



The Controversy, Part One

Opening

What if our theology could get up from our armchairs and move into our world? That would be something worth paying attention to. This is the Armchair Anabaptist podcast.

<intro song> Lay your guns down, down on the floor. There ain't no good in those guns anymore. Take my hand and let me kiss your feet. Let our friendship be sweet. <end>

“Because Mennonites have usually found that the way to faithfulness is to separate from others and eventually, if only I am here, then at least I'll agree with myself.”

“And I don't think that we can say we love someone and then shoot them. It doesn't make sense.”

“I always tell folks that, ‘Look at if you're in a debate and winning the debate becomes more important than reflecting love towards the person you're debating, then do the Kingdom of God a great service and shut up.’”

“How do we encourage people to see nonviolence as something more than a position about war?”

“Because we're not just sitting around doing podcasts and theology, we're actually trying to live our lives as Christians.”

<song>This is a reckoning between you and me. The writing of our wrongs as we eat and as we drink. <end>

Introduction

Kevin Wiebe: Hello and welcome to the Armchair Anabaptist. I am Kevin Wiebe.

Jesse Penner: And I'm Jesse Penner.

KW: The Armchair Anabaptist is a podcast of the EMC, that's the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, and Jesse and I are the editors of Theodidaktos, which is the theological journal of the EMC, and this podcast is our way of diving into theological topics in a different medium. We're quite excited to be with you and to be looking at theology, not just in the written form, but also in a spoken medium where we get to discuss theology instead of just writing about it.

JP: We're excited to do this. It's a bit of a new thing for us, and we've picked a unique format, I think, to go through this podcast. What we've done is, we've taken the episodes, and rather than center them on a specific guest or invited speaker, we're centering each episode on a question and bringing in a panel of guests from a wide range of backgrounds – we're bringing in pastors and professors and authors, people from within our conference and background, or people from outside of it to tackle these questions together. And so, we get to navigate an issue in a way that really explores all the angles and sort of looks at it from many different perspectives in order to take a chunk of time, a season, many episodes, to drill down into what we really believe about topics that are close and important to us as an anabaptists.

KW: And more than that, we're also taking a kind of longform approach to this, where we're taking a whole season. This entire season we're focusing on the theme of loving our enemies, but before we get to that, I want to take a moment just to introduce ourselves. Jesse, why don't you tell us a little bit more about yourself.

JP: Sure, so I'm a pastor, I feel like I'm a fairly fresh pastor, still a new one, pastoring out of southern Manitoba, I'm at an EMC church there. I've been lead pastor at a church for about two and a half years and just recently stepped into a role as editing this Theodidaktos along with you. I'm excited to kind of jump

into this.

When we were thinking about the options for what we could talk about it, when we were thinking about launching a podcast that was looking at distinctly Anabaptist theological issues, it became obvious pretty quickly where we wanted to get started, and that was the idea of peace. I think there are a lot of good reasons for that but one of them is that you and I both have sort of personal histories with working through this question in different ways. We come at it from different angles, I think, when we look at our histories and how we've gotten here.

For me, I am somebody who's grown up in the EMC. I've been a part of a couple different EMC churches over my journey from childhood through to where I am now, and peace has always been kind of an assumed position for me. It's something I grew up hearing about in our Sunday school classes and in sermons. When I read the Bible, it seemed obvious to me that this was the thing that Jesus taught, and I assumed, in fact, that this was the general position of Christians across the world, that everybody came to the same essential conclusions that us in our little country church came to about what Jesus is calling us to with peace. And so, when I started to engage more seriously with theologians and with people outside of our own traditions, and when I stepped into pastoring and started to work with a congregation that had a wide variety of views on what it meant to follow Jesus teaching on peace, it became important to me to do some digging and wrestling with what this means and asking, what does Jesus actually have to say about this? And how can we actually, honestly look at his teachings and apply them to our world?

