

The Heartbeat of 
The Remnant

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A ministry of
The Berean Voice 



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“The Berean Voice” is an outreach ministry of Faith Christian Fellowship, a church located in Holmes County, Ohio. It is operated by a board of directors, which ultimately answers to the elders of the church.

As a non-profit ministry, we desire to work with the Lord, for without Him we can do nothing. We are trusting God to provide for the ongoing work of this magazine and our other outreach projects through the free-will offerings of His people. Would you join us in prayer for this work and ongoing need?

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~ The Berean Voice Board

It is our goal that the content of this magazine bring honor and glory to God. All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. In the event of discovering any errors in content or detail, please count it to our oversight and kindly bring it to our attention.

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Another year has come and gone, with a new year stretched out before us. Let's take time to pause and consider what the Lord has done for us, giving Him the thanks due unto His Name. Let's also earnestly seek His guidance and grace for the coming year.

It is interesting to observe how those around us respond to this annual change. One local sign read, "We hope all your New Year's resolutions come true." Come true? Doesn't that sound as though they view resolutions as some sort of "making a wish before blowing out candles on a birthday cake"? An online advertisement read something like this, "Make your New Year's resolutions a reality...", by using their proffer of a special deal on financial credit. With all this hype each year regarding resolutions, I wonder what our Lord thinks. Most likely the outcome would be better if we made *commitments* based upon the Bible's teaching, rather than making *resolutions* based upon the desires and opinions of ourselves or others.

Here's a word from one of our board members:

Happy or Blessed New Year

In the last few weeks, we have probably been wished "Happy New Year" many times. Is it our hope to be happy in all the experiences of this coming year? Probably not. However, it is our hope to be content and blessed knowing that our Father which art in Heaven is in charge of all things concerning us.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose. -Romans 8:28

To have a blessed year, we must first break it into its smaller pieces, for this is the way it comes to us. Minutes, hours, days, weeks, and months. These are the building blocks of the year.

The little situations of everyday life, and our responses to them, build our relationships and attitudes for better or for worse. Our caring looks, words, and decisions, all add up to make a blessed moment. While on the other hand, uncaring looks, words and decisions all add up to make the opposite.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him,

and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. -Proverbs 3:5-7

HAVE A BLESSED NEW YEAR [moment by moment]

~Brother Joe Tindall

A Need for Godly Writers

From time to time, we run a bit dry on our supply of articles for certain sections of the magazine. These include articles for the children, for the youth, and for the sisters. We are also looking for personal testimonies of lives that have been changed by God. If God is prompting you to write as a blessing for others, please contact us for our specific writer's requirements and article guidelines. One main point is that all our material is free for passing on and for making copies as long as no changes are made to the published edition. We ask that all writers agree with this policy if they wish to write for us.

If you desire to write but are unsure how to start, feel free to contact us for pointers and tips for beginning writers. There is material we recommend that will help with this. Also, articles do not need to be perfect, since we edit all articles for grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation. We gladly work with new writers to help them grow in these areas. Then once each article is edited, we send it back to the writer to ensure they are okay with the revised edition prior to publishing it. It is our goal to encourage and help this ability which seems to be declining in our day.

Discipleship Column

With this printing of the magazine we are starting a new column on Discipleship. Over the last number of issues, we have written some about our burden that churches would consider helping their own people instead of sending them away to counseling centers. We have also shared our view that a Discipleship Model of helping people is more in line with the teachings of Scripture than the commonly understood perspective of a Counseling Model.

As we have written about these matters, we have received numerous requests for more specific teaching on this topic. After discussing these requests, we decided that (as much as possible) we would try to have a column, which is focused on these matters, in each issue.

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Freemen in Bondage

Rick Hess

The Heartbeat of the Remnant

October/November/December 2009

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Masada—Herod's Palace

In April 1992, an angry resident of Sanilac County, Michigan, wrote a letter to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. He was announcing his rejection of the “Corporate State of Michigan and the United States.” He was denying his citizenship and their authority over him. And, he was expressly revoking his signature on any hunting or fishing licenses that they had asked him to sign, which he viewed as contracts that fraudulently bound him to the government. Three years later this man would become known to the world as Terry Nichols, friend and accomplice of Timothy McVeigh, the man who bombed the Oklahoma City Federal Building.

These men subscribe to a very unique set of beliefs. Their system of beliefs arose in the 1970s, out of the anti-establishment movement, developing more fully in the 1980s into anti-government movements. There are various groups within this movement with varying degrees of involvement in anti-governmental actions, from vigilante groups and White Supremacist groups, to groups that profess to be Christian (some closely paralleling Anabaptists in certain ways), as well as Islamic and pseudo-Jewish groups. Their doctrines are promoted by tracts, vigilante courts, seminars, and shortwave radio, as well as Internet “Schools of Common Law”, YouTube videos, and through preaching.

Their tactics vary greatly. Obviously, most of them do not blow up buildings, but in varying degrees they despise and deny the secular government’s right to have authority over them. They believe they are standing for their rights; they are “freedom fighters,” using many tactics against the “great beast” of the U.S. government. Typically, they reject driver’s licenses, mandatory auto insurances, vehicle registrations,

Social Security numbers, birth certificates, marriage licenses, and even the use of ZIP codes! They are known for using all sorts of methods to hinder the government, such as employing fraudulent liens, lawsuits, bogus financial documents, fake auto IDs, misuse of IRS forms, threats to government officials and their families, and various financial scams. Some even occasionally resort to armed standoffs with law enforcement. They call themselves by different names: Sovereign Citizens, The Posse, Ambassadors of Heaven, or most often... Freemen. They would say they are true patriots, standing for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Some would say that only Yahweh is their authority and Him alone will they obey.

Really, none of these things are altogether new. I’d like to jump back 2,000 years and ask a few questions to stir our memory. Who were the Zealots? Why did they end up not following the Lord Jesus Christ? Why did they, for the most part, miss the salvation that God had sent for them?

Zealots

The Zealots were a fanatical right-wing sect who were alive and well when Jesus was teaching and preaching in Israel. They were a political party of the Jews who (along with many others) despised the Roman dominion over them. They were very nationalistic, militantly opposing the Roman government. Their name means “Jealous” or “Zealous” in the Aramaic language. They were self-professed followers of Levi and Simeon (who avenged their sister’s rape upon Shechem), Phinehas (who speared a Jewish man and Moabitish woman for their fornication, thus stopping the plague in the camp), and Elijah (who slew the 850 prophets of Baal and Ashteroth).



Masada—Mtn. Island Fortress

Masada, pictured above, was a Zealot fort near the Dead Sea. The name Masada comes from a Hebrew word meaning “stronghold.” Are we defending strongholds upon false conceptions of God, strongholds that will some day fall just like Masada did?

They believed they were truly devoted to God and His laws alone. Though they held some similar views with the Pharisees, they were distinctly different on a few points. Zealots felt it was treason against God to pay tribute to Rome, since God alone was Israel’s King. They were willing to use any method of guerilla warfare to fight for Jewish independence. Although they were His contemporaries, sadly, most of them never accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, nor their God-sent Messiah!

Their movement eventually degenerated into a band of cut-throats called Sicarii (dagger-men, in Latin). Their increased fanaticism provoked the Jewish-Roman war of the first century. In 66 A.D., they attempted to take full control of Jerusalem. This led to the horrible siege and destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus in 70 A.D. This was what Jesus had warned would come to pass (see Matthew 24), before he was crucified. The last Zealot stronghold was the highly fortified Masada, which fell to the Romans in 73 A.D. when some 900 Zealots committed mass suicide, rather than surrender to the Roman authorities.

Since the Zealots were so desirous to serve God, to know and do His will, why did they miss becoming followers of the only true Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ?

The problem was that they had a totally false concept of what true freedom is in the Kingdom of God. Like many other similar movements since that time, this false belief became a mighty stronghold in their lives. They failed to understand that true freedom comes when:

- I am submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- I am submitted to Him in all my ways.
- I am subject to earthly authorities when I am not asked to disobey Christ.

- Like Jesus, I accept suffering for being obedient to the Father, patiently.

When you study Jesus’ teachings, it is not hard to see why the Zealots could not follow Jesus while still in their stronghold of false belief. Consider the following areas where Christ’s teaching contradicts the “Freemen” mentality:

1. Jesus birth, in fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, was at Bethlehem, due to His parent’s *submission* to the Roman census and taxation. -Luke 2:1-6
2. Jesus said: “Blessed are the *meek*”. -Matthew 5:5
3. Jesus said: “Blessed are the *peacemakers*”. -Matthew 5:9
4. He blessed them who *accept persecution patiently*. -Matthew 5:10-12
5. He taught that it was important not only to *accept the authority* of the Roman soldier who asks you to carry his pack for a mile, but to volunteer to take it a second mile! -Matthew 5:41
6. He gave all His followers the calling to “*love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; bless them who spitefully use you and persecute you.*” -Matthew 5:43-48
 - a. Regardless of popular belief, He said that these are the qualifications for being called the children of God! -Matthew 5:45
7. He taught that the things that are truly valuable are not on this earth. -Matthew 6:19-21
8. He gave His followers a formula of how we should respond to every person when He said, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” -Matthew 7:12
9. He told all His followers that if He is truly their Lord, these things will be a part of their lives. “Not everyone that sayeth unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.*” -Matthew 7:21
10. Jesus commended a Roman centurion for his great

faith and contrasted it with the Jews' unbelief.
-Matthew 8:5-13

11. Jesus taught to **flee**, not **resist** persecution. -Matthew 10:22-28
12. The test of true love for Christ is in our willingness to "take up the cross" of submission and forbearance. -Matthew 10:37-39
13. Jesus' declarations to Peter "the freedom fighter":
 - a. When he rebuked Jesus for talking about His crucifixion: "Get behind me Satan." -Matthew 16:21-28
 - b. When He instructed Peter to go pay tax for both Peter and Himself. -Matthew 17:24-27
 - c. When He reproved Peter for using the sword to resist His arrest. -Matthew 26:51-54
14. Jesus consistently taught that His kingdom is not like the world's kingdom in operations. -Matthew 20:25-28
15. He told the Jews who were trying to trap Him in His words "Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's"—Pay your taxes! -Matthew 22:17-22
16. When Jesus taught His followers that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed, He warned them to flee, not fight for it. Some notable historians tell us that when Jerusalem fell, there was not one Christian left in it. They apparently obeyed their Lord!
17. Jesus' open declaration to Pilate, *My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* -John 18:36
18. Jesus did not resist Judas, His betrayer, though He knew of his plot against Him.
19. The last command Jesus gave was for His followers to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every tribe, nation, language and people group. Not only that but baptize them and receive them as equals into the kingdom of God. The early Church understood this well: Jews didn't become Gentiles, Gentiles didn't become Jews; they both needed to be born again and be converted to become Christians under the New Covenant. -Matthew 28:18-20

All this was unthinkable to the Zealots, whose "stronghold of false doctrine" blinded them to believe that God only speaks Hebrew, only accepts Hebrew culture, only saves Jews, and desires Israel as the only nation.

Barabbas

One of the greatest reasons the Zealots didn't choose

Jesus was that they had already chosen another "Saviour"—Barabbas. It was he who had been arrested for sedition (rebellion to government authority) and murder, yet it was he who the crowd chose in their blind passion. His name ironically means: Bar = "son of" and Abba = "the father".

When the crowd was crying, "Free Barabbas!" it was like they were saying "We choose the son of the Father!" But God has **only one** begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and for Him they cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" They followed a deceiver, a false deliverer, and a false Messiah. Their end was death, destruction, and bondage to sin, self, and Satan... and for those who never repented, an eternity in Hell.

