



# Editorial Process for Community Reflection Notes

## *ANABAPTIST COMMUNITY BIBLE*

The Anabaptism at 500 project has received questions about whether—and how—comments solicited for the *Anabaptist Community Bible* from a wide variety of study groups will be edited before appearing in print. These questions are understandable, and they merit a response.

The following understandings and guidelines will guide our editorial process:

1. **THE BIBLE ITSELF IS A COMMUNITY PROJECT**, representing the perspectives of many authors, editors, and communities as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. We affirm the overall coherence and authority of Scripture while recognizing that it contains a variety of perspectives and arguments. Similarly, commentary on Scripture will also reflect a range of perspectives.
2. **THE NOTES IN THE ANABAPTIST COMMUNITY BIBLE ARE MEANT TO ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION.** They are not prescriptions for how all Anabaptists should interpret Scripture. They do not define the beliefs of a single community. Instead, they will offer snapshots of how a diverse group of people, all identifying as Anabaptist, are interpreting Scripture at this moment in history and in their own contexts. The notes will present a range of Anabaptist voices (mostly North American), inviting readers to reflect on their own perspectives and to join the ongoing conversation.
3. Just as **ANABAPTIST GROUPS HAVE INTERPRETED THE BIBLE IN A VARIETY OF WAYS** (some clearly conflicting with each other); and just as individuals within Anabaptists groups hold a range of views; and just as we ourselves are not always clear about our own understandings of Scripture, the marginal notes in the *Anabaptist Community Bible* will reflect a range of interpretations and applications.
4. **WE SHOULD NOT CONFUSE COMMENTARY ABOUT THE BIBLICAL TEXT WITH SCRIPTURE ITSELF.** Many of us already use study Bibles and commentaries that do not always agree. Commentary can offer a helpful window into the Bible, but we recognize that extra-biblical resources do not have the same authority as Scripture.

## EDITING GUIDELINES

1. We begin with a high level of trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the collective wisdom of the groups producing these notes. Notes may vary in complexity and may even conflict with other study group comments. We see this as part of the Spirit-led study group process.
2. We anticipate an abundance of notes, and not all of them will be used. Notes may be edited for concision, clarity, accuracy, and space. Editors will seek to honor the spirit and voice of the contributors.
3. In selecting and editing notes, we will remain attentive to the presence of Jesus at the center of our life, faith, and Scripture reading. We will ask: Given what we know about Jesus' teaching and example, could we imagine saying this comment in the presence of Jesus?
  - Commentary should speak in ways that do not reinforce oppression, including racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, ableism, homophobia, and xenophobia. Assessing the assumptions of a text is not always easy, and may sometimes require a judgment call. This guideline does not rule out an honest engagement of the "hard sayings" of Scripture, especially the words of Jesus. The answer to the question "How would Jesus hear this?" could well include commentary that is direct and unsettling.
  - Commentary should encourage a spirit of inquiry and reflection. This extends to distinctive Anabaptist views that are not controversial. Since we seek to encourage engagement with Scripture, rigid or overly prescriptive statements may be reframed as questions/suggestions for discussion.
  - The edited notes will be reviewed by an OT and NT team of sensitivity readers, biblical scholars, practitioners, and pastors.
4. All notes need to be linked to a chapter/verse(s). If submitted notes do not include references, we may assign the notes according to our best assessment of where they fit in the passage.
5. Depending on the number of groups that participate, some passages may be assigned to more than one group.
6. Community Reflection notes will not name the study group that created them; all participating groups will be named in an appendix.