It's an incredibly tricky and nuanced thing to kind of dig through, it's not nearly so crystal clear as I maybe thought it was when I was young, and so I wanted to be able to grapple with that in this format and talk with some people who could lend their wisdom and years of learned experience and academia into this topic. So, what excites me about this topic is the opportunity to dig into this in a more intentional way than maybe I've had a chance to do in the past, and to talk to people who are interested in this and have done thinking about this and study about this and lived this out in their own lives and in their own churches; to understand what Jesus is really talking about when it comes to peace, and how it lines up with maybe my idealistic childhood ideas about what Jesus was talking about. What about you?

KW: Well, it might surprise you to know, Jesse, that I have not always been a pacifist. In fact, while I come from an ethnically Mennonite background, the first church I remember going to was an Anglican church. When I think about what church feels like home or feels like my childhood, it would be the Anglican tradition. I go in there and the liturgies just feel like home to me, and so I wasn't really raised with the beliefs of pacifism.

Furthermore, there were certain hypocrisies that that I observed when I was about 9 years old. We moved to a very Mennonite community from the community that I had been living in, and one of the things that that I noticed was, while there was kind of a very wholesale and very staunch condemnation about things like going to war, things like domestic violence were tolerated, and that kind of hypocrisy was something that I really did not appreciate, and so it really turned me off from pacifism altogether. And in fact, throughout my high school years, my backup plan was if all else fails, I'll just join the military because there you get a job and some training and everything all in one.

But it wasn't until I met my wife and she told me very proudly that she was a Mennonite, but she was a Mennonite from Pennsylvania, from a different kind of cultural Mennonites than what I was accustomed to, not the low German Mennonites of Canada, but from the Swiss German Mennonites of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and she was very proud of this background and really had a love for the theology and I said whoa, wait a second. She started talking about the peace position and there was something that was very attractive about that and so then after we got married, I started reading some of these theology books just out of sheer curiosity about what this was that she appreciated so much. As I read book after book about Mennonite theology, I came to really love the peace position. In fact, the things that I found hypocritical, it wasn't that the peace position was wrong, it was that they should have practiced it more fully. In fact, the very thing that I wanted was embodied in the peace position, if it would have been lived

out more faithfully. And so, it was one of those things that I came to embrace later in life, well, not that late in life, I'm still a fairly young man, well, mid-30s. Who am I kidding? The youth in my church don't think I'm that young. I can't speak the lingo of our teenage youth group anymore, so I don't know. But if we talk to the theologians in the EMC, they still call me young. So young, old, whatever, that's to be debated. Maybe in our next season: what is a young or old minister?

But for this season we're focusing on the peace position, loving our enemies and I'm really excited that we're spending this whole season on it, and we have every episode diving into different facets of this, and we have different panels of guests on every episode talking to this very important question.

The Question: Why is Loving Our Enemies Controversial?

KW: Now the first question that we asked is the question of why is this topic so controversial in the church? You know, the idea of love should be non-controversial, one would think, but this is a controversial topic. So, we started asking our guests, why is this so controversial? The first guest that we want to bring to you today is Betty Pries. Betty is the founder of Credence and Co, a mediation company. Betty also teaches conflict management at Conrad Grebel University College, and she is the author of the book *The Space Between Us* that was published by Herald Press. This is Betty Pries.

Betty Pries: It's a really good question. I think the simplest answer we can give to that question, why is loving our enemies so hard or such a controversial topic, is because we're human. And as people, we're so tempted as human beings to divide the world into categories of us and them. And "us" being those that are, you know, belong to us who are like us in some way. And "them" being the other. And we can think about that globally, we can even think about that within our families.

I've been listening so much recently, I've been kind of tuning my ear to how we make assumptions about what people are thinking and doing, and I'm kind of amazed. In one conversation after another after another, I hear how people are making assumptions about the other, whoever the other might be. Assumptions which may or may not be true. There's many wonderful, beautiful things about our creation, our peoplehood, who we are, and at the end of the day we are also broken people. We're human and we're so tempted. As human beings, we have a profound need for belonging, a profound, profound need for belonging, and what that means is that we sometimes draw tight boundaries around who's in and who's out. And so, whoever is out is, by definition, well, maybe not by definition, but whoever's out could be identified as our enemy, which makes loving our enemies so hard. Seeing the world through the lens of belonging and having people belong to us is normal. I think the challenge for us is, can we extend beyond our circles of belonging to see the humanity outside of us? To see how God's presence is outside of us, to see how there are people who are outside of our circle of belonging who are also people of goodness, generosity and grace. And I think that means we need to challenge our assumptions and to really be curious about the other, rather than assuming that our assumptions about the other are accurate.

