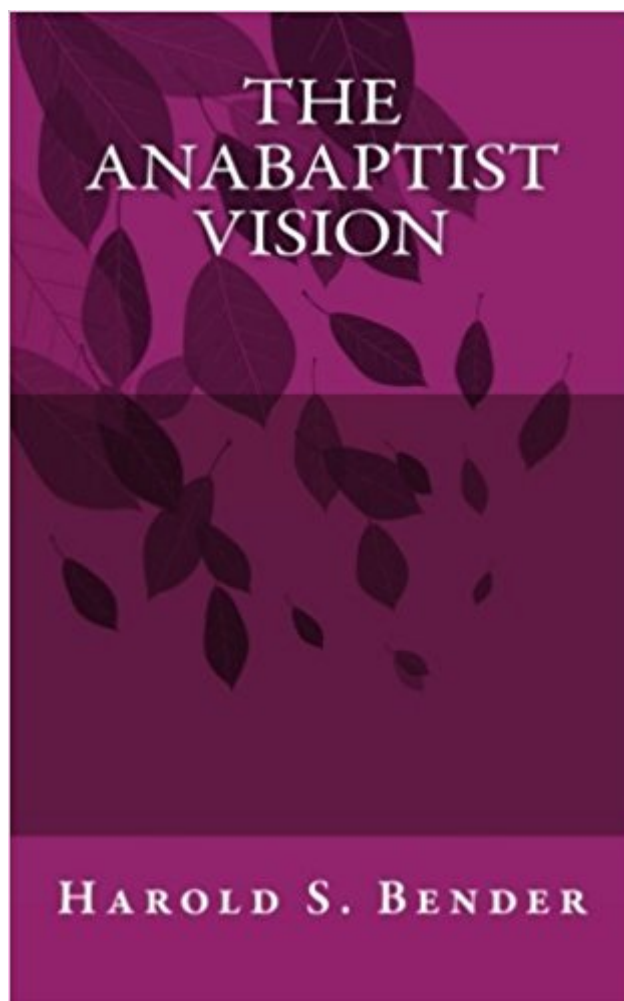


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The Anabaptist Vision



Synopsis

"Judged by the reception it met at the hands of those in power, both in Church and State, equally in Roman Catholic and in Protestant countries, the Anabaptist movement was one of the most tragic in the history of Christianity; but, judged by the principles, which were put into play by the men who bore this reproachful nickname, it must be pronounced one of the most momentous and significant undertakings in man's eventful religious struggle after the truth. It gathered up the gains of earlier movements, it is the spiritual soil out of which all nonconformist sects have sprung, and it is the first plain announcement in modern history of a programme for a new type of Christian society which the modern world, especially in America and England, has been slowly realizing -- an absolutely free and independent religious society, and a State in which every man counts as a man, and has his share in shaping both Church and State." These words of Rufus M. Jones constitute one of the best characterizations of Anabaptism and its contribution to our modern Christian culture to be found in the English language.

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Customer Reviews

The Anabaptist Vision was a fresh interpretation, a brilliant synthesis, which since has been recognized as a classic statement to be reckoned with for years to come.--Ernst Correll (12/01/1944) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Harold S. Bender was born July 19, 1897, at Elkhart, Indiana. He held degrees from the following institutions: BS, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana; BD, Garrett Biblical Institute; ThM, Princeton

