part of the reason we had gotten the contracts with his company was because he liked our lifestyle, and valued our reputation for honesty and integrity. We knew he bragged about our “Amishness” behind our backs. We had heard some of his comments about us from other business contacts.

Practical Questions:

1. Should we let the couple continue to sleep in our bedroom for the duration of the visit?
2. Rent a motel room for them?
3. Tell them they should repent of their sin and seek God’s forgiveness?

Strong Faith

by Faye Bell



“And He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your affliction’ (Mark 5:34 NKJV).

An entire ministry has been created around this one verse while completely ignoring many other Scriptures. Called by various names like “Strong Faith,” “Word of Faith,” and “Faith Healers,” it is infiltrating Anabaptist churches.

Proponents teach that God wants all His followers “well” and that all Christians should be healthy and whole. They say, “God has already done everything needed to heal you, and all you need to do is have enough faith so you can speak the disease out of your body.”

Teachers twist Scripture to support the belief that faith is a force, words are containers of the force, and through faith-filled words we can speak things into reality. They say, “Praying for healing is a sign of unbelief because God has already provided healing.”

And yet, the verse “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14, NKJV) contradicts their claim that praying is an act of unbelief.

In our community, the followers of this movement are visiting sick people and telling them that all they need to do is speak to their illness and if they have enough faith, they will be well.

A young woman newly diagnosed with cancer was visited and told of this ministry. The visitors gave her books about “Word of Faith” along with the admonition that if she didn’t believe in the teachings, she was ignorant and in need of enlightenment. The supporters prey on people when they are weak and vulnerable. We all know that a sick person will do much to find health again. This young woman was greatly upset and confused by the words her visitors shared with her.

An older woman who was dying of cancer, after years of battling the disease, was told to show her faith with healing. With tears in her eyes, she asked what it meant if she died instead of being healed. Would she not be saved? “Oh, probably you will be,” she was told, “but your reward will not be as great because of your weak faith.”

We know that God can and does heal. And Jesus did tell the woman with an issue of blood (Mark 5:34) that her faith had made her whole. So why couldn’t our faith do the same for us?

Practical Questions:

1. Why did Jesus and the apostles heal people in the New Testament?
2. Why is this Strong Faith movement not biblical?
3. Is it important if these teachers do not support all the Bible teachings and practices of the Anabaptists?
4. What is the best way to counteract false teaching?
5. How would one know if the movement is connected to the occult?



Contracted In

by Hot Wired



I am a 20-year-old youth who has been working for a Mennonite electrical contractor for the past two years. My employer made a contract with a very large company that makes products for several different industries. When my

Mennonite employer made the contract, he did not realize the company had a division that did work in the defense industry.

After we had a contract to install some new equipment, we found out that some of the equipment we were to install would be used to make hand grenades.

NOW WHAT SHOULD I DO??

Practical Questions:

1. Should I encourage my employer to back out of that part of the contract?
2. Should I refuse to work on machines used to make grenades?
3. Should I lay the responsibility on my employer if he completes the defense part of the contract?
4. What should I do if my employer continues to work on jobs in the defense industry?
5. And I wonder, “Should conscientious objectors do any work on military bases such as pouring concrete, building buildings, or selling supplies, including food items?”

Dead End

by *Frust Rated*



I acknowledge that the subject of the Sabbath Day is a perplexing subject, and my understanding is deficient. I have been and still am troubled by this subject, for it is evident to me that vast portions of “the Law” are ignored by both church teaching and the Christian community. Furthermore, these portions cannot be successfully implemented without a supporting culture. I am speaking specifically of all of the sacrifices in Leviticus, the calendar and holidays along with Sabbaths, the rituals of cleansing, rules about marriage, punishment for capital offences, and surely also circumcision.

Particularly troubling to me is that Jesus said, “Therefore, whoever shall break one of the least of the commandments and shall teach others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19).

If I approve of ignoring any of these instructions, I am bringing condemnation upon myself. Yet I cannot see how to successfully implement them.

I have a story to tell. Many years ago I believed that I should keep the Sabbath. The Sabbath is Saturday, not Sunday, and begins Friday evening at sundown, and goes for twenty-four hours until Saturday sundown.

The Sabbath is a day of rest, not as is commonly thought among Christians as the day of worship. Worship is not anywhere restricted to a particular day of the week.

The Sabbath is explained as a rest memorial of God’s rest on the seventh day after creation began (Exodus 20:10-11), and since God’s creation hasn’t been abolished, the Sabbath still stands.

Trying to keep the Sabbath is a real problem. I do not have a supporting Christian community, and besides this, there are special Sabbaths according to the Jewish calendar. I do not have reminders of when these special days come; there are also sacrifices associated with them which I cannot keep.

Violations of the Sabbath include doing work on that day which includes kindling a fire. Without a supporting community, I often made mistakes that made me guilty of violations. My family was not supportive either, and urged me to violate my conscience on this.

I was miserable because I was unable to live by these rules. Violating the Sabbath was a capital offence.

One day I learned of God providing an angel to help a relative with some heavy lifting on a Sabbath. I was confused. I knew I must be wrong about the Sabbath, but I needed to understand how I was wrong. I didn’t trust the explanations that came from my fellow Christians because they gave simple answers that ignored the purpose of the Sabbath as given in the Scriptures, as well as the commands to keep it.

Jesus was the only one whom I trusted to understand. I got on my knees to pray. I was afraid that my prayer might be intercepted by a devil, and I might get a wrong answer, so I prayed, “Show me how I am wrong; I do not want to live in sin.”

Then Jesus came and spoke to me. He first gave a sigh of exasperation. That really frightened me. The Lord of glory was exasperated with me! Then he asked me a question, “Isn’t it sufficient that one people remember?” The “one people” are the people of Israel.

