

The Heartbeat of

The Remnant

Published by
"The Berean Voice"

"I [Jesus] am come that they might have life..." John 10:10

Volume 21, Issue 1

Winter 2017



~ **Nonresistance vs. Pacifism**
Do You Know The Difference?
How & Why Does It Matter?
- see page 12

~ **The World or God—Child Rearing**
Who Understands Children?
Who Should We Trust?
- see page 23

~ **The Bible and a Dictionary**
How Are They The Same?
How Are They Different?
- see page 16

~ **Doctors or Midwives**
Which One Is Safer?
Which One is More Godly?
- see page 29

Magazine Contact Info

The Heartbeat of the Remnant
c/o The Berean Voice

P.O. Box 279

Shreve, Ohio 44676

Phone: (330) 439-9547

website: www.bereanvoice.org

~Email Contacts Below~

Questions or Comments

editor@bereanvoice.org

Address Changes & Subscriptions

(Free Subscriptions - Donation Funded)

subscribe@bereanvoice.org

Submitting Articles, Poems, & Photos

(please contact us for requirements)

submit@bereanvoice.org

"The Berean Voice" is an outreach ministry or ***integrated auxiliary*** of Faith Christian Fellowship, a church located in Holmes County, Ohio. It is operated by a board of directors and ultimately answers to the elders of the church.

As a non-profit ministry, it is our goal to be working 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.

Board of Directors

Willis Yoder	Chairman
Joel Hostetler	Vice-Chairman
Craig Bauman	Treasurer
Caleb Keller	Secretary
Curvin Wenger	Editor
Joe Tindall	Member
Matt Miller	Member
Mark Mast	Member

C o n t e n t s

<u>Page</u>	<u>Title</u>
3	From The Editor
4	Preserving the Childlike Spirit
8	Attributes & Nature of the True God
12	Nonresistance vs. Pacifism
16	Any More from Heaven?
20	Know Them Which Labor Among You
23	Understanding A Child's Nature
26	Outside-the-Church Counseling
29	What About Midwifery?
34	Is Thy God Able? (sister's)
38	The Circle Problem (youth)
42	Our Readers Respond
43	Ministry Updates/Financial Report

Reprint Policy

All material in this magazine may be copied and reprinted in its entirety, with no editing, so long as there is no credit or copyright information listed. Any article which we used by permission, must have special permission to reprint. When copying or reprinting any material, please use our complete name and address as listed in the "magazine contact info" on this page. Also, please reference the magazine: date and issue number, along with the volume number.

~ The Berean Voice Board

"This magazine is for the building up of God's Kingdom and is available free of charge to anyone wishing to receive it. In order to help our mailing costs, please consider getting a bulk shipment (5 or more copies) with others—your church, family, friends, etc. Also, please prayerfully consider supporting this work financially in order to keep it going and to help make it available for the less fortunate and for those on the mission field. May God richly bless you all."

**Please make donations payable to: The Berean Voice
and send to the address at the top of this page.**

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings of Christian love to our readers,

A New Year

It is hard to believe that we already have such a good head-start into another year. I sit here reflecting back a number of years to the time when we were approaching the end of 1999 and there was a lot of apprehension regarding the term Y2K. We were just about to make the transition from one time era to another—a year, a decade, a century, and yes, even a millennium. It seemed as though the whole world was waiting with “bated breath” for that last second...and then what?

That second in history has come and gone; actually, most of us hardly ever pause to reflect on that moment in time. We are rushing on with all of our present duties: raising children, earning a living, witnessing for the Lord, being busy doing the Lord's work, etc. However, are we remembering to live our lives as though every moment is just like it was back then at the end of 1999?

I find that it does me good at times to stop and ponder where I am in life and what the Lord may be trying to get my attention about. So often I find that I can be so busy with all that life has to offer, that I am much like Lazarus' sister Martha in the Bible. She was completely focused on doing and serving, to the point that the Lord had to gently rebuke her. “And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41-42) This was the answer to the frustration she expressed about her sister Mary who had been sitting at the feet of Jesus, sharing with Him and learning of Him, instead of being busy like Martha, with the earthly cares and duties of life.

May we each, in this new year, remember to take the time to sit at the feet of Jesus. Let us learn of Him, and allow ourselves to be filled with His Father's Word, the Bible. As we do this we will be blessed indeed, just like Mary was. Here is just one aspect that will take place in our lives, We will “not sin [willfully] against” God. (Psalm 119:11) I will stop with just that one blessing and encourage each

of you to take the time to search the Scriptures for yourself, to discover, or else to be reminded, just how many promises we have been given as we feed on God's heavenly manna, the Holy Scriptures.

Magazine Details

The ministry of The Berean Voice had been started in the year of 2015, with one of the goals being that of starting a doctrinal newsletter of some sort. Towards the end of 2015, the Lord opened the door for us to consider taking over the publication of an established magazine, “The Heartbeat of the Remnant”. As we prayed about this possibility, we came to a place of peace, believing the Lord had orchestrated these events. So even though this was a much larger project than we had originally been anticipating, we took a step (leap) of faith.

The magazine had been out of print for over two years, the mailing list was outdated, and we had never been involved in this type of venture before. Looking back, we really had no idea what all was involved in publishing a newsletter. There were all the legal aspects of becoming established as a recognized non-profit organization with the government, the post office, the bank, plus many other things.

Anyway, so much for all that, we won't bore you with more details. However, we would like to say that this first year has been somewhat of a challenge to get everything in place and finished in a timely manner. We are endeavoring to print the magazine quarterly, though we have fallen somewhat behind schedule. For this, we would ask your patience as we strive to get things back on track in this coming year. Our goal will be to continue to publish each new issue a week or two sooner than the last, until we are back to printing each quarterly issue at the beginning of each quarter. Thank you all so much for your understanding in this matter.

Other Matters

There are several other things that should be mentioned in this issue as well. First of all, there have been a number of you who responded to the request in our first issue, when we mentioned that we were looking for people to write articles, poems,

- continued on page 36

VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING



Then were there brought unto him little children,
that he should put his hands on them, and pray:
and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said,
Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come
unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

~ Matthew 19:13-14

Preserving the Childlike Spirit

~ Lee Rufener

Oh, blessed thought—"for of such is the kingdom of heaven". Children are as natural as the dawning day, as vibrant as a cool breeze, and as wonderful as the first flower of spring. What an adventurous concept to uplift the spirit of a little child as the epitome of Christianity.

The childlike heart is the one attribute that all citizens of God must possess if they ever wish to attain anything in the kingdom of our God. We need not be learned, though knowledge is useful. We need not be gifted, though gifts are imparted by God and He is to be thanked for them. We need not even be prudent, though modern living calls for it. But, of necessity, we must be childlike. On this, Christ takes an unalterable stand. (Matthew 18:3-4)

Wisdom is nearer when we stoop than when we soar. Thus, we observe our Lord stooping to reach the children, and, in the same stroke, rising to the crown of life. I would believe that in every noble and great man there are tokens and traces of a childlike heart. It is the diminutive fool who buries his spiritual life in a napkin. We may insulate ourselves from intervention, harm, loss, inconvenience, and anything else that would disturb our world, but in so doing, we lock our talent in a padded cell and forfeit the happy adventuresome spirit of the little child.

Our kingly Lord preached in the synagogues, healed diseases, raised the dead, rebuked the Pharisees, cast out demons, and our hearts respond with a hearty, "Amen!" But we also light on passages about the lilies, about the sparrow falling, and the raven who toiled not. These pictures paint a scene so fresh, penetrating, and

inspiring that we must sit in awe and stare at the Christ conversing with the child on His knee.

In all the conflict that He endured, no scoffing hardened Him. No disappointment soured Him. No pain dulled the keen edge of His love. He loved life and still believed, in spite of Judas Iscariot. He adored his Father, even though that is what led him to Calvary. And that sweet spirit, as of a little child, has been the dew of heaven to the world ever since.

The exhortation, to "let the little children come", encompasses a far broader swath than a mere rebuke to His disciples. It exemplifies that the spirit of the child never died in Jesus and leaves us with the lingering question, "Lord, is it I?"

This spirit can die so slowly and so gradually under the pressures of worldly commerce that we hardly notice how far we have drifted. However, the greatest losses are those we never recognize.

In the battle and in the fray, the seasoned warrior may not notice that amidst his religious fervor and spiritual combat, the foundations of his Christianity may have totally eroded away and crumbled to dust. There is no loss more tragic for a soul than the loss of that spirit of the little child.

Perhaps that is why the Lord mentioned, that "... whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6). This is as strong of language as there is. To offend a child is a sin of such significant magnitude that there is hardly an equal.

Now we will look at some of the vicious offenders of the child-like spirit.

Anger

Fathers are exhorted to “provoke not your [their] children to anger lest they be[come] discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). As parents, we want our children to grow up and mature into a lifestyle that honors us and God. And so, we provoke them to do so. This is not wrong, as long as it is immersed in grace. When grace is thin and disapproval drapes the environment like a formidable cloud, this discourages the child and anger is the inevitable result.

The wonder of life is lost in the disparagement of the clash. Anger robs the Christian of the wonder of life. What a poor thing life is, when the wonder of it all passes away.

Whenever we exalt our personal understanding, we become angry. When our plans are crossed, our wishes are ignored, and our understanding is breached, anger is the gourd that brings death to the pot (II Kings 4:39-40). “...Let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Ephesians 4:26). Children do not, but when adults do, they rise on the morrow to be greeted by the cup of—bitterness...

Bitterness

The joy of childhood is its receptivity. The greatest duty of it is to receive. But we have so overlaid this present with yesterday's sin and with tomorrow's prospects, that we have little heart for today's message.

Bitterness is the hardening of the heart, and it feeds on the offense of yesterday's dust, so that there is no vacancy left for the dew of the morning.

We are to take no fretful thought for the morrow, and neither shall we be anxious for yesterday's pain. We must consider the lilies and be a child again. Life is laden with plenteous mishaps and abuse, and it is much too short to spend our time cataloging each one of them.

Those who refuse to let the little children come and exemplify for them the cure of their petty and feverish feuds, will find themselves steeped in—cynicism...

Cynicism

There is an exquisite purity about the faith of children. Cynicism is the adult expression of unbelief. It is a desperate attempt to salvage our fleeting dignity and thwart off the inner feeling of disparagement that is slowly gnawing away at us like a cancer.

Ishmael lived for fourteen years as the favored and first-born son of the mighty Abram. At one time, he was even believed by his father to be the child of promise. But, as time progressed, and the birth of Isaac was celebrated, the pent-up anger, resentment, and bitterness began to erode the child-like spirit within him.

Perhaps it was the spiteful feelings which his mother had harbored toward her mistress that had been unwisely passed along to him and corroded his character. And thus, we find the unfortunate dilemma of a distraught youth spewing forth mockery and cynicism toward his brother.

Nobody enjoys being displaced, but each demotion in life must be received in faith, believing that God has an eternal good at the heart of it all. Better it is to trust than to be trusted. Better to walk by faith than by sight. For if the spirit of the child dies out, we forfeit our only avenue to life and our path becomes the slow journey to—death...

Death

Children love life. They can take a sordid afternoon and, with a little imagination, turn it into a carnival. They can sit in a cardboard box and sail around the world, then back again in time for supper. Their inquisitively curious minds are on a constant and far-reaching voyage in search of a new adventure. From sunrise to sunset they are

on a continuous quest to learn and explore the mysteries of life.

The childlike Christian, experiences life in a similar fashion. He has his world, just as the children do—in Christ, old things have all passed away from him. Within that new creation where the Savior reigns, and which each unconverted heart has never seen, there is a deep settled peace, that brings contentment and fullness of joy, and which isolates the heart from the world around.

But it is not so with the offended. This soul must be busy in other men's matters, whether it be the evils of the government officials or mental surmisings within the local church. The affairs of others are all a personal

Bitterness is the
hardening of
the heart,
and it feeds on
the offense of
yesterday's dust,
so that there is
no vacancy left
for the dew of
the morning.

offense to him, and, by responding in this manner, he embraces the death of the childlike spirit.

Where Age and Innocence Meet

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God..." (Luke 2:25-28)

No more beautiful scene could hardly be imagined than this meeting of age and infancy in the temple, that day, so many years ago. As we read the story of Jesus, we find Him surrounded on all sides by hypocrisy. Until we begin to wonder if there was any true religion left in them who haunted those sacred courts.

But here the curtain is briefly drawn aside, and we get a glimpse of an elderly Jewish man and woman. Oh, the surprise, as we find them living holy lives, separated from the world, all the while longing for the advent of the Messiah. Who they were, no one knows; what they were, everyone knows. These were two faithful believers, who had kept the faith in spite of the soul-damning temptations around them.

God's house had been transformed into a den of thieves, but these faithful souls resisted the urge to be angry, bitter, and cynical. They fought the waves of death through a childlike spirit, and prevailed.

Perseverance

Age need not deter our hope. Those days were very dark days for Israel. John the Baptist had yet to sound his trumpet and everything seemed hopeless for the Jews. Some of the noblest of them had, no doubt, taken refuge in despair. But this brave soul waited *for the consolation of Israel*, and we know now that his waiting was not in vain. If his hope had only been in temporal conditions, it would have withered long ago.

The noise, smell, and chaos created from the buying and selling of animals in the temple would be enough to discourage or anger many devout believers. But being rooted in childlike faith and in fellowship with God, we behold its fruition for Simeon. He overcame the hell around him by clinging to the hope be-

fore him. *He set his focus on the fullness of God rather than the fallacy of man.* [emphasis added]

Prayer

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:36-38)

Prayer is a living expression of faith. As a young widow, Anna was no stranger to pain, and she learned through the struggle to commit her needs to God in prayer.

We pray not for the things we have, but for the things we have not. We pray when life's circumstances batter our ship and we feel like we are perishing. We pray when we have no other recourse. We pray out of duty because we believe that God inhabits the prayers of the saints. It is prayer that brings us time and time again to the posture of a child. Like barren Hannah of old we rise from our knees and our stale countenance is *sad no more*.

Praise

"Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God ... And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord." We can hardly fathom the power that is unleashed when we praise. When we notice the good that God has bestowed upon us and give thanks for all things, the clouds disperse. A new day dawns about us, though our outward circumstances may change very little.

This was the case of this honorable duo who had successfully preserved the childlike spirit in a dying and cancerous nation. Herein, lies the freedom from personal depravity and the escalation of the first love that our parched and thirsty land is in such desperate need of today. The pure in heart shall see God and when they shall see him, so shall they praise him.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (Jude 1:21)

Recall Notice

~ Source Unknown

ATTENTION!

GOD, the Maker of all human beings is recalling all units manufactured, regardless of make, model, or year, due to a serious defect in the primary and central component of the heart. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units, code named Adam and Eve, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect has been identified as “**Sub-sequential **Internal **Non-morality,”** more commonly known as **S.I.N.**, as it is primarily expressed.****

Some of the symptoms include:

Loss of direction
Foul vocal emissions
Amnesia of origin
Lack of peace and joy
Selfish or violent behavior
Depression or confusion
Fearfulness
Idolatry
Rebellion

The Manufacturer, who is neither liable nor at fault for this defect, is providing factory-authorized repair and service, free of charge, to correct this defect. The Repair Technician, **JESUS**, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. There is no additional fee required. The number to call for repair in all areas is:

P-R-A-Y-E-R.

Once connected, please upload your burden of **SIN** through the **REPENTENCE** procedure. Next, download **ATONEMENT** from the Repair Technician, **JESUS**, into the heart component.

No matter how big or small the **SIN** defect is, **JESUS** will replace it with the following:

Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Faithfulness
Gentleness
Self-control

Please see the operating manual, the **B.I.B.L.E.** (**Best Instructions Before Leaving Earth**) for further details on the installation and application of these fixes.

