

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

James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing A Faith That Works

IN THIS ISSUE:

“HOW WE SHOULD OBSERVE THE LORD’S DAY” - *PHIL HAINES*

“TURNING TROUBLE INTO TRIUMPH” - *GALEN WEBER*

“ONLY ONE VOTE” - *KENDALL MYERS*

“ANABAPTIST BY CHOICE” - *GARY BUTIKOFER*

“ON DEATH AND DYING” - *PETER HOOVER*

Letter from the Editor

Greetings from the Acting Editor,

Anabaptist Voice bucks the trend toward smaller magazines. In this issue, we add eight pages due to increased efficiency in printing and mailing costs and available material, while at the same time keeping the attractive full-color format.

This magazine is not meant to be read in one sitting and then discarded. Articles of substance require some thought and coming back for a reread and discussion with a brother or sister. Keep your copy handy.

Anabaptist Voice also bucks another trend; that is the common attempt by many churches to make the Christian life sound easy and attractive. We teach that entering the kingdom of heaven and obeying the commandments of Christ is costly. Very costly.

In Luke 12:51-53 Jesus said:

Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.

Family division and separation hurts. It is not easy. Standing for truth will bring separation from those who teach that obeying the commands of Jesus and the Apostles are not “salvation issues.” The topics we study in *Anabaptist Voice* are Bible teachings that must be put into practice. They are not just Mennonite or Amish customs we are trying to perpetuate as a valuable way of life. Obedience issues are “salvation issues”. If we disobey our King, we place ourselves outside the Kingdom of God and give ourselves up to Satan and his world.

Peace,

James G. Landis



Send all responses, articles and questions to:

AV Editor

5282 Highway 56 South
Waynesboro, GA 30830
editor@anabaptistvoice.com
www.anabaptistvoice.com

Send donations and/or subscription info to:

AV Production Team

3287 Hwy. 201
Due West, SC 29639
subscriptions@anabaptistvoice.com
www.anabaptistvoice.com

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About *Anabaptist Voice*

Our Mission Statement:

Anabaptist Voice is meant to be a servant to the churches of Jesus Christ. We believe the name “Anabaptist” is a fitting term to describe an obedient “People of God” in our generation. We follow the practice of the historic Anabaptists who sought to obey the teachings of Christ and the apostles, but we do not idolize the Anabaptists nor historic Anabaptism. We follow Christ.

Our Purpose:

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

Our Goal:

To reinforce Christ’s call to forsake the world and be a loyal citizen of Christ’s heavenly kingdom. Many people have not heard how Scripture is meant to be understood and obeyed. Our aim is that *Anabaptist Voice* would stir all who read it to a greater kingdom awareness and a greater desire to obey Christ in all things.

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 the words of Isaiah 30:21.

Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying,
“This is the way, walk in it,”

Whenever you turn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left.

Our Audience:

Our primary target audience is anyone associated with an Anabaptist church. We define an Anabaptist church as one that practices a believer’s baptism, maintains separation from the world, and seeks to live out the New Testament teachings of Christ and the Apostles. Our aim is to reach a broad constituency comprised of many Anabaptist church groups.

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

Our Finances:

Anabaptist Voice will be sent to all who desire to receive it without any paid subscription. Donations will be accepted by those who wish to support the work. A few brethren have committed to support *Anabaptist Voice* by providing the extra financial backing needed so this project can be carried out. Their support is listed as “Local Support” in financial reports.

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 that have been received.

Our Distribution:

All *Anabaptist Voice* issues are free of charge to any individual who requests them. Brethren committed to this work make free subscriptions possible, but donations in any amount to help cover the costs are welcome.

We hope *Anabaptist Voice* will fill several purposes: We want it to stimulate brotherly discussion on Bible interpretation and application. We also hope that it will help generate preaching in our churches on practical discipleship issues. Finally, we hope some of you find it useful in one-on-one evangelism.

Press numbers will be determined by demand from those who find *Anabaptist Voice* useful in their personal life, church life, and ministry.

Our Organization:

A council of 6-10 brethren from various Anabaptist churches directs the production team and the editor in the publication of *Anabaptist Voice*.

The AV Editor is responsible for assuring that we adhere to the stated purpose, securing writers, and proper copy editing.

The AV Production Team is responsible for design, layout, printing, subscriptions, and all financial matters.

At present, *Anabaptist Voice* is choosing to be free of government regulations and control as much as possible. We are not registered with any federal or state government body. We are not a 501c3 organization; contributions are not tax deductible under present law. If you wish to help us with a significant donation, please contact us.

Our Statement of Beliefs:

For the purpose of publishing *Anabaptist Voice*, we are in agreement on the following points. We believe:

1. In the 23 articles listed in the Christian Aid Ministries Statement of Faith (available from CAM at www.christianaidministries.org/about-us or by writing to AV).
2. The Kingdom of God is now in effect on the earth (Matthew 5-7), and will be more fully experienced in a future state in the presence of God (Revelation 4).
3. The whole world outside the Kingdom of God lies under the sway of Satan (1 John 5:19).
4. God’s “New Covenant” with the people of God (the church) changes God’s “Old Covenant” with the Israelites (Hebrews 8).
5. The Bible can and should be understood and put into practice (Matthew 7:24).
6. The church is to be a holy people who call all the ungodly to repentance, self-surrender, and obedience to King Jesus. (1 Peter 2:9)

Our Bible Translation Policy:

Our desire is always to give the true meaning of the Word of God in simple language that all can understand.

To do this we have mixed various translations, put it in our own words, or quoted word-for-word from one translation when we felt the meaning would be clear to our readers. If we ever give the wrong meaning through an inaccurate rendering of the Scripture, we ask that you enlighten us with a clearer translation of the passage in question.

Explainable to Children?

The following letter is from Chu Lin Ooi whose family is of Chinese extraction, but has spent years in Singapore before coming to Georgia. Chu Lin is now part of a community church called “Harvester Baptist Mission.” This name applies not only to the local church here but also to many churches in various Asian countries.

In 1980 the present pastor of the whole group learned of Anabaptists and has been inspiring his people with the Anabaptist story. One or two of these local families have even named their children after Anabaptist martyrs—George Blaurock, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Michael and Margaretha Sattler. They know about Anabaptists.

A number of the families living in Swainsboro, Georgia work together in a helicopter parts business where they sell helicopter parts all over the world. Talk about reaching out! - AV Ed.

Hi, Mr. James,

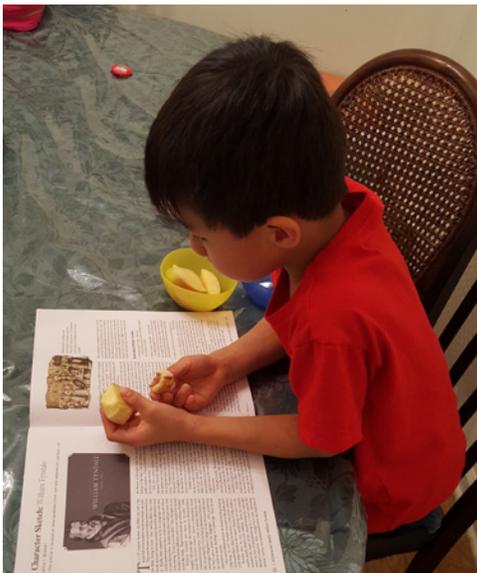
Here’s a picture of my 7 year old son Daniel engrossed in the *Anabaptist Voice*, enjoying it together with his evening apple snack :). He did not even know his picture was being taken.

The work you all are doing is succeeding in capturing the attention of both young and old alike. May it inspire us and future generations, Lord willing, to “rekindle the flame of the spirit of the early Anabaptists” (to quote my pastor when he first learned of the Anabaptists in the late 1980s).

Will be praying for all of you as you keep up the good work.

In Christ,

Chu Lin | Swainsboro, Georgia



“If you can’t explain it to a six year old, you don’t understand it yourself.” - Einstein

Affirmation

I say “Amen” to the vision. “May it inspire us and future generations, Lord willing, to “rekindle the flame of the spirit of the early Anabaptists.”

Your brother,

Dean Taylor | Altona, Minnesota

Commendation

It is really a joy to see the responses that are starting to come to the *Anabaptist Voice*, how we desire that people would respond to the Gospel with equal enthusiasm and how very interesting that the Lord has been and continues to lead people in the paths of truth as evidenced by your recent correspondent Chu Lin. One does not have to sport a “Mennonite or Amish” name to espouse Anabaptism which in reality is seeing the Scriptures as the paths of the Lord that David in the Psalms, Isaiah, Micah, Mark and Luke speak about.

Perhaps the Voice will bring Anabaptist thought and views of Scripture to many more who are struggling with how Christ desires us to follow in His footsteps.

We are also encouraged to see other Anabaptist groups starting to use technology to spread the Gospel and may we all do it for the His glory and bring souls into the Kingdom of heaven without resorting to counting scalps, so to speak, as we have seen done in Pentecostal churches where numbers become a measure of success in saving souls.

To us getting the message out there is vital and God will do the rest; we are not concerned with numbers.

In Christ,

Joseph Van Loon | Deloraine, Tasmania, Australia

Confirmation

This unexpected confirmation comes from an interesting and unexpected source. I am receiving confirmations from more expected sources. People who understand what genuine Christianity is all about will continue to affirm this effort.

It is past time to stop being cowed by the disenchanted, the disillusioned, and the ignorant in our own ranks—those who sometimes disdain the very values our heritage has championed in past centuries. Would to God that *Anabaptist Voice* could once again inspire deep loyalty to simple Christian values, to values worth dying for, and for values that Christ can continue to use as building blocks in His Kingdom!

I wonder what Jesus Christ is up to next!

Chester Weaver | LaGrange, Indiana

Mixed Response

I did receive the first issue of AV (email) and circulated it in our congregation. I got a mixed response, so we probably won't be able to do a bulk mailing. However we will stay in touch.

Personally, I think the magazine would be very helpful in guiding our constituency in its identity crisis. Too many of our members are being caught up in Zionism and Fundamentalism and its cultural religious wars versus modeling a Christian community for the world to see and desire.

N.Y., Ohio

Anabaptist Voice: Thanks for your brief explanation of where you are in your congregational life.

There is no solid foundation other than the Bible and its sure word of prophecy, Christ Jesus.

Many Amish and Mennonites who leave their culture and church simply slide into the world because they do not use the anchor of the Bible to hold them securely in the faith. *Anabaptist Voice* wants to help give a sure word of interpretation and practice to those searching for the truth.

The Practical Side

Dear Brothers in the faith,

Greetings of Peace! I was indeed encouraged and inspired by reading your first issue of the *Anabaptist Voice*.

YES, I believe *Anabaptist Voice* can be relevant and necessary among all the other parchments that find their way into our mail boxes. Maybe *Anabaptist Voice* can give some direction and clarity on important doctrinal issues that our "Menno" churches are struggling with.

Your section on The Practical Side is an excellent way to introduce and stimulate youth interest in reading and participation and I predict it will become a popular feature! I could see these real life examples as an excellent introduction to a Youth Bible study which would hopefully move into the deeper soil of the foundations of the faith which our Fathers stood on.

I do bless and support you as you move forward in making *Anabaptist Voice* a quiet, inspiring "trumpet in the land"! Hmmm. Maybe that phrase is an oxymoron?! Blessings of Peace!

P. H., South Carolina

Anabaptist Voice: It is true that much literature comes into Anabaptist homes. Our challenge is to make *Anabaptist Voice* attractive, distinctive, informative, interesting, useful, truthful, and God-

honoring enough that Anabaptists will not only read it, but will also use it as a means of sharing their faith with others.

Faith and Obedience

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus,

You have an interesting start for a new magazine aimed at the instruction, encouragement, and blessing of those who are our Lord's chosen.

Perhaps your magazine is the kind of encouragement we need. Over the years we have seen many "Anabaptist" people who like to exalt their forebears, praise their lives, and pride themselves that they are their children. But then in their own lives and actions they do not follow in the footsteps of those that went before them.

We must be Christlike with the Holy Spirit living within us. We must live the Christian life, then we will be the kind of people that the Anabaptists were. A proper faith in the promises of God through Christ prompts our obedience. Our works without the Holy Spirit's empowerment will fall far short of accomplishing much of spiritual value. A proper faith will work because it obeys the Spirit's directives. It seems almost that rather than talk about "faith and works," we should think of it as "faith and obedience."

I hope that we don't put so much stock in our goodly heritage that we forget what made our forefathers live the kind of lives that they did. As I read your initial installment it seems that the intent is to be that we should have the same faith that the Anabaptists did, and as Paul wrote the Corinthians, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." If we do this, we will mirror the same faith the Anabaptists had.

L.H., Texas

Anabaptist Voice: You have expressed our purpose well. Amen.

Do We Know It All?

Christian greetings.

I support *Anabaptist Voice* and like Issue 1.

However, I am not sure about how much we should compare the Anabaptists and the Protestants. We don't want to come across as proud, perfect, know-it-alls.

G. E., Ohio

Anabaptist Voice: We must know who we are and what we believe if we are going to witness to others with boldness. And sometimes it helps if we know why we are not Protestants, or Evangelicals, or Fundamentalists or whatever.

Knowing what others believe and teach can help us to better defend the truth. Because the Apostle Paul so thoroughly understood Judaism and the Scriptures, he

could prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28).

But, we should note that in doing so Paul sometimes angered both Jews and Gentiles enough that they wanted to kill him. A bold stand for truth can likewise bring persecution upon us.

Mennonite Wikipedia

Please subscribe me to your magazine.

I find your view of the Bible quite interesting. It seems you are promoting a Mennonite Wikipedia approach to Bible interpretation! I place a difference between careful Bible translating (Bibles) and man's understanding of the Word (commentaries). One is the inspired Word of God, the other isn't.

I find when I do a thorough study, I do need to understand the context and meaning of the passage in the original wording to really understand the Bible. I hope you aren't down-playing that kind of study.

C. H., Alberta

Anabaptist Voice: We promote all kinds of Bible study that search the Scripture for what God means it to say. Furthermore, we as Anabaptists believe that with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we can know the truth of God's Word and that we can interpret it and apply it correctly ... without a seminary education or a knowledge of the original tongues.

