



Out & About

Jan. 24 — Worship at Zion Mennonite, Archbold

Jan. 25 — Gifts Discernment Ministry Meeting

Jan. 26 — Ministry Development Team Meeting

Feb. 2 — Cluster Meeting at Sonnenberg Mennonite, Kidron

Feb. 4 — Cluster Meeting at Zion Mennonite, Archbold

Feb. 9 — ACA Planning Meeting

Feb. 11 — Cluster Meeting at Berlin Mennonite

Feb. 16 — Cluster Meeting at Leetonia Mennonite

Feb. 19-20 — Pastor-Elder Retreat at Camp Buckeye

Feb. 28 — Preach at West Clinton Mennonite, Wauseon



Travels and News
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To act — or — to react

We live in an age of “reactivity.” Certainly this is obvious in Facebook posts and the mutually disdainful and corrosive responses of our political candidates to one another.

And who can blame those who respond with anger or disdain to others who have so treated them? Many consider this quite natural in human interactions, and find no need to apologize for “*giving unto others what they have given unto me.*” We certainly do not find it uncommon even that many defend their “*freedom*” to so respond in such cases. But is such a response truly a mature act of a free person?

One of the most amazing expectations of God toward his people is that they choose as free persons not so much to “*react*,” but rather out of their freedom to “*act*.” Let me explain my assertion here.

In the fourth chapter of 1 John, after spiraling up throughout the previous passages to the pinnacle of what love means in regard to who God is and what God does, John declares God to be *one who acts*, not *one who reacts*.

⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. — **1 John 4:9-10**

Echoing such passages as Romans 5:8, John declares that the love of God — rather than being a *reaction to us* — is clearly seen as *an act beyond us*. The love which God exhibits is not a response to our actions, but an outpouring of his nature, of his character, of his freedom.

More astounding still is John's assertion that those who have been named as “*the children of God*” (1 John 3:1), those who have been “*inspired with the seed of God*” (1 John 3:9) are by the power of the new freedom implanted by the Spirit of God called to be those who, like God, are *ones who act*, rather than *being ones who react*.

¹¹ Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. — **1 John 4:11**

Sisters and brothers, we are freed, or if you prefer, empowered, to go beyond choosing how we will *react* to others. We can escape that slavery to only responding and can act out of the character of God implanted in us and choose freely to *act* in love.

A concise definition of such love, derived by another from these verses is as follows:

Love is acting sacrificially for the good of another person — not reacting sympathetically or reacting angrily, etc., but freely choosing to let the implanted character of God flow through us and choosing freely to act for the good of another.

I wonder: What should our reaction to this be?

