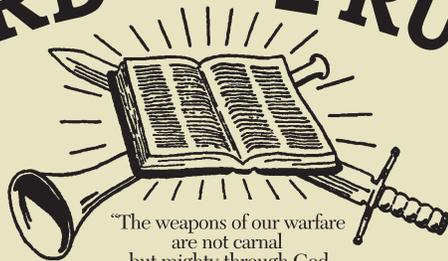


# The SWORD and TRUMPET



"Blow ye  
the Trumpet  
and warn  
the People."

"The weapons of our warfare  
are not carnal  
but mighty through God  
to the pulling down of strongholds."

"Take the Sword  
of the Spirit  
which is  
The Word of God."

## *Guidelines*



*HARVEY E. SHANK*

APRIL 2005

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**SWORD AND TRUMPET GUIDELINES** monthly magazine is a faith ministry directed by a Board representing various constituencies of the Mennonite Church. It is committed to defending, proclaiming, and promoting the whole Gospel of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes neglected truth and contends for “the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” This publication exposes and opposes doctrinal error which compromises that faith and leads to apostasy.

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# Person of the Month:

## Harvey E. Shank (1887-1974)

Born in Marion, Pennsylvania, September 26, 1887, Harvey E. Shank was the oldest son of John L. and Elizabeth Eshleman Shank.

As a young man of 17, Harvey accepted the Lord in the Marion Church during meetings held by Brother Abram Metzler. The year was 1904. On December 25th of that year Brother Harvey was baptized.

Brother Shank decided to be a teacher. He taught a year at White Rock School at Pond Bank located at the foot of South Mountain. In order to do this job he had to commute each day by train and trolley from Marion to Pond Bank. After that year he went to Normal School and a short-term Bible School at Goshen College. He returned to teach at Pond Bank School in 1909.

Harvey married Anna Bertha Martin on January 17, 1911. After their marriage Brother Shank became a farmer. In the course of time God blessed them with seven children. Harvey was not very successful at farming so when the local school board approached him with the opportunity to teach in the one-room White Rock Elementary School in Pond Bank he readily accepted the offer. Harvey made a financial sacrifice since his teaching job brought in only \$50.00 a month. The county superintendent noted that Brother Shank was a good teacher, which was proved by the fact that some of his students in this eight-grade school of 75 pupils were receiving the highest grades in Franklin County! Although Brother Shank farmed off and on over the years, teaching was apparently his niche.

During these early years Brother Shank was much involved in the work of the church in Marion. In 1917, Harvey was approached by the Mission Board to give oversight to the new mission work in Pond Bank. In February of 1921 the board decided that Pond Bank needed a resident minister. On March 20 of that year, Brother Shank was ordained to fill that position and so the family made the necessary move. The years at Pond Bank were not easy ones as Harvey worked to establish a Mennonite church in a community where such biblical beliefs were foreign. Finances were not the greatest at this time, coupled with the fact that the Shanks were alone in the community. God blessed, though, in spite of these difficulties and a core of families was reached with the Gospel and lives were changed. Brother Shank was loved and appreciated by the people. His sermons were down to earth and interesting. Harvey served as minister there until December of 1946.

In 1945 tragedy struck the Shank home. Anna got blood poisoning and died suddenly of a heart attack on October 4 at the age of 57. On March 25, 1951, Harvey married another Anna—Anna F. Bricker. She was also a schoolteacher who was much younger than Brother Harvey. She was able to be of great help to him in his older years.

On December 3, 1946, Harvey was ordained as a bishop of the South Franklin County churches. He served in that capacity until 1971. *(continued on page 3)*

# The Mirage of Self-Esteem

by Duane Witmer

Today I read an article by a self-proclaimed “liberal” educator. In his article, he was decrying the state of public education. He states that a recent study done by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ranked 40 nations’ high school math skills. United States ranked 28th, Hong Kong and South Korea ranked first and third.

The eye-catching, yet ironic part of this survey was revealed in a direct question to the students, “How do you feel about your math skills?” 57% of the Hong Kong children (ranked #1 worldwide) felt that they had a long way to go. In South Korea, 62% felt like they were not very good at mathematics (ranked #3 worldwide). When this same question was posed to American children 75% of these children (ranked 28th out of 40) said they got “good grades” in mathematics. This asks a thought-provoking question, why do inferiorly educated children feel good about their lack of performance? This writer goes on to speculate that this condition is the direct result of the lie that children have been told in the public school system. Regardless of performance, American educators go out of their way to inform their students that they are “good.”

The basic philosophy is that to succeed in life, children have to feel good about themselves. “Programs,” he said, “with names such as ‘I love me’ and ‘I like me’ are taught under a doctrine known as self-esteem.” Grades are slanted or inflated so that everyone can feel good about themselves.

This educator questions a very common doctrine of our culture today. It is

difficult to truly know how much this selfish doctrine has infiltrated the writing, teaching, and preaching of even conservative Christian theology. Like many of the Deceiver’s false concepts of life, self-esteem is such a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Yet, who of us does not want to feel good about ourselves? We know the misery of self-perceived rejection. And clothed with a strong desire to find a life beyond this rejection, the heart readily buys into this doctrine of self-esteem.

Is self-esteem really necessary? It probably depends on how we would define the term. But this I do know: any concept that begins with self ought to be questioned. Self-love, self-esteem, self-discipline, selfish, and self-helped: do any of these concepts have any place in our experience?

I don’t know when the concepts of self-inflation began, but based on the warnings and principles of the Scriptures, the possibility must have existed even then. *“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself”* (Galatians 6:3).

Doesn’t this sound like some American math students? Why would someone feel good about their performance when they are failing so drastically in how they measure up to peers? This scenario is a perfect illustration of someone who thinks themselves to be someone when they are nothing.

Have we seen any illustrations of this problem? Lest we become too judgmental in our thinking, let us consider ourselves. How much do we depend on the praise of others? How meaningful is it to us to

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hear the compliments of others? It takes a certain amount of food to feed the monster of self-esteem. Praise and compliments are delicacies in this diet.

In the Scriptures, there are multiple paths that lead to the contentment and satisfaction intended for the man with new life in Christ. Instead of promoting an inflated view of self, we are enjoined to grow a fruit of the Spirit called peace. We are not instructed to tell ourselves how good we are. We do not cultivate a crop of goodwill to ourselves. Rather, we cultivate peace, which is a fruit of prayer and praise (Philippians 4:4-7). It is for those who by the grace of God take on a servant role and focus on the needs of others and promote the advancement of others without a careful recounting of their own feelings in the process.

Is a person who ignores the importance of self-esteem a miserable person? Actually, this man should be the happier person. For this man does not carry the luggage of his own ego. Rather, he is a fountain of goodwill to all men. It does not take much perception to realize that this man is much more valuable than the man who requires a river of inbound resources to feel good. This employee will require much less maintenance than one who needs to be told that he is doing well in spite of his questionable performance.

In reality, focus on self-esteem becomes a mirage. To train up a child to think a lot of himself, to teach him that he needs to fill himself with "feel good" is to make a slave of himself. This man will never amount to anything more than he or someone else can make him feel. Sacrifice will not be sacrifice; sacrifice will be a commodity. In other words, "I will do this thing in exchange for how it makes me feel about myself." We know that this man will stop sacrificing the instant that he stops feeling good about himself.

Let us renew ourselves to the call of servanthood. Servanthood means that

we may work all day in the field and have to make supper for the Master at even (Luke 17:7-10). But this is our reasonable service. This lifestyle will lead to an eternity style where we will hear the blessed words, "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*" Those words will feel better than any self-esteem any man has ever drummed up. ■

—Reprinted from *The Pilgrim Witness*  
Jan. 2005 with permission



#### **HARVEY E. SHANK . . . cont'd.**

Over the years of ministry Brother Shank was used of the Lord as he held evangelistic meetings in many obscure churches in northern Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Alabama. God also used him in some of the larger churches in the Lancaster and Franconia areas. He was an impressive Bible speaker who kept the attention of adults and children alike.

A teacher at heart, Brother Harvey also taught winter Bible schools in both Belleville and Atglen, Pennsylvania, and also for five years in a row at EMS.

With all his responsibilities Harvey did not forget the needs of his family and prayed daily for them. He taught them that the love of God is demonstrated by showing care for others.

Due to failing health Brother Shank became inactive as a bishop in 1971.

Brother Harvey Shank was a hard-working preacher and teacher who not only taught the love of Christ but demonstrated it by his care and concern for others.

Harvey E. Shank died in Fayetteville, Pennsylvania, on May 28, 1974, at the age of 86. He is buried in the Marion Mennonite Church Cemetery.

—Gail L. Emerson

## From the Editor's Desk



Paul M. Emerson

### GUEST EDITORIAL

## The Fear Factor

by Paul N. Benware

Fear is generally viewed as one of life's negatives, which is harmful to us and therefore needs to be removed. But we also realize that fear can be good for us when, for example, our fear of harm keeps us from walking too close to the edge of a cliff.

The Scriptures look at fear as absolutely necessary for a godly life. They declare that believers are to live "in fear" during their entire time on this earth (1 Peter 1:17). Of course, what the Bible is speaking about is not some personal phobia but the fear of God. The fear of God is that reverential awe a person has for God because he or she sees Him correctly, recognizing who He is (His attributes) and what He does (His works). The Scriptures teach that the degree to which a person fears God will largely determine the quality of that person's spiritual life. Clearly, the "fear factor" is significant.

***Godly fear is a primary deterrent to sin in the believer's life.***

King Solomon observed that, "by the

fear of the Lord one keeps away from sin" (Proverbs 16:6). While the nation of Israel was receiving their law code at Mt. Sinai, the Lord demonstrated His awesome might in their presence, which terrified them. Moses then explained that the Lord did this so that "the fear of him might remain with you, so that you may not sin" (Exodus 20:20). When there is a diminished reverence for God in a believer's life, then sin flourishes. Such was the situation in the prophet Malachi's day. Israel had lost its reverential awe of God, and this spawned sins of all kinds (cf. Malachi 1:6-8; 2:10-17; 3:7-10, 13-15). The people of Malachi's day protested the prophet's analysis of their lives, but their faulty view of God was indeed the cause of their defective living. Could the same cause-and-effect be true today? How can the believer just leave their spouse for another; or the pastor take his sermons off the Internet and preach them as his own; or the believer gossip, damaging a church, and then go to that same church and "worship"?

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***Godly fear brings a special commitment from the Lord.***

Peter is clear that we are to constantly live our lives in the fear of God because we are accountable to Him (1 Peter 1:17). And to those who live with this reverence towards Him, the Lord makes a commitment and promises them many blessings, including: special guidance, wisdom for living, supply, protection, deliverance, favor, and compassion (Malachi 3:16-18; Psalm 25:12-14; 33:18; 34:7-9; 85:9; 103:11-13; 111:5; 147:11).

***Godly fear must be developed and cultivated by the believer.***

Because our culture is so contrary to a reverence for God—and because this culture seeps into the church—godly fear needs to be cultivated. First, there must be personal meditation on the Scriptures, especially those that describe God’s character, God’s ways,

and our accountability to Him. David prayed, “Establish thy Word to thy servant as that which produces reverence for thee” (Psalm 119:38). And second, we need to develop a culture of reverence with like-minded believers (Malachi 3:16a). This begins in the

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***“... the degree to which a person fears God will largely determine the quality of that person’s spiritual life.”***

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home where children are taught to love and to fear the Lord (Deut. 4:10; 6:2) and among those believers in the church who understand that it is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our spiritual lives healthy apart from the “fear factor.” ■

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# THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



*A Devotional Commentary*



by David L. Burkholder

**APRIL 3, 2005**

***Life in the Spirit***

Romans 8:1-17

Through the month of April we continue our study in the Book of Romans, picking up in today's lesson at Chapter 8. Paul has shown the inability of the Law to provide pardon and peace from the guilt and burden of sin. Its function was to create awareness of transgressions, but it could go no further. But within the gospel message there was hope and, for those who turned to it for salvation, there was justification, sanctification, and peace.

Therefore, Paul writes, for the one who is now in Christ, who walks in the guidance of God's Spirit, there is no longer the condemnation of unpardoned sin. As Phillips puts it: "For the new spiritual principle of life 'in' Christ Jesus lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death."

The Law did not contain within itself the power to enable man to live up to its demands. Therefore, God sent His Son into the world, in flesh, to condemn sin through the offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin, thus giving man hope, a way to fulfill the righteous demands of the Law by living in the Spirit. It is the Spirit who gives power to overcome the pull of the flesh and enable man to walk in holiness, free from condemnation and judgment.

There is a great contrast between those who live after the flesh and those who live in the Spirit—or within whom the Spirit lives. The one life leads to death. The other to life. One living after the desires of the flesh, identified as the carnal mind,

cannot please God because they are at odds with His demands for holiness.

Again Paul points out a defining principle. If one does not possess the Spirit of God, he is not God's. But if Christ lives within, through His Spirit, there is life. That life comes through the power that raised Christ from the dead, now working in the believer, raising him to new life.

Therefore, Paul insists, we are debtors to God. We owe ourselves, our ambitions, our desires, our all, to Him in response to the life He has given us. We have been made sons of God through the regenerating work of His Son. The fear of death has been displaced by the joy of new life. In our newfound happiness we cry Abba Father, addressing God in the most intimate terms in realization of our being adopted into His family.