Anyone who knows more than one language knows that more than one word can be used to translate a word into another language. Sometimes the German will give a concept not possible to translate directly into English ("Gemeinschaft" for "brotherhood"). Sometimes Spanish has a nuance English misses ("dar a luz", which means "to give a light" instead of "to give birth"). So for those who know two or more languages, comparing the same Bible passage in the two languages contributes to their study.

Because most words in one language do not have an exact equivalent in another language, a perfect translation is not possible. Besides that, different words mean different things to different people. There are different words or renderings that bring out different shades of meaning without doing violence to the Scripture.

Anyone can do the kind of Bible study we encourage. Read the Scriptures in context, compare different English translations (and other languages if you can), and then write out in simple words what you understand the passage says.

This kind of Bible study requires a lot of digging in—word studies, context, and interpretation. When I do it this way, I find the word of God precious and real.

Disciples Baptism

Dear Editor,

I am excited that you have progressed so well and have produced Issue 1.

One thing caught my attention in "Who is an Anabaptist?" You use the term "believer baptism," and I've often used a similar term. In the last few years, I have started promoting a new term, "disciples' baptism." The word "believe" has been so watered down, and we've faced situations where fathers think an eight-year-old child "believes," or even a four or five-year-old. Yes, no doubt they do, as much as a child can. In fact, the Lord commends their faith. But we didn't feel comfortable baptizing children.

I've needed to find a way to explain that they are not mature enough to hear the call to repent and follow Jesus in the Way as disciples. That's adult stuff.

E. S., Oklahoma

Anabaptist Voice: Adult "disciple" baptism is a good point and maybe we can take the Bible meaning of baptism up in a later issue. For now, let us say that we do not expect children to get married or to buy a farm.

Restore Faith

Dear fellow Believer,

Your magazine is put up very nice.

We need to somehow restore the unshakeable faith that our ancestors had during the Reformation period. It seems that our Mennonite and Amish people sometimes have the formality but not the spirituality. The mainstream Mennonites seem to be leaving God all together. There appear to be no absolutes.

I encourage you to look at what Christ and the apostles taught and notice what similarity there is in what the Anabaptists taught and lived.

May God give you strength.

M.S., Indiana

Anabaptist Voice: If our walk resembles that of the Anabaptists, it is because we follow the same model the Anabaptists followed—the New Testament Christ.

Policy Note

Email letters to Anabaptist Voice are encouraged. All letters must be accompanied by the writer's full name and physical address. If the letter is printed in the magazine, only the writer's initials and the name of their 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. At this point, to be overwhelmed with letters sounds like a pleasant rainstorm. - AV Ed.

Why We Should Observe the Lord's Day

by James G. Landis

Introduction: Anabaptist Voice wants to explain and defend the beliefs and practices that distinguish the people of God from the world and general Christianity. We believe that the way we observe the Lord's Day ought to be one of those marks of separation that set us apart from the world.

Anabaptists believe the New Testament teaches that the Lord's Day is a special day of rest and worship that grew out of the Old Testament Sabbath Day. After Christ's resurrection the church changed the day of the week from the seventh day to the first day of the week and called it the Lord's Day. But the manner in which the day is to be observed under the New Covenant is firmly set in the Sabbath Day of the Old Testament.

So let us look in the Scripture and see how God expected His people to observe the Sabbath Day under the Old Covenant. Then we want to consider whether or not these same practices are to be observed by Anabaptist disciples today.

The Old Testament and the Seventh Day

The observance of the Seventh Day(Sabbath) was firmly established at creation.

Genesis 2:2-3 doesn't say everything that God expected man to do or not to do on the seventh day; he did that in other places in the Old Testament such as in Exodus 31:14-17 where he spoke very forcefully. But as surely as Cain knew it was wrong to murder Abel, God also made plain, right in the beginning, what he expected of man in regards to the Sabbath day. Other later Scripture only reinforced what God had made plain to man in the very beginning.

An example of this truth is found in Genesis 2:24. In this verse God established that a man should leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, but the verse says nothing about divorce.

Yet it must have been a firm part of God's command right in the beginning. Men must have known that God did not want divorce, for Jesus told some Pharisees who were testing him "From the beginning God did not allow divorce". Jesus answered, "Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because you refused to accept God's teaching. But divorce was not allowed in the beginning." (Matthew 19:8).

Therefore we should understand that God established the Seventh day as a holy day of rest right in the beginning; and it was a day that he expected all men everywhere to observe in honor of Him.

From the beginning, keeping the Sabbath as a holy day was not an optional thing that man could do just to receive a blessing on himself. God required it. Numerous times in the Law and the Prophets God called it "MY Sabbath." Ezekiel especially used the phrase and pronounced dire curses on those who disregarded this holy day (Ezekiel 20:12-13,16,20-21,24; 22:8,26,38; 44:24).

Likewise, when we profane HIS Sabbath day by not keeping it holy, the same judgment falls on us as does the breaking of any of the other nine commandments (Exodus 20:5).

"God ended all His work which he had done in six days and rested on the seventh day. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day, because in it He rested from all His work"

Genesis 2:2-3

"Keep the Sabbath day. It is holy to you. Those who misuse it must be put to death. Those who do any work on that day must be separated from their people. Do your work in six days. But the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest. You must rest on it. It is set apart for the Lord. Those who work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. The Israelites must keep the Sabbath day. They must celebrate it for all time to come. It will be a covenant that lasts forever. It will be the sign of the covenant I have made between me and the Israelites forever. This is because in six days I, the Lord, made the sky and the earth. But on the seventh day I did not work. I rested."

Exodus 31:14-17

"So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife. And the two people will become one body."

Genesis 2:24

"I also told them to observe MY Sabbath days."

Ezekiel 20:12

"They totally misused MY Sabbath days. So I said I would pour out my great anger on them."

Ezekiel 20:13

"... MY Sabbath days."

Ezekiel 20:16, 20, 21, 24; 22:8,26,38; 44:24

"I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I cause the sins of the parents to affect their children. I will cause the sins of those who hate me to affect even their grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

Exodus 20:5

The New Testament and the Seventh Day

Throughout the Old Testament, how one kept the Sabbath was a sign of one's reverence and respect for God. Did Jesus by his coming, do away with the keeping of the Sabbath as a day of rest and a holy day? No, Jesus did not do away with the Sabbath.

There are no eternal commandments of God that Jesus did away with when he came and taught on the earth. He never said, "Now you can have idols as long as your heart is right. Now you can steal if your neighbor has plenty. Now you can kill if the government orders you to do it." Nor did Jesus ever say, "Now you may disregard MY Sabbaths and do whatever you feel like doing."

No, Jesus left every one of God's commandments in place when he ushered in his new standards "You have heard it said in the law ... but I say unto you—love your enemies ... do good to them that hate you ... worship the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your strength."

And it is certain that Jesus did not do away with the Sabbath day that God set up in the very beginning. There are two reasons we can say this with confidence.

First, The Sabbath observance was to be forever (Exodus 31:15-16). We observe that no heavenly bodies demonstrate a seven-day cycle, yet we still keep a seven-day week from the creation till now. Why is this? Keeping the seven-day week is a continuing witness through all time that God/Jesus made the world and everything in it (John 1:3).

Another reason we can say with certainty that Jesus did not do away with the Sabbath day is that Jesus taught his disciples, "I came to fulfill God's law, not to do away with it" (Matthew 5:17-19). Surely, when Jesus said, "Nothing will disappear from my law until the sky and the earth are gone" he would have included the Sabbath day as a holy day to be taught and observed until the end of time.

And God's blessing will rest on those who observe the Lord's day both now and in eternity. For Jesus said, "Whoever obeys my law and teaches other people to obey my law will be great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19)."

"Do your work in six days. But the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest. You must rest on it. It is set apart for the Lord. Those who work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. 16 The Israelites must keep the Sabbath day. They must celebrate it for all time to come. It will be a covenant that lasts forever."

Exodus 31:15-16

"All things were made through Jesus. Nothing that has been made was made without him."

John 1:3

"Don't think that I have come to destroy the law of Moses or the teaching of the prophets. I have not come to destroy their teachings but to do what they said. I tell you the truth. Nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone. The law will not lose even the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter until all has happened. Whoever refuses to obey any command and teaches other people not to obey that command will be the least important in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys the law and teaches other people to obey the law will be great in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:17-19



AFTER 6 DAYS, THE CREATOR OF LIGHT & DARK, THE CREATOR OF FLOWERS & STARS, RESTED

How We Should Observe the Lord's Day

by Phil Haines

Our country has drastically changed in the last century as we have entered a modern era. Electricity, computers, telephones and cars have completely changed our lives. Other changes have occurred in our lives besides those affected by modern inventions. Our country's morality is far different than it was a hundred years ago. This has occurred in part because many churches no longer teach or uphold certain historical Christian doctrines. One of these neglected doctrines is the keeping of the Lord's Day.

A hundred years ago work ceased once a week as Christians observed a day of rest and worship. Most all businesses and factories were closed. In fact, many states had blue laws that prohibited them from being open on Sunday. Today we know almost nothing about Sunday being any different than any other day of the week. Very few churches teach anything about a special day of rest and worship. Sadly Sunday has become a play day and shopping day. In this article, we want to consider how God views our changes in the Lord's Day observance.

Doing Good On The Sabbath

Let us turn to Scriptures for guidance on this subject. As we look at the New Testament we see no direct commandment given to keep the Sabbath day (nor do we see any indication that the Christian is not to keep it). Several times we find Jesus conflicting with the Pharisees about the Sabbath. However, He did not conflict with them if there should be a Sabbath, but how the Sabbath should be kept. We need to understand New Testament Jewish life to know why there were these confrontations.

The Jews were very meticulous in keeping the Sabbath day. They had lists of activities that were prohibited—Such as tying a knot, writing more than two letters, erasing, and extinguishing a fire (the only exception was if life was endangered). A person may wonder what was even allowed on the Sabbath day. The Jews by Jesus' time had excluded almost everything. To them the Sabbath day was a bondage day. It was like a child who was sent to bed by his mother and was told not to do anything else but go to sleep. The child asked, "Can I think?" Under the stifling weight of legalism the Jews might have wondered, "Can we breathe?"

It was this stifling legalism that Jesus confronted. We find in Luke 6:6-10 and Luke 13:14-16 two conflicts Jesus had with the Jews on keeping the Sabbath day. In one case Jesus healed a man with a withered hand and in the other case he healed a woman who had been all doubled up and bent over by an evil spirit.

Both of these actions were prohibited by their interpretation of the law. The scribes, the Pharisees, and the ruler of the synagogue classed healing these people as work. This was their legal interpretation of the letter of the law: "There are six days in which work should be done; therefore come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day."

Jesus humiliated the Jewish rulers when he asked them this question, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil, to save a life, or to destroy it?" Of course they could not answer him.

The point Jesus was making in both of these cases was that God's law did not forbid doing good to another on the Sabbath day. That was only their interpretation of the Mosaic law. Jesus was not dissolving the Sabbath day, but keeping it without man's added burdens. At the same time He was teaching His hearers that, from the beginning, God intended for the Sabbath day to be a blessing to mankind (Mark 2:27).

"And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

Luke 6:6-10

"And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?"

Luke 13:14-16

Rest On The Sabbath Day

From the beginning, “rest” was part of the day. God rested, not because He was tired, but rather to make something for man. He was creating a day of rest when He rested. He was making a holy day when He blessed and sanctified the seventh day. This holy day of rest would be called the Sabbath (Sabbath simply means “to cease”). God made it for man’s physical and spiritual good.

No other mention of the Sabbath day is made in Genesis.¹ One might wonder if the patriarchs kept the Sabbath day? The answer is most assuredly yes. God made this day holy. He didn’t intend for it to be ignored for almost 2,500 years between Creation and the time of Moses. He made it holy beginning at the Creation.

The next mention of the Sabbath day is in Exodus 16 when Moses told the children of Israel how God was going to send manna. Moses gave instructions to not gather it on the Sabbath. This was before the Ten Commandments were given. The Israelites did not ask what the Sabbath was or why they could not work. They already knew the Sabbath day was a holy day of rest.

Then in Exodus 19 Moses went up Mt. Sinai and the law was given. Exodus 20 has the 10 commandments. The fourth commandment is given in verses 8-11. (*see right column*)

Look closely at Exodus 20:10. Not only were the Israelites not to work, but neither were they to make someone else work—they were not even to make their oxen or donkeys work! Every seventh day was to be a day of complete rest throughout the land. Every work that could be done in any of the six days was not to be done on the day of rest.

Keeping a proper day of rest requires that we prepare for that day. Our preparation should begin on Monday. We work hard six days knowing the seventh day is going to be a day devoted to God. Our mind and bodies can work better those six days when we know the seventh day will be a day of rest. It is then we will get recharged to face the next six days. This day of rest and worship should always be the highlight of our week. It draws us back to Him and renews our purpose in life.

If instead of using the Sabbath Day as a day of rest, we use it as a workday or a play day, we not only cheat ourselves out of spiritual refreshment; we also fail to honor God by keeping it as a holy day.

God did not create the Sabbath day as a day of restriction to test man’s obedience. Rather the Sabbath was made for man’s good. God knows more about us than we know about ourselves. He knows it is best for man’s physical, emotional and spiritual well-being to have a day of rest and worship. It is proven that when a person works seven days a week their quality of work suffers. It is hard on the body and mind to go without rest.

When every day is taken up with earthly activities we begin to forget about God and our need for Him. It is for our spiritual well being to have a day completely void of work and full of spiritual thought and activity. Adam Clarke wrote “Had we no Sabbath, we should soon have no religion.” How true that is. That is why this country’s moral values have fallen. We have no Sabbath and we have very little true Christianity.

“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.”

Mark 2:27

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Genesis 2:1-3

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Exodus 20:8-11

1. Repeated mention is made of seven-day periods in regards to Noah’s ark (Genesis 7:4, 10; 8:10, 12) and a careful study of the detailed chronology given in Genesis 7-8 indicates that the Sabbath day was an important event throughout the flood. One might also note the number “seven” (each of clean animals and birds) in Genesis 7:2-4. Certainly this would indicate that Noah kept the Sabbath Day holy.

