

# The FCM Informer

Volume XXII, No. 5

The Fellowship of Concerned Mennonites  
PO Box 106, Harrisonburg, VA 22803

September/October 2007

## Feminism Gone to Seed

by J. Otis Yoder

Ahab's queen Jezebel mars the pages of the Bible. Her strong will and her worship of the false god Baal made a combination which brought to a head a decisive confrontation.

Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, the priest-king of Tyre and Sidon. She came into Israel through a political marriage to King Ahab. Kings in those times often married a daughter of a threatening neighbor nation to seal a nonaggression treaty with that neighbor.

It seems in this marriage Jezebel retained the right to her pagan worship of Baal and to introduce the idol to the people of Israel. In fact, she had a pair of gods, Baal, the male, and Asherah, the female. (Would that satisfy those of our day who want a female god?)

Although Baal's adherents considered him a fertility god, conditions in Israel seriously deteriorated. The early and latter rains failed as Elijah had told Ahab the king. Even the morning was dry, no dew.

The sun came up every morning in a cloudless sky. It blazed down all day long. It was the same day after day. The worse conditions became, it seemed the more determined Jezebel and her subjects were. She was a strong-willed domineering feminist. Nobody stood in her way. She had no conscience. Prophets had to hide in caves to escape her outrage, fed on bread and water by Obadiah.

One prophet, Elijah, boldly escaped her rampage, hidden by the Lord and fed by the ravens. She hated him with Baal hatred. She blamed Elijah for the drought.

So day after day for three and a half years, the sun shone down from a cloudless sky; with not a wisp of a cloud. Brooks were dried up. Dependable springs failed. Pastures lay parched. Cattle were dying. All this only made Jezebel the more angry.

Then the day came for a showdown. Elijah confronted Obadiah while he and King Ahab were searching for some grass and water to save the horses and mules. Elijah was not the kind of person to use Dale Carnegie's psychology, "how to win friends and influence people." Abruptly he told Obadiah, "Go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here."

Obadiah cringed. He could almost feel the cold steel of the sword on his neck if the Lord would whisk Elijah away, and Ahab would revengefully kill Obadiah for a false report. Ahab had reeked vengeance on others whose spotting of Elijah had proved unproductive. But Elijah promised to stay visible.

When the king and the prophet met, their words were bitter. Ahab put it straight to Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah matched Ahab's thrust with, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim" (I Kings 18:17,18)

Elijah proposed a decisive contest on Mount Carmel between 450 prophets of Baal and one prophet of God. It appeared to be grossly mismatched. Elijah called the people to decide between Baal, the idol, and Jehovah, the Great I AM—the God who can answer by fire.

The prophet laid out the procedure involving an altar, a sacrifice, and the fire of God. The 450 went first. They prepared an altar and a sacrifice and cried themselves hoarse from morning past noon. In their ritual dance they leaped upon the altar and cut themselves with knives and lancets in a kind of bloodletting sacrament.

Nothing came from the cloudless sky—no voice, no answer, no fire. Baal was stone deaf. The 450 were spent by their feverish gyrations. At the time of the evening sacrifice Elijah asked them and the people to come near to him.

Reverently the prophet repaired the altar in the name of the Lord using twelve stones representing the twelve sons of Jacob. He dug a trench around the altar, properly arranged the wood, and cut the bullock in pieces as detailed in the Law of Moses. He soaked it all with twelve barrels of water filling the trench. Then he anointed it with a simple prayer to Jehovah to turn back the hearts of the people.

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# The School Needs You

*by Ronald Martin*

The freedom to operate our own schools is but one of the tremendous blessings we experience. As a result of God's blessing on the hard work of faithful personnel, our schools produce results that the public school system can only dream of, at a cost that they can not believe possible. Complacency, however, has ruined many a successful venture; so, at the beginning of another school term, I would like you to consider what your contribution should be to the work of the school.

Teachers, you make an obvious contribution on a daily basis. More important than your store of pedagogical knowledge, you contribute a role model for your students. They will copy your expressions and tone of voice. Your enthusiasm for learning, your respect for authority, and your commitment to excellence will be mirrored in your students. The parents and the school board have the right to expect you to make school your top priority and to avail yourselves of opportunities to sharpen your job-related skills through reading and teacher instruction courses. While your contribution is important, remember, you are not alone in the work.