Can I also add, in terms of loving our enemies? You know, as, as Christians, we are sometimes focused. We have historically been, focused on whether people believe the right things rather than focused on whether we're living the right way, and this has allowed us to say yes to abstract ideas like loving your enemies without really needing to know what this commitment demands of us. I can say, yes to loving my enemies, but really, what does this commitment demand of me? Knowing, sort of agreeing to an idea at the really, at the physical level of what this actually means to us is profound. It's a 24/7 commitment to really lean into loving our enemies. It's about training our spirits to love our enemies, those that differ from us, and it involves a perpetual surrendering of our ego that life must go my way. I think that's hard.

JP: Brian Zahnd is the founding pastor of Word of Life Church in St Joseph, MO. He's also the author of ten books. His most recent book is *When Everything's on Fire*. We had a chance to connect with Pastor Zahnd and ask him this same question: why is loving our enemies such a controversial topic in the church? This is what he had to say.

Brian Zahnd: It's controversial among humanity because this is how we primarily achieve unity. It's

through common hatred of our enemy; this this is how we cohere as a society. We come together in hatred upon a vilified other, whether they are legitimately an enemy or it's just a convenient scapegoat. Now it shouldn't be controversial within the church because this is among the most remarkable things that our Lord ever taught us, is that we are to love our enemies. But it's maybe the hardest thing he teaches us to do and calls us to do. It's very difficult. I mean, I'm not going to say that it's easy. It's difficult. That it does become controversial within the church is a strong indication of how accommodated we have become within Christendom, to just the wider society. And so that we are not necessarily actually radical, counterculture, Jesus followers. We are, you know, whatever, we're Americans, or whatever our nationality, is with a little dab of Christian religion thrown in. Why is it controversial? Because it's hard. That's why it's controversial. It's hard.

JP: I also had a chance to sit down with Layton Friesen. Layton was, until recently, the Conference Pastor of the EMC and he was in that role when we had our interview together. He's now the Academic Dean at Steinbach Bible College. I also asked Layton about the controversy around the peace position and why that exists. These were his thoughts.

Layton Friesen: Well, I think there's a couple different reasons. The first thing I would say to that is that I think loving your enemies has often been seen as that sort of Christian love that is distinguished from all other kinds of love, and so, for example, everyone loves their friends. Everyone loves their family or their tribe, even though none of us maybe do it as well as we should. People have sort of a basic, almost natural instinct, to love their friends and their family and the people who are looking out for them. I mean, you could say that even animals do that at a certain level. But to love your enemies, to love those people who are seeking to destroy you, why would you do that? Like what instinct is there that would drive you to do that, or what benefit is there for you in that? That that seems superhuman. It's a form of love that I think the Christian tradition has recognized is only possible by the grace and power of Jesus in your life. That's the kind of love that loving your enemy is, and I think that's also what makes it somewhat controversial. It's because we're not talking about something that's natural here, we're talking about something that can really only come about through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

And then the question comes up, can you really expect somebody to do something consistently in their practical day-to-day life that is only possible through the supervening power of the Holy Spirit in their life? And that's actually a bit of a complicated moral question, and I'll just give you an example of another area where we sometimes hear about this same kind of question and that is the question of speaking in tongues. For Pentecostals, the Pentecostal tradition says that in order to be a Pentecostal you need to have evidence that you have spoken in tongues. And yet it's fairly clear that you can only speak in tongues by a special gifting and anointing of the Holy Spirit. And so, they run into this question in terms of who can be a minister in the in a Pentecostal church who can, be a member and so forth, is if you demand that everybody speaks in tongues, but it's clear that it's only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. How is that fair? How is that possible? How is that even reasonable? I think the same thing happens with loving your enemies. Loving your enemies is something, it's supernatural. It's something that you do because of the sanctifying work of the spirit in your life and so that just makes it really difficult. It makes it something that's not always, doesn't seem possible. It's something that often only a few of us ever really get to do very well and so it just seems impossible sometimes, and it almost seems miraculous when it happens, and then if it's miraculous, how can you expect it of everybody? I think that's a very basic problem that creates this controversy around loving your enemies in the church. It's a supernatural form of love.