But there is more. God's Spirit living within gives an added measure of peace and joy by confirming our relationship with the Father. "And if children," Paul goes on, "then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." What does it mean to be an heir of God? What promises of the Father will we share with our elder Brother, Christ? Can you fathom the ultimate blessings from living and walking in the Spirit, and experiencing freedom from condemnation and death?

Will any suffering for His sake be too great in light of the reward? I think not.

## ***For thought and discussion***

1. What was the function of the Mosaic Law, and why could it not bring peace?
2. What does it mean to "walk in the Spirit" or to "live in the Spirit"? What does it mean for you?

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3. Why, when the stakes are so high, do so many who have been exposed to the new life in Christ deliberately continue to walk in the flesh?
4. Have you experienced the confirming relationship of God's indwelling Spirit? Don't let it slip!
5. Ponder what it means to be an heir of God. Share your thoughts with your class.

## **APRIL 10, 2005**

### ***The Way to Salvation***

Romans 10:5-17

In a sense we seem to be backtracking somewhat in our study today. What has been alluded to, or assumed in previous lessons as a fundamental principle, is now set forth in clear terms: Salvation for Jew or Gentile comes alone through faith in Jesus Christ. It starts with a changed heart and is evidenced by verbal confession. The closing verses of the lesson also carry a challenge for those who have experienced this salvation to be dutiful in sharing it with those who have not yet heard the good news.

Again Paul uses the language of contrasts to emphasize the difference between Law and grace. For those seeking righteousness by observance of the Law, they must continually strive for obedience and strict performance—and then never have the assurance of heart that they are righteous before God. On the other hand, those who accept Christ's work by faith no longer need to work at attempting to gain favor with God. The word of faith is in their heart, giving assurance of right standing before God. And, Paul tells the Romans, this is "the word of faith which we preach."

Faith is the key, not Law. Christ has put an end to works-based relationships with God by offering a more satisfying and secure faith-based relationship. Verses nine and ten lay out the basis for this relationship; belief in the heart, confession

with the mouth. That evidences salvation. Salvation is a matter of personal trust in a living Saviour, confirmed by open confession of Him as Lord.

Paul goes on to say that the one who places trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation will not be disappointed. Whether Jew or Greek, all find satisfaction in Him and He richly rewards all who come to Him. Notice how Paul quotes Old Testament Scripture to support his thesis. Again Paul states the universality of the gospel: whoever accepts the terms will be saved.

Paul then turns to a very practical aspect, one that impacts the church and the individual believer yet today. How can anyone believe unless they first hear the message, how can they hear unless someone is sent? The proclamation of the gospel is a cooperative effort. The power of God to save is readily available to all and any who embrace it, but the message must first be proclaimed in a clear, understandable, and inviting manner by those who know and have experienced its transforming work in their own lives.

But, sadly, as in Isaiah's day, as in Paul's day and in our day, not all who hear the message of salvation accept it. That in no way lessens the truth of the message or its impact on those who do accept. And so the principle stands: faith comes by hearing the Word of God. God has made that Word available. Those who have heard and accepted carry the responsibility of continued proclamation so that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

### ***For thought and discussion***

1. Remind yourself again of the great advantage of having a relationship with God through faith rather than one based on works. Note verse eight.
2. Are belief and confession both essential to salvation? Explain.
3. Have you ever been disappointed in the Lord or His provisions for you? Perhaps it would be a good time to reflect on the many ways and times He has *not* disappointed you.

4. Think through, and discuss, some of the many ways the church has today of proclaiming the message of salvation. Are we doing the best we can?
5. What is one essential element in maintaining our personal faith?

**APRIL 17, 2005**

***The Transformed Life***

Romans 12:1, 2, 9-21

How will a Christian live and act? What are the obvious results in the life of one who has heard and obeyed the message of salvation? What does this experience do to relationships? In today's lesson text Paul explains the effects of one's relationship to Christ by its manifest outworkings in the life, actions, and attitudes of the believer. Here Paul turns practical and explains in terms easy to be understood the exercise of a life transformed by Christ.

It is in light of the foregoing mercies of God that Paul makes his appeal that those who have been recipients of that mercy now present themselves in total consecration to God's service—a dedication which Paul says is only reasonable. The motivation for this consecration flows from a transformed life, effected by a renewed mind, a complete change of attitudes and actions.

This is where the rubber meets the road, where philosophical theology becomes practical, where the real test occurs—has one's encounter with Christ really made a difference. And here in the following lists are where each professing Christian must evaluate what he knows of his own life, comparing himself with the standards of performance set forth in the Word of God.

(Verses 3-8, not in our text, speak primarily to the individual believer's function and relationship within the church. Verses 9-21 deal primarily with interpersonal matters and relationships.)

It is informative to note that the list of principles begins with the qualifier, love.

Love must be the basic attitude and motivation for all Christian relationships. It is to be sincere, without hypocrisy or pretense. It is to mirror the love God has shown to us in the act of salvation. Love will look out for the welfare of others, it will motivate one to freely share with those in need. It will empathize with those who suffer and sympathize with those suffering loss.

Love levels the ground between people of differing social strata. Love seeks peace. Love does not fight back when attacked or answer harshly when accused. Love is honest, kind, forgiving. In short, love is overcoming. It overcomes all negative attitudes and actions expressed against us, as well as what would naturally spring from our base nature toward others. The transformed life is a life of love expressed.

Spiritual transformation also does other things for the individual. It not only makes him sensitive to relationships with other individuals—it also makes him more sensitive in his relationship to God. He will become more diligent in his work, more fervent in serving God. He will leave punishment in the hands of God. He will show love to the unlovely, the ungrateful, and those who seek his hurt. He will seek by the total exercise of life to prove what is good, acceptable, and perfect in the will of God.

What a challenge Paul has left us! How do we measure up?

***For thought and discussion***

1. Think through the implications of the transformed life. Jot down as many areas as you can. How well does your life stack up?
2. What are the marks of the transformed life?
3. The motivation for the relationships spoken to in verses 9-21 can be summed up in one word. What is it?
4. As you study through these various evidences of the transformed life, allow the Holy Spirit room to engage you anywhere He may find you lacking.

5. Someone has said that “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.” Do you agree? What is your testimony?

**APRIL 24, 2005**

***Do Not Judge Your Brother***

Romans 14:1-13; 15:5, 6

Perhaps one of the greatest indications of the human condition is our proclivity to judge the actions and attitudes of others solely by our own personal standards. It somehow makes us feel good if we can point out a perceived fault or shortcoming in another. We, even in the Christian church, have not always learned the principle of tolerance in non-essentials. And certainly there are issues on which we cannot be tolerant. May God give us the wisdom to know the difference, and the grace to act accordingly. Today’s lesson gets to the very heart of brotherhood relationships. Let’s learn the lessons well.

We need to understand from the outset of our study that the issues Paul speaks to in our text are not non-negotiable ones. They are simply matters of personal opinion or conscience, stemming either from the background or upbringing of the believers at Rome. It will help your comprehension of the issue to read the rest of Chapter 14 and through verse seven of Chapter 15.

The first principle Paul expounds is that of non-judgmental acceptance in the brotherhood of those weak in faith. They are those who, perhaps due to an unenlightened conscience, feel they must still observe certain restrictions or certain holy days along with their expressed faith in Christ. There are still those today who believe that way and Paul’s admonition is to accept them without argument. Discussion, yes. Criticism, no. Argument, never.

For, Paul says in verse seven, we are all part of one another in the Christian brotherhood. And our goal should be peace and harmony, not dissension or strife. We all

belong to the Lord and should all act within that framework and with that awareness.

Paul makes it very plain that we have no right to judge our brother. That is God’s prerogative and must be left to Him alone. He also makes it clear that when we stand individually before the Judge it will be to give account only for ourselves, not for our brother. The implication is, of course, that we should be focusing on correcting our own weaknesses rather than on the perceived needs of our brother.

Paul rounds out our text (14:13; 15:5, 6) with an appeal to carefulness and unity as we live together in Christian brotherhood. Instead of judging or criticizing our brother we should be encouraging him onward, putting no stumbling block in his way toward Christlikeness. This can be achieved only as we allow Christ to model our attitudes toward mutual concern for one another, eliminating critical, judgmental thoughts and attitudes and striving for the corporate good.

That will lead to mutual edification of one another and mutual glorification of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

***For thought and discussion***

1. Think about how opinions, preferences, and matters of conscience are formed. What should be the guiding principles?
2. Why do we find it so difficult to accept those whose faith-practices differ from our own? What can be done to enhance understandings of one another’s viewpoints?
3. Is it wrong to do, or not do, certain things to enhance our faith-practices? Are there dangers with such? Think this through very carefully. How about some class discussion.
4. Why is it so easy to see faults and weaknesses in others, but so difficult to detect or admit them in our own life?
5. What are the things which make for a cohesive brotherhood and the elimination of divisive attitudes? You might want to spend time discussing this. ■

# Newslines . . .

by Rebecca Good

incidents events occurrences facts illustrations episodes committees vignettes proceedings problems  
experiences crises adventures transactions meetings tragedies scoops reports conferences happenings  
bulletins questions reports affairs dramas encounters personages actions tidings et cetera

## **"English Is the Language of Agreement"—Britain's Prince Philip**

Parents around the globe believe that in order for their children to succeed, they must learn the English language. English is used in business, higher education, diplomacy, aviation, the Internet, computer programs, science, popular music, entertainment, and international travel. More than 300 million people are studying English in China—this is more than the number of Americans who know it. Three-quarters of the English spoken in the world is used as a second language, rather than the first. Estimates say that one billion people speak English.

Each year, almost 600,000 foreign students study in the United States. Most come from India, China, and South Korea—Asians make up 57 percent of the foreign student population here. Thirteen percent come from Europe, and 12 percent from Latin America. While Canada, Britain, and Australia aggressively seek foreign students, America remains the most sought after destination for foreigners seeking to study abroad.

—from *The Washington Times*

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## **Religion in America**

*U. S. News & World Report* recently stated that the United States has more

churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques per capita than any other nation—around one religious meeting place for every 865 persons. Scholars usually agree that religion thrives in America because every religion is allowed equal freedom, and the government does not support any certain one. “ ‘Monopolies damage religion,’ says Massimo Introvigne of the Center for Studies on New Religions in Turin, Italy. ‘In a free market, people get more interested in the product. It is true for religion just as it is true for cars.’ ”

Similarly, Americans are noted for their private charity work. On a per capita basis, the U.S. government does not give as much aid as some other countries, but U.S. private charities spend more than \$200 billion per year. One study found that the average American home contributes seven times as much to charity as the average German home. Americans are also more than six times as likely as Germans to perform volunteer work. In fact, more than half of American adults volunteer time, this year collectively giving 20 billion hours.

—from *The Washington Times*

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## **Instant Discipleship: A Lie of the World**

The editor of *Christianity Today* writes: “If cheating is taking inappropriate shortcuts to achieve a good, even a

holy end, much of evangelical Christianity stands guilty. We read one-minute Bibles, pray through five-minute devotions, or wander from one conference to another to get five keys to spiritual success. We expect spiritual maturity in 40 purpose-filled studies. Though such resources are designed as milk for the immature, we fear they are viewed as the meat of discipleship by too many. . . . We do well to remember that He has created us not to be tourists, who seek instant and intense gratifications, but to be pilgrims on a long journey.”

—from *Christianity Today*

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### **Christian Apologist Preaches Truth in Mormon Pulpit**

This past fall, Ravi Zacharias preached at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. D. L. Moody preached there in 1899, but until now, other major evangelicals have skirted that pulpit. Zacharias’ sermon title was “Defending Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Zacharias preached “that Jesus understood the depths of human depravity, that His atonement provides full redemption through grace, and that His resurrection is mankind’s only hope.”

The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) sanctioned Zacharias speaking at the Tabernacle. Zacharias also had a private meeting with Gordon B. Hinckley, the current leader of the LDS.

Zacharias said, “I am absolutely grateful to the Lord for the opportunity and the courtesy extended to give me a hearing on such eternal matters. I still marvel that it came.”

There was a negative aspect to this amazing event. Before Zacharias spoke, Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, “told the Tabernacle audience that evangelicals have sinned against Mormons by misrepresenting them.” He said that he hoped evangeli-

cals would participate in the 2005 celebrations of the bicentennial of Joseph Smith’s birth. Some evangelicals involved in witness to Mormons worry that Mouw’s apology could be used against evangelicals by Mormons.

—from *Christianity Today*

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### **Mongolians Hungry for the Word of God**

The church in Mongolia is one of the fastest growing in the world—it is also one of the newest. Religious Mongolians have traditionally been either shamanic or Tibetan Buddhist. During the Middle Ages, small groups of Nestorian Christians existed in this cold and arid land, but they eventually died out. The London Missionary Society sent missionaries in 1817, but no churches had been planted by 1924 when missionaries had to leave the country. Communists seized control in 1921 and set up a revolutionary government. There were few Christians to persecute, but the Communists persecuted the Tibetan Buddhists, the dominant religion of the country, paring the Buddhist clergy down to 100 or less. *Operation World* said there were only four known Christians in Mongolia in 1989. Then in 1990, a new democratic government, upholding religious freedom, was established in Mongolia. When freedom opened the doors, missionaries entered the country, led by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Today, there are about 20,000 Mongolian Christians, and the church is growing at 15 percent annually. Now almost every one of Mongolia’s 22 provincial centers has a church.