So if a day of rest and worship is important for the Christian, then why is there no command in Scripture to keep one? It is because God does not want to risk man keeping a holy day as only a legalistic exercise. That is what the Jews had made it and Jesus had clashed with them about it. Rather God wants His people to serve Him because they want to and not because they have to. A Christian who loves God more than this world will see the value of a day of rest and worship and want to keep it. Consider Romans 7:6.

The Christian's motivation for serving God is different in the New Testament than the Old. In the Old Testament it was required of the Jews to uphold the law under the punishment of death. In the New Testament we serve God because of our love for Him. This is how we "serve in newness of spirit."

Likewise the Christian's motivation for keeping a day of rest and worship is different in the New Testament. It is because we want to have a day where we set aside the cares of life and draw close to Him. It is because we love God more than the wealth and pleasures of this world.

The Christian understands God created a day of rest in the Creation. He understands the importance of the day for his own spiritual well-being. He does not need another command to keep it. He knows the historical significance of the day. The Church through the ages has kept it. It started with Paul and the apostles. Apostle John wrote "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10a). The Corinthians were told to bring their offerings the first day of the week, presumably when they were gathering for worship (I Cor. 16:2).

So what reason would we in the 21st century have not to keep the Lord's Day? Does God now want His people busy working seven days a week? Would He rather His people have a day of fun and recreation instead? Would He want His people to sleep in and go shopping the rest of the day? We know the answers to these questions. These are things Satan desires and not God. God wants man to love Him with all His heart, soul, and mind. We do this in part by giving Him one day a week.

Our interest in having a day of rest and worship is a thermometer that measures our love for God. Those who would rather work or play than rest or worship have little love for God. If we find keeping the Lord's Day a chore, then we will not be interested in the things of heaven. In heaven we will not be working, shopping or mowing the yard. We will be singing around God's throne. If we do not enjoy that now, neither will we enjoy it in heaven. God will not make us go to heaven if we would not enjoy it.

Some might argue that in the modern economic environment they have to work seven days a week in order to make a living. This is not true. People might have to work seven days a week to live a lifestyle they want to live. In America most of our "needs" are really wants. We could drive an older car, eat out less, buy used clothing or save money in many other areas. There are always ways to get by with less when we want to. As we put our desire to serve God foremost, He will make a way. Sometimes that way might not always be our first choice, but there will be a way.

Keeping The Lord's Day Holy

Let us now consider the practical aspects about what is allowed and what is not allowed on the Lord's Day. Remembering the verses from Romans 7 we should never look at keeping the Lord's Day as being bound to the letter of

"But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Romans 7:6

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

I Corinthians 16:2

the law. The Lord's Day is something we should look at with joy and not as a burden. It is a joy that I do not have to worry about mowing the yard, fixing the car, weeding the garden, going shopping or other earthly activities. For those who truly love God with all their heart, with all their soul and with all their mind, they cherish a special day that is set aside for God. Any work that can be done during six days should not be done on the seventh day. If we can sweep, do laundry or weed the flower beds during the week, then we should not do them on Sunday.

Acts of necessity are permitted on the Lord's Day.

In Luke 14:5, Jesus did not contradict the need to pull an ox out of a pit on the Sabbath. So we too might find we have to do a necessary activity that cannot be done except at the present. But we must remember that it is a different situation if we put our ox in the pit.

For instance if we plan to be away on a trip 1,000 miles from home and we must drive or fly home on Sunday so we can be at work on Monday, that is putting your ox in the pit. Or if you set your business up so someone must pack eggs, milk cows, run trucks, clean rooms, or prepare food for the same 8-16 hours as any other day of the week, that could also be putting your ox in the ditch. Even if you personally are not there, you are causing someone else to work very long hours on the Lord's Day.

God will hold each person responsible for how much work he does on the Lord's Day. Each one must ask himself if it is work that could be done on one of the other six days.

This does not mean we can only sit on a chair on Sunday. Up-building, non-work, non-play related activities are permissible. Going on walks with the family, visiting friends and neighbors, and doing evangelistic work, is permissible. Most importantly we need to do spiritual things. Going to church, reading the Bible, reading other good books, and praying, should always be part of our Lord's Day.

Sunday is a day of rest, not laziness. It is a day of re-creation, not recreation. It is a day of memorial for our risen Lord. It is a day of Christian service. We need to be careful to not just make it a day to do fun things. **It is a holy day, not a holiday.** Our Sunday observance should begin on Saturday night. We finish our work early and get to bed so we are not tired for church on Sunday morning. **We prepare our hearts for worship by clearing our minds of earthly activities and spending time in God's Word.**

“And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?”

Luke 14:5



“ It's a silent witness to the Lord when people go into shopping malls, and everyone is bustling, and you see that Chick-fil-A is closed.

~ S. Truett Cathy

Buying and Selling on the Lord's Day

Another important subject to consider is buying on Sunday.

Nehemiah had trouble with people working and buying and selling on the Sabbath day. He warned the nobles of Judah to stop allowing this to happen. “What is this evil thing you are doing, by profaning the Sabbath day?” he asked. (Nehemiah 13:15-18).

Nehemiah considered buying and selling on the Sabbath day a very evil thing. He called it “profaning”—treating it as not sacred, contemptible, irreverent toward God, desecrating holy things—the Sabbath Day.

Buying and selling on Sunday is no less serious today than it was in Nehemiah's day, because this is a holy day. Some might argue that the store will be open regardless, so what does it matter if we go shopping or not. If all Christians would not buy anything on Sunday, then most stores would close because it would not be profitable to be open. Maybe the store will still be open, but that is not an excuse to patronize it.

Once a man lamented the fact he had to work on Sunday. He said he did not want to but his employer made him. He was asked if he ever shopped or ate out on Sunday. He admitted he did. He was told that if he causes others to work on Sunday, then he needs to accept working on Sunday as well. If he thinks it is wrong to work on Sunday, then he should not buy on Sunday either. The world can see the inconsistency of not wanting to work on Sunday but then go shopping and eat out. When an employee can rightly say they never buy anything on Sunday, and keep it as a holy day, many employers understand and grant them religious freedom by not making them work. Not all employers will do this. That is when a person should look for an employer that will respect their religious beliefs.

When we determine not to buy things on Sunday we will need to plan ahead. We should always check our gas gauge on Saturday. If we will travel on Sunday we can buy food to take along instead of stopping at a restaurant to eat. If all Christians would keep the Lord's Day holy, it would change this nation. Few businesses would find it profitable to be open. Non-Christians would stop to think about the meaning of this and their standing with God. Some who do not go to church now might have interest in going.

But if we find keeping the Lord's Day a burden to us, and our interests are focused on worldly pursuits, it reveals a lukewarm heart. If that is the case, let us repent and again embrace one day a week given unto the Lord.

Again, let us look at this day, not as a restriction, but as a day of joy. It honors God as the Creator God. It is a special day set aside for rest and worship. For the Christian it is the most special day of the week.

Practical Questions:

1. Should an Anabaptist make hay on the Lord's Day?
2. How long is a Lord's day journey by car?
3. Should Anabaptists use commercial travel on the Lord's Day?
4. What are fitting activities for young people on the Lord's Day?
5. Is it okay to work late on a Saturday night if we stop by midnight?
6. Should students do their homework on Sunday?
7. Would you allow a realtor to show your house on a Sunday?

“In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.

There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.”

Nehemiah 13:15-18

Note: It is beyond the scope of this article to defend why Christians keep Sunday as a holy day instead of Saturday. It is sufficient to say it has been the accepted practice of the Church through the ages, having begun with the early church.

Sermon Snippets on Contentment

by Austin Hege

Some imagine that godliness brings riches, but really, godliness with contentment is great wealth. - 1 Timothy 6:6

- Contentment: the hallmark of the man or woman who has put his affairs in the hands of God.
- Contentment is knowing that I shall be supplied with whatever I need; and if I have not everything I desire, I may conclude it is either not fit for me or not good for me, or I shall have it in due time.
- Contentment is being satisfied in spirit regardless of our lot in life. Hardships will come, but in the midst of them, we're utterly content in the Good Shepherd's care.
- Contentment is only as complete as our trust is.
- Contentment in the world is based on having as much as or more than those around us.
- Contentment comes from feeding at the Shepherd's table, loving His Word, delighting in His laws, and believing His precious promises.
- Contentment without godliness is short-lived at best.
- Contentment will keep us from the sins of envy and covetousness.
- Complete trust in my Shepherd's care moves me to contentment.
- A thankful heart allows contentment to flourish.
- A daily focus on life from an eternal perspective is a keeping force for contentment.
- Contentment will not keep us from riches, but will help us to wait patiently to inherit them.

“Do not be covetous, but be content with what you have. — Hebrews 13:5

It Pleases Me

A gentleman traveling by one misty morn, asked of a shepherd old.
“What will the weather be like today?
Wind or calm? Rain or shine? Heat or cold?”
And the shepherd with cheer replied, “Whate’er may come this day,
Be it a frigid blast or a golden ray,
I am content to say, **It pleases me.**”

“And how can you make such a statement bold?” the gentleman asked.
“For ‘tis plain to see that rain and cold can cost you dear,
While charming sun and gentle breeze could make a life of ease.”
“Ah!” said the Shepherd old, “I have found o’er many a year,
That whate’er the weather that does God please,
“I am content to say, **It pleases me.**”

**Adapted from a sermon by Austin Hege*



Church Planting: Turning Trouble into Triumph

The Story of the Church at Antioch in Syria, by Galen Weber

And with honey from the rock I would have satisfied you. - Psalm 81:16

When have you last seen honey come out of a rock in your life? Honey comes from beehives, not from rocks. And yet God, who made both bees and rocks, also brought honey out of a rock in Antioch in Syria.

Planting

(Acts 11:19-21)

In exploring the story of a forming congregation, we soon unearth the stories of God's servants whom He employed in that work. The very first believers to reach Antioch were fleeing persecution in Jerusalem. Some fled the 300 miles north to Antioch at the mouth of the Orontes River. While perhaps a smaller metropolis than Jerusalem, Antioch was Rome's military gateway to the Far East, and Rome's commercial hub for the Fertile Crescent's wealth, flowing westward to the capital of the Mediterranean world. To this bustling key city of the Gentiles came these Jewish refugees around AD 40—fleeing death as heretics in “their” Jerusalem, yet preaching Life in Christ to fellow Jews (who comprised at least a tenth of Antioch's population at that time).

How was their novel message received? Acts 11:21 tells us, “**The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord.**”

The new congregation became a new heart-home to those who had first carried the news of the Messiah. Through storms of persecution, God had piloted them to a new harbor. God had brought good out of bad.

Watering

(Acts 11:22-26)

When the brothers back in Jerusalem learned of the new church at Antioch, they sent Barnabas (a brother whose fruitfulness in serving they knew well) to serve there. When Brother Barnabas arrived, he thrilled to find God's work well underway, and shared in rejoicing as the Lord added more and still more to the new congregation.

Why, we might wonder, was Barnabas's next move to travel nearly 100 miles west to Tarsus to seek out the controversial Saul and bring him to Antioch? Brother Saul had earned a reputation as a prime target for Judaism's hottest hostilities. Barnabas, not Saul, had been sent from Jerusalem to Antioch. With Barnabas's influence,

the congregation had rapidly increased. We can easily imagine Barnabas becoming (in his quiet opinion) quite pivotal to the success of things at Antioch. After all, he had been the one chosen to go.

But Brother Barnabas's reputation of goodness, Spiritfulness, and faith, flourished afresh in his fetching of Saul from Tarsus. Just as he had done back in Jerusalem years ago (Acts 9:27), so he did again in Antioch. And Brother Saul accepted the call.

We can imagine Barnabas being moved by observing the many Gentiles in Antioch who were attracted to Judaism (Josephus War, 7.45), and then remembering Saul's specific call to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles such as these (Acts 9:15, 27). Did Barnabas perhaps see in Antioch a potential for Saul's bold preaching to prosper, away from Jerusalem's volcanic nationalists?

Whatever Barnabas's thoughts may have been, later events testify to God's hand in the summoning of Brother Saul from Tarsus to assist in Antioch.

While Saul's “gospel of the uncircumcision” and his unique charisma undoubtedly flavored the new fellowship forming in Antioch during that first year, he was learning things, too. Saul owed this opportunity to Barnabas's unselfish mediation on his behalf. This opportunity meant serving as one part of a leadership team (Acts 13:1), in a forming congregation of Jews and, no doubt, of converted Gentiles (Acts 15:1. What a delightful year that must have been for Saul! No threats to his life, like there had been back in Jerusalem. No aloneness anymore, as he had since known in Tarsus. How buoyant his testimony must have been, as at last his new life-call began to take shape and find expression! How he must have blessed God for this sweet reprieve from the rocky road of his past.

Increase

(Acts 11:26-30; 12:25-13:3; 14:25-28)

We further glimpse God's grace in Antioch through this sentence: “**And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.**” Our communities notice when Christ really dwells among those who claim His name, and they would coin just such a nickname for the followers of the Nazarene. “Messianics” ... “Little Christs” ... “Christians.” We know that Jesus of Nazareth had not travelled so far as Antioch in His lifetime, yet

His life was so plainly lived among His followers there that their unbelieving neighbors (probably) labelled the disciples with the name of their Master.

A congregation, then, is people more than place. We already knew that, but it deserves definition at this point in the story. Therefore, the establishment of every congregation of disciples who earn the nickname “Christians” must be more than coincidence—it must be God’s own Spirit opening hearts and reshaping lives to bear the image of His Son. Further, we know that God sets those members in the body as it pleases Him. Every one has a Barnabas story, or a Saul story. Those stories compiled will inevitably illustrate the King building His Kingdom, and bringing honey out of rocks.

I wonder, am I profitably familiar with the stories God is writing in my brethren?

Christ-filled believers overflow. When the Antioch brothers learned of a likely famine facing their Judean brothers, they decided together to send what help they could. Barnabas and Saul (and probably Titus—see Galatians 2:1) personally delivered their congregation’s gifts to the elders at Jerusalem. The hardship of famine prompted the sweetness of brotherly sharing.

The next chapter of Antioch’s story is the first of its kind among the followers of Jesus. Acts 13:1-4 reads beautifully. The call for Barnabas and Saul to go came from God’s Spirit and the call was received while serving the Lord and denying themselves through fasting.

