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*Editor: [anabaptistmennonites.org](http://anabaptistmennonites.org).*

In the United States (and other countries) the second Sunday, of May has been officially recognized as Mother's Day since 1914. But before that, in England and in various American communities and churches, the practice of observing a special day in honor of mothers and motherhood predated President Woodrow's signature by many years. To remember and honor one's mother is indeed noble.

But in recent years, many women in society do not desire to fill a mother's role in the home. Instead they desire to be a woman of the world. They desire a place of prominence in business or government.

In significant contrast, the sisters in our churches fill distinctly different roles in pursuit of far loftier goals. They are indeed daughters of spiritual Zion and mothers in Israel in God's New Testament church.

*Daughters of Zion possess a priceless inward beauty.* The King's daughters are "all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13). The meek and quiet spirit within expresses itself in a radiant submission to God's will. Their beauty is derived from their King and nurtured by a close walk with Him. Having found true beauty, they reject the world's bidding to adorn themselves outwardly. If they were to become haughty and wanton as the daughters of Zion in Isaiah's time (Isaiah 3:16-17), they would lose their beauty and incur their King's displeasure.

*Mothers in Israel are peaceable and faithful"* (2 Samuel 20:19). They are peaceable because they are at peace with God. In their interactions with one another, they refuse gossip and suspicion. Instead they "follow after the things which make for peace" (Romans 14:19), and they edify one another. They are peacemakers at home as they settle the childish squabbles and direct each child in the pathway of peaceable relationships.

Mothers in Israel are faithful examples of the believers in daily life. Kindness governs their tongues, modesty graces their appearance, and consistency rules their conduct. They are content to stay at home and to be faithful keepers of the home. Mothers in Israel faithfully support their husbands' decisions and flourish under their leadership.

*Daughters of Zion are "glad and rejoice with all the heart"* (Zephaniah 3:14). As they trust their King and find fulfillment in His provisions, they experience true joy. They do not go about their daily routines in a mundane

and monotonous manner. Singing rather than sighing graces their lips as they manage the household affairs. Their kitchen sinks are altars of praise. Their joy and their peace pervade the atmosphere of the home.

*Mothers in Israel serve the Lord's inheritance.* Children are the "heritage of the LORD" (Psalm 127:3). In so many ways, mothers invest themselves and their lives in the service of these little ones. They tenderly care for the helpless infants. They soothe the hurts of the growing child. Through instruction, correction, and punishment, they lovingly, yet firmly, strive to instill the morals of upright character.

Their influence not only serves but also enlarges and expands the Lord's inheritance. In Mother's lap, the child learns of God, hears Bible stories, and first memorizes Bible verses. Unknown is the number of youth who, because of a mother's faithful, consistent example and in spite of severe obstacles, chose the narrow way. In light of this eternal investment, it is well said that "the care of children is an angel's charge."

Daughters of Zion and mothers in Israel live and serve under the radiance of this divine benediction: 'A woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates' (Proverbs 31:30-31).

—ISM



### *The Church Visible or Invisible?*

What is the nature of the church? Is the true church an invisible group of saints within a much broader nominal church; or is it a visible, identifiable human group? How will our concept of the church affect our daily lives?

God, with His perfect knowledge and understanding, is the only one who knows where every saint is in the world. He alone knows who is genuine and has saving faith. "In every nation he that feareth [God], and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:35). God knows where His people are. But we do not have the ability to see as God sees. Consequently, the church in its fullness is not visible to us. But the church is most assuredly visible and identifiable as she lets her light shine.

The nature of the true church came into sharp focus in the time of the Reformation. The state church model was the established pattern. Everyone within a certain geographical area belonged to the state church of that region—whether they were Catholic or Protestant. Some of the populace were pious, and some were reckless in their spiritual lives. In answer to

this condition, Martin Luther promoted the idea that the true church is an invisible group of faithful ones within the broader state church.

The Anabaptists rejected Luther's explanation and taught that the church is "as visible as the Christian man and that its Christian character must be in evidence."<sup>1</sup> They believed if the church was not visible or identifiable, it did not exist. The true church is to have a unique identity and is composed of those who have personal faith and are living in obedience to the Scripture.