—from *Christianity Today*

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### **Between Adolescence and Adulthood**

Social scientists tell us that a new life-stage is emerging—“the years from 18 to 25 and even beyond have become a

distinct and separate life stage.” Developed nations around the world are noticing the phenomenon. Some call these young adults twixters or boomerang kids. This is a time between adolescence and adulthood when young people stall on assuming adult responsibilities. Marriage is put off longer; many continue to live with their parents. Rather than settle into a career, jumping from job to job is the norm during this stage.

College seems to take longer than it did years ago. It takes most students at least five years to finish. Most leave college sacked with debt. According to a *TIME* poll, 66% of college graduates said they owed over \$10,000 when they graduated. Five percent owed over \$100,000. On top of all the money spent on their education, many young people buy more and more things: iPods, flat-screen TVs, new cars, exotic vacations, high fashion, et cetera. Credit card debt for people in this age group has doubled since 1992.

College degrees have become less valuable as they have become more common. So many young people head back to college for graduate and professional degrees, absorbing even more time and money.

What is fueling this? Young people today face so many options. It seems their adult lives can be so perfect, if they only make the right choices. Their careers must give purpose, their marriage must be to that elusive soul mate. And in the meantime, they want to enjoy themselves. —from *TIME*

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### **Update on Mennonites Imprisoned in Vietnam**

Two members of the “Mennonite Six,” Nguyen Huu Nghia, 24, and Nguyen Thanh Nhan, 22, were released in December. Both report brutal treatment and verbal abuse during their nine-month incarceration.

They were savagely beaten and kicked, often until they fainted or

lapsed into convulsions. Their abusers would splash cold water on them to revive them, and then continue beating them. Not only prison authorities, but other prisoners would abuse them, hoping to receive rewards of food and cigarettes if they participated. Nghia and Nhan, who are brothers, were not given adequate food and water, the warm clothes provided by their families, or sleeping mats. They had to lie on the rough cement floor. Sometimes they were forced to squat motionless in a small place for long periods of time with only their toes touching the ground. At times of greatest exhaustion, the officers would try to force them to sign documents admitting to crimes or implicating Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, who remains in prison serving a three-year term. Nhan and Nghia did not sign, but believe the authorities forged their signatures.

The sole woman of the group, Le Thi Hong Lien, 21, apparently has suffered a mental breakdown. Nhan and Nghia witnessed Lien being beaten when they returned to the prison from the trial. Her father reports that she was tied in her bed, which the prison officials said was because she was “very wild.” Authorities say the appeal of her sentence cannot proceed because of her mental condition. They also refuse to transfer her to an outside hospital. Compass Direct, a news source concerning persecuted Christians, calls Lien “a zealous church worker, specializing in teaching the Bible to small children.” Amnesty International is publicizing her case, in hopes that the Vietnamese government will release her, and she will be given the treatment she needs.

Mennonite World Conference officials are continuing to bring the case of the imprisoned Mennonites before the chair of the Committee of Religious Affairs in Hanoi.

—from *Mennonite Weekly Review*

# One-Way Traffic

*32 reasons organizational drift is almost always in the same direction.*

by Joel Belz

Why is it that institutions and organizations of all kinds regularly drift from the right to the left, from orthodoxy to heterodoxy, from faithfulness to unfaithfulness, from discipline to permissiveness?

The pattern is unmistakable. You see it in schools, in churches, in the media, in families, in politics, and therefore quite naturally in societies at large.

To say it is a pattern is not to deny that it ever happens the other way around. In my own lifetime, I've watched colleges and even whole denominations take stock of their liberal drift and then head back to their roots. But that happens so rarely that when it occurs it's what a journalist calls a "man-bites-dog" story.

So for the last few weeks I've been asking folks around me: Why do they think the flow is so typically in just one direction?

Some point to the Second Law of Thermodynamics—the idea that everything in the created order tends to dissipate rather than to coalesce. One pop scientist illustrates the Second Law by pointing to a hot frying pan that cools down when it is taken off the kitchen stove. Its thermal energy flows out to the cooler room air. But the opposite never, ever happens; apart from a focused, conscious effort, the pan will never get hot. Energy simply doesn't gather on its own.

And just as that's true in the world of physics and chemistry, some thoughtful folks told me, it's also true in the moral world. The fall of humankind, through the rebellion and disobedience first of

Adam and Eve, and then of all their descendants, sets us on a trajectory that makes it predictable where our intellectual, psychological, and spiritual inclinations will take us. Disobedience and unfaithfulness have become the natural direction.

Against those broad, somewhat philosophical reflections, here were some of the specific observations of my friends:

- Liberalism offers quick fixes. The rewards of conservatism tend to be slower in coming.
- Institutions become the very thing they were founded to oppose.
- In our family, each of us has gotten more and more conservative as we have pursued the disciplines of the faith—Bible study, prayer, fasting.
- The movement is often the result of technological advancement and scientific discovery. Christians have a hard time connecting creed and empirical reality.
- We long to be comfortable, to have the fight over, to "belong." A good dose of hardship is a great remedy.
- We should not dwell on this. It is like dwelling on death. Let the dead bury their dead. The clear mandate to all believers is to recreate, to initiate, to innovate. We must have new wineskins in which to put new wine.
- The only habit to arrest such a drift is to submit ourselves to the preaching of the Word.
- Institutions liberalize because people forget the struggle. They take their heritage for granted, thinking it is their due rather than the product of a deadly struggle.

- We lose the joy of our salvation, and then those who follow do not see examples of Christ, but of mere men trying to save themselves.
- We become insensitive to the full extent of the Fall, so we accept guidance from the world and end up inviting aspects of the Fall into our institutions.
- Our surroundings become commonplace. We become numb to sin. We get overwhelmed and hopeless about changing or fixing those problems.
- The drift is an accommodation to the surrounding culture. But the drift is often exacerbated by a legalistic church.
- We get comfortable with the routine of life, with our churches, and with our Bible studies. The definition of finishing well becomes less stringent, and it is easier not to get dirty fighting the sin issues of the day.
- If the younger generation is instilled with the mindset that conservative ideals are simply true, and not hackneyed conventions, the movement will pass on to a new generation.
- A seminary professor always talked about the people of God in cycles: Repentance, obedience, blessing, growth (including some who are not truly God's people), warning, pruning . . . repentance, etc.
- Our problems start with a combination of the sins of covetousness, pride, lust, and sloth.
- Organizations, movements, etc., always want to grow. How do you grow? By including more people. Very often, you include more people by compromising. When you decide to stand up for an issue, you have to deal with the fallout. Who likes that?
- The “seeker friendly” movement—exalting the “marketing” impulse over the “truth” obligation—tends to compromise the truth. “Be nice, be soft, or people will leave in droves,” seems too often to be the operative maxim.
- Good scholars need to question and challenge what is commonly accepted, in order to advance knowledge. Good Christians need to believe what the Bible says. This creates a tension.
- People who weren't there at the beginning lack the zeal and the enthusiasm to take the time to understand the history and the issues. We all need to spend more time understanding our own history.
- Charity is often inclined to think the best, especially when small shifts are afoot. There is a penchant to avoid conflict—especially with regard to minutiae—that inclines the rebellious heart (through pacifism or perhaps passiveness) to contribute to such declension.
- Our sinful human nature is prone to error and laziness. The trend continues because it is the easiest. It requires the least intellectual work.
- Decay is natural in a fallen world—unless there's salt to act as a preservative. The best thing Christians can do is to remain salty.
- We erect all manner of idols (work, family, diversions, avocations, the pursuit of wealth and success) which we regard as harmless, since they are the hallmarks of our American society and culture, and which God, in His goodness, allows us to enjoy in unprecedented measure. But at the same time, He sends a wasting disease into our souls (Psalm 106:15) whereby we, while professing faith in Christ, seek fulfillment in the world. In short: We are an undisciplined, world-enamored, pathetic people who know next to nothing about loving the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. “Other than that,” this friend wrote me, “we're in pretty good shape.”
- We must continually fill ourselves up with the Word (which is the sword of the Spirit), be relentlessly vigilant and discerning, courageously and persuasively see and name things as the

Bible sees and names them, and take our lumps in the culture.

- Syncretism plays a role. We compromise (sometimes called consensus) A with B. Then, B with C, C with D, etc. Gradual drift that carries us far from where we should be.
- For liberals, the goodness of man is a bedrock assumption. They embrace it without question as a policy and a worldview.
- For conservatives, there is something dirty and unspiritual about politics (including church politics), and they won't participate. That kind of false spirituality or Gnosticism is common among evangelical Christians.
- The taken-for-granted patterns of thought are dictated by our education and the media.
- Conservatives themselves become too extreme, and provoke their own to leave the fold.
- Not to care what the world thinks, only to care what God thinks, that is

true liberty. But most of us prefer a strange kind of bondage.

- We come to favor people we love and respect over truth itself.

Enough? It is for me, and I'm still thinking.

Not all my friends thought my premise was true. Several said what may seem like a right-to-left trend is really only part of an overall much larger back-and-forth fluctuation, of which we right now see only a small part. I appreciate that caution. At the same time, I've never witnessed up-the-hill erosion. I've never watched attics get flooded while basements remain dry.

The Bible promises a new heaven and a new earth. I am not privy to the detailed schedule by which that will happen. But I do have a strong hunch that when it happens, it's going to feel more like a move to the right than one to the left. ■

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## Separated Unto God

by J. C. Wenger



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that was out of print  
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## Book Review . . .

### *The Divine Conspiracy*

Reviewed by Marcus Yoder

One of the age-old questions in Christianity concerns Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God. What is the Kingdom? What did Jesus mean when He said, "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15)? Most, if not all, of Christendom has heard of the term "Kingdom Living." It is one of the catch phrases bandied about on a regular basis, yet it has lost much of its original meaning. If we, as believers, are a part of this Kingdom, then it would behoove us to be aware of what this Kingdom is and what the King expects of His subjects.

*The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1998, 448 pages) by Dallas Willard looks at the issue of Kingdom living and endeavors to give some commentary on Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God with particular focus on the Beatitudes. Dr. Willard is a scholar, professor, and theologian who has long been a voice for the relevance of God in our daily lives. This book completes a trilogy of books directed to those who are convinced that Jesus is the only way. The first book in the series, *In Search of Guidance*, focuses on making real what he calls, "a conversational relationship with God." The second book considers the practical development of that conversational relationship and is entitled *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. *The Divine Conspiracy* completes the series and focuses on discipleship and Kingdom living. The title of this book is intriguing because it reflects the idea that God had a plan from the beginning featuring Himself as the major player. He conspired to not only send His Son, but to make a way for those who become His children to live well. It is within this "conspiracy" of redemption that all hope is found.

Willard's thesis is that Kingdom living is for "regular" Christians. If we follow the Master's teaching, there will be a dynamic change from legalism and selfish living to a freedom to follow Christ in obedience to His commands. Willard writes that as part of the Kingdom, we have been touched by forgiveness and new life and have thus entered God's Kingdom. We have a distinct way into the Kingdom and once there, are given distinct ways of living. Chief among these ways of living is the idea of reconciliation and redemptive relationships between those in the Kingdom and those outside its gates. Willard also makes clear that Kingdom living has a deeper reality than just the surface physical reality. The Kingdom of God is first discovered on a spiritual level and while it has physical ideas and motions, it is a Kingdom that burns from the inside out in the rule bearer. Spiritual is not just something we ought to be, it is something we are. It is the nature and destiny of man to be spiritual and it is on that level that the Kingdom of God is first experienced. Willard clearly argues this thesis throughout the course of his book.

Willard spends a considerable amount of time writing about the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. One of the most fascinating chapters is the one on the Beatitudes. The crux of this passage is the question, "Who are the really well off?" Willard's interpretation of the Beatitudes has caused this reviewer to change his way of thinking on this pertinent passage which, in today's Christianity, is often relegated to the realm of "cannot be done, so don't worry about it." His observation is that the Beatitudes taken in context are *speaking about the availability of the Kingdom of Heaven*, not some magical formula that we can keep so we will be blessed. It is about Jesus opening the Kingdom of Heaven to the poor, sick, the miserable, and the odd. Misunderstanding this key passage has hurt many people throughout

the realm of Christianity for it has become for them a list of things to do and a staircase to blessing when Jesus never intended them to be so. Rather Christ is looking into the face of the poor in spirit, the persecuted, the mourning, the meek, and saying that they have access to the Kingdom Life if they will but follow the one who came to bring the Kingdom to earth.

*The Divine Conspiracy* deals with many of the basic assumptions and passages of Scripture that have been bandied about throughout Christianity for ages. Willard is not afraid to gently poke holes into assumptions and biases that many in Christianity have espoused. He is courageous to point the way back to Jesus and to say that obedience to Christ is the necessary ingredient to be His disciple. He is premillennial in his view of the endtimes and has a fascinating view of ruling with Christ in the new heavens and new earth.

*The Divine Conspiracy* is ideally suited for contemplative reading and note taking with subheadings and entitled portions within each of the ten chapters. Because of the nature of Willard's writing it is imperative that one be prepared to read slower and to have some "think time" while reading. In light of this, the reader should be prepared to give the book substantial time and not leave a lot of space between times to keep the "flow" of the book going. The book is endnoted very well and the reader should check the

endnotes for further references.

