



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

James 1:22

Anabaptist Voice

Championing a Faith that Works

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- "OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD" - PETER HOOVER
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Letter from the Editor

In this issue, we again champion putting faith into practice. It is not possible to separate faith and works or love and obedience. Those who try separating these ideas wind up with a weak “sugar-water” gospel that may be as popular as Coca Cola, while those who actually put their faith and love into practice face a difficult climb and an oftentimes lonely struggle.

Let’s face it. Putting our love and faith into practice is not popular, but it is a great challenge Christ has called us to.

Let me share a legend that bears some truth but has been modified to make a good story.

A certain executive in a large company had been fantastically successful for thirteen years (1970-1983). In the early days of computers he considered changing companies. He interviewed at three different companies.

The first company told him, “We offer a great working environment, a huge salary, extensive perks, and large retirement benefits.”

He went on to interview with a second company. That company told him, “We are a great company. We have a fantastic product and this company is set to grow exponentially. Our stock will soar into the stratosphere and we will give you stock options so you can grow with the company. Your opportunity with this company is unlimited.”

The third company at which he interviewed was Apple Computers in its infancy. The legendary Steve Jobs told the man, “We are going to change the world. Do you want to come with Apple and change the world, or do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugar water?”

The man was John Sculley, president of Pepsi Cola. In 1983, this man who had so much, accepted the challenge to change the world and joined Apple Computers.

Brothers and Sisters, Christ has commissioned us to change the world. To do this we must be His obedient servants, living out the true gospel, putting it into practice, and calling others to full repentance from all sin. Will we spend the rest of our lives selling the sugar water of a social gospel—salvation by faith alone, income equality, saving the environment, health and wealth, limiting immigration, just war, nationalism, political lobbying for “righteous causes”—or will we stick with the world-changing gospel of “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 24:47)?

Join us as we seek to change the world by putting Christ’s everlasting Gospel into practice; championing a faith that works!

Peace,

James G. Landis

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About Anabaptist Voice

Our Mission Statement:

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

Our Purpose:

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

Our Tone:

The tone of the magazine shall be positive in that:

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

Our motto shall be words from Isaiah 30:21.

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

Our Bible Translation Policy:

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

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

Our Finances:

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

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

Our Organization:

The AV Editor is responsible for assuring that *Anabaptist Voice* adheres to the stated purpose, securing writers, and proper copyediting. The AV Production Team is responsible for design, layout, printing, subscriptions, and all financial matters.

At present, *Anabaptist Voice* is choosing to be free of government regulations and control as much as possible. We are not registered with any federal or state government body. We are not a 501(c)3 organization; individual contributions are not tax deductible. Those who give to *Anabaptist Voice* through the local church or through Shalom Ministries may obtain a tax deduction (see page 43 for details).

Our Audience:

Our primary target audience is anyone associated with an Anabaptist church. We define an Anabaptist church as one that practices a follower-of-Jesus baptism, maintains actual applications of Bible truths, and where a close-knit, disciplined brotherhood exists among the believers.

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



Some Historic Tenets of Anabaptism:

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

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



Our Readers Write

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

A Godsend

A while ago I had been praying for some kind of newsletter in which the vision of the first church could be revived (as in Acts 2, 4). If we aren't reminded, encouraged, and refreshed, it's easy to go along with the flow of the mainstream [around us] without even noticing [what we are doing]. That's why I think your newsletter is a Godsend.

The more we are of one mind and the more we work toward a common goal, the better we will be able to hold together. For He says of those end times that are coming, "And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved, but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short" (Matthew 24:22).

M.H. | Manitoba

Moral Integrity

I take this opportunity to express appreciation for your efforts to help us treasure and promote moral integrity. God bless you. I am happy to be able to make a contribution to your efforts.

Let me also say that I am eagerly looking forward to seeing what Romans 11:23 says God is able to do—graft the sons of Abraham back into the "good olive tree." "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again."

Is this also when Zechariah 8:23 will be fulfilled? "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, *Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*'"

Faith that works!

J.M. | Pennsylvania

Anabaptist Voice: We Gentiles are truly blessed to have been grafted into the natural olive tree because of our belief in Jesus. And Romans 10:12-13 tells us, "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." And the same path to salvation is open to the Jew "if they do not continue in unbelief ... for God is able to graft them in again" (Romans 11:23).

Practical, Empathetic Encouragement

I have been enjoying your magazine with its many profitable articles. I want to especially express appreciation for what appears to be a trend away from punching Protestant straw-men and lambasting "the hands that hang down and the feeble knees." Keep up the good work. I would rather read a single page of practical, empathetic encouragement on how I can become more like Jesus, than a dozen-page diatribe on the size of the beam in my brother's eye or a satire of the deceived heretic. I know that Scripture is profitable for rebuke and correction as well as doctrine and instruction "but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." I'm looking forward to more of it.

S.N. | Oregon

Need More

Please double the amount of copies that you send me for our church. There are not enough to reach around anymore and I like to give some out as well. I don't remember if I was getting 20 or 25 copies every time.

Also, I want to subscribe for our son-in-law who is on an Indian reservation in Ontario, Canada.

F.Y. | Montana

Zeal For The Gospel

Thank you for the opportunity to write to you.

I also like the account of the Gadarene demoniac in Luke 8 where Jesus told the cleansed man to return to his own house and tell what great things God had done for him. I think we need to have the same zeal to spread the gospel as those who went before us, and we should not get complacent about it in our modern culture.

Having a publication such as this is a grave responsibility and could have far-reaching influence. I will pray for you and others for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Lord bless. Grow in His grace.

J.G. | Nebraska

Star Wonders

I am writing to say I appreciate much of what I've read in *Anabaptist Voice*, especially the emphasis on practical Christian living. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15). This verse describes your mission well.

I disagree with the article on "light" by Menno Knight. It is true that in the above verse, as in many other verses, the Christian and Jesus are described as light.

I am thankful to live in a place with very little light pollution. On warm summer nights, I can stand outside and speak with God like a friend. I can ponder life and I can ponder faith as I look at the same stars Abraham looked at, as he talked with God. The stars and the moon speak a universally-understood language which speaks of God and creation (see Psalm 19:1-3). I believe the "poorest" parts of the earth are those where the people cannot appreciate God's creation because it is obscured by man's creation. I suspect many people have never had the opportunity to see the stars or hear them speak of God's greatness and infinite wisdom.

I do not believe Christians should become politically involved over "light pollution"; however, if we can do our part to help maintain God's time of rest and enjoy His beautiful creation, we should be encouraged to do so.

T.C.S. | Michigan

Anabaptist Voice: It is great that you enjoy the wonder of the stars that God created. And it is also great that we can journey to many places where the heavens are visible at night.

Hospital Witness

Recently while in a hospital waiting room, I saw a copy of a magazine entitled something like "Anabaptist Vision."

I am a minister/bishop in a conservative Mennonite church and from what I saw in the magazine, it would be of interest to me.

If you could send me a sample copy and subscription information it would be greatly appreciated.

P.E. | Manitoba

Anabaptist Voice: We encourage using AV as an outreach tool in hospitals and are blessed that you found the sample copy interesting!

A Note Of Encouragement

We, as Anabaptist people, call ourselves Christians, as do many others. Can we also say we are followers of Christ's teaching? If so, how can some of these responses be so unkind and critical? Right is right and wrong is wrong.

God did not ask us to see eye to eye. Don't lose heart, writers; there will always be negative and critical people out there (sad). Perhaps if people read only to find fault, they should not receive this magazine.

Keep up the good work.

N.Y. | Iowa

Anabaptist Voice: We are glad for all letters, even the ones that are critical of different thoughts. They help keep us on the narrow way in pursuit of truth. Jesus said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). And the harsh critics might even be blessed by something they read in AV.

Old Covenant

I'd like to thank you all for this publication. I can see it is a lot of work to put this writing together; may God bless you all richly.

I do have a question regarding the content of the article about the Old Covenant [AV07 page 21]. The writer said that the covenant with Abraham and his descendants has ended and that it ended when the temple veil was rent. I'm not aware of any Scripture that teaches such a thing.

Personally, I feel that this covenant promise to Abraham in light of subsequent events has a tremendous lesson to all people and nations everywhere: that God always keeps His promises. That provides a solid foundation for our personal relationship with Him.

Romans 11:28-29 says, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

J.M. | California

Anabaptist Voice: The exact quote in question from AV07 is: "This divine rending of the veil signified the passing of the Old Covenant with the descendants of Abraham and the inauguration of the New Covenant with the people of God." This is not a direct quote from Scripture and it might have been better to spell out what the rent veil signified rather than lumping all things together as "the passing of the Old Covenant."

We agree that God always kept His promises in the past and always will.

Only One Everlasting Kingdom

I'm far from an authority on future things, but I, for one, am not worried about the criticism you're getting on this subject—at least if I'm understanding it correctly. I'm more concerned about those whose view of prophecy and the nation of Israel contradicts a true nonresistant position. Praise God that all those who place their faith in the Lord Jesus are the true seed of Abraham, the true Israel. I do not know how, or in what degree, the nation of Israel factors in prophecy, but I do know that ALL the kingdoms of this world will perish. Only one kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and what a privilege it is to be a part of it, whether Jew or Gentile!

R.M. | Ohio

Thank You

Grace and peace be unto you. Thank the Lord, and you, for your efforts in bringing the *Anabaptist Voice* together to further the Kingdom of God. May God richly bless you.

W.S. | Ohio

Outside The Box

I hope maybe my email will encourage others to think outside the box of traditional American Anabaptism and only rural settings. People with souls are in all locations.

As one who grew up not a Christian, much less an Anabaptist, I never knew of “such things” until eleven years ago when I moved to Buckingham, Virginia in a rural setting. Maybe that's why I am passionate about moving to the city and a community area. I am excited about bringing a “third way” so to speak, and a challenge to Protestantism. It is a challenge I believe to be biblical and true.

We had been discussing moving to another location for some time. When God allowed our house to burn and we lost everything in a house fire, we decided to move forward.

In the past three weeks we moved from a rural farm to the city of Richmond, Virginia. This city completely lacks any conservative Anabaptist witness. I believe your magazine would be a great resource and conversation starter to give to seekers who know nothing of the Anabaptist Way or the Kingdom of God.

I truly appreciate your magazine. I would like to look at the ongoing cost of getting several copies in the near future in order to hand out.

God has worked amazing things in our life since the fire, and now we want to be a light and a testimony for God in the city of Richmond, Virginia.

D.L. | Virginia

Much Encouragement

I appreciate the tenor of the AV thus far and hope it can go on. We are now getting them delivered to our church in bundles. So discontinue sending mine to my home address.

A.G. | Ohio

Thanks so much for providing thought-provoking articles from an Anabaptist perspective. I enjoy reading it.

J.G. | Kentucky

I appreciate the work/effort you put into this publication. I would not want to see the work end because of lack of funds. Here is a small donation.

F.Y. | Kansas

Thank you for a magazine that provokes me to seek God in a deeper way. I wish you God's blessing as you, writers, and supporters press on.

W.B. | Ohio

I look forward to each issue! Your magazine has been a blessing and an inspiration to me. Keep it up!

K.Z. | Pennsylvania

I love getting your magazine. I'm an Anabaptist and love some of your very insightful articles.

J.M. | North Dakota

Yes, I want to receive the *Anabaptist Voice*. I read it from cover to cover. The articles are refreshing to my soul.

E.C. | Michigan

We have been thoroughly blessed reading these articles! God bless you as you continue this work.

D.D. | Ontario

I appreciate the unapologetic message of the truth of God's Holy Word. We must never be ashamed of holiness.

L.P. | Oklahoma

We appreciate the work you are doing. As a small house church fellowship, the extra insight from other Anabaptists is encouraging.

L.G. | Ohio



Our Councilors Speak

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

Did Jesus Pay Our Debt on the Cross?

We have seen a number of friends from an evangelical background come to our congregation and leave again. They have various reasons for leaving, but some have listed our understanding of the Gospel as one major reason. One such visitor said, "If you don't believe that Jesus paid my debt and took the punishment for my sins on the cross, that scares me. You remove the very foundation of my Christian faith."

Scripture reveals many facets of Christ's redemptive work, and we should believe everything that Scripture says. But we should avoid making Scripture say what it does not say.

Some say that Christ took the punishment for our sin and endured the anger of His Father against sin. If that is what is meant when it's said that He paid our debt on the cross, I object. Let me explain by using a series of questions and answers.

Q: Did Jesus die for us, shedding His blood for the remission of our sins?

A: Absolutely! "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

Q: Did He pay the price of our redemption?

A: Yes! A high price indeed! We are "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Q: Did He bear our sins in his body?

A: Certainly! He "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Q: Doesn't that mean that our sins were imputed (transferred to His account) to Him?

A: Many suppose that our sins were imputed to Him, and infer that He paid for our sins by taking the punishment for them. I can't find this idea in Scripture.

Q: What is the punishment for sin?

A: God told Adam, "If you eat (sin, disobey Me), you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Paul writes, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Q: Jesus died for us. Didn't He then take our punishment?

A: Christ died for us, but that is different from saying He took our punishment. Sin brings death as a consequence; sin separates the sinner from God, the Source of Life. Jesus didn't change that. He gave His life as a ransom for us (Matthew 20:28). When He released His spirit from His body, His body died (Mark 15:37-39); the eternal Son of God did not die. His death reconciles us to God; His unending life saves us (Romans 5:10).

Q: But didn't God deliver Jesus to the cross to appease His own anger?

A. The Father gave the Son, the Lamb of God, as a sacrifice for us. The Old Testament priests did not vent their anger on the lambs they offered, nor does the Bible ever say that the Father vented His anger on His Son. We understand that it is evil to punish a good man unjustly. God cannot do that (James 1:13). Satan entered into the heart of Judas (Luke 22:3), filled the Jewish leaders with envy and anger, and pushed Pilate to condemn Jesus to death. Satan devised the shame, suffering, and humiliation of the cross in a vain attempt to defeat and destroy Christ. But God the Father perceived Jesus' death as a "sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:2).

Q: Why would Satan plot Jesus' death when through it God accomplished His redemptive work?

A: Satan is not only the great deceiver, he is also deceived! "None of the rulers of this age" understood God's hidden wisdom in the work of redemption, *"for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"* (1 Corinthians 2:7-8).

Q: Did God have to punish Jesus so He could forgive us?

A: I can't find this idea in Scripture. In Matthew 18:21-35, where Jesus taught about forgiveness, who was punished so the servant could be forgiven? No one. The king simply forgave him because of his goodness and mercy. Our King calls us to forgive one another just as He has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). Forgiveness is releasing the debtor. When we forgive, no one is punished.