School board members, your contribution is foundational to the long-term success of the school. You are responsible for the core ideology of the school. From such obvious factors as the choice of teachers and curriculum to the more subtle factors such as library and reference books and the promptness with which maintenance issues are addressed, your values are being communicated at school. We would question the commitment of a farmer who does not feel it important to read any farming publications or to attend any seminars pertaining to his work. As a school board member, you should contribute a commitment to excellence that motivates you to read widely and to take in some of the educational classes provided at various school institutes so that you can better understand how good schools function. Teachers, parents, and students also expect your confidentiality. You have an inside track to an abundance of information that is not common knowledge. If your wife or children are commonly the root of the school grapevine, you are not contributing properly to the work of the school.

Parents, your contribution is key to determining the level of benefit your children will receive from the opportunities before them. Your contribution of respect for school authority is vital. To speak negatively of school board decisions and to question a teacher's policies in the public forum contributes nothing constructive to either the school or your children. You should also contribute motivation for your children to learn things that you never studied in school. Help your children to see the doors of opportunity that such studies will open for them rather than saying, "I never studied that, and I am making out just fine in life!" Parents also contribute to the work of the school when they take an interest in their children's schoolwork, when they visit school, and when they are available to help orchestrate the various special

activities for the school. Parents contribute greatly to easing the work load of the teachers when they drop off and pick up their students on time, when they ensure that their children have their homework completed and practice work finished, and when they communicate with the school staff any home schedules that will impact the school. Parents are also expected to contribute financially to the operation of the school. At times this expectation seems a heavy burden until we view it in comparison with the spiritual, moral, and academic costs we would incur if we were to use the public educational system. Finally, possibly the greatest contribution parents can make to the smooth functioning of the school is to daily, fervently pray for the work.

Grandparents, your contribution is also needed in the work of the school. Pray daily for the work as you can see probably most clearly the impact education has on later life. Your interest in school also contributes enthusiasm to the teachers and children. As you share your experiences and interact collectively and on a personal level, you can add relevance to studies that at times seem abstract to children due to their lack of experience. You too can contribute financially to the work of the school. Grandparents often have more economic freedom than do families with school-age children, and your contribution to the school can do much to lighten the burden the younger families need to carry.

Young people, you too can make an important contribution to the work of the school. School children often look at you with admiration and a desire for your approval. You can contribute to the school by sharing only the profitable aspects of your school experience and by encouraging the students to make the best use of their time in school. Consider seriously also whether God is calling you to contribute directly to the school as a teacher. A willingness to be a substitute teacher is a great contribution that not only will bless the teacher but also will have a trickle-down effect on the students and will be a growing experience for you as well. Youth also should take seriously their privilege of contributing financially to the school work. Many young men today hold well-paying jobs because of the quality education they received in our schools yesterday. You can choose to view your money selfishly as a product of your hard work or you can honestly admit that what you are earning today is a direct result of the input that others have made in your life. Contributing financially to the work of the school is but one way to express your appreciation of what the school has contributed in your life.

Together, all of us can contribute appreciation for the involvement of all the others in the work of the school. School is a corporate effort. Given your contribution and my contribution and God's blessing, the work of the school will continue to produce a generation that is a blessing to society and a testimony of the truth of God's Word.

*Reprinted with permission from The Pilgrim Witness, Sept, 2007*

# Faking Church

by Dan Schaeffer

Ned sits down next to his wife, Tanya, in the church his family has called home for many years. He smiles, waves, jokes, and engages in friendly banter with everyone around him. He is a fixture in the church having been involved in leadership for many years. Ned is well known, well liked, and deeply admired for his spiritual life. People continually stop and greet him. Frank, one of the men he has discipled, waves to him from across the church. Ned smiles and waves back. He remembers sharing with Frank how to live the Christian life. Suddenly he feels a pang of guilt.

## SERVING HIM – OR SERVING ME?

It happens slowly, subtly. Most Christians aren't even aware of it when it happens. The "it" is a spiritual defection. What others see of our faith and service to Christ has become distorted – inevitably in our favor. The deception has taken root.