The most significant weakness of the book is Willard's involved style of writing. He is very detailed and will lose some readers who want to sail through the book. Willard is a philosophy professor and it shows in the philosophical approach he uses to look at issues of life. He will also inflame some readers by his questioning of "dogma" that has been a part of Christian ideology for years. Willard brings into question the dispensationalism of Charles Ryrie and others who interpret the "kingdom" passages as Christ's rule during His thousand-year reign on earth. While much of Protestant Christianity claims to agree with Willard, it is clear that this is not the case. Willard exposes this discrepancy in a positive way by revealing that Scripture, and especially the Sermon on the Mount, has no lasting impact if it is not meant to be practiced and followed today. He argues that the Sermon on the Mount was given by Jesus not to impart information about some future events but "rather to make a significant change in the lives of the hearers." This view is becoming increasingly unpopular in much of Christendom today. The challenge for the reader is "Have I been impacted by the Scriptures?"

This book is a highly recommended read, but the reader should be aware that it is an intense book and will require careful and contemplative reading. It is available in most large bookstores, both secular and Christian. ■

**Editorial correction:** Regarding start date of The Shepherds' Institute in the January 2005 issue of *Sword and Trumpet*. Because of a series of events including board meeting postponements and editorial deadlines, the board has not yet officially finalized the actual starting date of The Shepherds' Institute classes as inferred by the *Sword and Trumpet* editorial. However, Fall 2005 had been and continues to be in view for the beginning of this important ministry. We apologize for any misimpressions our wording may have caused.

# Congregational Singing: The Approved Form of Music in Christian Worship

(Continued)

by Clarence Y. Fretz

### III. HISTORY OF SINGING IN THE ENGLISH CHURCHES

In English church history, the trend was toward congregational singing when there was real religious revival, and toward choral and instrumental music when there was spiritual decline.

As is well known to students of the Reformation, the "Reformation" in England was not at first a general religious revival or spiritual awakening, but a throwing off of the papal domination by a king who wanted to divorce his wife to marry another. Consequently, the only change that was made from the Roman Catholic usage of music was to translate everything that was sung from Latin into English.

But a spiritual awakening was coming. Reformation teachings were finding their way into England, and the church leaders here and there were embracing them. With Mary's persecution, the most zealous of these English Reformers were driven into Switzerland. It was there that they came into contact with the fires of revival under Calvin, and with it caught the enthusiasm for congregational singing (of psalms). When Elizabeth came to the throne, the refugees returned, and brought with them this practice of psalmody which the English Church was not slow to adopt. A contemporary, Strype, wrote:

1559-60, March 3rd. Grindal, the new Bishop of London, preached at Paul's Cross, and after sermon, "a psalm was sung (which was the common practice of the Reformed churches abroad)

wherein the people also joined their voices."

As soon as they commenced singing in London, immediately not only the churches in the neighborhood, but even the towns far distant began to vie with each other in the practice. You may now sometimes see at Paul's Cross, after the service, six thousand persons, young and old, of all sexes, singing together; this sadly annoys the mass priests, for they perceive that by this means the sacred discourse sinks more deeply into the minds of men.

Queen Elizabeth in her injunctions to her clergy, 1559, encouraged this congregational singing both during and after "the common prayer." The custom, thus established, soon became firmly fixed in the national religious life. The version of the Psalms known as Sternhold and Hopkins' was authorized in 1562 and was everywhere adopted. A Bishop Burnet said, "Psalms were much sung by all who loved the Reformation; and it was a sign by which men's affections to that work were measured, whether they used to sing them or not." "Psalm singer" was indeed but another name for Protestant. The music was altogether vocal. Organs were to be found only in the cathedrals, and in a few large churches. Indeed, a motion to prohibit them was made in the Convocation of 1562, and lost only by one vote.<sup>1</sup>

Sad to say, that during the eighteenth century, the spiritual force of the Reformation waned, and with it came a loss of enthusiasm for psalmody and a decline in congregational singing. Tate, writing

1. Material for this point is drawn chiefly from J. Spencer Curven, London: J. Curven and Sons, 8 and 9 Warwick Lane, E. C.: *Studies in Worship Music* (First Series), chiefly as regards congregational singing, 2nd. Ed. 1880.

in 1710, refers to the neglect of psalmody in schools and families, to the few tunes being sung, and to the unskillful clerks (who led the singing). It was then that organs and choirs were introduced, but not with the approval of those who had the welfare of the church at heart. Spiritual purposes were not being sought by the organists and special singers. One contemporary wrote: "Having got their organs and other instruments back again into the church, the performers seem to have been inclined to run riot with their newly regained treasure. The 'Spectator' complains that the solemn thoughts suggested by the sermon were driven out of his head by the merry jig-notes which followed on the organ." Another, Rev. Arthur Bedford, M. A., Chaplain to the Duke of Bedford, and good contrapuntist and musician, wrote in his "The Great Abuse of Music" (1711):

But now the notes (of the organ) are played with such a rattle and hurry instead of method, with such difference in the length of equal notes, to spoil the time, and displease a musician, and so many whimses instead of graces, to confound the ignorant, that the design is lost, and the congregation takes their time, not from the organ, since they do not understand it, but from the Parish Clerk, or from one another, which they could better have done if there was no organ at all. This makes many say that the organs, as they are not managed, do spoil parochial singing. And it is very observable, that in most places, instead of reaping any advantage from the organ, there are usually the fewest tunes and the worst performed by the congregation.

With reference to the introduction of special singing, Mr. Bedford, in a sermon preached in 1733, spoke these telling words:

There is indeed an abuse which cannot be concealed, and which hath given great offense in parochial congregations, which is when a few select

singers meet together in one part of the church, and engross the whole singing to themselves. Singing of Psalms is certainly a Christian's right, and we ought no more to be debarred from that than from joining in prayers, in receiving the Lord's Supper, and in hearing the Word of God. Such people have no authority to exclude others, and what they do at such a time springs from conceitedness, and an effectation of vain glory, which, as it is bad in all times and places, so it is worse in the house of God, and when we meet together for His immediate worship. And therefore it is much to be wished that the abuse was regulated, and the good use hereof improved. And this I think may be effectually done after this manner. Let those persons who have learned to sing in any parochial church, disperse themselves on a Sunday into their respective seats, and by singing all together in a single part, they may soon teach the congregation many of the plain tunes which they afterwards design to sing in concert. In such a method, it hath been known by experience, that where there is a sermon twice every day, and any tune is constantly sung twice every day, there the said congregation will learn in six weeks' time to sing any single tune, or even double tunes, after they have been sometime used to such a method; and so they may introduce as great a variety of grace tune as shall be thought expedient.

In 1787 Rev. W. Jones, Vicar of Mayland, a man of many-sided culture, preached a sermon on "The Nature and Excellence of Music," in which he said:

The psalmody of our country churches is universally complained of, as very much out of order, and wanting regulation in most parts of the kingdom. A company of persons who appoint themselves under the name of the "singers" assume an exclusive right, which belongs not to them, but to the congregation at large; and they often make a very indiscreet use of their liberty; neglecting the best old psalmody till the people forget it, and introducing new tunes which the people

cannot learn; some of them without science, without simplicity, without solemnity; causing the serious to frown, and the inconsiderate to laugh.

Dr. Miller, in "Thoughts on the present performance of Psalmody in the Established Church of England, addressed to the Clergy," 1791, says:

If any one would step into the Parish Church while the Psalm is singing, would he not find the greater part of the congregation totally inattentive? Irreverently sitting, talking to each other, taking snuff, winding up their watches, or adjusting their apparel?

Rev. T. Haweis, in his preface to "Carmina Christo," 1808, says:

Even in our public worship, the voice of joy and gladness is too commonly silent, unless in that shameful mode of psalmody now almost confined to the wretched solo of a parish clerk, or to a few persons huddled together in one corner of the church, who sing to the praise and glory of themselves, for the entertainment, or oftener for the weariness of the rest of the congregation; an absurdity too glaring to be overlooked, and too shocking to be ridiculous.

By 1848 things were so bad that Dr. Steggall, in the preface to his "Church Psalmody," wrote:

What inconsistency is apparent in the congregations of these enlightened days! Two thousand souls and more are sometimes assembled in God's house, and on His holy day, for the professed purpose of publicly offering Him their sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. The impressive liturgy is concluded, all rise from their knees as if to obey the short but emphatic exhortation which now proceeds from the pastor's lips. What follows? Surely the very foundations of the Temple are about to shake with the voice of praise and thanksgiving among such as keep holy day. Delusive expectation! All stand up, thus making a pretence of doing some thing, but in the place of the "uncontrolled exuberance of sound," all that is heard is the screaming of a few ill-trained

children, while the rest of the "great multitude" are content to have the praises of the Most High sung for them. Must it not be deemed an insult to Almighty God thus to slight one of the highest privileges He has granted us, and thus publicly to refuse Him that offering of praise which the very least of all His mercies would demand? Yet of this thousands of otherwise consistent Christians are habitually guilty.

Writing in the same year (1848), Mr. Robert Druitt, in a popular tract on "Church Music," attributed the deterioration of congregational song to the introduction of organs:

As things stand, we have no hesitation in saying that the organ has contributed as much as anything to the decay of congregational singing; for, in the first place, after the organ has been set up, and the organist appointed with a salary, the parish authorities imagine that all has been done that there is any need for, . . . and in the next place, fifteen or twenty stops of the full organ render it a matter of perfect indifference as to how people sing, or whether, in fact, they sing at all. Often and often has the writer been in a church where, with an overpowering organ, not three persons in the whole church opened their mouths. But the surest method of all to extinguish anything like song, is to set up a grinding organ. Truly, if a foreigner entered some of our churches he might imagine that, as a great manufacturing community, we employed machinery in the service of God, as well as in other things.

However, there were some attempts at reform. Notable among these was the Puritan Reformation under the leadership of Cromwell. The Puritans sought to accomplish their reforms by the use of the power of the Civil government. Their ideas on church music were apostolic, but their ways of carrying them into effect were not. On August 23, 1643, an ordinance was passed by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament for abolishing superstitious monuments. On

May 9, 1644, a second ordinance passed “for the further demolishing of monuments of Idolatry and Superstition”:

The Lords and Commons in part the better to accomplish the blessed Reformation so happily begun and to remove all offenses and things illegal in the worship of God Do Ordain that all representation of the Trinity, or any Angel, etc., etc., in and about any Cathedral, Collegiate or Parish Church or Chapel shall be taken away, defaced and utterly demolished, etc., etc.

And that all organs and the frames and cases wherein they stand in the Churches and Chapels aforesaid shall be taken away and utterly defaced, and none other hereafter set up in their places.

And that all Copes, Surplices, superstitious Vestments, Lords and Fonts be likewise utterly defaced, etc., etc.

Some organs were sold, some partially demolished, some saved by the clergy, and some were spared.

These reforms were not permanent. The Puritans had attempted to force them down people’s throats and it was not long till their power was overthrown and former practices restored. Organs and choirs were introduced into the service of worship on a larger scale than before.<sup>2</sup>

Reform in the use of music in worship was effected in a far better way by another means—real spiritual revival, brought about by the Wesleys and other leaders of the Methodist revival. The story of the music of the Methodists is most instructive. In 1880 Curwen describes Methodist singing as it existed then:

The tide of religious song, which was at once the expression and, among human agencies, the inspiration of the Methodist Revival, has never spent its force. The Methodists have suffered, like all religious bodies, as they have become wealthy and respectable, and as

the white heat of their early vigor has given place to the tempered enthusiasm of middle age. But they are still a singing people; still from Cornish villages and Yorkshire towns, from the negroes of Virginia, and the bushmen of Australia, rises in a stream the people’s song: rough and tuneless often, but bearing week by week the sorrows and aspirations and worship of tens of thousands. In a few town churches the simplicity of Wesley’s service has been departed from, and choir music, with elaborate organ playing, has taken the place of popular hymn singing. But these cases are exceptional, old Methodists look at them askance, and say that they do not represent Methodist psalmody. It is, on the whole, remarkable that so little change has taken place in the character of the psalmody, when we reflect on the enormous advance of the body in culture and position during the last century, and on the revolution which has taken place in Church of England psalmody during the same period. The conservatism of the Methodists has enabled them to retain in their worship-music the main principles for which Wesley contended—that everyone should sing, that the singing should never be delegated to a choir, but that it should be both “lusty” and sincere. Unfortunately, however, the faults of Wesley’s time as well as the excellencies have been too often preserved. The slowness, the dragging, occasionally the bawling against which he so persistently fought are still met with, especially in remote villages, while as a doubtful counterpoise, the hymns may be heard in some of the town churches sung at a pace which renders devotion impossible.

In order to appreciate the place and importance of singing in the early days of the Methodist movement, we must call to mind that hymns, heartily sung by a whole congregation, were an unknown element in public worship at the time when Wesley’s and Whitefield’s

2. Material on Puritans is taken from the article on “Organ” in *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Vol. 3).

work began. We Mennonites are so accustomed to regard congregational singing as an essential of public devotion, that it requires an effort to realize this fact. At the time we speak of, there were very few hymns to sing. Watt's were written, but the Dissenters had received them coldly and were very slow to adopt them. What the Dissenters ignored, the Church people did not know at all. In describing the ordinary service of the parish church, Wesley speaks of "the formal drawl of a parish clerk," "the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand," and "the scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold." He pictures the parish clerk as "a poor humdrum wretch, who can scarce read what he drones out with such an air of importance"; he refers to a custom of taking "two staves" of a Psalm, without regard to the appropriateness of the words or their completion of the sense; and he describes "a handful of unawakened striplings" as singing, while the congregation are "lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another." Wesley had far too strong an affection for the Church to caricature her services, and we may therefore accept his strictures as evidence of the existing state of things.

