

MOVEMENT & FOUNDATIONS

I recently received an email from a high school senior who lives near where I grew up. He had questions about local colleges and whether there are Mennonite churches in the area. This young man has been an enthusiastic supporter of Anabaptist Perspectives over the years. Last year, we responded to some of his questions in a Partner program bonus episode (see page 7). He and I also had some dialogue after that episode. I am grateful I was able to share from my own experience.

The last months have seen some exciting developments for us. We added Twitter and a dial-in phone line to our distribution platforms. We moved to publishing episodes weekly instead of biweekly and have been sharing excerpts from those episodes as short video clips. We have devoted more preparation to interviews in order to go deeper with each topic. We have seen audience growth across our various platforms including podcasts, email list, and Telegram/CloudVeil. On YouTube, several outstanding videos in March allowed us reach 8,000 different people who watched for an average of 21 minutes that month.

Much of this growth comes from the strategic decision last summer to build on the previous six years by solidifying the organization. Until that point, all work was done by part-time employees or subcontractors. I had been involved in various ways from the beginning and agreed to phase up my involvement to full time by January 2025. We have hired a full-time editor and videographer. Through these changes, our founders continue to anchor the work. Jaran Miller hosts episodes, guards the direction and selection of content, and engages with many comments and emails from our audience. Reagan Schrock hosts many episodes, keeps us abreast of the media landscape, and works with guests, partners, and supporters. As we press forward, we want to widen our distribution and deepen our conversations. We need wisdom from God and his people; we invite you to pray to that end and to share your thoughts, questions, and insights.

Marlin Sommers *Executive Director*



VISION

Using digital media to encourage allegiance to Jesus' sacrificial kingdom.



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Executive Director



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Co-founder & Editorial Director



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Co-founder & Podcast Host



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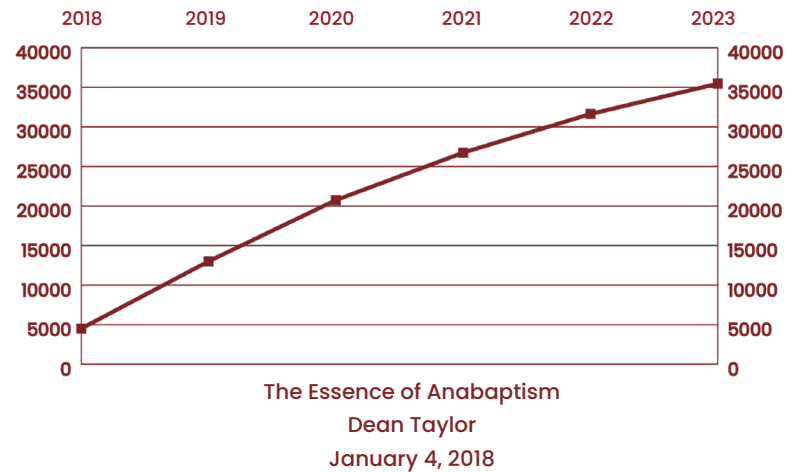


Arlyn Kauffman
Board Member



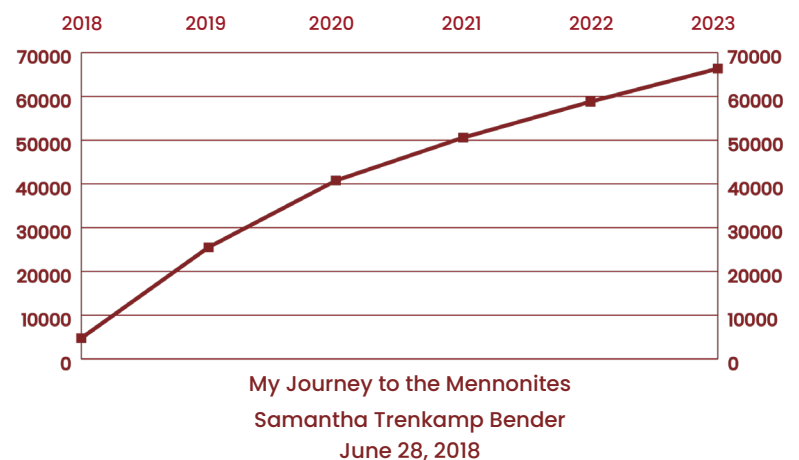
Jason Eby
Board Member

Cumulative YouTube Views



We focus on creating “evergreen” content that is relevant for years to come. Episodes released years ago continue to be viewed and interacted with (see charts). This is important to us and is why we spend significant time on production and emphasize in-person interviews. We aim for the value (both in topics and in quality of video and audio) to be high enough that it continues to be encouraging to listeners for many years to come. When we record an episode, I continually remind myself that this is not just a podcast here today in someone’s feed and gone tomorrow. Rather, this content will continue to be viewed and interacted with for years to come. This is exciting, but also a sobering reminder of the responsibility we have. Here are examples of YouTube videos that continue to get significant engagement well after they were published.