The Bigger Picture: the Kingdom of God

As important as our personal salvation is, Jesus' message centered on His Kingdom. Jesus came not only to redeem the individual sinner, but also to crush the Serpent's head (Genesis 3:15), to defeat that deceptive tyrant who held us captive. He came to rescue us from the kingdom of darkness and transfer us into His own Kingdom (Colossians 1:13).

Q: From a Kingdom perspective, why did Jesus die on the cross?

A: Beginning with righteous Abel, Satan took every departed soul into the abode of the dead (Hades). When Jesus died, He entered into Satan's stronghold of death (Acts 2:27) to wrest the keys of death and Hades from the Prince of Death. Hear His triumphant words: "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death" (Revelation 1:18). He took on flesh and blood "that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

Q: Does this help explain how He gave His life a ransom for us?

A: As long as Hades was under Satan's power, there could be no release or hope of resurrection. But when the Son of Man gave His life (Matthew 20:28), He entered into Hades, right into the house of the "strong man" to bind him and deliver the captives held there (Matthew 12:29). Jesus made a public spectacle of the powers of darkness, triumphing over them (Colossians 2:15). John adds, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8). Death held all its victims in its prison, but "our Savior Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:10). Praise God! Death is defeated and cannot hold us (I Corinthians 12:26).

Ernest Strubhar | Perkins, Oklahoma



"Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."
— Hebrews 1:3

The Bread & Body, Wine & Blood

Introduction: *The following is written in response to this note from Benjamin Haldeman of Greencastle, Pennsylvania: "I recently was asked, 'Why don't we accept transubstantiation?' (John 6:53-56). This is a basic Catholic doctrine, but that alone isn't a good enough reason to reject it."*

Definition: *Transubstantiation means that the bread and wine of the communion are literally and mystically changed in substance into the actual body and blood of the Lord.*

One of the strongest arguments for a symbolic meaning of the bread and the wine is that Jesus was sitting right there in flesh and blood when he made the statement, "Take, eat; this is my body ... Drink from it ... for this is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-29). And Jesus also said when he was physically present, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

James Landis | Waynesboro, Georgia

I was raised in a very strong Catholic environment and spent many years there until the Lord called us out into his marvelous light.

It was always a puzzle to me how Catholic theology could be so adamant that the communion bread and wine turned into actual human flesh and blood through the words of the priest. It never looked or tasted any different. I met priests who had a different take on this; they saw the communion emblems as something sacred after a blessing was pronounced over them and they treated them with respect. I believe we should do the same; for example, we would not toss them on the floor in our communion services.

Joseph van Loon | Deloraine, Tasmania

Whereas Catholic and Protestant theology have focused on what happens to the elements in communion, Anabaptist theology focuses on the presence of Christ in His people gathered for communion. I greatly appreciate the Anabaptist emphasis on the gathered and united people of God, and the communion service which reinforces, symbolizes, and makes this visible.

Andrew V. Ste. Marie | Manchester, Michigan

Dead To The Law

an interview with Shannon Newswanger

Introduction: Shannon originally submitted this material as a response to the challenge question in AV08: Explain what you think Jesus meant in Matthew 5:17 when He said, **“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy [them] but to fulfill them.”**

We would welcome other responses to any of the questions in the interview. The responses need not agree with the position taken in the interview, but should carefully explain your own understanding and the reasons for it. We want to build each other up in our understanding of this important Bible teaching: “Are the Ten Commandments different than the rest of the Mosaic Law?”

AV Question — Menno Knight stated in AV08, page 9 that the Ten Commandments and the laws Moses gave are different. You stated in a letter that at one time you also believed this. Why did you change your mind?

Newswanger: I was challenged with the question, “If the Ten Commandments are God’s eternal, universal law, why do you not observe the Sabbath on the seventh day as they specify?” I had always been taught that Jesus changed this to the first day of the week for Christians, but I found no scriptural basis for this and I knew that would refute the idea that the Ten Commandments were eternal and universal. I needed an answer for my conscience so I began to study.

I found that the Ten Commandments were inextricably connected to the other Mosaic Laws. They are frequently restated throughout God’s continued instruction to Moses as the basis for a long list of related instructions, which seem to come as an extension of the original commandment. Many of these laws are not ceremonies, but applications of the Ten Commandments.

AV Question — Can you give an example?

Newswanger: How do we distinguish between the command to keep the Sabbath holy and the command of *how* to keep it holy?

“These are the words which the LORD has commanded you to do: ‘Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day’” (Exodus 35:1-3).

Are we forbidden to kindle a fire on the Sabbath? Must we consider it a moral issue to flip a light switch or strike a match on the Sabbath? Remember, if we should break one commandment we break them all. What about the command for enforcing the law? It is here included with the command to keep the law. If I am under covenant to keep the Sabbath holy, am I not also commanded by the same to put to death all who do not? The book of Exodus is filled with such examples. Any distinction between the Ten Commandments and the rest was certainly not expressed in the giving or administering of them!

The Ten Commandments are given first, in the hearing of all the people, while the rest of the laws were given privately to Moses. This was not because of God’s plan, but by the people’s request.

“So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness...that you came near to me...And you said: ‘...if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die...You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do it’” (Deuteronomy 5:23-27).

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel” (Exodus 19:5-6).

This was God’s preamble to the Ten Commandments. They were part of a larger covenant—a two-sided, conditional agreement. In Moses’ review of the event in Deuteronomy 5, he clearly states that this covenant was established on Mt. Sinai between God and those who heard it. It was also to pass on to their children forever.

“For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law” (Romans 2:12).

There evidently were, and still are, those who are without law, that is, an authoritative written code of ethics.

AV Question — How did Christ fulfill the command, “Thou shalt not steal?”

Newswanger: He of course obeyed it, but He fulfilled (brought to completion the task of) the entire law of which it is a part.

“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Galatians 3:23-25).

“...Which [the OT Laws] are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17).

Paul compares it to the veil put over Moses’ face to hide what was only a reflection of God’s glory and already fading away, yet too bright for man to see. The Law was only a veiled (partial) revelation of God’s full glory and holiness. “Thou shalt not steal” did not forbid pillaging heathen neighbors or taking your brother’s goods by lawsuit, but Jesus revealed that God’s holiness is also above this.

The same is true for legal divorce, polygamy, killing in warfare, vengeance, judgment, and many other things. But “in [Jesus] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). He brought an end to the partial revelation by coming in His fullness (bodily) and being the perfect human example of God’s holiness, therefore removing the veil.

AV Question — Explain the analogy of Christ filling a hole which the law could not fill.

Newslinger: “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin...For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:19-23).

All have sinned, but before the Law man did not fully understand the huge gap between his character and God’s holiness “without which no one will see the Lord.” The Law’s enormous demands occupied much of a Jew’s life with sacrifices, ceremonial feasts, pilgrimages, etc., which did not provide a clear conscience. This proved to the world that even those who devoted their whole energies to approaching God could not be justified by the Law, without Christ.

But “[Jesus] takes away the first that He may establish the second” (Hebrews 10:9), so that today, “we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified...Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:10-22).

AV Question — What does the word “replete” mean and how does it apply to this subject?

Newslinger: Webster’s defines replete as “fully or abundantly provided or filled; having much or plenty of something; pleasantly full.”

Where once there was an insufficiency of blood to cleanse and power to save there is now an infinite abundance. Where once the high priests died and had to be replaced, Jesus lives forever.

“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

AV Question — If for one who stands upon Jesus Christ, the Old Testament Law no longer exists, does it exist for the heathen?

Newslinger: Every man is devoid of God’s holiness through the sin of Adam. Its curse of death is the basis of the need for blood atonement. This applies to all men. But the Old Testament law as a way to redemption and communion with God is no longer valid for anyone. It was proven insufficient and replaced with the New Covenant.

“Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life” (Romans 5:18).

AV Question — How do you interpret Mathew 5:19? “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”



“The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive. — Deuteronomy 5:2-3

Newslinger: Jesus was about to expose the weakness of the Law and replace it with His commandments as the Son of God. He is saying in verse 18 that the Law will not overlook one mistake until it is fulfilled: which is exactly what He had just announced He was going to do.

Jesus is not talking about the Law in verse 19 or He would be contradicting His point about its mercilessness. Jesus is talking about the commandments He was about to replace the Law with. I think He was showing that compared to the Law, they were not the standard of judgment, but commands by which His followers would be effective or not effective in building the Father's kingdom.

As followers of Jesus we serve God because we love Him and want to build our Father's kingdom not because if we make one tiny mistake we will be condemned. Immediately following these verses He begins a series of, "You have heard that it has been said...but I say unto you..."

AV Question — What are the practical results of your belief that all the Old Testament Law has been replaced by the commandments of Christ?

Newslinger: Our incentive for practical Christian living still falls into one of these two categories: (1) obeying and serving God in an effort to be right with Him, become acceptable as sons, and earn an entrance to heaven, or (2) obeying and serving God because we have been made right with Him and adopted as His holy sons through the atonement and redemption of his only begotten Son and are heirs with Him of the Kingdom of light. The first still leads to failure, despondency, and death and the second still leads to powerful victory, blessed hope, and eternal life!

S. N. | Ontario, Oregon



"Reputation is what people say I am; character is what I really am."

– Eugene Sommers, at Hartville, OH



"A blacksmith was once slandered and abused. He was urged to have recourse to law, but he said, No! I can go into my shop and hammer out a better character than any twelve men in a jury box can give me."

– Tunker Brethren Paper, 1909



"When I went out to find a friend, I couldn't find one there. But when I went to BE a friend, I found them everywhere."

– Lois Wenger, Port Hen-Ry Weekly, Port Henry, NY



"Just as one is, so suspects he of another."

This quote taught me that my faults and shortcomings reflect on my thinking of others. If I'm a compulsive complainer, then I suspect others of always complaining. If I'm not thankful, I suspect others of being unthankful. On the other hand, if I'm doing good and right, then I have higher expectations of others to do the same.

– Victoria Wipf, Lakeside Hutterian Brethren, OR

NEW Writing Challenge!

Pick one and expound on your answer.

1. What is the significance of Genesis 2:3?
2. What is the significance of Genesis 2:24?
3. How did Noah know the difference between clean and unclean animals?



Overcoming Evil with Good

by Peter Hoover

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Thirty years ago a number of correspondence teachers, including me, working at Lamp and Light Publishers in Farmington, New Mexico, became involved in studying evil. It started when some of us became concerned about unsafe medical practices touched by the occult. Too many of our brothers and sisters in the church, it seemed, had become far too involved and even gullible to spiritually unsafe practices marketed amongst us as alternative medicine. How should one know what practice to choose or which one should firmly be rejected?

We started by studying kinesiology, iridology, holistic therapy, supernatural energies, unscientific and unscriptural belief systems, the connection between herbs and spiritually unsafe practices amongst tribal groups, and much more. The further we dug into what was clearly wrong, the more vividly we realized the vast extent of evil. Even in the nearby town of Farmington, New Mexico, we discovered a “church of Satan,” people offering goat sacrifices in the nearby mountains, along with horrible practices and truly fearful rites.

One Saturday, when I had a bit of time to work on our study of evil, I entered my office. Something seemed wrong—sinister, foreign. I knelt to pray and even though I attempted to connect with God, everything seemed strange and disconnected. This brought fear to my heart. I wondered and cast about to find the reason until a clear answer came to me. “Your books about evil practices, your writings, your focus on evil; get rid of it all!”

I stood up, grabbed all my stuff about evil things, carried it out and dropped the lot into the dumpster. Then, after I returned to my office, I could pray marvelously well, picking up safe and spiritually profitable work for the Lord again.

Studying righteousness and focusing on Christ Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2), like bank workers who study real

money rather than counterfeits, will help us infinitely more than anything else. Nothing other than knowing the Lord Jesus and knowing the truth will guard us from the designs of the Evil One.

So if you are worried that evil spirits may haunt your house, that you will be ensnared by evil medical practices, or that you may be led into evil things unknowingly, study the truth.

God’s Word tells us plainly many things that are evil—sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

Literally, get rid of the things you know are evil. Throw them in the dumpster and don’t mess with them anymore.

If you aren’t sure whether a practice is evil, cast it aside and crowd your life full with things you know are good—patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control.

Worship God. James 4:8 says, “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” Prove that you love God by loving and serving your fellowman. I John 4:12 says, “If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.”

Always do good. In this way you will be so busy doing what is right and good that you will have no time to study and pursue evil things. By so doing you will overcome evil with good.

I will most likely never write much about the Evil One and what he plans for us. But, to learn more about Jesus, what He wants of me today, and what He has in mind for His followers worldwide, until He comes again, I simply cannot hear, absorb, and grasp enough.

May our close relationship with God, through His Son, Jesus, be our Light and Way until we stand before Him, face to face in peace!

P.H. | Waynesboro, Pennsylvania



“To be full of self-confidence is to be empty of God’s power.”

– Elmer Z. Yoder, at Hartville, OH



“A legacy is the imprint we leave on the future.”

– Art Nolt, at Great Lakes Mennonite Church, MI

The Scriptures Jesus Quoted

by Andrew V. Ste. Marie

“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

The New Testament was written in Koiné Greek, the common language of the Mediterranean world in Jesus’ day. As recorded in the New Testament, He and the Apostles quoted the Old Testament Scriptures in Greek although they were originally written in Hebrew, not in Greek. For instance, in Acts 15:15 the Apostle James quoted from the prophet Amos:

“And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things” (Acts 15:15-17 KJV, quoting Amos 9:11-12).

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this” (Amos 9:11-12).

In many cases, what Jesus or the Apostles quoted does not match with the Old Testament reference as found in our translations of the Old Testament. Did you ever read an Old Testament quotation by a New Testament writer, then look up the reference in the Old Testament only to find that the two did not match? Did that make you shake your head in bewilderment over how such a thing could be possible?

If so, you are not the only one, and this phenomenon is not limited to one or two instances. Dozens of New Testament quotations from the Old Testament do not match the prophecy found in our Old Testaments.

Take the above example. James the Apostle quotes from the Prophet Amos to convince the Jerusalem Council that God had foretold the conversion of the Gentiles. Yet the book of Amos in our Bibles says no such thing; he rather seems to prophesy that the Jews will possess the land formerly owned by Edom and other heathen nations. Where did James get his version of the prophecy?

