



MAP ♦ P.O. Box 128 ♦ 575 US Highway 250 ♦ Savannah, OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ September 2018

Beliefs of our Fathers

Part 1

This begins a study on the beliefs of our forefathers, based largely on the *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* from 1632. We will discuss different doctrines from the Dordrecht Confession and the Bible. Do we still believe today what our forefathers believed? The first section, presented here, tells some of the history of the Anabaptists.

HISTORY OF THE OLD ORDERS

By Dr. Ken Rathbun

In the sixteenth century, during the European Reformation, many people held religious beliefs that did not fit into the Catholic or Reformer molds. Several religious leaders emerged in Zurich, Switzerland, and nearby areas in the 1520s, where they won converts to their point of view. Scholars and historians often give various labels to these groups. However, in that important decade, names and labels which are familiar to us now were not clearly defined. "Anabaptist" was one such label.

People often refer to any and every group that was not Catholic or Protestant during the Reformation as Anabaptist, whether or not that group believed the views

common to true Anabaptists. Because we want to look at what our forefathers believed, we now offer a brief sketch of some of their history. This brief overview will focus primarily on their beginnings.

Reformer Ulrich Zwingli

In January 1525, a momentous event took place in Zurich. The Reformer Ulrich Zwingli had worked for several years to overthrow the Catholic Church and replace it with his own vision of a state-enforced reformation movement. He criticized papal authority and warned people of the uselessness of earning their way to heaven through honoring relics, participating in religious processions, and visiting holy sites. He taught that salvation came through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Eager young men flocked around Zwingli to study the Bible and theology. They believed in justification (to be made right or declared innocent) by faith alone for their salvation. As they learned Bible study methods from their teacher, these men began to question the widespread tradition of baptizing babies. Eventually, this concern caused divisions within the town.

With Zwingli's encouragement, the city council voted in mid-January 1525 to require infant baptism of all births. He thought it was important that a person be "born" into the state church and that God's church should include all the people in a given area. However, he also believed that the church is born of the Word of God, and that Christ alone is its head. In direct opposition to this command to baptize babies, the men in Zwingli's Bible study met one evening to baptize each other as believers. This new group became known as Anabaptists, which means "re-baptizers."

Those who participated in that historic night (January 21, 1525) all suffered persecution, exile, and slander for their belief. Some were even killed. That first Anabaptist baptism took place in the home of Felix Manz. George Blaurock, Conrad Grebel, and others also participated.

Felix Manz was later drowned in Zurich for his faith (a cruel irony for those who professed believer's water baptism). George Blaurock was beaten in Zurich, later exiled, and was eventually burned at the stake in Austria. Conrad Grebel died of the plague after a brief preaching

ministry.

The questioning of infant baptism as a means of salvation came from reading and studying the Bible. This new group's findings gave them the courage to act upon their beliefs and to go against both the religious and civil authorities. Other people in the region also found the biblical arguments for believer's baptism logical and convincing.

The topic of baptism was an issue within a wider area of disagreement – that of one's view of the church. The Reformers had a different understanding of the church than these Anabaptists. The Anabaptists believed that a church should be free from the control of the government and that church membership should be voluntary, not based on the baptism of an innocent infant. They were also against persecuting people for their beliefs. While these ideas might not seem earth-shattering to us today, many who accepted these views in the sixteenth century suffered horribly.

Other Reformers

Michael Sattler also contributed to the founding of Anabaptism. He was highly respected by several Reformers in Strasbourg, even though he was exiled from Zurich for his Anabaptist beliefs. In February of 1527, he authored the first statement of distinctives (specific beliefs characteristic of their group) in Switzerland. This statement of beliefs was called the Schleithem Brotherly Union.

Many Anabaptists adopted this confession, which was more commonly known as the Schleithem Confession. It

promoted believer's baptism, church discipline practiced by the local church, a memorial view of the Lord's Supper, holy living for church members, qualifications of pastors, non-resistance (no participation in the military), and the forbidding of making oaths. In May of 1527, Sattler was caught, tried, tortured, and burned for his faith.

Another champion of believer's baptism was **Balthasar Hubmaier**. This highly-educated former priest wrote several influential books against infant baptism and against persecuting people for their beliefs. His arguments were difficult for the Reformers to answer, and he is well known for ending his books with the classic phrase, "Truth is immortal." He was tortured in Zurich and later burned at the stake in Austria in 1528. The loss of such stable leadership directly affected later events.

Other beliefs and ideas regarding how to reform or break from the Catholic Church came from non-Protestants during the 1520s and later. If any idea united these groups (and it is difficult to find one), it was the idea of a church separate from the control of the state. Crucial to all non-Catholic and non-Protestant groups was what they viewed as their ultimate, or final, authority. The Anabaptists highly valued the New Testament. Other groups preferred the Old Testament. Additional groups, known as Spiritualists, valued the Bible, yet placed a greater emphasis on revelation received from God.

Religious leaders in that day often gathered followers by their forceful preaching. More than a few leaders claimed to have received prophetic

messages predicting a final battle and the coming of Christ. Strasbourg (then in Germany), and later, Münster, were each identified at one time or another by one of these leaders as the New Jerusalem.

In 1534, one of these groups forcefully seized control of Münster and proclaimed it the capital of Christ's kingdom. After much violence within the city, a combined Lutheran and Catholic army retook the city and brutally executed the leaders.

Though Anabaptism would long be remembered and harshly criticized for the events at Münster, it remains a fact of history that Anabaptists made non-resistance and non-participation in the military one of their distinctive key characteristics. (Mennonites and Amish are one of the largest Christian non-resistance groups in the world today.)

Menno Simons

During this same time, a Catholic priest in northern Holland with an uneasy conscience gained fame by preaching against obvious Catholic abuses. This man's name was Menno Simons. After learning about Anabaptism and studying the Bible, he became convinced that infant baptism was wrong. He struggled, though, with separating from his church and joining the Anabaptists.

After seeing many Anabaptists (including some of his own family members) suffer, he took compassion on these scattered, leaderless groups. He knew the way forward would be treacherous, lonely, and difficult, but in 1536 he gave up his secure position and joined the Anabaptists.