The concept of the invisible church had an appeal to many because it took away much of the cross bearing associated with true Christianity. The Anabaptists "could have spared themselves untold suffering at the hands of the persecuting state churches had they been willing to suspend the creation of visible churches committed in full obedience to Christ."<sup>2</sup> In other words, they could have existed in the shadow of the state churches, but they chose otherwise. Their willingness to pay the price of true discipleship still influences our concept of discipleship today.

The early church was a very visible church. When Peter preached, the people's response was "men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). His answer was "Repent, and be baptized." Repentance requires an inner change of heart and an outward change of practice.

Baptism is a public outward act that declares one's identity as a Christian and symbolizes surrender to Christ's lordship. Today, as in the early church, baptism connects the applicants to the visible body. "The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). This Biblical pattern is one reason we emphasize the importance of keeping water baptism tied to church membership in the local visible body, rather than baptizing outside of an established local membership.

The early church was clearly identified as followers of Christ. They spoke of Christ and patterned themselves after Christ to the extent that they were called Christians, which means "followers of Christ" (Acts 11:22-26). Their identity was obvious.

The apostles proclaimed the Gospel, and churches were established as people responded in faith. They organized local groups who fellowshiped together and were accountable to each other. They were authorized by Christ to make binding decisions for each other (Matthew 18:18). The fallen and unrepentant brother was to be put away from among them. The Christ-life was to be lived out in practical experience.

The Epistles emphasize the visible nature of the church. We are to love the invisible God with all our heart (1 John 4:20). That love is shown by

how we relate to and love our visible neighbor. We are instructed to submit ourselves to God (James 4:7). We are to submit to one another "in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21). Our submission to the people of God is an indication of our submission to God Himself. Our interaction with the visible body of Christ reveals something about our relationship to God. The church has a relationship to the invisible God, "but it responds to Him as a human community which lives out in time and space the life which comes from above."<sup>3</sup>

The visible nature of the church is emphasized by the exhortation that we should "shew forth the praises of him who hath called [us] out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Jesus Himself said that we should be a light to the world. "A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). We are each instructed to be an "epistle ... known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2).

The concept of a visible church is closely tied to the Biblical and Anabaptist outlook that emphasizes the brotherhood aspect of the church. "We being many are one bread, and one body" (1 Corinthians 10:17). God in His wisdom designed the church as an interconnected body to protect us from our individualistic tendencies. We can benefit from other Holy Spirit filled people as we relate to the church, a visible human group.

Our view of the nature of the church has practical implications. It underscores the need for obvious fruitfulness and holiness of life. This places a greater responsibility on the church to maintain a consistent, disciplined body. The church is to be a pure, chaste bride rather than a mixed group of sinners and saints.

Today many independent splinter groups and house churches have come out of conservative Mennonite settings. They often emphasize individual expression and inner spiritual life with an accompanying de-emphasis on group submission and definite group standards. Many times this is an effort to avoid personal accountability to a group. This independent approach has so often resulted in instability and a loss of the faith and practical Christianity.

Those who accept the idea of an invisible church will not see the need for practical separation from the world. This concept minimizes the need for a lifestyle that involves self-denial and cross bearing. But outward, visible expressions are the telltale expressions of the heart. If we desire eye-catching clothing (such as fancy dress sleeves or bright, bold prints), we reveal what type of spirit rules our heart. If we insist on blending with the world in our casual wear, we reveal a heart that is tilted toward the world.

If we respond in anger, we reveal a heart defect. If we are violating Bible standards in our moral conduct, we reveal a lusty heart. True Christianity will show itself by a consistent practice that willingly lives by Bible principles.

Practicing the Christian woman's veiling, maintaining nonconformity in attire, keeping a Biblical home structure, avoiding the unequal yoke, and practicing brotherhood assistance (rather than depending on insurances) are all things that separate us from the world and create visibility in the world. The idea that the church is invisible or unidentifiable comes from the pietistic influence that emphasizes inner experience and feeling and subtly de-emphasizes outer practice. Indeed, we must have a living relationship with the invisible God, but this relationship will be obviously visible in practical living—in our appearance and conduct. Ultimately, our practice says more about our heart than our verbal expressions do.