So, what should I do if I realize that I have believed a lie and have allowed myself to be influenced by the Zealots of our day? Repent and submit to the rightful Lordship of Jesus in your life. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...* -1 Samuel 15:23, and no witch is right with God!

In this day of easy-believism and cheap grace, it is essential to consider whether we have been genuinely born again, surrendering our all to our resurrected Lord, since Jesus said ... *Verily, verily... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* -John 3:3. Have you ever seen yourself as hopelessly lost, without a single plea before the crucified Lord Jesus? If your life still belongs to you, you are not one of His.

Believe His word. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.* -1 Peter 2:13-17

Recognize that God is the final authority. It is He who raises up whom He will and puts down whom He will. Remember Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and others like them. Many times, God uses the ungodly to chasten His people. God has established earthly government and authority. The home, church, employment, and the government all establish order in society; the opposite is chaos and anarchy (which is really every man being his own lord). -see *Romans 13:1-14*. Be ready to make godly appeals to the government when asked to do what is against the Lord's will for us. Be ready to suffer like Jesus did, patiently, resigned to die, if needed, to fulfill the will of God the Father. -see *1 Peter 3: 8-18* May God bless each one with true freedom as the children of God, living as strangers and pilgrims in this world—another kingdom! -see *Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11*.



A Brand New Year

Another year has swiftly flown;
Its days will not again be known.
They're spent and gone beyond recall.
Through it, was Jesus Lord of all?


Another year is ushered in;
It's free from spot and stain of sin.
God hands it, silently, to you.
Through it, will you to Him be true?

It may be Christ will come again,
Before this year shall have an end.
So from His statutes do not bend,
And simply trust Him as your friend!

—Susan M. Stalter

Priorities

Barry Grant
Arcahaie, Haiti



One day in late spring Jack was wondering what to do with his old lawn mower after purchasing a new one. His wife suggested that since it still worked well, they should give it to their poor neighbor Tim. “Yes,” Jack replied, “he does mow his large yard with that old push mower. He would love it!” So later that day Jack went to his neighbor’s home and gave him the used mower, for which he was very thankful. Tim really enjoyed his new gift and used it on a regular basis.

Then one day several weeks later Jack returned and said his new mower was in the shop and he needed to use the older one. Tim gladly sent him home with the machine. Two weeks later Jack returned it. The following week he was back and said he again needed to use the mower. This time when he returned it, Tim noticed Jack had changed the seat and had done some other things to the mower. As Tim was talking with his wife that evening, he expressed how he didn’t understand what Jack was doing. Tim replayed in his mind the day Jack had brought the mower over, reassuring himself that the mower had been given to him. It just didn’t make sense to him why he continued to come and take it back whenever he needed it. Finally, they concluded that maybe he originally wanted to give them the mower, but later decided that he still wanted to control it and use it when he needed to.

Dear friends, does this sound like our life with Christ? We said that we gave our life to Him, yet we still do what we want with it; we still want full control.

I was recently talking with a brother who had been involved with missions for many years. He shared with me the problems they face with their missionaries. He said that most people that come to the mission field are simply there for ‘missionary status.’ At that point it all began to make sense. If you are going to the mission field only for, or mainly for, selfish reasons, then it’s no wonder it’s not working. It explains why missionaries today are more worried about comforts and short contracts than they are about the souls of men.

After our family moved to a foreign country, many people have asked us when we plan to return home. To this question I have no answer, but I do know that if God has sent us to the mission field, then God will also need to send us home. I have seen many that have spent time on the mission field but are now back home. I usually ask them why they came home and what they are currently doing. The answers are usually the same... “We just felt it was time to come home.” Not only are they back home, but they are usually back working at their previous employment. It’s almost like they decided to take a year or two off and hit the mission field overseas, then when that gets old, they head back home.

My desire in this article is not to criticize short-term missions, nor to say how long one should spend on the mission field. My heart is that we make sure we are going into foreign missions with God’s will in mind and a desire to serve Him in whatever way is pleasing to Him, not just because we want to explore another culture or get away for a while.

So how do we decide who is called to missions? I believe that if we do not care about the lost around us while we're still in our country, we can't expect to care for the lost in another country. If we are ashamed to spread the Gospel of peace in our homeland, how can we expect to do it in another land? It amazes me to see who is going overseas to be missionaries. Many times, it's people who seem to have great difficulty submitting to authority, people who are being conformed to this world, people who have an independent spirit, and other such carnal weaknesses. If our lights are hidden when we're living in America, how do we expect them to shine when we are in another country? Especially when there are a great deal of hardships and difficulties that are waiting for us.

It seems to me that, for the most part, the ones who are drifting farther away from God seem to talk as though they are becoming more and more spiritual. And unfortunately, many of these decide to spend more time involved with missions. Could it be that the reason for much of our failure on the mission field is because the wrong people are going? The devil wants the ones with a twisted, watered-down Gospel to go and spread their false doctrines. Also, the devil is trying to get the sound, faithful believers to 'live a quiet and peaceable life,' to be quiet, and to keep to themselves. Thus, the ones who should really be going are the ones that are staying home, and the ones who should be staying home are the ones that are going!

I have had many conservative Anabaptists warn me of the dangers of losing my children on the mission field, but this I do not understand. If we lose our children, how can we blame it on our location? Yes, it is true that missionaries are losing their children. Does that mean we should forget about Jesus' great commission to ... *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*, according to Mark 16:15? No, actually, we should be sending godly men who have their homes in order. Many brothers and sisters in the faith are losing their children in this day. I could list many reasons why, but serving Christ on the mission field is not one of them. In fact, I believe it is a great place to raise a godly family.

It all goes back to priorities. If serving God is number one in our life, we would have more faithful missionaries. I was talking with the director of a large Anabaptist mission and he told me they are in great need of workers. What he said next did not surprise me. "When the economy is good in America, we can't find people, but when it's bad, we have all positions full."

**Could it
be that the
reason for much
of our failure on the
mission field is because
the wrong people
are going?**

This simply takes us back to our priorities. What if God would look into your heart and print off a list of your priorities? What would be number one? To be honest I don't think it would look very good. Maybe our family is number one, then our business or employment, then our friends, entertainment, church family, house, bank account, and then God somewhere towards the bottom. Now don't get me wrong, I know we would all say God is first, but do our actions prove that? Maybe we don't understand Jesus' command to forsake all that we have and follow Him. I know it goes against our natural tendency to deny ourselves and follow Jesus. It's not common sense. However, it is a must if you want to enter the kingdom of God. We are not talking about right and wrong; we are talking about priorities. If we would start putting God first—before our businesses and entertainment and family—our children would see that, and they would want to do the same. Our children are the first ones to see what is number one in daddy's life.

When the Anabaptists were overseas several hundred years ago, they were active. They traveled and preached the Gospel message; they sent out missionaries leaving their families, not expecting to return. They were persecuted, and they were killed, but isn't that what our Lord says will happen? The Gospel was spreading like wild fire. One executioner said that the more Christians he killed, the more of them there were. Finally, there was an invitation to travel away from persecution to a free country. Once there, they began to work, they could build their farms unhindered, they could raise their children unhindered, and that's just what they did. However, it didn't take long before wealth, land, and possessions overtook them. Because of their hard work ethic, their honesty and loyalty, they became the rich.

Yes, for us as conservative Anabaptists, life is now good for us, but what about the Gospel? What about our faith? Let's be honest. Are we just as willing as our forefathers were, to die for serving Jesus? Or did this 'vanity fair' grasp us in its talons and will not let go? There are brothers who will be called to earn a living and support the ones that are sent. Is that what we are doing, or have we put ourselves first in everything?! Let's not forget the parable of the certain poor widow who gave two mites, which was all that she had. Jesus said she gave more than all the rich men.

Dear brothers and sisters let's make sure that we have our priorities right. Is God our all in all? Or do we give to Him of our time and money, that which we think is extra? We don't all know God's will for our life, but why is that? That could be because we already have our life all figured out.

We already know what we want out of this life that's but a vapor. This doesn't leave much time for God. Dear ones, just being a good church member is not all that God has for us. He wants everything—Everything!

With houses and barns and a beautiful life,
There surely won't come unhappiness and strife.
But what if we're missing the thing that counts most;
A relationship with the Lord of hosts.
We can have much land for corn or rice,
But what if we miss the pearl of great price?
No one on earth enjoys living with regret.
Can you imagine eternity, if it's Him you forget?
The years pass by, one then two;
What if it's you Jesus never knew?
As our vision narrows and opportunities come by,
Do we seize the moment, even if Jesus would cry?
We don't know tomorrow, what it will bring,
But don't we try to not miss a thing?
We all seem really good with talking the talk.
Will He find faith, and people walking the walk?
We say God is first with no question in mind
But a man on the altar is not easy to find.
Do we grab hold of everything life has to bring;
And forget about the cross, to which we should cling?
How bad do you want to see our great King;
Will you follow no matter, just what it might bring?
Is it money you love, or pleasure and fame?
Can you forsake it all for His worthy name?
If we count all but loss, forsaking our will,
Would not then God enter, and our life He would fill?
Can we put our God first, no matter the cost;
And reap in the harvest, before it is lost?
This is God's will, a mansion awaits.
Oh, how I want to see Him, at those pearly gates!

—Barry Grant



How to Have a Strong Family Unit

By Harold S. Martin
A Bible Helps Booklet No. 351
Used by permission

Families everywhere in our society seem to be breaking up and falling apart. A strong family unit will have a dynamic leader for a father, a firm but warm-hearted mother, and cooperative children who respect both parents. Each member of the family has a part to play in making the home beautiful. Each has a God-given role (function) to perform. In God's order of things, the masculine role is that of being the breadwinner, and the feminine role is that of being a homemaker.

Preparation for the proper roles in the home usually begins in early childhood. A little girl is given dolls and dishes to play with in preparation for homemaking. A little boy receives toy trucks and tools in preparation for his role as breadwinner. If a child adopts the role of the opposite sex, he is termed a "sissy" and she becomes known as a "tomboy." There is great confusion about proper roles in the home today—largely because of the efforts of the women's liberation movement, the influence of radical college professors, and the propaganda of the mass media. One state board of education, for example, forbids including pictures depicting women with aprons and vacuum cleaners in school textbooks. To have a strong family unit, however, the biblical roles need to be observed. The husband is to exercise loving leadership and the wife is to manifest quiet submission.

1. The Husband Exercises Loving Leadership

The husband is to be a leader in the home. When a couple marries, the husband becomes the head of a new decision-making unit which we call "the family." The husband should set godly standards and lead the way by living up to those standards himself.

- He should lead out in family worship, prayer at mealtimes, and seeing that the family gets to church services at the proper times.
- The husband should enforce discipline in the home.
- He should try to make his wife's duties easier—by hanging up his clothes, coming for meals on time, and cleaning out his pockets before putting clothes in the



wash hamper. The word "husband" means "houseband" and this implies that he is the one who should tie things together.

To perform the loving leadership role well, the husband should be diligent about cultivating at least three very important qualities.

a) *He should be a faithful partner.*

All surveys indicate that many husbands have at some time or another been unfaithful to their wives. Satan has always tried to get people to believe that "the grass is greener on the other side of the fence"—and in the realm of human relationships, the devil promotes the lie that perhaps life with another woman would be a kind of paradise.