WARNING – Continuing to operate the human being without these necessary corrections, will void ALL manufacturer warranties. Additionally, this will expose the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list, and will result in permanent impoundment of the human being. For free 24-hour emergency service, call on **JESUS**.

DANGER – Any human being units not responding to this recall action will have to be scrapped in the furnace of Hell. The **S.I.N.** defect will not be permitted to enter Heaven, in order to prevent contamination of that facility. Thank you for your prompt and urgent attention to this matter!

P.S. Please assist with this urgent message whenever or wherever possible, by notifying others of this important recall notice. You may contact the Father any time by ‘Knee Mail’!

BECAUSE HE LIVES!



Attributes & Nature of the True God

~ Harold S. Martin

One of the great needs in the church, and in the world, today—is a new conviction about the greatness, majesty, holiness, and nature of the living God. Many people in Western society today say they believe in God, but their ideas about God are often almost pagan in content. Many people have no idea what kind of God they believe in.

I read about a group of younger people sitting around a table some time ago, discussing very seriously some of the deeper issues of life.

One young man asked, “Who, at this table, believes in God?”

There was a long silence.

Then, one said, “I believe in a spirit of goodness that connects all mankind.” Another said, “For me, god is nothing more than kindness and happiness and all sorts of good things.” Still another said, “I think there are little chunks of God in everyone—and that’s that!”

That’s how many people in the Western culture are thinking today. One of our greatest needs is to build a conviction about who the true and living God really is! The loftiest thinking that can ever engage the human mind is thinking about the name, the existence, the person, and the work of the one and only true God.

I suppose that almost all who are reading this article would boldly say that they believe in the living God revealed in the Bible—but faith is sometimes put to a test. We believe in a personal God, but what kind of God is He?

I don’t know the answers to all the tough questions that one can ask about God—but I’m convinced that the God who reveals Himself in the Bible—is real and

active, and in absolute control of the universe, and is closely related to the events of our lives.

1. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The term “God’s attributes” speaks of those characteristics that describe God’s being. Some of the characteristics that describe God’s being are listed below.

a. Omniscience

God knows everything—He has complete and perfect knowledge of all things. God knows the past—the Bible says, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18). God knows the present—even the number of hairs on each of our heads (Matthew 10:30). And God knows the future—“There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known . . . what shall be in the latter days” (Daniel 2:28).

b. Omnipotence

God is all powerful—He has infinite power—there is nothing that God cannot do. God’s power is evident in creation. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them [all the starry skies] by the breath of his mouth” (Psalm 33:6). Fifty-six times the Bible declares that God is “the Almighty one”—perhaps expressed most clearly in Revelation 19:6, which says that the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.

c. Omnipresence

God is everywhere present. This does not mean that God is somehow diffused through space, with parts of Him located everywhere. It does mean that every-

thing is included within the scope of God's vision and reach.

In Psalm 139:8, David says, "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." The point of the message in Psalm 139:7-12 is that there is no place in the entire universe—on land or on sea, in Heaven or in Hell—where one can escape from God's presence. The positive blessing of this truth is that none of us is ever alone.

Jesus says, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

d. Holiness and Justice

God is absolutely perfect in all His ways. There is not a single blemish or flaw in His character. God is never partial. He never plays favorites. We read in Deuteronomy 32:4 that God is "a God of truth, and without iniquity—just and right is He."

e. Love and Mercy

The Bible says that "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Psalm 103:8). Grace is the undeserved, unearned, incredible kindness of God. There are a number of ways to define grace and mercy, but perhaps the most meaningful way to describe those two characteristics of His being is to say: *Grace is getting from God what we do not deserve*—God gives salvation, even though we do not deserve it. *Mercy is not getting from God what we do deserve*—God withholds judgment, even though He would absolutely have every right to give it.

f. The Wrath of God

In this age when multitudes are given to greed and pride and sex and self-will, the church is basically quiet about God's wrath. Instead, many church leaders ramble on and on about God's kindness—saying nothing about His judgment. How often, in the past year or two, have you heard a sermon about the wrath of God?

Just as the Bible points out that God is good (to those who trust Him), the Scriptures declare that God is terrible to those who reject Him. Second Thessalonians 1:7-10 says in essence that the Lord Jesus will return some day in blazing fire, and will punish (will take vengeance on) those who know not God, and who do not obey the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be punished with everlasting destruction, and will be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

Why should we—when the Bible is so clear—feel awkward and silent when the subject of judgment

comes up, and evade the issue when we're asked about it?

God's wrath is not rage, bad temper, or cruelty. God is not a cruel monster. God's wrath is something which people choose for themselves. The person who rejects Christ prefers to be by himself, without God, defying God's offer of salvation—and at the time of judgment, God will respect that human choice! *Nobody stands under God's wrath, unless he has chosen to do so!* The Apostle Paul says in Romans 5:9, that since we have now been justified by Christ's blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him?

g. The Goodness of God

This attribute means that God is compassionate and gracious and slow to anger. He is unfailing in tenderness and forbearance. Psalm 145:9 says, "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." And several times in Psalm 107, the psalmist says, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

God controls all that happens in the world—every meal, every wholesome pleasure, every bit of sun, every night of sleep, every moment of health, and everything else that sustains and enriches life—all these are gifts from God.

However, Romans 11:22 reminds us to behold the goodness and the severity of God. God sometimes uses severity to discipline us, to awaken us, and to remind us not to fall into complacency—lest we take His goodness for granted.

In Luke 13:4, Jesus reminded His followers about the tower in Siloam, which fell (in Jesus' day) and killed innocent people. Although it was a disaster, Jesus said this tragedy did not indicate that those victims were worse sinners than the people who lived in Jerusalem. No! Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!" (Luke 13:5). The lesson to be learned from that kind of disaster, Jesus says, is that death is coming to all of us—and all persons need to repent and receive Christ as their Savior.

We don't know why disasters hit certain people (the tsunamis in Indonesia, the hurricane Katrina, the earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti)—but we do know that those disasters should push all of us toward repentance, and toward doing the works that God commends.

These are some of the essential qualities (the attributes) of the true and living God who has revealed Himself in the Bible.

2. THE NATURE OF GOD

The true and living God has chosen to reveal some details about Himself in the Scriptures.

a. God is a spirit

John 4:24 says, “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” The fact that God is a spirit staggers the imagination. We can’t imagine a formless being, yet Jesus clearly tells us that God is a spirit—which means that He has no physical dimensions—no size or shape. The Bible also says that God is invisible (1 Timothy 1:17). Paul declares that Christ “is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15).

We cannot see God with the human eye because our eyes can only see objects of the material world—and God is not a material being. Sometimes God has appeared briefly in various physical forms (called “*theophanies*” in theology)—but these were only temporary manifestations of God for a special purpose. No one has ever seen God in His full, real, complete, true essence, for God is a great spirit being, and is not limited by a physical body.

b. God is a person

God is not some kind of influence, or energy, or a blind force in the universe. He is not a spirit of goodness that somehow connects all mankind. God is a living person Who has all the expressions of personality. God has intelligence and emotions.

- He was grieved that He made man on the earth (Genesis 6)
- He was a friend to Abraham (Genesis 12)
- He searches human hearts (Psalm 139)
- He loves the world of human beings (John 3:16)

God loves, and grieves, and senses pain. A concrete bridge doesn’t have knowledge and feelings and grief—but then a concrete bridge is not a person either!

c. God is a unity

God is one God; there is no other. One of the reasons God called Israel as a chosen nation was to witness to the unity—the oneness—of God. The Jewish “*Shema*” (“the Lord our God is one Lord” from Deuteronomy 6:4) is repeated at least 50 times in the Old Testament.

The nations surrounding Israel—the Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Ammonites—by way of contrast, were polytheists. The lesson is this: If God is one God,

then He expects the unity of our powers and our devotion to be concentrated on Him. An undivided God expects undivided allegiance to Him!

The Apostle Paul says (in 1 Corinthians 8:4), “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.”

The true God revealed in Scripture is one God.

d. God is a trinity

The Bible gives repeated evidence that God is one in substance, but that He expresses Himself in three personalities—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each of whom is God. Our human minds cannot fully grasp this truth—yet it is part of the Bible’s revelation of who God is. Each person of the Trinity is truly, fully, and equally God!

- the Father is God: Ephesians 4:6 speaks of “one God and Father of all.”
- the Son is God: Hebrews 1:8 says, “but unto the Son, he saith, Thy throne O God, is forever.”
- the Holy Spirit is God: Acts 5:3 says that Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, but Peter says in verse 4, “Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God.”

Belief in the Trinity is one of the distinctive characteristics of the historic Christian faith. The obvious teaching of the Scriptures is that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—yet there is only one God. We really cannot comprehend that fact.

Yet, we use and benefit from many things which we cannot completely understand. We can’t understand electricity, and computers. *We can’t understand how sodium and chlorine (two deadly poisons) are combined together to make table salt*—which is a food product that is not poisonous, and is in fact essential to life. We can’t understand how hydrogen (which is a flammable gas), and oxygen (which supports combustion)—can be combined together to make water. *The only ingredients in water are these two highly reactive gases—yet water is used to put out fires!* Can you explain that?

The word “Trinity” is best defined this way: In the nature of the one God, there are three distinct persons—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—each fully God, co-equal and co-eternal. There are several obvious facts related to the Trinity in the Bible.

(a) Simple grammatical observations in the Bible support the doctrine of the Trinity:

The pronouns “us” and “our” are used when God speaks. At the time of creation, God says (Genesis 1:26), “Let *us* make man in *our* image.” At the time of the call of Isaiah, God posed a question, “Who will go for *us*?” (Isaiah 6:8).

The Greek and Hebrew languages have two different words for “one”:

When God created the woman, He took *one* of Adam’s ribs and made the woman (Genesis 2:21). There was one, and only one, rib that was taken from Adam’s side. The word “one” means “one in an absolute sense.”

But when a man and woman marry, the Bible says that the man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife—and the two shall become *one* flesh (Genesis 2:24). There the word for “one” means “one in a collective sense.” There are two persons in a marriage, yet the two persons are one unit. The word “one” (when used of God) is always one in a collective sense—a compound unity. The Hebrews used “*yochid*” for “one” in the absolute sense, and “*achod*” for “one” in a collective sense.

In the New Testament, we have the same thing. John the Baptist is called “The voice of *one* crying in the wilderness” (Luke 3:4). There was only one John the Baptist, so the word “one” in the absolute sense is used. But when Paul and Peter and Apollos worked together as a team of preachers in New Testament times, Paul said, “He that plants and he that waters are *one*” (1 Corinthians 3:6-8). Paul used the word “one” which means one in a collective sense—more than one person was working as a single team.

Whenever the word “one” is used for “God,” the writers use *one* in the collective sense. The true and living God is *one* God, manifesting Himself collectively in three persons.

(b) The New Testament epistles are filled with the Trinitarian concept of God:

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, spiritual gifts are administered by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 2:13-18, prayer is related to all three persons of the Trinity. Verse 13 speaks of Christ, verse 16 speaks of God, and verse 18 speaks of access through the Spirit. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, thanksgiving is expressed for the gift of salvation, which is accomplished through each person of the Trinity. We are to give thanks because God chose us, Christ purchased us, and the Spirit sanctifies us. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, the

benediction is given as an ascription of praise to each person of the Trinity. It exalts the love of God, the grace of Christ Jesus, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Some teachings of Scripture cannot be explained adequately by any human being—but must be accepted by faith simply because God has spoken.

We can’t understand the fall of a leaf by the roadside, nor can we understand the hatching of a robin’s egg. Why should we be troubled by our inability to understand the Trinity—the nature of God?

The Bible nowhere systematically explains the Trinity. Failure to understand the doctrine fully is not harmful, but failure to believe it is indeed very dangerous!

God did not make us and then leave us like an absentee landlord. Paul told the Greek philosophers in Athens that God is not far from each of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:27-28).

We are not alone here on earth. Those who are genuine followers of Christ are in the presence of a Friend who knows us and cares for us. I walked through an old cemetery in Boston a few years ago; it was near Park Street Church.

- most of the stones were broken
- some were turned over
- many of the names and dates on the headstones were no longer legible.

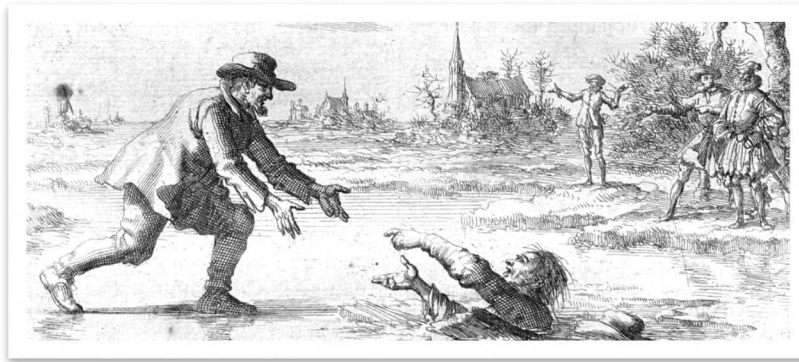
These were people who worked hard, raised families, and had joys and sorrows just like we do. Perhaps they thought they would be remembered for a long time—but their great-great grandchildren (in most cases) don’t even remember their names—and are not concerned about maintaining their place of burial. Life is fleeting—and most of us will soon be forgotten. We may think now that what we have to offer is important, but even our descendants (a generation or two from now) will likely forget us. But remember this: our God will not forget.

First Peter 5:6-7 says, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” This great God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who created the vast universe—cares for each human being!

A Bible Helps Booklet #402

Used by permission of :

Bible Helps,
PO Box 391
Hanover PA 17331



Nonresistance vs. Pacifism

~David M. Sweigart

At first glance, one could suggest that these two terms might be synonymous. In fact, one hundred years ago they sometimes were used interchangeably.⁽ⁱ⁾ But as the English language continues its forward march of change, it has since become necessary to define these terms separately.

What is nonresistance?

The term nonresistance is taken from Matthew 5:39 where Jesus tells us to “resist not evil”. This means **not “resisting”** in any form—militarily or personally. It means showing genuine love to all—friend or foe.

During the Old Testament time period, God allowed, and even at times commanded, his people to go to war and to execute punishment on the lawbreakers. But in the New Testament Jesus commands us to love our enemies (Matthew 5:24) and to “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

These teachings and commands are for the Christian and the church—not the unbeliever and the state. It permeates every area of our lives with one exception—to “resist the devil” (James 4:7). But this is referring to a personal or church responsibility for believers—of not giving in to the devil’s temptations in our “own” lives. Plus, it is a *defensive* action, not an *offensive* one like pacifism is. Never are we told to resist (fight against) the **evils** in **society**. This includes a willingness to pray for and submit to earthly authorities even if we cannot obey them in certain situations where obedience to them would constitute disobedience to God as written in His Word, the Holy Scriptures.

What is Pacifism?

The root word “*pacifici*” is a Latin word taken from Matthew 5:9—“Blessed are the peacemakers”. The dictionary defines pacifism as “opposition to war or violence, as a means of settling disputes”. At first glance this seems very similar to nonresistance and as was previously noted they can (at times) be interchanged. But there is an activism or particular forcefulness that is often associated with it. For example, we use a “*pacifier*” when we want to make fussy babies become quiet—it conveys a *forced* peace.

Pacifism could also be considered **nonviolent “resistance”**. (“Nonviolence” is a term used more recently in place of Pacifism.) It (Pacifism or Nonviolence) is the act of rejecting physical violence while working on an endeavor to obtain political, economic, or social *end goals*. It is a surface rejection of violence or physical force, except in cases where it is deemed absolutely necessary in order to advance the cause of peace. (The ends justify the means.)