Upon this sleep of formalism the Methodists, with their hymns and their singing, burst like heralds of a new life. Crowds were drawn to the services simply by the irresistible charm of the music. To sing hymns was to be a Methodist. It was noted among the first signs of Dr. Coke's Methodism that he introduced hymns into his church at South Petherton; and in Cornwall the Methodists were nicknamed the "Canorum" for the same reason. The hymn-singing was, however, more than a sensuous pleasure. The most ignorant and wretched discovered a new delight, and a new sense of responsibility and dignity, in "standing before God and praising

Him lustily and with a good courage." The small "societies" which soon began to gather in towns and villages, to nourish by companionship that higher life which the teaching of John Wesley had quickened, were poor in learning, culture, and station. Their worship and the songs they sang were the outcry of simple hearts, rude and unadorned as the singers themselves; but warm from the heart, ardent as youth, and throbbing with the energy of conviction and faith. These men and women had something to sing about, and they sang, therefore, not half-heartedly and self-consciously, but with thoughts and affections making for the object of their song; with that self-oblivion and passion which is not only the condition of devout praise, but the mark of every great singer that from time to time touches the hearts of men.

It is instructive to notice that, in the process of religious awakening, hymn-singing came before preaching, or even the reading of the Word. It was the hymns that were used to break new soil. A letter from Berridge, one of Wesley's preachers, addressed to his leader, July 16th, 1759, gives us an insight into the evangelizing process. Speaking generally of his work, he says:

As soon as three or four receive convictions in a village, they are desired to meet together two or three nights in a week, which they readily comply with. At first they only sing; afterwards they join reading and prayer to singing, and the presence of the Lord is greatly with them. Let me mention two instances. At Orwell, ten people were broken down in one night, and only by hearing a few people sing hymns. At Grandchester, a mile from Cambridge, seventeen people were seized with strong convictions last week, only by hearing hymns sung. When societies get a little strength and courage they begin to read and pray, and then the Lord magnifies His power as well as love among them, by releasing their souls out of bondage.

John Wesley's first tune book was

issued in 1742. A great deal of the history of Wesleyan Methodist psalmody may be traced in the Minutes of the Conference.

We find the Conference of 1746 recommending a careful choice of hymns proper to the congregation, and the use of hymns of praise and prayer, rather than those descriptive of particular states—a piece of advice that might well be given to all denominations today. We are reminded of the length of the hymns at once, seldom more than five or six verses at a time. The next piece of advice is to suit the tunes to the hymns. The last counsel is evidently Wesley's own. He tells the preachers to stop the congregation while a hymn is being sung and ask them, "Now do you know what you said last? Did it suit your case? Did you sing it as to God, with the spirit and the understanding also?" Such an interruption would startle the mechanical order of our modern services, but it is often not unneeded. In the Minutes of 1763 the question is asked, "What can be done to make the people sing true?" This is abruptly answered as follows: 1. Learn to sing true yourselves. 2. Recommend the tunes (i.e., the tunes in Wesley's book) everywhere. 3. If a preacher cannot sing himself, let him choose two or three persons in every place to pitch the tunes for him.

The Minutes of 1765 are brief and pointed:

Teach them (the congregation) to sing by note, and to sing our tunes first (Wesley had published his first hymn and tune-book in 1761); take care they do not sing too slow. Exhort all that can in every congregation to sing. Set them right that sing wrong. Be patient herein.

Wesley's own taste in music was rather severe. The tune book which he published contained tunes of a sober cast, and nearly one-third of them were in the minor mode. The direction in which the taste of his people went is

shown by the Minutes of 1768:

Beware of formality in singing, or it will creep upon us unawares. "Is it not creeping in already," said they, "by these complex tunes, which it is scarcely possible to sing with devotion?" Such is "Praise the Lord, ye blessed ones"; such the long quavering hallelujah annexed to the morning song tune, which I defy any man living to sing devotedly. The repeating the same word so often, as it shocks all common sense, so it necessarily brings in dead formality, and has no more religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe. Besides that, it is a flat contradiction to our Lord's command, "Use not vain repetition," for what is vain repetition, if this is not? What end of devotion does it serve? Again, do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality, and is brought in by those who have very strong or very weak voices. Is it not possible that all the Methodists in the nation should sing equally quick?

In 1815 there was written:

Let no singing be allowed in any of our chapels after the public service has been regularly closed by the officiating preacher, as we think that singing at such times tends to extinguish the spirit of devotion, and to destroy those serious impressions which may have been made on the congregation by the previous ministry of God's Word.

Very early in the movement "The singers," as the leaders of the music in each chapel were called, seem to have caused trouble. They were too fond of displaying their powers. In 1787 during Wesley's lifetime, the Minutes say: "Let no anthems be introduced into our chapels or preaching-houses for the time to come, because they cannot properly be called joint worship." The Conference of 1796 (after Wesley's death) curiously relates this Minute: "Let no anthems be introduced into our chapels unless on *extraordinary occasions, and with the consent of the superintendent*, because they cannot properly be called joint

worship.” The Minutes of 1796 say: “If a preacher be present, let no singer give out the words.” In the Minutes of 1800, we find a reference which shows a further advance on the part of “the singers”:

Let none in our connection preach charity sermons where bands of music and theatrical singers are introduced into our chapels. And let the stewards, trustees, and leaders be informed that such a practice is offensive to the Conference, who believe it has been hurtful to the minds of many pious people.

In 1802, we read:

We beg that our people will keep close to the excellent rules drawn up by our venerable father in the gospel, Mr. Wesley, in respect to singing. The celebrating of the praises of the Most High God is an important part of divine worship, and a part in which the whole congregation should endeavor vocally to join. It is, therefore, very indecorous not to stand up on so solemn an occasion.

Again in 1805, we read:

Let no pieces, as they are called, in which recitatives by single men, solos by single women (fuging, or different words sung by different voices at the same time), are introduced, be sung in our chapels. Let the original, simple, grave, and devotional style be carefully preserved which, instead of drawing the attention to singing and the singers, is so admirably calculated to draw off the attention from both, and to raise the soul to God only.

The question of instruments in chapel also gave trouble. Wesley, as Mr. G. J. Stevenson, the industrious historian of City Road Chapel states, “We never had a thought of an organ being erected in any Methodist chapel.” In his day there was so much difficulty in providing the salaries of the preachers, and the cost of the chapels, that it never occurred to him that the Methodists would be rich enough to meet the cost of a chapel

organ. The Minutes of 1796 (after his death) say: “Let no organ be placed anywhere until proposed by the Conference.” The Minutes of 1808 say: “Where organs have been introduced, the Conference requires that they shall be used so as not to overpower or supersede, but only to assist our congregational singing, and that they shall be considered as under the control of the superintendent, or of the officiating preacher for the time being.” The Minutes of the same year (1808) judge it “expedient to refuse, after this present year, the sanction of consent to the erection of any organ in our chapels.” The Minutes of 1820 say: “The Conference judges that in some of the larger chapels, where some instrumental music may be deemed expedient in order to guide the congregational singing, organs may be allowed by special consent of the Conference.”

In 1827, when the Leeds organ controversy was hottest, Isaac published a little work entitled “Vocal Melody, or Singing the only Music sanctioned by Divine authority in the Public Worship of the Churches.” He says:

The arguments employed in this little tract are directed against instruments of all kinds. Organs are undoubtedly the worst, because they make most noise, nearly drown the voice of those who sing, and render the words quite inaudible. Bass instruments are the least objectionable, because they do not interfere with the air of the tune, nor prevent the words which are sung being pretty distinctly heard.

Isaac mentions that he has an instrument in his own house and does not object to them *per se*; only when introduced into public worship. He argues that, whereas under the old dispensation the practice of instrumental music was limited to the priests, so with the priesthood it was abolished. In the New Testament we read only of singing, not of playing. Music, to be of any use in worship, must do two things—first, express

the feelings; second, direct them to God. Singing with the spirit and the understanding will accomplish both. He considers that for devotional purposes, instruments are worse than useless:

The religious tendency given to excited feelings is effected by the words which accompany the tune. The noise of the instruments, however, tends to drown the words, and to draw the attention from the hymn or psalm to mere sounds, in which the spirit of devotion is lost. . . . When the animal gratification arising from the charms of music exceeds the spiritual enjoyment expected from communion with God, the soul will rest satisfied with the pleasures of sense, and make no efforts to turn the attention from the orchestra to the throne of grace. . . . A traveller needs rest on the road, to enable him to perform his journey, but if he be entertained in the way with a paradise of delights, he will be tempted to stop short, and to make that his permanent abode which was only intended for a temporary accommodation. . . . A man may be more excited by instrumental than vocal music, and yet prefer the latter in a place of worship, because he may be of opinion that the human voice is the better adapted to the great end of worship, which is to please the Lord rather than himself.

Isaac objects to the use of music in worship as a fine art appealing to the senses, and shows that if it is thus admitted, pictures, sculptures, and incense ought to follow. He continues:

It is said that "music is the means of drawing a person to a place of worship; when there he is awakened and converted; thus the blessing of God crowns the means, and gives them the stamp of His approbation." Aye, but by what means? Did God awaken or convert him while listening to a fiddle or an organ? I trow not, or the man would have stood as good a chance of being converted in the play-house as in the house of the Lord. The Divine blessing accompanied prayer and preaching, which are both of Divine appointment, and the sinner

was changed, not by the music, but in spite of it. Men often use a variety of means in order to a spiritual end, some of which are good and some bad. If the end be effected they take it for granted that God has blessed them all; when in truth He has brought good out of the bad means, and given His blessing only to the good ones.

It is instructive to read the testimonies to the power of the early Methodist singing which are borne, often unwillingly, by contemporary writers belonging to the Church of England. Rev. Dr. Vincent, Rector of All Hallows, in his "Considerations on Parochial Music" (1787) says:

That the people are alive to attractions of this kind no other proof is wanting than the attraction they all experience in the psalmody of the Methodists. It is not rashness to assert that for one who has been drawn away from the Established Church by preaching, ten have been induced by music. . . . We have no right to complain of this system of the Methodists—they fight lawful weapons, for they are the same as the Reformers employed against the Church of Rome. And if we are sensible of the efficacy of them, why should not we proportion our mode of defense to the nature of the attack. That the harmony arising from the voices of a well-regulated Methodist congregation is delightful, no one who has heard it can deny. Let us not envy them the enjoyment of it, but draw our own instruction from it, and this we may readily do by examining in what points their excellence consists. . . . It will be generally acknowledged that the effect is produced first by the union of every voice in the assembly (no one being negligent, inattentive, or remiss), secondly by practice, and thirdly by moderating the voice to the harmonious pitch. For that it does not consist in better musical composition is evident. Their superiority is as manifest in the performance of a common psalm tune as in any modern composition adapted to their own hymns. That it does not

consist in better voices is equally plain, because when the effect is most striking, no particular voice is heard. That it does not arise from greater previous skill is easily proved, for they have no skill but practice, and pretend in general to no knowledge of the science but what they have acquired by the ear.

Often, in open air services, the Methodist hymns drowned the noise of men hired to interrupt them. It is doubtful if the voices of an ordinary congregation of the present day would do that, though their organ might. Wesley liked the singing to be congregational. At Neath, in 1768, after preaching in the parish church, he writes: "I was greatly disgusted at the manner of singing. Twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves, and quite shut out the congregation." At Warrington (1771), speaking of the Methodist Chapel, he says: "I put a stop to a bad custom which was creeping in here; a few men who had fine voices, sang a Psalm which no one knew, in a tune fit for an opera." Describing a similar scene at Dublin (1787), he says: "But is this Christian worship? Or ought it ever to be suffered in a Christian church?"

Wesley sums up his advice to Methodist singers in the preface to his "Sacred Harmony," with characteristic abruptness. He says:

I want the people called Methodists to sing true the tunes which are in common use among them. . . . I have been endeavoring for more than twenty years to procure such a book as this. Masters of music were above following any direction but their own and I was determined whoever compiled this should follow my direction not mending our tunes, but setting them down neither better nor worse than they were. At length I have prevailed. The following collection contains all the tunes which are in common use amongst us.

That this part of worship may be more acceptable to God, as well as the more profitable to yourself and others, be careful to observe the following

directions:

- I. Learn these tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.
- II. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all, and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.
- III. Sing *all*. See that you join with the Congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of Weakness or Weariness hinder you. If it is a Cross to you, take it up and you will find a Blessing.
- IV. Sing *lustily*, and with a good Courage. Beware of singing as if you were half Dead or half a Sleep, but lift up your voice with Strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of it being heard, than when you sung the songs of *Satan*.
- V. Sing *modestly*. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the Congregation, that you may not destroy the Harmony, but strive to unite your Voices together, so as to make one clear, melodious Sound.
- VI. Sing *in Time*. Whatever Time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before or stay behind it, but attend close to the leading Voices and move therewith as exactly as you can, and take care you sing not *too slow*. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy, and it is high Time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our Tunes just as quick as we did at first.
- VII. Above all sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every Word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other Creature. In order to this attend Strictly to the Sense of what you sing, and see that your Heart is not carried away with the Sound, but offered to God continually, so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here and reward when He cometh in the Clouds of Heaven.