The answer is to be found in an Old Testament version you may never have heard of: the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, Amos 9:11-12 reads:

“In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and will rebuild the ruins of it, and will set up the parts thereof that have been broken down, and will build it up as in the ancient days: that the remnant of men, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, may earnestly seek me, saith the Lord who does all these things.”

So what is the Septuagint and where did it come from?

The Egyptian king Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC) helped build the great and world-famous library at Alexandria, which became a center of learning. It is believed that he sponsored a translation of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) into Greek. Tradition says that 72 translators did the work, and the round number (70) gives us both the name Septuagint (septuaginta is Latin for 70) and the common abbreviation for the translation, the Roman numeral LXX (70). The rest of the Old Testament books were later translated into Greek as well. This all took place around 250 years before Christ was born.

As the Jewish people had been scattered throughout the world following the Babylonian captivity (598 B.C.), they welcomed the translation into Greek, a language they were more familiar with than Hebrew. Even in Judaea, many Jews by the time of Jesus were more familiar with Greek than with Hebrew. Thus, the Septuagint filled a crucial role in keeping knowledge of the Scriptures alive among Jews who would not have been able to understand the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Hebrew Old Testament preserved today, and which modern Old Testament translations are based upon, is known as the Masoretic Text, which came into its final form in the Middle Ages. There are several differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint. Scholars used to think that these differences indicated that the Septuagint was a sloppy translation of the Hebrew Masoretic Text, but study of the Dead Sea Scrolls has laid that misconception to rest. Some of the Hebrew manuscripts discovered at the Dead Sea match with the Septuagint and not the Masoretic Text; this indicates that the Septuagint was translated from a different family of Hebrew manuscripts than the manuscripts which became the basis of the Masoretic Text.

It is not hard to study the topic of which Old Testament text Jesus and the Apostles quoted from. All you need is a translation of the Septuagint, an English

New Testament and an English Old Testament translated from the Masoretic Text (which essentially all Bibles are). (It would be best to use a fairly literal translation, like the KJV, NKJV, or NASB.) The project is made much easier if your New Testament sets off Old Testament quotations in a different font and has a cross-reference to the place in the Old Testament where that statement is found. Read the quotation from the New Testament, then look it up in your Old Testament. Note similarities and differences. Then look up the same Scripture in the Septuagint; again, note similarities and differences.

Many quotations will be essentially the same in both the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint. Where they are different, the New Testament almost always agrees with the Septuagint instead of the Masoretic Text. In a few cases, it agrees with the Masoretic against the Septuagint. Jesus and the Apostles generally quote from the Septuagint text family.

For example, Jesus asked the chief priests and scribes, “Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” (Matthew 21:16), quoting from Psalm 8:2a, which says in the Masoretic Text, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.” The Septuagint reads, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise.”

In the earliest centuries of the church, the Septuagint was used as the Old Testament of the church. Christians continued to use the Greek Septuagint until Jerome used the Hebrew Masoretic Text instead of the Septuagint as the basis for his translation into Latin (the Vulgate). Thus his translation, based on the Hebrew, effectively switched the Western, Latin-speaking church to a Hebrew-based Old Testament text and divorced it from the Septuagint. The Eastern, Greek-speaking church retained the Septuagint, and it is to this day the official Old Testament text of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

When you read the Septuagint, you realize that its influence on the New Testament goes far beyond the quotations of prophecies which many New Testament readers know about. In addition, many familiar New Testament Scriptures are actually quotations from the Septuagint, and the New Testament author does not notify us that he is actually quoting from the Old Testament. For example:

“Be ye angry, and sin not” (Ephesians 4:26a).

“Be ye angry, and sin not” (Psalm 4:4 LXX).

“Stand in awe, and sin not” (Psalm 4:4 Masoretic).

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17b).

“And do thou provide things honest in the sight of the Lord, and of men” (Proverbs 3:4b LXX).

“So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (Proverbs 3:4 Masoretic).

“God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (I Peter 5:5b).

“The Lord resists the proud; but he gives grace to the humble” (Proverbs 3:34 LXX).

“Surely he scorneth the scornors: but he giveth grace unto the lowly” (Proverbs 3:34 Masoretic).

I invite you to partake of the blessings of reading a translation of the same Old Testament which Jesus, the Apostles, and the early church quoted from. You may be surprised at how the New Testament illuminates the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures.

A.V. S. | *Manchester, Michigan*

The following Septuagint translations are available from Sermon on the Mount Publishing. To order, use contact info at right.

Brenton Septuagint

This edition has the Septuagint with Apocrypha in both English and Greek in parallel columns. It is translated in King James-style English, giving it a familiar sound to KJV readers and making comparisons with that version easy. It has the disadvantage of having very small English type. **Cost: \$57.00 postpaid**

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“What is truth? It is that which agrees with final reality!”

– Jason Miller at Peniel Church, OH



“Do your giving while you’re living, then you’re knowing where it’s going.”

– Jim Myer at White Oak Church of the Brethren, PA



“Guilt is to the soul what pain is to the body.”

– Dave Lapp at West Haven Amish Mennonite Church, PA



“It is easier to stay busy than to stay vibrant in our walk with God.”

– Calvin Yoder at Southern Mennonite Fellowship Meetings, GA



“If we come to see boundaries in our lives as restrictions rather than as safeguards, we have already conceded our freedom.”

– Gerald Sensenig at Little Mountain Mennonite Church, PA



“A house may look good on the outside but the future of the house depends on its foundation.”

– Jonas Landis at Burkland Mennonite Church, GA



“Our children are wax to impress and diamonds to retain.”

– John Risser at Hartville, OH



“We carry tradition; conviction carries us.”

– Eugene Sommers at Hartville, OH



“The death shroud has no pockets.”

– Urie Sharp at Hartville, OH



“Loving our brethren testifies of our love to God. Brotherly love stays true through thick and thin. Love is the greatest commandment.”

– Martin Yoder at Lyndonville Amish Church, NY

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

Things Yet Unseen

by James Landis

Introduction: The following story is purely imaginary, albeit possibly prophetic. Our prayer is that God might use it to enlarge your own vision of the future.

It all began in 2018 when two young Mennonite men had been fasting and praying for two days. Then Daniel said to John, “I feel like we Mennonites are not clear about the two-kingdom concept—the kingdoms of this world, and the Kingdom of our Lord and Christ. I sometimes hear believers talk about our country, our government, and our President. We are US citizens of this earthly kingdom with all its rights and privileges; we register for the draft, and yet we are joyfully silent about the great evil of the military as long as we are able to perform an alternate service for the country. Do we really believe there are two kingdoms engaged in a battle to the death?”

“I know,” John replied, “it is true that Mennonites have often given a testimony of peace by aiding the suffering during and after wars. This is good and is what Jesus wants His followers to do. But is that all we, as followers of Jesus, should do to attack this great evil of Satan?”

“Daniel, listen to this. *The New American* magazine reported last month:

The US military has heartlessly destroyed Iraq, occupied Afghanistan the past 17 years, bombed Syria into oblivion, overthrew the governments in Egypt and Libya, launched drone and missile attacks against other countries, etc. Furthermore, the US is adding massive new outlays to the current budget for a far-flung War on Terror that has already consumed 5.6 trillion dollars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Syria. These costs do not include the huge sums expended in over 70-plus countries where the War on Terror is ongoing. These figures say nothing about all the people killed and the terrible suffering of millions more.

“John,” Daniel answered, “everyone knows war is terrible. It causes horrible suffering. It bankrupts the destroyer and the destroyed. Common sense should tell mankind to stop the fighting. The reason warfare does not end is because many people in banking and the defense industry profit from war and do not want it to stop. But John, the senselessness of war is not the reason we oppose it. We oppose warfare because Christ said His followers should do good and not evil; we should put our swords away. War proves the military is the work of Satan in the kingdoms of this world and not the work of God.”

A Calling from God

“So Daniel,” John asked, “what do you think we should do about this terrible evil going on in Satan’s kingdom? Should we join the anti-war movement and march on Washington, write Senators and Congressmen, quit paying taxes?”

“John, I don’t think that marching in Satan’s kingdom and using the weapons of this world—guns, bombs, drones, and laws; force and violence—is part of the peaceable Kingdom of Christ. Jesus said His followers should not use the sword. We should use words that He will give us in our hour of need. By the power of His Spirit those words can tear down Satan’s kingdom. For Jesus told us, ‘Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.’”

“Brother John, let me tell you a true story that shows what a faithful witness can do to destroy militarism. I read it in *Tomahawks to Peace*.”

In the late 1670’s, two Quakers, Friend Edmundson and Friend Briggs, felt their spirits drawn to the Caribbean Island of Nevis. They arranged private passage from Antigua in the Caribbean to Nevis. When they arrived in the port at Nevis, the English governor of the island, Governor Wheeler, sent officers and soldiers aboard the ship and forbade anyone to go ashore. Neither could any of their Quaker Friends from the island board the ship to visit them. They also forced the captain of the ship to post a bond of 1,000 pounds sterling guaranteeing that he would carry his passengers straight back to Antigua.

When Friend Edmundson inquired of the “hard usage” they were receiving as Englishmen on an English Island, the officer answered them, “Yes, you should be allowed to go ashore, but the reason you cannot is this: Since you Quakers came to the Caribbean, 700 of our militia have turned Quakers, and Quakers will not fight. We are surrounded by enemies and we have need of soldiers. That is the very reason Governor Wheeler will not let you come ashore.”

“That’s the answer,” John exclaimed. “Those Quakers converted the soldiers and showed them the way of peace. Furthermore, they did it without swords and bows and the carnal weapons of the world; they used only the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

“Certainly there must be thousands of soldiers involved in these terrible wars who suffer from a guilty conscience and who would desire peace. Let us invade the kingdom of Satan with the Word of God. If you and I each convert five soldiers that would be ten soldiers. And if each of those converted soldiers brought two more soldiers out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light, that would be 32 souls fighting in God’s kingdom. God is calling us to do this.”

Daniel raised his hand, palm outward. “Wait a minute, Brother John. You forget about the Anabaptist churches who practice peace and do not fight in the military. What if many disciples from these peace churches—Amish, Brethren, Mennonites, Hutterites, Apostolic Christians—caught the vision and became active instead of passive—conquering instead of defending, advancing instead of yielding? Why, we could soon have 3,000 other followers of Jesus joined in the Lord’s battle. It wouldn’t be long until we could have 10,000 ex-military men on the Lord’s side and maybe several hundred thousand called out of the defense industry into peace jobs where they would grow and produce useful things instead of manufacturing the destructive weapons of war.”

Now John raised his hand, palm outward. “Daniel, you’re carried away. Such numbers will never happen in our time. Maybe a few will come but I don’t even know any soldiers. It’s impossible.”

“It’s true,” Daniel answered. “With men it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth His laborers. Lift up your eyes and see that the fields are white and ready for harvest.”

Taking the Offensive

Daniel and John were serious. By the end of 2018, twenty soldiers had repented of their sins, were baptized and had left the military. Those new converts eagerly joined the battle and spread the good news of deliverance from their sins and peace among their former friends. Other believers from the peace churches rallied to the battle and started calling men and women to repentance among the defense industry workers.

Before the end of 2019 strange things took place. John was traveling to an army base with a van load of ex-soldiers when he lost control of the van and crashed head-on into a trailer-truck. John and four ex-soldiers died in the fiery crash. The cause of the wreck could not be determined.

Not long afterward Daniel was flying cross-country to meet a speaking engagement near an aircraft plant making fighter jets. The weather was good. For some unexplained reason his plane veered off-course and

took him directly over a military base. Anti-aircraft fire brought him down.

At the funeral the preacher prayed, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Many shed tears of love for Daniel, but no one thought of giving up the fight. Daniel would not have wanted that.

And so, like a great swelling tide the numbers grew and multiplied. The attackers prayed for boldness and a lack of fear. And the Lord gave it to them. So with great power the saints attacked the military strongholds of Satan, casting down every argument and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And great grace was upon them all.



The Secret Conference

In mid-July 2026, a gaunt scar-faced brother limped up to the basement entrance of a burned-out church. His good black eye shone with an intensity of purpose while skin closed over the hollow spot where his other eye should have been. A gray-haired guard, leaning on a cane, stood in front of a heavy blanket where the door used to swing.

“Say brother, what is the password for this night?” he queried.

“Now how do you expect me to remember that?” the limper asked. He smiled thoughtfully while the old guard shone a small pocket light on the weathered face. He laid a kindly hand on the man’s shoulder. “Brother, I have heard much of you. Try ‘Unseen.’”

“Unseen,” the limper replied.

The old guard greeted the limper with a holy kiss, then stepped aside. “The brethren are waiting for you. Be blessed.”

The Prayer Session

Only two LED flashlights pointed toward the corners of the large dark room. None could see clearly the faces of the men seated in the great circle. The newcomer limped to a chair in the dimly lit circle and fell to his knees. Immediately all the rest of the men fell to their knees.

“Almighty God, maker of heaven and earth,” the limper’s powerful voice began. He continued, “You are the One who holds Pleiades in your hand and calls the billions of stars by name. We are but dust of the earth and we surrender our way and our wills into your powerful hands.

“Lord, you enlisted us in this war against your enemies that at times seem so powerful and threatening. It’s your war and we are but your servants. Show us what to do that your kingdom might advance and that many more soldiers in the carnal armies of Satan might surrender to you. We know many are blind and wretched now, but they can come to know your peace. And then, we pray these forgiven soldiers might leave the bullets, the bombs, the screaming jets, the poison gas, and the other weapons of terror and join us in building your kingdom of peace.

“We pray that millions more who are employed in manufacturing and distributing the evil weapons needed for the killing fields of the world might repent. Forgive them, Lord, when they cry out to you. May the blood of your son Jesus cleanse them of their sin. Then Lord, we pray these distressed souls might leave their sinful past behind, give up their jobs and join us in the great battle we are fighting.

“Lord all powerful, show yourself strong in this battle with Satan’s forces so your great name might be upheld, that even the heathen might fall on their faces and tremble at your might and power.

“Lord at this late night hour, we bow before you as the one who can cast both body and soul into the fires of hell. And we declare we are unafraid of those who even call us children of Beelzebub and threaten to kill our bodies. You told us that if they called you Beelzebub they would call us the same.

“Lord you know all about water-boarding and singed flesh and broken bones and disfigured faces. You know about straight jackets and the loneliness of solitary confinement and the hunger pains and fierce dogs they set upon us and all the other evils Satan sends against us. Lord, we can only rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for the name of your holy servant Jesus.

“Now, Lord, look on their threats and tortures and grant to your servants that with all boldness we may speak your Word to all those involved in the terror wars.”

