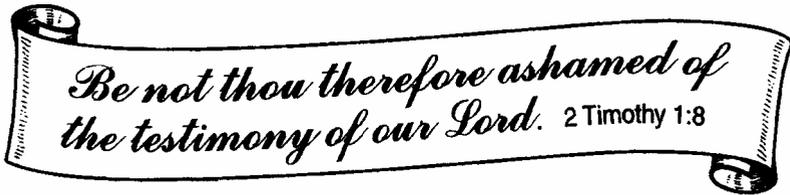


THE EASTERN MENNONITE TESTIMONY

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The young priest Isaiah received a vision of God, which gave him confidence and renewed inspiration to proceed with God's work (Isaiah 6). He saw the Lord "high and lifted up," and that enabled him to also see himself. This vision prepared him to be useful in God's service. Several observations from this account will renew our inspiration to serve God today.

We need a vision of God today. His glory is exalted above all. His perfection cannot be challenged. His authority is without equal. His Word is law and will not be changed.

A vision of God enables us to see ourselves. Isaiah responded, "Woe is me! for I am undone." Our own goodness will vanish in the presence of the eternal God. Our sacrifice will seem insignificant. All boasting in personal ability or confidence in past accomplishments will flee. All we will see is our unworthiness and our need for His aid.

God is ready and willing to send seraphim with living coals for our cleansing. The altar of Jesus Christ's sacrifice "cleanseth us from all sin." His blood alone can remove the blot of sin. Through faith in His work, we can stand before God forgiven and sanctified.

A vision of God inspires us to serve. Isaiah responded, "Here am I; send me" after hearing

God's call "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" This was not a presumptuous response but an expression of confidence in the One who called. He saw the need and was willing to be used.

God needs men with a vision for service today. The church needs faithful men and women to teach in our schools. Persons who are willing to sacrifice time and income are needed to meet literature needs. Some must readily serve in the various mission fields across the world. The elderly and others with special needs require special care. God blesses those who serve with all their heart.

A vision of God enables one to serve faithfully for the duration of life. We should not feel that we have performed our duty by serving one, five, or ten years. Material gain is not the primary purpose for life on this earth. Isaiah's work continued for as long as there were those who needed God's message. His work was never done. And neither is ours.

To see God is essential, but how can we? Most of us will not have a vision as Isaiah did. But we can see God in various ways.

We see God in His Word. The Scriptures describe the attributes and personality of God. As we read the Word with faith, we declare like the seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." The New Testament reveals God's mercy, grace, and love in the price that was paid to rescue man from eternal destruction (John 3:16). His faithfulness is confirmed through the Scriptural promise of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26).

We see God through faith. Although God is invisible, we move forward as though we see Him (Hebrews 11:27). We find rest as we accept by faith the revelation in God's Word.

We see God through the brotherhood. The shining light of the saints shows the glory of God (Matthew 5:16). Seeing God's grace effectively at work in a suffering saint's life gives us courage to trust Him. A challenging exposition of the Scripture by a brother inspires obedience.

Even a brother's or sister's acknowledgement of failure assures us that God's Spirit is working among us.

Seeing the Lord in these ways inspires faithfulness to Him. It reignites our first love (Revelation 2:4) and builds appreciation for separation from the world. No one who sees God is casual about Christian living. No one who sees God takes lightly the wishes of his parents or ministry. Like Isaiah, the person who sees God will be serious about even the hidden sins of bitterness, carnality, pride, and disrespect.

May God grant each of us a vision like Isaiah's.

—JGB



A Biblical Response to a Jury Summons

The text of this article is a recently published tract by Eastern Mennonite Publications.

You received a letter in the mail that demands your appearance at the courthouse for jury duty. As a conscientious Christian, how should you respond? This pamphlet tries to help you understand what you are being asked to do and how you, as a Mennonite, should answer that demand.

What is a jury?

A jury is a group of approximately twelve citizens who are chosen by a court to hear a trial. In a criminal case they are expected to listen carefully to the trial and then declare the accused person guilty or not guilty. In a

capital punishment case, they may be required to decide on the criminal's sentence. In a civil case, they listen to a lawsuit trial and then decide how much money should be required for settlement.