You may have noticed it from time to time as the stain on your soul showed through behind your spiritual façade, but it seemed such a slight blemish that it was acceptable. You have begun the downward spiral of spiritual defection from sincere service to Christ and His church.

But don't take this judgment too personally; you aren't the only one. I'm another.

Years ago I was in a church where a new and exciting ministry was opening up. I was hoping to be chosen to lead the ministry. I felt I was the best qualified and was sure I would be chosen. I wasn't. I was frustrated, angry, and jealous. Of course, I didn't show it. At that point I seriously thought about leaving the church.

I see it clearly now, how I was motivated by ego, pride, and ambition. But there are "hidden" sins, so very easily cloaked. This is not to say I did not love God and want to serve Him; I did. But, sadly, I wanted to serve me more than I wanted to serve Him.

By withholding this opportunity, God was working to dislodge a destructive attitude that would threaten to destroy any true and sincere ministry I might attempt. I had forgotten that my gift had not been given to me for my personal glory. My gift had been given to glorify Jesus, and to strengthen the believers.

## SUCCESSFUL IMPOSTERS

When you represent God so visibly, such as with a teaching gift, it can be nearly impossible for anyone to detect you're a fake. You're saying such great things about God that you outwardly appear the picture of sincerity. If you don't do self-examination, no one may ever know. Except for God. Seeds of defection can grow deep roots in your soul, even as your ministry reputation expands.

You may read your Bible regularly, listen to good Christian music, or read books by the latest and most popular Christian authors. You may be a popular Christian "personality", or a pastor, or a leader in your Christian circles. You may even feel very spiritual at times; but you're a fake, an imposter.

I have, on numerous Sunday mornings, preached a message

that deeply moved members of the congregation. Ironically, I had "prepared" for ministry that morning by arguing with my wife on the way to church, or made life miserable for my children because they were making us late. But years of practice came to the rescue, and I easily morphed into "Pastor Dan." I was instantly compassionate, holy, and spiritual. I was faking church.

When Jesus sent out His disciples on their first mission, they came back and exclaimed with great excitement, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He encouraged them, but also warned them: "Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:17-20). It is addicting to be the center of attention in ministry.

When I counsel with someone and she or he tells me how great a listener I am and how much I have helped, it feels good. When I teach and I am praised for my insight or delivery, it feels good. When I visit the sick and they express their appreciation, it feels good. Doing good is not often as rewarding to me as looking or feeling good. I can do some really good things for some really lousy reasons. Feeling needed, respected, wanted, and significant can become as great a motivation as love for Christ. In fact, if we aren't careful, one day our love for affirmation becomes the biggest motivation to service. And because so much good is still occurring, few notice.

A.W. Tozer once wrote, "Many a solo is sung to show off; many a sermon is preached as an exhibition of talent; many a church is founded as a slap to some other church. Even missionary activity may become competitive, and soul winning may degenerate into a sort of brush-salesman project to satisfy the flesh."

We're all fakes. Oh, we're not all fakes all the time. In fact we can spend a good deal of our time truly and genuinely serving. But most of us would admit that the spiritual image others have of us isn't always accurate; in fact, at times it is nowhere near reality. It is a fearful thing to let others in on the dark secret.

## BEING ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

I don't want to suggest that we never truly serve Christ. More to the point, our motives for ministry are mixed far more than we imagine.

We have not lost our desire to serve Christ. But a subtle defection has occurred nonetheless. We begin to serve ourselves just a little more than we serve Him. And over and over again the story of Ananias and Sapphira is played out – in the church and in us.

In Acts 5 we read the story of this couple in the early church who, on seeing the generosity of other believers who gave up land and possessions to be sold to give to the poor, decided that was a great idea – in principle. What they were really attracted to was the increased spiritual standing that each of these people, who so unselfishly gave, received.