Brother Limper paused and another brother took up the prayer. His voice carried a German accent and he had trouble switching his “v’s” and “w’s” around.

“Lord, vee don’t pray that you take this persecution away from us, chust make us strong and keep us from being deceived by the viles of the devil. You know how

many Mennonites ver deceived in the great wars and left your kingdom and peaceful ways and followed after mere men like Hindenburg and Hitler. They took up guns, submarines, machine guns, bombs, and planes and choined in the wicked carnal warfare and hateful ways of evil men. Lord, vee know you want us to love our fellowman and not to murder him.

“Your vurd teaches us that ven everything is going good and people feel like they don’t need you anymore, that’s ven they want to deny you. So Lord, don’t stop this persecution, but let your enemies see what you can do to transform and empower your soldiers. Go with us into battle that vee may overthrow Satan’s strongholds and tear down his fortresses. The enemy is afraid of your power. The demons know that you can turn the hearts of millions of soldiers away from destruction and murder and make them builders and peacemakers.”

The next ex-soldier who prayed had the accent of a black man from the Deep South. “Lawd, have mercy. You know all the killin’s I have already dun, a hatin’ my enemies. An’ I thinks about’ aw those soldyers ou’ there a doin’ it still. An’ maybe dey doin know no betta. Lawd hep us ta ge’ yow message to ‘um.

“Lawd, fawgive us. An’ doe be pleased to fawgive us as we fawgive dem dat trespass agin’ us. Lawd, righ’ now we speakin’ abou’ dem dat burnt dis here church an’ killed our dear brothas and sistas. You know who dey is an’ wha’ was in der harts. Lawd, take dat bitterness and hatred out’n dey harts an’ wash ‘em clean and give ‘em white robes to put on. An’ like yah tole us, Lawd bless ‘em really g-o-o-d.

“An’ Lawd, we thank you that you brought these dear brothas from the fah conahs of the earth here safely unda’ yo’ protectin’ arms and gave us this here place o’ quiet repose to meet in. An’ now we ask that you’d be with the prophet as he leads us in the wah we up agains’ with Satan and aw his debils and ‘aw the eebils he can thunk up.

“An’ las’ of aw, Lawd, we pray you’d put aw these dea’ brothas neath yo’ everlastin’ arms an’ cradle ‘em all safely home.

“In the name of Jesus, Amen and Amen.”

Fighting the War God’s Way

All remained quiet as each brother continued his own prayers for a time. Then the prophet slowly raised himself to his chair and began to preach.

“Brethren, it is fitting that all of us know who we are up against in the war.

“It is not the US government with whom we war. Even though their agents issue decrees against the Anabaptists

because they are causing thousands of soldiers to desert the army, and millions more to eschew the riches of the defense industry and seek peaceful constructive work; we do not fight the government. Even though they confiscate all our goods, lock us in prison, torture us, exile us, or steal our wives and children or even kill us it is not them with whom we war. We war against Satan himself.

“When Satan went with Jesus out into the wilderness to tempt Him, one of the temptations was to take Jesus up into a very high mountain where the devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Then the devil told Jesus, ‘If you will fall down and worship me, I will give you all these kingdoms.’

“Well, Jesus did not fall down and worship Satan, praise God, and Satan did not give Jesus the kingdoms of the world. God has allowed Satan to be in charge of them to this day. So we war with Satan.

“All the evils in war and governments that God is against—lying, murder, stealing, rape, destruction, starvation—come from Satan. There is no such thing as a holy government or a holy war. Let it be clear to all that we war against Satan himself, and without God’s power with us, we — shall — miserably — fail.”

Now another voice spoke from the circle.

“Brother prophet, we are fully persuaded that we war against the Evil One and that we need God’s power to do it. But tell us how we attack and destroy the enemy. Or should we change our strategy and go on the defensive?”

“No, brother, we have the right strategy of calling soldiers and enlisted men to repentance and enlisting them in God’s army.” A great chorus of ayes filled the room. “Thank God, He brought me out of the military and set my feet on the rock. I want to attack the enemy.”

Brother prophet waited patiently till the chorus subsided. Then he went on. “The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians, ‘Though we are in the flesh, we do not use the guns and bullets of this world to attack our enemies. But the weapons we use are mighty words from God that cast down every high thing that exalts itself against God and brings every thought into obedience to Christ.’ And God is ready to punish all disobedience.

“This truly works with the military and defense personnel.” Again a chorus of “ayes” rang out.

When it had cleared, Brother prophet continued. “Our attack strategy is working and God has given us Holy Spirit power. We do not keep records of baptisms as we are now an underground church, but we think several thousand men have left the US army and are now either in hiding or in prison. Many thousands have left the defense industry and gotten other jobs.

“We are attacking Satan’s stronghold and the results are predictable. Hundreds of men and women are in prison. In prison they preach and pray and gain more believers. Their homes and farms are confiscated. Their bank accounts have been plundered. But they suffer joyfully the despoiling of their goods and they move from place to place, meeting in secret. God is with them. In the cities and towns where they settle, new believers join them and the Lord prospers everything they do with peace.”

The Attack

Suddenly three taps on the wall interrupted the stillness. The lights went out at once and complete silence and thick darkness enveloped the men. All fell to their knees and waited. Shouts sounded and many heavy boots tramped on the floor above them.

An officer pulled the curtain back and shone his bright light around the room for a minute. “There’s no one here,” the officer shouted. “They must be hiding in the swamp.”

“Let’s get ‘em,” a soldier shouted. “With our night-vision equipment we can run ‘em down.”

“Not worth it,” the officer countered. “By the time you dodge the snakes and the alligators and fight your way through the briers, the men will already be scattered in the city on the other side of the swamp.”

“I see,” said the soldier. “Well, it’s time to teach the traitors and religious nuts a lesson. Let’s do some target practice on the cars.” Rounds of bullets tore the night air as the soldiers emptied their guns. Then the praying men heard the doors slam and a heavy military truck lumbered out the driveway.

The God of Peace Goes with You

When all was quiet once more, the brethren rose to their feet. The prophet spoke: “Jesus told His disciples that if they reject them in one city they should flee to another. Let us do the same. Go in peace and the God of peace be with you.”

Practical Questions:

1. Is targeting military personnel and defense industry workers with the Gospel any different than targeting the Muslims or some unreached people group in Asia? What is the difference?
2. What will almost certainly follow if any number of people repent and leave the military and the defense industry? What would be the results in the Kingdom of God?
3. Is the above story possible? Is it desirable?

Only One Category

by Paul Emerson

Many have attempted to separate an understanding of the Word of God into two categories. In the first category are the very most important teachings such as salvation, the Scriptures, and evangelism. The second category includes everything the Bible clearly teaches that they did not put into the first category. This enables them to say that the first category represents “salvation issues” while the second category does not.

This dichotomy is really a false human invention. When God uses the word “all” in II Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” who are we to say that one thing in the Word of God is more important than another thing? Who are we to say that some things are “salvation issues” and some are not? It is all equally God’s truth. It is a form of apostasy to categorize it into various levels of importance.

Commentary on “Only One Category”

by James Landis

“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” – Matthew 28:20

“OBSERVE” in this verse does not catch the full force of what Jesus was telling his disciples they should teach. DO and OBEY are much stronger. In these last words of Jesus here on earth, Jesus is calling His followers to teach their converts to DO and to OBEY “all things I have commanded you.”

Doing and obeying the all things Jesus commanded us to do are the heart of the Anabaptist Way. The emphasis on putting into practice all the things Jesus commanded distinguishes Anabaptists from many others who also claim to be followers of Jesus, but only talk about the “all things” or just ignore them completely.

Maybe some so-called Anabaptists do not put into practice “all” the things Jesus commanded, but that is the commitment of all true followers of Jesus. Believers unwilling to surrender their own will to Jesus do so at the risk of their eternal salvation.

So today, some Anabaptist believers tire of putting the “all things” Jesus commanded into practice and start shucking off the undesirable things with the intent of keeping the really good practices. Veilings for the women disappear, the holy kiss is no longer practiced, modesty

Some people add a third category—namely, application of biblical principles. Those who do this typically make obedience to these things optional. Obedience to the application of Scripture cannot be optional.

We may not all agree on how to apply a specific scriptural principle but once an application is agreed upon in the local setting, it must be required. A truth that is not practiced is not received truth. We would say that evangelicals who speak truth but do not practice it, do not really believe that truth.

Those who make these artificial categories are paving the way for disobedience to God’s principles. The actual practice of a principle is the certification of belief. No works (fruit), no faith.

– The substance of this essay was taken from the *FCM Informer*. Used with permission.

of men and women disappears, brothers go to court, wedding bands come in while purity goes out, military service is a decision for the individual believer, big-time sports lead one to the arena, and on-and-on.

Brother Emerson has it right. It’s a package deal. When people consciously cross out just one of the “all things” commanded by Scripture, it undermines “all” the commands of Scripture. Suddenly all God’s commands are vulnerable to the whims of the individual or church. This is nothing new. In my short lifetime, I have seen it happen over and over again. That is the way it works.

People can retain the name of Amish, Brethren, Mennonite, or they can tack fellowship, conservative, community, or even Christian to the name of their church. But if the believers who are part of that church do not put into practice the teachings of Christ and the apostles, the name is meaningless.

Let us be careful to put into practice all the commands of Scripture in spirit and in visible deeds. Let our practice of obedience to the Scripture be seen by all and not a caricature of the truth so that it invites the mockery and ridicule of those who say and do not.

Jesus said, “He who hears and does the things I say is like the man who built his house upon a rock.” And in Revelation 1:3, the angel told John, “Blessed is he who reads, hears, and keeps the words of this prophecy, for the time is near.”

Brevity of Life

by Fred W. Miller

Having just passed my 84th birthday, I have been musing on the brevity of life. The patriarch Moses spent extended periods of time alone with God. He recorded God's perspective of man's life span in Psalm 90 where he speaks of octogenarians who have lived fourscore years. "Yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

In contrast to God's eternal existence, man's earthly sojourn rarely spans more than 80 years, at best. Mortal man's transient life is portrayed as flourishing in the morning, then hastily cut down and withered by evening.

Since death and judgment are certain, we must heed verse 12: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." The force of the German rendering is, "Teach us to remember that we must die, that we may live wisely."

Psalm 90 ends with beseeching God's benediction on the work He has assigned to us and our children (verses 16, 17).

May God enable us to invest faithfully the short time that remains, to fulfill His will for our lives. At the end of our days, may we be able to say as Jesus said to His Heavenly Father. "I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do" (John 17:4).

These sobering words of a hymn writer express the urgency of NOW.

And now, my soul, another year
Of thy short life is past;
I cannot long continue here,
And this may be my last.

- S. Browne

FW.M. | Cabins, West Virginia

Life In A Hutterite Colony

an AV Staff Report

“God is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:27).

If we want to know God and how He would have us live in this world, we need only look around because Acts 17:24 tells us, “God made the world and everything in it.” Romans 1:20 confirms that ever since the creation of the world God is clearly seen and understood by the things that He made.

So life in a Hutterite colony is patterned after the order and harmony and beauty that we see in God’s created world all around us—its detailed structure and rotation, the constellations, and the wonders of plant and animal life.

When we look around at God’s handiwork we can find many examples that God had community living in mind for us humans when He created this earth—the ant hill, the beehive, the flock of sheep, the birds of one feather flocking together, the flying V of geese, the pride of lions, the cattle herd, the flowers which bloom in bunches—all show us a pattern of togetherness. Hutterites believe that is also how God planned for man to live together in a colony.

Hutterites get many visitors who come to their communities to see if they can discover the secret of how they live together in such glorious harmony. Their secret is explained in John 13:34-35, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Like many visitors who take a tour and catch a glimpse of the way a Hutterite colony functions, one gentleman in particular was amazed at the working system of the colony. As he went from one place to another he remained unable to grasp the possibilities of living and working together until he ventured into the last place on the tour—the *kleineschul*, or kindergarten. After a few minutes of explanation inside this little school-world,

the man exclaimed, “Now I know how such a life as this is possible.”

Kleineschul

So we will begin our tour of life in a Hutterite colony in the *kleineschul*.

At the tender age of three, all children on the day of their birthday head off to the *kleineschul*. The teachers in this school are 3-5 ladies over the age of fifty. As soon as a woman turns fifty, she is done cooking and promoted to be a teacher in the *kleineschul*. Their main

interest now is to teach these young ones how to eat together, sing and pray together, play together and have nap time together—all, of course, in unity and no fighting! Rules vary but most students in this group must be in attendance by 7:00 am for breakfast, with final studies over by 2:30 pm, after naptime.

When the children turn six, they will graduate from the *kleineschul*. By that time their knowledge

will include a variety of Bible stories. They will know many German songs by heart and the letters of the alphabet, both in German and English.

At age six, children will move on to grade school where they advance in both German and English studies. Now they will place themselves under the rule and regulation of the German school teacher and his wife. In most cases, they are also in charge of growing and caring for the garden which gives the German school teacher a perfect opportunity to harness the energy of the youth.

Only with their parents and each other do the children spend more time than they do with these two individuals. They have one-half hour to 45 minutes of German school in the morning, six hours of English school, and then one hour of German school in the evening from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. Many colonies have beautiful schoolhouses with nice playgrounds. Most have an English teacher using



Bird's Eye View of Hutterite Colony

a public school curriculum who comes to teach from outside the colony.

At 5:00PM the children head straight to their separate dining room for supper. Their meal will be overseen by the German school teacher and his wife. Here, too, they sit according to age with boys at one table and girls at the other. After supper they will be expected to be in attendance at the evening prayer meeting; babysitting is the only duty that will excuse them from attending the evening gathering.

These tender hearts get firmly established and rooted in their Hutterian way of life. This molding of the child's life is like planting a young tree with a stake going down two feet on the right and one on the left with a rope from the little tree to each stake. This keeps the young tree from being blown over by each wind which comes along.

Hutterites have a very democratic system with a check and balance at each post along the way. If the parents are slack in the rooting and grounding of the young one, the kindergarten teachers and the German school teacher will get the job done. All in the colony strive for perfection, but few attain it; though strive for it they do.

Coming of Age

Once these children turn 15, they are expected to act like adults. Becoming 15 is one of the most exciting events in their young lives. They may say, "Tomorrow is my birthday!" Some can hardly sleep, for on awakening tomorrow, they will get to eat with the adults.