From God's point of view, it is an exceedingly wicked sin to be guilty of unfaithfulness to one's married partner—in any way, shape, or form. The sexual appetites within the human body have a powerful potential for misuse; our bodies can easily be aroused to lust. This is especially true for the male. The husband can guard the tendency toward illicit lust by avoiding stimulating literature, by refusing to get caught up with immoral images on TV and the Internet, and by concentrating on his wife's good points. (We tend to see the faults of those close to us, and the virtues of those who are farther removed.) We can be faithful husbands by resolving to live each day as if it were our last, and by determining to be loyal to the marriage vows. In Proverbs 5:20-21, God asks, *And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.*

Don't play with fire. Stay away from what is not yours. Guard against situations that might become a snare—such as spending lots of time alone (at work) with a woman who is not your wife. At the marriage ceremony we men make some sobering promises. "Do you take this woman to be your lawful wife? Do you solemnly promise (before God and these witnesses) that you will forsake all others, and love and honor and cherish this woman until death shall

separate you?” And we said, “I do.” The Bible says that it is better not to vow than to vow and not pay (Ecclesiastes 5:5).

b) He should be a diligent provider.

In Proverbs 6:6-8, God reminds us of the tiny ant, and says, *Go to the ant, . . . consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer and gathereth her food in the harvest.* Like the ant, the husband is to be a provider. *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel -1 Timothy 5:8.*

No matter how pious a man might appear to be on Sunday morning, if he does not seek to provide for the basic needs of his wife and family, he puts a bad light on the Christian faith. And so, it is the husband's duty to work hard, to get to his place of employment on time, and to keep in mind the words of Scripture, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might -Ecclesiastes 9:10.*

When God saves a man, He gives him a new love for his family, and he finds joy in providing for their needs even though every job has duties that are hard and routine and boring.

c) He should be a considerate companion.

The husband's leadership role does not give him a license to become rude and to act like a selfish dictator. If we teach that a husband is to be “the head” of the wife, we must equally stress that the husband is to love his wife even as his own body, and as Christ loved the church. Colossians 3:19 says it clearly: *Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them* (or as some translations say, “Don't be harsh with them”).

After all, the sister who is now your wife took your name; she left the love and security of her home to come and live with you; she pledged to share the joys and sorrows of life together with you. It is the height of cruelty to treat her harshly; to respond to her requests with cold indifference; to answer her with even the slightest tone of sarcasm in your voice.

The husband is to honor and respect his wife. He must seek to understand her. He must attempt to avoid those things that disturb her. He should hear the concerns of his wife, and listen to her advice, and be considerate of her feelings, and profit from her suggestions. It is only a matter of courtesy to appreciate her efforts and to be considerate of her feelings. Express appreciation for her cooking,

her neatness of dress, her manner with the children, her gracious attitude toward guests, etc.

Marriage is a precious relationship that needs much tender, self-sacrificing care. The Apostle Paul devotes twice as many words to telling husbands to love their wives, as he does to telling wives to submit to their husbands. A wife needs to be told by her husband that he loves her. Husbands—you can say it with flowers; you can say it with small gifts; you can say it by remembering anniversaries and birthdays; you can say it with the squeeze of a hand; you can say it with a dish rag; but above all say it with words!

Males and females are not identical physically and emotionally, in spite of all the attempts to equalize their roles today. The woman, in particular, needs to feel loved, needed, respected, and important to her husband. We husbands must be sensitive, understanding, and considerate; we must tell our wives that we love and appreciate them and show them that we love them by doing the kinds of things mentioned above.

Some husbands seem to enjoy making life hard and miserable for their partner. They become a kind of dictator who barks out the orders, and his wife is expected to come running whenever he blows the whistle. Husbands, if you have been neglecting the duty to show love and appreciation and consideration to your spouse, go to your wife; apologize for your neglect; take out the family Bible; look over the

record of your marriage; look at some of your early pictures; bring home a box of candy to mark a special occasion; go along with her to buy some of the groceries; take time out for a meal at a restaurant so that she is free from the chores of cooking the food and cleaning up the dishes.

The husband and wife both need to continue in the spirit of courtship all their married days. If people would work as hard to keep each other as they once did to catch each other, most domestic home problems would be solved.

2. The Wife Manifests Quiet Submission

The role of the wife is primarily that of homemaking. She is to be in a team-partnership with her husband, and the husband and wife should plan together, and discuss matters of concern together—but final decision-making on tough issues rests upon the husband's shoulders, and he must assume the responsibility for ALL decisions that are made. There are at least three qualities the Christian wife should cultivate:

Husbands, love your
wives and be not
bitter against them.
Colossians 3:19

a) She should show proper submission.

Just as a team needs a head coach, and a business needs a director, so the home needs someone to be in charge. God says that the leader in the family situation is to be the man, and the wife should be submissive to her husband. Ephesians 5:22 says in essence, *[You wives must submit to your husband's leadership in the same way that you submit to the Lord.]*

The editor of a conservative church magazine prepared a column each month in which he responded to readers' questions. He had been asked so often the question, "But why should males always be the leaders?"—that his reply in one edition of the magazine was this: "Husbands are to be the leaders in the home simply because God decided that they should be! So, stop asking!"

The husband's role is no greater than is the wife's. His role is not superior to hers; it is just different from hers. The husband's leadership role relieves the wife of final decision-making. For example, an angry neighbor knocks on the front door and complains about damage the children did to his fence. The husband isn't home; the wife says, "I'll speak to my husband about it, and we'll take care of it." That is a proper response for the wife. She puts the responsibility on her husband. She doesn't need to make the decision. She is set free from the emotional burden of making final decisions and taking the responsibility for them. The wife should rejoice in her husband's authority over her. It is the wife's special privilege to move day after day under the protection of his authority. This is women's liberation in a very real sense.

The principle of submission does not mean that the wife should engage in sin because her husband demands it. All interpersonal relationships are to be governed by Acts 5:29 which says that we ought to obey God rather than human authorities. If a husband demands that his wife engage in prostitution to help supplement the family income, or that a wife lie about his whereabouts to protect him from state authorities—she need not obey. But the Christian wife should seek to comply with her husband's directives, even if his demands seem unreasonable, unless such submission requires her to sin against God.

b) She should demonstrate kindly respect.

The instruction from God's Word is found in Ephesians 5:33. It says, *Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

The Amplified Bible says, "Let the wife see that she respects her husband, notices him, regards him, honors him, venerates him, esteems him, and that she admires him exceedingly." The Christian wife must be careful not to say things that tend to injure him. She must not use sarcasm, bitterness, and verbal attacks. She must maintain a home that guards his respect and supports him.

Titus 2:4 says that the older women are to teach the younger women *to love their husbands*. This means more than kissing him when he leaves for work in the morning. A wife can show love by acknowledging his headship in the home, by living within financial means, by apologizing promptly when there is a conflict, by being supportive of him when things go wrong, by paying attention to personal appearance, by keeping an orderly home, and by making no major decisions without his advice.

And remember that nothing breaks the spirit of a man more than a nagging wife. Instead of nagging, try putting a love-note in your husband's coat pocket or his lunch bag. Find some way to tell him that you love him and that he is the most important human being in your life.

Some years ago, I was sent on a fact-finding mission to the country of India. I left New York City; stopped in Saudi Arabia; and finally landed (in the evening) at Bombay on the west coast of India. The ride from the airport to downtown Bombay was depressing indeed. People were everywhere. The noise of blowing horns; the screaming of religious Hindus trying to appease their gods; the sight of hundreds of people sleeping on the sidewalks; the smell of open sewage was nauseating. I was discouraged and lonely and sad.

I went to my room, tried to protect myself from the mosquitos, opened my suitcase, pulled out my pajamas—and out fell a note from my wife. There was a quote from Matthew 28, "*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world,* —from one who never ceases to love you —Priscilla."

Let your husband know that he is the most important human being in your life. Don't wait until his heart is still in death, and then wish you had told him you love him!

The wife must never compare her husband's achievements with the accomplishments of another man. Wives—you should never say to your husband, "Look how nice Joe keeps his yard," or, "Dave often brings a gift home for his wife; why don't you do that?" Make it a point to try and express

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Ephesians 5:22

appreciation to your husband for whatever you can honestly compliment. Perhaps you can mention his faithfulness on the job, or his ability to fix a leaking faucet, or his time spent reading stories to the family. Your home should be a place “where seldom is heard a discouraging word.”

c) *She should major on tidy housekeeping.*

Many today are saying that housework and homemaking and motherhood are paths to misery. One feminist group says that “A housewife is an inhabitant of a domestic concentration camp.”

The second chapter of Titus instructs the older women to teach the younger women how to conduct the affairs of home life. The older women are to *teach the young women to . . . love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed -Titus 2:4-5.*

The phrase “keepers at home” means literally “workers at home.” Christian women should try to be good housekeepers, not seeking to be lavish, but tidy and neat. The wife should work diligently at the task of trying to keep the house attractive and clean, and the meals tasty and well prepared.

The phrase “keepers at home” means also that the Christian wife should see that the home is her primary sphere of activity. It is best for younger women (mothers of small children) not to be working at some job outside the home. There are some exceptions, but generally speaking, the father should be the breadwinner and the mother should be the homemaker.

Some of the disadvantages of a mother’s working outside the home when there are small children, are these:

- Children will be raised largely by baby-sitters.
- There will be a tendency to alleviate guilt feelings by giving gifts to children to compensate for not giving them as much time.
- There is sometimes the temptation to become too intimately involved with another man at the place of employment.
- It becomes easy to neglect personal devotions—Bible reading, meditation, and prayer.
- Some develop an independent spirit, leading them to believe they can make it financially on their own, especially if there is a bad marriage.
- The mother who works at a regular job outside the home gives her best hours and her best disposition to someone other than her husband and her children.

- There are many more additional expenses—extra clothes, baby-sitting services, car and gasoline, higher income tax bracket, greater tension and thus medical bills, and the tendency to buy more than is really needed.

A child doesn’t need wall-to-wall carpeting and beautiful drapes and the latest computer games. Children need their mother’s time and affection. Mothers should see their children off to school in the morning and see them home again in the afternoon. When children come home from school in the afternoon, bubbling over with concerns about things that have happened during the day, it is a tragedy if they must come home to the walls of an empty house.

The mother’s primary ministry is to create a home which becomes a refuge for family members—a place to which they can come—away from the stress and turmoil of daily life. Each member of the family will go out to face the responsibilities of a new day better prepared because mother was there to organize, prepare, encourage, and pray.

When a man chooses from all the women in the world—one woman to be his companion for life—and solemnly promises to love her with an affectionate love, that love should be as genuine and as real after they’ve been married 20 or 25 years, as it was during the time of courtship. I hope that this is the experience of every reader of this article.

Print copies of this booklet may be obtained from:
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Vaccine Articles

Also, with this issue, we have reached the end of the series on “vaccines”, written by Dr Miggiani. These articles have generated a good bit of discussion, some of concern, but most of interest and appreciation. A big thank you to all who have responded.

Towards the end of the article, Dr Miggiani shares that he is open to anyone who desires his input on practical ways for churches to put together written policies on this matter. It is his opinion that *written policies* would be more legally binding in any possible future situations.

Currently, in the U.S, there doesn't seem to be any viable alternative options available for those wishing to maintain the herd immunity through vaccinating their children. Years ago, Dr. Miggiani's family found vaccines available from Japan, that were ethically safe. Since that was years ago, there needs to be new research done on the matter. If there are those who see this as an important matter needing attention, Dr Miggiani would be interested in communicating with you to see what could be put into place for the benefit of the greater Anabaptist community. If anyone wishes to dialogue with him on these matters, please contact us and we will pass it on to him.