JP: As Layton continued, he touched on a really interesting point, I think, about how the secular world has also been changing its thinking around peace in the last 500 years, and even in the last couple of generations, and how the way that the world around us thinks about peace also affects the way that we as Christians interact with this.

LF: The secular world that we live in, and I cover some of this in my book on secular nonviolence,

the secular world that we live in has taken this idea of loving your enemies and has tweaked it a bit, has transformed it a little bit, but has translated it into other things that some Christians have become uncomfortable with, and so nonviolence has become a huge part of our world today in in secularity. You think of anti-bullying education. You think of resisting violence against minorities, resisting violence against LGBT people. You think of eradicating spousal abuse. I mean, we've just had lots and lots of teaching and education and advocacy and political action against violence in our world. And the troubling thing, maybe not the troubling thing, the good thing actually, is that it's worked. That we have seen massive declines in violence across the west in the last 500 years. There is no doubt about that, that that there has been a nonviolent trajectory in the West. We have far fewer people being killed today violently than would have been the case 500 years ago and so what that has done, though in the present day, for our churches today, is that calls for nonviolence are often seen as sort of secular, in some cases left wing, in some cases sort of progressive liberal notions, and it's hard to understand than how evangelicals or conservatives or people who are more traditional in their understanding of the scriptures, how they can still be concerned about nonviolence or loving your enemies or any of these kinds of concerns because they've kind of been taken over in some ways by the secular world and tweaked a bit; not directly taken over but tweaked and so now we've got a bit of a problem on our hands in terms of identifying ourselves as Christians. What is actually Christian about this? And so, I think that has made the whole process of loving your enemies, thinking about nonviolence a little bit problematic for people because it's become identified with certain ideological camps in our world that we may not actually identify with. And so, we feel that well, I'm not left wing, so then therefore I can't be into nonviolence, because that's a left-wing thing. And that's just a product of secularity. But that does cause some troubling difficulties for us in the church.

KW: Ronald J. Sider was the founder and President Emeritus of Evangelicals for Social Action and was the Distinguished Professor of Theology, Holistic Ministry and Public Policy at Palmer Theological Seminary. He was the author of numerous books, including the Early Church on Killing and the bestselling book Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger. He also wrote a book that I was very appreciative of, called Nonviolent Action: What Christian Ethics Demands, but Most Christians Have Never Really Tried. I had a chance to interview Doctor Ronald Sider a few months before his passing last year. This is his answer to our question about why loving our enemies is such a controversial topic.

Ronald Sider: Because it's hard. The natural human response to enemies is to resist, and to resist violently if that seems necessary. It goes against the natural instincts that we have of self-protection and defense. I don't think, until Jesus we had a religious leader saying explicitly, we should love our enemies. So, it's in some ways radical and it's not easy to do.

KW: That was Ronald J. Sider from our interview that we had with him prior to his passing last year. Now this whole question about why is this discussion about loving our enemies so controversial? I think one of the things we've been hearing again and again is that it's just something that just rubs against the grain for everybody.

JP: Right, one of the things that I really appreciated about the way that this question was addressed is the fact that everybody who was interviewed assumed that this is something that we're actually doing, right? It's not just some pie in the sky theological issue, but it actually is something that needs to be lived out in our lives, and because of that there was this recognition that it is something that rubs against the grain. It's something that's difficult, it's something that doesn't feel like it's practically what we want to do. It's not something that's intuitive to us, and so, it is something that has to be thought out in a meaningful way ahead of time because it does go against maybe what our instinct is or what our base desire is when it comes to areas of conflict.