This publishing work is registered as a charitable organization in the USA and is supported through freewill offerings. We welcome your articles, testimonies, and questions. We reserve the right to edit or decline any material and are not responsible for the return of any articles.

Since our beginning in 2000, many people have written to us, asking to be added to our mailing list, while others have sent us names of their friends and family members. We think it's important for us to tell you that the cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.50 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come alongside us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit, as well as highly appreciated. In order to continue receiving *The Amish Voice*, please keep us informed of any changes to your address. Thank you. —Joe Keim

Menno lived a life filled with constant travail and harassment, which included hiding and escaping from religious authorities. Amid these hardships, he provided essential leadership that held the Dutch and North-German Anabaptists together. His writings revealed a desire to help his extended flock and showed a concern for church discipline. The impact of his ministry is demonstrated by the fact that eventually many Anabaptist groups in locations far from Menno's area of ministry were called Mennonites. However, Menno held an unusual view of the origin of Christ's flesh, and it was a view that his later followers did not hold.

Anabaptism grew in strength in Holland, North and South Germany, Switzerland, and Moravia. The only effective way of limiting its impact was through persecution. The Catholics, especially, killed many, as *Martyrs Mirror* recounts. The Reformers' common method of exiling Anabaptists from their regions frequently resulted in the death of the exiled one, as the Catholics often burned the Anabaptists fleeing the Reformers' territories.

Anabaptism continued in Switzerland, but persecution continued. Some Anabaptists relocated north to the Rhine River Valley, where they enjoyed greater freedom for a time.

Jakob Ammann

In 1693, a division arose among the Swiss Anabaptists that is still apparent today. An elder named Jakob Ammann expressed dissatisfaction with the way the brethren lived out their faith. Ammann wanted to see stricter separation from the world in dedicated disciples of Jesus, as well as church discipline with the practice of shunning, even for family members. He also expected obedience to the 1632 *Dordrecht Confession of Faith*, which

included foot washing as an ordinance of the church, which the Swiss congregations had not observed.

The conflict raged not only in Switzerland, but also in the Rhine Valley, including southern Germany and Alsace (located in France). After much discussion, the conflict remained unresolved, and the stricter Anabaptists took the name of their leader, becoming known as the Amish.

Persecution by governmental authorities during this time never ceased. With news of available land in the New World and



elsewhere, immigration seemed to offer relief from oppression, and the thought of relocating interested many Anabaptist groups. In some regions, emigration was actually forced upon them by the rulers.

Relocation

While moving to a new land offered freedom to follow their beliefs, relocation also brought challenges about how to preserve their identity in these new settings. Concerns about religious beliefs, culture, appearance, and language were important to both Mennonites and Amish. The extent to which these issues caused problems differed among the various groups.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, many Mennonite and Amish groups travelled to North America to start a new life. Many settled in Pennsylvania, though some continued westward as farmland became less available. Some settled in Ontario, as well. Both the midwestern United States and Canada's western provinces saw many Anabaptist settlements.

Beginning in the 1760s, some Mennonite groups in Germany and Switzerland travelled east into Russia. They enjoyed a long and often profitable existence until the rise of communism in the 1920s. When that happened, many tried to leave for North and South America.

The stricter Mennonite and Amish groups faced a number of challenges when relocating. One of the challenges dealt with the extent to which they were to apply the principles of strict discipleship to Christ. These groups saw conformity to the world as directly opposed to faithfulness to Christ. Standards of how this loyalty to Christ proved itself in response to technology and industry caused conflict over time. They valued simplicity, separation from worldliness, and the daily practice of their faith. Specific rules demonstrating these concerns were classified in their *Ordnung*, a set of guidelines for life and conduct. Over time, however, not everyone agreed on the everyday application of these principles.

In the 1870s, the Amish in the United States became divided, and the stricter among them formed the Old Order Amish. The remaining progressive-minded Amish joined together as Amish Mennonites. In the early twentieth century, more and more groups united, and the Amish Mennonites became

Continued
Next Page

known simply as Mennonites. Some joined the Mennonite Conference churches. Today, the Old Order Amish maintain their distinctions with practices including social shunning, foot washing, strictness in dress and appearance, and shunning of technology. The Old Order Mennonites formed during the late nineteenth century, and they, too, favored traditional forms of living and limited use of technology.

Emigration didn't always mean freedom in every sense for the Amish or Mennonites. Though they enjoyed church membership based on the baptism of believers, the liberty to practice their beliefs raised other issues that proved

difficult. Neighbors and local authorities did not always accept these German-speaking people, and at the national level, the United States government did not always embrace the non-resistance of these pacifist churches. This difficulty continued at least through World War I. The laws regarding the education of their children also caused difficulty, especially in the twentieth century, for those in the United States and Canada.

Throughout the latter nineteenth century in Europe, the Amish trend of merging with the Mennonites was apparent. In 1937, the last Amish church united with a Mennonite congregation.

In the twentieth century, the Old Order Amish and Mennonites in North America

faced the challenge of disunity from within. Groups formed that favored greater use of technology and less strictness in their personal lives. Despite these conflicts, the Old Order Amish experienced a strong growth rate (which continues today), and the retention rate of children who decide to receive baptism and remain in the Old Order is extremely high.

The future of the Old Order Amish and Mennonites will be somewhat determined by whether or not they maintain their distinct plain appearance and customs, and more importantly, whether or not each generation will maintain a clean heart for the Lord and seek the new birth by faith, as Jesus explained in John 3.

End

Dreams, Visions, and God's Word

—Marvin Miller

The article I am writing is in response to the eighth article in David Wickey's eight-part series entitled "Buy of Me Gold Tried in the Fire."

I was glad to see that Mr. Wickey placed a high priority on Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and the church. Because God knows that we are spiritually frail, He has given us these wonderful tools, as well as other great possessions. In addition to appreciating the things that Mr. Wickey prioritized, I was also encouraged by the obvious trust he places in Christ alone for salvation.

Psalm 40:2 says, *He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.* God has given every Christian talents and gifts that He intends us to use to serve Him and others. Mr. Wickey has a gift for writing and is familiar with Scripture.

Unfortunately, at times, our strong points can also lead to some of our weaknesses. The devil knows this truth; he knows the human race like a mechanic knows cars, and he has had thousands of years to perfect his methods. He knows where we are likely to fail, and he uses our inherent weaknesses as weapons against us. The devil doesn't care what method he uses, but rather, he only cares that his methods are successful.