The pacifist aims to establish a better world by eliminating war. He attempts to bring peace and harmony among the unregenerate nations of earth, by working through political influence. In other words, he is trying to sanctify the unbeliever—reform the sinner—“Christianize” an unconverted society.

Why is Pacifism wrong?

A pacifist apparently believes that man is basically good because he thinks that man’s efforts can bring peace to a fallen world. But the Bible does not agree that man is basically good. We see this where Jesus

says, “All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” (Mark 7:23)

A pacifist sees no distinction between the church and state and therefore the concept of the *two-kingdom principle* is lost. Because of this, the pacifist often fails to recognize **the God-ordained role of the use of force in the peacekeeping function (within society & at the border) of the state (civil authorities)**. In Romans 13:4, we are told that “he beareth not the sword in vain”. Going to war and punishing the transgressor is all part of the *God-ordained* responsibility of the state.

Pacifism (and Nonviolence) are not peaceable. A pacifist is not at peace with his surroundings. Pacifists attempt to use peace itself as *a tool or a weapon* to accomplish their goals. Someone has said “I am a pacifist—with the emphasis on the ‘fist’.”

A pacifist has an **inability** to accept the fact that there are injustices, sin, and strife in a fallen world. Pacifists are often unwilling to suffer personal reproach quietly as Jesus himself gave us example (I Peter 2:20-23). *The world’s greatest need is Jesus, not peace!*

History of Pacifism

After Napoleon’s wars ended in the beginning of the 1800s, there was a merging of several peace organizations under an American organization called the American Peace Society. It was founded by a theologian named David Dodge. In 1816, a similar organization was founded in London, England, called the London Peace Society. These groups and others similar to them grew out of a frustration with armed conflict and out of a desire to rid the world of war.

The famous Russian writer Leo Tolstoy was a fervent promoter of pacifism. He was very influential and inspired many followers, among them Mohandas “Mahatma” (‘Great Soul’) K. Gandhi (who was the leader of the so-called “peaceful revolution” of India), who in turn influenced a young black preacher in Birmingham, Alabama by the name of Martin Luther King Jr.(ii)

Following World War I, there was a great push by society in general and by certain civic groups in particular, for the elimination of war. Even world governments were concerned enough that the League of Nations was formed as an effort to prevent the world from taking up arms and again killing hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of soldiers and civilians in another global war.

Today, there are many world organizations devoted to world peace (pacifism). On the one hand this includes groups such as churches and religious (or faith-

based) organizations and on the other hand, such secular groups as the United Nations, the Peace Corp. and so forth. In the 1960’s, the theme was civil rights and opposing the Vietnam War, in the 70’s and 80’s it was nuclear disarmament.

Pacifists are not just involved with issues relating to war. They have shifted their focus to other social justice issues such as: unequal distribution of wealth, racism, sexism, prejudice, gun control and poverty. Currently, the march toward social justice continues with the environmental movement, the feminist movements, socialized health care, LGBT rights, and minority entitlement, just to name a few.

The pacifistic ideas of today are sometimes called the “social gospel”, and the liberal Anabaptist churches are right there, marching in lock-step with the world regarding these ideas. How did the mainstream Anabaptists get there?

Pacifism—its influence on conservative Anabaptism

In conservative Anabaptist circles one sometimes grapples with this question, “Why should nonresistant people be interested in the teaching of war and related issues, especially in the classroom?” Several reasons could be given. One in particular which stands out is that wars have a profound influence on any given society. Wars change the status quo. This seems to be just as relevant in the church as it is in the general society.

A war influences our people because it forces us to confront specific issues. It is usually not very hard to practice nonresistance in a period of national peace. But as emotions rise in the general public when an enemy is threatening, it forces a nation to fight to preserve itself. This is when the effect of our stand, against the Christian participating in war, becomes obvious and needs to be sharply defined. To what extent can nonresistant people participate in the war atmosphere of a country? What is our attitude towards war, and what will be the end result of the decisions we are making?

During the Civil War and both of the World Wars, thousands of Mennonite young men were called to serve their country, and because of their nonresistant stance they were classified as conscientious objectors. However, the Mennonite church was poorly equipped to respond to the outbreak of World War I. There was a dearth of teaching, and conviction in general, in the Mennonite church at this time. And of course, the Biblical teaching on nonresistance was also lacking.

There also had been no prior negotiations with the government relating to the draft question and possible alternate forms of service acceptable to the Mennonite

conscience. In trying to cope with the pressure from the Selective Service (the governmental agency responsible for the draft) the Mennonite Church reached out to other “nonviolent” church organizations to appeal in a unified way for recognition and tolerance.

The church groups that banded together included the Brethren in Christ, Mennonite General Conference, Lancaster Conference, and the Quakers. This mixture as represented here proved to be detrimental in watering down the traditional Biblical position on Nonresistance. The Quakers (who stood for nonviolence), for example, in spite of having the common ground of being opposed to war, were not on the same page as the Mennonite Church (who stood for nonresistance).

All this was happening, plus other more mainline Protestant groups tended to view war as immoral and evil—a direct result of the influence of pacifistic pressure from civic groups mentioned previously. They also tended to be weak on the principle of separation of church and state or maybe what is more properly called the **two-kingdom concept**. They placed a strong emphasis on pressuring the government to become more Christ-like. (iii)

During the period between the World Wars there was a consolidation of these groups under what became known as the MCC (Mennonite Central Committee). A lay brother, by the name of Orie O. Miller, was very influential in this organization for many of its formative years. The MCC under Miller, was very instrumental in introducing pacifism into the Mennonite Church. From this point on, we see a shift in the thinking, away from *nonresistance* and towards *pacifism*.

Observation of this shift becomes evident as one studies documents written by those who faced circumstances which called for clear direction relating to the doctrine of nonresistance.

The Dordrecht Confession of Faith (1632) XIV is very clear in its statement on revenge. (There is no ambivalence in its teaching about **the role of the state** versus **the role of the believer within that state**.) “*From this we understand that therefore, and according to His (Jesus) example, we must not inflict pain, harm, or sorrow upon any one, but seek the highest welfare and salvation of all men, and even, if necessity require it, flee for the Lord’s sake from one city or country into another, and suffer the spoiling of our goods; that we must not harm anyone, and, when we are smitten, rather turn the other cheek also, than take revenge or retaliate*”.

An example from Mennonite history that would illustrate the proper role of the church in addressing the

government during a time of war is a Petition to President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 during the Civil War. It is an excellent example of the respect and general tone toward a nation’s government that deserves mention.

The two-kingdom concept is portrayed clearly because Bishop John M. Brenneman did not use the occasion of his letter to tell the U.S. government how to fight the Civil War or why it should not be fighting at all, but simply and humbly desired to “*...inform the president that there is a people, scattered and living mostly in the northern parts of the United States—Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana—and some few in Illinois and Iowa—called Mennonites, who are greatly distressed at the present time on account of the war. As it is against their Confession of Faith and also against their conscience to take up arms therewith to destroy human life, the President must not mistake us to be secessionists or rebels against the government, as we are entirely free from that guilt.*”

He begins his letter in this lofty way—“*We, the undersigned, heartily wish unto our most noble President grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the good Lord abundantly bless the President with wisdom and knowledge from on high and enable him to rule this our great nation with prudence. We would humbly pray the President not to consider us too burdensome by presenting to him this, our weak and humble petition, thereby humbly praying and beseeching him to take into consideration our sore distress.*” (iv)

By 1950, a shift was under way in the Mennonite Church. A pamphlet entitled “A Declaration of Christian Faith and Commitment with Respect to Peace, War, and Nonresistance, 1951”, was published. It was considered to be the “the Position of the Mennonite Church as adopted by the Mennonite General Conference at Goshen, Indiana”.

We now quote from the book “Weathering the Storm” (v) (about this Declaration). “*While in the past Mennonites had kept their views on war and peace for themselves, the statement speaks of love and peace as the heritage of all people, a way ‘to which all...are called’. This means that the church must witness ‘of the righteousness which God requires of all men, even in government’. Clearly, Mennonites have moved from an attitude of nonresistant self-preservation to a stance of creative involvement in peacemaking.*” (vi) In other words, nonresistance now is transformed into a tool (pacifism) to prod societies into or towards peace.

This declaration also testifies that “warfare is sin”. The line between personal responsibility in nonre-

sistance and societies responsibilities becomes blurred with statements like “war is sin”. If what is meant, is that war is wrong for the believer, this is correct; but a blanket statement that war is sin, conveys the attitude that war is wrong for the state, as well—which is not within the purview (range of operation, control, or concern) of the church to decide—the church telling the state what to do.

In 1967, J.C. Wenger wrote a paper that was read at the Peace Witness Seminar at Eastern Mennonite University entitled *Pacifism and Biblical Nonresistance*. It was later published as a booklet. He does a very good job at defining nonresistance and showing the weakness of pacifism, but is weak on the application of nonresistance, especially in relating to the government of a free society.

He says the dilemma, is in a democracy, that professes Christianity. I quote—*“Surely it is in order for nonresistant Christians to call to the attention of the leaders of the state (1) the tragedy of terminating the life of a criminal—thereby cutting off his opportunity to repent—and (2) the futility of thinking that capital punishment is a strong deterrent to the horrible crimes committed by the emotionally ill. It is surely legitimate for Christians to plead and to urge that evil men who oppress the racial and the poor minorities are violating both the holy law of God and the rights guaranteed to all citizens in the legal framework in which the state operates.”*

Later in this address, J.C. Wenger goes on to question why Christians should pay “taxes specifically labeled as war taxes, or even the payment of that portion of their federal income tax which is allocated for the support of war”. This type of thinking—which contradicts Jesus teaching in Luke 20:25—became very prevalent during this era of time (Vietnam war) and later. It is a form of political protest that also is inconsistent with the two-kingdom principle. Therefore, it is not a non-resistant response, but rather it is the outworking of a pacifist mentality.

In a response to events on 9/11, C. Norman Kraus of Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana, condemned the media for making the assumption that pacifism cannot solve the crisis of international terrorism, but that military action will. (vii)

Delegates to the General Conference Mennonite Church Special Session in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on July 8, 1997 adopted a document entitled “And No One Shall Make Them Afraid” with the subheading “A Mennonite Statement and Study on Violence”. This document contains the following statements: (viii)

In response to violence in public life, we call the church at all levels to:

- Work and pray in ways that confront the powers that promote institutional violence, racism, sexism, prejudice, and poverty.
- Work to abolish capital punishment, wherever it has become law.
- Advocate laws for greater restriction of the manufacture and possession of guns whose primary purpose is to kill or threaten human beings.

In response to global violence, we call the church to:

- Restrain our own material desires and ambitions, and promote a fairer distribution of the world’s resources, in order to reduce inequity, hunger, and hurt, which feed violence.
- Finance and pray for the work of our church agencies in promoting international justice, economic and personal well-being, respect for human rights, and participation in decision making.
- Call on legislators: to reduce military spending and arms sales, and to promote global justice.

It should be clear to all, that the mainline conservative, Anabaptist churches have moved from the Biblical doctrine of nonresistance to an aggressive form of pacifism. No longer is the church content to live out nonviolence in believer’s personal lives, it now sees itself with a mandate to pressure worldly societies and governments to do the same. This is destructive to the two-kingdom teaching of nonresistance and to the two-kingdom concept in general.

What Can We Learn From All This?

Understanding the two-kingdom concept is foundational to a consistent application of the doctrine of nonresistance. To teach nonresistance without understanding this concept would be like trying to teach nonconformity without the practice of distinctive or separated dress.

What determines whether someone is a pacifist or a nonresistant person is their view of God. When their view of God changes, it also changes their view of the world. The world is no longer something from which Christians should separate themselves, it has now become something to pressure and to change.

In the case of nonresistance, the change goes one of two ways. One way is toward pacifism, the other a complete abandonment of all nonresistance especially

- continued on page 22



Photo; courtesy of Timothy Mast from Virginia

Any More from Heaven?

~ E.S. Gutwein

The dictionary is a book with authority. If two people have a disagreement about the meaning of a word, a dictionary has the power to settle it, because its definitions have been approved by language authorities. However, we can see that the authority of the dictionary has been extended, enlarged, and changed over the years. A modern dictionary has more words in it than one from one hundred years ago. Also, the current meaning of some words is different today than it was a century or two ago. The dictionary never seems to be complete, and it does not remain up-to-date for very long. It constantly needs to be changed as the language changes.

Unlike the dictionary, the Bible does not change with time, neither does it lose its authority nor its power. God said He would protect His Word so no one could harm it. David said that God's Word is settled in heaven forever (Psalm 119:89). This is a place where neither moth nor rust can cause damage, and where thieves cannot break in nor steal (Matthew 6:20).

This does not mean that the Bible will only be preserved in heaven, for, what good is God's Word if man cannot have access to it here on the earth? No, God keeps His Word safe here on earth as well, from generation to generation.

Today, we have the same words that God gave to holy men of old, over a time period of hundreds and even thousands of years. We can read them, study them, and live by them. Psalm 12:7 tells us, "Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever". And in Matthew 24:35 Jesus

says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away".

Although God revealed his will progressively over thousands of years, there came a time when He had said everything He needed to say to man. In the last book of the Bible, He says that if anyone dares to add to its words, or take away from them, He will punish that person with terrible plagues, and take away his salvation (Revelation 22:18, 19). This is a terrible sin to commit.

Since we are told to never add or take away from the writings of Revelation, by extension, the same would hold true for the rest of Scripture as well, especially since we are told that "**all** Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Timothy 3:16). The canon of Scripture has been closed; the Holy Bible is a complete unit of sixty-six books, and no more.

In fact, in the Bible, God declares that His Word is perfect and complete. It has all that man needs to please Him, and to live an abundant, victorious life. Second Peter 1:3 is one such verse: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue". Another verse is 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works".

The "abundant life" declared in the Scriptures (John 10:10) is not just a nice thought, or an experience reserved for *super* Christians. This is for every individ-

ual Christian who believes God's Word and obeys it (Romans 3:22). Is this not wonderful?! God made sure the Bible had everything we needed for today and for every day in our future! However, we must not receive the words of the Bible only as the words of the men who wrote them, but rather as what they really are—the Word of God as one unit. “Ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Ephesians 1:19 says that God's mighty power will work with “exceeding greatness” in us if we believe. God has sufficient power and ability to change the heart of any person, giving them abundant life, no matter how vile and evil they are, if only they are willing to believe what is written in His Word.

Sadly, today there are numerous ideas and influences that have persuaded many believers to doubt that the Bible actually has all the answers we need to live an abundant Christian life and to be full of joy. However, the Apostle John tells us by divine inspiration that the things he has written are able to give us full joy (1 John 1:4). God said it. Do we believe it?

The Bible further shows that from the start of our Christian life, God through His Word has given us everything we need to withstand Satan's temptations. We can be victorious through each one of them, remaining faithful unto the end of our life. Read about the armor of God in Ephesians 6. There we find that God has already provided us with a complete suit of armor. If we wear the whole armor of God, we will “be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” and “to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (verses 11 and 13). What more do we need? If God was able to make all grace “abound to every good work” for the early church believers (2 Corinthians 9:8), can He not do the same for us today? Sure, He can. And He does! We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

Therefore, God will not add any more content to the Scriptures, and He will not give us any further revelation than that which He has already given us in the Bible. Unlike our dictionary, the content of *this* Book does not need to be changed or modified. In fact, it is the other way around. *We* ourselves *must be changed and sanctified by it*: “[Christ gave himself for the church] that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:26). Do you believe without a shadow of a doubt that, as you read and believe what is written in God's Word, His Spirit will cleanse you from every uncleanness and sin

in your life, if you allow Him to do so? Nothing else and nobody else can do this for you.

What Is Adding or Taking Away?