The courts try hard to find a jury that will make fair judgment. For this reason they summon many more people than they will need. Then they sort out any who cannot serve for personal reasons or any that the court decides may have unfair biases.

Why are Mennonites now summoned when they were not in the past?

In the past, jurors were randomly chosen from voter registration lists. Those who did not vote were not called for jury duty. In more recent times, however, fewer people have participated in voting. The government has become concerned that the voter lists do not accurately represent American citizens. Now names are also randomly chosen from other sources, such as driver's license lists.

What does the court expect of me?

Do not ignore the summons. Courts demand respect and obedience. They expect you to promptly fill out any questionnaires and reply cards that came with the summons. They expect you to appear at the courthouse on the day noted on the summons. The summons includes a warning that failure to obey is considered contempt of court and could result in fines or imprisonment.

Courts expect respectable citizens to feel obligated to serve their country as jurors. They will not allow people to avoid this duty just because they do not want to serve or because it is inconvenient. They will, however, excuse people who are unable to serve for reasons such as health problems.

How should a conscientious Christian respond to a summons?

With your summons you will receive a questionnaire. The questionnaire is to determine if you are unable or disqualified to serve. It will ask you detailed questions about what your attitudes would be as a juror toward the judge, policemen, attorneys, or criminals. Instead of attempting to answer these, find and answer any questions about personal reasons or religious beliefs that would prevent you from serving. Then in the space provided or in an attached letter, respectfully explain your religious convictions that prevent you from serving as a juror.

Some courts will accept your reply and excuse you from serving. They will send you a letter stating so. Other courts will reply that you must come for the jury selection process anyway. You should go on the day you were asked to appear. Prospective jurors may need to be at court for much of the day, sitting through the choosing of a number of juries.

How should I act before the judge?

Courts demand respect for the judge. When the judge appears, the audience is to stand. All are to be quiet and to be dressed decently. People are expected to stand to address or answer the judge. They begin or end their statements with "Your Honor." However, some of the formality has been relaxed in recent years. Observe what seems to be acceptable in your setting. A Christian would not want to appear disrespectful to those in authority. Neither would he want to appear to worship men. Most important is a meek, sincere, prompt response when it is your turn to speak. If you do not understand or do not know what is expected of you, apologetically say so. Court personnel will help you.

What is the jury selection process like?

You will be placed with the other persons who were summoned, often one hundred to one hundred fifty persons. The court will be choosing several groups of jurors that day. As the selecting of a jury for a trial begins, you will be given a number. The court will randomly pick forty to fifty numbers. Then in a process called "voir dire", the court will reject any persons they deem unsuitable. The judge will ask if any of these persons cannot serve for personal reasons. Some may have legitimate excuses, such as important appointments or health needs. The lawyers will question prospective jurors to determine if they will be able to make fair judgment. Finally the lawyers will choose approximately fourteen jurors from the group.

Then the process begins again for another trial. All persons are again eligible for the drawing of numbers. You could possibly need to sit through most of the day until your number is chosen. Only then will you have the opportunity to explain your religious position.

What should I do if my number is chosen?

When the judge asks if anyone has personal reasons that keep him from serving raise your hand and state that you have personal, religious convictions that would not allow you to serve as a juror. The judge may ask if you would be willing to lay aside your religious convictions to simply obey him in acting as a juror. Of course, Christ is your Lord, and His commands supersede a judge's authority. You should answer, "No."

After you have had the opportunity to make your religious position known, you may be allowed to leave after that jury has been chosen.

How should I write or state my position as a conscientious Christian?

State that you will be unable to serve as a juror because of religious convictions.

Give your church affiliation.

I have chosen to be a member of the Mennonite Church and have been a member since.....

Explain your literal obedience to Jesus' commands.

I obey the teachings of Christ literally. Jesus has commanded His followers to not participate in the affairs and judgments of government (John 18:36). He also taught Christians to minister love, mercy, and forgiveness, not to dispense judgment and justice (Matthew 5:36-45). Jesus Himself refused to be a judge over an inheritance dispute (Luke 12:14).

I cannot love and do good to all men and, at the same time, condemn and punish them (Romans 12:19-21). The meekness and patient suffering that Christ taught is not suited to the work of a juror.

Explain your belief in separation of church and state.