Immediately I completely understood, and I said, “Yes sir, if you say so.”

I understood this meant there are national laws for Israel. These are to be obeyed, but perhaps not by non-citizens who live in other nations. Also, Israel is to be a kingdom of priests. As a kingdom of priests, aren’t they representing the whole population of the earth, including me, before God (Malachi 3:16-17)?

Practical Questions:

1. How do you explain the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament?
2. What did Jesus mean in Matthew 5:19 when He talked about not breaking any of the commandments?
3. Why would God not be pleased if anyone offered up blood sacrifices?
4. Is it okay for Christians to violate any of the Ten Commandments?
5. Why did Acts 15:18-20 ask the Gentile Christians not to eat things polluted by idols, things strangled, and blood?
6. Can the one-day-in-seven “rest day” be observed on the first day of the week instead of the seventh day?
7. When should a Christian obey his conscience?



Upcoming Events

Anabaptist Voice is announcing events we think are of interest to our readers. AV is not endorsing everything said or done at these meetings. If you know of any meetings or events that would benefit the Kingdom of Christ and are open to attendance by the general Anabaptist community, please let us know so we can continue to feature this section in future issues.

Southern Mennonite Fellowship Meetings

At Hartwell Mennonite Center, 3214 Royston Hwy, Hartwell, GA 30643

November 2-4, 2018

A family-oriented fellowship meeting

For information and lodging, call (706) 376-1200.

Theme: "Living for Christ in the 21st Century"

Speakers: Brent Stoltzfus | Harry Argo

Topics: Interpersonal Relationships with Asian Religions, the Unsaved, and Other Denominations | The Importance of Discipleship and Brotherhood Relationships | Forced Tolerance for the Christian | Facing the Technological Age | The Christian and Social Media | Godly Music and Entertainment



Christian Aid Ministries Open House

At CAM Warehouse, 2412 Division Highway, Ephrata, PA 17522

November 1-3, 2018

Learn about the work of CAM through informative presentations; see what life is like in other parts of the world in the exhibit area

For lodging, call Heidi Horst before October 30 at (717) 354-2434.

Speakers: Paul Yoder | David Ropp | Melvin Bricker | Edmar Plett | Luke Kurtz | Steve Yoder | David Troyer | Brent Boll | Stanley Fox | David Swearingen | Gary Miller | Andre Weaver

Topics: CAM's work in Liberia, Ukraine, and Kenya | A day in the life of a phone team member | Bringing God's Word to the unreached | Venezuela Crisis | Hope and Healing for Nineveh | Estate Planning | And many more



Swiss Pioneer Preservation Associates—New Book Release

At Martindale Fellowship Center, 352 Martindale Rd., Ephrata, PA 17522

November 1, 2018, at 7 PM

Presenting a new, definitive history on local Mennonite bishop Christian Burkholder (1746-1809), author of the *Address to Youth*. Author Dale A. Burkholder will give a presentation with book signing afterwards.

For more information, call Raymond Zimmerman at (717) 354-7139 or Dale A. Burkholder at (717) 669-1866.

Speakers: Lester M. Burkholder | Dale A. Burkholder



Circulation and Financial Statements

Again, we are thankful for your support of *Anabaptist Voice*. This includes the financial blessing of enough funds to carry on the work. This abundant supply of funds reminds us of the words found in Ezra 8:18 & 31, “The hand of our God was upon us.”

On 7 August 2018, we held a meeting of six brethren involved with the work of *Anabaptist Voice* at Burkeland Mennonite Church meeting house. One of the items we discussed was ways to expand our mailing list; these are only ideas and we want to pursue some of them after AV11 is safely in your hands.

1. Those who read and appreciate the magazine can hand out copies to church friends, family members, employees, business contacts, jail services, hospitals, doctor and dentist offices, and others.
2. Add lists from Anabaptist churches not formerly included.
3. Include a brochure in another publication such as *Beside the Still Waters*.
4. Post a free advertisement in *Reaching Out*.

We commend this work to God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. And we remind ourselves to handle our finances carefully. We must continue to do good, to be rich in good works, to be ready to give, to be willing to share, and to be sure to store up for ourselves a good foundation for the time to come that we may lay hold on eternal life (paraphrase of I Timothy 6:18-19).

Income & Expense Report

July through September 2018

July 2018 Beginning Balance	\$13,101.49
Income	
Reader Donations	\$3,777.00
Local Support Donations*	\$3,410.91
Total Income	\$7,187.91
Expenses	
Handling & Packaging	\$561.00
Postage	\$2,696.32
Printing	\$4,704.00
Staff Expenses	\$526.29
Total Expense	\$8,487.61
September 2018 Ending Balance	\$11,801.79

ISSUE #7 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 6,300 | Print & Postage Cost: \$9,736
\$1.55/Copy

ISSUE #8 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,500 | Print & Postage Cost: \$7,695
\$1.71/Copy

ISSUE #9 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,600 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,100
\$1.76/Copy

ISSUE #10 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 4,600 | Total Cost: \$8,487.61
\$1.84/Copy

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

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End of Year

by Andy Beckner

We wish to each one in this season of the year,
Peace and joy and love and good cheer.
May we all praise our Father who gave us His Son,
That we all may draw near Him as one.

We commend you to God and the Word of His grace,
As you go to and fro on the earth in its race.
May He always within you abide,
As you draw ever more near to His side.

A. B. | Wirtz, Virginia



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**“YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW
OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL; FOR YOU ARE WITH ME; YOUR
ROD AND YOUR STAFF, THEY COMFORT ME.”**

PSALM 23:4