We tend to think that adding or taking away from Scripture only means adding or omitting words from the Bible. But it actually begins before that. Following the illustration in the introduction, how does a dictionary get modified? First, a group of people change the meaning of a word, and use it frequently in their private and public communication. Next, other groups of people adopt it, until finally, the vast majority of people are using the new meaning. This is when language authorities consider modifying the dictionary, because the new meaning has become so widespread.

Something similar happens with God's Word. When a person receives extra-biblical information through a vision, a dream, or from an angel, it does not get added immediately to the Bible (that would be too obvious!), and seldom does this happen. Rather, it is spread to others by word of mouth and it is broadcasted through radio, television, internet, and other types of recorded audio or video format. It is printed in books and magazines, and preached across church pulpits.

However, the fact that some Christians have visions, or claim to have received messages from angels, does not mean that God has been communicating with them. Matthew 7:22 declares that hell-bound people can prophesy, cast out demons, and perform miracles. Many people in both Christianity and pagan religions receive messages from the spirit world, but this does not mean that these messages have come from God.

The Bible says clearly, “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” (2 Corinthians 11:4). There are three “anothers” here. The second and third “another” means another kind (Gr. *heteros*) of spirit and gospel (e.g., *different* as in an apple and an orange). The first “another” means another of the same kind, which looks identical in many ways (e.g., *another* as in an apple and another apple). False teachers preach a Jesus who, at first sight, is identical to the real Jesus. The only Jesus we must follow is the Jesus who is clearly declared and defined in God's Word, the Holy Bible.

Galatians 1:8 pronounces a curse on anyone, even an apostle or an angel from heaven, who preaches any other gospel than that which was originally shared by Christ and His Apostles. This verse can also be trans-

lated as follows. “Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel besides (Gr. *para*; as in parallel) that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed”. Therefore, a parallel gospel or word from God means extra-biblical revelation that agrees with Scripture! An example of this was when Satan tempted Jesus. He actually quoted Scripture word for word, but it stood for another parallel gospel meant to deceive. This should not come as a surprise, because “Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Another example of this is the demonized man Jesus encountered in the synagogue. Evil spirits had revealed to him things that were true and agreed with Scripture. He said, “I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God” (Luke 3:34). Just because a vision portrays something that is true is not proof enough that it comes from God. The same also applies to extra-biblical revelation, even though it may agree with Scripture.

Someone asked this question: “If the Devil only quoted Scripture, would you allow him to preach over your pulpit?” What did Jesus say to him in the desert? “Get thee hence Satan”. All this teaches us that we should not only reject extra-biblical revelation that *disagrees* with Scripture, but also reject extra-biblical revelation which *agrees* with Scripture. We are warned to contend for the “faith *once* delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3), lest we fall under God’s curse. It is not speaking of a faith given to the saints once upon a time, but rather **the** [only] faith that was delivered once and for all. No more or further revelation is needed, nor allowed!

Suppose someone would say, “But this does not mean we can’t receive other revelations from God, besides the Bible. We are just not supposed to add them to the Bible?” However, this seems to defeat God’s purpose for prohibiting additions to the Bible. In His Word, God has declared that He has given us **all** the instruction we need to find His will, and to live a godly life. Therefore, by accepting *any* extra-biblical revelation we would be denying the sufficiency of Scripture, and we would be undermining the finality of biblical authority.

Dare we say that, while we may not add revelation to the “Bible” itself, we are free to publish it in another book written besides the Bible, portraying it to be divine revelation? Of course not, that would be absurd. God condemns ALL extra-biblical revelation. Thus, claiming any further revelation as divinely inspired, opens the door to the awful influence of deceiving spir-

its, and puts us dangerously close to the curse of Revelation 22.

Are we in any way limiting God by saying that He does not give any further revelation? Not in the least. We must simply limit ourselves to what God has said in His Word.

Ways of Adding or Taking Away

We know that adding to, or taking away from Scripture can mean altering the words of the actual Bible, such as when a translator adds or omits words from the original when making the translation. But, as we have said a few paragraphs before, it can also happen when people accept and spread extra-biblical revelations that disagree with the Scriptures, as well as those that agree with the Scriptures.

The obvious manifestations of adding or taking away, are when people receive dreams and visions, or hear voices that teach things that disagree with Scripture. We may wonder who would fall for this type of deception. But surprisingly, there are many sincere believers who follow a Charismatic type of persuasion who actually believe this way. Others would say they do not worship the Book, but that the voice of the Spirit is greater than the Bible, and we should not limit God by a book (i.e. the Bible). In these circles, leaders caution people not to think too deeply and even not to read the Bible. Amazing, but true! It is sad that so many sincere people are ensnared by these deceptions, and are in danger of God’s judgement.

Other ways of adding or taking away can be much more subtle. It can take the form of sincere believers, or even children, receiving dreams and visions that depict scenes of Heaven, interacting with Jesus, and concepts that do not necessarily contradict Scripture, but nonetheless, are not revealed in Scripture. This would fall into the category of extra-biblical revelation that seems to *agree* with Scripture. But as we have seen, this also is condemned by God. The Bible says that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, but “these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

Many are the things that could arise from human imagination or demonic suggestion that do not appear to contradict revealed truth, but cannot be proven nor disproven. God deliberately chose to limit revelation, and gave us everything we needed to have life abundant. He does not reveal any more information, because He has revealed all that is necessary in the Scriptures, as it is written.

Furthermore, at a public level, and in a more indirect way, adding to, or taking away from, can occur when preachers, teachers, and authors twist Scripture to fit their own desires, lifestyles, or agendas, and thereby teach a gospel that suits the whims of their audience or their readers. It also happens when religious people refuse to take a stand against false doctrine, and ignore Scriptures that convict them or others of sin.

Finally, it can also happen at a personal level. If an individual knowingly is living in sin, or is believing and promoting a false idea, a false teaching, or a false doctrine, he can be adding or taking away from Scripture as well. By ignoring or twisting the Scriptures where they do not agree with his lifestyle, he then finds himself in the same error. But the Bible condemns this very harshly: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20-21).

Why Do People Add or Take Away?

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4, God teaches us that a time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine. They will seek out teachers who will teach them exactly what they want to hear, and they will not listen to the truth. They will turn to fables, or myths (Gr. *muthos*). And they will do this because of their own lusts. Evil desires are a very common reason why Christians turn away from the truth, and accept twisted teachings and false gospels. This is why they turn to made-up stories about Creation, the nature of man, sin, Heaven, and many other topics. Friends, this is actually happening today, and in our very own circles!

Many Christians allow themselves to be in a tough predicament. They know that the Bible condemns current extra-biblical revelation, but they also sense the sincerity of those who supposedly have had them. This becomes more apparent when the individual in question is a child. We assume that since a child is innocent and sincere, they will not be touched by Satan. And understandably so, it is difficult for us to grasp why God would allow Satan to influence or work through young innocent children, but Scripture is clear that these things do happen. One example is found in Matthew 17:18. But we must not be deceived by Christian sincerity or childhood innocence. In Matthew 7:22, those who appeared before God said they had prophesied in His name, cast out demons in His name, and even performed miracles in His name. But God said, “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity”. Therefore, we

see that sincerity and miracles do not prove that something comes from God.

Another reason for accepting extra-biblical revelation may be simply a lack of faith. When we do not believe that God divinely inspired His Word in order that today we have everything we need to live a godly and victorious life, then we will tend to look for other things that make us *feel* more spiritual or more blessed. We will start to believe that seeing miracles or visions of angels and Heaven, will increase our faith. But the Bible does not say “blessed are those who experience miracles or see Jesus”, but rather, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

Similar to a dictionary, the Bible is also a book with authority. The words of Scripture are what give the Bible its authority. Its pages are full of edification, admonition, commandments, and promises that speak to the many situations we face in life.

The Bible also contains statements that appear more than once, in order to give God’s words proper weight or significance in their place and context in the Scriptures. Taking away any words, even repeated statements, is condemned by God. Likewise, adding any words, even if they agree with Scripture, comes under God’s judgment. The canon of Scripture is closed. Therefore, while the dictionary needs to be constantly updated, the authority of God’s Word is complete. In order for it to have power in our lives we simply need to believe it. There is no further revelation from Heaven than that which has been given to us in the Bible.

“Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2). May we be among those who mix God’s Word with faith, and someday will hear His blessed words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:21).

~ Editor’s Note:

This article is meant to address the problem of supposedly receiving divine revelation that would be additional to God’s Word—that which is received through dreams, visions, near-death experiences, spirit guides, visions of angels, listening prayer, etc.

In no way is this article endeavoring to teach against the clear Biblical teachings of: Prayer, and Walking in the Spirit, etc. These topics will be covered in another article at another time.



Know Them Which Labor Among You

~ John D. Risser

KJV ~ “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” (I Thessalonians 5:12-13)

Amplified ~ “Now also we beseech you, brethren, get to know those who labor among you [recognize them for what they are, acknowledge and appreciate and respect them all]—your leaders who are over you in the Lord and those who warn and kindly reprove and exhort you. And hold them in very high and most affectionate esteem in [intelligent and sympathetic] appreciation of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.” (I Thessalonians 5:12-13)

To any Bible scholar who has thoroughly immersed himself in the study of God’s Word, the subject of God-ordained authority is a familiar one. From the creation of the world, God has been the one who has orchestrated all earthly authority—authority in the home, in the nation, and (since the time of Christ) in the church. This has been put into place, by God, in order to give direction and to maintain law and order. It is also by this method that He provides structure and organization through which all the functions of life can move forward successfully.

As we examine the Scriptures, it is evident that God allows people who are in authority to decide how to exercise that authority according to their own choosing. Since man is born with a carnal nature, these choices often tend to be against the holy will of God. However, since it is all God-ordained, He still requires that all authority must be respected and obeyed without excuse, regardless whether that authority is godly or carnal.

The only exception to this mandate is when earthly leaders begin to require that the people under their authority make decisions or act in ways which are contrary to the higher written law of God. In these cases, disobedience to their laws is necessary in order to continue living as true followers of God and His Word. However, there must still always be honor and respect through it all.

In this article, we will be looking at how God expects Christians and their church leaders to relate to one another, during this New Testament time period. This subject could be addressed from a number of different angles. What should church leaders do to gain the respect of their people? What should the people do when Godly church leaders appear to be going wrong? Or, what forms of church leadership and practical administrations follow Biblical directives?

While each of these questions would lead to excellent discussions, we will seek to keep the focus of this article on just one main point. We will be looking at the scriptural instructions that God has given to each of us regarding the issue of relating to those who have been placed over us in spiritual authority as church leaders.

The New Testament uses a number of different terms for early church authority, beginning with the apostles and followed by deacons, ministers, elders, and bishops. Various scriptures note specific prerequisites for seeking out from among God's people those who will properly take up these offices. It is interesting that in these requirements for church leadership, we see that their past relationships are important as well as their ability to develop and maintain healthy ongoing relationships, with integrity.

These directives place much responsibility upon them for the spiritual care of the souls within their realm of duty. Obviously, there must be active, healthy relationships, in order for this to happen. No relationship is built by just one person; it always takes the effort of both parties involved.

The first and possibly most important point to look at, is the need to accept the fact, that all authority is God-ordained. Romans 13:1-2, refers to the seriousness of this matter. All authority is ordained of God and must be obeyed, whether in the church or in the kingdoms of this world.

The consequence of disobedience is eternal damnation. It is not nearly as important *how* the specific administrations of authority are structured and functioning, as it is to accept the command to *obey* all God-ordained authority.

The disobedience to, or disrespect of, authority, is one of the devil's main tools in taking souls captive. This was his original plan with Adam and Eve in the garden, and it has continued on down through time. Rebellion is essentially pride, since it focuses on self and the desires of the flesh.

Repentance, confession, and accepting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior brings Holy Spirit power into our experience and places us into the family of God. This by extension also brings us under the authority of the church of Jesus Christ. With God's Holy Spirit giving us direction and empowering us to overcome the flesh and all its vices, we are thereby being transformed in all our relationships.

In the conservative Anabaptist setting, local church fellowships vary greatly in administration and practical agreements regarding the application of Biblical principles. Still, the fact remains that membership in any of these organizations is voluntary and should be based on the testimony of a transformed life.

Agreements within these organizations are, consequently, under the direction of the leadership that God has ordained to guide that particular local church body. This then declares that any Christian who chooses to

pledge his allegiance to that particular body of believers is therefore required by God to obey those practical and particular agreements.

To build relationships with those who "labor among us," we will seek to keep our voluntary commitments to the church open and full of integrity. There are always times for discussions or questions, but it must also, at all times, be understood that the authority which is placed in the church by God is to be respected and obeyed.

There are those instances when a believer realizes that he is no longer able, with a clear conscience, to be in harmony with the specific ways his local church applies the teachings of Scripture. At this juncture in his life, he should seek out a church with which he can once more voluntarily cast his lot. He must never violate his present commitment until he has changed his allegiance to a different group of believers; otherwise he will find himself in direct challenge to his God-ordained authority.

It is a weakness of humanity to view any authority either with *too much reverence* or with *disdain*. As believers, we seek to find God's will in this delicate balancing act. Those who "labor among us" have not campaigned nor fought for their position, as many in earthly kingdoms do. Rather, they have been given a duty of service (by God) that has changed their life forever.

As they seek to fulfill the duties God has given them through the church, their desire should be to "know them [those]" under their authority. This is necessary to help them determine the spiritual condition of those believers, so they can "watch for their souls."

In relating to our spiritual authorities, it is just as improper for us to *revere* them as it is to *disrespect* them. To understand, bless, and encourage them, we need to realize that they are still living in the flesh, with similar struggles as those faced by the rest of us. With all this in mind, we see then that their responsibility also brings added accountability.

Open communication with them about our lives is imperative in helping them to continue their work. Asking them about their spiritual journey is also important. This will give us direct knowledge about how to more properly pray for them from day to day.

Those who "labor among us" need friends. It has sometimes happened in church culture that the ordained men were thought of as ones with whom we can no longer be friends, but rather have more of a "business-style" relationship. This is far from the direction that scripture gives to believers working together for the glory of God.

Our theme verse suggests an affectionate relationship—one that is both “intelligent and sympathetic.” This indicates a close friendship. If servants of God carry out their responsibility in the Biblical manner of “watching for souls”, then a loving friendship with them necessarily becomes that much more important.

Regular phone calls, notes of encouragement, getting together with them as families, having them over for a meal, or giving them transportation to a speaking assignment are only a few practical suggestions about how to build these friendships and make their work load lighter. It is good for us to know their schedules, so they can be reminded of our prayer support through the heaviness of their responsibilities.

Interestingly, the verses at the beginning of this article end with some pertinent advice, “be at peace among yourselves”! What a beautiful way to improve our connection with God and His ordained authority.

There are different issues that will always put stress on the godly relationships we should be having with our leaders: disagreements without love, strivings among fellow believers, and struggles in interpersonal

relationships. Any of these types of struggles always has the potential to bring division to the body.

A Godly church leader will spend much time and energy to know the truth about matters and seek to bring any necessary restoration. This will create many temptations for bitterness and cynicism in a leader's experience. He may struggle to love his brethren as he ought, yet he knows that the standard of God has never changed and he must be faithful in his calling.

On our part, as those who are under their authority, we need to give diligence in our personal commitment to holy living and loving the brethren. This then, will be a tremendous asset in bringing about closeness of relationship with those who “labor among us.”

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Hebrews 13:17)

-continued from page 15 (Nonresistance vs. Pacifism)

toward the military and nationalism or patriotism. A relaxing of these standards in the church or in the home, is the first step on a journey toward the world and away from God. When one gets close to the world, the world's problems then become his own.

Is Christ the Lord of the church *only* or is He *also* the Lord of the state? Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) But someday they will be—"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Revelation 11:15).