I believe in separation of church and state. The civil government has a responsibility to maintain order and restrain evildoers (Romans 13:1-7). The church is to call men to Jesus and to teach them to live a holy life. The state and the church use opposite methods and tools (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). My energy and time are dedicated to the work of the church.

Express your respect for the government

I respect the civil government and appreciate the law and order that they provide (Romans 13:4). I am grateful to live in a country that respects religious convictions and want to be a law-abiding, honest, and peaceable citizen (Titus 3:1). My prayer is that the government can maintain order and peace in the land (1 Timothy 2:1, 2).

Discuss your summons with your ministry.

Your local ministry will be glad to provide support and advice as you face this summons. They may be able to tell you what to expect from your particular court.

Do not become overly anxious or worried about the circumstances you are facing. Seek the Lord's presence and blessing as you go, and remember to trust Him. God is able, through the Holy Spirit, to give His children words to say "in that hour" (Mark 13:11).



Lessons From Mennonite Institutions (Part 2)

Higher Education

The Anabaptists of Europe, as well as the Mennonites coming to America, had an interest in education. Schools were built before meetinghouses in many places. The early schools served as community schools until the public school laws went into effect in the first half of the 1800s. These schools taught religion and good morals, but, as time moved on, the world's influence became stronger. Mennonites were perhaps too comfortable with this influence.

Mennonites increasingly sought higher education in the late 1800s, especially in the Midwest. The mentality that a college education was necessary for effective Christian service pressed in from surrounding Protestant groups. Emphasis on the church meeting humanitarian needs, instead of remaining a clear light to the world, contributed to the desire for higher education and positions beyond a simple life.

A group of college-educated Mennonites in 1894 began a high school in Indiana, known as Elkhart Institute. By 1903 it outgrew its facilities. With a strong invitation from the city of Goshen and an attractive gift offer of \$10,000, Goshen College was born. It offered high school, junior college, and, eventually, senior college. Although the founders had very progressive and liberal views, it was hoped that the school would be an aid to the youth of the church.

However, the school caused many divided opinions, and many feared that it could potentially destroy the church. The 1923-1924 term was closed due to opposition from the church regarding the school's teaching program and practices. It reopened in 1924 with faculty changes and other adjustments, but it continued to lack the full support of the church. Many activities of the school met with contention.

Although the school contributed to the literature and teaching materials of the church, its influence discouraged conservative practice.

Concerned brethren wanted a school that would support the church while giving youth instruction in Bible study and Christian service. In 1907 an appeal was made to the Kansas-Nebraska Conference for a school west of the Mississippi River "in which the Bible would be a specialty." In 1909 Hesston Academy, later named Hesston Bible School and College, began with good support.

The school offered a two-year Bible study course on the high school level. Some years later a four-year Bible course on the college level was offered. In 1942 seminary training was offered by a three-year Bible

course, followed with two years at Goshen. Until 1952 the college was believed to support the faith and practice of the church, but the pressures of accommodation and interrelationships with other institutions destroyed its foundational beginning.

In eastern United States, where the older Mennonite communities existed, feelings were strained over these schools. Most did not support the establishment of high schools and colleges. Many resisted the pressure for youth to acquire higher education. But sincere, loyal brethren asked questions such as, "Can not a school be operated that would support and promote the church and be a contribution to God's kingdom?" They knew that higher education could potentially destroy the very faith they wanted to preserve, but they were confident a school could be provided that would be a help to the church.

Around 1913 a group of brethren in Virginia offered short terms of high school studies and Bible studies in several locations. In 1917, after much prayer and caution, an old camp property was purchased. Local brethren and conservative leaders who were giving good direction to the church were its supporters. Extreme caution was invested in the forming of a strong constitution to ensure that this school would be a spiritual success and not destroy Biblical practices. A letter of one bishop, L. J. Heatwole, gave very specific conditions upon which he could support this school. This constitution was stated to be "unchangeable."

All the leaders placed great confidence in it. Heatwole said they had written an instrument "that enjoins upon the management the sacred duty of maintaining not only the standard of orthodoxy that harmonizes with the peculiar doctrine, faith, and discipline of the church, but excludes from the faculty and management anyone who should fail to measure up to this standard."