To go at God’s call is very good indeed. On this “missionary journey” God’s grace brought many non-Jews into His Church (Acts 13:42-46; 14:1), powerfully verifying Saul’s calls to this very work. To stay by God’s grace is also very good. Most of the believers at Antioch stayed, while Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark journeyed. When the travellers finally returned, those who had stayed

heard their first “field report,” learning first-hand that grace could turn the whole world to faith (Acts 14:27). How their concepts of grace must have multiplied!

Crises

(Galatians 2:11-21; Acts 15:1-41)

If God removed all rocks from our roads, we couldn’t see the miracle of sweetness coming from our trials.

Perhaps every congregation must eventually face crises which shake them and shape them and sift them, and hopefully “**stablish and strengthen and settle them.**” If that which costs little is indeed worth little, then believers really ought to expect their priceless position in Christ to be mightily opposed by Satan.

We find on record three crises centered in Antioch. Paul appears in all of them. Little is recorded of the brotherhood’s journey through these matters, but each of them would appear to have created huge difficulties among Paul’s local brothers. And, judging from the Bible record, all three crises surfaced in rapid succession:

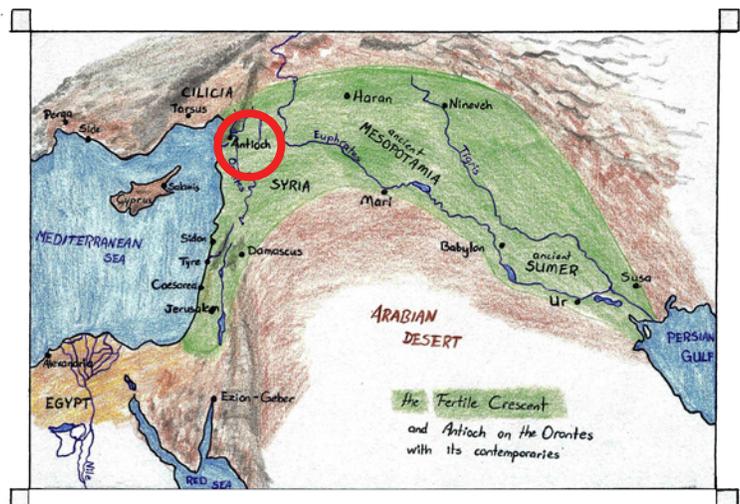
- A. Paul vs Peter (Galatians 2:11-21)
- B. Paul and Barnabas vs. Judaizers (Acts 15:1-35)
- C. Paul vs. Barnabas (Acts 15:36-41)

A. Paul vs Peter

It seems that Peter arrived in Antioch, and initially made no objection to sitting at table with his Gentile brothers. But when some people arrived from Jerusalem, claiming to come “from James,” Peter, fearing criticism from his fellow Jews, refused to eat with Gentile believers any longer. Whether by his influential example or by some other pressure, all the Jews but one reverted to their familiar segregational laws. That one was Paul. He saw national identity and physical ritual being valued above

The Fertile Crescent (also known as the Cradle of Civilization) is a crescent-shaped region in the Middle East that curves from the Persian Gulf, through modern-day southern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and northern Egypt. This land contains comparatively moist and fertile land of an otherwise arid and semi-arid Western Asia, the Nile Valley and Nile Delta.

- Map Sketch by Galen Weber



the spiritual rebirth of faith in God's work through Christ. Race would overwhelm grace, if this went on. Paul writes in Galatians 2:14 that he publicly rebuked Peter.

Can you imagine such a stand-off during your congregation's fellowship meal?!

B. Paul and Barnabas vs. Judaizers

If that first crisis blew by any believer at Antioch, he was hard-hit by the second. Another delegation from Jerusalem came to Antioch. They minced no words when they preached—"Become circumcised, or you will not be saved."

Paul and Barnabas united now in resisting such teaching. They had personally witnessed God's building of four new congregations in virgin territory. Each church had been composed of both Jews and Gentiles and Paul was not about to compromise the heart of the Gospel he preached; faith in Christ Jesus, not circumcision, had transformed each of those new believers.

But the men from Jerusalem were equally confident of their position and would not budge an inch from the law of Moses.

Finally, the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, along with several others, to try and settle the question, "Must Gentile believers be circumcised? The apostles and elders gathered to grapple with a broader question, "Must believers in the church keep the law of Moses?"

The outcome of that meeting vindicated Paul's gospel of the uncircumcision and stamped an official "CLEARED" on his call to the unconverted world. Circumcision is not required—obedience to the faith is.

This conclusion brought rejoicing in Antioch! What a relief to Gentile believers everywhere! Antioch hosted a Bible conference, with Judas and Silas as guest speakers.

Your Bible says that they "confirmed" the brethren. In such a context, we can soon deduce that it was a wonderful time together around the Word. Once again, the sweetness of Gospel fellowship, and significantly, the Holy Spirit is credited for this conclusion to the conflict (Acts 15:28). God was in it.

C. Paul vs. Barnabas

Soon, of course, Paul was anxious to be off again. Probably he wanted to "deliver the epistle" in every church which he and Barnabas had helped to found. Doubtless, his heart also burned for the regions beyond, where even the Jewish religion was unknown, and where the gospel would break new ground in a brand-new way. Church life

at Antioch had matured and borne fruit, and once again Paul was hearing the call of God to "regions beyond."

Barnabas was ready as well, but soon their planning snagged on John Mark. On the previous journey, Barnabas's young cousin John Mark, fresh from Jerusalem, had accompanied them as a "cook's boy of sorts." But shortly after leaving Uncle Barnabas's native island of Cyprus, only six months into the journey, John Mark had dropped out and hurried home to Jerusalem. Probably he thought it the best course for him. Paul however thought it was desertion. Now, very characteristically, Barnabas planned to give the young man another chance.

Paul absolutely refused. And thus the long-term team, Paul and Barnabas, was split by their contention over a brother's choices. It is significant enough to note here that Paul refused to extend to Barnabas's cousin the very grace which Barnabas had twice extended to him.

Thus Paul and Barnabas went two different directions, and perhaps with God's blessing, two teams went out to spread the gospel instead of just one. At least, it does not appear that Paul and Barnabas were lifelong enemies after that. And somewhere down the road, Paul counted John Mark as a faithful servant (II Timothy 4:11).

Neither did Paul hold lifelong grudges toward the brethren at Antioch for the record tells us that Paul returned to Antioch and spent time there (Acts 18:22).

Conclusion

The church at Antioch was not without great troubles. Severe dissension shook the believers. The apostolic leadership did not agree with each other on points of doctrine and practice. Personality clashes came into play. Yet in each case, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, the church turned those troubles into triumphs—they taught a great many people, they upheld sound doctrine, they came to a common practice among Jews and Gentiles, and they sent out missionary teams. We can learn much from the triumphant Antioch church!

Practical Questions:

1. Can an Anabaptist church expect that there will be no troubles?
2. When can a split be a good thing for a church?
3. How does the Holy Spirit speak today (Acts 13:2)?

Bible Story: The Church at Antioch of Syria

These verses have been arranged according to Galen Weber's chronology for the church at Antioch.

Trouble: Persecution Scatters Believers.

Triumph: Many People in Antioch Followed the Lord!

Many of the believers were scattered by the terrible things that happened after Stephen was killed. Some of them went to places as far away as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. They were telling the message to others, but only to Jews. Some of these believers were men from Cyprus and Cyrene.

When they came to Antioch, they spoke also to Greeks, telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. The Lord was helping the believers. And a large group of people believed and turned to the Lord.

The church in Jerusalem heard about all of this, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and full of faith. When he reached Antioch and saw how God had blessed the people, he was glad. He encouraged all the believers in Antioch. He told them, "Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts." Many people became followers of the Lord. **Acts 11:19-24**

Trouble: Saul's Bad Record of Persecuting the Saints.

Triumph: Saul Taught the Disciples for a Year!

All the people who heard Saul were amazed. They said, "This is the man who was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy those who trust in this name! He came here to do the same thing. He came here to arrest the followers of Jesus and take them back to the leading priests."

But Saul became more and more powerful. His proofs that Jesus is the Christ were so strong that the Jews in Damascus could not argue with him.

Then Barnabas went to the city of Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found Saul, he brought him to Antioch. And for a whole year Saul and Barnabas met with the church. They taught many people there. In Antioch the followers were called Christians for the first time. **Acts 9:21-22 & 11:25-26**

Trouble: A Great Famine.

Triumph: Antioch Church Blessed By Sharing!

About that time some prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them was named Agabus. He stood up and spoke with the help of the Holy Spirit. He said, "A very hard time is coming to the whole world. There will be no food for people to eat." (This happened when Claudius ruled.)

The followers all decided to help their brothers who lived in Judea. Each one planned to send them as much as he could. They gathered the money and gave it to Barnabas and Saul, who brought it to the elders in Judea. **Acts 11:27-30**

Trouble: Prophets and Teachers Needed At Home.

Triumph: Two Prophets Sent Out And New Churches Were Started!

Now when Barnabas and Saul had finished delivering the relief offering to Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch. They brought the young man John Mark along with them.

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers. Among them were Barnabas, Simeon, and Lucius from Cyrene. Simeon was also called Niger. Another was Manaen. He had been brought up with Herod, the ruler of Galilee. Saul was among them too.

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke. "Set apart Barnabas and Saul for me," He said. "I have appointed them to do special work." The prophets and teachers fasted and prayed. They placed their hands on Barnabas and Saul. Then they sent them off.

They preached the message in Perga, and then they went down to Attalia. And from there they sailed away to Antioch. This is where the believers had put them into God's care and had sent them out to do this work. And now they had finished the work.

Bible Story: The Church at Antioch of Syria (cont'd)

When they arrived in Antioch, they gathered the church together. Paul and Barnabas told them all about what God had done with them. They told how God had made it possible for the non-Jews to believe! And they stayed there a long time with the followers. **Acts 12:25-13:3 & 14:25-28**

Trouble: Strong Leaders Disagree Publicly.
Triumph: Honesty in Practice Is Restored!

When James, Cephas, and John heard about the contention over Jews and non-Jews, they asked only one thing of us. They wanted us to continue to remember poor people. That was what I had wanted to do all along.

When Peter came to Antioch, I told him to his face that I was against what he was doing. He was clearly wrong. He used to eat with the Gentiles. But certain men came from a group sent by James. When they arrived, Peter began to draw back. He separated himself from the Gentiles. That's because he was afraid of the circumcision group sent by James.

Peter's actions were not honest, and other Jews in Antioch joined him. Even Barnabas was led astray.

I saw what they were doing. It was not in line with the truth of the good news. So I spoke to Peter in front of them all. "You are a Jew," I said. "But you live like one who is not. So why do you force Gentiles to follow Jewish ways?" **Galatians 2:10-14**

Trouble: Teachers From Jerusalem Disturb Church at Antioch.
Triumph: Church at Antioch Strengthened And at Peace!

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch. Here is what they were teaching the believers. "Moses commanded you to be circumcised," they said. "If you aren't, you can't be saved." But Paul and Barnabas didn't agree with this. They argued strongly with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed to go up to Jerusalem. Some other believers were chosen to go with them. They were told to ask the apostles and elders about this question.

Then the apostles, the elders and the whole church decided what to do. They would choose some of their own men who were leaders among the believers. They would send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. So they chose Judas, Barnabas and Silas. They were leaders among the believers.

So the men were sent down to Antioch. There they gathered the church together. They gave the letter to them. The people read it. They were glad for its message of hope. Judas and Silas were prophets. They said many things to give strength and hope to the believers. Judas and Silas stayed there for some time. Then the believers sent them away with the blessing of peace. They sent them back to those who had sent them out.

Acts 15:1-2, 22, & 30-34

Trouble: Paul and Barnabas Disagree About John Mark.
Triumph: Two Mission Teams Go Out Instead of One!

Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch. There they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Some time later Paul spoke to Barnabas. "Let's go back to all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord," he said. "Let's visit the believers and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul didn't think it was wise to take him. Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia, and hadn't continued with them in their work.

Barnabas and Paul strongly disagreed with each other. So they went their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas. The believers asked the Lord to give his grace to Paul and Silas as they went. **Acts 15:35-40**

“...my ways (are) higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

~ *Isaiah 55:9*

The Devil is Dead

by Menno Knight

Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” – Matthew 16:23

Judging by what I don’t read and don’t hear, the devil is dead! The newspapers, the trade papers, and the church papers, seldom mention Satan. Maybe I’m reading the wrong papers.

Or maybe I’m not “listening up” to the preaching going on around me. But what I hear is that God causes everything in the world—tornadoes, floods, wars, car crashes, work accidents, financial prosperity, poverty, imprisonment, torture, sickness, and even death.

Very, very seldom do I hear anyone say that the Old Serpent, the devil, caused something to happen. How about you? Have you heard anyone say things like this? “The devil wrecked Brother Grant’s car. Or Satan deceived Sister Eileen into taking off her veiling. Do people in your life talk about the devil sending a storm or starting a war?”

My guess is, almost never. When I press people to tell me what the devil does do in the world I get these really vague answers like, “Whatever God allows him to do.”

But when I read the Bible I get a different picture. Satan is not dead nor is he bound up and cast into the fiery furnace prepared for the devil and his angels. At least not yet. No, I Peter 5:7 says to watch out for the devil because he prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to eat up.

Watching out for the devil roaring about seeking to frighten us away from God brings to my mind all those horrible things we can do nothing about—tornadoes, floods, robberies, murder, cancer, boils, war, and persecution. Did the devil cause them? No doubt, he can. Just as surely as he beset Job in all his suffering, he can roar today. When evil is about, so is the devil, or one of his lying spirits.

Well, then let’s call him by name. I Peter 5:9 says to resist the devil. How are we going to resist the devil if we don’t even recognize his presence. So the next time tragedy strikes in your life, watch out for the devil and be ready to call him by name.

Or could Satan be blessing you with the sunshine of health and wealth in order to steal your heart away from God? Be on your guard.

We must also be ready to detect and resist Satan when he poses as an apostolic angel of light (II Corinthians 11:14). Watch out for deceitful teachers with smooth tongues and suave personalities; TV, radio, internet, magazines, and commentaries that say things like, there is no hell, salvation comes through the sinner’s prayer, you can’t loose your salvation, you don’t need to live a holy life, and you can be a Christian and look and act like the world. Look out! If you hear any teaching contrary to the Word of God, Satan is behind it, just as surely as he was when he tempted Adam and Eve. Call Satan by name. Resist him.