However, as is now the case, the kingdoms of this world are not under the lordship of Jesus Christ. If they were, I suppose we should be helping God by getting involved and coercing the state to abide by New Testament principles such as living in peace with our fellow men! How can a pacifist obey the command in Matthew 5:39—“Resist not evil”?

When Jesus came the first time, the angels said “Peace on earth.” This was a peace given to those who accepted Him then and to those who accept Him into their hearts today. It is a peace that can only transform individuals—from any particular society—through the New Birth experience.

When Jesus comes the second time it will be a peace that will also change all the societies and governments. Only when the Prince of Peace sits on David's throne in Jerusalem will we finally have social justice and all inequalities will be vanquished forever.

Footnotes

- (i) Nonresistance in Colonial America, EMP, 1985 by Wilbur Bender p.3
- (ii) Love and Nonresistance, Christian Light Publications, 2007 by John Coblentz p. 107
- (iii) For a good example of this type of thinking see "Nonresistance Under Test" pub. 1949
- (iv) Mennonite Church USA Archives
- (v) Weathering the Storm: Christian Pacifist Responses to War p.19 (a collection of essays by various authors) Faith and Life Press, Newton, Kansas 1991
- (vi) Ibid p.20
- (vii) Published in the Daily News Record, Harrisonburg, Virginia on October 1,2001.
- (viii) These lists of statements are not complete.



Understanding A Child's Nature

~H. Stephen Ebersole

Have you heard of ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder)? This disorder, supposedly existing in certain children, has recently been redefined and updated by “experts” in the field of psychiatry. It is characterized by angry, irritable, argumentative, defiant, disobedient, hostile, and vindictive behavior toward others, predominantly adults, especially authority figures.

In order to be labeled ODD, this type of behavior must be their lifestyle or “pattern” (lasting for up to six months) and not just an isolated occurrence, (here and there, or once in a while), but rather happening on a regular or daily basis. Additionally, it must be manifested as a package deal, including a minimum of four of the defined categories of “anti-social” behaviors. (This certainly sounds both dire and confusing at the same time).

The expectation is that individuals should not confuse ODD with any one of the other bewildering myriad of so-called “disorders” associated with children’s anti-social behavior. CD (Conduct Disorder) is recognized when a child violates the basic *rights* of others and expresses all-inclusive anti-social behaviors or “conduct that is out of order”, whereas the other labels for disorders in children usually define more specific anti-social behavior. ADHD (Attention Deficit-Hyperactive Disorder) defines a child that cannot be calmed down, made to listen, or “pay attention”. DAD (Disinhibited Attachment Disorder) defines children that seem to be plagued with attention seeking, and indiscriminate friendliness.

Then there is RAD (Reactive Attachment Disorder). This specified type of anti-social behavior is usu-

ally observed in children who have not formed strong social bonds with their caregivers. This so-called disorder seems to be a current developing issue gaining prevalence and popularity among a number of conservative, Anabaptist groups here in the U.S.

In the past, this view would have been more localized among certain individual families, but as time moves on there seems to be a concerted effort among those who have foster and adopted children to accept and promote this secular viewpoint. There are many support groups, annual meetings, and numerous newsletters all geared towards these specific families and their seemingly “specialized” struggles. There is no doubt that the struggles are real; however, in the midst of reaching out for answers, some, if not many of these families have become more and more susceptible to the “wisdom of this world” on these matters.

More and more children in our culture are being diagnosed with one disorder or another, i.e., a condition that is not normal or healthy. These disorder “labels” call for therapies. Therapies are: special treatments of a given diagnosis, counseling, and/or medications. Disorders require “experts” to analyze or evaluate what is the cause and cure of a certain specified so-called “abnormal behavior”. In the world of professionalism, there is a rising concern that the base-line of “normal” children in our society seems to be shrinking.

What should the Christian do with this flood of philosophies? What should we believe about raising children with diverse personalities? Since the “experts” believe children’s behavior is from a genetic, organic, or environmental base, should we then change our

basic child training beliefs and methods? Are children therefore, victims of forces outside of their, or their parents', control?

Might a diagnosis which produces a label, influence a parent to stop believing that his or her child is responsible for their behavior? What if the child begins to believe that they have no ability to take responsibility for their actions or that they cannot choose to be something different than that which their lower nature (natural inclination) would dictate?

The following principles are a summary of the timeless truths of the Bible. If we want to "endure unto the end", we must believe these principles in our hearts, practice them in our families, and teach them in our churches.

Each child in the ultimate sense is created in the image of God.

We believe the Biblical account of creation and that God created Adam and Eve in His own likeness and image (Genesis 1:26-27). Also, that Adam's sons were born in his own likeness and image, (Genesis 5:3). Hence, the human spirit and personality is a replication of God Himself. We are not the result of random chance, mutations, and evolution. Moreover, when each child is created in the womb, God personally oversees His creation and has infinite thoughts for each one (Psalm 139:13-19).

The product of this divine creation is that each child is incredibly complex, resilient, and gifted. There are receptors in each soul that are capable of: connecting the child with teachings about God, and forming a personal relationship with Him.

Each child is hopelessly corrupted and bears the image of Adam's fallen nature.

Romans 5:12 informs us that "by one man sin entered into the world" and that "death passed upon all men." The psalmist himself acknowledged that he was "shapen in iniquity" and that the wicked speak lies "*as soon as they be born.*" In Ephesians 2:3 we are informed that "we ... were by nature children of wrath, even as others."

From infancy, children are incredibly selfish. Sometimes they cry even when nothing is wrong, usually just wanting attention or their own way. In toddlerhood, the fallen human nature comes out with all its ugly expressions. Post-modernism has introduced and interjected many legal and political terms in place of traditional, Biblical terms such as: selfishness, meanness, violence, dishonesty, deceitfulness, etc.

Defining traits by giving them subjective terms such as "issues" or "disorders" does not change the "source" nor the "nature" of the behavior. We should not be surprised by ungodly human behavior nor should we sensationalize it (make a big deal out of it). Biblically speaking, we should *expect* that children will tend to respond out of their lower (Adamic) nature!

If we want to
"endure unto the end",
we must believe
these principles
in our hearts,
practice them
in our families,
and teach them
in our churches.

The solution for raising all children is a balance of love and discipline.

Couples should enter parenthood with unconditional love and acceptance for the children God chooses to give them. In the season of life, during young adulthood, God has planned for this investment into the next generation. God knows how much children need parents, and perhaps even more, how much parents need children. (This is not to

place a negative view on barrenness nor the reaching out for children in adoption. In fact, this pattern speaks of larger-than-life principles—how each one of us, as a believer, is adopted into God's family.)

Each child (even a handicapped child) should be treasured and given a Biblical baseline of love and acceptance. His needs should be met and love poured into his life. Along with this, as much as God blesses, children should be raised among brothers and sisters. Children tend to receive infinite corrections to their human selfishness by living with each other. They learn socialization skills even without knowing they are learning them.

In early toddlerhood, when the human nature traits of selfishness begin to emerge, parents will need to choose to confront each child's personal Adamic nature. The Bible gives us the God-ordained pattern of using the rod. Discipline should be for the child's needs and should be consistent with the specified disobedi-

ence. A spanking should not be considered a big deal, but rather it should be seen and understood as the Biblical method of correction, restoration, and cleansing the child's conscience, when it is administered the Bible way. Spanking half a dozen times in the same day for the same issue is not necessarily abnormal, it is just a normal process for some children—children with certain traits that God has gifted for a purpose He alone understands.

If oft repeated spanking for the same offense does not seem to be producing godly change, then maybe the whole situation should be re-evaluated Biblically. Is father or mother's example of life inconsistent with the expected change in the child? Are they disciplining in anger or in some other way "provoking the child to anger"? Perhaps they are not together on the issue in question therefore sending the child a mixed message. What if one of them is out of their God-ordained position of headship order in the home, therefore causing the child confusion about what is expected?

However, this personal evaluation should never discourage parents from faithfully applying Biblical discipline. The goal is to train each child to hearken to wisdom outside of his inner self. The Bible makes it clear that if a child is left to hearken to his inner wisdom, he will come to destruction (Proverbs 29:15). Children who learn to hearken to the voice of wisdom that "crieth without" (Proverbs 1:20) and who learn to listen to [hear and obey] their parents, other authorities, and even each other, can arrive at a place of enjoying a pleasant existence in this life (Ephesians 6:2-3).

Sometimes parents raise questions about the exceptional child. "We have normal children," they say, "but here is one that clearly is the exception. How shall we treat this child?" The fact is, exceptional children are normal too! It may be that their high maintenance requires greater doses of love and discipline. *The worst stigma a parent can place upon a child is the idea that he has conditions and/or traits that are unmanageable.* Fathers and mothers, please do your child a favor. Let him know you love him with all your heart, but let him also know that you will not accept it if he does not hearken to your voice. You simply will not cease discipline until he submissively and happily obeys your directions.

If you missed this foundational platform when your child was young or perhaps succumbed to the idea that "my child needed to be treated differently than normal," you can always go back and admit this to him. He will benefit by your confession and repentance at any stage of life, if you honestly and humbly

acknowledge that you failed to bring his will into submission as clearly taught in Scripture. Since he is created in the image of God, he can still choose the way of submitting his will to God, even though it will be much more difficult than if you would have taken your stand in those early days.

Ultimately, being converted, being born again, and receiving God's new nature is the only hope for each and every human being. Jesus' death and resurrection provides a miracle of transformation in the human heart. Godly training lays a platform, but it can never replace the new birth. Poor training with obvious needs may actually drive a person to see his need of conversion more completely. The fact remains, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This is not a once and done experience. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:23). This is a day-by-day miracle as we walk with God through His Word and live a life of routine (whenever we fall) repentance.

Renaming and redefining human nature does not change *anything*! Each and every disorder that experts and professionals claim to see and understand today, can be recognized in the historical, human record of the Bible. This so-called "abnormal" behavior can be identified in the familiar accounts of Cain, Joseph's brothers, King Saul, Absalom, Judas, and others. The positive attributes of human behavior can be recognized in the accounts of others such as Noah, Daniel, the Hebrew boys, Nehemiah, Peter, Paul, and many others.

ODD, ADHD, and RAD are indeed interesting and novel terms. But the same needs of the heart and human behavior have *always* been here with us. Thank God for the Bible, our only "unadulterated" and "unchanging" guide through the "changing" philosophies of this world.

~ Editor's Note:

This article was originally printed in the Pilgrim Witness under the title ODD. In order to clarify some points and to update the information, some editing changes have been made by the editor of the Berean Voice, with permission and approval of the author.



“Outside-the-Church” Counseling

~ by Delbert Shetler

Much ado is being made these days about the counseling and psychiatric movements that are filtering into our plain, conservative Anabaptist churches. I am thankful for this, as it shows there are still people concerned about that which penetrates the hedge surrounding our churches. Thank God that not all the watchmen have left their posts.

First of all, I would like to point out that the way this is happening, is exactly backwards from how it should be working. One must admit that this movement is indeed *filtering* into the churches. How can we prove this? If we go back twenty, thirty, or possibly fifty years, how much did the church know about the terms psychiatry, psychology, hurts, emotional pain, spiritual abuse, etc.? Today, you supposedly need to know and understand these terms, plus many more, in order to live a victorious Christian life and to be able to help fellow-believers effectively deal with their struggles. So, it is **indeed filtering** into our churches.

The question now becomes, “Do good Biblical teachings **filter** into the church?”, or rather, “Should good Biblical teachings **be flowing out of the church?**” Amongst Bible-believing Christians this should not even be a question. We have gotten it all backwards! We are letting worldly philosophies and secular ideas impact our understanding of how to deal with people who are struggling. We certainly cannot say that the church struggled more before these teachings showed up. There actually are way more issues to deal with today than there ever were.

So, really, what is wrong with this movement? This was the question which haunted me until I decided I just needed to know.

Before we take this any further, I would like to share my background. Not so long ago, I fully support-

ed the counseling movement. I went to the seminars and came home feeling enlightened. I wondered what I could do to get more people motivated to attend these insightful meetings. I felt irritated with anybody who would not support this way of thinking. The only thing I could see were the churches with all their issues (there were many) and this being the answer for the majority of them.

All along, though, there was one thing that bothered me. I knew there were a certain number of people who were really concerned about what this movement would do to the church. What bothered me even more was that they were well respected people of the community—people that were known to be deep thinkers. However, I also noticed there were other people of the same stature that were supportive of this movement. How could this be?

It did not take long until this started causing division among the brethren. Suddenly, the heart-to-heart and upbuilding talks between certain brothers stopped, because they could no longer agree on these certain issues. Why? Because they were not getting their facts and information from the same source. Yet, they were both well respected men that the community and churches looked up to for direction and guidance. I came to realize that there was only one way to explain this.

I spoke with numerous open-minded people who were on both sides of this concern in an effort to hear the whole matter. I finally came to the conclusion that this is one of the most *deceiving* issues that is presently affecting our plain churches. We all know the devil when he shows up in a suit of red, or with a fork and horns, but do we know him when he shows up in the form of an angel? That, I believe, is what we are fac-

ing, and that is why it is so hard to decipher between right and wrong. One must really want to understand the Truth, and then only through earnest seeking, Bible reading, and prayer will they be able to tell the difference between Truth and deception.

Remember, I used to be in total agreement with this idea. Then, when God's Truth started dawning on me, I actually inwardly resisted it for a while, until finally the picture became so clear for me that I could no longer deny it. I believe the wolf in sheepskin is among us!

What concerns me the most is all the people who are involved that I do not doubt want nothing but that which is right. If we could somehow get *the church* motivated to put forth as much effort to help the struggling people among us as the counseling centers do, this might not even be an issue. However, that still does not make it right.

So, what really is wrong with it?

Let us take a look at the word *trend*. Trend is the direction something is taking.

Church and trend often appear in the same sentence. What trend does the counseling movement promote? Does it promote brotherhood? Does it promote unity within the church? Does it promote dying to self and taking up the cross? From my observation, the answer would need to be NO to each of these questions and many more besides.

I would most certainly agree that we have many struggling people among us that need help. Instead of putting all our efforts into how to deal with the issues once we have them, I think the question that needs to be answered is, "why do we *have* so many issues?" If we look for answers outside of the church to solve problems within the church, where do we think people will end up looking for answers to their many other questions and struggles?

That is the trend this has started. The church is rapidly losing its authority! I have been there and I know that if we decide that psychiatry and outside-the-church counseling is OK, then the next time an issue arises, we will first consider "what does the counselor think about this?" And that is a major problem! It does not matter how sincere that counselor is, or how devoted he is to working for God, he is **not** our God-ordained spiritual

authority—our church leaders are. Worse yet, if he is not giving clear Biblical answers, *then he is not our source for Truth!*

A template made from a template, made from a template, will not remain accurate. Remember the two brothers that could no longer have a heart-to-heart conversation. Their templates are no longer the same!

Most people, both for and against counseling, would agree that a weak or lukewarm church contributes to having more of their people struggling with various issues. If the church ends up being the problem, how do we then expect a program from outside the church to fix that problem?

However, we still need to fix the problem. Treating symptoms never actually fixes the real problem. The concerning part of this is that we have many people looking to the symptom treater for the answers to all their issues. If a misaligned vertebra is causing a backache, how much Tylenol will it take to heal that particular problem? The Tylenol will help ease the pain, but it will have no impact on fixing the actual problem.

In Revelation 13, we read of the beast that came out of the water that deceived many. This should concern us greatly. However, we, as concerned, church-going Christians should be even more concerned with a second beast we read about in the same chapter.

Just at a glance the second beast does not seem to be near as dangerous as the first beast, but this beast will affect the church more than the first one. According to this Scripture, the second beast (the false prophet) came out of the land and caused the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast. It does not say that he told them to, or made them worship the first beast. He "caused" them to worship the first beast. How did he do this?