Our lifestyle and our character should stand as a visible testimony that we are serious about following the Lord and representing God's cause today.

*Brother James*

**1** The Mennonite Encyclopedia, 1955-90, article "Church."

**2** Harold S. Bender, *These Are My People* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1962), p. 20.

**3** Bender, *My People*, p. 20.



## The Value of Apprenticeship

An apprentice is one who learns an art or a trade as he works under the direction of a skilled teacher, often called a master. Such arrangements have endured for thousands of years. Tubalcain was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron" (Genesis 4:22). Joshua learned about his calling and responsibilities by working with Moses. Elisha learned about his work as a prophet by helping Elijah.

Throughout history, apprenticeships have filled an important role in the training of skilled craftsmen. Apprenticeships likely reached their most developed form in Europe between the years of 1100 and 1500 under organizations of workers called craft guilds. The master supplied food, lodging, and clothing and trained his apprentice to develop habits of industry and sobriety. By the mid-1800s, with the coming of industrialization, guild (or domestic) apprenticeships greatly declined.

The principles of apprenticeship apply not only to the learning of a trade but also to Christian living. Parents serve as masters when they teach their children. We ourselves are apprentices when we learn from our elders whose lives, as much as their words, have gained our respect.

Learning is hard work, requiring effort and diligence. According to the dictionary, there are three ways to gain knowledge or skill: 1) by study, 2) by instruction, and 3) by experience. All three of these are vital for productive apprenticeships. To paraphrase someone's observation: "A few learn by reading the instructions, some learn by hearing, but all learn by example."

Apprenticeship is based on the wisdom and experience of previous generations. Children and youth desperately need the guidance of others who have walked the path before them. They need our footprints to know where to place their feet. We must put concepts in shoe leather so the younger ones can see what it means to do the very thing we are trying to teach them. Youth should desire the values of their godly elders. "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16). "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28).

Apprenticeship requires humility. An effective apprentice readily acknowledges his need to learn. He cannot approach his duties with a "know it all" attitude. He must be willing to take direction from his master. Long ago, an apprentice worked for his education with little or no wages. The master was willing to adopt his apprentice, and the apprentice needed to adapt humbly to his master's ways. The younger was moldable, malleable in the experienced one's hands.

Apprenticeship encourages self-denial. The master taught self-sacrifice by investing his time and resources for the advancement of his apprentices' education and personal well-being. The apprentice needed to apply himself diligently to be productive for his master. Present-day employers who help employees to start on their own are to be appreciated. We all must crucify selfish interests in order to be effective Christian servants.

Apprenticeship provides skills for life. Most parents want their children to be productive and useful. But it takes more than wanting. It takes example, demonstration, and discipline to instill a good work ethic. It takes the inspiration and cohesion that comes alone from big hands and little hands working side by side. Jesus was known as "the carpenter's son." Surely, our Master was Himself an apprentice.

Apprenticeship inspires personal responsibility. The master and the apprentice were accountable to each other through a written contract or ver-

bal agreement. The master assumed responsibility for the safety and physical well-being of those who apprenticed under his care. The young printshop apprentice who proved to be punctual, careful, and dependable surely went from sweeping floors to arranging print. Youth are inspired to be responsible in their daily personal devotions when they know their parents enjoy their own devotional life.

Apprenticeship transfers moral values. The aged men and women of Titus 2 were to teach the younger to be sober, loving, temperate, holy, discreet, obedient, along with other godly characteristics. Knowing that "somebody follows you" calls us to be "in all things skewing thyself a pattern of good works" (Titus 2:7). The awesome responsibility to instill moral values in the rising generation behooves us to maintain honesty, integrity, simplicity, diligence, and consistency in our own personal lives. By God's grace and with His help, we are able to say with Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Paul encouraged Timothy by reminding him that the faith was passed down to him by a godly mother and grandmother.

Apprenticeship cultivates patience. Both the master and the apprentice invest much time in each other. Seven years was a common duration for the apprenticeships of yesteryear. Parents are often given twenty years or more to patiently help each child learn how to relate to the disciplines, disappointments, and joys of life.

Apprenticeship yields rewards for a job well done. Commendation from an employer, satisfaction of a customer, or accomplishment of some special project provides needed encouragement to keep on learning. Apprentices eventually become masters and are able to help others learn about the Christian path to the heavenly goal.