Even after salvation, our sinful flesh tends to plunge us into the miry clay of the confusion and evil that we were saved from. We cannot lose our salvation, but we will still willfully or involuntarily slip; no one is exempt from failing from time to time.

Thankfully, the Bible is steady, secure, and black and white; it is not goofy, nebulous, or barbaric—even when dealing with the deepest and finest of points. There are parts of the Bible we don't understand due to our limited wisdom. God, in His mercy, knew that we needed a common denominator and reference. He knew that we needed a checkpoint when dealing with our own spiritual frailty. He knew that we needed a weapon to fight the devil, and a comfort in times of trouble.

Colossians 3:16 says, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* This verse sums up our need for Scripture and a local church that is led by a pastor called of God. The Bible is the truth we rally around and seek to study in order to ensure that we are on the right path.

While I was glad to see so many Scripture references in Wickey's article, I feel that the main emphasis of his article was on dreams and visions. I do not deny that God could use dreams to speak to us as individuals; He certainly uses many things such as circumstances and events. However, when we take these experiences and try to teach others what we have learned, we sometimes cause confusion in our audiences if we aren't careful.

First Corinthians 14:8-11 says, *For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So*

Continued on Page 8

Sermons and Testimonies over the Phone

Call in and listen to a variety of topics that covers things such as family, parenting, testimonies, and biblical teaching. Pick up

Dial-in Number: (641) 715-3800

Access Code: 478499 #

the phone, dial the number, and add the access code. Listen to a whole new set of messages every month!

September

The Call of Faith, Parts 1 and 2

Charles Stanley explains that Abraham's life was characterized by his faith. When God called Abraham, he left his home and stepped out into the unknown without hesitation. Discover how Abraham's lifestyle of faith shows us how to trust God for everything.

Exploring Your Love Styles

In a discussion based on their book *How We Love*, counselors **Milan and Kay Yerkovich** join Focus on the Family to outline five primary love styles and explain how each shapes behaviors, beliefs, and expectations in marriage.

How to Deal with Difficult People, Parts 1 and 2

Chip Ingram discusses ten keys to experiencing life in a supernatural community.

October

The Call of Faith, Parts 3 and 4

Charles Stanley explains that when Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, wrongfully jailed, and repeatedly forgotten, he didn't know those obstacles were all a part of God's great plan for the nation of Israel. So, don't despair when unexplained hardship strikes. God is doing something

great for you and for His kingdom. Just stick to God's plan for your life.

Protecting Your Child From Sexual Abuse

Justin and Lindsey Holcomb joins Focus on the Family to offer practical advice for how parents can safeguard their children from sexual abuse in a discussion based on their book, *God Made All of Me: A Book to Help Children Protect Their Bodies*.

Overcoming the Pain of Your Past, Parts 1 and 2

Chip Ingram discusses getting unstuck: Overcoming the Pain of Your Past, and Overcoming a Warped Self-Image.

November

The Call of Faith, Parts 5 and 6

Charles Stanley teaches that Moses, David, and Peter were ordinary men who lived extraordinary lives. Their abundant faith in a great God set them apart and empowered them to accomplish what seemed impossible. You can choose to trust God fully, too, for He will use anyone who desires to follow Him.

Discovering God's Plan for Your Parenting, Parts 1 and 2

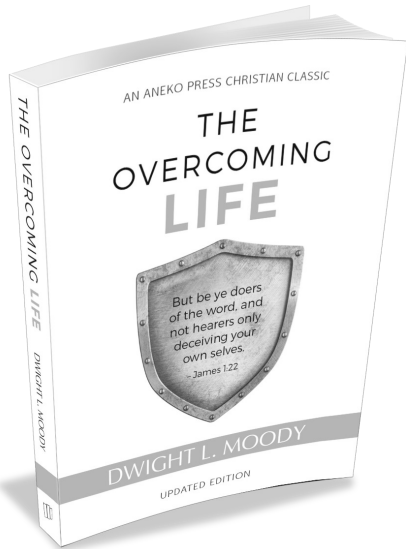
Author Gary Thomas joins Focus on the Family and explains how parenting can lead to spiritual transformation in a discussion based on his book, *Sacred Parenting: How Raising Children Shapes Our Souls*.

Contact The Amish Voice

- 1. Comments and Questions:** If you have any comments, prayer requests, suggestions, ideas, or questions, or if you want to send us an article or your testimony to be printed in the *Amish Voice*.
- 2. Printing and Postage:** If you enjoy the *Amish Voice* and would like to help us with the cost of printing and postage.

- 3. Friends and Family:** If you know of others who might benefit from the *Amish Voice*.

Contact us at: The Amish Voice, P.O. Box 128
Savannah, OH 44874, **Office:** (419) 962-1515



Continued from the last issue.

Confession of Sin

True contrition will lead us to confess our sins. I believe nine-tenths of the trouble in our Christian life comes from failing to do this. We try to hide and cover up our sins, but there is very little confession of them. Someone said, “Unconfessed sin in the soul is like a bullet in the body.”

If you are not experiencing the power of God in your life, you may have unconfessed sin or something in your life that needs straightening out. There is no amount of psalm-singing, attending religious meetings, praying, or reading your Bible that is going to cover up anything of that kind. It must be confessed. If I am too proud to confess, I shouldn’t expect mercy from God or answers to my prayers. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy* (Proverbs 28:13).

He may be a man in the pulpit, a priest behind the altar, or a king on the throne, but covered-up sin has consequences. Man has been trying to cover up sin for six thousand years. Adam tried it and failed. Moses tried it when he buried the Egyptian he killed, but he failed. *Be sure your sin will find you out* (Numbers 32:23).

You can bury your sin as deep as you like, but it will keep coming to the surface if it has not been blotted out by the Son of God. What man has failed to do for six thousand years, you and I had better give up trying to do.

There are three ways of confessing sin. All sin is against God and must be confessed to Him. Some sins I never have to confess to anyone on earth. If the sin has been between myself and God, I may confess it alone in my closet. I don’t even have to whisper it in the ear of any mortal. *The son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son* (Luke 15:21). *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight* (Psalm 51:4).