Booklet Project

In the last several months, some of our readers have been asking if we could send all these articles to them in a PDF format. That way they can go back to review them or make copies to pass out to others who may have interest.

Upon considering these requests, we concluded there will be more people who will want to have these articles available as well. So, we decided to compile this series into a booklet. It is our goal to have this project completed within a month or two. If you have interest in receiving copies, please contact us with a phone number or email address so we can let you know when they are finished.

Stocking Our Inventory—CDs & Printed Literature

Inside the back cover of this magazine, you will see that we have installed a new office and storage facility to better suit the growing needs of our ministry. There have been many folks who have heard about this developing need and have donated time and money to make it possible for us to start moving forward in this way. A big thank you to all who joined us in this project.

For those who missed out and still want to help, we are needing to stock up our inventory of books, booklets, and CD sets to have available to send out upon request. The projected cost to finish up the new office and to stock up our inventory, will be around \$5,000.00. Then it will take

approximately \$300.00 per month for the ongoing needs of maintaining the inventory and sending out these resources to those requesting them. These are extra financial needs we will have in an ongoing way. Please prayerfully consider getting involved with this part of our ministry.

Financial Needs

Towards the end of last year, a number of you sent financial contributions for our ministry. A big thank you to all who have so generously donated. All our material is provided free of charge; however, it still costs money to make it all happen. Many of our costs are procured on a monthly basis, while some are quarterly. All our current work requires ongoing support in order to flow efficiently.

We are at the point of needing to start expanding some of our efforts and work. Up until now we have produced most of our information on specific topics (such as counseling concerns, godly homes, the N.T. church, godly courtship, etc.) in audio format and sent it out via CDs. However, we have been receiving numerous requests from folks who would rather have that same information put into books or booklets. We are planning to move forward on these projects as finances and time become available.

Please prayerfully consider how the Lord would have you partner with us both for our ongoing needs, plus the extra needs we will incur as we expand to meet the growing needs and requests.

Upcoming Event

In the last three years we have traveled to different communities to share a series of meetings on counseling concerns and about how churches can effectively help their own people. Several churches in Pennsylvania have asked us to share in July of this year in Lebanon County, close to Myerstown. This event is scheduled for July 26-28, 2019 at the Fairview Reception Center, in Lebanon, PA.

The topics we are planning to cover will include: churches successfully helping their own, a biblical view of negative emotions such as anger and fear, biblically understanding panic attacks and racing thoughts, preventing problems through maintaining godly homes, understanding the placebo effect when dealing with depression and anxiety, a biblical understanding of mental disorders, effectively overcoming addictions, understanding a safe use of psych meds, a biblical view of adoption and fostering issues, a simple, practical, and biblical view of dealing with molestation and immoral habits, plus more. If you have interest in these subjects, mark your calendar. Also, please let others know who might be interested. We will have more details in the next issue of this magazine.



Servanthood—God's High Calling

Josh Wamble
Age: 20 years old
Lebanon, PA

God designed us to serve, yet we have a difficult time getting the message that this is God's call for our lives. Jesus took the time to school His disciples on servanthood. Let's go to school with them and learn some things that we need to be aware of if we are going to fulfill this part of God's purpose for our lives.

First, if we are going to be a servant-hearted person, we must be aware of our motives. Simply put, a motive is the **reason** that we do what we do. It's what's behind our actions.

In Mark 10, the disciples had left everything to follow Jesus and were being discipled by Him to become future leaders in the church. During this process they were being taught to preach the Gospel message and to care for people. Sometimes their motives got a little messed up because they wanted earthly recognition. In the passage where the mother of James and John came to Jesus with a request, they were asking for honor, glory, and power. When they started following Jesus, it seems that their motive was to experience God more deeply and meaningfully. They didn't realize that the godly motive of serving people naturally springs from loving Jesus. -see Luke 7:47

When we think about being a servant, we must be aware that we have within us the deep desire to be honored, to experience glory, to be important, and to be served. It is a natural desire for us—being mankind living in a fallen world with the “old man” to contend with. It is so natural that we see this phenomenon of vying for position and prestige even in nature. Years ago, farmers noted that if ten chickens were put together in a pen, within minutes the chickens (even if they were strangers to each other before) formed a hierarchy based on dominance. That's where we get the term “pecking order.” Instinctively they will determine, through a series of skirmishes, which

chicken is number one, which is number two, and so forth. It's an important process because the lower one is in the pecking order, the more frequent the pecking. This is the thing we must fight against—the natural urge within our hearts to have dominance over other people. If we are going to improve our ability to serve, we should check our motives. Do we really want to make a positive difference and contribution to others in our world because of our love for Jesus Christ?

A second key to improving our servanthood is to learn from our Biblical model. Jesus calls His disciples together and gives them a principle. In the world, He says this is the natural way of things, ... *Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.* -Matthew 20:25 The world's system tries as hard as possible to get to the top. But for the followers of Jesus, He says, there will be a different value system at work... *But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your*

servant: -Matthew 20:26-27.

We should be people who serve. The word *servant* in this passage is translated slave. Interesting word isn't it? Slave? A slave was someone who really had no rights and no honor. The whole purpose of the life of

a slave was to serve his or her master. In other words, our purpose is to serve Jesus. Our whole being should be directed to the cause of Christ. One of the ways we do that is by serving people that He brings into our lives. -see Matthew 25:34-40. Our primary mission is to **minister** to people, not be **admired** by them.

To make His point even more forceful, Jesus points to Himself as the model. He says, *Even as the Son of man came*

Our primary mission is to minister to people, not be admired by them.

not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. -Matthew 20:28. Do you want to know what servanthood looks like? Look at the life of Jesus. We read about Him in John 13, the scene where the disciples all arrive for a meal. Jesus got up, washed, and dried the disciple's feet. Then He says, *If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.* -John 13:14.

Let's follow the perfect example of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when Scripture says: *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:* -Philippians 2:5-7. This should be our attitude.

A nursing school graduate illustrates how this could happen in our lives. This woman took a job in a long-term care facility. One of her first patients was a woman named Eileen. Eileen had had an aneurysm that ruptured in her brain, leaving her totally unconscious to the observing eye, and apparently unaware of anything that was going on around her. It was necessary to turn Eileen every hour to prevent bedsores, and she needed to be fed through a stomach tube twice a day. Eileen never had visitors. Apparently, no one cared about her. One of the other nurses said, "When it's this bad, you [as a caregiver] need to detach yourself emotionally from the whole situation." As a result, more and more Eileen was treated as a **thing** instead of a **person**, with people going in, doing their work, then leaving again as quickly as they could. But this young nurse decided that she, in living out her Christian faith, would treat this woman differently. She talked to Eileen, sang to her, said encouraging things to her, and even brought her little gifts.

On Thanksgiving Day, however, the young nurse came to work reluctantly, wanting to be home on the holiday. As she entered Eileen's room, she knew she would be doing the normal tasks with no thanks or appreciation from her patient. She decided to again talk to Eileen and said, "I was in a bad mood this morning, Eileen, because it was supposed to be my day off. But now that I'm here, I'm glad. I wouldn't have wanted to miss seeing you on Thanksgiving Day. Do you know that today is Thanksgiving?"

Just then the telephone rang, and the nurse turned away from the bed to answer it. As she was talking, she turned to look back at Eileen. Eileen was looking at the nurse... crying. Big damp circles stained her pillow and she was shaking all over.

That was the only emotion that Eileen ever showed, but it was enough to change the attitude of the entire staff towards



her. A short time after that day, she died. The young nurse closed her story this way: "I keep thinking about her. It occurred to me that I owe her a lot. Except for Eileen, I might never have known what it is like to give [compassion and care] to someone who can't give back."

One of the ways of serving Jesus is giving to someone who can't give back. So, examine your motives and look to Jesus. Then ask the Lord for the mind and heart of Jesus to dwell in you.

Where is God calling you to serve? Who is God calling you to serve? This is the tough part. You must make the choice repeatedly if you desire to be a faithful servant your entire life.

Let us pray and ask God to show us opportunities around us in which we can serve. Remember, when we choose to serve, we must not think what we will get out of it. Let us have a spirit of humility when we serve others. Let us live out the servanthood life to the fullest of our ability. Let us be **willing** servants and not **duty** servants.



Of **Such** is the Kingdom of God

Annetta Martin — Age: 20 years — Glenmont, OH

“Jesus said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.” Mark 10:14, 16

It was late morning in Niger, Africa, as I bent over a tub of soapy water, scrubbing yesterday's laundry. I was home alone, babysitting the boys of the missionary family I was working for.

“Anatou!” (**Ana**-too—the Nigerian name for Annetta)

Startled, I looked up upon hearing my name. I was surprised to see a little boy clinging to the top of the courtyard gate. I tried to quiet the annoyed feeling rising within me. It was Isaka, a neighbor boy who liked to come play with the boys sometimes. He wasn't always very respectful or obedient. Normally I didn't mind having him in the compound (a house or building surrounded by a high wall), but today was different. I was home alone, and I didn't know the Zarma language well enough to reason with him if he got into trouble.

“Ifo no ni ga ba?” (“What do you want?”) I questioned. “Open the gate,” He said. Of course, I knew that's what he wanted. Carefully I opened the gate a few inches. By now, he was

back on the ground, eagerly waiting at the gate opening. He grinned at me, mischief gleaming from his eyes. In broken Zarma, I explained that the children's father wasn't at home. I told him he could come back tomorrow. He wasn't so sure. He wanted to come and play now. Finally, he half-heartedly turned away.

Relieved that he had obeyed without too much trouble, I turned back to my work. But my relief was short-lived. He was back again peering through the gap beneath the gate, and asking to be let in. Seeing that these efforts brought no response, he began knocking on the gate. It wasn't respectful knocking, but loud pounding. The boys in my care thought it was a wonderful new game, and immediately joined the pounding from their side of the gate. As they continued pounding and shouting with laughter, the noise became increasingly loud.

It was time for lunch, so I took the boys into the house. With no one outside anymore, the fun was gone. The noise stopped, and the neighbor boys were finally gone—at least I hoped.



Children in Niger, Africa

An hour later, I was cleaning up the kitchen, when to my great surprise, someone ran past the window. I was shocked! The gate was latched from the inside, so the only way for someone to get into the compound was to climb over the high wall. I hurried outside. There were two boys in the courtyard. The one immediately dashed out the opened gate, clutching his old, flat soccer ball. But not Isaka. Grinning, he stood in front of me, mischief gleaming from every part of him. He was not planning to leave. I was exasperated. Carefully, I tried to explain to him that he must leave for now, but that he could come back tomorrow. Seeing that my words held no weight, I took his arm and led him through the gate. After making sure the gate was once more securely latched, I turned back to the house.

I had barely entered the house when the flat soccer ball came sailing over the gate, followed by a pair of old, yellow flipflops. The faces of Isaka and his two friends appeared above the gate, their eyes shining with delight and naughtiness.

Several days later, I was out in the courtyard again, scrubbing laundry. Several feet away,

Isaka lay on the ground, watching me. He caught my eye and grinned. At that moment, I knew I loved him, naughtiness and all. I wondered what the future held for him. His Daddy and Mama probably weren't Christians. His house was a small grass hut on a dirt street, and he spent his days roaming around the neighborhood without supervision.

There are many little children like Isaka that don't have Christian parents. They don't have anyone to teach them to love God and to obey the Bible. There are also many children who don't have parents who love them and provide for them. A lot of children, like Isaka, have only a mud or grass hut for their house. We have a lot to thank God for. Parents that love us and teach us about God, and many other things like a warm house, nice clothes, and plenty of food.