Reagan Schrock *Co-founder and podcast host*



WHAT IS JESUS' SACRIFICIAL KINGDOM?

Note: This is a condensed version of an essay by Marlin Sommers. Read or listen to the full version on our website. Links, citations, and more extensive scripture references can be found there.

anabaptistperspectives.org/essays/what-is-jesus-sacrificial-kingdom



Our vision is **using digital media to encourage allegiance to Jesus' sacrificial kingdom**. Why do we describe this kingdom as sacrificial?

As Anabaptists emphasize, God's kingdom is not "right-side-up" by the world's standards, but "up-side-down." Visions of God's kingdom that imagine imposing God's rule through violence, or the power of the state, are false to Christianity. Jesus operates differently and calls us to follow him. That is one reason we speak of his kingdom as "sacrificial."

But sacrifice is not only about difficult things. Relationship, not suffering, is the essence of sacrifice. The sacrifices we offer to God are sacred gifts. New Testament sacrifice means partnering with God as we joyfully live from the mind of Christ.

Jesus Established His Reign through Sacrifice

The Lion of the tribe of Judah stands as a lamb that was slain. We belong to Jesus as his servants because he ransomed us from the "futile ways inherited from [our] ancestors" with his precious blood. Jesus was at once the giver of the sacrifice, the priest who offered it, and the sacrifice itself. In the Old Testament, a sacrifice was not acceptable if the giver was living in sin and injustice or did not have a contrite heart. Sacrifices were offered through a priest who was cleansed and consecrated to approach God for the worshiper. Sacrifices were to be given from the best of what one had, and blemished offerings were not acceptable.

Jesus the perfect priest offered himself

Continued next page

MISSION

1. Engage with questions important for faithful living in ways that are biblically, historically, and theologically informed.
2. Share stories and history (especially from the Anabaptist movement) as a source of understanding and inspiration for serving the King.
3. Publish content regularly on major platforms, interact with audience responses, and build an expanding resource library.

as an acceptable sacrifice. We are accepted “in him,” and in him, we are a kingly priesthood who can offer our bodies as spiritual sacrifices.

Jesus is a Passover lamb. This was the sacrifice that marked God’s ransom of a people from the power of Egypt. It is the sacrifice reflected in the Lord’s supper where we are given his body to eat. (1 Corinthians 5:7-8)

Jesus’ death is a sin offering. This was offered in recognition of sin. It was normally an animal, but in cases of poverty it could be some other type of food. The sin offering was mostly burned, but some of it was eaten by the priest so that the priest could bear the sins of the people. The blood of the sin offering was for purging and cleansing, even as Jesus’ blood makes us holy. Hebrews 13 points out that the flesh of the sin offering was burned outside the camp, just as Jesus was killed outside Jerusalem. Believers go “outside the camp” and identify with his shame.

Jesus is a fragrant offering. Various offerings are described as a sweet smell to God. God was pleased with the worshiper and accepted his worship.

Jesus’ Sacrifice Shows Us How to Live and Relate to Others

We are to live in light of Jesus’ sacrifice.

Love as he loved us and gave himself for us. Bear the shame he bore. Live without the “leaven” of malice and wickedness and with the “unleavened bread” of sincerity and truth.

As one of my pastors used to say, “It is a lie that Jesus died so we don’t have to die.” We share Christ’s death and carry our own cross. We are united with him in his death so that we may be united with him in his life. We seek to know the fellowship of his suffering so that we may know the power of his resurrection.

Allegiance to Jesus’ sacrificial kingdom means imitating his sacrifice. It means overcoming evil with good, loving our enemies (and our friends), dying to our self-will, our pride, and our boasting, and entrusting ourselves to the Father who cares for us and the vindicator who judges justly.

The Whole of Life is Given to God

Allegiance to Jesus’ sacrificial kingdom is not to be thought of as some grim and glum affair. Nor does sacrifice come only in difficult choices. Remember, that while sacrifices are gifts, and gifts have a cost, these gifts are not always “given up.” In many cases, the worshiper would eat (and enjoy) the animal before the Lord. 1 Peter tells us that we are a redeemed and consecrated priesthood that can offer spiri-

PRODUCTION

Episode with John Coblentz



tual sacrifices to God. What are some of those sacrifices?

While Hebrews 13 calls us to share the shame that Jesus experienced as a sin offering, it also indicates sacrifices we can make that please God. We can praise God by confessing that Jesus is Lord, and we can use our material goods to bless others.