The question was once put to Wesley,

“What is your opinion of instruments of music in a place of worship?” He replied, “I have no objection to their being there, provided they are neither seen nor heard!” To this Dr. Clarke adds: “I say the same, only I think the expense of purchase had better be spared.”

According to Methodist writers, the singing of the Methodists was already on the decline in 1880. Curwen wrote in that year: “We hear complaints of a departure from the simplicity and bare spirituality of Wesley’s services, of a lack of warmth in the congregation, and a disposition to hand over the singing to a choir.”

A writer in the *Cornhill Magazine* (1878), who was evidently himself a Methodist, said:

The Wesleyans of 50 years ago were specially distinguished for the fire and force of their singing. There might be a lack of art, but you were always sure of heartiness. In this respect, as in others, the Wesleyans are somewhat changed. They have increased their musical education, but the energy and earnestness of their singing are diminished. This is partly owing to the congregations leaving the organ and choir to do the singing for them, and as long as they are content with a vicarious worship of this sort, their devotional fervor will be comparatively unemployed during the singing. Their falling off in congregational singing may be partly attributed to another cause. Education is spreading among the people, and the social level of the Wesleyans is higher than it was. Their children learn vocal music and the piano, and some of them know too much of music to like bad singing, and so avoid imperfect psalmody by remaining silent in the chapel.

It is strange that the Methodists, with their compact organization, and their great fondness for singing, have never attempted to arrange for the systematic instruction of their congregations in the rudiments of music, which is the only radical method of promoting congregational singing. Wesley was more practical

than his successors. His *Tune Book* has a preface which gives a course of exercises and lessons in the art of reading music, on the system prevalent at the time, which called the scale tones *fa sol la fa sol la mi*. This was the best system known in Wesley’s day. Had he lived now I do not doubt that he would in the same way have sought out and eagerly promoted the simplest and most straightforward plan for enabling the multitude to read music.

Most impressive is Henry Ward Beecher’s comment on the state of Methodist use of music in worship in his time (1813-1887). In the following passage he attacks, with characteristic vigour, an instance of congregational passivity with which he had come into contact:

By the way, yesterday morning I was at the Methodist church here. A very pleasant room it is, and I am told that a very worthy society occupy it. But I have a most weighty charge to bring against the good people of musical apostasy. I had expected a treat of good hearty singing. There were Charles Wesley’s hymns, and there were the good old Methodist tunes that ancient piety loved, and modern conceit laughs at! Imagine my chagrin when, after reading the hymn, up rose a choir from a shelf at the other end of the church, and began to sing a monotonous tune of a modern music-book style. The patient congregation stood meekly to be sung to, as men stand under rain when there is no shelter. Scarcely a lip moved. No one seemed to hear the hymn, or cared for the music. How I longed for the good old Methodist thunder! One good burst of old-fashioned music would have blown this modern singing out of the windows, like wadding from a gun! Men may call this an improvement and genteel! Gentility has nearly killed our churches, and it will kill Methodist churches if they give way to its false and pernicious ambition. We know very well what good old-fashioned Methodist music was. It had faults enough, doubtless, against taste. But it had an *inward*

*purpose and religious earnestness* which enabled it to carry all its faults, and triumph in spite of them. It was worship. Yesterday's music was tolerable singing, but very poor worship. We are sorry that just as our churches are beginning to imitate the former example of Methodist churches, and to introduce melodies that the people love, our Methodist brethren should pick up our cast-off formalism in church music. It will be worse with them than with us. It will mark a greater length of decline. We could hardly believe our eyes and ears yesterday. We could hardly persuade ourselves that we stood before a Methodist church. We should have supposed it to be a good old Presbyterian or Congregational church, in which the choir and pulpit did everything, and the people did nothing. Our brethren in this church must not take these remarks unkindly. They are presented in all kindness and affection. The choir sang better than many choirs in city churches, but no one sang with them. The people were mute. They used their ears, and not their mouths. But alas, we missed the old fervour—the good old-fashioned Methodist fire. We have seen the time when one of Charles Wesley's hymns, taking the congregation by the hand, would have led them up to the gate of heaven. But yesterday it only led them up to the choir, about ten feet above the pews. This will never do. Methodists will make magnificent worshipping Christians if they are not ashamed of their own ways, but very poor ones if they are. Brethren, you are in the wrong way. It will never do for you to silence the people. Your fire will go out if you take it up under the ashes of a false refinement. Let an outsider, but a well-wisher, say these plain words without offense. The Methodist Church has laid the Christian world under a great debt by its service in the cause of Christ, and we have a right to it, and an interest in it, as common Christians, too great to suffer us to see signs of degeneracy in it without sorrow and alarm. We hope

God means to do great things by it yet for our land. But it will not be by giving up heart and soul, zeal and popular enthusiasm in worship, for the sake of sham propriety and tasteful formalism, that the Methodist Church will become yet further efficient. We hope to see such a revival of religion among them as will come like a freshet upon their churches, and sweep out the channels of song, and carry away the dead wood and trash which have already dammed up the current of song, and made the congregation stagnant. Oh, that there may be a rain of righteousness upon them, which shall swell their hearts to overflowing, and cleanse their sanctuary from all formalism, and especially from the formalism of pedantic music!

#### ***Questions to the Readers***

In the light of the Word of God, and the history and experience of the Christian Church, is there after all any justification to take any steps in the direction of introducing choirs and musical instruments into the musical portion of our worship? Is the desire for such special features prompted by truly spiritual motives? Is it the outgrowth of revival, or of spiritual decline, materialism, or what? Will the spiritual life of our congregations be thereby strengthened? Will the music in our worship be any more appealing, whole-souled, spiritually fervent, and God-honoring? It may be more rich and varied from a musical standpoint, but will the intensifying of esthetic enjoyment deepen spirituality? Has it done so in the past? If we permit choirs and instruments, how will we keep them from overshadowing, discouraging, and even silencing such hearty congregational singing as we have now? Can we be any more successful than other denominations who tried and failed in this? ■

*(to be continued next issue)*

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# Mennonite Education: The Distinctive Emphases

by Steven R. Brubaker

Every school has its emphases. Classical schools emphasize Latin and logic, Catholic schools strong discipline, Baptist schools child evangelism, Fundamentalist schools patriotism and nationalism.

What do Mennonite schools emphasize? Mennonites may easily offer negative reasons for having our own schools rather than sending our children to public schools or other Christian schools. We don't want the exposure to drugs or a sexually-charged atmosphere that is so prevalent in public education, nor do we want the focus on child evangelism or Christian patriotism found in many Christian schools.

But are there any positive emphases of Mennonite Education that can excite us, that allow us to say with energy and conviction—"That's worth having our own schools," that define what we are about rather than merely what we are against, or that give churches and parents and board members and principals and teachers compelling reasons to have Mennonite schools? There are! I suggest three Christ-centered emphases of Mennonite Education that we can and should continue to cultivate in our schools.

Some may ask whether the emphases suggested here are descriptive or prescriptive. That is, are these things we **should be** emphasizing or are they things that we **are** emphasizing? The answer is they are both. Not all of these emphases are present in every Mennonite school. Not all are present in appropriate degrees. Some of these emphases are almost lost as we follow patterns of education prescribed by

worldviews that differ from our own. However, we will quickly recognize these emphases as consistent with our history and that they are often present in our schools in many ways. By identifying these emphases we can increase their presence and impact in our communities.

Again, someone may ask, Why all this attention to Mennonite emphases? Shouldn't we be concerned about being Christian—and having Christian emphases? Of course! However, we are not the only ones to be concerned about being truly Christian. It is preferable to acknowledge the general perspective that we bring to the pursuit of truth and that perspective is probably best described with the words *Mennonite* or *Anabaptist*. To claim to be merely Christian without an acknowledgement of our overarching vantage point runs the risk of arrogance.

God has been gracious to us as a people. Because of our heritage, we are uniquely shaped to understand and live with clarity some of what it means to follow Christ. For this we must be grateful and faithful. We must also acknowledge that we do not understand everything with clarity and that some of what we think we understand is probably not as certain as we think. This calls for a deep-seated humility about the contributions we make to education and about our need to learn from others who can help us see our blind spots. Being grateful for and faithful to the grace of God as experienced in the Mennonite tradition calls us to speak confidently of the distinctive emphases of Mennonite Education while humility

calls us to listen well to other traditions.

Finally, a word about the approach we plan to take. For each of the three emphases we will first, state the emphasis; second, define, illustrate, and give biblical justification for the emphasis; then describe two ways which this emphasis is observed in Mennonite schools; and finally, suggest some dangers to which the emphasis is susceptible.

***First, Mennonite Education emphasizes living over thinking.***

It was my first test during my first year of college. The class—Old Testament Survey. The teacher—Hap Struthers—an old, godly man—the Hap stood for Happy. As he returned our graded tests, Dr. Struthers said, “Some of you made A’s and some of you made F’s. I have those grades recorded in my grade book. But there is another gradebook—God’s. And in His grade book some of you who have an A in mine got an F in His, and some of you who got an F in mine have an A in His. His grade book is a whole lot more important than mine.” Dr. Struthers’ comment illustrates so well what we mean when we say Mennonite education emphasizes living over thinking.

Schools are responsible to teach the 3R’s—Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic—all having more to do with thinking than living. For this reason, schools can easily make the mind and thought the focus of education. Additionally we live in a time when the dominant cultural mold believes that the problems of society can be solved through the education of the mind. Poverty, crime, abuse, and disease will cease when we learn to think properly. Mennonites disagree. In the words of Paul Zehr, “The Anabaptists discovered the total life is to be brought literally under the lordship of Christ. Instead of educating the mind or training the body, the Anabaptists **educated the**

**will** so that the total person began to live in obedience to Christ.” Richard Hughes quotes a Mennonite as indicating that “Protestants learn to live by thinking; Mennonites learn to think by living.” Mennonite education emphasizes living over thinking.

The Apostle James asks the question, “Who is wise and understanding among you?” Then he answers, “Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom” (James 3:13). A wise person, a truly educated person can be recognized by two qualities: his acts of service and his humility. Mennonites agree that you can tell if a person has been properly educated, not by how much he knows but by how humble he is and how much good he does. If our students graduate with attitudes of disdain for people who know fewer facts than they do (perhaps even their parents), we have failed as Christian educators. If we merely graduate students who live self-centered, materialistic lives we have failed. Our goal is not to make smarter people but to make better people. Making them smarter may help, but it is only a means, never the goal. Thus, Mennonite education emphasizes living well over thinking.

How, then, does this emphasis bear fruit in our schools? We consider godly character as the primary qualification for teachers. Godly character, much more than great learning, is the basis for choosing who teaches in our classrooms.

Probably the best-known Mennonite educator of all time is Christopher Dock. Whenever his name is mentioned, I think of two images. The first is the title often used to describe him, “pious schoolmaster of the Skippack.” The second vivid image is the picture of him kneeling in prayer as he died. Piety. Prayer. Is Christopher Dock remembered for his intellect? No—for his godliness. Mennonites value godly teachers

because they represent the vision of a whole life rather than a disproportionately large brain.

Over the years, I have looked at a number of teacher applications from Mennonite schools. Some of them have asked absolutely nothing about the applicant's qualifications as a teacher. Instead they have only asked about the applicant's relationship with the church, relationship with God, and the conduct of his life. This approach would be absolutely incomprehensible to many schools outside the Mennonite Church. It does illustrate very effectively the value we place on godly character. Inquiring about and making aptitude to teach a part of the teacher evaluating process can be done in ways that do not violate the emphasis on living over thinking. In fact, it is imperative that we find not only good "livers" to teach in our schools but also capable and called "teachers."

Mennonites value godly teachers because that is how students' lives are shaped. The mind may be shaped with other methods. There is no other way to shape godly lives.

Another way that the emphasis on living over thinking influences the classroom is in our approach to grading. We tend to reward life qualities like diligence, effort, cooperation, and attention to instructions with good grades as much as we do superior intellect. We make it possible for the student with these characteristics to do well in school even if their natural intelligence is not outstanding.

With every emphasis comes the real possibility of overemphasis. And the Mennonite emphasis on living over thinking sometimes results in neglecting and devaluing the mind. We sometimes view mind development as a necessary evil. From this viewpoint, we should only develop the mind enough to read the Bible and make a living; more than that will take us away from God.

We have struggled as a people to see the mind as a necessary, even essential part of what it means to live well. This tendency should not deter us, however, from making a life focus the basis for developing the mind.

***Secondly, Mennonite Education emphasizes the community over the individual.***

We live in a society that has elevated the status of the individual. This emphasis has greatly affected Christianity. James Sire comments on this by saying, "Whether Catholic, evangelical, mainline, liberal or conservative, Christians see themselves as individuals first and communities second." He observes that "our faith tends to be a Lone Ranger Christianity. We sing, 'I Come to the Garden Alone,' or 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee,' or 'On the Jericho Road.'" He concludes by saying, "It is the community side of the equation that we in our Western mode have missed (Sire. *Discipleship of the Mind*. Pp. 63, 64). For Mennonites, a primary purpose of education is to prepare students for living well in community.

Jesus stressed the overarching significance of the community in His prayer prior to the crucifixion. He asked the Father on behalf of those who would believe in Him over the centuries that "they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21). Paul continues the theme in Philippians 2 where he instructs us as individuals to "do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." He goes on to say that this kind of community focus describes precisely the mind of Jesus Christ (2:3-5). God designed us to find our normal existence not as disconnected individuals but in committed

and unified community. Mennonite education emphasizes the community over the individual.

