

ANABAPTIST DOCTRINE**PACIFISM****Nonresistance**

Matthew 5:39: _____

Many Anabaptists believe this verse to mean that Christians are to separate from the world, and don't be involved in its governance.

These nonresistant Anabaptists believed that God had ordained governments to keep order in the world (Romans 13), but they believed that Christians would live according to the "perfection of Christ," and leave governance to non-Christians.

These Anabaptists believed that they were called to establish outposts of the kingdom of Heaven, here on earth. They would live as disciples and followers of Jesus in these communities, but they could expect only suffering in the world, on this side of heaven.

Nonviolence

A small minority of Anabaptists thought that the separation of the church from the world would not be so absolute. Pilgram Marpeck was committed to nonviolence, but he thought the church more as an outpost of God's love whose mission was to actively radiate that love out into the world.

These Anabaptists believed that followers of Jesus should not isolate themselves from the world as if trying to defend a citadel of purity. Rather, they would be open communities that would reflect God's love and let unbelievers in to experience a relationship with Christ.

This view was in the minority in the 16th century, primarily due to the intense persecution that the Anabaptists were faced with.

Discipleship

In the end, the difficult issue of violence was settled according to the principle of discipleship. Reborn disciples will follow Jesus. They will speak the truth and live the truth. They have renounced claims to earthly possessions. They will not return evil for evil, but will respond to evil with good.

1. Though we may understand why the early Anabaptists sought to remove themselves from society, why don't we practise this today?

2. The argument has been made that living as a pacifist may not be the exact way Jesus intended us to live, but by getting this wrong we at least haven't harmed anyone and have lived a life of peace, but if living a pacifist lifestyle is right and we don't follow these guidelines – meaning that perhaps we have caused serious physical harm to someone – we will have to answer for this one day. Is there any truth to this argument?

3. Once you are a baptized believer, the Bible says that your life should look different. One of these ways is to live a life of peace, a pacifist lifestyle. Is it true that our beliefs about violence should be different than the nonbeliever? In what other ways should our lives look different?