The Eastern Mennonite School in Harrisonburg, Virginia, opened October 19, 1917, with elementary and secondary levels in Bible and in vocational and academic classes in some fields. In the ten years to follow, it offered high school and junior college, continuing the aim of its founders. However, threatening issues were knocking at its doors. The desire for state and educational-association accreditation to acquire the higher levels of education and acceptance at other colleges started a path to the world and the throwing out of the "unchangeable constitution" set up by its founders. In the late 1940s it received accreditation on the senior college level. Along with these changes came competitive athletics and intercollege exchange. Separation came to be viewed as a tradition of the past and a bond-

age to practice. Slowly, Biblical obedience was exchanged for the mentality and practices of a godless world.

All of these above-mentioned colleges eventually provided a seminary for training to the ministry. This core change, which had destroyed the Biblical position of the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith in Holland, now also invaded North America.

The above-mentioned colleges were strong in scholarly studies of Anabaptist-Mennonite history, but they failed to encourage and promote the literal practices that they discovered in these studies.

Since high schools were begun in many larger Mennonite communities around 1950, the colleges dropped the high school level. These high schools and college institutions became a voice leading youth, parents, and church leaders to depart from long-established Biblical principles and practices.

What lessons can we learn?

Higher education does not enhance spiritual life but greatly risks spiritual death. College education exposes one to and imposes upon one many of the world's philosophies and patterns of thinking, thus eroding Biblical convictions. The high schools and colleges of the Mennonite Church caused constant conflict, by pursuing activities and involvements beyond the approval of the church.

Higher education tends to exalt the accomplishments of man, giving recognition to professional achievements and positions. Higher education has also contributed to women reaching for a supposedly higher role in society than homemaking.

Christians do not need the advanced education that requires the accreditation of state and educational associations. Church history does not give any indication that the Anabaptists encouraged levels of higher education or vocations. Christian service and witness do not require higher levels of education, but the new birth and walking with God are imperative.

Higher education has contributed much to the development of mankind's knowledge and development. However, it has at the same time been one of the agencies by which many have lost faith in God. It has also unsettled and relentlessly attacked the church with modern trends that produced accommodation. Moral integrity has been weakened.

As a conservative Mennonite people, let us continue to keep a good philosophy and standard of education. Let us not be ensnared into higher education appeals, which disregard Biblical principles and accept the world's philosophies and standards. We need an education that sees us through this

life, helping us make a good contribution to mankind while fitting us and our children for heaven!

Brother John.

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GIVING OUR LIVING

Giving is an essential element of Christian living. Jesus honored "a certain poor widow," who not only gave, but even gave all her living. "But she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark 12:44). How can we, like this woman, please our Lord by giving our living?

We give our living when we recognize that all we have belongs to God and that we are only stewards of these goods. This makes us accountable to use them in a way that pleases Him. When we hoard our possessions to ourselves, we fall under the same condemnation as the wealthy farmer who said to himself, "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). Jesus concluded the parable by remarking, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." This echoes His Sermon on the Mount: "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Giving is certainly one way of making a heavenly deposit.

We give our living when we give as the Lord has prospered us, whether it be little or much. Like this widow, we do not let the large amounts that our brother gives intimidate us. If we wait to give until we are wealthy, we may never give at all. "Little is much if God is in it." If we give large sums of money to be seen of men, God certainly is not in it. Those to whom God has entrusted more of this world's goods have a greater responsibility to share (1 Timothy 6:17).

We give our living when we give until it hurts. We forgo legitimate wants for the sake of helping to meet a need that is more important. This woman, it would seem, gave the last of her money. She likely went out to earn more to be able to give more as she had opportunity. Do we view giving as a once-and-done obligation, or are we ready to do our part when a new need arises?

We give our living in more than a monetary way. While giving funds is noble, giving our time has a personal touch and a special blessing for both the giver and the recipient. Although this is not always possible, it is important to take such opportunities to share.

We give our living when we sacrifice income to invest in other's lives. What example are we setting for our families? They may know our heart better than we. Are our own pursuits always more important than family time, church work, and a helping hand? Do we have time to help the neighbor when he is in trouble or that stranded motorist when we are in a hurry? Are we willing to sacrifice efficiency so our children can help us and so we can teach them valuable lessons such as a good work ethic?