Romans 12 brings our entire life into the realm of worship. Paul urges us to present our bodies a living sacrifice which can be holy and acceptable to God as spiritual worship. Presenting our bodies to God as instruments of righteousness and offering our devoted lives is a worship service that is spiritual or rational in character. It is not presenting something physical through temple ritual but engaging our reason in devotion to God as we act from a renewed mind.

Allegiance as Response to Jesus' Sacrificial Kingdom

Allegiance is a question of loyalty. To whom are you devoted? Are you faithful to a leader? In the proper sense of the word, only God is worthy of allegiance. To give full allegiance to anything else is to worship an idol—a vain thing unworthy of such devotion. Our vision at Anabaptist

Perspectives is to encourage allegiance to King Jesus in our actions and in what we value and treasure.

I agree with those Christians, Anabaptist or otherwise, who refuse to pledge allegiance to a flag or country. Nations and governments ask for allegiance they can't rightfully be given. Dimensions of allegiance related to nationalism, empire, and war have been a central theme for us at Anabaptist Perspectives. Various episodes with Dean Taylor have followed up on themes from his book *A Change of Allegiance* which explains his journey out of the US military. Many other episodes have explored themes of God's kingdom and how it relates to warfare and empire. We produced an audio version of David Bercot's book *In God We Don't Trust* which dissects the propaganda surrounding the American Revolution.

But allegiance, and the threats to it, are often quieter. How do I treat my wife? My husband? My neighbor? Do I help others? Do I wrong others sexually? Is my sexuality fully devoted to God? Am I kind? All these are questions of allegiance as well. Allegiance is directed to Jesus. But it is helpful to remind ourselves that allegiance means fidelity to his ways and to the nature of his rule, and it means a life offered in worship. ✿

RECENT ESSAYS

6/6/2023	Teaching Children How to Relate to Children from Other Cultures	Ryan Grove
7/1/2023	Why Work? Work as Knowing	Marlin Sommers
8/5/2023	Noun Doctrines and Verb Doctrines	Dan Ziegler
9/2/2023	Suffering Love is the Engine of the Kingdom of God	Chester Weaver
10/7/2023	Why Anabaptists Don't Have Priests	David Derstine
11/4/2023	What is Jesus' Sacrificial Kingdom?	Marlin Sommers
12/2/2023	From Condemned Slave to Belonging Child	Milo Zehr
1/6/2024	Husbands, Wives, and the Arsenal of Jesus' Sacrificial Kingdom	Marlin Sommers
2/3/2024	Faith, Works, and Assurance	Milo Zehr
3/2/2024	A Handful of Hard Notes: Five Historic Questions about Music	James S. Martin
4/6/2024	Investing Is Not Gambling. Speculating Might Be	Marlin Sommers
5/4/2024	Money, Education, and My Anabaptist Experience	Brian Martin
6/1/2024	Schism is Heresy	Frank Reed