KW: And that's one of the things about Christianity that is just so very difficult, is that when we follow Jesus, he sometimes ask us to do things that we do not want to do. He asks us to follow him into actions, into ways of behaving that go fundamentally against the things that we want to do, the things that we maybe instinctively would do on our own or the behaviors, the ways of responding if left to our own

devices, you know, and we're asked to do something radically different than that.

JP: Right. There was, maybe you can help me figure out where I've heard this before because I'm sure it's a relatively well-known quote that's sticking out in my head, but this idea of basically looking at what Jesus has to say in the Sermon on the Mount and other places and asking the actually super radical question, which is, what if he actually meant what he said? What if Jesus was just telling us how to live and he actually meant that that's how we're called to live? And so, this is an incredibly tricky thing to try and understand, how do we implement this in our lives? And it's understandable that this creates some heat as we process these things together in the context of our churches and our Christian communities.

KW: Shane Claiborne.

JP: That's the one!

KW: He's one guy who says that yeah, but it is a very excellent question. What if Jesus actually meant what he said?

Question Two: Why is this Topic Important?

JP: We also asked the panel of guests that we have why it's important not to sidestep or avoid this hot button topic. It's a tricky thing to talk about, we acknowledged that, but why is it something that needs to be talked about in our circles? Why can't we avoid it? Let's hear from Betty Pries.

BP: It's important because each of us matters. And at the end of the day, I lean heavily on Genesis 1, which is we're all made in the image of God. Now Genesis 1 does not say we all behave in the likeness of God. There are moments when my behavior is not the likeness of God, but that never takes away the belief or the statement that we are all made in the image of God. It matters also because if we can't love our enemies, eventually we'll discover we can't even love ourselves. See one of the things that we know is, our compassion for the other is premised on our compassion for ourselves, and the more we call people the enemy, the circle of who's in gets smaller and smaller and smaller, and at some point, we discover, well, it's said like this, "we look for the enemy and discover that the enemy is us."

When we divide the world into categories of who's in and who's out, who's enemy and who's good, and who's other and who's self, or who's with us, who's them, right? Who's them and who's us? The more we divide the world into these categories the more we start to self-destruct, not only as a collective but even individually. It's interesting to me, when I've worked with people who have spent time in spaces of really being hateful, at some point, many people who have spent time in significant hate will discover that the hate has taken up residence in their own souls, against themselves. And they no longer like the person that they've become. We are more connected than we realize, and the more we try to shut out others or declare them to the enemy and refuse to see the humanity in them, at some point our own humanity begins to die.

JP: Pastor Brian Zahnd also addressed this question of why we can't sidestep this hot button issue of peace.

BZ: Because this is what we're called to do. We're called to follow Jesus. It doesn't really matter until it matters. I mean if it's just a matter of theology to sit around, and you know, speculate upon, that's one thing. But when real life is happening and the question is there before us, are we going to go the way that most people would go, or are we going to go the way of Jesus? I mean, there are all kinds of things that I now aspire to and really do want to try to live into, that I would never even attempt except that my Lord commands it of me. People hear me talk about peace and nonviolence. I am not by nature a peaceable or nonviolent person. I'm plenty capable of celebrating violence and desiring to employ it toward what I think are good ends, I mean I'm not by nature nonviolent, but what I am, I hope, at the core of my being, is someone to whom God has revealed his son as Lord. And so, I have to be called beyond something more than what I would be just left unto myself. I feel like I've wandered away a little bit from the question, but I mean, I guess my answer would be, because we're not just sitting around doing podcasts and theology, we're actually trying to live our lives as Christians. The word meaning, you know, "a little Christ," a Jesus-ite, you know, that would be kind of a literal interpretation of what the word Christian means, a Jesus-ite.

Well, if I'm going to be a little Jesus, then it really counts when the issue is at hand.

KW: This is what Layton Friesen had to say about why it's important not to ignore this topic.