*Brother Kenneth*



### ***"Why Do the Heathen Rage?"***

Psalm 1 portrays the two ways of life—the way of the righteous and the way of the ungodly. In Psalm 2, the focus is on those who have taken the way of the ungodly and are making a commotion about it.

The heathen rage because they do not know God and therefore do not understand His sovereignty. The heathen suppose that if they rage loudly enough and long enough they will become sovereign and have the last word. However, the tone and tenor of Psalm 2 is that God will have the last word. His word is authoritative and sovereign.

The heathen rage because they fail to understand what sin does to a person. It hardens them. Therefore, sin makes raging look harmless when in fact it is very dangerous, because it moves one further away from God. The heathen rage because they are frustrated when they discover that God uses them in their rebellion to accomplish His purposes. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee" (Psalm 76:10). Had the princes of this world known the wisdom of God, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8). They would not want to be used of God to provide salvation for mankind. This puts them in derision and vexation, which issues into more raging.

The heathen rage because they are blind to the fact that they are defeated from the start. When men dig in their heels in their resistance against God, they are fighting for a lost cause. This is why Gamaliel, a renowned doctor of the Law, stood up and told the council, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38, 39). Those who were raging admitted that this was good advice.

The heathen rage because they are oblivious to God's impending judgment. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." Pharaoh of Egypt thought his plan was invincible when he had the Israelites cornered at the Red Sea. But God's judgment upon Egypt was not finished. Pharaoh was not acquainted with a God who could make a dry path across a sea in an instant. Neither did he realize that this God was able to remove wheels from chariots at a most crucial time.

The heathen rage because their goals are in conflict with God's plan. Their aim is to exalt and deify man. God's plan is to exalt His anointed Son. In spite of all the raging, God said, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." The heathen cringe at the thought of kissing the Son and bowing the knee to Him, "who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords."

While the heathen rage, they are squandering their opportunity to renounce their raging and to be wise now by stepping out on the Lord's side. Pilate, Herod, Festus, and Agrippa all had their opportunity. But without any record to the contrary, we conclude that they chose to keep raging until the day of death.

Unfortunately, sometimes a form of this vice even shows up among professing Christians. The spirit of raging becomes evident at times when disciplinary action is taken by the church or by Bible school and Christian day

school administration. Raging can become a chronic reaction to discipline. The heathen may rage and people may imagine resistance against God's rule, but they are only performing "a vain thing" (see verse 1). God remains sovereign. All resistance to His authority will be judged.

The solution for raging is also given in this Psalm: "Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. . . . lest . . . ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little" (Psalm 2:11-12).

*Brother Donald*



### Church Committee Report Literature Evangelism

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ . . . in Christ's stead" (2 Corinthians 5:20). It certainly is humbling to think of sharing the message of reconciliation on behalf of Christ.

The purpose of the Literature Evangelism Committee is to organize evangelistic activities and to assist congregations in their outreach efforts. The Committee is again planning four Boston street meeting trips this summer. Tentative dates for these trips are June 5 & 6; June 26 & 27; July 17 & 18; and August 14 & 15. Plans are also being made for a street meeting trip to Indianapolis, Indiana, on August 1. This is a joint effort with the Flora congregation. We are also planning to assist the Metter congregation with a street meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on October 10.

The Committee invites those twenty years and older who have interest in going along on any of these trips to contact them. This work has been a rewarding experience for many in past years. It also encourages personal evangelism in home areas.

The Tract Review Report booklet is a valuable resource in making informed tract selections. This report grew out of congregational outreach committees' requests for direction on how to choose the best literature for their outreach work. The report includes discussions on message types and how-to-use recommendations. This information is also helpful in personal evangelism efforts. Booklets can be ordered from David Martin (Blue Rock).

We continue to claim God's promise as His Word goes forth: "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

*Brother Nelson*

## Watch and Pray

Watch and pray that when the Master cometh,  
If at morning, noon, or night,  
He may find a lamp in ev'ry window,  
Trimmed and burning clear and bright.

Watch and pray, the Lord commandeth;  
Watch and pray, 'twill not be long;  
Soon He'll gather home His loved ones  
To the happy vale of song.