What is the way to get someone to change their mind once they really know what they want? There is only one way! That is through cunning deception! And, who is surer of himself than a deceived person? According to the Bible this second beast deceived even the most elect. If we expect to recognize this second beast let us not be looking for an "obvious" devil. It will be something much more close to the real thing. So close to the Truth, in fact, that even some of the

Do we know
him [the Devil]
when he
shows up
in the form
of an angel?

most elect (well-respected men of the community) will fall for it.

By now you are probably wondering if I actually think the counseling movement is the second beast. My answer is yes and no.

No, in the fact that counseling itself would be way too obvious. Yes, in the fact that it promotes a wrong mindset. A wrong perspective of where we as humans rank ourselves in the eyes of God, since it promotes individualism, humanism, new-age thinking, plus many other similar forms of heresy.

Humanism, as one writer put it, is to set ourselves up in the temple of God, the human body (Greek for temple is "Naos" meaning dwelling place of the Holy Spirit) and then decide right and wrong by ourselves, as though we are God. While we would never proclaim, with words, to take the place of God, our actions end up saying otherwise.

Of course, if we are okay with this, we then believe we have the right to take authority away from the church. This strongly promotes individualism, which is "new-age" thinking. This gets us to believe that the human race is mostly good and that we should just nurture it along. This directly contradicts what Scripture teaches us. Our good deeds are as filthy rags in the sight of God.

My personal opinion is that this way of thinking totally fails in teaching people how to die to self. I realize that people unfortunately find themselves in horrible situations: Abuse, neglect, and many other sinful circumstances. However, do we deserve better? Do not get me wrong, I am not saying that these people do not need help. We need to help these people by listening to them and being there for them. But they must also understand that as long as we are living in this "sinful and fallen" world, we will always be living among other people who may sin against us. Dying to self is a daily necessity and will not come easily, depending on what we are dealing with. Here is where one might need help from the church.

So, what is the root of the problem? In Romans 3:23, it says "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God".


Nowadays, we have people needing to see a counselor for no apparent reason other than the fact that their parents fell short of perfection. In doing this, do we realize that we are teaching our children that they will someday need to see a counselor because of our short comings? Does that seem right? We know (if we are honest with ourselves) that we will not be perfect parents for our children.

In closing, I would like to ask a couple questions for each of you to consider carefully, questions that I cannot say I have all the answers for. Therefore, I encourage each of you to ponder them in light of the teachings of God's Word.


- Should a born-again Christian, who has truly died to self, struggle with the past to the point of not being able to control his or her emotions?
- If we have truly died to self, do we focus on our own struggles, or do we forget about ourselves and start looking where we could help other people?
- Does the persecuted church need "outside-the-church" counselors?

It is not my desire for this writing to cause any arguments or divisions, but rather to get people to think deeply about where this movement came from and where it is taking us. I realize that some strong statements have been made in this article. However, I believe that through much seeking, praying, speaking with many concerned brethren, and the leading of the Holy Spirit, I have developed an understanding of where this is coming from and where it is leading to. Above all, I do not want to lead anyone astray.

Give all honor and glory to God if anyone gleans any useful information from this article for their Christian walk.



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. 2 Corinthians 11:3





What About Midwifery?

~Wolf Miggiani M.D.

It is not infrequent that I am asked the question stated in the title of this article. As the father of a daughter who is just starting out in this field, and as a doctor who has always striven to work with, learn from, and teach local midwives wherever we have lived, I can say that I have a very positive outlook on the issue.

Whether it is obvious or not, the question is usually asked with great passion – “what about midwifery?”. People love their midwives, and they want to protect them. (Good!!) Being a Christian physician, I understand the trials and consequences of swimming against the strong currents of the medical “establishment.” But in plain church circles, being both a doctor and a conservative Anabaptist makes me somewhat of an enigma – an oddity. Therefore, this helps me to understand the underlying question behind the first question: “Whose camp are you in – theirs or ours?” My simple answer is YES—both!! If you want the explanation, keep reading...

RISKS AND BENEFITS

It is not one of those things we tend to think about, but with just about everything we do, we subconsciously analyze the risks and benefits. Have you ever contemplated eating a big greasy pizza just before bedtime or going to a crowded shopping center on a busy Saturday? Of course, you have! Well, then you have looked at risks and benefits. Childbirth is a natural, yet important milestone in the lives of our families, so it also deserves some close attention. As it turns out, some of the risks of a medical/hospital approach to childbirth ends up being the benefits of a midwife-managed delivery. But...it also goes the other way around – the risks of a midwifery approach can also be the benefits of a medical/hospital delivery.

The Spiritual Risks and Benefits

Childbirth is not just *another* medical procedure. People do not clamor to have home dental extractions. Neither do our churches work together to train lay surgeons and construct appendectomy or hernia treatment centers. As Christians, birth has special meaning for us, and the Bible has a lot to say about it. The pain of birth is a consequence of man’s fall: “...in pain you shall bring forth children...” (Genesis 3:16) Yet the result (a child) is a gift – “Lo, children are a heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” (Psalm 127:3)

So, likewise, by the new birth of God’s Spirit, we will be reunited with the Lord of Heaven: “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3) So, it is no wonder that many Christians desire a more personal birthing experience for their baby. But, this often conflicts with the governments’ desire to efficiently manage childbirth, which it sees as just *another* medical procedure.

Conflict

As we try give the government the benefit of the doubt, we realize that it truly sees home deliveries as a risk (we will talk more about that later). Despite this understanding, many Christians are still put into the uncomfortable position of asking themselves, “Is this God’s turf, or is this Caesar’s turf?” (think Matthew 22:21). How much authority does the government have when it comes into conflict with the ability of Christians to exercise birthing options utilizing a free conscience?

Moreover, the medical community does not improve the appearances of its intentions by the positions that some of its members have taken. I remember in

medical school a serious effort was being made to force all medical students to assist in abortions. That was almost 25 years ago! The American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecologists (ACOG) has pushed for “efforts to *destigmatize* and *integrate* [italics added] abortion training” for physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and midwives.(i) So while ACOG is trying to eliminate barriers to the taking of life, in some ways they are also working to put up barriers against those midwives who strive to assist in the giving and respect of life. In essence, this could potentially be seen as a drive to “weed out” Christians.

Why is there this drive? It is the age-old story of the epic battle of world views. There is very little difference between a child being offered up to Moloch during Old Testament times and an unborn child being offered up to the twin gods of materialism and convenience in our current time period. Where is all this going? Recently, a Swedish, Christian midwife was fired from her job for refusing to participate in abortions. The courts found that she *must* participate if she wants to practice.(ii) Sweden is not known for its overpopulation nor for its lack of health care access, so it does not seem logical that there is any legitimate *worldly* reason to not allow her a free conscience in this matter.

Two of my own daughters were adopted from China, where forced abortions are common. It is because of the One-Child policy that we had the opportunity to adopt them. (Just another example of the Lord turning man’s frowardness into a blessing!) Could that happen here? It might be difficult to consider this possibility with the recent change in the tone and direction of the country. Yet, it does not take much of an effort to realize there are powerful secular people in this country who would like to see, for example, the population of the planet decreased by 95% (Ted Turner - Founder of CNN), 50% (Henry Kissinger - Statesman, Nobel Peace Prize Recipient), or 10-15% (Bill Gates - Billionaire).(iii) This would mean a “reduction” of anywhere from *one* to *six billion* people!

Does any of this sound familiar?

“And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them . . . And he [Pharaoh] said, when ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive.” (Exodus 1:7,16-17)

To me, it seems like there certainly was, is, and will be a need for God-fearing women, who feel called to the profession of midwifery to practice, with a godly conscience, the vocation of helping bring babies into this world.

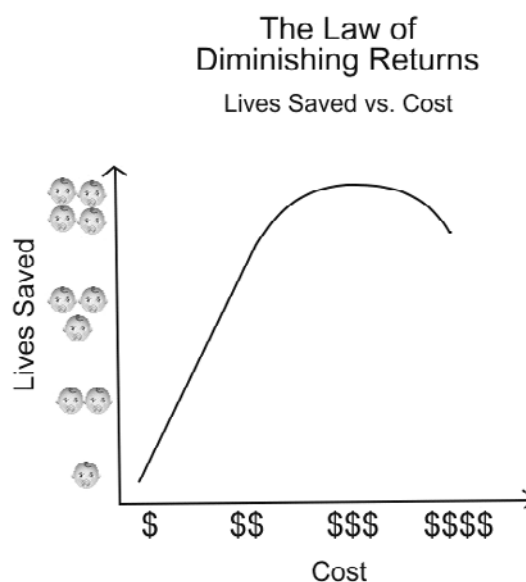
Summary

So, in summary, the spiritual risk is that there are worldly providers (many physicians, even some midwives) who do not share a Christian world view. Thus, their counsel may not be compatible with a Christian walk, when we consider their potential abortion mentality, screening for the purposes of termination, human birth control vs God’s control (especially the abortifacients), etc.

But the spiritual benefits of Christian providers (some doctors and many midwives) is the confidence that most likely the advice and counsel you are receiving recognizes the authority and sovereignty of the Lord. And that the human hands ushering in your child’s new life on Earth are those of a practitioner who shares a love for the one true God. The one important caveat to bear in mind though, is that *not all midwives are Christian* and *not all doctors are worldly*.

The Economic Risks and Benefits

According to one study, the average uncomplicated normal birth costs 68% less in a home than it would in a hospital.(iv) Anecdotally, I think most of us realize that the savings can be quite a bit more than that. It makes sense. Here is a chart illustrating the concept of The Law of Diminishing Returns, which says that more is not always better.



As you can see, with only a small increase of cost, the quality of care (and lives saved) increases. Think about how minimal the cost is for cleanliness, yet it is probably the greatest life-saving factor. For example, in the 1840s, at the Vienna General Hospital, maternal death rates from infection alone fell from highs of over 30% to generally less than 2% after strict hand washing was enforced!(v)

However, at the higher end of this cost chart, the more that is spent might only result in a smaller number of lives saved. Think of the Neonatal Intensive Care Units and what it costs to run them. They are good to have when you need them, but expensive nonetheless.

Finally, look at the last part of the curve, where even more cost and intervention can actually result in a decrease in the number of lives saved. For example, think about amniocentesis and other usually unnecessary invasive tests that can result in miscarriages or other complications.

So, it sounds like there is no economic reason to forego a hospital delivery, right? It is true that there are numerous positive studies, and it seems that they universally show a lower cost. Still, it is important to realize that there are a number of presumptions about home births here: first, that the out-of-hospital deliveries are low-risk pregnancies, and second, that there is ready access to a receiving hospital if necessary, either of which would change the study outcomes.

This is in all reality an important presumption, because these studies assume that there is a negligible difference in complications between hospital and home deliveries. If there is actually a higher complication rate, the cost of dealing with those complications usually is not taken into account, even though these complications could extend well into the future—even for the rest of that individual's life.

This leads us to the last section—medical risks and benefits. What are the complication rates for mother and child when comparing home versus hospital deliveries?

MEDICAL RISKS AND BENEFITS

The Risks

So, what is the actual possibility of a bad outcome for the mother and for the child, when comparing a hospital delivery with an out-of-hospital delivery? Before I try to answer that, I would like to talk a little more about the concept of “risk.” Yes, God is sovereign, omniscient, and loving: “But even the very hairs

of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:7)

At the same time, he has allowed us to learn from patterns (experiences) in the past—patterns that we can call risk. More specifically, I would like to introduce the concept of *absolute risk* and *relative risk*, to put things into the proper perspective. A good illustration of this is the chance of being killed by lightning in any given year. According to the National Weather Service, there has been an average of 51 lightning deaths per year. So, in a population of 325 million people, your chance of being killed by lightning is about 1 in 6 million. The data also shows that men are about 4 times (400%) more likely to be killed (as roofers and climbers) than women. Likewise, since there are 50 states and about 50 deaths, statistically, one would expect about 1 death per state (not accounting for population size). Florida (flat, with a lot of lightning), however, sees about five deadly strikes per year (a 500% increased likelihood).(vi)

So, the *Relative Risk* of a man getting hit is high (400% increase), so is the chance if you live in Florida (500%). Does this mean that if men see dark clouds, they should dive for cover? (Preferably not under a tree!) What if you are from Florida? Should you move to North Dakota (which has not seen a deadly strike in ten years)? The answer is probably not, because the *Absolute Risk* for Floridians is still less than one, in one million, as is the risk for men in general. However, it would be wise (especially if you are a roofer who lives and works in Florida) to take proper precautions, such as not playing ball outside or not working in high places when you realize an electrical storm is approaching.

NOW, BACK TO DELIVERIES

First, Mothers

Historically, even as late as the early 1900s, becoming a mother was associated with a mortality rate of six to nine mother's deaths per 1,000 live births — nearly 1% for *each* delivery!(vii) Today, becoming a mother is 99% safer. In modern times, due to sanitation, good surgical techniques, and antibiotics, the rates are in the area of 10-15 per 100,000 live births (the risk actually decreased the greatest (89%) from about 1930 to 1950, when antibiotics came into use).(viii) For comparison, consider that the chance of being killed in an auto accident is about the same in any correlating given year - 10.6/100,000 population (2013 data)(ix)

So, where do midwife assisted deliveries stand in regard to the mother's risk? Since home and birthing center deliveries amount to only about 1% of the total in the U.S., the data is very limited. One midwife-led study of almost 17,000 deliveries revealed 1 death (due to a blood clot), so this is in the same range as that of the national average.(x)

What about baby?

Most women know that pregnancy and delivery can be difficult and complex. From the moment of conception, about 20% of pregnancies end in miscarriage (one in five), which means that most women will go through one or more during their lifetime. Another, much larger study looked at 14 million deliveries (which included 130,000 non-hospital births). In it, comparisons were made between hospital midwife deliveries and non-hospital midwife deliveries. They found that the risk for a home birth or birthing center baby was roughly 4 times that of a hospital-delivered baby. (1.26 in 1,000 live births vs 0.32 in 1,000 hospital births). This seems to make for a high *relative risk*, but the *absolute risk* for both is close to 1 in 1000 deliveries. Therefore, this means that for all three: home, birthing center, and hospital deliveries, God, in his mercy, allows about 999 out of 1000 babies to return home to their families. (xi)



Some Thoughts:

- Out-of-hospital breech deliveries (22.5 per 1000) have 45 times the risk of cesarean deliveries (0.5 per 1000).(xii) This is high risk; so are moms with diabetes and blood pressure issues.
- Twin births have an infant mortality rate of 22 per 1000.(xiii) These children are often premature, and have a significantly higher risk of other medical problems, so they should be managed as high risk.
- First births – relative risk is statistically significant (2.19 per 1000 out-of-hospital vs 0.33 per 1000 in hospital), but is the absolute risk significant (998 compared with 999 babies will still make it home)? The same can also be said for VBACs.

The Benefits of Out-of-Hospital Deliveries

- Cesarean rates approach 30% in some hospitals.
- In non-hospital deliveries, 95% of women avoided a cesarean section. Of those, 89% of women completed a non-hospital delivery, but 6% were assisted in the hospital with Pitocin, vacuum, or forceps. Only 5% ended up requiring a cesarean section.
- About 30-35% of hospital deliveries involve an episiotomy.
- The percentage of women who have no tears in a non-hospital delivery was found to be 49% in the midwife study, whereas for hospital deliveries only 24-34% of women avoided a tear or episiotomy. (xiv)

CONCLUSIONS

Quality Counts

Remember in the last issue, I mentioned that a physician can do 5,000 deliveries, but the question is, “*Does he or she do them well?*” Accordingly, the same applies to midwives. Does she know her limitations—when to refer out? Also, does she strive to continue educating herself?