However, if I have wronged someone, and he knows that I have wronged him, I must confess that sin not only to God, but also to that person. If I have too much pride to confess it to him, I don’t even need to go to God. I may pray and weep, but it won’t do any good.

First, confess to that person. Then, go to God and see how quickly He will hear you and send peace. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift* (Matthew 5:23-24). That is the Bible way.

There is another class of sins that must be confessed publicly. If I have been known as a blasphemer, a drunkard, or a shameless sinner, and I repent of my sins, I owe the public a confession. The confession should be as public as the transgression. Many people will say something mean about another in the presence of others, and then try to patch it up by going to that person privately. The confession should be made so that all who heard the transgression can hear it.

We are far too concerned about confessing other people’s sins. If we are interested in true repentance, we will have as much as we can handle to look after our own. When a man or woman gets a good look into God’s looking glass, he doesn’t find fault with other people as much as he does with himself.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Thank God for the gospel. If there is any sin in your life, make up your mind to confess it and be forgiven. Don’t have any cloud between you and God. Know you have a clear title to the mansion Jesus has gone to prepare for you.

Conversion

Confession leads to true conversion. There is no conversion at all until these three steps have been taken.

The word conversion means two things. We say a person is converted when he is born again. But it also has a different meaning in the Bible.

Peter said, *Repent ye therefore, and be converted* (Acts 3:19). Paul said that he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but preached to Jews and Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God (Acts 26).

A worker for God long ago once said, “Every man is born with his back to God. Repentance is a change of one’s course. It is right about face.”

Sin is a turning away from God. It is aversion from God and conversion to the world. True repentance means conversion to God and aversion from the world. When there is true contrition, the heart is broken for sin. When there is true conversion, the heart is broken from sin. We leave the old life and are transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Wonderful, isn’t it?

Unless our repentance includes this conversion, it’s not worth much. If a

person continues in sin, it is proof of an idle profession. It is like pumping away at the ship's pumps without stopping the leaks.

Solomon said, *If they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin . . .* (1 Kings 8:35). Prayer and confession would be ineffective while they continued in sin. Let us listen to God's call and forsake the old, wicked way. Let us return to the Lord. He will have mercy on us and pardon us.

If you have never turned to God, turn now. I disagree with the idea that it takes six months, or six weeks, or six hours to be converted. It doesn't take you very long to turn around, does it? If you know you are wrong, then turn around.

Confession of Christ

If you are converted, the next step is to confess it openly. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Romans 10:9-10).

Confession of Christ is the completion of the work of true repentance. We owe it to the world, to our fellow Christians, and to ourselves. He died to redeem us. Should we be ashamed or afraid to confess Him? Religion as a concept – as a doctrine – holds little interest for the world, but what people can say from personal experience always has weight.

I remember taking part in meetings where the truth was met with resistance. Bitter and reproachful things were being exchanged.

One day, one of the most prominent men in the room rose and said, "I want it to be known that I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. If there is any condemnation to be cast on His cause, I'm prepared to take my share of it." It went through the

meeting like an electric current, and a blessing came at once to his soul and to the souls of others.

You've got to make a public confession when you accept Christ. You must confess Him in your place of business and in your family. Let the whole world know that you are on His side.

Many are willing to accept Christ, but they are not willing to confess it. Many are too focused on the lions and the bears in the way. Now, my friends, the devil's mountains are only made of smoke. He can throw a straw into your path and make a mountain of it.

He says, "You can't confess to your family. You'll break down. You can't tell your co-worker. He'll laugh at you." But when you accept Christ, you will have the power to confess Him.

There was a young man in the West who pondered his soul's salvation. One afternoon in his office, he said, "I will accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior."

He went home and told his wife (who was a nominal professor of religion) that he made up his mind to serve Christ, and added, "After supper tonight I'm going to take our company into the living room and erect a family altar."

"Well," said his wife, "you know some of the gentlemen who are coming to tea are skeptics, and they are older than you. Don't you think you'd better wait until after they leave, or go into the kitchen and have your first prayer with the servants?"

The young man thought for a few moments and said, "I've asked Jesus Christ into my house for the first time, and I will take Him into the best room, not into the kitchen." So he called his friends into the sitting room. There was a little mocking, but he read and prayed. That man became chief justice of the United States Supreme Court. *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every*

one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Romans 1:16).

A young man enlisted and was sent to his regiment. The first night he was in the barracks with about fifteen other young men who passed the time playing cards and gambling. Before going to sleep, he fell on his knees and prayed. They cursed at him, taunted him, and threw their boots at him.

So it went on the next night and the next. Finally, the young man went and told the chaplain what took place and asked what he should do.

"Well," said the chaplain, "you aren't at home now, and the other men have just as much right in the barracks as you have. It makes them mad to hear you pray. The Lord will hear you just as well if you say your prayers in bed and don't provoke them."

For weeks, the chaplain didn't see the young man. Finally, he saw him and asked, "By the way, did you take my advice?"

"I did, for two or three nights." "How did it work?"

"Well," said the young man, "I felt like a whipped hound. So the third night I got out of bed, knelt down, and prayed."

"Well," asked the chaplain, "how did that work?"

The young soldier answered, "We now have a prayer meeting every night. Three have been converted, and we are praying for the rest."

I am so tired of weak Christianity. Let's be all-out for Christ. If the world wants to call us fools, let them do it. It's only for a little while. The crowning day is coming.

Thank God for the privilege we have of confessing Christ.

This article was taken from the book
***The Overcoming Life* — by D. L. Moody.** To order this book, send \$7.00 and your address to Aneko Press, PO Box 652, Abbotsford, WI 54405.

Dreams, Visions, and God's Word, Cont. from page 4

likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

In 2 Peter 1:18-20, the Bible clearly states that Scripture was to be trusted even more than the vision Peter had while with Jesus: *And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*

Peter is reminding his listeners of his own vision when he was with Jesus. He then states that Scripture is better than visions, since visions are a private interpretation of what God said. Scripture is “more sure” because it can always be tested with other parts of scripture. Visions, on the other hand, cannot be compared and tested, because they are not part of Scripture.