Ananias and Sapphira are the original church fakers. They decided to sell a piece of land they owned, but secretly gave only half the proceeds. They wanted a spiritual reputation, but they didn't want to pay retail. This deception, revealed by the Holy

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# An Example of the Slippery Slope?

by Paul Emerson

In 1997, Conservative Mennonite Conference voted not to require the veiling for ministers' wives. The debate at that time included an acknowledgement that while the Scriptures taught the veiling, the Conference was somehow not in a position to require this Biblical practice from its constituents. As best this writer could understand the majority CMC position, one should teach what the Bible says but make obedience either optional or subject to private interpretation. The Confession of Faith was not something to be enforced.

Now, ten years later, the aforementioned group has voted to drop another Biblical practice. CMC policy had previously forbidden its ministers to perform marriage ceremonies between divorced persons. By an 86% vote on August 3, 2007, CMC granted permission for ministers to perform marriage ceremonies between divorced persons.

One wonders what the next point on the "slippery slope" will be. Since acceleration usually occurs during movement down the "slippery slope", will the next compromise on Scriptural issues even take 10 years? Is restraint entirely gone?

The human cry from the progressives during times like

these is, "We must recognize where we are and accept it." While it is true that we should recognize where we are, we should neither accept nor legitimize drift away from the simple principles of the Word of God.

It is interesting to note that those evangelical Protestants, who hold the Reformed view of divorce and remarriage as opposed to the Biblical Anabaptist view, have lately started to forbid their ministry from performing marriage ceremonies between divorced persons. For them it is not particularly a doctrinal issue, but rather a set of practical considerations in magnifying the sanctity of marriage within our decadent culture. Thus, while many in the Anabaptist world rush to depart from pure Biblical practice, others outside our tradition move (perhaps unintentionally) closer to Biblical practice. Such seems ironic to this writer.

The issue here is not what a particular conference does or does not do. The purpose of noting the above is to call us all to Biblically examine our practices. We are all made from the "same clay". Every believer has at least one "Achilles' heel". More probably we each have many "blind spots". "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

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God heard. The fire fell! It consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and "licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God" (I Kings 18:38, 39).

There was another sacrifice by the brook Kishon. Elijah supervised that one, too. Those 450 prophets were slain.

Then Elijah prayed for rain and the cloudburst watered the land. But Jezebel was infuriated. Instead of humbly accepting the truth of God, she threatened the prophet, vowing to eliminate him.

Later Jezebel used her diabolical scheming to wipe out God-fearing Naboth so Ahab could seize the good man's inheritance. Her determined spirit met a match in Jehu when she came to a sorry end. Dogs ate her carcass leaving only her skull, feet and the palms of her hands to be buried (II Kings 9:33).

But the influence of that wicked woman pervaded the history of God's people for centuries, even down to the days of the apostle John. The church at Thyatira was afflicted with her spirit. In His message, Jesus warned the church at Thyatira to get rid of her. Could this also be a warning for us?

We hesitate to imply that any woman of our Mennonite Church is like Jezebel, strong willed, consumed with a false god.

Yet the way some react to the biblical code for relationships and leadership in the body of Christ raises concerns. Leaders have been captivated by the psychology and mood of the times. Surely we ought not design our agenda after an unholy society. Had we no infallible Guide Book we then would need to do the best we can. But were our leaders to accept God's Word for what it truly is, GOD'S WORD, we affirm they would lead us differently.

We need fearless prophets like Elijah who will rise up to resist the inroads of pluralism and duplicity regardless under what banner they may come. Is there some Baalism among us?

Movements across the church warn us that we are living in days of great tensions. Truth lies slain in the sanctuary. So much seems only to be cries to a deaf god. There is no answer and no fire.

Political agendas in our capitals hew the path to cater to the lowest lusts of the race. Evil is mounting with the force of a cloudburst.

Our Master has predicted that evil will cover the world as an indicator of his return. We urge our readers to "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." He is at the door!

*Reprinted with permission from Sword & Trumpet, May 1993*

# Who Shall Order the Battle?

*by Glenn Sensenig*

The king of Israel was facing an invading enemy. The prophet of God came to him with a promise of victory. The king then asked the prophet by whom the victory would come. He answered, "By the young men of the princes of the provinces." The king's next question was, "Who shall order the battle?" The prophet's answer was, "Thou" (I Kings 20:13, 14).