Everybody will have moved one notch over to make room for this youngster. His place will be at the last table at the last place with the rest of his comrades. There will be no more German school in the morning and evening with that daily verse to recite. There will be no more

English school. They may think, "freedom at last." Oh, but what a surprise!

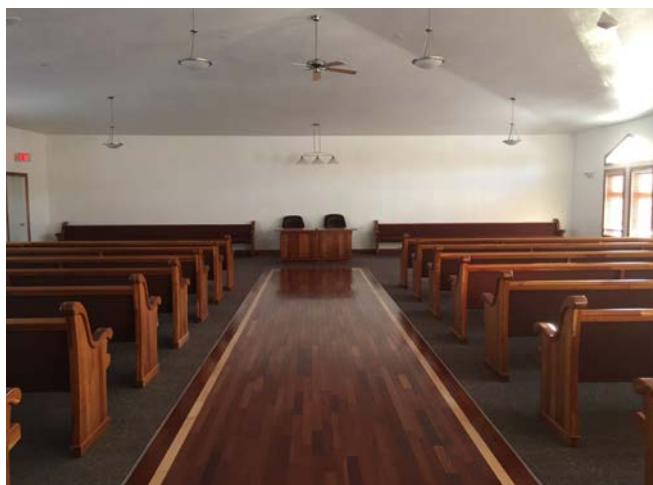
The order which has been implanted in these young lives is there to stay. Breakfast is at 7:00AM, lunch at 11:30AM, *gebet* (prayer) at 5:30PM and supper at 6:00PM. They are expected to attend. Sunday school is still attended by these young adults until baptism and they will still be disciplined by their beloved school teacher if they miss one too many breakfasts or are not regularly at evening prayer meetings.

Young men are implemented into the work force under the guidance of their father, an uncle, or the field boss. By this time the young adults are not strangers to work. While working with the German school teacher in the garden, they plucked many miles of weeds in the last ten years. Summertime may find many a 12 to 15-year-old helping out in state-of-the-art pig barns, dairy barns, chicken barns, slaughter plants, riding horses and to trail cows. Hard workers are praised and slothfulness is regarded as sin.

Young girls find themselves wielding measuring spoons, knives, and rags. Cooking three meals each day for 120 people of all ages is no small undertaking. Helping to peel 50 pounds of carrots each week is an honor for a six-year-old girl.

When these young ladies are not in the kitchen, they can be found cleaning various spaces in the colony. They may be called upon to make goodies for the men folks working on a housing project, or to babysit for a mother with three little ones for the afternoon. Free time is scarce.

For two years they have shared in the women's vast work load with their many rules and rotations. At first, it seems like a jungle maze they will never be able to



Lehrstuben (Teaching House)



Improvement Project

navigate. But now they have gotten a good grip on how everything falls into place, when to do what, where, and with whom.

- Springtime sees them weeding and hoeing.

- Summer finds them picking and canning. Early morning sees them heading to the bake house to bake for farmer's markets and, later in the day, selling their produce.

- Fall brings more canning and butchering of ducks, geese, chickens and turkeys, and of course, winter sausage.

- Winter finds blessed respite to sit down to one's sewing machine and enjoy those long winter evenings reading the Word of God and singing (*not that it gets neglected in those busy days of autumn*).

Now when girls turn 17, they get a turn cooking and baking. They will be guided along by their mother, a helper, and the head cook who is usually, but not necessarily, the financial administrator's wife. The head cook is voted to the job by the baptized male members of the colony. All the other women from ages 17 to retirement from cooking at age fifty, take turns in the kitchen, but the head cook spends up to 5 hours in the kitchen every day. These cooking duties will challenge any young girl.

And there is always the washing of clothes to be done. Every colony has a community wash house at a central location, oftentimes built on to the kitchen. Inside is the homiest laundromat with five heavy-duty washing machines, two dryers, and our homemade soap (its recipe stemming out of Russia). Ladies are expected to clean up when they are done, but Monday after everybody is done washing, the one whose turn it is to clean, will do a thorough job.

Baptism

Baptism is the next step in the young fledgling's life. They have made quite the track from kindergarten to public confession of their faith. Each person's road takes a different path. Some learn from other people's mistakes and become young godly people as easily as a young bird learns to fly. Others must learn from their own mistakes; their road can be a lot more difficult.

With today's many temptations, one wonders that so many are retained. But are the wiles and temptations of the devil worse today than they were since the beginning of time? Not really. It is all about a choice. Every single youth has received the cultivation to bear fruit. So as they stand before the ministers and the whole congregation to recite their learned confession (with trembling knees and quaking hearts) there is many a joyful member in



Wheat Crop Irrigated from the River

the crowd. From the kindergarten ladies to the field boss and German school teacher, they have memories of how they helped this group along the way. Family and friends rejoice with these new Christians. As they pledge their vows, there is a rekindling in the rest of the members' hearts. The baptism is an outward sign of death to self and a new life in Christ and obedience to His will. Hutterites understand from God's written Word and all of creation and nature, that this means surrendering one to another for the good of the whole. It is *gelassenheit*, that elusive word with a hard definition.

If life goes on as usual, young men will become experts at their jobs, growing in wisdom and knowledge. Young ladies will gain great knowledge in being a homemaker and caretaker, both of the young and elderly.

Courtship and Marriage

As is the nature of man and as God so wisely planned in his great love for us, He has ordained that these young ones will also get married. There are many opportunities for courtships to be started. Funerals and weddings can bring together up to 500 people. These are great moments to spend time getting to know other young people while they work together at these big functions.

Many times young men will go to other colonies to help out with a building project or just for the day to help butcher 1000 ducks. Girls get great opportunities to help out in the same way. Hutterites make all their own furniture and it is the women who sand and varnish it. Evenings of visiting, walking, and singing follow when young ladies go to another colony for a work-related outing.

Marriage follows soon after a courtship begins. A year or two is the normal waiting period. As in all cultures, there are many variations.

Weddings are exciting events in young people's lives and for the whole colony. Every member joins in the preparation for the celebration. Once the parents' permission has been granted, a young couple can start making wedding plans. The bride will move to the groom's colony unless she marries a man in the colony where she lives.

The young man will tell the minister of his marriage plans and ask for a place to live with his future bride. Many times he will move in with his parents or remodel an empty unit or do some touch-up work in a trailer. A mighty motivation is pushing him. He must work hard with other fellow members to get his home ready in time for the wedding.

Soon he will be going to get the bride. Through letters, phone calls, and a few visits they have come to an agreement when to get married. The bride is also busy with preparations. There will be a two-day celebration prior to the wedding called the *hulba* at her colony. Then the wedding, which lasts 2 to 3 days, will be at the groom's colony.

One of the most difficult things to do is getting the bride's heart ready to leave home. Not only does she have to bid her family farewell, but also all the colony members with whom she has formed close relationships. It is like leaving your whole world behind. But here also is great inspiration and motivation to move along in the right direction. If she will keep her heart focused on the bridegroom and the joy that awaits her, she can see through leaving her home and colony behind and starting a new life in her groom's colony.

All believers really have a grand allegory of the bride waiting for the bridegroom and leaving everything else behind to live with him. One can imagine how it should be with us waiting on our heavenly groom to come and claim His own.

For a bride, settling in at a new colony is like being 15 all over again. Changes and challenges have parked themselves comfortably at her front door. Not only does she have to adjust to married life but she has to learn the routine and rotations of this group of women and, of

course, getting to know and build new relationships with about 100 other people.

After living 13 weeks at her new colony, the bride will take her first turn at cooking. The young husband will take on a new responsibility of getting up at 5:00AM with his wife to go help her start the morning routine of getting breakfast on the table by 7:00AM. She needs him more

for moral support than anything else.

In the dining room, men sit on one side and women on the other side according to age. As a new bride, it is a blessing to walk into the dining room and be able to take her place without trying to figure out where she will sit. She will be grateful for the things which never change. She will sit with three other ladies her age, some of them as much a newcomer as herself.

They are bound to have something in common; the start of new friendships begin right there in the dining room. Going to eat meals three times a day brings everybody together to share their joys and sorrows. If troubles and trials arise, opportunity for reconciliation presents itself three times a day. Members are not to be avoided.

In the colony there are many opportunities to serve others or take advantage of this "out-of-this-world" wonderful system. One can have the attitude of, "What can I do for my colony?" Or one can say, "What can my colony do for me?" With a servant's heart, one's duties turn into a delight.

Growing Family

More delight! A baby is coming and so the work load grows. The sewing machines will be oiled and cleaned and baby garments will soon be made. Yardages of goods will be carried into the mother-to-be's house before the baby's first breath. After the baby is born, the maternal grandmother will be ushered in like a queen for the first four weeks of special home care this mother receives. For eight weeks, the new mother is released from all work duties in the colony.

When the baby turns 13 weeks old, mom again starts cooking and baking and helping with the work load.



Meal Time

There are always willing hands to help out which makes life easier.

Life goes on for the happy couple. There are trials which come along, but never must they carry a burden on their shoulders alone. Their greatest care is to instill in their children the fear and knowledge of God and love for their fellowmen. This they can practice by dutiful service of reaching out wherever there is an opportunity.

Traveling is limited. Ladies will go home to visit their parents two or three times a year and stay for two to three weeks each time. While they are gone, they will have a friend or sister-in-law wash dishes for them. Such little details cannot be neglected. These details are what makes colony life bloom and blossom.

Just as a body has many major functions, it is a malfunctioning body when even the smallest nerve does not work correctly. One sees the eye blink but who can take note of the many muscles it takes to make it blink? So it is with colony life. There is food on the table, but no one takes note of the diligent gardener with his group of school boys and girls who weeded the crop all summer long?

So it is with every little thing we do. In colony life everyone takes turns cleaning and rotating on the jobs. That way nobody gets bored. Nobody thinks they have a less or more important job. Everybody learns how to live in community. It is all done much better and is seen to be more beautiful when everyone realizes the reason for living together in community.

Sunset Years

With grown daughters of her own who can run the home, the mother is now able to go to her parental home and care for her parents when the time comes. She will be released from all duties at her colony. Her sister, daughters, nieces, and maybe even a cousin or two will take turns filling in for her. Because they share the work, such burdens turn into joyful get-a-ways.

Going home to take care of mom and dad for four weeks is an honor. Food is prepared for them in the colony kitchen three times a day. All the daughter has to do is go and bring the food to the house. Sewing, cleaning, and laundry will be her duties in her free time. She will use the wagon she used as a single girl in their home to take her load of laundry to the wash house each Monday and Thursday morning.

Taking care of the elderly seems an unwanted task or a heavy burden to many people. But when it is shared like this, it actually becomes a real pleasure. When one thinks about getting old and feeble themselves, one can enjoy taking care of others.

The Hutterites truly have a wonderful way of life where one is cared for from the cradle to the grave. In this system there is love, harmony, order and security. When the Holy Spirit moves people to live for the good of others according to God's plan, one will find an environment which resembles the front porch of heaven—"On earth as it is in heaven!"



Hutterites share a common ancestry with the Mennonites and Amish and as would logically follow, share many of the same beliefs and doctrine. Hutterites differ in one major aspect: they believe in sharing their possessions in common as demonstrated by Christ and His Apostles and as later further refined and described in the Book of Acts.

Christ commanded us to love one another, and Hutterites believe that living together is a wonderful and unique expression of love for their fellow man.

What's the history of these unfamiliar, unique people living throughout the prairies in southern Canada and the northern states in the USA? If you're looking for answers to these and other questions, visit www.hutterites.org

Picture & text from www.hutterites.org.



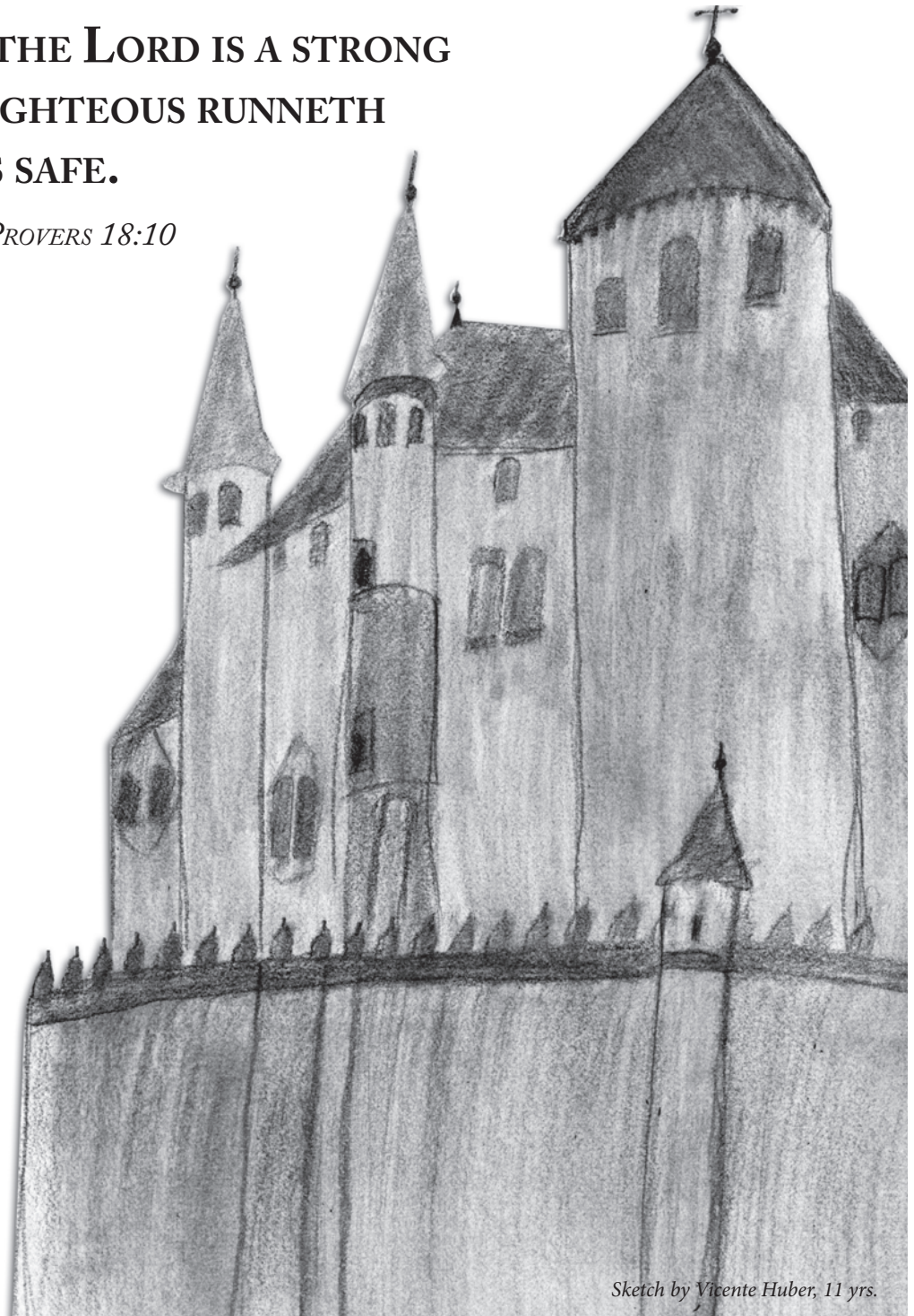
Proverbs Illustrated

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

Your ideas are best; but if you want a starter, try Proverbs 28:13. I see a man with a freshly dug hole throwing his sins in while he’s looking behind him to see that nobody is watching. And somebody could be peeping at him from behind a tree.

