

ANABAPTIST DOCTRINE

ECONOMIC SHARING AND TRUTH-TELLING

Activity:

The class will be broken up into two groups. The first will practice economic sharing using the “communal” model, while the other will use the “common purse” model.

Which economic model did you prefer? Explain.

Economic Sharing

1 John 3:16-18: “

”

1. What role does your church play in taking care of the needs of those in the congregation?

2. In what ways is the role of the church different today than it was in the 16th Century?

3. Where is tithing first practised in the Bible (Genesis 14:18-20)?

Nowhere does the New Testament require Christians to tithe in the sense of giving 10 percent, but it does reiterate many things associated with tithing: those who minister are entitled to receive support ([1 Cor 9:14](#)); the poor and needy should be cared for ([1 Cor 16:1](#) ; [Gal 2:10](#)); those who give can trust God, as the source of all that is given ([2 Cor 9:10](#)), to supply their needs ([2 Cor 9:8](#) ; [Php 4:19](#)); and giving should be done joyously ([2 Cor 9:7](#)).

“Whoever has a true faith will share with a needy member and not keep anything as personal property.” Testimony of Barbli with the wooden leg, Bern, Switzerland. 1529.

In several Anabaptist communities economic sharing took the form of community of goods, where members gave up all claims to property. But even in the more numerous non-communal Anabaptist groups there was a “common purse” kept to help the needy.

4. Do you believe the church commands us to live in communities where there is not personal property? Explain.

Truth-Telling

Matthew 5:34; 37: “

”

Anabaptists agreed that Jesus’ word was final: Christians should be truth tellers, whose yes means yes, and whose no means no, regardless of the civil consequences. This idea was in complete harmony with Anabaptist insistence on spiritual integrity. Born again believers were supposed to not only tell the truth, but live the truth.

5. Truth-telling and the refusal to swear oaths was one of the most difficult doctrines for early Anabaptists to follow. Is that still true today? Explain.

“All who are planted into the body of the church through faith in Christ, will not swear as the children of the world do. Rather they confess and live the truth without additions, with a pure heart.” Testimony of Hans Marquart, 1532.