

Anabaptists: A People of the Book

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The future for the Anabaptist community is linked to Scripture. Both the Mennonite and Brethren churches were birthed out of the Scripture. Our forefathers read and studied the Bible and took it at face value. They honored and obeyed the Scripture. Many of them memorized much of the Bible. In fact the Brethren said, “The New Testament is our only creed.”

The Bible was the prominent factor in both private life in the home and in the corporate life of the church. If the Anabaptist community is to continue to be a spiritual expression of Scripture, it must be the same today.

The Anabaptist community must continue the hard work of expository preaching. There is a hunger for the Word of God in our churches. Those of us called to preach and teach have an awesome responsibility and opportunity. We must be about our Father’s business.

The home must also be a place of Scripture teaching. The Bible must become a focal point in the life of the individual and the family. Personal commitment to study the Scripture and to have family devotions are part of what it means to be Anabaptist.

In our busy society, Bible study can become only a brief exposure on Sunday morning at church. This will not work. The Bible must retain a place of prominence in our lives.

Many people commit hours for sports. Many will watch a ball game or play in one for 3 or 4 hours. We may commit many hours for leisure, but how much time do we spend studying the Scripture and meditating on its truths? We commit hours and years to business and farming. But how much time do we commit to the Word of God as we prepare our souls and the souls of our children for eternity?

If we are going to be people of God, we must be people of the Book. To be people of God means being men and women of the Scripture where Scripture is the most prominent force in our lives and the Scripture directs our thinking and behavior.

Our leaders must be diligent students of the Scripture and all of us must be committed disciples of the Word of God. It should be the first wall of defense against the world and the answer to our deepest longings and needs. It should direct our decisions and plans. Only then will we have the needed strength to continue to be the people of God.

Jesus said, “Sanctify them by thy Truth. Thy Word is Truth.” It is the Word of God that will set us apart unto God. Nothing else will work.

For thirty years I have studied and taught the Scripture. It has been a life-changing experience for me and for many of my students. We are the hammers and the Bible is the anvil. Hammers wear out, the anvil – never!

I am calling us as a community to the Book of books – the Bible. It is our lifeblood and our heritage and our future. If we depend on the Bible and its Giver, we can hardly imagine the blessings that await us now and in eternity. God bless you as you do that.