Each one of us should thank God for all the blessings He has given us. Let's pray for children like Isaka. God created and loves every child no matter what their skin color is, nor where they live or how rich or poor they are. Let's pray that God will send Christians to share God's Word and His love with families like Isaka's.



Courtyard in Niger, Africa

Psalm 46: When Mothers Pray

Anna L. Martin
Perkins, OK

Sometimes, Lord, I come before You with a weary mind. The morning has been long... loud with teasing and tension... trampled on and trodden over. Or maybe I am the trampled one. I feel spent already. I don't have the quiet mind with which one ought to approach the Most High God, but I come anyway. I must. I need You. Today, I heard again the dismal headlines from this sin-sick world. And God, I am afraid, not for myself, but for my children. You give us families like flocks; but we are so inadequate to shelter them from the evil overtaking the earth. Dusky, unnamed fears crouch at the edge of my consciousness, shadowing my daily duties with uneasiness. Things like training, meals, children's hearts, friends to reach, apologies to make, character to attain—these throng my mind in demanding multitude, leaving me with half-formed prayers and scattered requests. But beyond those regular needs hover disease, deceit, and death. Yet Your Word is all-sufficient. I come before You now, opening this Gift, seeking strength to sustain me. And how fitting is this: today's reading is Psalm 46, beloved and timeless words. Lord, as I read, my mind makes comment, applying Your words to my life.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” A Presence more present than the ever-present clamor of little people. A refuge from the burning of noontide nerves. A strength to discipline once more, to give reproof instead of a snap, to listen when I'd rather lock a door behind me.

“Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though Islam rule the world, though an atomic bomb sear across the earth.

“Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,

though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” Though the prophecies of the book of Revelation come true in my offspring's days. **“Selah.”** Selah. Selah? In these uncertain times? Sit back and think about that—**therefore will not we fear**—because of God. God is our refuge: my refuge, my children's refuge.

“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.” I know gladness. This treasure that You have poured into my hands as precious little gem-souls is gladness. Sometimes it feels like a river. Sometimes I feel like I am drowning under Your wealth, and other times I simply know gladness in the city of God. When we kneel at twilight as a family, it feels like the holy place of the most High. Would that I could keep us all as we are now, innocent and safe! But I can't, I can't...

“God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” Perhaps this 'her' was not written for the woman of God. But it fits. I have this gift of God within me, and I should not be moved. Oh, but I am. Mornings go, evenings come, and I am moved. Weariness, love, tears and joy assault my womanly being. God's Word does not move: **God shall help her. God shall help me! and that right early.** Early: on time, in time, over time.

“The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.” Yes, Lord, yes. The heathen are raging. I fear for my posterity, lest they be devoured by that roaring lion that stalks about openly these days, arrogantly handling deceit until it appears as truth. But the key phrase, the anchoring point of life, finishes these frightening words: Your's is the commanding voice. The heathen may rage, but when You speak, humanity melts away.

“The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our

refuge. Selah.” *I relax into the arms of this God of Jacob, embraced by a truth established long before my vaporous lifetime.*

“Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.” *He hath made? Yea, He alone. Earthquakes in random places are by Your design. Fires and floods. Famines. Help me to view them as Your works, not events against which to construct a husk of man-made shelter.*

“He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.” *He does this! The psalmist constantly brings me back to You, Lord. The cheeky charades of men are but chess pawns in the hand of the almighty God. Herein is comfort beyond comprehension. Men think they win a war, but really, it is You who ends it. You break the strength of nations. You set up and take down. Why then do I fret over the tides of tumult?*

“Be still, and know that I am God:” *likely the most impossible thing for a woman, a mother-woman to do. I can’t even read this verse without interrupting. I’m still for the moment, Lord, but any time now the children will awaken from their nap. The laundry is crispy-dried, supper will soon be late, I didn’t make that phone call for my husband yet, and these are only the most immediate tasks. How does one be*

*still as a mom, anyway? In my mind? Oh. It had been still, but already it is off—***“I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”** *Not a perfect family, not a photo album lifestyle, no wealth of well-meant works, but You, O Holy God, will be praised. In the end, after it all, You will be. This is weighty. This puts to silence demanding ambitions. This is stillness.*

“The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.” *I must arise now, I must plan, I must toil. The gladness of the streams of God flow through me, evidence of the Strength that I sought and found here in this quiet hour. You who have refuted your people since the time of Jacob will hide me and mine today, tomorrow, and always.*

You are faithful, oh Lord of hosts. Once again, Your Word has ministered peace into my heart. Thank You. Your promises shine on my fears, dissolving them by the light of Truth. I do not understand life any better, but I realize anew how blessed I am to call You my God. Help me to be still in my mind, the single fact that You are God anchoring me amid the surge of duty. Help me to carry this Selah into the rest of my day.

Amen.



Benefits of Churches Helping Their Own

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What is Help

In our time, many conservative Anabaptist churches are facing a seemingly unstoppable epidemic. More and more people are coming forward with struggles they don't know how to handle. Many times, when a church has one of these "needy situations" arise in their midst, they start contacting various facilities. Usually, they hear the discouraging words, "Sorry, we have no openings until..." These waiting lists are long, some upwards of a year; some are even longer.

As churches continue to observe the long-term fruit resulting from the "help" being provided, concerns are being raised about more and more of these programs. Considering these growing concerns and the long waiting lists, numerous churches are trying to stem the tide of this ever-increasing wave of problems. Some groups are building their own facilities so they don't need to rely on other groups with whom they may not be as comfortable. Others are investing time and money in developing their own programs that are more in agreement with their line of thinking. Still others are putting their money and energy into helping those among them who seem to have the potential to become future counselors.

Anabaptist Uniqueness

When the Anabaptists were trying to chart a new course for the church, there were many things their counterparts thought were strange. One of these was that they had such a loyalty for each other, even to the point of dying for one another. These Anabaptists were trying to make God's Word practical, when He said *That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one*

for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. -1Co 12: 25-27

These Anabaptists understood that *the elders... [should] feed the flock of God... Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.* -1Pe 5:1-3 They also understood the Scriptures to teach that *...the body is of Christ. [And that He is] ...the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.* -Col 2:17-19

This practice of the local church functioning together as a body, with Christ as the Head, was unique to the Anabaptists. This was in contrast with the Catholic church whose leadership tended to be the 'head' and with the Protestant church which practiced a Theology that was so individualistic that everyone tended to do *that which was right in his own eyes.* -Jdg 17:6 (There is a need for Biblical leadership to lead and there is a need for each individual to have a personal relationship with the Lord. Here we are not talking about either one of these points.)

The Historical Church

Down through the years, ever since the time of Christ, all true believers did their best to follow the Apostle Paul's admonition that *as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* -Gal 6:10 True Christians have always done their best to help each other—whenever they could; however they could. When there was a financial need, the church took an offering. When a mother was bed-ridden,

local sisters took their turn to make sure the cleaning, laundry, and cooking was done. When there was a death, fire, or other sudden life-changing event, the local brothers and sisters pitched in to help until normalcy was restored. And when normalcy could not be restored, such as with the death of a spouse or a parent, the church endeavored to find a suitable way to ‘fill in the gap’ to help in a long-term way.

Another Gospel, Another Jesus

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. -2Co 11:1-4

In this discussion, let’s take careful heed that we don’t allow anything or any person to become our treasure, other than Jesus Christ. Let’s beware that no counselor, teacher, or any person of repute, begins taking the rightful place in our hearts that belongs only to our Lord and Saviour. In the Greek, Christ means the ‘anointed one’ and Gospel means ‘a good message’.

It is troubling when a struggling person needs to go back to the same counselor whenever a new life issue comes up or can’t seem to live without attending the next seminar or conference regarding people’s problems. Here a very fine line is crossed many times without even realizing it—that of allowing another person to become ‘the anointed one’ (Christ) or allowing a certain program or method to become our ‘good news’ (Gospel). Thus, without realizing and many times without wanting to, folks end up turning to ‘another Jesus’ and to ‘another Gospel’. (When we make this observation, we are **not** saying that all programs and organizations fit this category. We are simply saying that many people allow certain other people or certain programs to take precedence over the ‘simplicity and sufficiency’ of the Jesus Christ of the Bible and over the simple Gospel message.)

Getting Back to the True Gospel

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. -Jud 1:3 Let each of us who claim to be a true believer and follower of

Jesus Christ, strive to earnestly contend for the faith. THE faith—not just **any** faith, not just **a** faith, but THE faith. THE faith that was once delivered unto the saints. We need to get back to the Bible and take God at His Word. We need to take it at face value and strive to walk in obedience. This faith that some people refer to as ‘old-fashioned’ is still as accurate and effective today as it was when it was written several thousand years ago regarding the soul of man and how to change human behavior.

The Truth Sets People Free

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. -Joh 8:31-32 As a church, we have found this to be true. Many other churches have found this to be true. The ‘simplicity and sufficiency’ of the Scriptures, and the redeeming, changing power of Jesus Christ, is able to save people to the uttermost. This ‘Gospel’ is able to change and save the vilest of sinners. It is also able to cleanse and salve the hurting heart of those who have been sinned against.

God is able through His Son, His Spirit, and His Word to completely change (help) the most difficult of situations. There are many methods and programs available today that claim to be ‘Christian’ or ‘Biblical’, yet most of them would not be discovered through a common-sense reading of the Scriptures. There is, however, THE faith once delivered unto the saints. This faith, this Gospel, is still as real and life-changing today as it was when it was originally delivered unto the saints. When this ‘Truth’ is used and followed, then what the Bible says is correct—people **are** set free.

It works

We have seen this Gospel work successfully for any number of the various struggles most churches view as extreme—those understood to require a professional or ‘trained’ individual. This Gospel message works for seriously broken marriages, any of the various addictions, rebellious youth, years-long moral struggles, and any of the extreme mental disorders. We have seen broken marriages restored, rebellious youth become godly examples to their peers, and people with years-long moral struggles repent and rebuild godly resistance to those temptations. We have seen dysfunctional families start functioning according to Biblical principles and people with serious mental disorders and emotional struggles enabled to once again be ‘in their right mind’.

This does not mean there are no more struggles. All people are living in a fallen world. All believers have an enemy of

their soul. All of us are made of the same stuff—dust (Psa 103:14)—and all have the same passions (Jam 5:17). We will all be faced with similar temptations, yet we all have the promise that God will provide power to overcome *any* temptation we may face (1Co 10:13). The temptation of unbelief or allowing fear to rule, the temptation to turn to drugs, sex, or alcohol to drown out sorrows or frustrations, or the temptation to believe the lie of the devil that there is no hope, so why keep living. If each of us could see the temptation behind each personal struggle, it would be easier to recognize how Satan is trying to steal, kill, and destroy us and how Jesus is wanting to give us life and that more abundantly (Joh 10:10). No matter what the temptation, God has promised to help us overcome each one, plus any other difficulty we may face in our walk with Him.