Some personal experiences are not good teaching points. Rather, there are many verses that are more easily understood and are better methods of teaching than dreams. To abandon the solid tree trunk of the Bible as a reference point and to go out on the slender limb of a dream or vision of one man is dangerous. If our pastor got up in church and instead of a Scripture text, shared about a dream he had recently, I am sure we would all be concerned. Should we not have the same standard when learning from a written article?

The early church was warned to use discretion with their spiritual gifts among unbelievers, lest they be thought crazy. We are trying to reach souls for Christ, not cause more confusion (see 1 Corinthians 14:23). I do NOT believe that all spiritual gifts are alive today, since we have the Spirit and Bible to lead us. I am simply using these verses as a parallel principle as I think it applies.

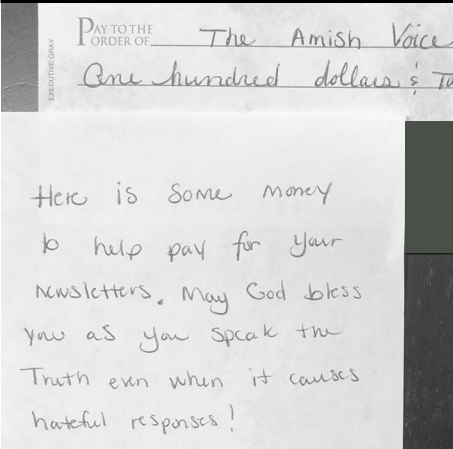
I am a young man and do not wish to be disrespectful to my elders, since the Bible requires me to have a high respect for age. However, I respectfully but flatly disagree with Wickey's eighth article, in the sense that the emphasis was on dreams and visions and not on the solid rock of Scripture.

With all due respect,

Marvin J. Miller

End

Thank You!



We at the *Amish Voice* are grateful for letters and gifts like the one pictured above. It is because of generosity like this that we can continue to send out the *Amish Voice*.

Thank you to those who read it, give to help, and pray for us. We pray for you, too, that you will continue seeking God and growing nearer to Him.

Total Trust

—By David Wilkerson

When I speak of total trust in Christ, I mean not only in His saving power, but also in His keeping power. We have to trust His Spirit to keep us and conform us to the likeness of Christ.

At one time you were alienated, cut off from God by wicked works. What good work did you do to make things right with Him? None! Nobody has ever been able to make or keep himself holy. We are brought into Christ's holiness by faith alone, as we trust in what God's Word says: *Be ye holy; for I am holy* (1 Peter 1:16).

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel (Colossians 1:21–23).

Note the phrase *If ye continue in the faith*. Jesus is saying, "Continue trusting in Me, living by faith. I will present you as clean, faultless, and holy before the Father."

Beloved, this is all the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost. As the Spirit empowers you to mortify the deeds of the flesh, He will lead you by His conviction.

There are no degrees of holiness, only degrees of maturity in Christ. You can be a new Christian and still be absolutely holy in Jesus. So do not compare! It is foolish to measure yourself against someone you picture as being “holy.” We are all measured by one standard—the holiness of Christ. If we are in Him, His holiness is ours in equal measure.

Never again look at another Christian leader and say, “Oh, I wish I were as holy as he is!” You may not have that person's discipline or his prayer life, and you may struggle more often than he does, but he is no more accepted by the Father than you.

We hear a lot about forgiveness. There are many books, articles, and quotes about what forgiveness is or isn't. I'm about to add my understanding of it to the big pile. Some of the ideas out there about it are completely false, and I'd like to address some of those.

What Forgiveness Is

Forgiveness is an outpouring of my Father's forgiveness for me.

True Forgiveness happens only when you realize and accept God's forgiveness, love, and mercy for yourself. You cannot

forgive if you haven't experienced His forgiveness. If the only reason you are forgiving someone is because "God won't forgive me if I don't", then it's not forgiveness. It's selfishness.

Forgiveness is pleading to God for mercy for myself and the person who hurt me.

When Jesus forgave you as He hung on the cross, He asked God to have mercy on you. When you realize how merciful God has been to you, you will want to extend His mercy to others.

Forgiveness is willingly paying the consequences for the sin of the person who hurt me.

You need to accept responsibility for your reaction to the pain the person caused you. Face it head on. You are "paying" for it already – why not do so cheerfully and deliberately? This is where the power that person had over you is lost. When you choose to deal with the lies that developed because of the pain you experienced, you are "paying cheerfully" for what was done to you.

Forgiveness is a choice that only I can make.

Forgiveness is not a feeling. Choosing to forgive is choosing life. Choosing bitterness is choosing death.

What Forgiveness is Not

Forgiveness is not forgetting.

I'm sure you've heard it before – Forgive and Forget. The Bible never tells you to forgive and forget. It does say that God forgets your sins when you confess them. I'm not sure that forgetting is even



possible in every situation. What about the person who lives as a paralytic because of drunk driver? He's faced with his handicap every day. What about a girl who was raped? Or a family who lost a child because of a medical malpractice?

Forgiveness is not a one-time deal.

When Jesus answered Peter's question about how often to forgive his brother, Jesus' implied reply was "every time." I don't think Jesus was talking about 490 different incidents. Instead, He was saying that every time you are reminded of an incident, forgive right away. It doesn't matter whether that is ten times a day, or one hundred times a day. Forgive.

Forgiveness is not trust.

Forgiveness is something you freely give to the person who hurt you, while trust is earned.

Forgiveness is not possible without Jesus.

The world talks about forgiveness, but in reality it is a counterfeit for the real thing. You cannot truly forgive if you haven't met Jesus. Without Him, it's completely impossible.

But how?

If you are bound by bitterness, there is a way out! You don't have to live as a victim any longer!

The truth is Jesus loves you. He cares about you. His arms are open for you today just as they were when He was hanging on the cross asking His Father to forgive you! He wants to redeem every nook and cranny of your life. He's been waiting for you for years!

You don't have to feel fuzzy feelings toward the person who hurt you to forgive. If you are having trouble even "wanting" to forgive, ask God to give you the "want to." Believe me, He will!

Then talk to Jesus.

"Jesus, today I choose to forgive [name] for the pain he/she caused me when he/she (what they did to you). I choose to forgive him/her and release him/her. I don't want to hold this against him/her any longer. Please have mercy on him/her! I will pay for his/her sin. Will you forgive me, Jesus, for being so focused on myself and bitter toward him/her?"