As a practicing ER physician (who, as a family physician, has not done *routine* deliveries in over 15 years), the learning and testing process *never* stops—Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Advanced Trauma Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support, emergency medicine board recertification, Continuing Medical Education state requirements, and the list goes on. Likewise, a good midwife also should *never* stop learning and teaching.

Building Bridges

It is not infrequent that I hear from midwives that they do not get enough support from physicians. This is a valid complaint. No doubt much of this, either directly or indirectly, relates to “turf battles.” However, I believe that for most physicians, IF it is apparent that a midwife is doing all she can to be excellent in what she does, that fact will go a long way toward building a working relationship.

Some Suggestions

Most larger hospitals offer a course called the Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP). It is usually taught by Neonatal Intensive Care Unit nurses and pediatricians. Lay midwives could ask about taking this program. If the particular course director will not offer “certification,” it is likely that they would allow an “audit,” which means listening to the lecture, possibly going through the exercises, but not becoming certified.

It works the same way for the Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics, which is a course designed to maintain the quality of deliveries for family doctors. I would be happy to help any midwife get started.

Additionally, midwives could become a volunteer EMT or a paramedic. If an individual is servicing a small hospital in this capacity, a working relationship between physician and midwife will naturally and necessarily develop. This would allow midwives to, in some ways, be a part of the “establishment” without necessarily compromising independence. Potentially lifesaving skills could also be acquired in this way, such as starting and managing an IV, which could then legally be utilized during homebirths.

Unity of Purpose

No doubt I may have stepped on some toes, and pushed many a comfort zone. But when all is said and done, it is good to remember that our purpose on Earth is to glorify God in all that we do: “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” (Col 3:23-24)

Both physicians and midwives have unique and special roles in what they do, so it is important that we learn from each other, and learn to work with each other, in order to better serve God and our patients. It is entirely reasonable for individual couples to choose either pathway for the care of their families. Pray for wisdom and look for excellence.

Bottom line: it seems short-sighted to get into an “either-or” or a “we-they” mentality, when an “all of the above” view seems to be the more Scriptural perspective. All Christians would do well to heed the Apostle Paul's admonitions in Romans 12:16 (NLT): “Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!”

Footnotes:

- (i) ACOG Committee Opinion Number 612, November 2014
- (ii) <http://www.lifenews.com/2015/11/12/court-rules-nurse-fired-for-refusing-to-assist-abortions-must-do-abortion-to-keep-her-job/>
- (iii) Watts, David, “Journey to a Brave New World,” www.iuniverse.com, p.47
- (iv) Anderson RE, Anderson DA. “The cost-effectiveness of home birth,” J Nurse Midwifery. 1999 Jan-Feb ;44(1) :30-5.
- (v) Semmelweis, Ignaz (September 15, 1838) [1861]. *Etiology, Concept and Prophylaxis of Childbed Fever*. Translated by Carter, K. Codell. University of Wisconsin Press.
- (vi) <http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/fatalities/fatalities14.shtml>
- (vii) <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4838a2.htm#fig1>
- (viii) <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT>
- (ix) <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.TRAF.P5>
- (x) Cheyney, M., Bovbjerg, M., Everson, C., Gordon, W., Hannibal, D. and Vedam, S. (2014), Outcomes of Care for 16,924 Planned Home Births in the United States: The Midwives Alliance of North America Statistics Project, 2004 to 2009. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*, 59: 17–27.
- (xi) Grünebaum A, McCullough LB, Sapra KJ, et al. Early and total neonatal mortality in relation to birth setting in the United States, 2006-2009. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2014; 211:390. e1-7.
- (xii) Berhan Y, Haileamlak A. The risks of planned vaginal breech delivery versus planned caesarean section for term breech birth: a meta-analysis including observational studies. *BJOG* 2016; 123:49–57.
- (xiii) <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/neonatal-complications-outcome-and-management-of-multiple-births>
- (xiv) J Sleep, A Grant, J Garcia, D Elbourne, J Spencer, I Chalmers, West Berkshire perineal management trial. *Br Med J (Clin Res Ed)* 1984 Sep 8; 289(6445): 587–590.



Is Thy God Able?

~ Rachel O. Martin

And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Daniel 6:20

Recently, I was feeling very overwhelmed with the busyness of a large family. Fall always tends to be a difficult time for me. We just came through another busy harvest season—canning, freezing, preserving—and there are still more projects to finish before winter sets in. Additionally, there is the start of another school year. We are a home-schooling family and this year we will have five children in school. On top of that, we have had numerous recent appointments to attend, with the dentist, eye doctor, orthodontist, and doctor. Even today, I need to take one of our daughters to the dentist because one of her fillings fell out.

This morning, our youngest son woke us early, a thunderstorm had gone through during the night, plus we will be needing to prepare for a trip tomorrow. I got up feeling that this busy day had gotten off to a bad start. I prayed that God would help me find something to read in His Word that would be encouraging. I opened my Bible and my eyes were drawn to Daniel 6. I almost did not read it, thinking that I would rather read somewhere in the gospels instead. But God had allowed me to open there for a reason. Here it was written that the king asked Daniel whether his God is able to deliver him from the lions. That phrase caught my attention. *Is thy God able?* Is God able to deliver me from my lions of: fears, anxieties, cares or any other

lions I am facing? Of course, I know that He is completely able, but what about me? Am I fully trusting Him or am I trying to hold the lions' mouths shut myself? Let us take a look at some of the lions that we might meet.

The Lion of Work

Those of us who are mothers with a number of young children can at times feel overwhelmed almost to the point of discouragement. Besides being our husband's help meet, we have cooking, cleaning, laundry, and child training to do. Almost daily we need to be nurse, counselor, and judge. Then on top of that, those of us who are homeschooling mothers have the privilege of juggling those responsibilities as well. It is a blessing to be able to work hard and to work with our children, but let us face it, our work can be a roaring lion ready to devour our peace and joy.

I was impressed with the fact that Daniel did not need to hold the lions' mouths shut. God sent His angels to do it. In the same way, we can rest in the Lord and trust Him to work everything out. The work will still all be there, but if our attitude is right, we can go to bed at night and sleep peacefully even if not everything is accomplished the way we would like.

In this busy season of our lives—mothers raising a family—it becomes necessary to lay aside some of our ideals and desires. We need to have our priorities straight. In this it would be helpful to consider some practical solutions.

I would suggest making a plan and trying to stick with it. Our family functions so much better when we have a schedule and then follow it. There are some

families that have the whole day broken up into fifteen or thirty minute segments for each family member. Our day is not nearly as detailed as that, rather I like to think of our schedule as having certain pillars, then letting everything else fall into place.

The pillars I am referring to are: (1) rising at the same time each day, (2) having our meals at regular times, (3) naps after lunch and (4) a regular bedtime. In among these pillars, I then have lists for the school-age children, so they know what I expect them to do every day. These lists include our regular days for laundry and cleaning. These are all just suggestions for mothers to consider as they try to figure out what works best for them.

I am one of those who like to-do lists. They help me remember all that I want to get done. I can check my lists when the children need something to do. I try to keep it in a handy place and write things down as I think of them. There is no need to invest in something fancy or costly; I just use an inexpensive notebook, which I pick up at our local store.

You could assign jobs for the children. With nine children, I find it very helpful to make a list or schedule for each of the school-age children. That way I do not need to remember what they should be doing. I have received many helpful ideas from other homeschooling moms and from books written to give practical pointers and suggestions for homeschooling families.

We need to have a good attitude. Do not fret if you are not getting everything done that you would like. Sometimes we just do not reach around. If we have done our best, and our husband and children are fed, clean, and content, that is the most important. Sometimes, what we think we need to do is just simply a want, rather than a need.

The Lion of Sickness

This lion roared at us this week. Our ten-year-old and three-year-old sons have been very sick since Sunday with high fevers peaking over 104 degrees F. Now it is Friday and they are still sick. Also, my husband has been in Florida on a business trip for Christian Aid Ministries. While there, he ended up in the Urgent Care facility due to an earache. On top of all this, I had a headache for several days, during which time my two older girls were in PA for Bible school. Although I was feeling quite overwhelmed, I did what I could with the housework.

How will we deal with this lion? We need to trust in the Lord, realizing that all things work together for our good (Romans 8:28-29). Take one moment at a

time. I have often pondered on suffering and why God allows suffering in our lives. Somehow, God seems to use suffering to draw us closer to Him and to strengthen our faith.

After I had a heart attack and was lying in that hospital bed, not knowing what my untrustworthy heart would do next, I learned to trust the Lord in a much deeper way than when all was going well and life was easy. This is hard to explain, but I have come to the conclusion that the only way to completely understand this is to actually experience it!

Allow me to share some blessings we have experienced because of sickness. Once, I was sick at a time when we had five young children. No church girls were available to come help me, but an older sister in the church said, "I can come for half a day." Her girls were already helping other people, but this grandma came, folded my laundry, swept my floors, and washed my dishes. I will never forget how she blessed me that day.

Then, when I had my heart attack after our ninth baby was born, a young sister offered to come help us for several weeks. That also was a tremendous blessing for us, while I recovered from that traumatic event. God was showing His love and care for us through other believers.

The Lion of Discouragement

As women, we are emotional beings. I believe it is one of Satan's tactics to tempt us with discouragement. In order to overcome discouragement, we can meditate on what God says in His Word, "I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Corinthians 6:16, 18).

If you are discouraged, meditate on the fact that you are a daughter of the Lord Almighty! Also, do not compare yourself with others, since that only brings pride and/or discouragement. "But they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." Keep your eyes focused on the Lord Jesus and seek only the approval of your Father in heaven (John 5:44).

The Lions of Fear and Anxiety

There are countless things we can be anxious about. We fear sickness, accidents, and death of loved ones. We worry about what other people think. Sometimes we really are in fearful situations. After my heart attack I was gripped by an overwhelming fear. At this time, a dear friend shared something with me that

helped me overcome this lion in my life. She said it matters where you look. I realized I could look at all that could go wrong or I could look at God's grace that had helped me thus far and believe that His grace would be sufficient for the future. Some scriptures that also helped me were: "The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands." (Psalm 138:8), "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." (Psalm 139:5), "... And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not..." (Revelation 1:17).

Do not keep your fear to yourself. Pray. Talk to someone about it and ask them to pray for you. Meditate on God's word. Another powerful tool against fear and anxiety is singing.

Let us rise up and say with Daniel, “My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.” Daniel 6:22

How gentle God's commands,
How kind His precepts are!
Come, cast your burdens on the Lord,
And trust His constant care.

Beneath His watchful eye
His saints securely dwell;
That hand which bears all nature up
Shall guide His children well.

Why should this anxious load
Press down your weary mind?
Haste to your heav'nly Father's throne,
And sweet refreshment find.

His goodness stands approved,
Unchanged from day to day;
I'll drop my burden at His feet,
And bear a song away.

-Philip Doddridge

-continued from page 3 (the editorial)

short stories, etc. Also, that we were hoping to start developing our own compilation of photos to draw from instead of needing to go online for those.

For those of you who have responded, we thank you for your interest. However, we do apologize that we did not have all our requirements sorted out ahead of time. As different of you started to bring various questions and inquiries, we realized that we needed to take our time to ensure that we have those details thought through and in place before we start accepting the above mentioned items. At this time we are getting close to having that in place and once we do, we will be contacting each one of you who has sent in your offer to write for us.

Also, we received some feedback on the articles we have been printing in the medical column. There has been some question regarding the direction or the agenda that is in place for that column. In response, we have seen a lot of confusion surrounding the issue of Biblical ethics regarding a whole host of issues relating to health matters. There are some folks in the plain circles who seem to be quite gullible or naïve in regards to using any alternative

methods that are available (even some that border on being evil). There is also a strong view among some in the plain circles who see all “allopathic medicine” (regular medicine) as being suspect, unsafe, dangerous, or even anti-Christian. Finally, there are those among the “plain people” who would be unaware or even possibly confused in knowing what is Biblically acceptable or actually required, IF the need would arise for them to go to the doctor. Also, they would not know when to get second opinions or which tests and screenings are ethical or necessary.

Our goal with the medical column is to endeavor to honestly look at these issues from a Biblical perspective, while trying to develop Christian ethics in regards to ALL of medicine—allopathic or alternative. We will also be planning to try to unravel some of the confusion surrounding a Christian's visit to the doctor, IF there is ever the need for that. Finally, since there is already so much available information regarding herbs and vitamin supplements, we do not plan to be focusing on those aspects of health, even though we believe there is a proper and right place for them. God Bless you all.

~ C. L. Wenger

The Potter's Vessels

*God the Potter is molding me,
What kind of vessel will I be?*

*To carry, to store or for a drink?
A lamp, or a plate, or a kitchen sink?*

*I'm a little bit shallow, I admit,
For I'm focusing on me quite a bit.*

*But here's a thought,
I am not the only pot.*

*About my life are many others,
A husband, a daughter and some brothers.*

*The Potter's hand is on them, too,
Making each of us something new.*

*Another pot gives me a bump,
And now I have a little lump*

*Into another pot I smack,
It seems that they now have a crack,*

*Back to the Potter's wheel we go,
Until His likeness again does show.*

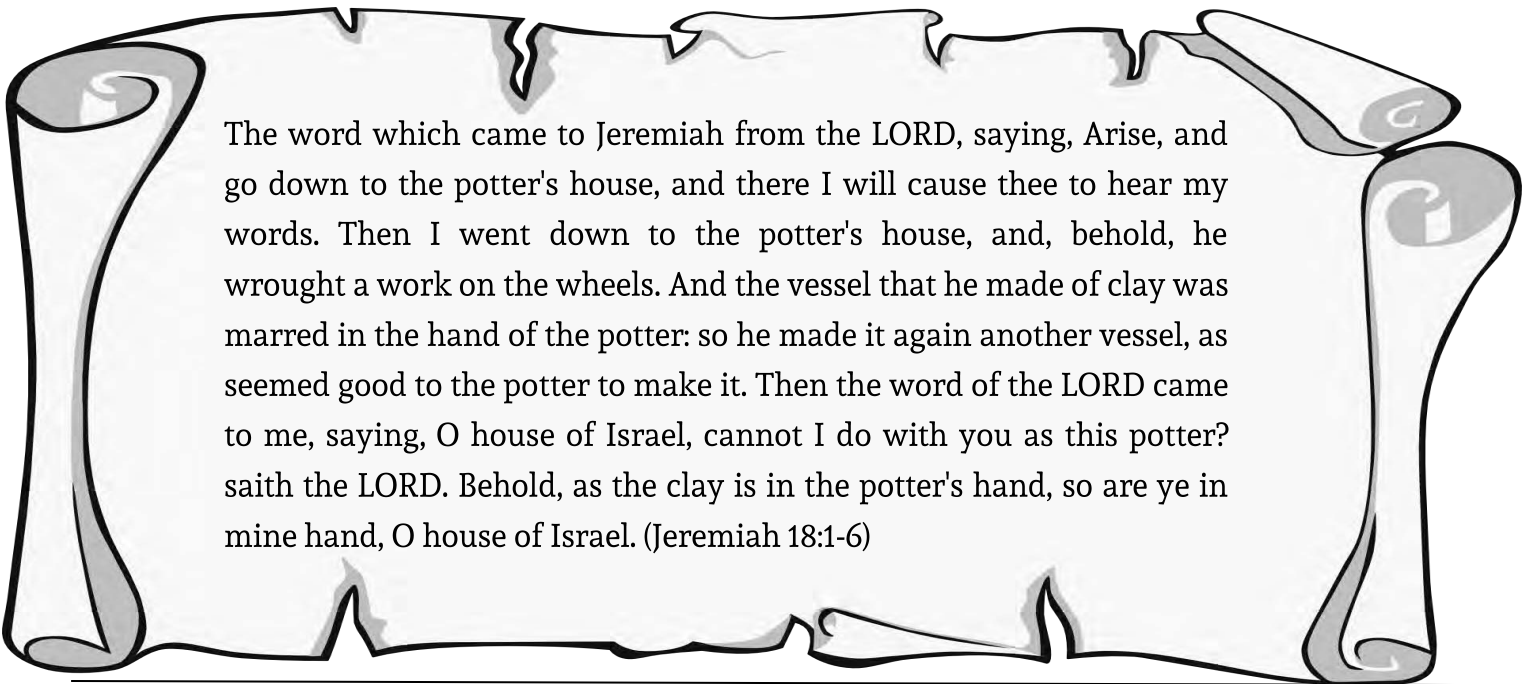
*If what I do and what I say,
Changes the course of others clay,*

*Then with great care I must behave,
Lest others' pots become concave.*

*Useful pots are God's desire,
One's that can withstand the fire.*

*It's not just me and it's not just you,
God's working with other vessels too.*

~ Elizabeth Rust



The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. (Jeremiah 18:1-6)

Neighbor
Circles

Cousin
Circles

Common Interest
Circles

The Circle Problem

~ Isaac Zimmerman

I love the young people in our church and I am one of them. While we as a church have very few youth-only activities, as young people we still have many enjoyable times together. We sing together, we wash dishes together after fellowship meals, and we have many fulfilling times of just sharing with each other. Also, our church families frequently invite each other over for a meal or to spend an evening singing together.