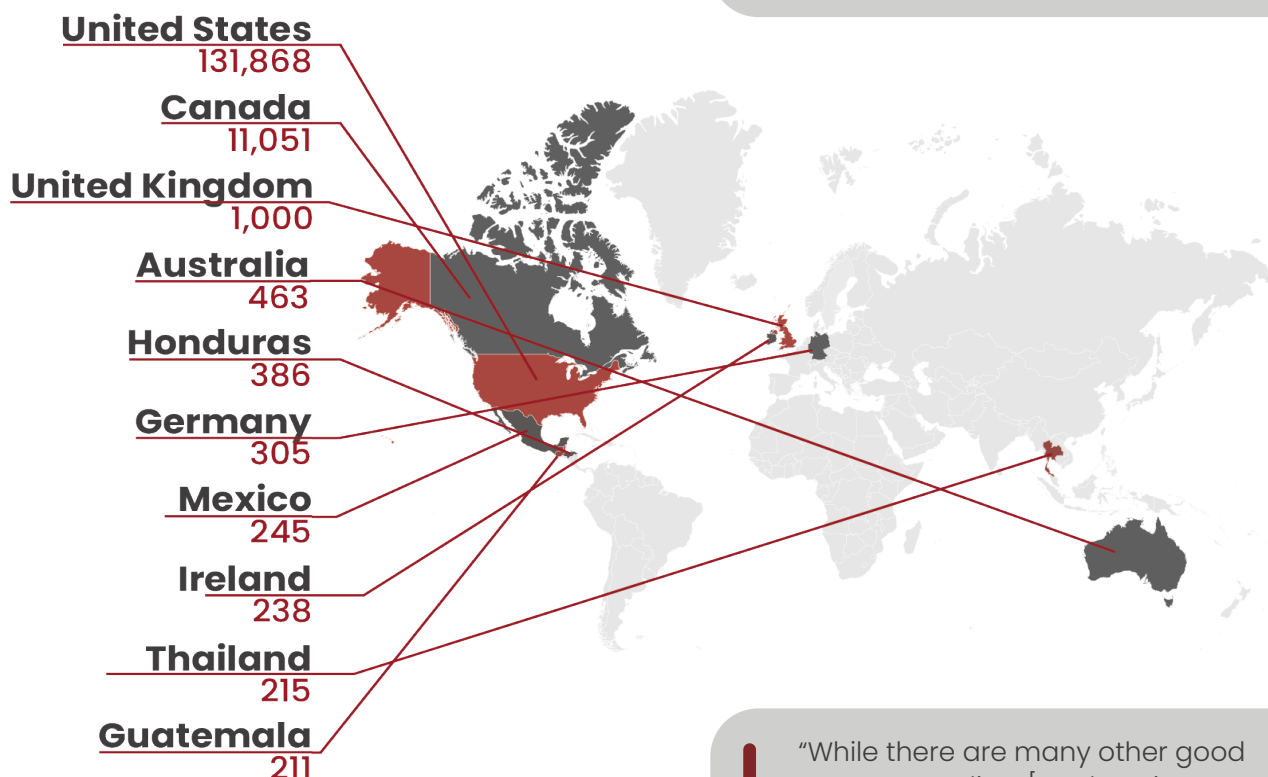
TOP COUNTRIES 2023

YOUTUBE AND PODCAST VIEWS/DOWNLOADS

NUMBERS DO NOT INCLUDE OTHER PLATFORMS

"This was very helpful, thank you very much! May God bless you and greetings from the Netherlands!"

"As a Christian in Australia I found this so interesting. I wish we had Anabaptists here. I am grateful I have a relationship with Christ. Can you recommend any books I should read? God bless"



"I come from the Netherlands and as far as the historical Christian faith is concerned, it is poor here. A few years ago I discovered this Podcast, among other platforms, and am blessed that our historical faith and practice is taught. I am encouraged to see there are more kingdom people, great teachers too. Thank you for that and keep it up!" *Saher*

"While there are many other good resources online, [Anabaptist Perspectives] is one of my "go to" because of our shared worldview. I have especially enjoyed the content that features seasoned leaders that I know personally—I can say first hand that they live what they preach and that makes them even more inspiring!"
Ian Miller

"We thank God for your ministry and we want to let you know how much it is important to us... The Anabaptist Values shared through your channel give us hope for the future of the Albanian church." *Saimir*

SUPPORT

ANABAPTIST PERSPECTIVES


Our work is financially supported by monthly donors, church offerings, and donors who give on a periodic or annual basis.

As a special thank you to monthly donors, we release a bonus podcast every three weeks. These are often responses to comments or questions we receive.

These Partner episodes are available on our website or via the Patreon app for those who give there. We are grateful for your support as the ministry grows.



Contributions are tax deductible and a receipt will be sent at the end of the year.

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 anabaptistperspectives.org/donate

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FINANCIAL REPORT

2023

REVENUE		
Audio Book Sales	\$	181
Interest Income	\$	1,026
Patreon Income	\$	6,113
Unrestricted Donations	\$	100,319
Total Revenue	\$	107,639
EXPENDITURES		
Gear & Equipment	\$	6,181
Travel	\$	2,190
Travel/Event Meals	\$	309
Payroll Tax	\$	3,103
Subcontractors	\$	14,471
Wages	\$	38,801
Workers' Comp. Insurance	\$	457
Admin Software & Apps	\$	3,548
Media Distribution	\$	1,234
Media Production Software	\$	1,192
Advertising & Marketing	\$	3,396
Office Supplies	\$	25
Payment Processing Fees	\$	1,337
Team Development	\$	123
Shipping & Postage	\$	6
Total Expenditures	\$	76,374
Net Revenue	\$	31,264
2023 BALANCE		
Beginning	\$	55,172
Ending	\$	86,436

*Gear and Equipment we own is not on the books as all items are below the capitalization threshold.
Donated use of shared office space is not reflected on statement of activity.*

\$2,570 is donor restricted for the Frank Reed Lecture Series

Accounting was switched from cash basis to accrual basis in 2023. This increases the amounts shown in certain expense categories, especially for employee and contractors, since compensation for work in December 2022 was recorded in January 2023, but compensation for December 2023 was recorded as a 2023 expense.





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OUR PLATFORMS

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Text



Essays

Audio



Many Anabaptists are cautious of the internet. Many use CloudVeil to access our episodes and essays.

t.me/AnabaptistPerspectives
t.me/EssaysForKingJesus

Episodes are also available via phone.

Dial-in number: **(737) 773-2848**
(PERSPECTIV)



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