Freedom and life are yours when you choose to forgive. And to refuse is eternal death. Refusing to forgive affects those around you too. It's that serious.

End

The Commandments of Jesus (2 of 2)

—Compiled by J. S. McConnell

Jesus said, *If a man love me, he will keep my words* (John 14:23). What are His words, or commands? Many of them are listed below. Read them and see how well you are doing. Do you love Him? Are you keeping His commands?

COVETOUSNESS

1. "Take heed and beware of covetousness" Lk. 12:15
2. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" Mt. 6:19-20
3. "Ye pay tithe...and not leave (them) undone" Mt.23:23
4. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" Mt. 5:42
5. "Give alms of such things as ye have" Lk. 11:41
6. "When thou makest a dinner...call not thy friends, nor thy brethren...but...call the poor" Lk. 14:12-13
7. "Make yourselves friends of the mammon..." Lk. 16:9

HYPOCRISY

1. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" Lk. 12:1
2. "Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes" Lk. 20:46-47
3. "Do not ye after their works" Mt. 23:2-3
4. "Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise" Jn. 2:16
5. "Do not your alms before men, to be seen of them" Mt. 6:1-4
6. "When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites...to be seen of men...enter into thy closet and pray in secret" Mt. 6:5-6
7. "When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast" Mt. 6:16-18

MEEKNESS

1. "Take my yoke upon you...for I am meek and lowly in heart" Mt. 11:29
2. "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them...but it shall not be so among you" Mt. 20:25-26
3. "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" Mk. 10:43-44
4. "Be not ye called Rabbi" Mt. 23:8
5. "Sit not down in the highest room" Lk. 14:8-11
6. "Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you" Lk. 10:20
7. "Say, we are unprofitable servants" Lk. 17:10

OUR LOVE TO THE BRETHREN

1. "Love one another as I have loved you" Jn. 15:12
2. "Despise not one of these little ones" Mt. 18:10-14
3. "Have peace one with another ... and be reconciled to thy brother" Mt. 5:23-24; Mk. 9:50
4. "If thy brother...trespass against thee go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" Mt. 18:15-17
5. "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times a day...thou shalt forgive him" Lk. 17:3-4; Mt. 18:21-22
6. "Judge not according to appearance... first cast the beam out of thine own eye" Jn. 7:24; Mt. 7:1-5
7. "Condemn not" Lk. 6:37

PERFECT LOVE

1. "Be ye therefore perfect" Mt. 5:48
2. "Sell that ye have and give alms" Mt. 19:21
3. "Love your enemies" Mt. 5:44; 26:52
4. "Do good to them which hate you" Lk. 6:27-28
5. "Lend, hoping for nothing again" Lk. 6:35
6. "Resist not evil" Mt. 5:39-41
7. "In your patience possess ye your souls" Lk. 21:19

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

1. "Be thou faithful unto death" Rev. 2:10
2. "Hold that fast which thou hast" Rev. 3:11
3. "When men shall revile you, and persecute you, ...rejoice, and be exceeding glad" Mt.5:11-12; Lk. 6:23
4. "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another" Mt. 10:23
5. "When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak" Mt. 10:19
6. "Murmur not among yourselves" Jn. 6:41-43
7. "Look up and lift up your hands" Lk. 21:28

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

1. "Preach the gospel to every creature" Mk 16:15; Mt. 10:7
2. "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His (Christ's) name" Lk. 24:46-47
3. "Baptize disciples, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost" Mt. 28:19

- 4. "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" Mt. 28:20
- 5. "What I tell you ... that speak" Mt. 10:27; Mk. 4:22
- 6. "Feed my sheep" 4:22
- 7. "Heal the sick" Jn. 21:15-17

WISDOM

- 1. "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" Mt. 10:16
- 2. "Beware of men"

- 3. "Let (the blind leaders) alone" Mt. 10:17
- 4. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine" Mt. 15:12-14
Mt. 7:6
- 5. "Consider the lilies... how they grow"
- 6. "Whatsoever city ... ye shall enter, inquire who is worthy; and there abide ... Go not from house to house" Mt. 6:28
Mt. 10:11-13; Lk. 10:5-7
- 7. "Whosoever will not receive you ... shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them" Lk. 9:5; 10:10-11

My Children: The Work and Joy My Children Bring

—Esther Keim

In the night, I hear a cry.
 When I wake up, I think I'd rather die;
 Then I think of those who aren't as fortunate as I
 To wake up in the middle of the night to hear my baby cry.

An hour later a small voice beside my bed,
 "Mama, can I sleep in your room instead?"
 I'm so tired, I don't care;
 Is he here or is he there?

My feet are getting cold, so I roll over
 Only to see I have no cover.

And then as it starts to dawn,
 I say, "You're making a mistake, Lord; it hasn't been that long."
 And when I get up I can't even enjoy my shower,
 You see, the kids have been up for about an hour.
 As I get dressed and breakfast out of the way,
 "Help me, Lord, to enjoy this day," I pray.
 "Help me to realize the many blessings my children bring."

Here comes Jonathan, saying, "Please, Mom, sing."
 Then comes Rachel also wanting a part.
 Clapping her hands and stomping hard.
 Then I remember all the things I have to get done,

"Forgive me, Lord, but we're having so much fun."
 Then as the day goes on by
 I say, "Oh, Lord, don't let the time so fly."
 It seems the day has just begun,
 But the clock on the shelf just struck one.
 Then again to the Lord I say,
 "Help me to cherish each moment of the day."

Then He reminds me of all the times the children wanted to go
 out to play
 And I said, "Not now; I just don't have time today."
 He says whether your walls are black or white,
 I really don't give a mite
 I love your children, you see;
 Why don't you take a moment and tell them about Me?

"Yes, Lord, I'm really going to try and do better from now on
 I just ask for forgiveness for opportunities that are gone."
 Now that it's bedtime, it's rock the one and read a story to
 another;
 "Lord help me not to look at this as a bother,
 But help me enjoy each moment as the days go by,
 So that as they grow older, I don't have to fret and cry
 Over precious moments that have passed me by."