Theological Seminary; MA, Princeton University; and ThD, Heidelberg University. He became dean of Goshen College in 1933 and from 1944 he served as dean of Goshen College Biblical Seminary until his death in 1962. He was ordained to the ministry in 1944 and he became president of Mennonite World Conference in 1952. In 1927 he founded the scholarly quarterly, *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, and served as its editor until his death. He was also the author of *Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature*, *Conrad Grebel, First Leader of the Swiss Brethren*, *These Are My People*, *Mennonite Origins in Europe*, and *Biblical Revelation and Inspiration*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The Anabaptist Vision is essentially the transcript of the presidential address before the American Society of Church History in 1943. The *“book,”* if one can call it that, is very small and a mere 36 pages in length. Do not let its diminutive size or length fool you. This could be one of the most clearly articulated definitions of Anabaptism that I have read to date. Personally, I have read numerous essays, many church history textbooks detailing the Anabaptist movement, and a couple books (*A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology* by Thomas N. Finger and *The Naked Anabaptist* by Stuart Murray). Until this little book-essay, I was still a slightly perplexed as to how I might formally position the Anabaptist principles. Typically, or perhaps it is more accurate to say stereotypically, people will most often categorize the Anabaptists with the Amish or the Mennonites. I suspect from a purely historical perspective, this is true. On the other hand, there are guiding principles that I think form the foundation of Anabaptist theology and it is these principles that I have been specifically seeking to identify. I believe I have finally found what I was looking for in Harold Bender's *The Anabaptist Vision*. First, let me share a little more about the structure and content of the book. As I have mentioned it is very concise. This works to the reader's advantage since it can easily be read, even a couple or more times, in a single sitting (this is what I did). Another point to make about its concise nature is that Bender does not use many unnecessary words making his points clear and easy to understand. He has included some historical markers and detail, but it is not overwhelming or boring. He uses only the necessary details to provide the perspective needed to guide the relevance of the principle points that distinguish the Anabaptist vision. The following are the principle points of the Anabaptist tradition as I noted (and highlighted) in my reading:

1. Great emphasis placed upon the actual personal conversion and regeneration of every Christian through the Holy Spirit.
2. Strive to follow the footsteps of the church of the first century and to renew unadulterated original Christianity.
3. Concerned and focused on living *“a true Christian life,”* that is, a life

patterned after the teaching and example of Christ.⁴ Transformation was/is inclusive of the entire way of life of the individual believer and of the society so that it should be fashioned after the teaching and example of Jesus Christ.⁵ Voluntary church membership based upon true conversion and involving a commitment to holy living and discipleship is absolutely essential.⁶ A commitment to the ethic of love and nonresistance as applied to all human relationships (peacemaking and pacifism).⁷ Belief that the Sermon on the Mount is a vision and ethic that Jesus taught for his believers/followers to live out today, empowered by his grace and following in his steps. I think many, and maybe all, of these principles are embraced by the Amish and Mennonite communities; however, I do not think they need be restricted to them. I find myself embracing these core principles and am hopeful of finding a community of like-minded individuals who will embrace them with me.

Excellent content which appears to be objective and accurate. Thirty-six pages constitutes a pamphlet. "Paperback" is a misleading description. I could have downloaded this information much less expensively.

this little book contains jewels by the page, and does excellent job of overviewing the Mennonite vision and way of life.

This is one of the first books I read as an intro to Anabaptism. Initially it answered many of my nagging doubts regarding modern evangelicalism. It also fired me up and got me really excited about following the Bible and the words of Jesus literally. If you know nothing about Anabaptists, Amish or Mennonites then this book is for you. Well worth the few quid you spend on it. It's a great book. the book that kind of clinched it for me really in my decision to become Amish-Mennonite. though when I got there I found modern day Anabaptism is not what I thought it was or what historical Anabaptism was. I went the way of so many. Looking for the perfect Church according to my own set of standards of what perfect is. Like so many I didn't find it. Many end up leaving the Church and just heading out on their own with their family. Others try to recreate the Church and end up like the groups they despise. I tried a different route. Find the Church of the first century, locate it on earth today. Join it, and submit myself to it. What I found wasn't necessarily what I was comfortable with, but it is the Church that Jesus established through His Apostles, sinners and all! The Orthodox Church doesn't have the prettiest history, but neither does ancient Judaism, yet Jesus said the people of his day regarding the pharisees, and I paraphrase "do what they say, but

don't do what they do, for they sit in the seat of Moses." Now if he could say that about the hypocritical pharisees, how much more the successors of the Apostles, the men who sit in their seats? And there are plenty of righteous men in the Orthodox Church, past and present. Schism is a great sin, numbered right up there with adultery and murder. The Anabaptist Church is infamous for its history of schism. If you are searching for the truth, I encourage you to consider Orthodoxy. A good book to start with is either *The Way: What Every Protestant Should Know about the Orthodox Church* or *Becoming Orthodox: A Journey to the Ancient Christian Faith*.

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