So how do we resist Satan?

Ephesians 6:11-12 tells us how:

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

So we do not wrestle with other humans, or at least we shouldn’t. We should see beyond the drunkards, the druggies, the soldiers, the politicians and the dirty exteriors of sinful flesh to the supra-human powers that fight for the souls of men and women.

And we will want to pray daily that powerful line from the Lord’s prayer, “Deliver us from the evil one.”

Practical Questions:

1. What does the Devil do?
2. How do we tell when God is chastening his children?
3. How does an Anabaptist overcome evil?



SEEKING TO DEVOUR

Only One Vote

by Kendall Myers

The hype over the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign has dominated news headlines for months. And it will get worse until election day. Every four years this media-fueled American phenomenon sweeps across the country with its fiery rhetoric of vision, reform, progress, and glory. And every four years, especially as November draws near, groups of devoted American citizens, churches no exception, preach the importance of “getting out the vote,” calling on each American citizen to perform his civic duty by visiting the polls on election day and thereby ensuring the prosperous direction of the nation.

But I am a Kingdom Christian, an Anabaptist follower of Jesus. So what should my response be to the nearly universally-held American assumption that voting is not only a right, but it is a moral duty?

Two Kingdoms—One Vote

Jesus opened his public ministry with this message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 4:17). With this proclamation, Jesus announced the dawning of a new era in the world. His Kingdom was a realm where His rule would be gladly received, and where his Father’s will would be carried out. As a sphere aligned with the character and Spirit of Jesus, this kingdom of God stands in marked contrast to the kingdoms of this world in its nature, its purposes, and its methods. Jesus emphasized this fundamental difference to his disciples in response to a power struggle among them:

Jesus then told his 12 disciples to gather around him and listen closely. He said, “You know about the rulers of the Gentiles. They hold power over their people. Their high officials order them around. Don’t be like that. Instead, anyone who wants to be important among you must be your servant. And anyone who wants to be first must be your slave. Be like the Son of Man. He did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free.” Matthew 20:25-28

In contrast to the worldly power structures of his day, Jesus exercised his authority humbly, sacrificially, and peacefully.

Jesus makes clear that we Kingdom citizens must do as he did while he was in the world. That’s what “Follow me” means. And when we follow Jesus we find that his methods stand poles apart from the methods of the power structures of today’s world, including those of the United States’ government.

The government carries out its agenda of “national interest” by force, Christians commend their message to people through their sacrificial service. Engaging in the political process of this worldly power structure—whether by holding office, voting, or lobbying—confuses these two opposite and irreconcilable means of “accomplishing good.” As Kingdom Christians we conscientiously object to participating in the political process.

The nature, purpose, and methods of Christ’s kingdom stand fundamentally opposed to the political structures of our world. That’s why I won’t vote on the second Tuesday of this November.

Voting in the Wrong Kingdom

The implications of dabbling in the world’s power structures give rise to a number of secondary reasons to “conscientiously object” to voting.

1). The immoral actions of government.

In a representative democracy [republic], citizens elect officials to represent them in government, “entrusting” their influence or voice to a particular official with their vote. As such, a vote translates into an indirect participation in and a responsibility for government’s actions.

This becomes a problem for Christians because any candidate for public office who is elected will be required to take an oath of office. For example, the President must swear “to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

As a result of carrying out the duties of his office, the actions of the official you voted for will never be in harmony with the vows you have made as a follower of Jesus Christ. His actions cannot be right and good because he is serving in the kingdoms of the world.

Therefore, voting for the politicians who carry out these immoral actions equals moral compromise on the part of a Christian.

2). The incredibly divisive nature of politics.

The culture and climate of the political scene are marked by rivalry, conflict, and strife. Negative advertising and derogatory personal comments fuel the contentious atmosphere, inciting voters to attack the opposing candidate as well as his supporters. Thus, political allegiances create rifts and barriers between people. Even when a voter expresses his preference in a respectful way, there will be people who react strongly to that position, taking offense at it.

CAST YOUR VOTE WISELY



KINGDOM OF THE WORLD

-OR-



KINGDOM OF GOD

Political allegiances hinder the unbiased witness of the Christian. Refraining from involvement in the political process, both in terms of public declarations and in private political loyalties, gives Christians an impartial position from which to share the gospel and to minister to the needs of diverse groups in the community. It also gives the church a clearer prophetic voice in the nation.

3). **The self-centered nature of politics.**

If I were to vote for a presidential candidate, how would I choose? Would I vote for the one who opposes abortion, or for the one least likely to lead the nation into a war? Or would I choose the candidate who I believe will work for the good of the world as a whole?

No one is capable of weighing all of the factors that would play into that choice? Therefore, any choice, any vote, puts us in a moral and ethical dilemma.

4). **The warning from history.**

It is hard to believe Mennonites ended up in Hitler's army, willingly fighting for the Nazi cause. But it happened. In the late 1800's Prussian Mennonites began to move toward integration with German society. They became model citizens, carrying out their civic duties of voting, holding political offices, and serving their country in the military.

And so, in 1933, the Mennonites of East and West Prussia wrote a letter to newly elected Adolf Hitler in which they pledged their "joyful cooperation in the building of our Fatherland." Shortly afterward, they up arms in his army.

The Vote That Counts

The choice between voting and not voting is not a choice between activity and passivity. Was Jesus passive? To not vote is not necessarily a choice to withdraw from the needs of our society. In fact, the problems that our society faces

can be more effectively addressed and changed through non-governmental avenues.

A Constantinian marriage of the church and state still tempts the church in America. The temptation is to try to accomplish the church's work through the coercive power of the state. The hope is that if we can elect the "right" officials and pass the right laws, we can create a good society. But just as "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," so the coercion of government buildeth not the kingdom of God.

The Vote That Changes Hearts, Not Laws

Satan says, "Vote for me. Do it my way."

Christ says, "Follow me. Do it my way."

Who will we "vote for"? Do we think that we can accomplish God's work with the world's tools? Or do we believe that the church of Jesus Christ has the resources to address the world's problems?

Directed by Kingdom values and using Kingdom methods, we Christians can effectively help meet the true needs of society. We can bring the heart-transforming power of the Gospel of Christ to a Romans 1 world. We can demonstrate His self-sacrificial love to a world wrenched by suffering. That's our highest civic service and duty. And it demands 100% of us and from us.

Let us then humbly bow ourselves before God and pray, **"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** In so doing, we align ourselves with God's kingdom and his plan to redeem society.

I won't be going to the polls this November because many years ago I cast my only vote for the King of kings and Lord of lords. I owe Him my full allegiance. And He is worthy.

— K. M.; Waynesboro, Georgia

An Incompatible Vow and Oath

No one can serve two masters at the same time. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. – Matthew 6:24

Baptismal Vow: The Kingdom of God

Do you confess that it's only through the blood of Jesus Christ which He shed on the cross that we can find forgiveness from sin?

“I do.”

Do you confess that you were a sinner estranged from God and that you were without hope heading for eternal damnation?

“I do.”

Do you confess that through the transforming power of the blood of Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection that old things are passed away and all things are become new?

“I do.”

Do you renounce the world, the devil and all demonic powers, and are you willing to surrender your life totally to Jesus Christ and by his grace serve Him faithfully until death?

“I do.”

Are you willing to give up your life in death for the sake of Jesus Christ rather than deny Him?

“I am.”

*original vow by Galen Yoder, East Dublin, Georgia.

Oath of Enlistment: US Armed Forces

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm)

This is an oath forbidden by Christ.

that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States

This puts the Constitution above the Word of God.

against all enemies, foreign and domestic;

This means using violence to destroy those deemed enemies by the government.

that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same;

“True faith and allegiance” overrides all other loyalties.

and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States

One cannot obey the President and Jesus Christ.

and the orders of the officers appointed over me,

These officers are not godly men.

according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

This is not God's code and is contrary to Christ's law.

So help me God.

This is asking God to bless evil, rather than surrendering oneself to God's will.

- Title 10, US Code; Effective 5 October 1962



Anabaptist by Choice

Interview with Gary Butikofer

Gary Butikofer made a well-reasoned decision before joining an Anabaptist church at the age of 24. He has been a life-long advocate of the Anabaptist Way ever since. We believe his practical pointers on what it means to be an Anabaptist can be of benefit to all our readers. - AV Ed.

Anabaptist Voice — What was memorable about your childhood?

Brother Gary — I was born and raised in Quincy, Illinois. Our town sat on the western bulge of Illinois right next to the Mississippi River. Directly across the river was Taylor, Missouri where my father's relatives and their families lived. They all went to an Anabaptist church called the Apostolic Christian Church.

I had a very happy childhood, and my parents were sincere Christians who were very loving and encouraging. My parents were devout Lutherans; they lived what they taught. When my father married my mother, he joined her church. So my brother and sister and I were all baptized as infants in the Lutheran church. Of course, that was not a choice that we made.

Here is what I remember our family doing on some Sundays. Our house was one block from the Lutheran church. At 8:00 A.M. we went to the Lutheran church for preaching followed by Sunday school from 9:00-9:45. Then we hopped in the car, drove across the Mississippi to the Apostolic Christian Church for the preaching service at 10:00. After the service they always had a fellowship meal. And this was followed by an afternoon service from 1:00-2:00 p.m. I always enjoyed these days with my cousins and relatives; they were always like a family reunion.

“ The teaching of the Lord has been given for the purpose of being put into practice.

~ Conrad Grebel

Anabaptist Voice — With your exposure to two different churches, what comparisons stood out to you as a child and young man?

Brother Gary — It seemed to me that the Lutheran church was bigger and more impersonal. People did not visit a lot with each other after church. The pastor conducted the service and then most people promptly scattered. However, the pastor usually preached a well-structured sermon.

Because there was little emphasis on separation from the world in the Lutheran church, there rarely was a distinct change of life in a member. You could grow up and be little different from respectable non-Christians.

In the Apostolic Christian Church people were much more involved with each other. The common meal every Sunday greatly fostered fellowship and a common life. The ACC had some strong standards such as: some separation from the world, the holy kiss, separated seating, acappella singing, an unsalaried lay ministry, and no courtship. The ACC was a peace church.

One unique practice in the ACC was that the ministers did not prepare their sermons. There was a devotional reading from the O.T., and then wherever the pulpit Bible fell open to in the N.T. was where the minister preached from for that Sunday.

One thing that really impressed me with the ACC was the distinct change in a person's life when they joined the church. The young people were often allowed to live like the world until they were converted. Then their lives made a drastic change and they began living for God.

1. In 1854 Jacob Butikofer left his home village of Butikofen in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland and emigrated to America. Jacob Butikofer brought the Butikofer name to America and was Brother Gary's great-grandfather. "Butikofer" means "someone from the village of Butikofen." Gary's relatives at Taylor, Missouri were from his grandmother's side of the house. Edward Grimm (1876-1937), moved to Taylor in 1926 and became the first minister of the Apostolic Christian Church in that town. Like the Butikofers, Edward's parents had also come from Bern, Switzerland. Edward Grimm is Gary's great-grandfather.

2. The Apostolic Christian Church began in the 1830's in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland. A defrocked Reformed minister, Samuel Froelich, began preaching a true gospel and some of his first adherents were Mennonites. The Apostolic Christian Church of America still holds many tenets of faith and practice familiar to most Anabaptists.

Anabaptist Voice — What had you decided about your church future by the time you graduated from the public high school?

Brother Gary — I was very uncertain about my faith and church at this time. But I was searching for something. I had made up my mind that I wanted to be sure what I believed before I made any change in church membership. I thought a lot of my parents and the fact that my parents would have been very disappointed if I had joined any other church than Lutheran served as a restraining influence on me.

In 1963, I went off to college at the Western Illinois University to get a degree in education. This college was about 70 miles northeast of home, but occasionally I rode the train home for a visit.

At the university, I joined the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and attended their meetings during the four years I was in college. In my freshman year, I also began a large self-study of different churches. I would go to the library, read up on a particular denomination, then go visit some of their churches.

It wasn't until my junior year in 1966 that I found a booklet called "Mennonite Life" by John A. Hostetler. I had never met a Mennonite before, but the church interested me because it was similar to the Apostolic Christians. I saw the booklet was published by Herald Press at Scottdale, Pennsylvania, so I wrote them and said, "Send me everything you've got on the Mennonites!"

In 1967 I graduated from college with a Bachelor of Science in Education. I got a job teaching 5th and 6th graders in a public school not far from home. This school was quite different than the public schools of today. The principal of the school was a "Christian Church" minister. He allowed me to teach a course on "creationism" instead of the standard course on evolution. In addition, I spanked a good many students and never had a problem because of it. I enjoyed my three years of teaching in that school.

Meanwhile my search for a church home continued. Herald Press sent me several books by J. C. Wenger and a 1966 Mennonite Yearbook. I eagerly searched the yearbook for the Mennonite church closest to me and settled on Hannibal, Missouri. But when I visited there, I felt that what I found did not line up with what I had read about Mennonites. So I went back to the yearbook and made more visits. Eventually, I found what I wanted at Sunnyside Conservative Mennonite Church in Kalona, Iowa and was baptized there in January of 1970.

Anabaptist Voice — You say you found what you wanted. What were those things you settled on as important to you in a church home?

Brother Gary — There were five things that were important in drawing me to an Anabaptist church. These things have only become clearer and more important to me in the years that have passed since.

- 1. Brotherhood:** Means small congregations where everybody knows each other and where people are accountable to each other. A community of believers where people help each other with building projects and where they practice the holy kiss. There is a closeness among the believers so people share of their goods and finances and are dependent on each other and not so much on the government.
- 2. Fellowship:** Means common meals together at church and in homes. A community that encourages and challenges each other. A place where people need each other because the Christian life is not easy.
- 3. Sharper Conscience:** Anabaptists make a sharp distinction between the Christian church and the world. There are absolutes and right and wrong are not just a matter for the individual. Effort is made to cultivate the conscience in all things—dress, not using tobacco and alcohol, honesty and peace in all dealings with one's fellow man.

Nonresistance Is a Bible Doctrine

If nonresistance is only a "Mennonite doctrine," abandon it!