It takes less time

When churches understand and allow God to work in their midst in this way, there is a cost involved—an initial cost of time and energy. However, in the long run, once people find the truth that sets them free, they learn to go to God alone and there find peace and rest for their soul. They learn to trust God with their past, their present, and their future. They learn to walk in Truth and to have a relationship with a God who is alive and real. It is in this way that they learn to rely on the Lord instead of people. The more we read God's Word and allow it to take root in our hearts, the more real it is for each one of us that *thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* -Psa 119:105

Here is the reality. Usually when people struggle it's because they don't know what the problem is, nor what the answer is. Life seems confusing and out of control. When they are helped to see God's Truth about the matter and what His answer is, they can start moving forward. Once

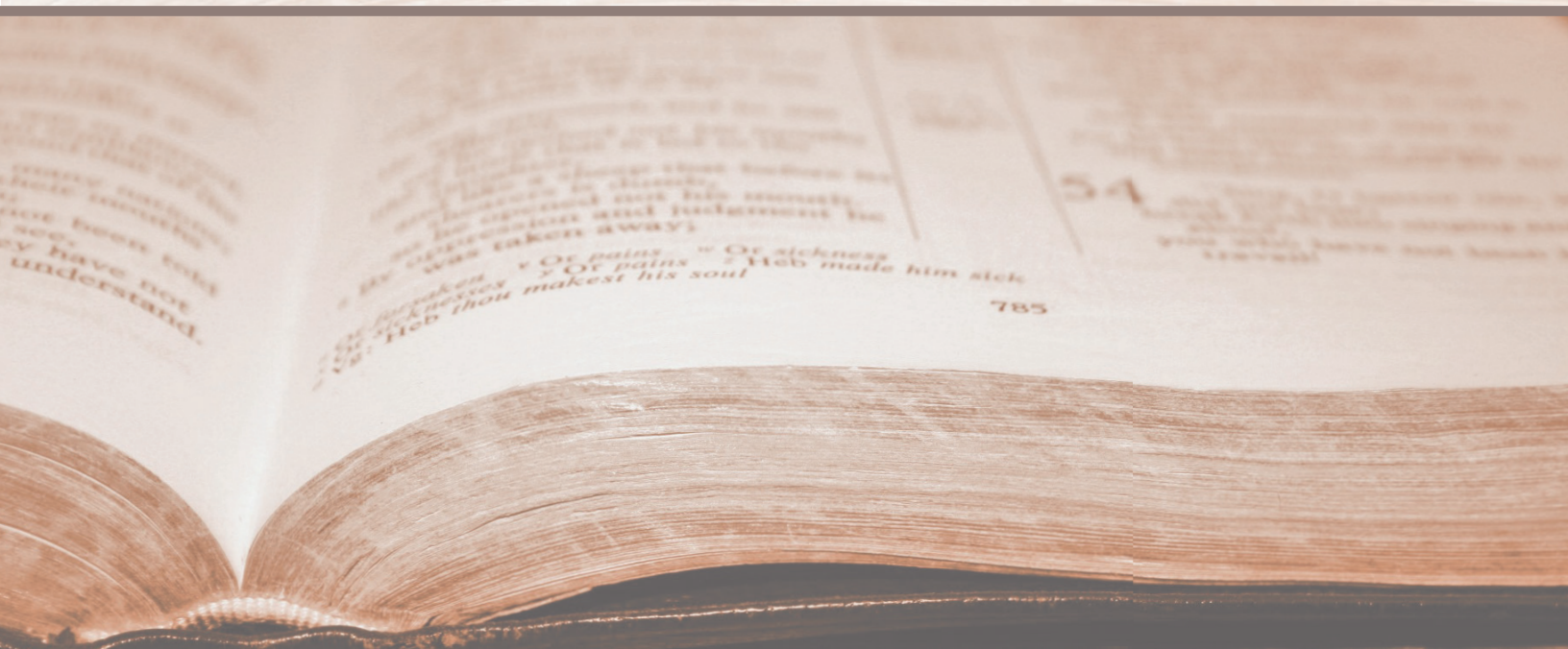
they see that God's way works, they start sorting more and more issues out for themselves. As this forward movement happens, they require less time and less input from others, since they are now able to go to God in their own closet and find His answers for their questions and troubles. Thus, in the long run, it takes less time when churches help their own by using a discipleship model, directing them to Christ and the Scriptures for the answers to their struggles.

It brings unity to the body

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! -Psa 133:1

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. -Eph 4:3-6

As churches use the simplicity of God's truth and endeavor to help their own people instead of sending them away, the one overriding benefit that comes by default *is unity*. This comes about because the local body is being practical in their one-anothering efforts. The one who is struggling is sharing his need in honesty and humility. The rest of the body is focused on lifting up the hands that are hanging down. The whole body sees the Lord as the Great Physician and as the one and only Counselor. They join hearts together in earnest prayer for help, direction, and answers. This works the same as a couple who stays humble and open with each other through life's difficulties—the more they share together, the more they are drawn together. Thus, a church that openly shares their problems and struggles with each other, endeavors to help each other, and prays for each other will naturally be drawn together in unity.



Despise Not Prophecyings

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Despise not prophecyings. -1 Thessalonians 5:20

A certain nostalgia surrounds the thought of prophecy, for it conveys the mystery of prediction. The prophets of old were passionate, persistent, and powerful men, who sought to awake the yawning crowd from their contented slumber. They employed God-inspired, extreme and creative means in their avid attempts to convict people of their presumptuous sins and arouse an awareness of God. They predicted that the present dream was about to end and that each would then give an account of themselves to God. Thus, a prophet is generally understood as one who both *pronounces* and *predicts*, yet, we commonly estimate his worth based solely upon the fulfillment of his predictions. -see *Deuteronomy 18:22*

While this is an accurate depiction of the prophet's pursuit, it is incomplete and fails to represent the majority of his calling. A more careful study of the subject will reveal that the Bible uses the words *prophet* and *prophecy* in several different ways. While predictions are certainly a tool of the prophet, there is much more that is to be conveyed through his prophecy. An unbalanced focus on the 'foretelling of time' may dull our ears to the 'forth-telling of truth', leaving an anemic understanding of his real significance for us today.

The prophet is to be the mouthpiece of Jehovah Himself, in uttering forth the divine message committed unto him. If he speaks no predictions, he is no less a prophet. It is because the predictive element of the prophet's message is so strong in our thinking, that we have come to confuse the matter to our own hurt. We feel less obligated to be affected by a prediction, for it may be proven false, so we hold the speaker suspect until he is fully vindicated by his words. But John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets and he did no miracle and made no prediction except the arrival of the One coming after him who was greater than he.

Prophecy is the instruction, and the prophet is the teacher. God's Word is written for all to read, but the prophet makes it practical. While many prophets in Israel prophesied the fall of Judah, the impending fate of the nation was not their

thrust. The burden of the message was that the people were responsible for the coming judgments and thus were the predictions meant to be correctional. Ahab blamed Elijah for calling for a three-and-a-half-year drought, but it was his own actions that occasioned it. The prophets linked the moral and spiritual defections of the offenders to the coming judgments. Jonah predicted that Nineveh would be overthrown in forty days, but Nineveh was not destroyed, yet we do not fault Jonah. Likewise, similar judgments were pronounced upon Israel in an effort to alter the course and conduct of the people. Thus, we must understand that a prophetic prediction outlines a coming event rather than creating that event. Christ foretold of wars throughout the age, but His prediction did not necessitate the wars.

Obviously, there were scriptures to be fulfilled. Apart from divine inspiration, Daniel could never have foretold the historical course set forth in the great image of the man and of ...*the stone [that] was cut out of the mountain without hands...* -*Daniel 2:45*. The betrayal of the Son of Man was another one of them, yet Judas is not without blame for its occasion. It is here we must realize that the thrust of the prophet is not found in predicting future events but in speaking forth the mind and heart of God and holding others accountable to it. It is on this ground that the prophet of the Lord meets his greatest opposition.

Stoning the Prophets

In the Parable of the Vineyard, the Lord sent forth servants (prophets) to the husbandmen (his people) requiring fruit. These were beaten, treated shamefully, despised, rejected, and sent away empty. In a narrow sense, these words were spoken prophetically against the Jews. *And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.* -*Matthew 21:45*. Yet, what sort of a preacher would limit this application strictly to the children of Israel? This parable accurately portrays the nature of all men and their tendency to despise the prophetic word. While we exalt the prophets of yesterday who are dead and

quote them to our heart's delight, as soon as we encounter a living one demanding more fruit than we desire to give, immediate resistance arises.

In the year that king Uzziah died... -Isaiah 6:1, a twenty-year-old youth by the name of Isaiah the son of Amoz volunteered to prophesy for the Lord—... Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. -Isaiah 6:8-10.

Christ quoted this verse as the reason He spoke in parables. He did not preach in pointed speech, for they could not endure plain prophecy. While the deceased Isaiah was among the most celebrated prophets of Christ's day, it was not so in his own. He prophesied for sixty years in the days of King Uzziah to King Hezekiah, and history would indicate that during the evil reign of Manasseh, he was sawn asunder. -see Hebrews 11:37.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! -Matthew 23:29-37

Such was the reception of the prophets then, and such is the reception of the prophets today. Thankfully our modern society is not so inclined to shed the blood of the men who speak for God, yet they still have little inclination to hearken to the message—*Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. -Isaiah 1:13, 14.*

The priests taught the traditions while the prophets told the truth. That old-time religion that was good enough for my fathers may not be good enough for God. There is nothing wrong with traditions as they stand, but when a prophet exposes the heart, those steeped in religious customs are often the first to reject him and the sparks fly upward.

Ahab counted Elijah as his enemy and hated Micaiah ... *for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil... -1 Kings 22:8.* But the prophet's goal is fruit for the Master. Selfishness stands stubbornly planted in the center of our barren field, and to this the prophet must speak. But this awakens a dawning problem. He is human, and humans are fallible. Those who know him best are well acquainted with his weaknesses and sin. Thus, ... *a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house -Matthew 13:57.* Today, men will give rapt attention to a visiting minister. He is novel, and they do not know him well. They also know that he will be departing for home soon and he will not be present to follow up on his words. It is similar with the prophet who is deceased, and we casually connect with his writings in a book. We interpret them through our own understanding and we rejoice that we are on the same team as he. But the prophet within the home church congregation is often despised, for he has been commissioned to...

...Root Out, and to Pull Down, and to Destroy, and to Throw Down... -Jeremiah 1:10

It takes no scholar to scan this job description and observe that the orientation of a prophet is predominantly negative. In fact, there is twice as much negative work as there is positive. But the modern church has no use for negative preachers and, thus, they despise them. I once had a church deacon on my doorstep heralding his church. I asked if his church allows television in their homes to which he affirmed, but that they only watch good things. I asked him if some watch the Green Bay Packers which he did not deny. I probed him to consider that this is modern day idolatry. At this he bristled and commented that they have a much more positive message. He then proceeded to laugh and label my message as legalistic. The modern church *is allergic* to anything that has any tint of a negative connotation and *is addicted* to anything sugar-coated with cheap grace. The Bible says... to put off the old man and to put on the new... in that order. Many seem to think that if they put on the new, the old will automatically fall off by itself. The prophet is sent to root out and pull down, completely to the ground. God does not follow the inclination to build upon a defective foundation. Nor does He sow His wheat among tares.

While much of the doctrine of present-day churches is

faulty, this one is among the worst. Many have grown so worldly that they see nothing to root out, nor pull down. Yet, there is another class of people who do understand the things that are amiss and still decline to root out and pull down simply because it is too difficult. These ... *watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. -Isaiah 56:10.*

Roots are deeply entrenched, and countless structures have been erected by well-meaning souls. These roots are doctrines long held, customs long practiced, sins long indulged, false traditions long supported, and worldly values long embraced. While an ambitious young preacher may energetically set his hand to the task, he soon will find the task profoundly impenetrable. He may adamantly point out the wrong, faithfully quote the pertinent scriptures, painstakingly prove the evil tendencies, and solidly reason of the consequences of the errors; still the hearts of men refuse to give in and a major storm arises. Men are deeply entrenched in their understanding. They have long supported it, and long poured their energies into it. Their arguments are not rooted in scriptural reason but in emotion. Prove the pagan roots of Christmas, the godless foundations of secular education, or the fact that the original Sunday schools were never intended for the children of Christians, and most men will care very little, while others will react with animosity. Add to the list the disgrace of women dominating the home and church, marriages consisting of partners that were previously vowed to others for life, and disrespectful children who must be entertained with sports, smart phones and videos; and the prophet has a lifetime of painful uprooting work before of him.