We are blessed with a lot of youth who have a zeal for the Lord and are committed to following Him. These things are a blessing and we are thankful for our close-knit youth group. However, having a close-knit youth group also brings challenges. One of these challenges is avoiding the problem of circles.

The problem

Among the young people of many churches, there seems to be what I will call circles—age circles, cousin circles, neighbor circles, common-interest circles, etc. While these circles (cliques) are not necessarily all bad, the main problem is that not everyone is included in these circles. Usually, there are some who are outside of any specific circle. While the rest of us are busy with our conversations and projects, they are left by themselves. Maybe they are sitting alone, watching, many times in the back or in a corner. Most likely they are wishing to be included, but they are not sure how. Per-

haps they are not sure if they are welcome or even invited to join in. Or worse yet, maybe someone has privately told them to stay away from the rest of the group.

Not only do we have circles, but we also have attitudes. Sometimes people are looked down upon—secretly of course. Perhaps we do not appreciate them. In our minds, we tend to place them on the social ladder a few rungs below us. Usually, they are not a part of the *in group*. They are often not included in the normal activities and conversations. Perhaps they are not popular. Maybe they feel rejected and hurt because they do not seem to fit in or are not accepted as being a part of the group.

Why does this seem to be such a common problem? What is the cause for this kind of struggle among Christian teenagers and young adults? Why are some not being accepted? While there could be a number of reasons for this, let us consider some that are the most likely.

Some Reasons

1. They are newcomers.

Perhaps their family just moved to our church or community. We already have a close circle of friends. Maybe the rest of the youth in our church have already found their place in the group and have settled into a comfortable normal routine. Maybe the circle seems

full enough. Newcomers may seem scary or disruptive, so we tend to keep them outside of our circle. Finally, it can be challenging and make us weary to start from scratch making new friends repeatedly, with each new arrival.

2. **They are “poor”.**

Perhaps there are youth in our congregations or in our circle of friends who are not accepted because they are struggling financially. Their clothes may seem to be ill-fitting and shabby, their house may appear to be in poor condition, and their vehicles may sound like they are squeaking out their last miles. Their family cannot afford to go to the places others go and do the things others do. They are “poor”, so those of us who consider ourselves “rich”, do not want to risk our social standing by befriending them.

3. **They are “different”.**

Perhaps we think they look different, talk different, dress different, or eat different. They do not do things the “normal” way, and since we do not want others to possibly think of us as being “different”, we hold them at arm’s length. We do not want to be identified with the “different” crowd...

4. **Their convictions do not match ours.**

Perhaps there are youth in our congregations who dress more plainly than we do. Maybe there are those whose parents do not allow them to participate in some of the activities that the others take part in. Should they then automatically be considered as self-righteous? Or, maybe there are those who are less conservative than we are. Does this then, make them less spiritual than we are?

5. **They are quiet and shy.**

Perhaps they find socializing to be very difficult. They do not say much and when they do, they make blunders. They do not seem to be making any moves towards becoming more friendly, so since it is “their own fault”, the rest of us tend to mostly ignore them.

These are just a few possible reasons. There may well be more, but are these good reasons? Is it okay for us as Christians to have these attitudes? What does the Bible have to say about this?

The apostle James writes very bluntly in James 2:9, “But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and

are convinced of the law as transgressors.” Ye commit sin! Do we understand that? Or do we just overlook this clear statement and shrug our shoulders?

How does the scripture define respect of persons? In this same passage of scripture, James gives a very practical illustration that is easy to understand. He gives the example of an assembly, or church service, where two men come in. The one is dressed in nice clothes and the other is dressed in vile (disgusting) raiment. This scripture says that if we give the man with nice clothes a better seat than the other one, we are guilty. “Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” James 2:4

Now, let us consider how these same five reasons look in light of God’s Word, remembering the previous portion of Scripture, *“If ye have respect to persons ye commit sin.”*

The reasons again

1. **They are newcomers.**

Are we not glad that Jesus accepts newcomers? If he did not, we would have been left out in the cold. To not receive newcomers into our churches and into our friendships is to ignore the heart of God.

2. **They are poor.**

The Bible gives us many glimpses into the heart of God concerning the poor, and there are dire warnings for those who oppress or take advantage of them. Jesus blessed the poor and said “But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation,” Luke 6:24. We are believing a lie if we think that being well-to-do puts us on a higher level than those who are struggling financially.

3. **They are “different”.**

So are you. Your way of doing things may not be any better than their way. God created each person to be different from every other person. Beware of lifting yourself above someone else. Philippians 2:3, tells us “...In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

4. **Their convictions do not match ours.**

Many of us are members in congregations where there is some variation in dress and other areas of lifestyle. When we look down on someone who is faithfully obeying their parents or who is conscientiously living out their convictions, we are actually looking down on Godliness. To reject others who are sincerely walk-

ing with the Lord, but are less conservative than we are, can be the result of a *proud heart*. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?” (Romans 14:4)

5. They are quiet and shy.

Perhaps they are not doing their part to be friendly. Did Jesus wait for us to do our part before He reached out to us? Did He say, “It’s their own fault”? Sometimes people are very shy by nature. The people around them can do a lot to help them overcome their shyness. Philippians 2:4 tells us, “Look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others”.

What shall we do?

First of all, I think some of us need to repent. Even as I wrote this, I was personally convicted, and needed to repent of some wrong attitudes. Remember, “If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin.” We need God. We need Him to show us that we are all on the same level in His sight. We need Him to give us a heart of love for all men. It is only in sacrificial love that true Christian friendships can happen.

It is not God’s will that there would be young people in our churches who are rejected and left out. It is time we get out of our circles (cliques) and start befriending ALL those who God has brought into our lives. It is time we lay down our own rights to a good time with our favorite friends and start living unselfishly, with everyone God has placed in our lives.

As we do this, it is important that we do it with a right heart. We are not at the top of some social ladder, reaching down a grudging hand to a poor individual several steps below us. Not at all. Rather, we do it because we understand that we need each other and that God has commanded it. That young person in the corner most likely has something you need, and maybe you have something he or she needs. In 1 Corinthians 12:18, Paul tells us that God has placed the members in the body as it has pleased Him, and we need each one.

It is God’s will that our churches would be places where people of all ages are loved and accepted, encouraged and admonished. God did not design us to function by ourselves; we need each other. God wants grace to flow between us all, as children in God’s family.

Let us move forward with courage and a sense of opportunity—not out of duty, but in cheerful obedience. God is a God of relationships and when we exercise Godly friendships it brings a blessing to us, to our friends, and to our churches.

What an opportunity!

But it will not all be easy:

- It may hurt our reputation. Remember, Jesus made himself of no reputation for us.
- It may cause some of our existing friends to reject us. If they do, we are better off spending less time with them anyway. If that is all it takes to cause them to no longer be our friends, then they were weak friends at best.
- It may mean talking about things that are not our interest, since we will be talking about the other person’s interest. Or, it may mean giving up an activity we enjoy, in order to spend time with others in their activity. But that is okay—Jesus gave up *everything* to reach you and me.
- It may mean losing our popularity and becoming a *nobody*, since we are choosing to associate with those who others may think of as *nobodies*. That is okay too; when we choose the possibility of losing our reputation for the sake of obeying the Lord, then He can make us a *somebody* in his kingdom.

Let us be brutally honest and admit that sometimes we are very wimpy and lack the courage to respond to others like Jesus, no matter what. We are afraid of what our friends might think. We are afraid of being rejected. We are afraid of being thought of as different or strange. We are afraid to be the first one in our *clique* to step forward, to repent of having respect towards persons, and start *loving Jesus* by *loving the least of His*. Afraid? Yes, afraid. I’ll be the first one to acknowledge it.

It is not my intention to send all of us young people on a guilt trip with no return. If we have wrong attitudes, let us repent, and move forward.

Be encouraged, take little, practical steps, and the Lord will enrich your life with friends like you have never had before.

In conclusion

I love our youth group. I am thankful for their godly example in facing the challenge of circles. By God’s grace I will join their endeavors to follow the example of Jesus, who without partiality, was willing to love and receive us all.

In Trial's Vale

The sky is dark; the night is cold;
But God hath pledged my hand to hold.
The trial's great, the valley low;
But God will show the way to go.

He has not planned an easy path,
But He indeed would save from wrath.
He loves me, yes, enough, I know,
That He has planned this way I go.

His best seems hard, but time will prove
T'ward me His everlasting love.
If I look up, He'll show His face --
Such love can never be replaced!

If through the storm I hold His hand,
Unmoved from Him I'll safely stand;
Then land my ship on heaven's shore,
And rest eternally secure!

Here sorrows crush my tender heart,
And here my dreams are pulled apart;
But up in heav'n I'll know no grief --
There I shall find a great relief!

The path's still rough, the way still hard,
But by God's grace my heart I'll guard;
For God has planned for me the best,
So in His will I now shall rest.

~ Susan M. Stalter

"The cup which my Father hath given me,
shall I not drink it?"

OUR READERS RESPOND

Greetings in the name of our blessed Friend and Savior Jesus Christ!

I recently began receiving your magazine and agree with many things in it. In this latest issue in the article, "How Should a Christian Vote", a couple things stood out to me in particular. I agree with the point of the article and feel the two-kingdom principle to be an integral part of the true gospel of Jesus.

It was good to see it pointed out that the "Mennonites" of Germany during WW2 were in no way connected with the other defenseless (nonresistant) Mennonites of the time. Just sharing the name "Mennonite" (or "Christian") and a common background is no indication of an ecclesiastical connection and shared guilt. The bulk of Mennonitism is no more guilty of the deeds of those groups in Germany than: the Old Order Mennonites are guilty of MennoniteChurchUSA allowing gay ministers, or the early Swiss Brethren were guilty of the "Anabaptist" robber band of Fulda raping and murdering people who didn't receive adult baptism (in the 1500s).

One correction I would like to mention concerns the statement made about the Mennonites of Russia "agree [ing] to never evangelize their neighbors". Although it is widely held that when moving to Russia the Plattdeutsch Mennonites promised the government not to make converts, this is in actuality only a myth. The privileges granted by Catherine the Great to the Mennonites did warn them that it was illegal for those of the state church (Russian Orthodox) to join them, but this would have been nothing new for them, being the same in most of Europe at the time.

The privileges even spoke positively of proselytizing Muslims or other "unbelievers" in Russia, explicitly stating that such was permissible. And indeed, during their time in Russia various people did join the Mennonites (with names such as Makoski, Lenzmann, Jahnke, Heese, Broeski, Radenzel, and others) some of whom did receive persecution from the government for doing so (as warned).

I don't mean this as criticism, only a little correction since I have heard the same misconception so many times before and don't like to see it spread yet further by means of print. It is a topic especially close to home being myself a convert to one of the horse and buggy "Russian" Mennonite groups.

Written in love,

Stephanus, from Belize, Central America

"Greetings Stephanus. Thank you so much for taking the time to write and share your understanding and correction on this above stated issue. Our goal is to never intentionally or unintentionally, spread a report that is not accurate. We do our best to search things out, but at times we still need our readers to respond like you have to ensure that all facts are correct. Again, our heartfelt appreciation for your concern and efforts in this matter. May God richly bless you." ~ C. L. Wenger

Sirs;

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Heartbeat of the Remnant magazine. For years I received and was informed and edified by the magazine of the same name published by Charity Christian Fellowship. I found the articles in this issue to be excellent. I like the diversity, the practicality of the articles. I also appreciate the kingdom perspective. Is there any chance of an on line subscription being offered? How often do you plan to issue? Enclosed is a check of appreciation, to help a little with some of your start up and publishing costs.

Yours in Christ,

Rebecca, from the USA

Dear Heartbeat of the Remnant

Greetings in Jesus' worthy name. It is a blessing to see the magazine published again. May God give you wisdom and grace to publish His Truth to this generation which knows so little truth. Yes, we can and should draw from our Anabaptist background as they also sought to earnestly contend for the faith in their generation. But it was refreshing to see your heart to lift up our Lord Jesus Christ first and foremost. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Enclosed is a small love gift to help with publication.

In Christ, Jonathan, from Canada

FINANCIAL REPORT

In our last issue, we shared that we were in urgent need of finances. As you can see below, our readership picked up the burden and shared quite charitably. May God bless each one of you for your generosity. Please keep us in your prayers, as we continue to move forward with this effort of providing Biblical edification through the printed page. Also, as God moves in your hearts, please remember that the only way we can keep going forward with this work is by the ongoing free-will offerings of God's people. ~ C.L.W.

THE BEREAN VOICE FINANCIAL REPORT (2016 Fourth Quarter)

Income

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Beginning Balance	\$4,889.06
Berean Voice Donations	\$115.00
Remnant Donations	\$11,645.00
Where Most Needed	\$1,910.00

Expenses

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Miscellaneous	\$47.00
UPS & Postage	\$401.31
Payroll Expense	\$3,000.00
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$6,462.66
Books & Literature	\$163.94
Website Maintenance	\$250.00
Office Expenses	\$91.50
Telephone	\$49.05
CDs, Albums, & Labels	\$0.00
Equipment and Software	\$0.00
Professional Fees	\$0.00
Berean Voice Travel Expense	\$0.00
Total Income	\$18,559.06
Total Expenses	\$10,465.46
Balance	\$8,093.60
Percentage of Income Spent	56%

THE BEREAN VOICE FINANCIAL REPORT (2016 Year-End Totals)

Income

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Beginning Balance	\$3,178.39
Berean Voice Donations	\$3,156.00
Remnant Donations	\$28,002.51
Where Most Needed	\$2,565.00


Expenses

<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Miscellaneous	\$47.00
UPS & Postage	\$993.12
Payroll Expenses	\$12,533.84
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$11,953.93
Books & Literature	\$435.94
Website Maintenance	\$436.00
Office Expenses	\$629.05
Telephone	\$223.82
CDs, Albums, & Labels	\$0.00
Equipment and Software	\$830.60
Professional Fees	\$725.00
Berean Voice Travel Expense	\$0.00
Total Income	\$36,901.90
Total Expenses	\$28,808.30
Balance *	\$8,093.60
Percentage of Income Spent	78%

* These totals are through the end of 2016 and do not reflect the costs for this issue or the next.

The Heartbeat of the Remnant
c/o The Berean Voice
P O Box 279
Shreve, Ohio 44676

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Erie, PA
Permit # 227



**Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:
though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;
though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.**

- Isaiah 1:18