This exchange shows the value of young and old working in harmony in the roles best suited to them. The physically strong young men faced the enemy. The older and more seasoned gave oversight.

It also brings into focus the need to adjust to changing roles as youth mature. Youth are eager for the battles of life, in contrast to the elderly who have borne the burdens of life and anticipate a more retiring role.

This process of transferring responsibility from parents to children can present unique challenges. Youth who are eager for more responsibility and decision-making may seem very immature to parents. Sometimes youth react when feeling mistrusted and struggle in relating to parents.

This occurs because growing children change quite rapidly and parents may have difficulty adjusting. On the other hand, parents have reached a plateau of maturity and are more stable. But there is great blessing and joy in our homes when each can appreciate and profit from the contribution of the other.

Consider these guidelines for transferring responsibility from the older to the younger:

1. Too much responsibility too young can spoil the maturing process. Responsibility and decision-making should be matched to age and maturity.

2. The eagerness of youth to take on more responsibility prematurely is normal and should not be discouraged by parents. But parents, not children, should decide what is best.
3. Maturity is partially measured by the ability to assume responsibility without becoming vain and boastful. A humble openness to counsel when shouldering responsibility shows maturity.
4. Sometimes more responsibility should be given even though parents may be apprehensive. It is part of developing the child (and the parents).
5. Parents need to gradually change from treating their upper teens as children to treating them as adults.
6. When it is obvious that a child is unable to make mature decisions, parents need to assert themselves and make sure the right thing happens.
7. When children develop a cynical outlook toward parents or others it is likely that they have been given more responsibility than they are able to handle.
8. The time comes in life when parents should be responsive to the input of mature children. This brings a reverse set of challenges—the family guiding parents through maturity.

Transferring the yoke from one generation to the next results in misunderstanding and polarization in many homes in society today. But God intends that this be a good time in family life when unique blessings can be enjoyed. The greater the negative potential, the greater the positive potential. God wants us to experience the best in each period of life.

*Reprinted with permission from Home Horizons, September 2007.*

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Spirit, was dealt with severely. Fortunately, their secret defection is illuminated to us by the Holy Spirit to serve as a warning to us.

We are taught to loathe their example, but I'm afraid we've often simply copied it, albeit to a lesser degree. I have discovered, with some shame, that there is a great deal more of Ananias and Sapphira in me than I care to admit. The answer to this dilemma does not lie in removing ourselves from our ministries, or positions, or our churches. Church is the ideal haven for fakes and sinners of all kinds. We simply need to be willing to admit we've been faking it. I have found that the Holy Spirit can very effectively reveal my less-than-noble motivations upon request. I have also begun to discover the much more fulfilling ministry

of genuine service.

We need to ask God to begin to reveal to us improper motivations for service and spiritual reputations we do not deserve. This is a prayer clearly within His will that He will surely answer, though not an easy prayer to pray. Oh, the words are simple enough, but the implications are serious. It requires tough honesty and transparency. We may learn that we are not the person we thought we were. This is at first depressing. But it is also freeing, as the truth always is.

Faking church will always be a temptation, but when we can admit the truth, it can become a temptation we learn to resist.

*Reprinted from Moody, July/August 2003*

# Feeding the Flock

by Melvin Worthington

### The Dangers of Spiritual Immaturity

The dangers of spiritual immaturity cannot be ignored as a threat to progress in God's work.

Paul described the Corinthians as "babes" in Christ. They were incapable of digesting any nourishment other than that suited for children. They had not developed in grace and humility but were "proud" of their gifts.

The Corinthian Church had lost its strong spirit of unity and become filled with discord and dissention. Their disharmony resulted in toleration of immense evils in their group.

Whereas their salvation was not questioned, their sanctification was certainly not progressing properly. Envy, strife, and division never characterize mature Christians.

Spiritual immaturity hinders progress in any group. The impulsiveness, impatience, intolerance and insinuations often manifested in our own meetings indicate spiritual immaturity. Such attitudes always result in strife and schisms.

### The Diet of Spiritual Instruction

The diet of scriptural instruction is prescribed for spiritual maturity. At conversion Christians are infants in a new world. They see new objects and, though they have joy and great self-confidence, they are weak in themselves and in need of constant teaching.