But Jeremiah is commonly referred to by a descriptive epithet. He is never called the prophet who rooted out, pulled down, destroyed, and threw down. He is known as the 'weeping prophet', for there is not a more effective way to convey a seemingly negative and difficult message than by loving the recipients to whom he must preach. *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. -2 Corinthians 2:4.* He only tore down so that he could effectively give himself...

...To Build and to Plant. -Jeremiah 1:10

While the uprooting must needs be, it is only meant for the interim and we ought to get it done and over with. There are some who never do anything but pull down and destroy. These are predominantly pride-laden egotists rather than true prophets of God. They oppose every church, prove

everyone wrong, proclaim everyone to be hirelings, and call all doctrine but their own, heresy. These know nothing about building and planting. A prophet's visionary calling is to nurture the conscience to sensitivity while building one another up in the fruit of faith, love, holiness, and humility and to ... *travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, -Galatians 4:19.*

As we can see, there is but a fine line between the *proud pessimist* and the *persistent prophet*. Perhaps the only way we can tell the difference is to examine his fruit, but even many of the old prophets had little to show for their years of faithful preaching. Noah prophesied for 120 years but was only able to save his own family. Herein lies another reason for the silence of the prophet. A minister must be *one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) -1 Timothy 3:4, 5.* Many men give themselves to preaching the Word, but do so to the neglect of their own children. If a prophet is to build and to plant, he must first do it at home. Those who fail, ought to leave the prophet's office and repair their own breach, but too often they don't. They often retain their position and omit the first two-thirds of their commission, just like the Old Testament prophet Eli did in response to the evil of his sons. *-See 1 Samuel 2:27-36.* The lukewarm and worldly souls love it and are delighted with the men who preach it. While the pulpits are inflicted with prophetic laryngitis, the money flows in and their churches are full. These are the prophets that ... *have daubed them with untempered mortar... -Ezekiel 22:28,* while God is seeking ... *for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap... -Ezekiel 22:30.*

Genuine building is painstaking and slow. It is to be accomplished with patience and tears. It is to be performed by one who cares enough about others that he will refuse to allow them to build upon a faulty premise, and by one who loves enough to demand that the laborers in the vineyard surrender good quality fruit unto their God. We need the vital prophetic message for it ultimately ushers in incessant hope. Hope for a new day when truth will roll down like an ever-flowing stream of righteousness from under the church doors. May the headwaters of that mighty river begin as streams coursing down the cheeks from men and women with such a vision. *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him -Psalm 126:5,6.* The rest ought to despise not prophesyings.





Vaccinations— Wrapping It Up

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With this article we hope to wrap up this series on vaccinations. In this series, I tried to show that while vaccines are effective, the development and production of some are based on immoral practices. We also considered the real risks of complications from vaccines. Finally, we introduced the idea that for a number of vaccines, the benefit is primarily for the society, then secondarily for the individual. This is why, for example, the medical community is vaccinating millions of children for polio, when there were only 22 cases worldwide in 2017.

This chart shows a summary of the major points we went over:

PROS (Pro-Vaccination)	CONS (Anti-Vaccination)
Protects the child against disease. (See Part 1, Autumn 2017)	Some vaccines were created and produced using aborted human fetal tissue. (See Part 3, Summer 2018)
Creates a “Herd” immunity to protect immune compromised (the very young and old, etc.) against disease. (See Part 1, Autumn 2017)	Exposes children to potentially harmful reactions and side effects. (See Part 4, Fall 2018)
Establishes the possibility of eradicating certain diseases. (See Part 1, Autumn 2017)	

Before trying to decide how it would be best for Christians to approach this issue, we should also consider these verses:

- *But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. -1 Timothy 5:8*
- *And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar’s. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. And they marvelled at him. -Mark 12:13-17*

So, does the vaccination of children, belong to Caesar's turf, or is it God's domain? Certainly, the state sees itself as having a role, yet most of us believe that the care of our children's physical needs is our God-given role.

Here's the "catch" (v.13); the state sees the welfare of children as being part of its turf, however, there is a recognition that parents almost always make the best decisions for their children. As such, almost all states have made "carve out" exceptions to laws requiring vaccinations—those who are religiously opposed (and for some states, those who have philosophical objections) may be excused from receiving the injections. In the United States, there are only three exceptions to this. Mississippi and West Virginia do not allow religious or philosophical exemptions, with the only permissible exemption in these states being that of a genuine medical reason. In 2016, California became the third state to not give allowance for any exemptions.

What are the penalties? In general, state laws exclude children (that have not been vaccinated) from public grade schools and high schools. The parents are also held to account if the child is truant (absent) because of this. (Furthermore, some of us have children who want to work in the medical field, yet most of those schools require certain vaccines, in which there are very few "work arounds.") Well, our children go to our church's Christian day school, so we're OK, right? In those three states, the answer is "No". The laws apply to both public and private schools. Do these laws cover homeschools? SO FAR, they **do not** apply to home schools.

Those of you who are breathing a sigh of relief, because you do not live in those states, and can use religious exemptions, consider this. Many state laws are written with the wording that an exemption is allowed **only** if receiving a vaccine violates a specific religious "tenet." For example, Jehovah Witnesses have a widely recognized and long-held practice (at least historically) of rejecting vaccines. There have been a number of court cases in which religious exemptions to vaccines have been rejected because the individual family, not the church, objects to vaccines. If the family objections have been backed up by an official, documented church tenet, a court challenge to those claims would have been less likely.

There is a website where people can check out all the vaccine laws in all the states. It can be found at this link:

<https://www.nvic.org/Vaccine-Laws/state-vaccine-requirements.aspx>

Below is a list of recent changes or current status of various states:

California

- In California Personal Belief Exemptions were phased out, starting in 1/1/16. They did allow religious exemptions for homeschool, but not private schools (Christian Day Schools) —Current Policy
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=HSC&division=105.&title=&part=2.&chapter=1.&article
- An attempt in 2018 to remove the application to private schools was defeated. (CA AB 2668)

Arizona

- AZ SB 1383 in 2018 Protections from state regulations about requiring immunizations of children of foster parents were removed. The bill died in committee.
<https://legiscan.com/AZ/text/SB1383/id/1698377>

Mississippi

- MS—No exemption for religious reasons. Applies to public and private schools. —Current Policy
<http://www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/static/14,0,71,688.html> <http://www.msdh.state.ms.us/msdhsite/static/resources/2029.pdf>
- MS—Multiple attempts to add religious and philosophical exemptions, failed in committee.
<https://legiscan.com/MS/bill/SB2059/2018>
<https://legiscan.com/MS/bill/HB1505/2018>

Hawaii

- HI — HB 779 (2018) Sought to expand exemptions to philosophical reasons — died in committee.

Minnesota

- MN — SF 3977 Sought to eliminate conscientious exemptions
https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=SF3977&version=latest&session=ls90&session_year=2018&session_number=0

New Jersey

- NJ — A3818 — Tightens religious exemption: includes "...an explanation of the nature of the

person's religious tenet or practice that is implicated by the vaccination, and how administration of the vaccine would violate, contradict, or otherwise be inconsistent with that tenet or practice;"

- A3818 passed Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee on 4/5/18

New York

- NY A3485 — Died — Ties vaccination compliance to being able to claim dependents on tax returns. "ALL MONIES RELATED TO A TAXPAYER'S FAILURE TO CLAIM HIS OR HER DEPENDENTS PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION, SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND USED SPECIFICALLY FOR VACCINATION AWARENESS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING."

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2017/A3485>

Oklahoma

- OK SB 1433 "adds in statute that refusal to vaccinate a child or delaying vaccination is not defined as "child abuse." In conservative Oklahoma, this bill did not receive enough support to pass through committee. Evidently, a majority of the committee felt that withholding vaccinations, as some level, may constitute "child abuse".

http://webserver1.lsb.state.ok.us/cf_pdf/2017-18%20SUPPORT%20DOCUMENTS/impact%20statements/fiscal/senate/SB1433%20INT%20FI.PDF

- OK SB 1123 sought to eliminate exemptions [R]
- OK SJR 57 sought to put a state constitutional amendment for the elimination of exemptions on the ballot for a vote.

<https://www.legiscan.com/OK/text/SJR57/2018>

Pennsylvania

- PA SB 217 (2017) Notwithstanding any rule or regulation to the contrary, a strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief may not qualify as an exemption from the immunization requirements of this section. This bill sought to

eliminate philosophical exemptions but did not pass.

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?syear=2017&body=S&type=B&bn=217>

Rhode Island

- RI H7686 — Attempted to add philosophical exemption —held for further study

<https://legiscan.com/RI/bill/H7686/2018>

West Virginia

- WV — "West Virginia does not grant non-medical exemptions." Applies to "public, private and parochial" schools. —Current Policy

<https://dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/immunization/requirements/Pages/Medical-ExemptionResource-Center.aspx> <http://code.wvlegislature.gov/16-3-4/>

- WV HB 2945 Sought to establish Religious and "Conscientious personal objection"—died in legislature.

http://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb2945%20intr.htm&yr=2017&sesstype=RS&i=2945

One final word on the legal front (as in the case of laws tightening up in California) is the importance of understanding that the legal landscape is constantly shifting and changing. Here is a snapshot of how the "winds of change have been blowing" over the last year or so. Legislators in Minnesota, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania **unsuccessfully sought to remove exemptions** (MN SF3977, NJ A3818, OK SB1123, PA SB217), while legislators in Hawaii, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and West Virginia **unsuccessfully tried to expand exemptions** (HI HB779, MS SB2059, RI H7686, WV BH2945). Curiously, New York legislators tried to tie child income tax deductions to vaccination status (NY A3485). Politically, you may have noticed that conservative states are just as likely to be more restrictive as liberal states. The reverse is also true! What is certain, is that change will happen, and it is good to have a ready answer.

So, what is church and family to do? First, pray for wisdom. Then research the topic well. Consider the medical, ethical, and spiritual aspects. It is not unimaginable that in some future time, the authorities will REQUIRE vaccinations—NO EXCEPTIONS! As a church body of parents given the duty of protecting our children,



yet at the same time being a nonresistant people, we would then have to discern: are any convictions we have due to personal objections to vaccines or is submitting to vaccinations a violation of Godly principles? In such a scenario, do we give to Caesar what is Caesar's (Matthew 22:21)—submitting ourselves, even at the cost of potential bodily harm (such as our forefathers had done)? Or do we "...obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)?

In either case, it is important to at least discuss this as a church body, to seek God's direction. The state will be more likely to recognize an individual family's claim to an exemption, if the Church can show that it has a long established and clearly stated position in writing. Again, I would recommend that all church bodies put these thoughts into words. I have aided churches in the past in doing so and can provide samples of what a group can come up with.