But if it is Bible doctrine, let us get a deep burden and a bold testimony to those professing Christians in government and in the military services. Either we love our neighbor and refuse to execute carnal judgment on him (whether he be friend, criminal, or enemy), or we are breaking the second of the two Great Commandments, and cannot be saved until we repent and come out!

— Submitted by David Walter, Wolf Point, Montana

4. No Compromise: Anabaptists emphasize that we must not compromise when Bible teaching is at stake. This includes not participating in the military and other government duties and the rejection of divorce and remarriage.

5. Voluntary Commitment: Anabaptist churches are made up of people who have made a choice to follow Christ against the flow. It is not made up of people who are members because they live in a certain country or area. The Mennonites were evangelistic in reaching out to others because they were a select group who freely surrendered their lives to Christ and to each other.

Anabaptist Voice — How did it come about that you taught school in Northwestern Ontario, Canada?

Brother Gary — When I came of draft age (18 years) I was classified as a “combatant” by the draft board in my home county. The war in Vietnam was heating up in the 1960’s and many young men were being drafted into the military. However, as a college student (1963-1967) and then as a teacher in a public school (1967-1970), I was exempt from the draft.

After studying Mennonite history and doctrine, I became convinced that the military was not for a Christian. This took place long before joining the Sunnyside Conservative Mennonite Church. Even though the church was willing to baptize me before I had my classification changed, I felt it was inconsistent.

So I filled out paperwork and wrote my letter telling of my reasons for desiring a CO (Conscientious Objector) classification. The local draft board was not convinced. They declared, “We never heard of such a thing,” and refused to grant a change in status.

I then wrote to MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) in Washington D.C. and told them of my dilemma. They assured me that I should not worry; they would take care of it. And they did. MCC wrote a letter to the Illinois State Draft Board that was very familiar with the many CO’s in the state. The Illinois State Draft Board then overturned the Adams County Draft Board’s decision and I got my CO classification in the late fall of 1969. This cleared the way for my baptism in January of 1970 at the age of 24.

Then another change took place. The draft went to a lottery system and it was no longer possible to be exempted if your number was called. Well, my

number came up in April 1970 which meant I was to report for duty immediately. But the local public school where I taught exerted enough pressure on the local draft board so that I was allowed to finish teaching the school year.

Then another problem surfaced. Due to friends at Sunnyside who told me of the Poplar Hill Development School in Northwestern Ontario, Canada, I decided I would like to do my alternate service there. Again the Adams County Draft Board refused to cooperate. They said I must do my service in Illinois. Going to a foreign country was out of the question—I don’t know how they viewed all the boys the military was sending to Vietnam. Again I appealed to MCC and MCC went to the Illinois State Draft Board, and for the second time they overruled the Adams County Draft Board. I was cleared to serve in Canada



GARY BUTIKOFER, REGINA WAGLER & GRADES 1-4
FRONT DOOR OF POPLAR HILL SCHOOL, CIRCA 1982

Anabaptist Voice — What was your life like at Poplar Hill Development School?

Brother Gary — I arrived at the school the day before the late June graduation of the 1970 class. Immediately after graduation the Canadian government hired airplanes to fly all of the boarding students back to their native villages. This gave me a chance to get situated with the school for two months while the students were gone. During the summer months the staff did a lot of gardening—growing carrots, corn, green beans, and potatoes.

Poplar Hill Development School was surrounded by water on three sides. In fact, the whole country seemed to be made up of lakes and rivers. Because of its isolation, planes on pontoons or skis provided the only way in and out. Poplar Hill was located 80-90 air miles from our mission base at Red Lake. Many planes landed and took off almost every day in order

to supply the fuel for the generators, and all the food and supplies for the students and the staff. We did all of our heating and cooking with wood.

Each year, the older boy students and their teachers built one building to add to the school, so there were a lot of buildings (15) on the grounds. The school owned the buildings, but the government owned the land which was called Queen's Land.

The school consisted of 55 students from grades 1-9 and between 25-30 staff. Most of the staff were either Mennonite or Brethren in Christ. The students became like our own children. As a single man, I stayed in the single men's dorm. After marriage, we had a house of our own.

I lived and taught at the school for 10 years as a single man. Then I married Joy Hege, a worker at a neighboring mission. After I taught there another 10 years, the school closed.



BUTIKOFER FAMILY, 1988

Anabaptist Voice — Twenty years at the school was a significant part of your life. Was it worthwhile?

Brother Gary — I believe it was very worthwhile. We had Bible classes as well as morning and evening devotions every day, and services on Sunday. Many students went on to become ministers and active members in their village churches.

The students also learned many practical skills such as cooking and sewing for the girls, and woodworking, sheet metal work, and construction for the boys. Each year, the boys learned much by putting up a building on the campus. Sometimes these students would then go home and construct a building in their own village.

Students also practiced some of their Indian crafts: girls helped tan a moose hide, made a pair of boots, and did beadwork; boys built a canoe and made snowshoes.

Besides the spiritual impact, the biggest benefit of all to the students was that they learned discipline. They learned to live for something beyond the moment and learned to set goals and give up something now to obtain a future objective. Because of this, quite a number of former students later became chiefs in their villages.

Anabaptist Voice — If the school was making such an impact on the students, why did the school close?

Brother Gary — The Canadian government, and Indian Affairs in particular, became very opposed to all Indian boarding schools because of some highly publicized abuses in the past. So they began closing down these schools left and right. Poplar Hill Development School was one of the last of these to close in northwestern Ontario.

The school closed in the fall of 1989. That school year, I taught a few of the staff children of those who still remained at the school. Then in the spring of 1990, Joy and I and our five sons left Poplar Hill and moved to Ear Falls south of Red Lake. I taught there in a Mennonite school for the 1990-91 school year.

Anabaptist Voice — What happened the following school year?

Brother Gary — In the summer of 1991 we moved to Joy's home area in Wisconsin. I taught school for the church families for one school year. Then the families all decided to homeschool and so I got a job as a nurse's aide which I did for two years. After that I worked for Allen Bradley putting electrical equipment together for 14 years. Then I retired.

Anabaptist Voice — When did you make up the list of 33 differences (found on pages 30 & 31) between Protestants and Anabaptists?

Brother Gary — After I retired, a friend of mine told me that he had just the right job for me in Ghana, Africa. Our first question was, "Isn't that a hot country?"

"Oh, it's not too bad," was the reply. At that time two of the boys were married and the other three were adults, so Joy and I were not held back by family responsibilities. Joy and I believed it was God's will that we go.

We went to Ghana in July 2010 and stayed there exactly 3 years. The climate was bearable, but we

found the nature of the Black people in Ghana completely different from the Indian people in northwestern Ontario. The Indians were quiet and shy, while the blacks were bold and aggressive. We soon learned to love and appreciate all these people.

I served as the administrator and teacher at a Bible Institute for 10 mature students in each term. I felt that some of the staff considered themselves merely conservative Protestants. So I wrote up this comparison to show them the sharp contrast between Anabaptism and Protestantism. I also shared some of this with my African students who were unaware of how much erroneous Protestant teaching had actually come into their life.



GHANA, AFRICA, 2012

Anabaptist Voice — It sounds like you are still a committed Anabaptist. Do your five sons support you in this?

Brother Gary — All five sons have chosen to be baptized in an Anabaptist church and have followed the Anabaptist way. They are Anabaptists by choice.

Four of our sons have married Anabaptist sisters that are also committed to following Christ in the Anabaptist way.

Joy and I enjoy a beautiful close family relationship as Anabaptist Christians should. On my 70th birthday we had eight grandchildren. In May of this year, God blessed us with another granddaughter. That brought the total number in our family to 20 souls in all.



BUTIKOFER FAMILY, 2015

Introduction to Anabaptist vs. Protestant Comparison on following pages

The purpose of the interview on the previous pages is to show why Brother Gary came up with the 33 differences between Anabaptists and Protestants and why they were important to him.

Brother Gary's 33 points did not all come to him at one time. He put 24 points together for the benefit of the teaching staff in Ghana and has since added 9 more points. As the Lord tarries, he will likely add more points to his list.

We want to be cautious in our comparisons between Anabaptists and Protestants. Yet we do not want to be mealy-mouthed and apologetic for what the Bible teaches and what we believe. We must pray for a holy boldness that calls men to bring their lives into obedience to Christ's commandments and into harmony with Scriptural principles.

The statements on The Anabaptist Way side are but an attempt to state in simple language the correct Biblical interpretation and practice as seen through Anabaptist eyes. We are open to correction and further examination of what the Bible teaches and how to apply it.

On The Protestant Way side, we are pointing out things where Anabaptists commonly differ with many Protestants. Some Protestants may reject certain points on the Protestant side and actually agree with many points on the Anabaptist side. We recognize that.

Of course, it is not possible to give a full explanation of some of these points in one short phrase. So we welcome articles that more perfectly describe the true Bible Way for Anabaptists to follow. We are not wanting articles that tear down what Brother Butikofer has put together, but we do welcome articles that can help us come to a fuller correct understanding of the Word of God and its application to our daily life.

- AV Ed.

A 21st Century Comparison of Differences: The Anabaptist Way vs. The Protestant Way

by Gary Butikofer

*Many of the following comparisons are a difference in degree, a difference in emphasis. But the saying goes, "A difference in degree becomes a difference in kind."
- G.B.*

THE ANABAPTIST WAY

THE PROTESTANT WAY

Differing Views of Salvation

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Salvation is by a faith that works. True saving faith includes surrendering our will to Christ- a dying to self. | 1. Salvation by faith alone. Salvation is separated from living for God. Faith can be mere mental assent that produces no fruit. |
| 2. Emphasis is surrender to Jesus. | 2. Emphasis is on "me". What can I get out of it? Gives me a ticket to Heaven. |
| 3. Focus on new life and walk with God. | 3. Focus on experience and feelings - right standing with God and forgiveness. |
| 4. Includes believing, repenting, surrender. | 4. Salvation is praying the sinner's prayer. |
| 5. Salvation is a continuing process. | 5. Salvation is an event-happens instantly. |
| 6. Goal is to enter Kingdom of God | 6. Goal is to escape Hell. |
| 7. We are saved from the enslaving power of sin. | 7. Saved in sin; we sin every day. |

Differing Views on the Word of God

- | | |
|--|---|
| 8. Believe Old Covenant is superseded by the New Covenant. | 8. Believe in a flat Bible with both covenants still in effect. |
| 9. Focus on obedience to Christ and His Word. | 9. Focus in believing the Bible. |
| 10. N.T. ethics are the rule for life. | 10. Emphasizes similarity between O.T. & N.T. ethics. |
| 11. N.T. ethics are in effect now. | 11. N.T. ethics are ideals for a future age. |
| 12. Ordinances are to be practiced. | 12. Ordinances are spiritualized. |
| 13. Violence is not for the Christian. | 13. Violence is necessary in pursuing justice. |
| 14. Peace is always commanded in N.T. | 14. God commanded violence in O.T. |

Differing Views on the Church

- | | |
|--|---|
| 15. Following Christ brings suffering and causes opposition from the culture. | 15. Being a Christian empowers one to achieve dreams of health, wealth and power. |
| 16. Church exists only where people form a community of disciplined disciples who obey God's Word. | 16. Church exists wherever God's Word is heard and preached. |
| 17. Members live above known sin. | 17. Known sin is tolerated among members. |
| 18. Emphasizes the visible church. | 18. Emphasizes the Invisible Church. |
| 19. Brotherhood means all are accountable to each other - standards, communal. | 19. Emphasizes individualism. "No one tells me what to do." |
| 20. A localized self-governing brotherhood. | 20. An organized, institutional church. |
| 21. Church and state are separate. | 21. Church and state are blended together. |
| 22. Calls people out of society. | 22. Tries to redeem society and nation. |
| 23. Church belongs to the Kingdom of God. All else is the kingdom of this world. | 23. The church and the world are blended together. |

Differing Views of Faith

- | | |
|---|--|
| 24. Faith and works cannot be separated. | 24. Faith and works can be separated. |
| 25. Believing correct doctrine is important, but following Jesus is more important. | 25. Emphasizes creeds and believing in them. |
| 26. Faith means good works will follow. | 26. Faith is merely mental assent. |

Differing Views on Holy Living

- | | |
|---|---|
| 27. Humility is the main test of conversation. Includes yieldedness, lowliness, and submission. | 27. Emphasizes assertiveness, pride of accomplishment, self-esteem, boldness and a conquering attitude. |
| 28. Emphasizes yieldedness and surrender. | 28. Emphasizes independence. |
| 29. Obeying Jesus frees us to live a positive, bold, and joyous life. | 29. Obeying Jesus is boring, difficult, restrictive and/or negative. |
| 30. Outward adornment feeds carnality and obscures beauty and character. | 30. Outward adornment was common in O.T. times, so it is condoned today. |
| 31. Jesus condemned all oaths. | 31. Civil oaths are permitted. |
| 32. The entertainment world is largely rejected because it encourages lust and sin. | 32. The entertainment world is largely condoned. |
| 33. Nonresistance is required in all public and private life. Military service is forbidden. | 33. Going to law and “military service” are condoned and even encouraged. |

The Meaning of II Corinthians 5:21

Anabaptists believe that man can choose to surrender his will to Christ and attain salvation through Christ's blood. Both the Lutherans and the Calvinists agree there is no free will in our salvation. All are predestined to heaven or hell. Because Christian churches do not know who is saved and who is lost, they have a hard time separating the church and the world.

Another common difference between the Anabaptist and Protestant understanding of salvation hinges on the meaning of II Corinthians 5:21. Did Christ take our sins upon himself and become “sinful” or did he go to the cross as the spotless Lamb of God?

Tim Myers said the meaning of II Corinthians 5:21 can be better understood by amending the KJV to read as follows:

“For he hath made him [Jesus] who knew no sin, to be a sacrifice for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Alternate translations that support this rendition would be:

“He made him who knew no sin to be a sin-offering for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (MOUNCE).

“For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ” (NLT).

Much hangs on a correct understanding of this verse. Christ did not become a sinner so we could become righteous in God's sight. This would ruin the type set forth in the Old Testament. God required that the Israelites offer a passover lamb without blemish. There were to be no imperfections in the lamb. Abraham did not put Isaac on the altar because he was a sinner, but because he was the son of promise. And Jesus also was perfect, without sin, when he died on the cross, and God accepted his sacrifice so that those who believed could be at peace with God.