All believers are to desire the milk of the Word that they may grow (I Peter 2:2). Hebrews 5:11-14 indicates that believers should develop in their Christian experience so they might feast on the meat of the Word. Both milk and meat are nourishing food.

Paul's use of milk and meat suggests two sets of truth, one for the less mature (milk) and the other for the more mature (meat).

Bible reading should be done on a regular basis, not haphazardly. No Christian can reach maturity without being nourished by the Word. There is no substitute.

We need renewed emphasis on the diet God prescribed for proper spiritual development.

To get the most from Bible reading, a believer must have proper disposition, desire and diligence.

Whenever spiritual immaturity lingers over a prolonged period, it can usually be traced to neglect of the Scriptures.

### The Duty of Shepherds

The duty of shepherds includes feeding the flock. The pastor has a solemn duty to teach the flock.

The ideal pastor is one who engages in a didactic ministry, feeding the saints on expository preaching to give them the rich food of the Word, thereby prompting the Church's internal development which leads to numerical growth as well.

One qualification for a bishop (pastor) is that he be "apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:2). He is not simply to try his hand at teaching, but he must be able and skillful at it.

Skill in teaching is the special office of the minister who has the duty of instructing believers and disputing the gainsayers. Pastors not only need the ability to teach but the willingness as well.

The pastor has the solemn duty to tend the flock (John 21:16, I Peter 5:2). In these instances the word "feed" means to govern, care for, guide, and protect. The pastor has the duty of faithfully guarding, governing, and guiding his flock. He must make provisions for their growth and protect them from dangers.

The pastor also has the solemn duty to train his flock. Having taught his flock, and in the process of tending his flock, the pastor must train them as well.

Careful attention to training will help believers to have a clear, comprehensive, and correct view of their duty to Christ, family, church, and community.

The pastor who faithfully and fervently engages in the work of feeding the flock God has given him to shepherd will reap eternal dividends.

Labor which proceeds from the love of Jesus pleases the Master.

*Reprinted with permission from Pulpit Helps, Spring 2007*

# Learning from History

by P. Daniel Stetler

My younger brother and I once began arguing over who had been in the most trouble during our growing-up years. I was confident that I had received far more punishment than he had, but he quickly brought our debate to an end when he said, “You probably did get in more trouble than I did because I watched all the dumb things you did and didn’t do them.”

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could all learn from the experiences of others that easily? Unfortunately, we seldom seem to learn what history has to teach us, and those who don’t learn from history inevitably repeat it.

I am particularly concerned that the Church of our day learns from history. There are certain periods in the history of the Church which are shining examples of God’s grace at work in our world. But there are other periods which cause us to bow our heads in shame. We certainly do not want to repeat those mistakes.

The Church began in a “blaze of glory.” The Day of Pentecost and the events that followed were phenomenal by any standard. As Paul and other Christian missionaries traveled across the Roman Empire, churches sprang up everywhere. Before the end of the 1st century, the Apostle Paul was writing about “saints in Caesar’s household.” (Phil. 4:22)

Unfortunately, this success attracted the attention of Caesar, and ultimately Rome determined to stamp out Christianity. For the first 300 years of its existence the Church was bitterly persecuted; but in spite of all opposition, it was unstoppable. Early in the 4th century, however, circumstances changed radically. Christianity was legalized in 313 AD, and then in 391 it became the official religion of the Empire.

Initially, the Church had been made up of people who were willing to put their lives on the line to be Christians. After Christianity became the official religion of the Empire, everyone wanted to be a Christian. This brought a flood of unconverted people into the Church. Their motive for becoming “Christians” was far more political than spiritual, and the result of this influx was that the Church went into a dramatic spiritual decline.

These new “Christians” brought with them many of the practices and beliefs from their pagan religions. Soon Christian worship became diluted with heathen practices, and doctrine was corrupted by pagan philosophies. The Church that could not be stopped by persecution was eventually destroyed by its own success and growth.

What followed was one of the most tragic periods in

the history of the world – the Dark Ages. It is a shameful blot in the history that during this period, the Church was one of the most powerful forces in the world, yet it did little or nothing to dispel the darkness. In fact, the Church itself ultimately became completely engulfed in darkness.