Some have asked me how our family has done vaccines. We have given our children the required vaccines. (They are now all young adults.) Lori and I felt that we needed to not protect only our children from disease but also our neighbor's children and the elderly as well, through our community's herd immunity (even if there was a slightly increased risk to our children). For those still fearful of the adverse effects to their children—we understand;

one of our children contracted a severe, life-changing complication due to a vaccine she received before we had the blessing of adopting her. The vaccine in question is no longer being used because of this specific adverse effect. This problem was discovered largely due to vigilant clinicians and parents, working together, seeking for the best way to care for the next generation.

Finally, regarding the morally-tainted vaccines, we (as a family) had the following thoughts. Since these vaccines have been used primarily for community health, we felt that if the authorities could provide us with an ethical vaccine, we would comply. Sadly, they didn't seem willing to accommodate our views, but fortunately, we were able to obtain alternative vaccines from Japan as a substitute for those vaccines that were tainted (those derived from, and produced on, aborted fetal cell tissue cultures). (For parents and leaders interested in going this route, I would be happy to show the way.) Yet if we would not have been able to obtain these vaccines, (and since our family was taking on a small, but increased risk, and since the risk to the community was also small), if an ethical vaccine was not available that did not use aborted fetal tissue cell lines, we would feel the need to conscientiously refuse to use them, even if there was no religious or philosophical exemption provided by the state.

SUPPLEMENT—I have provided the following lists for your reference:

Vaccines that are given to try to eradicate now rare diseases (Primarily used to create herd immunity):

- Mumps
- Measles
- Rubella
- Polio

Main Vaccines produced on aborted fetal tissue cell strains:

- Mumps
- Measles
- Rubella
- Varicella (some — Shingrix is OK)
- Hepatitis A
- Polio (some — Imovax, IPOL are OK)
- Rabies (some — Rabavert is OK)

Top Vaccines that offer significant protection to potentially common serious diseases:

(If you had to choose the most important vaccines to have, these are every-day life savers.)

- DTP (The tetanus spore is ubiquitous (soil, animal, human stools, with up to 300,000 cases of lock jaw/year worldwide).
- H. flu (Not to be confused with the “flu” shot)
- Influenza (80,000 deaths in the US in 2018!)
- Pneumococcus (The “pneumonia” shot—for adults AND children. 900,000 cases/year in the USA, about 50,000 deaths per year SINCE the vaccine was introduced. 40% unvaccinated.)

In conclusion, here are my final recommendations:

- Pray for **wisdom**.
- Gather **knowledge**. (I have provided numerous sources and resources for your use.)
- Discern the **truth**. (Make sure its not driven by emotions, fear-mongering, or conspiracy theories.)
- Is it accurate information, or is it misinformation?
- Is it personal preferences, or is it Godly principles?
- Discuss and agree on a policy as a church body. (And put it in writing.)

- Act on your convictions, as the Spirit leads.
- Obtaining ethical alternatives will take some work, though I can help point the way.

May He grant you each of us wisdom and conviction: *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. -Proverbs 4:7*

A Word from the Editor:

We have finally reached the end of this series on vaccinations. We wish to express a big thank you to all for your patience as we have tried to wade through the issues. Our goal was to be neither “pro” nor “anti” on the matter. The sole reason for writing on this subject was to reveal that there is an ethical concern about using vaccinations since they are derived from, and grown on, tissue taken from aborted fetuses. We have endeavored to do our best to present as fair and as balanced of a view as possible.

It has been interesting to interact with our readers regarding this subject. There were several concerns shared along the way, but most responses were that of appreciation about having the information available to read through and to consider. We appreciate all the feedback we have received and invite any more input someone may have.

Moving Forward

As you see towards the end of the article, Dr Miggiani is open to anyone who desires his input on practical ways for churches to put together written policies on this matter. Written policies should be more legally binding in any possible future situations.

Also, currently there doesn't seem to be any viable alternative options available for those wishing to maintain the herd immunity through vaccinating their children in the U.S. Years ago, Dr. Miggiani's family found vaccines that were ethically safe available from Japan. Since that was years ago, there would need to be new research done on the matter. If there are those who see this as an important matter needing attention, Dr Miggiani would be interested in communicating with you to see what could be put into place for the benefit of the greater Anabaptist community. If anyone wishes to dialogue with him on these matters, please contact us and we will pass it on to him.

Booklet Project

Finally, we are in the process of compiling this series of articles on vaccinations into a booklet. If any of you have an interest in this, please contact us with a phone or email we can use to let you know once they are finished.



A Tame Wolf

(Author unknown) The Heartbeat of the Remnant—May/June 2004 Revised—December 2018

Awolf can be tamed, but no matter how carefully you may train it, it will still be a wolf. Its wild nature may break out at any time. Some years ago, a gentleman brought a young wolf home from Russia. It became so tame that it followed him about like a dog. Even his children played with it, yet it never harmed any of them in the least. But one day its old nature broke out, and it attacked its master. Vainly the man fought off the beast and would certainly have been killed, had not another man come to his assistance and shot the brute.

There are some people who think you can do for man what we cannot do for a brute—change his nature by means of careful training. This has often been attempted, but there is no known single case in which it has ever succeeded. Indeed, it can never succeed, for the Bible tells us that this change, without which no one can enter heaven, is the doing of the Lord. David prayed, *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.* -Psalm 51:10. The Apostle Paul describes it thus, *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* -2 Corinthians 5:17. And Peter speaks of it as us becoming partakers of the divine nature -2 Peter 1:4.

A change this great can never be produced by mere human agency. It is the work of God, and of God alone, by His Divine Spirit. Outward reformation **can never** change the heart. If the great inward change is not produced in us by the grace of God, sin will one day reassert its mastery over us, and will prove our destruction.

God works by His means and in His own appointed way. God employs the gospel and the ministry of the Word for this end. Therefore, if we desire this change we must hear and accept His Word; and we must go to God in prayer, asking Him to work within us this change of heart by His Holy Spirit.

Remember that NO person can enter heaven without this change. Ponder the truth that Jesus said, ... *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* -John 3:5. You will not enter heaven if you die before taking this step of obedience as the Scripture saith ... *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:* -Hebrews 9:27. Is it wise or safe to risk our eternal existence in this way?

God's Word makes it very clear:

- There is NONE righteous—ALL people are sinners without Christ -Romans 3:10-12; 5:12; Isaiah 53:6
- As sinners, ALL people are doomed for an eternity

separated from God -Romans 6:23; Galatians 5:19; Revelation 21:8

- Without Jesus Christ, everyone is spiritually lost -Luke 19:10
- Before Christ can change an individual's heart, they must first realize that they are a sinner -Luke 5:31-32
- Everyone must confess their own sins -1 John 1:9, Romans 10:9-10
- Everyone must repent of their own sinfulness in order to be right with God -Acts 2:38
- Each person must believe -Mark 1:15; John 1:12; 7:39; 8:24; Hebrews 11:6

...Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. -Mark 9:24 God tells us that, *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* -Luke 11:13 Finally, the Scriptures tell us there is only one way for this change to take place—*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* -Ezekiel 36:26-27 Once this change takes place, the Scriptures say that that individual is *in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* -2 Corinthians 5:17

If you have never been born again of God's Spirit (John 3:5-7), don't keep putting it off. Earnestly seek the Lord with godly sorrow, *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* -2 Corinthians 7:10 Agree with the Lord about your sinful condition. Ask Him to take away your old heart and to give you a new one. Repent of ALL areas that His Word says is sin. Choose to walk in the ways of righteousness. Choose to obey the Scriptures and walk accordingly by faith.

The Scriptures assure us that, *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.* -Psalm 103:8-11 And the Lord promises us that *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* -1 John 1:9



Storage Shed—Office/Storage



From the beginning of our ministry in 2015, we have not had any dedicated office or storage space. Several of us were using spare space in our homes, which often has ended up intruding into our living space. At times we have found this to be somewhat challenging, but we wanted to try to be frugal with the money God gave us to work with.

Over the past year we have discussed the growing need to do something about dedicated office space and to spread the work out among more people. Towards the end of the year, we (as a board) all agreed that it was time to move forward with this need. So, we shared this need with a number of our readers and with several local churches.

The Lord has richly blessed us through the gracious financial gifts many of you have given. A number of people donated their time to build a 14 x 24 storage building for us. Several supply companies donated materials or offered a discount on products purchased for this project. Others donated time to help insulate and finish the inside of the new building. And still others helped with the wiring, lighting, and flooring. A big thank you to all who so generously helped with this project.

This building has been installed on a newly prepared gravel pad at Craig Baumans. As a family, Craigs will be taking over the mailing list, the subscription email, the ministry phone, the resource inventory, and the sending out of all requested CDs and printed literature (other than the Remnant magazine). Hopefully, we will be able to complete this transfer within the next month. This will free up Curvin Wenger’s family to have more time to dedicate to the editing and layout of printed literature, plus the discipleship part of the ministry. Please pray for us as we make this change and as we continue moving forward on other projects.

Craig Bauman—featured board member

Brother Craig was appointed treasurer at the start-up of our ministry in 2015. We are very grateful for his many hours of faithful service as he has fulfilled these responsibilities. Other than his duties as the treasurer for The Berean Voice, he spends much of his time in his wood shop, where he specializes in cabinetry and other such projects.

Craig has been married to Diane for 33 years. The Lord has blessed them with ten children, of which two are married. They currently have three grandchildren, which bring them much joy. Some over four years ago, the Baumans moved to Ohio from Wyoming. After their move to this community, they joined our church, Faith Christian Fellowship. A year or so later we divided into two churches on opposite ends of the county, since our church was filled to capacity. At that time Craigs stayed with Shining Light Christian Fellowship, the west church, where they have continued to faithfully serve the Lord.



Est. Average—Costs Per Quarter

Office Equipment	\$350
Shipping Expenses	\$250
Staff Expenses	\$4,500
Magazine Publication	\$12,500
Software/Phone/Internet	\$500
Office Supplies	\$200
Office Expenses	\$450
CD & Literature Inventory	<u>\$1,200</u>
	\$19,950

An annual financial report will be available upon request each year after February 1st.

This Mind Which Was In Christ

By Rebecca Weber

Inspired by a message at Youth Bible School in 2016

Lead me down, my Master—

Down the way You came;

Leaving all behind You—

Let me do the same.

Down into the valley

Where no human praise

Comes to make me lofty,

Comes to rule my days.

Lead me down, my Master—

Into servitude

To the sinful lowly—

Reputation skewed.

Down into Your suffering

Justice was denied.

Pain, humiliation,

Leave no room for pride.

Lead me down, my Master—

Down unto the cross

Where my self must perish—

And with it, all the dross.

Down in meek acceptance;

My goal a simple one:

That glory would be added

To God and to His Son.

Lead me down, my Master—

Deeper into You;

Till the resurrection

Comes to make things new.

Then at last in glory

To You I will ascend,

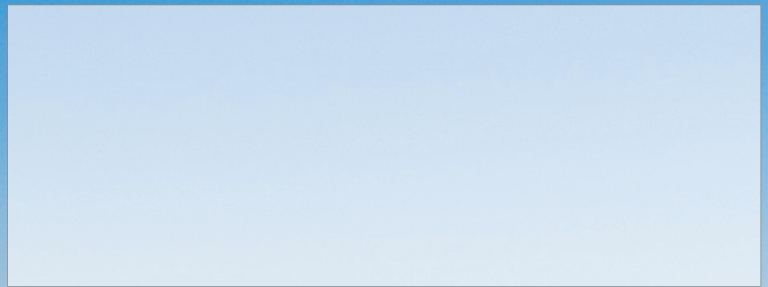
Reign with You in Heaven,

And praise You without end!

The Heartbeat of
The Remnant

c/o The Berean Voice
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Shreve, Ohio 44676

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Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 6:10-11