**THE NAME OF THE LORD IS A STRONG
TOWER: THE RIGHTEOUS RUNNETH
INTO IT, AND IS SAFE.**

– *PROVERBS 18:10*



Sketch by Vicente Huber, 11 yrs.



On the War Front: In Bolivia

the story of Don Elvio Ruíz, as told by Rachel Yoder

I, Don Elvio, was born on the Candelaria Ranch near Concepción, Bolivia. My mom worked on the ranch which was owned by my father's brother. I was born May 24, 1953 and lived on the ranch till I was eight years old.

In 1961 the government passed a law to liberate the slaves; they then had to leave the ranches. The government gave each family some property which is how the community of Candelaria got started.

At 10 years old, I went to Cochabamba to work. The communities that had just been liberated and given this land had to work very hard. They had to plant chacos, yucca, and bananas. A lot of these people did not have a whole lot to eat so my mom sent me to Cochabamba to work for a lady who had been through the village looking for people to work for her, almost like slaves.

I did not like it there because the climate was very different. Also the food was more spicy and there were more vegetables which I was not used to. I liked just plain rice with maybe a little onion.

When I was 11, I came back to Santa Cruz to work for the mother of the lady who had employed me in Cochabamba and was there until I was 19. These people raised me and paid for my schooling. They lived right in the center of the city, about a block and a half from the plaza. The lady, Ramona, was a Bolivian with a German

father; she was like a second mother to me. Her son had a hardware store where I would work. They were very, very Catholic and trained me in the Catholic ways which I accepted. I was baptized into the Catholic religion and confirmed when I was 30 years old.

While working at the hardware store, I met Sonya. She had come to live with a neighbor lady. In 1978 we were married in a civil wedding.

In 1979, Sonya and I went to visit my mother. We already had our first son Elvio, Jr. Times were very hard in the city so we stayed in Concepción. After Melca was born, I wanted to baptize both children into the Catholic religion but I was not allowed to have them baptized until I was married by their church. So we were then married by the Catholic Church.

In 1981, I started working in the Catholic Church as a helper to the sawmill operator but I wanted other work, so I started studying carpentry under the Catholic schools. One teacher was a German who had come as a volunteer and the other one was the architect of the church building. This was when they started the restoration of the cathedral.

On August 15, 1984, they had the dedication of the restored church. All the labor volunteers then went back to their own countries and the Catholic students became



Don Elvio Ruíz in front of his picture while working on cathedral renovations.



Bell & Clock Tower at restored cathedral.

the master carpenters. At this point, I started reaching further into the communities surrounding Concepción for work. I worked on carvings for doors and windows of Catholic churches. The church provided housing for me in town. They also helped me educate my children. I worked about 33 years for the Catholics. Sonya was a cook for the boarding school.

The Catholic priests now knew that Sonya and I were seeking God elsewhere and they gave their blessing to us.

We were having a lot of trouble with our son, Mario, with drug addiction and alcoholism. So Sonya wanted to get out of town. Nelson and others from *Iglesia Biblica Christiana* invited him to attend their church. Mario would go but would always return home without a change of heart.

One Thursday he left with one of the *motos* loaded with plantains and was gone all weekend. When he showed up, his face was all bloodied. I spoke to Mario and told him, “You are not going anywhere. Maybe these (*Christian*) people actually want to help you.”

But he would not do it. I told him, “You have to admit your addictions and reach out to get help. You have to recognize what you actually are. You need to work if you want something to eat.” That happened on a Tuesday so I told him, “Those people have church on Wednesday. I want you to go. I think maybe they can help you.”

He left and was gone for a long time. We were worried when it got late. After a long time, Nelson came by with the truck and Mario got off. He was very content and gave me a hug. Mario asked forgiveness from me and his mother. He told me, “I received the Lord. I received Jesus.”

He cried and hugged me. I told him, “I forgive you and I expect you to be a different man now. There were times when I failed you as a father and I want to ask your forgiveness.”

He kept going to the church services. One Sunday Sonya went with him. She said she wanted to hear the Word. A while later she came home and told me, “I received the Lord with the help of *Tía Becky*” (Jewel Landis).

I said, “That is good,” but not much more. One day she asked me to go along to church but I said, “No one is going to obligate me to go to church.”

That went on for a couple months. One Sunday morning I got up and got ready like I used to get ready for Mass. Sonya asked me where I was going and I said I was going to church. I went that Sunday and everyone gave me a good welcome. I paid attention to what they were saying and what they were reading from the Word. Phil became my friend and he always encouraged me. He said, “I hope you do not mind if I call you ‘Dad.’ Dad, you need to receive the Lord. You need to accept Christ as your Savior.”

I told him, “I appreciate it. I do not mind if you call me Dad, but I do not feel it is time yet.”

It just so happened that over that time Phil’s father-in-law came to visit and came for lunch.

I stepped outside and asked Phil and Ed to come with me. I had just read the passage of the Ethiopian eunuch and I asked Brother Ed, “What do I need to do to be accepted?”

He asked me, “Do you believe in Jesus Christ?”

I said, “Yes.” Then we prayed and I received Christ. I began to make changes in my life and in my attitudes. Before, I liked the parties and I

liked to drink. After I gave my heart to Jesus, I was not so attached to drink and cigars; I kept walking away from them.

We still had our struggles and Mario still had a lot of struggles and at times he would fall. But now we had the Word of God; we had something to offer him. We had a way to reach out to him and try to lift him up. But Mario was still a weight on us.

Mario went to another place and got a lot of good help and made a lot of improvements. But we still pray for him a lot because he could still fall and go back to things he had been doing.

When I was still working at the Catholic Church, a lady who worked there gave me a hard time. For a while I was not sure they were going to allow me to retire and receive all my pay. Sonya and I decided we were going to



Bird's-eye view of cathedral.

leave it in God's hands. It is God who has to see justice through, who is right and who is wrong. I do not need to get into a fight with them to make them do what is right. Thanks to the Catholics, I had a house all those years in which to raise my family and was able to give the children an education. Even today, many of those Catholic people are still my friends.

In the end, God worked it out. They allowed me to retire and also paid me what they owed me. Today I am still learning new things and want to be around people who know the Word of God.

We asked Mario, "How did people know you had become a Christian?"

Mario answered, "People see what you do." Christians are a light when they are around other people. You are not really a light when you are just out here where there are trees and cows! People see the change in your life.

They would make fun of me and say, "Ah, he is an evangelical now." One nun said to me, "So you changed religions, huh? How is this?"

So I told her, "Mother, I have a question for you, 'Is Jesus religion?'" He is not a religion. I am following Him and no one else. So I do not see it as a change of religion. I have just taken another step and I am now more a follower of Him!

Some say, "You now have flipped and gone to a different religion."

I say, "Who says Jesus Christ is a religion?" That always brings the discussion to an end. Catholics do

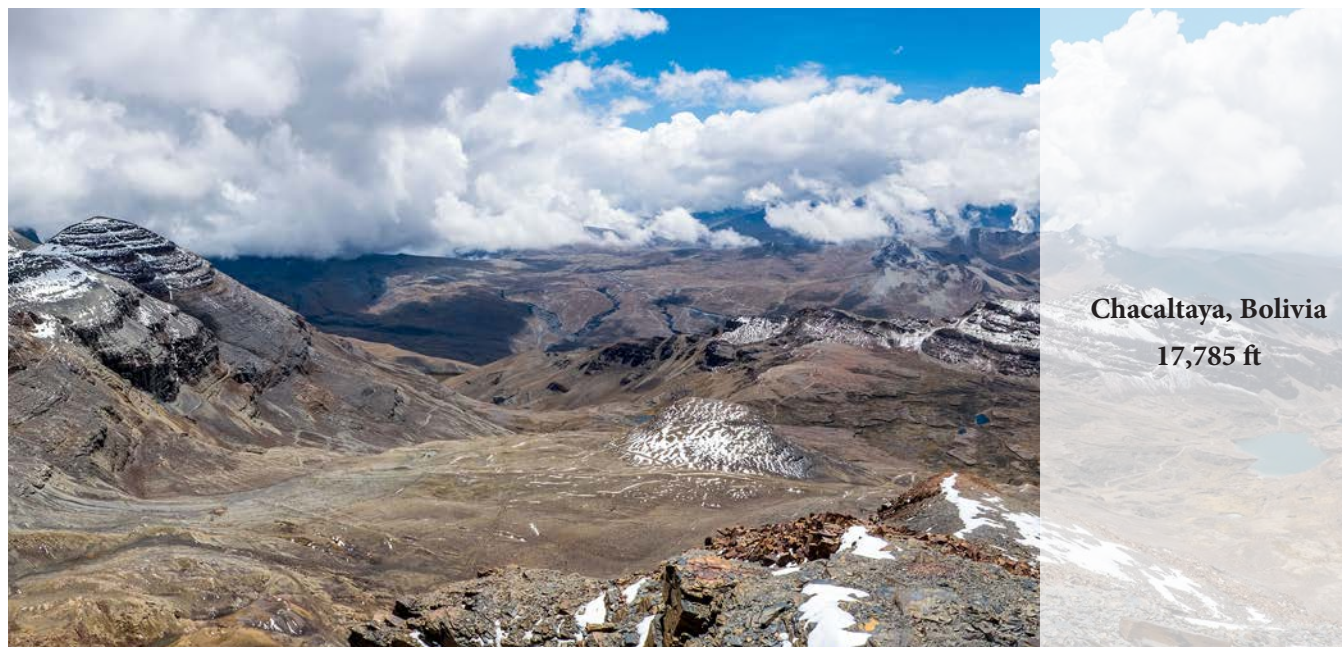
not know what to say. The current bishop and priests are more open to talking about Jesus than some of the previous ones had been.

Catholics in general are free to talk about the Bible. But their talk and the way they live does not connect. This is a big problem with the Catholics. We used to go to Mass and then come away and go directly to a party where we did things Jesus would not want us to do. I do not go out of my way to confront others, but my friendship with them has changed. It seems as if something is holding them back from a commitment to God. But I let them with God; I do not try to judge them.

Catholics do some good things—they help people in need with housing, education, water pumps in the communities, etc. We have learned to be patient because God does not always answer us right away. But in the end, He gives us exactly what we need.

I struggled for a long time with getting baptized as a believer, since I did remember my baptism as a boy and the promises I made to the church then. Finally, I did decide to get baptized upon my confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

R.Y. | *East Dublin, GA*



Chacaltaya, Bolivia
17,785 ft

On the War Front: In North Dakota

by Carrie Vandal

I was born in 1967 and raised in Berlin, Germany. My parents were an American army officer and a German lady, both atheists. My mother embraced the teachings of the hippie and feminist movements. This led to my parents' divorce when I was 11 years old. My dad returned to the US. It left me with much pain and grief to cope with. During my high school years I found numerous ways to escape the hardness of life. Drugs and partying provided a ready escape from those feelings of hurt, hopelessness and fear.

During those difficult years I contemplated why I even existed and what might be the point of my life. It's hard to answer those questions when you believe humans have evolved by chance. I continued to make poor choices for myself. In 1994 I moved from Berlin to Colorado in order to attend college, but I dropped out a year later.

I moved to Spokane, Washington, to be employed on a horse farm. Here I first met some people who believed that Jesus is Lord. I was invited to attend Friday night meetings for young adults. This was at a Protestant Evangelical church. The acceptance and love of this group were a stronger draw towards Christ than any of the sermons. I could see these people had something real in their lives. They had the joy and peace and hope that I was starving for.

My first ever prayer was this: "God, if you are really out there, please show me. I am scared and I need to know if you are real." At the time I was considering suicide.

God answered my prayer and touched my life. In His unfathomable mercy, God pulled me out of the miry pit and placed my feet upon the Rock. I received His gift of faith and was saved. Hallelujah! How good it felt to be washed clean and forgiven!

The Lord used what I had been through by placing me into a home for troubled girls. I was employed there for five years and was able to heal, learn and encourage others.

In 2002 I married Matthew Vandal. We live in rural North Dakota now and I am a keeper at home. We home-school our three children.

A trend towards nationalism developed in our circle of friends. Many were ready to arm themselves in order to fight for their rights. We found ourselves at odds with them. We could not reconcile this fear, patriotism, and willingness to kill another with the teachings of our Lord. While we were searching for like-minded believers, the Lord brought about an invitation to a Mennonite church.

In 2013 we started visiting this Mennonite church and felt welcomed and accepted there. In studying books from Mennonite and Anabaptist circles, my eyes were opened to the reality of the two kingdoms. I feel that at this point I became a true follower of Christ. We relocated to be part of this Mennonite community in Mylo, North Dakota.

C.V. | Mylo, North Dakota



The Lone Ranger

adapted from a sermon by Austin Hege

A follower of Jesus who does not meet with other believers is like:

- a student who will not go to school.
- a soldier who will not join the army.
- a citizen who has no country.
- a salesman who has no customers.
- a seaman on a ship without a crew.
- a businessman on a deserted island.

- an author without readers.
- a football player without a team.
- a politician who is a hermit.
- a scientist who does not share his findings.
- a bee without a hive.
- a doctor without any patients.

Such is the man that claims to be a Christian but will not attend church. — Author unknown

Goals for Anabaptist Family Life

by Steven Brubaker

Since Steven and Cynthia Brubaker's children have grown up, Steven and Cynthia sat down and consciously made a list of things they would like to see for their grandchildren. AV thinks these things are worthy of consideration for any God-fearing family who wants to "train up a child in the way he should go."