The only hope for the Church was a revival of vital Christianity, and that eventually came in the form of the Protestant Reformation. The Word of God was translated into the language of the people, and the light of God’s truth began to dispel the darkness.

Unfortunately, the Church has not learned the lessons from history. Time after time across the centuries it has tried to win the world through accommodation, only to discover that such efforts always lead to serious spiritual decline and darkness.

The Church of the 21st century seems to be following those same well-worn paths. In its zeal to succeed and grow, the Church has assumed the values, philosophies, operational styles, entertainments, and lifestyles of the world it hopes to win. This approach has never worked in the past, and it certainly is not working in the 21st century.

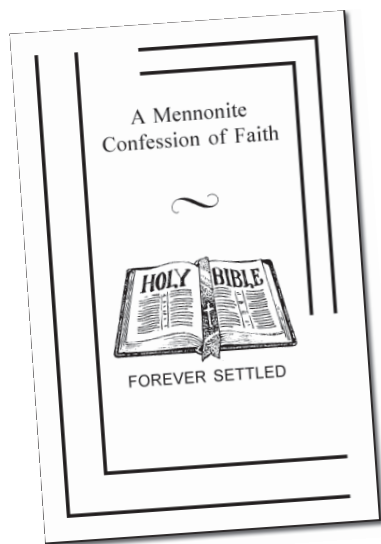
George Gallup has demonstrated repeatedly in his statistical studies that there is no longer any significant difference between “Christians” and “non-Christians” even in such foundational areas as basic honesty and moral purity. When religion loses its ability to change and elevate people, it is ultimately rejected by the society around it. This has already happened in Western Europe, where in some countries less than 2% of the population attends church on a normal Sunday morning.

Is there hope for our situation, or are we headed for another “Dark Ages?” There is no doubt that our nation is in steep spiritual and moral decline. There is no doubt that we desperately need a major spiritual awakening. But THERE IS HOPE!!!

The same historical record which reveals the utter futility of accommodating the world also reveals that, even in the darkest times, God is actively preparing to revive His work. History further reveals that for nearly 1000 years God has broken through the darkness with a spiritual awakening at least once in every century. If we are to be Christians God can use to bring a spiritual awakening, we must learn both of these lessons from history. If we learn them, our earnest prayer will be, “Lord, revive your work; do it now; and begin that work in me!”

*Reprinted from The Torch Summer 2007*

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*Where History In Review...  
Becomes History in the Making!*

For many years Bro. Walter Beachy of Plain City, OH, has honored the Lord and blessed the Church through his professional yet personable preaching and teaching style. While the Lord is continuing to use him in very meaningful ways across this land (as well as in other countries) there is a concern that the increased limitations of aging may eventually diminish his ability to do so. In a day with so much advanced technology making it possible to capture this message for the good of future generations, it would be regrettable not to thus preserve his teaching on Anabaptist History & Theology.

*A place of retreat... And a place of learning...*

### **Where**

- Farmstead Inn & Conference Center in Shipshewana, IN

### **When**

- April 14-16, 2008

### **Who**

- Anyone 12 years and older
- All varieties of Anabaptist tradition such as Mennonites, Beachy, Amish, along with anyone seeking to learn more of the Anabaptist way.
- Due to the fact that a diversified attendance is desired (and that space is limited) we reserve the right to qualify our audience.

### **Cost**

- \$140 per person. This will include two nights lodging, refreshments at a "Meet and Greet" evening, continental breakfasts and meals for both days, plus the classic beverages offered throughout the Conference.
- Come for a pleasant, relaxing time of learning and fellowship!

*A place to give... And a place to receive...*

We are looking for businesses and others who could underwrite the costs for the production of this project. The estimated costs will range between \$5,000---\$10,000. Tax deductible receipts will be given as well as acknowledging credits in the edited version of the final presentation. Reproductions of this video will be available through the FCM, (Fellowship of Concerned Mennonites) for distribution to Bible Schools, Church Libraries, and individuals.

### **Call us**

For further information and to make reservations please call:

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