The false idea that Christ became a sinner by taking our sins upon himself permeates much of the Christian world and it comes into many Anabaptist circles as well. So some sing, “took my place on Calvary, now I don't have to go” even though it makes no sense. (So what if you did go to Calvary? Would God accept your blood as a suitable sacrifice to cover your sin?)

Apparently many “so-called Christians” like the idea that they got rid of their sin—past, present, and future—by casting them all on Christ and making him sinful. But it is a false belief. Christ always was the spotless lamb of God whose sacrifice God accepted to bring peace to all those who believe in his name.

On Death and Dying

by Peter Hoover

When this decaying body has been changed into a body that lives forever, then death will be swallowed up in victory! Oh death, where is thy sting? – I Corinthians 15:54,55

Thirteen years ago Susan and I stepped into the St. Mary's Hospital at Rochester, Minnesota, for the first time with our terminally ill daughter, Purity Rose. After a nine-month battle against leukemia, both of us were able to be with her, alone, when she opened her eyes for the last time, smiled to us, and departed to meet the Lord.

During all of this our brothers and sisters of the Elmendorf Community supported us loyally, visiting us regularly, and taking care of our children at home. We spent our nights at a Holdeman Mennonite mission next to the hospital—part of the world-famous Mayo Clinic complex in Rochester. Thinking back, we have painful but also very blessed memories. We came to know many wonderful people, and our lives have been enriched .



OH GRAVE, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY?

But, if we faced the same decision again, would we bring another child to St. Mary's to fight a terminal disease?

I seriously wondered whether this was right thirteen years ago, yet our church community prayed and recommended we go ahead with it. So, even with some misgivings on my part, we decided to give it a try. But after we saw how much our daughter suffered, day in and day out — especially during the final weeks — we both came to see the clear limits of modern medicine.

“The best that science can do is to add years to man's life, only God can add life to man's years.

~ Merle Ruth

As a child I frequently spent time in the hospital, one time for around six weeks with major surgeries in my head. Six years ago I experienced more of the same. We still had a number of younger children at home and although I was eager to give up the fight and move on to meet the Lord, we decided to go through all of this pain and bother -- three more times in the hospital -- to extend my “borrowed time” if the Lord wills.

For better or for worse, I am still here, but my perspective on human life, medicine, death and resurrection has been steadily traveling one direction. The direction to less medicine and a greater trust in the Lord — trusting Him totally in life or death.

Death.

Should we try to avoid it, or pussy-foot around it, as if death did not face every one of us?

For many years I have had a strong aversion to using the term “passing away.” When I die, please do not say, “Peter passed away on Tuesday evening.” I have no desire of “passing away” into any vague imaginary place. Instead, I want my body to die and be buried, so that when the Lord comes, I may rise to meet Him. Everything crystal clear and honest. Like it was when I was young. People died, we buried them, all standing around as we “shoveled up the grave.” Then we went in to the meetinghouse to have a message, not about the dead, but for the living.

Practical Questions:

1. Should Anabaptists always pray for healing?
2. Should Anabaptists always pursue healing through advanced medical technology?
3. Should costs affect an Anabaptist's medical decisions?
4. How directly involved should the Anabaptist brotherhood be in “life and death” decisions?

Life's Lessons

*I learn as the years roll onward
And leave the past behind,
That much I had counted sorrow
But proves that God is kind;
That many a flower I had longed for
Had hidden a thorn of pain,
And many a rugged bypath
Led to fields of ripened grain.*

*The clouds that cover the sunshine
They can not banish the sun;
And the earth shines out the brighter
When the weary rain is done.
We must stand in the deepest shadow
To see the clearest light;
And often through wrong's own darkness
Comes the very strength of light.*

*The sweetest rest is at even,
After a long and wearisome day,
When the heavy burden of labor
Has borne from our hearts away;
And those who have never known sorrow
Can not know the infinite peace
That falls on the troubled spirit
When it sees at last release.*

*We must live through the dreary winter
If we would value the spring;
And the woods must be cold and silent
Before the robins sing.
The flowers must be buried in darkness
Before they can bud and bloom,
And the sweetest, warmest sunshine
Comes after the storm and gloom.*

John Henry Newman

Quinton Whitman
This image not to be copyrighted



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. **Readers’ Responses** to questions raised in previous issues.
2. **“The Rest of the Story”** giving “real-time” responses to life.
3. New **“Real-Time”** 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 you are.” This section is not for some idealistic future kingdom posing theological complicated questions with no good answers—for example, the woman who had seven brothers as husbands (*Matthew 22:24-28*).

Take the time to write *Anabaptist Voice* and share your situations where you faced a difficulty ... and failed, or won a victory. As Gary Butikofer observed in his interview, “We need each other because the Christian life is not easy.”

As you ponder the situations in these stories and then share your answers and experiences with others, remember the words of Jesus when He told the packed out house, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s Word and put it into practice” (*Luke 8:21*).



THE PRACTICAL SIDE OF LIFE

THE PRACTICAL SIDE | Reader’s Responses

Reader’s responses to the stories from previous issues.

Response to “Eating Out” from Issue #1

by: No T. Bar



As far as The Practical Side, I’d have some thoughts about each one, but I’ll just speak to the Eating Out one. I’m not much for eating out, but my response to that one would be, if feasible without being obnoxious, to ask a waiter if there would be a quieter place available. Perhaps in a crowded restaurant that would not be an option. Instead of ordering the regular dinner, I’d order a lettuce salad or perhaps a sandwich. Usually there are less expensive options. I wouldn’t scrimp on the tip; leave what is the going rate or a little more, especially if I ordered less expensive items. Because the waiter still has to serve the table. I would not badmouth Applebee’s, but would share what I know about the atmosphere – bar, dim lighting, noise, big screen.

Last spring we went to Nags Head for the first time since our wedding trip. One evening we walked across the street and down a little from where we were staying at Cahoons Cottages to what looked like a local restaurant that had been there a long time. When we went in, we found a place to sit and it turned out to be right beside the bar which was very noisy and getting louder by the minute. I think a waiter asked if we would like to move. We probably looked out of place. If I remember right we said we’d be okay, but she found a quieter spot for us anyway. Across the room on the screen was the Kentucky Derby. I think that was part of the reason for the “excitement”, etc. We didn’t realize it was that day, but we got to watch the proceedings, the race, and the aftermath. It was interesting. And our spot was not quite as noisy. But we probably would choose something else the next time. I’m not for bars.

THE PRACTICAL SIDE | Readers' Responses

Readers' responses to the stories from previous issues.

Response to "Eating Out" from Issue #1

by: O. B. Kairful



If my 13 year-old daughter were with me, would I stay? Would I be happy to have her describe the restaurant to her Mother or her friends in Sunday School class? Or more importantly, how would she describe it to Jesus?

I would politely inform the hostess/waitress why I was leaving ... and leave a tract that tells more of our faith. And yes, strengthen the brethren at home by telling them of my experience. It could save others from the same "embarrassment".

It would be easier to make these choices if Jesus was actually walking with us. But a true disciple of Christ will live a life just like Jesus did; a life that disciples and challenges others. *"Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Cor.11:1).*

Response to "The Practical Side" from Issue #1

by: Cree A. Tive

I felt "The Practical Side" did not offer very creative alternatives. When people are upset, they often are so stressed that they lose their creative resourcefulness. We need to pray for God's peace so we can see the options He has given us. Here are a few of my suggestions.



FOOD PROCESSOR:

Have samples tested from the other cases at an independent lab to prove they are free of contamination. If the inspector would not accept testing of the other batches, feed the jars of food to hogs. Pigs eat bugs all the time, so it should not be a problem. Every food processing business needs some hogs to eat rejects.

EATING OUT:

For the overpriced dinner, why not go to the grocery store, buy a BBQ chicken or some cold cuts and paper plates and eat at the park? It would cost a lot less and have leftovers for snacks later.



Response to "Three Ticket Day" from Issue #1

by: U. R. Gilty



Describe to the judge honestly what happened that morning, and ask for mercy. Tell him you really want mercy, but you will be satisfied with justice.

Tell him you understand Romans 13:3 *"For rulers are not a terror to good people, but to those who do evil."* If you don't want to be afraid of the judge, then do good, and the judge shall commend you.

Tell the judge you are sorry you are on the wrong side this time!

THE PRACTICAL SIDE | The Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to the stories from previous issues.

Eating Out

Rather than exit and find another eating place, we remained, bought cheaper dishes, and left a proper tip. Looking back, I should have exited the undesirable atmosphere and gone to another place. I don't think our witness is enhanced by frequenting a beer joint. Rather, people are surprised to see us there as they know we don't belong. This was borne out to us by several plainly dressed Amish young people who did not give a good testimony in that sinful place.

— Need Food



On Hold

The 180 cases of product are still sitting in the warehouse 10 months later. The inspectors have never come back to visit the plant since the days of the original problem. So it appears that everything is still “on hold.”

— Food Processor

A Three-Ticket Day

I spent a miserable couple of weeks as I waited for paperwork to file through the system. When it did come through the outcome was \$1800 in fines for my first two tickets and \$350 for my third ticket!

It has always been my belief, “You do the crime! You pay the time!” In my mind it would be dishonest for me to go to court and try to get out of something that I had done wrong and act like I had not done it. On the other hand, I am a sinner saved by grace, and in my mind \$2150 possibly left some room for grace. So I made up my mind I would go to court prepared to pay the bill and take responsibility for what I had done wrong, but still hoping for mercy. With that in mind, I put the \$2150 in my pocket and headed off to the courts prepared to pay the bills in full. One more thing entered in. At that time our church was trying to raise funds for a building project. I told the Lord that any money that would come off of this fine would go directly to that project.

I went to the municipal court in the small town first since paperwork in a small town usually goes through faster than in a state court. Approximately 15 other people appeared at the court and I listened while the hard hand of the law descended upon several of them. There was no mercy here. Then it was my turn. I took \$350 out of my pocket and paid the fine. The experience at the state court was extremely different. You came into their presence with respect and dressed properly. If you came in dressed inappropriately, you waited until last. The officials there said they didn't want to spend any more time there than we did, and if we had a clear record and our speed was not too excessive, they would get us out of there with little trouble.

I knew that my speed had been excessive, so I was prepared for some “trouble”. When they called my name, I took my paperwork to the first individual, explained the situation to him, and he reduced my speed on the ticket. I then needed to take my paperwork to the judge. I explained the situation to him as well and he reduced my speed to 53 mph in a 35 mph zone. The outcome was unbelievable grace, a total fine of \$126. The Lord got the rest.

I was reminded in a very real way of God's grace to me. “I was in sin's prison, oh, so dark and cold, like a lost sheep wandering from God's eternal fold. Then the door swung open, Jesus said to me, ‘I have signed your pardon, now you may go free!’”

— Rushin Mennonite



THE PRACTICAL SIDE | Blockade or Opportunity?

by Tym ReDeamer

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. – Ephesians 5:16

What to do? The interstate leading to Grandma's house has suddenly become a parking lot; a parking lot with no exit. Don't look left; don't look right, someone may see you looking at them. Everyone just look straight ahead. Look as far ahead as you can, maybe you can see the problem. Please Lord, fix this traffic jam ... But wait! Maybe this traffic jam is an opportunity... sent by God. It may be a test just for you. What will you do?

My wife and I and one of our older daughters were traveling south on I-81 in Virginia several years ago. The weather was nice, the car rode fine, and we had plenty of gas. We were enjoying each other's company as we counted down the hours left on this trip. "Uh oh", we all said, "Looks like trouble"... There was nothing but brake lights ahead as far as we could see. We slowed to a crawl and finally all southbound traffic stopped. We shut off the engine. Now what?

Someone noticed a big stack of CDs in the car that we carried with us to hand out at gas stations, etc as we traveled. "Let's get out and give these to people" someone suggested. So we did. These particular CDs were just what we needed. They were the "Home" recording of the Esh family singing. *(These CDs were distributed by Still Waters Ministries in loving memory of the John Esh family who died in a tragic van wreck on March 26, 2010).*

NOTE: For CDs mentioned above, please contact:
Still Waters Ministries
285 Antioch Rd.
Clarkson, KY 42726
Phone: 270.242.0459



WASTED TIME?

My wife stayed in the car and my daughter and I started walking among the cars ahead of us. We showed the CDs and most everyone opened their windows to talk as we came alongside their vehicle. Some simply took the CDs with a thank you, but most were happy to engage in conversation. Almost everyone remembered hearing about the awful tragedy. It was a sober topic as we talked about the CD and the reason for its production. It

was easy to think about a car wreck because it may well have been the very reason why all traffic was stopped.

I remember one lady who said she was on the phone with "her pastor." She had called him after she became very distraught because she "could not handle this traffic jam." As her pastor prayed for her, we showed up at her

car window. After we talked a bit, she said good-bye to her pastor, telling him that some "angels from heaven" had shown up! She calmed down as we reminded her that she could be the one in a mangled car up ahead.

As we walked from car to car, we had many good conversations. When the traffic slowly started moving again, we simply waited by the side of the road for our car to come along. We got many friendly waves as the folks we had talked to passed us. The "distraught" lady pulled over to tell us how much she was enjoying the singing. She said she would never forget that traffic jam!

“ We have what the world needs and the world needs what we have.

~ Frank Reed

THE PRACTICAL SIDE | Taking the Bait

by Coon Trapper

The eye is like a lamp for the body. Suppose your eyes are healthy. Then your whole body will be full of light. But suppose your eyes can't see well. Then your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light inside you is darkness, then it is very dark!

— Matthew 6:22-23

Eight years ago I started my own business. I convinced myself I needed a cell phone. Our church had accepted cell phones for business use only, so I secured one in the approved manner.

But the cell phone did not stay at the office very long. Soon I had it at home. It didn't take long till I saw what that cell phone did to our sons. They were totally enamored with it.

Next I convinced myself that as my business grew, I needed a better billing system. To me it seemed the best option to accomplish this would be a computer, so I hired a Mennonite to run this part of my business. Then I found out that the Mennonite needed a better laptop to do my work, so we made a trip to Best Buy. He bought the laptop we needed and I paid for it.

Our next stop was Verizon. My assistant thought that some of our ordering needs would go much better if we had an internet connection. Since our business is technology centered on alternative energy, most of our vendors communicate only by email. To help us with email we bought a Galaxy Tablet, and again, I paid for it.