If we played word association and I said *Baptist* or *Evangelical*, someone likely would say Billy Graham. If I said *Catholic*, someone would probably say Pope John Paul. If I said *Mennonite*—at least to a non-Mennonite audience the response would not be specific people (Who outside our circles knows Conrad Grebel or Felix Manz or Menno Simons?) but characteristics like close, unique communities and large families. When people think of Mennonites, they think of groups, not individuals. A friend of mine was in New York City on business recently and struck up a conversation with a local. During the discussion my friend indicated that he was a Mennonite. “Oh,” the other person responded, “I didn’t know there was a community of **you** people in this area.” Perhaps it is no accident that we have not produced Billy Grahams because Mennonite education emphasizes community over the individual.

Mennonites understand a primary purpose of education as preparing children to live well in community. Education that prepares one to live in community must happen in community. This is another reason godly teachers are so important. We want a person in the classroom who is living well in community. There are many and perhaps better ways to accumulate facts (e.g., computerized learning) but we are preparing people to live well with each other. When I wanted to go to college, my father suggested that I go to a school where I could spend weekends at home. He understood instinctively that if education is to result in a greater commitment to the community it must happen in the context of community. Each weekend I would go home and discuss what I was learning. The discussions were sometimes animated and we didn’t always agree, but insisting that I

continue to engage my community while learning was a major factor in bringing me toward rather than away from the community.

How then does this emphasis on community over the individual impact the Mennonite school? One obvious way is in the subjects that are often highly valued in our schools. Our valuing history and music flows from our community orientation. How so? Family history, local history, Mennonite history, church history, American history, world history are important to people who value the community, including the community as it extends from the past into the present. We have tended to be suspicious of the arts but singing has found broad acceptance among us perhaps in large part because it is a community experience rather than individual artistic expression. If we were to again play word association with the phrase *Books and Lutherans* we would immediately think the *95 Theses*. For the phrase *Books and Reformed Tradition*, Calvin’s *Institutes* would quickly come to mind. For the phrase *Books and Mennonites* many would suggest that our two outstanding works are *Martyrs Mirror* and the *Ausbund*. A history book and a music book. Both illustrate our commitment to community.

The community emphasis also produces schools that serve all students, not only the intellectually advanced. Two summers ago, I was teaching a course on the Foundations of Education. During the course, we spent some time reading an article about a classical school in Texas. I was getting excited because I find some of the classical methods and ideas very compelling. One student wasn’t excited however, and when I allowed the class to respond she said, “I don’t like it. It strikes me as elitist. It seems that only a certain kind of person would do well in that school.” She was right. Mennonite education, on the other hand, values a school where

all individuals can be included in the community.

This emphasis has the capacity to veer into dangerous territory. I will mention two possibilities. An emphasis on the community over the individual can easily become a deadening form of traditionalism. Jaroslav Pelikan stated the problem so succinctly: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living." A community focus can degenerate into a culture of empty activity designed to sustain the group but without a life worth sustaining. Also, a community emphasis has sometimes resulted in the rejection of people who didn't quite fit the community mold but could have brought a legitimate and necessary diversity. When community is highly valued, we are not always sure what to do with the exceptional people among us who challenge our communities. So, many of them leave. A student of mine once remarked that he didn't think there was any room in the Mennonite church for a career mathematician. An emphasis on community can inappropriately exclude.

***Third, Mennonite Education emphasizes a world vision over a national vision.***

We are living at a time of intense national feeling. America is engaged in a number of struggles that pit it against other countries or at least elements within those countries. The American president has pictured these situations in terms of fighting the evils of terrorism and bondage. This vision of fighting evil has two components:

1. The nation, in this case America, holds our primary allegiance and is a geographic entity.
2. We fight evil in the world through exercise of our nation's power.

Conservative American Christians have largely endorsed this vision. They say it is the responsibility of American

Christians to support this nation in its fight against evil. But Mennonites have a different vision.

1. The Kingdom of Christ holds our primary allegiance, and it has members in every country of the world, including Iraq.
2. We fight evil in the world through the skillful use of our weapon, love.

This vision is one of a kingdom of followers of Christ that transcends national borders. We belong to a kingdom that has members in every country of the world. Mennonites believe that our first responsibility is to those brothers and sisters. Paul calls us to this vision when he states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). But our commitment is not only to those who belong to the Kingdom of God. We are called to love everyone, including our enemies. Our call is not only to love the neighbor next door but to act in love to everyone in every nation. Mennonite education stresses that we are Christians first and Americans second. According to Richard Hughes, "Mennonites routinely counsel one another to abandon self in the interest of others and to abandon narrow nationalism in the interest of world citizenship." This is not loyalty to the United Nations but a vision of the world where our brothers and sisters span the globe and where we attack the evil in the hearts of all men by bombarding them with love. Our goal is not to kill our enemies but to love them into the Kingdom of God.

Mennonite schools live out this emphasis in two basic ways: by telling different stories, stories of good over evil; and by honoring different heroes, heroes who loved well.

Years ago, several teachers from our school took a teacher field trip to Augusta, Georgia. We took a guided bus tour to the major historical sites in the

city. Particularly memorable was the boyhood home of Woodrow Wilson. The guide showed us the church where Wilson's father, a minister, preached. He told the story how one Sunday morning during the Civil War an opening hymn was led and the pastor, Mr. Wilson, stood up and announced, "We will continue our worship down at the foundry molding bullets for our soldiers."

From a different time in this nation's history, Ken Gire tells of a tombstone he saw. It read: "Sacred to the Memory of Lynn S. Love who, during his lifetime, killed 98 Indians that had been delivered into his hands by the Lord. He had hoped to make it 100 before the year ended when he fell asleep in the arms of Jesus in his home, in N.Y. State." These are the stories often told in the broader culture, stories of power, of violence, of death.

Mennonite schools tell stories of how we can and should overcome evil with good. Myron Augsburg tells about Aaron Rempel in his book *The Robe of God*.

In the early decades of the 20th century, Aaron Rempel, a wealthy Mennonite farmer and estate owner, lived in southern Russia, in a town called Gnadenfeldt. He was so prominent and wealthy, and his estate so well known, that the Czar of Russia would often visit and hunt on his estate.

When the Revolution of 1917 broke out, the White Army was initially successful in defeating the Red Army in the region near Rempel's estate. The officers of the White Army ordered their soldiers to put Red Army prisoners into boxcars and ship them off to Siberia.

One evening, as Rempel was walking home from the city with groceries he had purchased for his family, he came upon a railroad siding where there was a boxcar full of men. One of these captured soldiers called out to Rempel, "Sir, we're so hungry, we've been in here all day with nothing to eat. Can you help us?"

Acting on his Christian beliefs,

Rempel walked over to the boxcar and began shoving his bread, cheeses, and sausages through the cracks.

The man inside took them and passed them around. He said, "Thank you," and Aaron replied, "God bless you."

Some months later, the tide of the struggle changed. The Red Army totally defeated the White Army, put their prisoners into boxcars and shipped them to Siberia. Within a few months, as the Marxists took over the country under Lenin's leadership, the Red Army rounded up all of the Mennonite farmers in the area, put them into boxcars, and shipped them to Siberia as well.

Deported to Siberia, Rempel went from a life of wealth to a life of poverty, from a position of strength to one of weakness. And yet, he remained the entrepreneur he had always been. Recognizing the need for a warm drink in the Siberian cold, Rempel began shipping in tea from Mongolia and soon had a good business going. His neighbors, however, were envious of his success and—calling Rempel's business the crime of capitalism—had him arrested by the Marxist authorities.

As the trial progressed, it became evident that he was, indeed, "guilty of capitalism." Finally, the Commissar told him to step forward to be sentenced. Aaron Rempel stepped forward, fully expecting the sentence to mean his execution. But the Commissar said, "I think we have met before."

"No, your Honor," Aaron replied. "We have never met."

"Yes, I think we have. Were you ever in Gnadenfeldt?"

Aaron said, "Why yes, I lived there."

"Do you remember an evening when a man called to you from a boxcar, and said, 'We are so hungry, we have been in here all day with nothing to eat?'"

"Yes," Aaron said, "I remember that."

"And what did you do?"

"Why, I went over to the boxcar and shoved my bread and cheeses and sausages through the slats."

"And what did you say?"

Aaron paused for a moment and then replied, "I think I said, 'God bless you.'"

The Commissar said, "Yes, we've met before. I was that man. I am not going to sentence you. If you would like, I'll sign those papers for your family to emigrate."

Aaron said, "Oh sir, thank you, and would you sign those papers for all the Rempels, for I have brothers here."

All of the Rempels immigrated to Burbank, California.

Mennonites tell different stories and they honor different heroes. Recently I received a catalog for Christian families. It was promoting resources for raising godly sons. There were two kinds of heroes the catalog suggested parents should encourage their children to emulate: the missionary and the soldier.

Tony Campolo tells a moving story about an American and a German soldier. He says that his friend told of dinner with a veteran of World War II. The veteran related this story of the Battle of the Bulge. One foggy, rainy morning his commanding officer instructed his unit to shoot any wounded enemy on the field. Although violating the Geneva Convention, the officer believed that it must be done, given the chaos and disarray of a battle without clearly drawn lines. The rules had been abandoned, and prisoners would not be taken. This soldier said that he came upon a seated German soldier with his back against a tree. He wasn't wounded. He was just too tired to go on, totally dissipated. He was too listless to resist anyone. "As I aimed my gun at him, he asked me to wait a moment. Speaking in English, he told me he wanted a chance to pray before he died. I immediately sat down with him as I realized that he was a Christian brother. We talked about our families. I showed him pictures of my children. He showed me photographs of his family. We read some Scriptures together. It was wonderful." Campolo's friend asked, "Well? What did you do?"

When the man didn't answer, the friend pressed. "What did you do? What did you do?" The man said, "I stood up, aimed the gun at him, and said, 'You're a Christian and I'm a Christian. I'll see you in heaven.' And I shot him!"

In contrast, Mennonite education promotes heroes who have learned to love the unlovely, help the helpless and to do good even to their enemies. We grew up hearing time and again the story of Dirk Willems and how he gave himself up to rescue the very man attempting to capture him. Or the story of Pastor Peter and the thatched roof. These were heroes who loved well. A number of years ago at SMBI, I heard my father-in-law tell the story of Annie Funk. She was born into a Mennonite home in 1874. As a teenager she spent some time in voluntary service among the black people in Tennessee and later among needy women in New Jersey. When she was 32, the church asked her to go to Janjgar, India, as a Mennonite missionary where she founded a girls' school. Six years later she received a telegram saying her mother was sick and that she should come home. Annie booked passage home to take care of her. She sailed to England where she was booked on the *SS Haverford* for the voyage to America. A coal strike delayed that ship and so she went aboard another—the *HMS Titanic*. You know that story. By some accounts Annie had found a place in a lifeboat but when she saw a mother with children, she gave up her place for them and perished in the waves. And so very possibly Annie died the way she lived—in loving, sacrificial work among the poor and needy. She was fighting evil by doing good. These are heroes that our children need to know. Otherwise they will grow up following more the example of George Washington, Paul Revere, and Daniel Boone than Dirk Willems, Aaron Rempel, and Annie Funk.

What are the dangers associated with

a Kingdom mentality? One very real possibility is a retreat into passivity rather than the active engagement of evil. We may very easily refuse to fight an enemy overseas but never sacrificially love the neighbor next door. We might give lip service to a world vision and not give of ourselves in our local communities. We may turn nonresistance into “If you leave us alone, we won’t be any bother.” When our world vision becomes this rotting carcass, our young people are understandably uncompelled. They may reasonably say, “At least the U.S. is doing something about the evil of terrorism.” On the other hand, a sacrificial call to actively engage the evil in the world through loving service will light a fire in our students that can make an eternal difference in the world.

Mennonite education emphasizes a world vision over a national vision.

Mennonite schools will have a continuing reason to exist not merely because we live differently but also because we think differently. The classroom is a primary tool for shaping the thinking of the next generation, but only if we intentionally set out to do that.

We have considered three ways that Mennonites think differently about the world:

1. Mennonite education emphasizes living over thinking—a Life Focus.
2. Mennonite education emphasizes the community over the individual—a Community Commitment.
3. Mennonite education emphasizes a world vision rather than a national vision—a Kingdom Mentality.

As we live our beliefs and think carefully about what those beliefs mean for education, we can continue to develop a vision for our schools, one that is energizing and compelling—a vision that defines our schools not merely by what we want to avoid but a vision for what we want to accomplish. May God help us. ■

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## **Study Shows Public Schools Indoctrinate Even Christians**

A researcher has revealed some disturbing trends regarding the sets of beliefs Christian students in public schools have about the most important issues in life.

Dan Smithwick is the founder and president of the Nehemiah Institute, a group that provides a biblical worldview testing and training service to Christian educators. He is the developer of what is called the “PEERS test,” a tool to assess the worldviews of young people, and says the majority of public school students from evangelical Christian homes consistently score in the “socialist” category on the test.

According to Smithwick, this outcome should come as no surprise, considering the fact that secular humanists are currently shaping America. He notes that socialism, a political and economic philosophy that commonly emphasizes government control and redistribution of wealth over personal responsibility and private ownership, often goes hand in hand with secularist attitudes and a generally non-biblical worldview.