What We Want for Our Grandchildren

- For them to be read to regularly and broadly (*Bible to Bruchko*)
- Toys that inspire creativity and imagination (*Lego, blocks, race tracks, doll babies, kites, rockets*)
- Opportunities and resources for creative play (*spaces, time, stuff – sandbox, chalkboard*)
- Unquestioned attendance at (*all*) church gatherings
- Daily meal times as an entire family (*at least once a day*)
- Daily times of prayer, Bible reading, and reflection
- Lots of conversation
- Memorable times as an extended family at Christmas, Thanksgiving, and birthdays
- Family service projects including interaction with neighbors
- Authentic ministry involvement (*e.g., children's clubs, prisons, inner city, soup kitchen*)
- Regular chores (*real work, not contrived*)
- Periodic attendance as a family at museums, parks, concerts, cultural events, and broader church events
- A school with a positive Christian culture
- Opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument
- A wide range (*number and type*) of teachers, ministers, youth leaders, and mentors that invest in their lives
- Adult quality learning equipment (*sewing machines, potter's wheel, welder, woodworking, telescope, microscope, etc*).
- Cross-cultural immersion experiences
- Meaningful and positive friendships, a best friend or so (*not parents*)
- Tightly controlled and limited use of computers, video players, and Internet

As outlined by Steven Brubaker at the 2018 Men's Seminar, Hartwell, Georgia.



ACCORDING TO THE KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION CITING A REPORT FROM THE CDC, CHILDREN AGES 8-10 SPEND ALMOST 6 HRS. PER DAY IN FRONT OF A SCREEN USING ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA.

THIS YOUNG FELLOW IS ENGAGED IN THE REAL WORLD AROUND HIM, EXPLORING CHEMICAL REACTIONS IN A HOME GROWN "LAB".

EXPLORE . LEARN . GROW

An Anabaptist Weight-Control Plan

by Menno Knight

**“I discipline my body and bring it into subjection.”
– I Corinthians 9:27**

Obesity is a big problem in America. Skipping all the nice verbiage that masks the real condition of an excess of superfluous weight, we are talking about fat people. One can go to town on a hot summer day with his eyes half closed and the problem is obvious. Many people are overweight.

Obesity is not only in the hedonistic world around us. I had a close friend who was short and stocky by nature ... and overweight. I talked to him about it and he confided to me that he would feel better if he lost some weight, but he never did. One day he fell over dead with a massive heart attack.

Now I think the people of God should be concerned about more than just falling over dead with a heart attack and the practical effects of overeating—related health problems, sluggishness, poverty, and poor appearance. They should be concerned about what God thinks of a fat person.

Being overweight should not be a problem for the people of God because the Bible provides a sure-fire way to control your weight. It is simple, cost-effective, and God-pleasing. It works.

One does not need to go to the university or read books about the cause of getting fat. You do not need to study which foods may cause a premature death ten years from now or to attend seminars and health clubs on how to lose weight. Common sense should tell us that it is not only what one eats that makes people fat; it is also how much one eats that does the trick.

People do not get fat on well water. When Anabaptists went to prison and the jailers put them on bread and water, they became weak and thin. Some starved to death.

People get fat because they eat more food than the body needs. When one habitually eats more food than he needs, the Bible calls it gluttony. Proverbs gives stern

warnings about the practical effects of overeating. **“Put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite” (Proverbs 23:2).** Now this proverb is not advocating suicide, but it is encouraging one to control how much he eats.

The solution to the problem of obesity is simple. Stop overeating. This takes self-discipline. Stop frequenting all-you-can-eat buffets where you feel obligated to “get your money’s worth” or you feel free to indulge. Stop snacking between meals. Eat slowly; chew your food well instead of “wolfing it down.” Do not take seconds. Skip a meal. Fast occasionally for a day.

This brings us to the next aspect of God’s sure-fire weight-control plan. It’s cost-effective. You don’t need to buy expensive books. You don’t need to see a doctor. You don’t need to purchase any expensive machines or set up a work room. You don’t need to purchase costly health foods. None of that. All you need is a good bathroom scale and use it every day. If it electronically records the weight for the day, that is helpful.

If you want to commit to a weight-control plan that does it God’s way, here is the next step. Weigh yourself every day at the same time, preferably first thing in the morning. When one goes to the doctor’s office, the nurse’s aid weighs you first thing. So it should be no big deal to weigh yourself in your private closet and it won’t cost you anything.

Now it gets a little harder. Write down your weight every day. If you are overweight for your height and build—there are charts available for guidance—set yourself a goal of five to ten pounds less than your present weight. Then begin cutting back on how much you eat. When you have maintained your new weight goal for a week, drop the weight goal again by five or ten pounds and keep it there for a week. Keep doing this until you have reached a body weight that is pleasing to God, your fellowman, and yourself.



“Get Your Money’s Worth”

Eat meals with a variety of wholesome foods. Eat some asparagus, some spinach, some collard greens, some onions, and some radishes, some eggs, some dairy, and some meat—do not eat the whole chicken in one meal. Proverbs 23:20-21 gives this advice: “**Hear my son ... Do not mix with winebibbers, or with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty.**”

Do not eat too much of any one thing. Eat a little of many different kinds of food. You do not need to worry about the effects of eating small amounts of most any food. I Timothy 4:3-5 gives some guidance on this: “[**Some people command] one to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**” But if you discover, by trial and error, that a small amount of one food, such as ice cream, makes you sick, do not insist on eating ice cream. Generally, small amounts of most foods will not make you sick.

On the other side of the balance scales, eating too much of most anything can make you sick, including sugar, salt, and honey. Proverbs 25:27 tells us: “**It is not good to eat much honey.**” The principle involved is that too much of even a good thing is not good for your body.

Again, one should come back to **how much** food one is eating rather than only considering **what** one is eating. Everyone should know that a car that travels 100 miles takes more fuel than a car that travels only 10 miles. Likewise, a person who does a lot of physical work outdoors on a cold day demands more oatmeal and eggs than a person who stays indoors and works at his desk. If you would do things God’s way, a person should adjust how much he eats to match his physical activity.

The scales will tell you if you are eating more than your body needs.

So if you are determined to control your weight in order to please God, you have guidance in the Scripture. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 6:20, “**For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.**” Again he wrote in I Corinthians 9:25-27, “**Everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things ... I run thus: not with uncertainty. I fight not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection.**”

Is God pleased with your body weight? Do you glorify God in your body and in your spirit? Romans 13:14 tells us to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and not to think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

What do the scales tell you? There is a way for the scales to go down and it lies in your self-control.

Now I am sure there will be some naysayers to God’s weight-control program who will argue that they are genetically programmed to be fat. Others believe they are medically destined to be overweight. Other “excuses” may surface for why some do not bring their bodies into subjection.

A few cases for Christians being fat may be valid. If so, they will need to work that out with God and His Word. But the majority of fat people are without excuse. However, there is a way out of their uncontrolled overeating. If they see the error of their way and repent, God can give them a new heart and a new body—a body that is in subjection to their will so that when the last trumpet sounds and they leave this earthly body, they will not be disqualified from the prize of winning a heavenly body (I Corinthians 9:27).



A report released in October 2017 by the CDC indicates that almost 40 percent of American adults and nearly 20 percent of adolescents are obese. Obesity is medically defined as having a body mass index of more than 30.

One in five adolescents, ages 12–19; one in five children, ages 6–11, and one in ten preschoolers, ages 2–5 are considered obese, not just overweight.

These are the highest rates ever recorded for the United States.

—from an NBC News report by Dr. Gussone



The Practical Side

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

— Colossians 3:17

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

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

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

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



The Practical Side: Work Boots Required

The Practical Side: The Rest of the Story

What really happened in conclusion to stories from previous issues.

Swear Not

by Kenny C. Clearly



The points made by Lee Gal Assistant and Amoot Point (AV08 page 39) hinge on the definition of perjury. In older dictionaries perjury was "lying under oath." Today it seems to have a broader meaning.

The main point in our discussion is what Jesus said in Matthew 5:37. "Just say, 'yes' or 'no.' Anything else you say comes from evil." Perjury, swearing, even affirming goes beyond this. I have been a witness and also a defendant in court. When asked to swear, I said, "I affirm with 'yes.' I will speak the truth."

her son. I told her, "I was really glad your son took care of the deer and put it out of its misery. It was so sad that someone shot it in the first place, but I can understand why the man hadn't stuck around because of all the hunting violations."

The attendant replied, "There are a lot of hunters in this part of the state who carry loaded guns in their trucks all the time."

I thought her comment a little odd, but didn't think more about it until a few days later. That's when I learned that the man who had initially shot the deer was her son!

Time Wasted

by Always Rezonable



This was the clincher that ended the controversy over the value of going to church.

"I've been married for thirty years. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today.

"Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

Roadkill

by A. Bie Stander



I was in the doctor's office for a blood test. I mentioned to the attendant that I thought I'd seen her cross the bridge near my home. She said, "Oh, so you're the one who moved in there!"

We talked a bit more and I learned that the fellow who had shot the deer with the pistol and put it out of its misery was

Down On Christ Mass

by Up von Conshuns



I am trying to sort through the practical implications of not “keeping Christmas” in a world that does. How should I respond when someone greets me with a cheery, “Merry Christmas?” Or, “Did you

have a good Christmas?”

I think I am muddling through a proper response to such questions as much as anyone. I pray for wisdom and the courage to speak when there is openness and opportunity; the Holy Spirit can bring conviction as He chooses. There is plenty of ‘religion’ wherever we look these days—but there are people seeking truth and authenticity. They know enough of the Bible, and are exposed to enough information that they suspect that a lot of what is called ‘Christianity’ today is not the real deal.

Some people fear that if we [Anabaptists] are not ‘culturally relevant’ and are too ‘different’ and ‘out-of-sync,’ seekers will avoid us. I find the opposite to be true. Those who are hungering for truth have little patience for compromise or leaven. The more authentic and set apart we are, the more they are drawn to us. God’s way works, although it may seem ‘foolishness’ to us.

Instead of trying to market the Gospel to people through new and innovative ideas, let’s just aim for 100% obedience to what He has outlined for us. It may seem

old-fashioned, and it may not make sense to us, but it works!

Now there is much to remember about the birth of Christ. In the words of the angels to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night (not mid-winter), “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men.”

Or in the words of Zachariah,
“[That we] might serve Him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before Him
all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:74).

Or in the words of Simeon,
“For my eyes have seen Your salvation
Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:30-32).

But Simeon didn’t stop there. He went on to utter an ominous warning to Mary which is not exactly a call to wild celebration and joy by which to remember the birth of the Christ-child. “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:34-35).

Let us then be constant in remembering the birth of the Christ-child in light of both the suffering and joy He brought to the world. Let us not mix that remembrance with the carnal and evil celebrations of the world at the winter solstice.



The Practical Side: Reader Responses

Reader responses to stories from previous issues.

No Humility

by Manny Doubts



There were a few things that immediately jumped into my mind as I read “Pay Me” in AV 08, page 41.

First, a debtor never dictates terms to a creditor. Saying, “I’ll pay you as soon as I can” is dictating

terms. A better response would be, “I am unable to pay you according to our initial agreement. What would you like me to do about it?”

Second, mentioning a perceived lack of “non-resistance” in another person while reneging on a promise, critiquing clothing, and acting hostile is not wise nor Christ-like.

Third, why does the debtor ask the question, “What is the biblical way of collecting debt from people?” Collecting debt is not the debtor’s responsibility at the moment. That is a question for the creditor to address should he be pricked by the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, I find the overall lack of humility from the writer of this article a bit unsettling.

Apologies Needed

by Recon Cider



“Pay Me” by Wen I. Cann has several problems (AV08 page 41).

First, he “beholdest not the beam that is in his own eye” (Luke 6:41-42). Apparently the debtor did talk to his creditor, but gave no

indication as to how or when he would pay him.

Second, he didn’t follow the procedure of Matthew 18:16 which tells the offended one to take witnesses along when he brings the matter before the offender. Instead, the debtor skipped that step and made it public.

Third, he made an agreement and didn’t fulfill his part. Regardless if the agreement is a signed legal document or a verbal agreement, an honest person will honor it. His word should be as good as his bond. [If he is unable to pay his debt, he should make every effort to satisfy his creditor by coming to a satisfactory plan for payment.]

Fourth, when Mr. Cann’s work slowed down, the rented equipment should have been returned. [This may not have been an option if the agreement covered a fixed time period.] The statutes of God teach that when borrowing something the borrower is to leave a ‘pledge.’ It is a token and reminder to the owner of who borrowed the item and an incentive for the borrower to quickly return the item. (My dad loaned out equipment at no cost and it sometimes came back broken or he had to go get the item if he remembered who borrowed it.)

Fifth, Mr. Cann said he would pay as soon as he had the funds. The debit card removed money from his account. He must know that a debit card does not prevent over-withdrawals and like a credit card they must be paid. There also may be penalties for over-withdrawals. Mr. Cann should establish lines of credit with the institution if he is going to do business in this way.

Sixth, everyone needs to understand that outward appearance can be a testimony for Christ or against Christ. Man looks on the outward appearance and makes judgments by that (I Samuel 16:7). The LORD knows the heart. There is a difference between being religious and being righteous. The greatest opposition to Christ Jesus came from the religious people of His day.

On the other hand, the “bitter, angry, malicious person” accusation may be true, but it can be self-condemning. Jesus said, “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37). Remember, Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10).

The proper response for Mr. Cann is to go and apologize for not paying as originally agreed. He can explain his hardship and tell of his plan to prevent it from happening again. Romans 13:8 says, “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he who loves another hath fulfilled the law.” Afterward, Mr. Plain Mennonite should apologize for being impatient and wrongfully using the debit card. Salvation by grace means that we go the second mile (Matthew 5:41).

The biblical way of collecting a debt may be to consider it the price of tuition in the school of hard knocks. Can we sincerely pray, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matthew 6:12)?

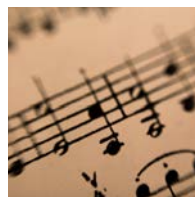
My granddad said, “If people beat you one time, it is their fault. If they beat you a second time, it is your fault.” I questioned that statement until I realized that it wasn’t about forgiveness. It was about trust!

My mother taught me that “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” In business dealings, remember, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it” (Jeremiah 17:9)?



The Great Atonement

by X. Forey Given



In AV06, page 40, I.M. Troubled raised questions about some of the lyrics of our songs and hymns. I agree that some hymn lyrics are not scriptural. However, I’m concerned that I. M. and all of us Anabaptists do not minimize the atonement that was accomplished by the death of Christ on the cross.