As young people, we give our living when we volunteer our service. This may mean leaving a better paying job for a work of greater service in the kingdom. Teaching school, serving in an outlying area, helping a needy family for little or no pay, caring for the elderly, or assisting in relief work where disaster strikes are opportunities many young people have. Doing the work at hand and being useful where God has placed us prepares us to be of use in greater things.

Jesus perceives the motive of giving. He also knows how much it cost us and how much we were willing to sacrifice. Jesus does not measure the worth of a gift by its monetary value but by the size of the heart of the giver. Christ's blessing is upon those who, as this woman, live and work to "have to give."

Brother Marcus.



Comfort

*Dear Master, Thou who paused and wept,
Beside the tomb where Lazarus slept,
Come, touch our bleeding hearts we pray,
Beside this grave of cruel, cold clay.*

*Our minds are numb; our hearts are sore;
We shake our heads and weep still more.
How can we live beyond this pain?
Will rainbow ever follow rain?*

*And not alone for us we weep,
His family ties were strong and deep.
Oh, who will fill the place he left?
Ah, who will comfort those bereft?*

*Dear weeping Master, help us see,
Of greater loss and grief to Thee,
Than saints whom Thou hast welcomed home,
Are souls who through sin's darkness roam.*

*So through our tears our hearts rejoice,
For here lies one who knew Thy voice;
And though his grave is hard and cold,
We trust he treads the streets of gold.*

*And in the steps he humbly trod,
We see the path that leads to God.
Sister Rebecca.*

Vocal Vices (Part 5) Whisperings

*"For I fear, lest, when I come,
there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes,
backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults"*
2 Corinthians 12:20

Obviously, there is a time and a place for whispering. But what can make it so evil and destructive?

Whispering can be very impolite. Think how you feel when others are whispering in your presence. Whispering should not be allowed at meal-time because it hinders family interchange. In a school setting whispering can lead to cliques or could indicate their existence. Surmising and suspicions arise from such activity.

"A whisperer separateth chief friends" Proverbs 16:28. Whispering excludes others and expresses partiality. When we whisper in the presence of others, they are obviously being excluded. Can we blame them for becoming suspicious of what we are hiding and feeling as though we are rejecting them? Would it not be better, if we have a legitimate reason for sharing private information, to find a private place to share it?

Whispering in a worship service hinders worship by distracting those around us and the one leading out in worship. When kneeling for prayer, we should focus on communication with God, rather than with those around us. Whispering during worship reveals a lack of love for and fear of God.

Whispering can also be a form of mockery. Are we considerate of others in embarrassing situations, or do we increase their pain by whispering? Can the special individuals among us with handicaps or deformities sense God's love in our hearts, or do we reveal our prejudice by whispering?

Whispering is also associated with slander (Romans 1:29 and 2 Corinthians 12:20). While railing is an aggressive, outspoken form of slander, whispering is its quiet counterpart. Both spring from the same bitter heart and are equally evil in God's sight.

Slandorous whispering reveals that we know our thoughts are unacceptable. When parents give direction with which we may not agree, do we mutter under our breath to others evil words we know better than to say aloud? When discipline is administered or a new rule made at school, do we whisper to a friend words we would be ashamed to have the teacher hear? When direction is given or correction is administered by ministry,

whether at Bible School, our local congregation, or to us personally, do we whisper our rebellious displeasure to a friend while otherwise appearing cooperative?

And remember, if we are tempted to justify ourselves because our rebellion was not outwardly expressed, remember that God holds us as accountable for our attitudes as well as our actions (1 John 3:15). When "that which ye have spoken in the ear ... shall be proclaimed upon the housetops," will we stand unashamed before our fellow men and uncondemned before God? (Luke 12:3).

—*Brother Roland*



PRAYER POINT

*"The effectual fervent prayer
of a righteous man availeth much"*

Thank God for Christian mothers who adorn themselves with
"The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,
which is in the sight of God of great price."

Thank God that before Christ ascended he promised:
"I will come again, and receive you unto myself;
That where I am, there ye may be also."
John 14:3

Pray for our national leaders.
Pray God would superintendent the coming election.

Praise for our students that have completed their formal education;
That they may be useful in life and service.

Praise God for the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit
to guide us into all truth.