Smithwick’s worldview test consists of a series of statements carefully designed to identify a person’s worldview in five categories: Politics, Economics, Education, Religion, and Social Issues (PEERS). Each statement is framed to either agree or disagree with a biblical principle.

When it comes to major moral and social issues, the Nehemiah Institute spokesman contends there is a dramatic difference in thinking between students in public schools and those in Christian schools. This is because, while Christian school students are generally taught curricula predicated on a biblical worldview, students educated in public schools, even when they grow up in Christian homes, tend to a very high degree to adopt the non-biblical and socialist worldviews of the secular humanists in control of their education. ■

—Reprinted from *Religion Today*

**SWORD AND TRUMPET**

# What Do They Think?

## Public opinion regarding conservative Anabaptists

Survey done by 11 Faith Builders Ministry Apprenticeship Students:  
*Irene Bontrager, Brenda Hershberger, Lydia Croutch, Sherilyn Troyer,  
Darrell Hershberger, Vincent Beiler, Lonnie Weaver, Keith Yoder, Robyn Soukup.*  
*Paper and Chart prepared by Irene, Darrell, and Sherilyn.*

What in the world did we think we were doing? We didn't know what we would experience as we set out on an unprecedented adventure on September 3, 2004. As Ministry Apprenticeship students from Faith Builders Educational Programs in Guys Mills, PA, we wanted to learn more about the perceptions people have of us as conservative Anabaptists. We designed a survey in an attempt to assess those perceptions. After an initial trial survey here in Guys Mills, PA, we headed to the tourist town of Shipshewana, IN. There we spent two days doing surveys in an indoor shopping area, out in the flea market, and along the street. In addition to conducting the survey, we wanted to develop skills and engage in experiences that would help us to reach out to the world in various ways and ultimately point them to Jesus. How were we to get people interested in talking with us? How could we work as a group and relate to people in a godly way? How should we present ourselves to those who did not know much about us unusual people? What did we have to offer to the world? Would we be able to answer their questions?

As diverse as we conservative Anabaptists are, we are alike in our sense of separation from the "outside world." Many of us have an "us and them" mentality, and we often wonder what they think of us. If we are living the way God intended people to live, then why are not more people living the same way? Maybe they think we are just another ridiculous fringe group, not worthy of serious attention or respect. Or maybe they believe us to be an exclu-

sive ethnic community not open to new members. We realize that public opinion should not be an ultimate guide to how we should live or appear, and that true discipleship does not always result in a positive response from those observing. However, we thought an awareness of public perception could still be helpful, so we set out to assess it. We returned with the following three dominant impressions: (1) The general public knows very little about conservative Anabaptists. (2) Their general impression, however, is positive. (3) Unfortunately, they see us as disconnected and reclusive.

In our survey we simply used the word *Mennonite* to identify ourselves, not attempting to explain that some of us were actually not technically Mennonites, but Beachy Amish. We hoped that the respondents would see us as conservative Anabaptists and answer accordingly. This is what happened for the most part, although too many of them confused us with Amish, and some believed us to be mainline Mennonites. We simply smiled at their ignorance and thanked them for their helpfulness. In this paper, we are attempting to describe public opinion toward conservative Anabaptist people in general. We are using the terms *Anabaptist* and *Mennonite* interchangeably to describe the broad conservative Anabaptist community (plain people).

The overwhelming response to our queries about Mennonites was, "I don't know much about Mennonites." Mennonites were a mystery to many of our survey participants. They could not provide us with much helpful information, but only

shook their heads in perplexity at many of our questions. We were frustrated at their ignorance, because we were expecting lots of revealing answers. However, we soon came to realize that this ignorance about who we are may be revealing in itself.

We talked to many people who came from areas where few or no Mennonites live, and it was understandable that these folks knew little. We were surprised, however, to learn that even those who lived in a community with all kinds of plain people seemed to know little about them. Almost one-third of our participants did not know whether Mennonites would accept other Christians into their churches. Professing Christian people were just as ignorant as nonbelievers. Why, we asked ourselves, is there so little knowledge of a group who is distinctive and visible?

Not only were people uninformed, but misinformed as well. Many held ideas about conservative Anabaptists that were simply wrong. The question “Why do you think Mennonite ladies wear the little white caps?” brought some surprising responses. The primary response was “I don’t know.” A close second was “Tradition.” Several thought it has something to do with marriage. Others guessed that it represents purity, is something commanded in the Old Testament, is to set us apart from the world, or has something to do with humility and holiness. One person oddly commented that he thought it was for the purpose of attracting men. Only a few correctly identified the little white caps as a prayer veiling.

It was encouraging to note that, although we were very different from them, the survey participants respected the Mennonites. When asked what they thought Mennonites think is most important in life, they most often mentioned God or faith. Family came in second, religion/morality was third, and tradition was a surprisingly low 8%. However, on question 7, “What would you say is the most outstanding characteristic of the Mennonites?,” “dress” was a significant answer.

One comment we received was, “Mennonites are the best missionaries in the world.” Another thought that came through was that we believe in a life of discipleship, following Christ with every part of our lives.

Many people believe that we are outstanding citizens who work hard and improve things. Mention was made about Mennonite disaster relief. People also mentioned the neatness and beauty of Mennonite houses, yards, and gardens. Someone thought that our most outstanding characteristic was the furniture we make.

Participants also felt that we seemed open and friendly as we related to them. We could sense that they appreciated being around us and felt comfortable with us. They felt free to ask questions about our beliefs, which we answered to the best of our ability.

People were not offended with the way we dressed; rather, they appreciated our modesty and were glad that we stood up for what we believed. We didn’t get the feeling that they thought we were backwards or stubborn because of our dress. Some people also thought that we *should* be isolated to a degree in order not to be influenced wrongly by the larger culture.

Though respected and admired, Mennonites are perceived by general society as inherently different. Not only are we seen as unusual in the things we do and the way we look, but we are also viewed as a distinct ethnic group with a common racial background. The Pennsylvania Dutch-speaking Amish are especially viewed this way, but the characterization extends to conservative Mennonites. People wonder if ethnic purity is one of our goals, asking if Mennonites are allowed to marry people from the world.

The people viewed our self-sufficiency and work ethic with a good deal of admiration, but it was not the “I-wish-I-could-be-like-that” admiration. It was admiration from a distance. While they admired the positive points, such as our work ethic, neatness, integrity, family values,

and simplicity, they did not see themselves functioning at that level. These positive traits, along with ethnic peculiarities, synthesize into a culture that is seen as impenetrable.

Most people we talked to seemed to think we were satisfied to remain secluded in our cultural enclaves, and were a bit surprised that we were actually out asking questions of them. They believed Mennonites to be a secluded people who dislike speaking with others about their faith. One church history buff we interviewed thought we are shy about expressing our faith so as to avoid persecution.

Although the majority of them thought we would accept other Christians into our churches, they believed the requirements for membership to be extremely difficult if not impossible. "Extreme dedication" was one person's take on what it took to become a Mennonite. Others correctly guessed that becoming a Mennonite would require a major lifestyle change. Most expressed little or no desire to become Anabaptist, although almost half of those interviewed said they found the Mennonite way of life attractive.

We asked them what we could do to be less isolated. Suggestions ranged from visiting other church and community activities to featuring ourselves in magazine and TV ads. However, most of them told us they did not think we should try to interact more with society in general. They like us the way we are—separate and distinct, comfortable and distant.

Just what is the place of conservative Anabaptism in today's world? How do we relate to an increasingly secular society? What kind of image are we projecting? As students with limited experience, we do not pretend to know all the answers. However, we have found that most people know surprisingly little about conservative Anabaptists, even those that lived near them. We were surprised and pleased to find a strongly positive public opinion toward conservative Anabaptists overall, but we were not thrilled to hear that we

are viewed as disconnected and reclusive. We wondered if this is how Christ's church should appear. We do not know. Think with us.

### ***Other Interesting Perceptions***

**On Wealth**—Someone said that he thought we were too wealthy and exploited our workers. He had seen some businessmen who were too shrewd, and noticed a transaction that he didn't appreciate.

Someone else thought that although some Mennonites become millionaires in their businesses, he didn't have a problem with it. He and other people didn't think that Mennonites were materialistic.

**On Transportation**—One person said that we drive nice cars. Several people told us that some of us drive too fast—"show them where the brake pedal is!" One boy commented that his Mennonite neighbors with the big pickups "think they own the road." And some people who were confused about our mode of transportation mentioned that we should do away with horse labor—"one skinny little horse pulling five or six people." Another thought that we should put diapers on the horses.

**On Heart Matters**—Most importantly, we had some thought-provoking and encouraging times that caused us to think and evaluate what we believe. Someone perceived that what was most important to us was preparing for eternity. We were reminded to be aware of legalism and to be careful that we don't think ourselves better than non-Mennonites. Someone advised us to make sure all people [in our churches] have the option to change.

What made it all worthwhile was having even one meaningful encounter with someone. If we were able to pray with someone or to bring encouragement to him or her, we knew we had experienced an appointment scheduled by God. We praise Him for His faithful leading and caring for us.

*Note: This survey was not conducted in a statistically scientific way. The results we gathered do not necessarily represent nationwide public opinion.*

Public Opinion Survey Results									
1. When you hear the word <i>Mennonite</i> what is your initial reaction?									
	Positive	Neutral			Negative				
	70%	29%			1%				
2. Have you ever attended a Mennonite Church service?									
	No	Yes			Yes				
	83%	17%			17%				
3. Is the Mennonite way of life attractive to you?									
	Yes	No			Somewhat				
	44%	42%			12%				
4. Do you see the Mennonites as an isolated people?									
	No	Yes			Somewhat				
	57%	35%			8%				
5. Do you think Mennonites would accept other Christians into their churches?									
	Yes	Don't Know			No				
	63%	29%			8%				
6. What do you guess it would take to become a Mennonite?									
	Accept Beliefs	Don't Know			By Birth				
	66%	25%			9%				
7. What would you say is the most outstanding characteristic of the Mennonites?									
	Integrity	Faith	Dress	Work Ethic					
	18%	17%	17%	15%					
	Simplicity	Community	Family						
	15%	10%	8%						
8. What would you guess the Mennonites think is most important in life?									
	Faith/Relationship With God	Family							
	40%	27%							
	Religion/Moral Values	Tradition	Don't Know						
	23%	8%	2%						
9. Do you have any religious affiliation?									
	Protestant	Catholic	Non-Religious	Other Religion					
	76%	18%	5%	1%					
Survey conducted by Faith Builders Educational Programs Ministry Apprenticeship Program Students.									
168 surveys: September 7, 8, 2004: Shipshewana, Indiana.									

# “Work, Who Needs It?”

by J. Mark Horst

As you read the title above it would be interesting to know what your first thoughts were? In speech we hear the tone of voice and we see the facial expression. These give us clues to the meaning of what is being said. In print, all we have are words on a page that can be taken almost anyway you choose. Until you read farther.

Years ago while working in a large factory, one of my co-workers, a non-Christian, wore a T-shirt with these words: “I don’t need this job, just the pay!” Unfortunately, some Christian co-workers who never would’ve worn that kind of shirt, had the same attitude.

I believe the answer to the question of the title is, everyone who is able. Even those who cannot do much can do something. Show me a person who has nothing meaningful to do and I’ll show you a person without purpose, prone to complaining, and a negative view of self.

In Genesis 2:2 we read that “God rested on the seventh day from all his *work* which he had made.” Since God is perfect, and since He created a perfect world, and since He created a perfect man and gave him work to do in it, we conclude that the ability to work is a gift from God.

God created Adam and placed him in the Garden of Eden to “dress and keep it.” He also entrusted Adam with the responsibility of naming all the animals. These were Adam’s work in the Garden and they were not wearisome.

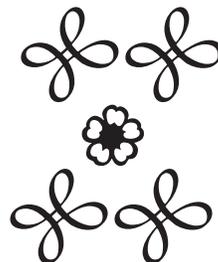
Work only became physically exhausting after mankind sinned. The weeds, the thorns, the briars, the hardened ground, these were part of the pain of discipline. They were a constant reminder, the smooth words of the devil notwithstanding, of the awful consequences of sin.

The daily weariness that accompanies our work should be a continual reminder that our stay here on earth is only temporary. This is not what God intended for us in the beginning. So, in His mercy, death entered the picture to give us hope for the future. How poor the person who believes this is all there is and devotes himself to the accumulation of things, only to leave it all behind!

And lest you think your work is unimportant, ponder these words from Martin Luther: “*The maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of God just as much as the monk who prays—not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship.*” So the wise man Solomon could say, “In all labor there is profit. . . .”

I believe work will not cease when we enter the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Read Matthew 19:27-29; Luke 19:12-27; and other verses. Toil and pain will be gone, but work will remain. ■

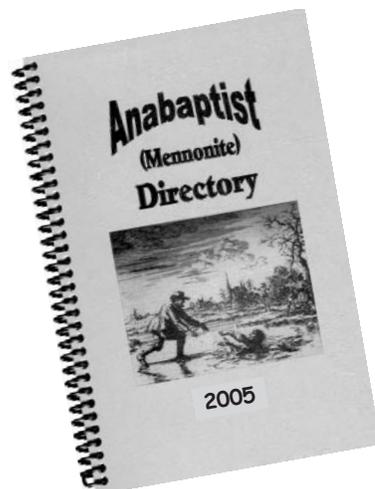
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