I whole-heartedly agree with I.M. when he says, “Wouldn’t have done a bit of good for me to die on Calvary.” However, we should be forever grateful that “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin [a sin offering] for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21), and that “Your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake” (I John 2:12).

Up On Christmas

by Sue Z. Sure



In “Down On Christ Mass” (AV08 page 40) by Up von Conshuns, the writer indicates that one should not celebrate Christmas because it is of pagan origin and is still celebrated in ungodly ways.

I look at it differently and ask myself, “How can I not celebrate Christ’s birth?”

The details of the coming of the Messiah were prophesied hundreds of years before His birth from Numbers through Malachi. Then there seemed to be silence from heaven to the Jews for about 400 years until:

- The angel spoke to Zacharias.
- Elizabeth became pregnant with John.
- Six months later the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary telling her she would bear a son... “the son of the Highest...and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.”
- Mary traveled to Elizabeth. Whereupon baby John “leaped in her womb” and Elizabeth prophesied.
- Mary praised and magnified the Lord.
- At John’s birth Zacharias prophesied.
- An angel told Joseph to marry Mary and not to put her away, “for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”
- God had Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem for Jesus’ birth because it was prophesied hundreds of years before that the King of the Jews would be born in “Bethlehem of Judea.”
- A multitude of heavenly hosts praised God before the shepherds.

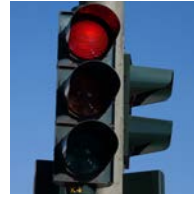
What’s more, there was a special star which wise men from another country saw and followed to Jerusalem. They came asking, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship him.” (Over 600 years prior to this, Daniel had lived in their country and taught the wise men of that former age.)

So how can I not celebrate the fulfillment of hundreds of years of prophesy?

How can I not celebrate such a great event when there was so much celebration and orchestration in heaven over His birth?

Color Symbols

by May Nee Figures



In an effort to show the wrongness of wearing red, it seems that L.E. of Wisconsin has exploited Scripture (AV08 page 7). Some of the referenced scriptures do not mention color, much less the color red. One colorful verse was Isaiah 1:18, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

It seems that the main point of the verse is cleansing from sin for those who are “willing and obedient” (verse 19). Applying it to clothing is a stretch.

If any color is more holy than others, it must be white. Revelation 3:4 says, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.” Those whose names are in the book of life will be clothed in white. Revelation 3:5 says, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” The Pope always wears white, but those who visit him wear black, never white. Why?

If any color should be avoided, it would be black since it is associated with darkness and evil. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). Proverbs 7:9-10 records, “In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.”

Regardless of the color, clothing should cover the body and indicate the gender of the wearer (Deuteronomy 22:5).

We, like Lester Showalter, have seen some wild hair colors. However, some people in Anabaptist circles have also been coloring their hair for years. When gray hair starts showing, it is pulled or colored a youthful color. Jesus said in Matthew 5:36, “Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.” Is dying hair an act of defiance? Jesus said, “Thou canst not make one hair white or black” and people say, “Oh, yes we can” and then do it.

Hating Evil

by Will Denier



Two previous stories, “Taking the Bait” (AV03 page 38) and “Hidden Perils” (AV05 page 42), brought out a real battlefield today that most professing Christians are in. Many, I believe, are already spiritually killed. I’m glad these readers saw the dangers and made sacrifices for the safety of souls.

I truly believe many souls are at stake, even of plain Anabaptist groups. Most Anabaptist groups have seen the dangers of TV, but today we see many Old Order groups falling for the Internet. Watch out! I fear for your souls. Satan is a mastermind. Paul says, “We are not ignorant of his devices” (II Cor. 2:11).

Don’t be ignorant. Both TV and Internet have some good, but much more evil. Satan knows he can’t get sincere Christians aboard an evil ship without sufficient good to draw them. But once they are aboard, temptations abound. Both are enticing and very dangerous.

If we think the Internet is needed for business, perhaps our business is too big! Jesus teaches self-denial: “**Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me’ (Matthew 16:24).** In Luke Jesus made His claim on us stronger yet: “**So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33).**

I’m thankful our brethren had foresight not to accept self-propelled vehicles, telephones, electricity, and computers. It saves us from many snares. What are we willing to sacrifice for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?



The Practical Side: New Stories

Real world situations met by today’s Anabaptists.

Comfortable

by Wel Kohming



When I first met the members of what has become my Mennonite church, I was struck by their love for one another, their gentleness, and sincere kindness. I saw these acts of love as the embodiment of God’s love for me—this stranger who had welcomed them into her tiny home for a cottage meeting.

I was especially impressed with the teens in the group. They answered my questions, did not shy away from an inquisitive 58-year-old woman, and desired to serve God by sacrificing their evening to sing for me.

“My church family”—that is how I see them, that is how they make me feel—has loved me through all sorts of humorous incidents while I learned the Mennonite culture. They prayed for me, loved me, and drove hours to visit me while I was hospitalized after an accidental drug overdose.

I have never felt judged by those in my church. When I made mistakes, they were patiently pointed out to me.

The correction/chastisement that I received as I learned how to walk more closely with God has been tempered by their love. Yes, it has been difficult at times, but what makes the correction palatable is that I know they are doing this out of concern for my spiritual welfare.

I was raised Roman Catholic and became a member of a religious order for the laity. I served in that order for fifteen years. But that was not enough; I wanted a deeper faith! But unless you’ve been raised in the Catholic Church, it may be difficult to understand how entrenched the practices become. I never, ever felt judged because I was Catholic.

As someone still new in the faith, it saddens me to read letters that seem to be so judgmental of other faith traditions. I was drawn to the sweetness of my church’s brotherhood. I could feel it the moment I walked in the door and I WANTED to be part of that. The love of Christ was present.

Our church makes no apologies for its adherence to Bible teachings, but our members are quick to make newcomers feel at home. My son is a US Army officer. He wasn’t sure how he would be received when he visited at Christmas, but I told him he had nothing to worry about.

He was eagerly greeted and then engaged in discussion after church. On the way home, he made the comment, “They were so NICE!” He’ll be back. And it is my prayer that one day, he will make the same decision I made.

I view my son, all the members of our armed forces, and in fact, anyone outside the Anabaptist fold as potential converts. We never know what seeds we are planting or how long it will take for them to germinate. But if we sow bitterness and judgment in with those seeds, they will never, ever grow. Those seeds stand a much better chance of growing roots when fertilized with strong Christian principles and the love of Christ.

Practical Questions:

1. What happens when a visitor comes to your church for the first time?
2. Is it possible to “learn the culture” and join your church?
3. Must a person prove his sincerity before baptism?
4. How long does it take to bring an applicant to baptism?

Easter Amiss

by Kenny C. Clearly



I appreciated “Down on Christ Mass” by “Up von Conshuns” (AV08, page 40). I feel it is good to be aware of historical facts on issues like this so we can, as individuals and brotherhoods, steer clear of pagan practices. Yet we need to

be very careful how we handle this so that what we do to avoid celebrating Christmas is not worse than the original problem. In Galatians 5:20 we find two words (dissensions, factions) that mean separating ourselves into small groups. I feel it is important to address issues like paganism in our celebrations, but we must be considerate of one another so we do not cause a split.

In that spirit, I would like to point out that Easter, as well as Christmas, began as a pagan celebration.

“Easter” existed hundreds of years before Christ. Sunrise services, bunnies, eggs, and other things were used to worship the fertility goddess *Eastre*. Debauchery and immorality went with these festivals. Everything in the festival signified new life, including celebrating it close to the first day of spring. These pagan rites made it very convenient to bring Christ into this picture since He also depicts new life.

Other inaccurate information concerning Easter is the timing between Good Friday and Sunday morning. In Matthew 12:38-40 Jesus said, “As **Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**” Three days and three nights taken literally would be 72 hours. Friday evening to Sunday morning is about 36 hours.

In Exodus 12:14-16, Leviticus 23:6-8, and Numbers 28:16-18 we read that the day after the Passover was a Sabbath or a “high day.” In John 19:31 it says that those bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. In this same verse, John specifically mentioned that it was a “high day” or the annual [special] Sabbath. In Mark 16:1, Mark tells us when the Sabbath was past (this would have been the special Sabbath), the women bought spices to anoint him. Mark 16:2 says the women went to the tomb “very early in the morning on the first day of the week,” just after sunrise. This would have been the morning after the weekly Sabbath as it was very unlikely they bought spices before sunrise.

So if the Passover (Last Supper) was on Tuesday evening and Jesus was crucified on Wednesday morning we could have the following sequence. Jesus was put in the grave on Wednesday before sunset, Thursday is the annual Sabbath, Friday morning the women go to buy spices to anoint Jesus, Saturday was the weekly Sabbath, and the next morning, the first day of the week, the women found that Jesus had risen. So if we have Jesus put in the grave Wednesday evening—he probably was not in the grave Saturday night—that has him in the grave 72 hours or three days and three nights exactly as he told the Jews he would be in Matthew 12:38-40.

So where should we be in this picture? If the New Testament made a commandment of keeping holidays, it would seem like an important point to celebrate the resurrection, but since it does not give us a specific command, we feel it is good to have a day to reflect on the birth of Christ or his crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, or Pentecost, and it can be any day of the year. Hopefully, this historical information can help us that we can more and more reflect on Christ and steer clear of pagan practices.

Practical Questions:

1. Why could not the high day in John’s gospel have been the one referred to in Exodus 12:14-16; Leviticus 23:6-7; and Numbers 28:16-18?
2. How many “high days” were in a Jewish year?
3. What do you celebrate at your church when you get together on the first day of every week?

The 2018 Anabaptist Identity Conference

AV Staff Report

The 13th Anabaptist Identity Conference was held March 15-17, 2018 at the Mt. Hope Sale Barn near Millersburg, Ohio.

The front page of the program states the purpose of the yearly conference. “The birth of the Anabaptist Identity Conference was to awaken the conscience and arrest the alarming desertion of our people from radical Christianity.” The front page of the program also raises three questions: Who are we? Where have we come from? Where are we going?

We will attempt to classify the different talks at the conference as answering one of these three questions. This is an arbitrary classification as the talks branched out in many directions and some speakers strayed from their assigned topics.

Who are we?

- “The Apocrypha: Separating Fact from Myth” by David Bercot
- “The Value of Community: Jesus is Coming Soon” by Jerry D. Miller
- “Quest for Piety and Obedience: Contending for the Faith in our Day” by Donnie Brechbill
- “Experiences of Non-Resistant Christians in the American Revolution” by John L. Ruth
- “Why Do Most Anabaptists Not Allow Divorce and Remarriage?” by John D. Martin

Where have we come from?

- “Quest for Piety and Obedience: The History of the River Brethren” by Donnie Brechbill
- “The Northern Anabaptist Experience in Civil War” by Andrew Ste. Marie
- “The Southern Anabaptist Experience in Civil War” by Andrew Ste. Marie
- “The Anabaptist Voting Block: Mennonites, the Polls, and the Civil War” by Andrew Ste. Marie
- “Anabaptists in World War I: Setting the Stage in a War to End all Wars” by Chester Weaver
- “Anabaptists in World War I: Weathering the Storm’s Ferocity” by Chester Weaver

Where are we going?

- “Christendom’s Sword and the Ideal Resistance: An Offensive Strategy” by John D. Martin
- “The Mark of the Beast: What to Be Watching For” by David Bercot
- “What You Need to Know About Jehovah’s Witnesses: From Kingdom Halls to Pennsylvania Dutch” by David Bercot
- “The Mystery of the Mark: Off-grid ponderings, Ezekiel Nine, and Hedge Preachers” by Peter Hoover
- “The Mystery of the Mark: The Excitement, Cost, Triumph, and Reward of Tau” by Peter Hoover

Each presentation was followed by a ten to fifteen-minute question-and-answer period. Several times the discussion period had to be shut down so the next presentation could happen. In addition, a panel made up of the conference speakers answered written questions submitted by the audience.

Over 600 people attended the 2018 conference, representing twenty-seven different states as well as Canada and Australia. One of the unique features of the conference is the varied identities of the attendees and the opportunity to meet face-to-face. All kinds of different conservative Anabaptist people attend, including the German Baptist people and Old Order Amish. On the other side of the spectrum some more liberal Mennonite academics regularly attend, including a reporter for the *Mennonite World Review*.

The conference hosted a number of book tables by various individuals. Books referred to by the conference speakers, as well as many other Anabaptist resources, could be purchased on-site. In addition, various CD’s and recordings of the conference were available for order or purchase. Anyone interested can still order the conference recordings through Victory Music Services. Simply call Laverne Yoder at 443-480-1489.



Lord willing, next year’s conference is planned for the Centerville, Michigan area (southern Michigan). Hope to see you there.



Upcoming 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.

The Christian Hymnary Hymn Conference

June 1 - 3, 2018

Topics: An inspiring weekend of hymn singing, hymn messages & lots of good fellowship!

Location: Roxbury Holiness Camp, Roxbury, PA

Registration: There are no registration fees to attend. Expenses are covered by free-will offerings; please come prepared to share. Your registration is appreciated. You may do so by calling (941) 822-5315 and leaving us your name, phone number, how many will be in your party and where you are from.

Lodging: To book a cabin, motel room, RV space or to tent, please call Roberta at (717) 530-3693.

Contact: Nathan Overholt at (941) 954-2399 or via email at hsofgrace6550@yahoo.com.



Circulation & Financial Statements

Anabaptist Voice thanks each of you for your prayers and continuing financial support. We are planning for a local face-to-face meeting in the near future where we will consider our organizational arrangements and the expansion of our mailing list.

Anabaptist Voice welcomes any thoughts you have on these matters or on other matters related to the work.

Please send all checks and subscription matters to:

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Income & Expense Report

January thru March 2018

January 2018 Beginning Balance \$9,600.65

Income

Donations for Issue #8 \$5,767.29

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Total Income \$7,695.21

Expenses

Handling & Packaging \$619.00

Postage \$2,357.21

Printing \$4,719.00

Total Expense \$7,695.21

Donations for Issue #9 \$5,721.71

March 2018 Ending Balance \$15,322.36

Issue #6 - Actual Numbers

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Donations for Issue #6: \$1,249

Local Support Donations: \$8,731

Issue #7 - Actual Numbers

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

Donations for Issue #7: \$6,353

Local Support Donations: \$4,018

Issue #8 - Actual Numbers

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

Donations for Issue #8: \$5,767

Local Support Donations: \$1,928

Issue #9 - Estimated Numbers

Print Qty: 4,600 | Print & Postage Cost: \$8,000

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

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“Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Luke 12:27