—Esther Keim

"Contend for the Faith" has been the theme for our missions month at my home church. Again, and again, we have been challenged to the core by missionaries and our own pastor "to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Again, and again, we were challenged to

remember the men and women who surrendered their properties, employment, finances, popularity, positions, friends, family, and even their very own lives to earnestly contend for the faith.
 Yes, I know they were mere flesh and blood, and they had shortcomings just like you and me. Even then, I stand in

awe; I thank God they stayed the course. Together, we, too, will earnestly contend for the faith and make the faith known throughout the entire world. Thank you, mighty soldier! We are in it together—all the way to our last breath.
 —Joe Keim

Feedback and Response Section

1

Hello. Someone gave me the *Amish Voice*, and I thought there were some good articles in there. I really appreciated the last article that I read, "Living in the Stronghold of Deception." It's so easy, I think. If I'm deceived, how am I going to know it? You know, because a deceived person thinks he's right. And you can't just walk up to somebody and say, "You're deceived" because it would never work that way. Basically, you believe

what you believe unless you're open to the truth; and sometimes the truth hurts, especially to really know the truth about ourselves. Sometimes it causes pain because we don't always like what we see in ourselves, but we must be honest. I think we must be honest with ourselves and admit that we may not always see it right. There's a big difference between fitting ourselves into God's plan or trying to fit God into our plans.

—MP from PA

Jeremiah Zeiset responds:

MP,

Thank you for writing. For ourselves as well as others, I wonder if there is anything that is more powerful than prayer. The Lord is the only one who can really show us the truth (and He sometimes does do that through other people). I'm thinking of Job after God spoke to him, where Job said, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee* (Job 42:5).

I don't know how any one of us can really see unless the Lord opens our eyes, much like Paul when he was on his way to Damascus and the Lord stopped him,

spoke to him, and made the "scales" fall off his eyes: *And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized* (Acts 9:18).

I know from experience that we can ask the Lord to open our eyes to the truth. That is basically my story, though even worse than those who are deceived, I sinned knowing it was wrong while I did it. I think there is much more grace for those who are in error from deception than for those who are sinning on purpose. But that said, I asked the Lord to make me willing to live for Him, and He did. He changed my heart, and I now genuinely do want to live for Him.

And this is important: as I read the Bible, I've found that it's very helpful to ask the Lord, by the Holy Spirit, to show me what I'm reading. I believe that if we ask the Lord to reveal truth to us, and we mean it with an open heart, He will show us all the truth that we need as we read the Bible and spend time in prayer with Him.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).

—Jeremiah Zeiset

2

The Bible tells us to beware of false prophets. Search your heart, and can you truthfully say from the bottom of your heart that there is nothing wrong with smartphones and all that other modern

technology? Are you just taking out of the Bible what you want and twisting it to how you want it?

Praying you will find the truth.

—RCY from NY

Paul Miller responds:

RCY,

You are right, in the Bible it does tell us to beware of false prophets. There are many false prophets out there. Some tell us that we can become gods. Others tell us that Jesus is not God. Some say that we get to heaven by joining a church or following rules. However, if we want to know God's truth, we must go to God's Word and see what His Book really says.

There is nothing in the Bible specifically about smartphones or other modern technology, so we must then look at biblical principles and see what applies to modern technology. We certainly do not need modern technology to sin. We can sin without any technology at all. We can sin with a computer and without one. We can sin with a smartphone and without one. Certainly some modern technology makes it easier to sin, but it also makes it easier to do good, too.

This reminds me of the gun control debate. Some people blame guns for murder, although most people with guns do not kill others.

It is the same with smartphones. Some use them for sinful purposes, but many use them for good. I personally do not have a smartphone. I personally do not use much of the modern technology that many other people do, but that is a decision that I have made. I know many people who use *Cont.*

Following are excerpts from the book, *Mennonites in Europe*, by John Horsch

MENNONITES in EUROPE



(Note: The term “Anabaptist” was used to describe and define certain Christians during the Reformation era. These Christians rejected infant baptism, choosing instead believer's baptism. Since many of them had been baptized in their infancy, they chose to be baptized as believing adults. So their enemies called them Anabaptists—”re-baptizers.” For their “crime” of believer's baptism, Anabaptists were heavily persecuted during the 16th century and into the 17th, by both Roman Catholics and Protestants.)

In need scarcely be said that Roman Catholicism had always taken an attitude of intolerance and persecution toward all dissenters from its creed. On the contrary, the principal leaders in the Reformation movement, Luther and Zwingli, in the first period of their reformatory labors, condemned Romish intolerance. They were in the earlier period, defenders of the principle of liberty of conscience. Later they agreed to a thorough-going union of the church with the state, which meant the abandonment of the principle of religious liberty. Furthermore, the natural and inevitable consequence, was the persecution of the Anabaptists by the established Protestant state churches.

It is a fact recognized by many recent historians, that the persecution of the Anabaptists surpassed in severity the persecution of the early Christians by pagan Rome! Persecution began in Zurich soon after the Brethren had organized a congregation. Imprisonment of varying severity, sometimes in dark

dungeons, was followed by executions. Within a short period, the leaders of the Brethren lost their lives in the persecution.

Anabaptism was made a capital crime. Prices were set on the heads of Anabaptists. To give them food and shelter was a made a crime. The duke of Bavaria, in 1527, gave

orders that the imprisoned Anabaptists should be burned at the stake—unless they recanted, in which case they should be beheaded. In Catholic countries the Anabaptists, as a rule, were executed by burning at the stake; in Lutheran and Zwinglian states, Anabaptists were generally executed by beheading or drowning.

Thousands sealed their faith with their blood. When all efforts to halt the movement proved vain, the authorities resorted to desperate measures. Armed executioners and mounted soldiers were sent in companies through the land to hunt down the Anabaptists and kill them on the spot without trial or sentence. The old method of pronouncing sentence on each individual dissenter proved inadequate to exterminate this faith.

In the first week of Lent, 1528, King Ferdinand of Austria commissioned a company of executioners to root out the Anabaptist faith in his lands. Those who were overtaken in the highways of fields were killed with the sword, others

were dragged out of their houses and hanged on the door posts. Most of them had gone into hiding in the woods and mountains. In a forest near Lengbach seventeen were put to death.

In the province of Swabia, in South Germany, four hundred mounted soldiers were, in 1528, sent out to put to death all Anabaptists on whom they could lay hands. Somewhat later the number of soldiers so commissioned was increased to eight hundred, and then to one thousand.