We made an agreement that my assistant would keep these wonders in his office and not have the internet turned on except when he needed to use it. I was naive. Soon the morning schedule went like this: Get into the office, set up the laptop, turn on all the power, grab a cup of coffee, and spend the next 20 minutes checking out news.

It wasn't long until I personally was using it every day. It is a wonderful tool. I was using it to look up many specs that I needed to do my business. I was checking my emails.

Then something really got my attention. Even though our church discourages texting, I had two cell phones upgraded so I could do texting. The first morning with phone #1, I had a text awaiting me. It was a missent call between a boy and a girl. On phone #2 the text was blatant pornography. I never pursued either one, but it vexed me that they could so easily come in to my office unbidden and unwanted.

When checking my emails, I occasionally could not avoid a constantly scrolling dating site that popped up on the sidebar advertisements. Scantly clad girls showed up with the question, "Which age group are you interested in?" I cringed. Suppose my sons were old enough to be using these "tools"? I know filters can be put in, but these are not bullet proof. Even though I was not pursuing this type of information, it still came to me.

Before long, my seven-year-old son figured out how to log onto the Tablet in my employee's office. My bookkeeper had started playing some games on his lunch break. My boy figured out how to start these up on his own. Soon my boys were sneaking into the office to play whenever they had a chance. I also discovered that the computer screen was often turned on to some kind of social media game. Not only was this of concern for the boys, but the longer time went on I saw a drop in my bookkeeper's performance.

Then I observed the wonder of the smart phone and what it can do. Some carry it to work, church, the dinner table, bed, family gatherings, and even the bathroom. At the push of a button, we take and send any picture anywhere.

Our extended family get-together is so involved in smart phones that the younger ones can no longer visit with each other or the older folks. Many sit around and doodle on the phone the whole time. I am told that one cousin actually walked into his girlfriend's

house for a date and was texting on the way in.

It dawned on me that all this technology was wasting my time, costing me money, driving our family apart, and tempting me to sin. Something needed to be done.

Practical Questions:

What should Brother Trapper do?

1. Clean out his home of all internet devices?
2. Allow only adults to use the internet and phones?
3. Put filters on cell phones and computers?
4. Form a church accountability group?
5. Seek alternative means of office and business technology to accomplish his goals?



SMART?

THE PRACTICAL SIDE | Tables

by David Schlabach

We once hosted a small group of college students at our home. They asked many questions. Numerous ones expressed surprise that we sit around a table to eat our meals.

“You mean you do this every day?” one girl asked in disbelief. When I explained that normally we do this three times in a day, she was almost awestruck. She remarked how remote that possibility seemed to her. Her family’s schedule and routine does not accommodate such an event. She recalled once in her memory that they tried it on a Thanksgiving Day. Then it seemed so strange to them that it actually didn’t work out. This brief conversation made a profound impression on me. How do we value tables?

A table is an important piece of family furniture. In 2 Kings 4:10, we get a glimpse of the provisions a family made in Shunem for the prophet Elisha. In a room for him to lodge was a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick. Very basic, but essential, items for comfort, order, and function. Tables are a part of a godly home and help create an atmosphere of order and thankfulness. One of the first household purchases for a young couple should be a functional table.



FAMILY TIME?

Togetherness and Order

A table can become a focal point where families can gather and sit around in a familiar pattern. Having the same places gives security and familiarity to small children. It avoids confusion. It brings a sense of order. We wait on each other at the table. Everyone should strive to be punctual to arrive at the table. In that way, we honor each other. We sit, we enjoy, and we relax with each other. Today’s trend is to eat on the go. People eat out of bags or while walking around. Food is prepared for merely grabbing and consuming. People do not have to use tables if they choose not to. It is possible to exist without the orderliness and togetherness of tables. Our perspectives change if this becomes our pattern. We should strive to gather around the table.

In certain cultures, the table may mean a low, small coffee table-like piece of furniture where one sits on the floor and is within reach of the items set onto this table. For others, it may be a mere mat spread out on the floor where

food items are placed. The actual form of table may vary. Nevertheless, the spirit and result of gathering around the table are the same. It brings order and opportunity for the proper life perspectives.

Thankfulness and Tables

I Timothy 4:5 says that our food is sanctified by prayer. So we pray before we eat it. What a beautiful pattern! Food is on the table, voices are hushed, heads are bowed, and God is thanked. Most of us received our first lessons of quietness, praying, and patience at the table. Such frequent lessons are effective. Young parents should use them. Food is a gift. Thanking for it in turn develops a spirit of gratefulness. It can develop respect to those who helped prepare it.

I like to take it one step further. Those who garden or have any other home food developed on farm or property are privileged to make the connection to the cycle. There are seeds, then plants, finally something to gather. The climax is the food on the table. Trees, fruits, and meats all contain those complete cycle possibilities. Families who work together to achieve this have a special benefit not experienced otherwise. Food taken from mere boxes or packages do not have this dimension of enjoyment. The Bible speaks of enjoying the food from our labor as a gift from the Lord (Ecclesiastes 2:24).

Let’s conclude with Psalm 23:5. “**Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.**” God provides for us, even in the sight of evil surroundings. God is good, gracious, and ample. He provides for all eternity.

Reprinted with permission, Pilgrim’s Pathway.

— D. S.; Medina, New York

Practical Questions:

1. What blessings, besides the ones mentioned, stem from a family eating their meals together around a table? Blessings for the father? For the mother? For the children?
2. What are some beneficial guidelines regarding reading and technology usage at the table?
3. Is the table a good place to have family devotions?



A CALL TO SERVICE | Kingdom Channels

by Reagan Schrock

Inspiring change in the Middle East.

In October 2014, the Islam State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) attacked the city of Sinjar, Iraq. Thousands were mercilessly slaughtered. Thousands more fled into the mountains where they remained trapped without food or water; many more died from dehydration and exposure.

The survivors of this horror found their way into the Dohuk region of northern Iraq, where they currently live in refugee camps and abandoned houses. With nowhere to go and almost no possessions other than what they fled with, these refugees have not only lost their homes but also family members to the brutal tactics of ISIS.

Kingdom Channels was launched in early 2016 as a direct response to the incredible need that ISIS has left by displacing hundreds of thousands of people. Kingdom Channels is an Anabaptist organization focused on bringing compassion and long-term assistance to refugees displaced in the northern regions of Iraq. Our mission is to show Christ's love during this incredibly dark time. The specific need that ISIS has created by causing the refugee crisis is a golden opportunity for building God's Kingdom.

We are committed to serve the most unreached. Volunteers live and serve among the refugees, laboring in a village that contains thousands of displaced people from Sinjar, Iraq.

Kingdom Channels is reaching out specifically to the

Yezidis, an unreached people group numbering over 800,000. More than half of the Yezidis have been forced to flee their homes or have been killed as a result of ISIS attacks. Because of the work of Kingdom Channels, this people group is hearing of God's love for the first time, and are being given hope in a time where hope seems lost.

Instead of fighting ISIS with bombs, what if we fought with Bibles? Instead of spreading hate, what if we taught love? Instead of despair, hope? What if these people, who have lost everything to terrorism, were shown the way of God's infinite love? This, we believe, is the only response that will bring lasting peace to this war-torn land. Will you join us on this incredible mission to change Iraq through love?

You can find more information on our website, www.kingdomchannels.org. Consider signing up for our email newsletter, where we frequently send updates from the field; you can do this by simply emailing us at contact@kingdomchannels.org or by going to www.kingdomchannels.org/updates.

If you wish to support us in this vital work; mail any contributions or correspondence to: Kingdom Channels 121 County Road 616, Athens, TN 37303. Many opportunities exist for volunteers, both long term and short term. Applications are available on our website; we can gladly email them as well.



KINGDOM CHANNELS



A CALL TO SERVICE | Anabaptist Resources

by Clinton Burkholder

Using technology to further the Gospel of Christ at Anabaptist Resources.

Good morning, let me introduce myself. My name is Clinton Burkholder with Anabaptist Resources. Anabaptist Resources is a contributor-based website designed to distribute Bible-based digital media online at www.anabaptistresources.org.

The vision of Anabaptist Resources is to present and promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. We recognize that some things in life never change, like God's gift of salvation, and His desire for His children to be obedient to Him. Some things in life do change, such as technology. Therefore, we want to take the opportunities of this digital age to present an unchanging God to those who seek Him. It is the desire of Anabaptist Resources to build a network of contributors, publishers, translators, content reviewers, etc. to get free Gospel literature into the hands of people who want it. We believe that through the use of the internet and digital text we may be able to go places that are difficult and even impossible to go with printed literature (*may be due to local regulations or simply the remoteness of the area*). We intend to provide material that is Biblically sound, to provide direction and insight to those who are seeking truth, and also to encourage believers at home or abroad.

I've just finished reading the first edition of the *Anabaptist Voice* and enjoyed it immensely. I'm requesting permission to post the *Anabaptist Voice* periodicals on Anabaptists Resources website. You can also submit other Bible-based media to our website. If you have any questions, let me know. Thank you!

Will **you** be the change this world needs? Will **you** give people hope where hope no longer exists?

-Kingdom Channels

A CALL TO SERVICE | "Lord, Give Us a Vision"

Near an Indian village was a high mountain towering up out of the desert. It was considered a great feat to climb this mountain, One day the Chief said, "Now, boys, you may all go today and try to climb the mountain. Each of you go as far as you can. Then when you are tired, come back, but let each one bring me a twig from the place where he turned."

Away they went; full of hope, each feeling that he could surely reach the top.

Soon a boy returned. He carried a twig of sagebrush. "Well," said the Chief, "you reached the mountain's foot, but you did not climb upwards."

The next had a cottonwood spray. "Good," said the Chief, "you got up as far as the springs."

Later in the afternoon one arrived with a cedar spray, and the old man said, "Well done. You went half-way up."

An hour afterwards, one came with a sprig of pine. To him the Chief said, "Good; you went to the third belt."

The sun was low when the last returned. His hand was empty as he approached the Chief, but his countenance was radiant, and he said, "My father, there were no trees where I got to—I saw no twigs, but I saw the Sea!"

Are we too satisfied with the splendid "trees" around us? Let us climb and lift our vision to include the larger world.

by Ernest Thompson Seton (*abridged by AV*)





Announcements, Meetings & Events

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.

MEETINGS: Kingdom Fellowship Weekend 2016

Continuing in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in prayers.

Kingdom Fellowship Weekend exists to promote Biblical Christianity in an era marked with apathy and compromise. We welcome participation from all who, as we, are longing and praying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

KFW operates on free-will donations and does not require a set fee for attendance. Payment is required for lodging costs only. Opportunity will be given to contribute towards the rental of the campground, food costs, and a love gift for the speakers.

Roxbury Holiness Camp has cabins for families, dorms for singles, guest house (hotel style), Byers Conference Center (hotel style & handicapped accessible) as well as tent and RV sites.

It is greatly appreciated when attendees register well in advance. To register, please submit the form at www.kingdomfellowshipweekend.org/reg. For pricing, special requests, or to register by phone, please call 717-753-0845.

Please prepare the soil of your heart by memorizing II Timothy 3:12-17 and be ready to recite this passage during the weekend.

DATE: August 26th - 28th, 2016

LOCATION: Roxbury Holiness Camp
13763 Cumberland Hwy.
Orrstown, PA 17244

SPEAKERS:

Men: Joe Root, Dean Taylor, Clayton Shenk, Matthias Overholt, Tim Power, Dave Adams, John D. Martin, Matthew Milioni, Ernest Eby, Lloyd Troyer, Finny Kurruvilla

Ladies: Anita Yoder

TOPICS:

21st Century & Discipleship | Jesus & Discipleship | Families & Discipleship
Singles & Discipleship | Small Groups & Discipleship | Community & Discipleship
Evangelism & Discipleship | Multiplication & Discipleship

CONTACT:

717.753.0845

WHAT TO BRING:

- Bible & note pad or journal
- Sleeping bag or bedding, pillow, towel
- Any snacks or extra food your family may need for the weekend
- A donation toward the cost of the weekend
- II Timothy 3:12-17 in your memory and a testimony of what God is currently doing in your life!

Anabaptist Voice would be glad if someone would write a 600 word report of their experience at these meetings.



Circulation & Financial Statements

ISSUE #1 - ACTUAL NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,000 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,538 | Donations for Issue #1: \$3,020 | Local Support Donations: \$5,517
*see report below for details

ISSUE #2 - ESTIMATED NUMBERS

Print Qty: 5,000 | Estimated Print & Postage Cost: \$7,500 | Donations for Issue #2: \$927 | Funds Needed: \$6,500

Anabaptist Voice Income & Expense Report *January thru June 2016*

Income

Donations for Issue #1	\$3,020.35
Local Support Donations*	\$5,517.66
Total Income	\$8,538.01

Expenses

Handling & Packaging	\$835.00
Postage	\$2,229.01
Printing	\$4,505.00
Sample Issue Distribution	\$969.00
Total Expense	\$8,538.01

Donations for Issue #2 \$927.65

*see section "Our Finances" on Page 4.



**ISSUE #1 ROLLING OFF THE PRESS
AT HAINES PRINTING IN NORTH EAST, PA**

Thank You!

We say "Thank you!" to each one who has expressed an interest in *Anabaptist Voice* whether face to face or by filling out a written response. Some have donated money. That is needed. Some have helped with encouragement. Words help keep us going. Some have indicated a willingness to help distribute the magazine. Some have shared words of wisdom to give direction to our efforts. Others have indicated a willingness to try writing for AV. For all those willing to write, I would like to suggest that you pick out a question or two scattered throughout the magazine and write a 200 word response. Pick one that you have a special interest in. That will give us a chance to get acquainted with your writing and interests.

- AV Ed.

Championing A Faith That Works

Anabaptist Voice
5282 Hwy. 56 South
Waynesboro, GA 30830
editor@anabaptistvoice.com
www.anabaptistvoice.com

To:

Brother Subscriber
1234 Main St.
Anytown, US 98765

“BUT OTHER SEEDS FELL ON GOOD GROUND AND YIELDED A CROP: SOME A HUNDREDFOLD, SOME SIXTY, SOME THIRTY. HE WHO HAS EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR!”

MATTHEW 13:8-9