Watch and pray; the tempter may be near us.  
Keep the heart with jealous care  
Lest, unguarded for a moment,  
Evil thoughts may enter there.

Watch and pray, nor let us ever weary;  
Jesus watched and prayed alone,  
Prayed for us while only stars beheld Him,  
When on Olive's brow they shone.

Watch and pray, nor leave our post of duty,  
Till we hear the Bridegroom's voice.  
Then, with Him the marriage feast partaking,  
We shall evermore rejoice.  
—Submitted by Sister K R



### "Come Out of Her, My People" (Part 5) Vacation Mentality

Timothy carefully maneuvered the truck into the congested highway. The traffic inched along for several miles. The minutes ticked by. Would he reach the supply store before closing time?

"Where are all these people going?" Timothy noticed a large motor home in the exit lane ahead. Behind him was a pickup, pulling a camper. "Exit 6 is the main route to Lakeside Campground," Timothy pondered. "June

weather is attracting lots of vacationers." Another motor home eased up beside Timothy as the traffic came to another halt. A bold bumper sticker caught his eye. "I'm Spending My Children's Inheritance."

Modern society lives for their vacations. Whether it is an extended weekend by the lake or a four-week traveling tour, most people have the mentality that "you owe it to yourself."

Do Christians need vacation? Do we owe it to ourselves? Certainly our bodies need rest, and "the sleep of a labouring man is sweet." We also need worthwhile things that recreate the mind. But good diversions can usually be found right at home! Too often, a vacation mentality is not content with home.

The vacation mentality tends to desecrate the Lord's Day. Weekends are filled with lively recreation and strenuous sports. Our God-given day of rest was designed both for man's benefit and, more importantly, for God's glory. We must not forsake the assembly of the saints. Our children learn that church attendance is foremost and frequent.

The vacation mentality is a serious misplacement of values. Our culture has come to believe that "the good life" includes regular indulgences of relaxation and "getting away." This lifestyle is costly and unbecoming for disciples of Christ. While others are touring the world, we must keep to the narrow way, which truly leads to life.

A vacation mentality does not preserve a good attitude toward work. It promotes the concept that work is stressful, tiresome bondage. "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Will not this attitude have a reckoning day? Loafing, laughter, and laziness will surely stifle spiritual interests. If every idle word will be judged, how much more our idle hours or days?

Grandfather's advice, "Take time to smell the roses," is still good advice. We should gaze at the stars too. And our families will benefit from a trip to the zoo. But Grandfather's vacations from the farm were rare. Even though most of us are not tied to the farm the way our ancestors were, should not extended stays away from home be infrequent?

Spiritual priorities and stewardship principles must govern our traveling and sightseeing interests. Is it becoming for the people of God to plan excursions merely for pleasure? Will not those who are seeking first the kingdom of God plan their travels primarily around church and family events?

We should consider several precautions when planning a family vacation. Avoid thinking that parents need to get away from their children. Keep the family together. Avoid multifamily overnight excursions. Good discipline

and proper reserve can easily be lost. We should question the outcome of prevalent vacation patterns. Would a cabin-going or camping-out habit help or hinder spiritual appetites?

The Christian life has no vacation. Even when visiting a point of interest or involved in a legitimate recreational activity, we are still responsible to be faithful disciples, servants, and ambassadors of Jesus Christ. While the carnal world is busy vacationing, living for the here and now, God's children must "come out from among them" in pursuit of an eternal, heavenly rest.

*Brother Christopher*



### **PRAYER POINT**

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

Pray for wisdom in relating to the budding interest in Togo, a West African country bordering Ghana. Pray for the approximately two thousand correspondence students who are studying the Bible in the French language.

Pray for the summer street meeting work sponsored by the churchwide Literature Evangelism Committee and by local congregations. Pray for a vision to behold the fields, "for they are white already to harvest."

Pray that we may be delivered from the plague of public immodesty and immorality of our day. Pray that "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation [we may] shine as lights in the world."

Thank the Lord for another successful school year. We can hardly estimate the value and influence of nine months of school life in a godly environment. May God bless our students and teachers as they plan for a profitable summer vacation.