In various provinces an imperial provost marshal by the name of Berthold Aichele, with his assistants, put many Anabaptists to death. On Christmas Day, 1531, he drove seventeen men and women into a farmhouse in Württemberg and burned the building together with the inmates.

Three hundred and fifty Anabaptists were executed in the Palatinate before the year 1530. At Ensisheim, "the slaughterhouse of Alsace," as it was called, six hundred were killed within a few years. Within six weeks, thirty-seven were burned, drowned, or beheaded at Linz, in Austria. In the town of Kitzbüchl in the Tyrol, sixty-eight were executed in one year. Two hundred and ten or more were burned in the valley of the Inn River.

The number of Anabaptist martyrs in the Tyrol and Görz was estimated at one



thousand at the end of the year 1531.

Dirk Willems of Holland was re-baptized when he became a believer, thus rejecting the infant baptism practiced at that time. This action, plus his continued devotion to his new faith and the re-baptism of several other believers in his home—led to his subsequent arrest and martyrdom.

An officer came to arrest him at the village of Asperen. Running for his life, Dirk

came to a frozen pond. After making his way across in great peril, he realized that his pursuer had fallen through the ice, and into the freezing water.

Turning back to save the drowning officer, Dirk dragged him safely to shore. The man wanted to release Dirk, but a burgomaster, having appeared on the scene—reminded him that he was under oath to deliver criminals to justice. Dirk was bound off to prison, interrogated, and

tortured in an unsuccessful effort to make him renounce his faith. He was tried and found guilty of having been re-baptized, of holding secret meetings in his home, and of allowing baptism there—all of which he freely confessed. “Persisting obstinately in his opinion,” Dirk was burned at the stake near his hometown on May 16, 1569, by these bloodthirsty, ravening wolves—enduring it with great steadfastness.

End

Love for the Lord Jesus,
cont. from back cover

After that, I wanted to follow Jesus. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me* (Matthew 16:24). For me, that meant laying everything else at His feet. No longer do I care what people think of me. If I love Jesus, it means I'm going to talk about Him – a lot. If someone loves another person (a boyfriend or girlfriend), they think about them and talk about them – a lot. If someone loves their work, a brand of machinery, or a particular type of food, they talk about it a lot. One thing I know and hang on to is Jesus' words that if we are ashamed of Him, He'll be ashamed of me. I do not want Jesus Christ to be ashamed of me.

If you have not already done so, my friend, I encourage you to ask Jesus to give you a new heart. *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John 3:3). Ask Him make you willing to follow Him. If you are already born again, ask Jesus to show you how to love Him more. Pour out your heart and life for your best friend, Jesus Christ. It's a special relationship to guard and nurture, even more so than we do with our earthly friends. May the Lord Jesus Christ richly bless your relationship with Him.

—Jeremiah Zeiset

End

You Are Precious, Mother Mine

—By Norma Miller

(I wrote this poem as my mother lay on her deathbed.)

Someday your mother, young and strong,
Telling you "No" all day long,
Will be in an unlikely state.
You will cherish it if not too late.
Her once robust and lively frame
Will lay there weak and unashamed.
Her hands, that were once creative, strong,
Will rest there limply in your own.
Her words, once strong and unafraid
Will languish, then remain unsaid,
As her eyes, that once glanced down at you,
Are raised imploring, begging you
To see and hear the things she can't express
And communicate to others her heart's quest.
And you will treasure every breath, and every smile, every tear,
As you lovingly whisper through your tears,
The words you don't want left unsaid,
The love you haven't yet expressed,
And you treasure the moments spent with her,
And you pray for her and read the Word.
You are precious, Mother Mine,
I wish only to have more time.

—Norma Miller

Receiving duplicate mailings?

Please note your correct name and address and return all labels to the Amish Voice

Moving?

Please send us your new address

Not interested in the Amish Voice?

Please remove the label from your newsletter, mail it to P.O. Box 128, Savannah, OH 44874, and we will take you off the active list. **Without the label, we are unable to remove your address from the active list.**

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Ashland, Ohio
Permit No. 188

Current Resident

Love for the Lord Jesus

—Jeremiah Zeiset

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha (1 Corinthians 16:22).

I've been thinking a lot lately about what it means to love the Lord Jesus. Everyone wants to be loved, and Dwight L. Moody once said that if you can convince a man that you love him, you will win a friend for life. Think about it. If you can convince a man you care for his soul, he will be open and honest with you, but in no other way will he do so. If you are in business and you demonstrate that you genuinely love your customers, they will be loyal to your business. If you show love to your children, they will readily want to listen to you and obey you – little convincing with a stick will be needed. If you genuinely love your spouse, he or she will be delighted to be in your presence, and will be your best friend forever.

But Jesus said unless we love Him more than all of these, we are not worthy of Him. *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:37).* Exactly how much do we need to love Jesus? More than anything else.

I have to be honest, friends. In all the churches I've been, whether Anabaptist, or evangelical American churches, the biggest lack seems to be of love for Jesus Christ. If men, women, and children only loved the Lord, everything else would take care of itself. No longer would we feel the need to address outward appearance and put up guards to keep people

"in their places." No longer would children rebel against parents. No longer would preachers spend so much time talking about things that really don't matter. Honest, it's true! If churches – and again, I'm not singling out any specific church because all are equally guilty here – would spend the majority of their time helping people in the arena of the heart, helping them understand how to love the Lord, then we'd finally see genuine unity and amazing peace in the hearts and lives of our people. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* (Psalm 133:1).

Where to do we begin? How can we find such a love for Jesus Christ? I don't know the answer for each individual person, but I do know my own experience. I knew Jesus Christ died on the cross for my sins, but for a long time, it was head knowledge only. It's not enough to know about the Lord, we must know Him and be known of Him: *the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19)* Knowledge reached my heart when I asked the Lord to change my heart, to make me willing to follow Him no matter what. When I told the Lord that I was willing to let Him give me a new heart, He acted on my request. I needed to be born again. Simple, old language, but sometimes the simple things are best. Jesus said a long time ago that we must be born again, the same Jesus that said that gave me a brand-new heart when I asked for it.

Continued on Page 15