LF: I think it's important because Jesus is important. I really think it comes down to that. It's just really hard to ignore the fact that this was a huge concern for Jesus. The way we treat one another, the way we treat our enemies, the way we forgive one another, the way we treat those who persecute us; Jesus goes back to these issues over and over again. And so, I think if we want to actually be serious about following Jesus, we have to grapple with his message of nonviolence. And the church has struggled with this and it's not easy. I don't think there's any straightforward, easy way to follow Jesus' commands about nonviolence. It's actually one of the most difficult parts of Jesus' teaching. And as the church struggles it has fallen off the wagon on all sides over the centuries and we will continue to do that, but I don't think we can avoid the fact that this was just really, really important for Jesus. And so, if we want to be people of the Spirit following Jesus, then this has to be pretty central.

One of the interesting things about Jesus' teaching about loving your enemies is that, as we look ahead in a New Testament to the way in which Paul and John and Peter, and the other apostles take Jesus, words, take Jesus' life and they translate it into instructions for the early church in their epistles, it's very interesting to look and see what parts of Jesus' ministry, what parts of his teaching did they actually, literally pick up and pass on to their churches. So, for example, you don't find Paul ever mentioning the prodigal son, or the sower and the seed, or talking a whole lot about Jesus' miracles or about Jesus' exorcisms. He talks about Jesus' death and resurrection. That's a huge thing. He talks about a number of other things, but the one thing that you do find, that Paul and Peter both pick up, is Jesus' teaching on loving your enemies. That seems to be the one thing, or a very key thing, not the only thing, but a key aspect of Jesus' teaching that they picked up. The other thing you can see when you get into the book of Acts is how quickly the disciples enacted Jesus' teaching of loving your enemies.

In the story of Pentecost, the disciples and the rest of those gathered in the upper room are anointed with the Holy Spirit, and immediately the same day they begin proclaiming repentance and forgiveness and invitation to the people who had crucified Jesus. And Peter makes it very explicit - he actually points at them and kind of needles them, and he says you crucified Jesus, you're the ones who rejected the author of life. And you are welcome into our church. Repent. You will be forgiven, your sins will be washed away and you can come on in and join us. Like what?

I would challenge anyone to find another regime that would be willing to do that. Somebody assassinated your leader and now you go to those assassins, and you say, come on in and join us, you're welcome here. You just say you're sorry for what you did. You repent of what you did now come on in and you can become leaders in our organization. Like that's just unheard of, and yet that's exactly what the apostles and the other followers of Jesus did immediately after Jesus' ascension. That's almost one of the first things they did. And so, you can see that the disciples clearly had got the message from their Savior that this is how you identify as a Christian: you love your enemies and you forgive those who persecute you. Just as the disciples had been forgiven for their part in betraying and denying and deserting Jesus in the crucifixion. And so that's why I think it's just really, really crucial. This is clearly a New Testament ethic, a New Testament way of living that begins with Jesus, is founded in Jesus but is picked up in the rest of the New Testament. I think you can go even into the Book of Revelation and show how this finds its place there. So, I think it's just central in terms of what the New Testament teaches about morality, about living the life of faith.

KW: In our conversation with Doctor Sider, he did not mince words and left us with a challenging but profoundly biblical answer to this question of why is loving our enemies something that we should not sidestep, even though it's a controversial discussion.

RS: If you look at society, if you look at history, I mean the natural reaction of every society is to defend itself violently. It's what the human kind instinctively does, but if Jesus is Lord, if Jesus is truly our Lord, and we feel that we should follow him, then it's very problematic for Jesus to say, "I want you to love

your enemies.” But then for us to refuse to do that; that’s blatantly rejecting Jesus, finally. And in my book *If Jesus is Lord*, I really push that at the end, saying we have to choose between whether or not we really intend to follow Jesus, we really want to let him be Lord or not.

KW: What a challenge from Ronald Sider and that wraps up our interviews on this very first episode of *The Armchair Anabaptist*. That challenge from Doctor Ronald Sider about, this matters because Jesus is Lord, I think is a fitting challenge, some really excellent food for thought. Layton Friesen also touched on that, that this matters. This topic of loving our enemies, it matters because Jesus matters. What do you think, Jesse?

JP: It’s exactly this sort of tension between the fact that this is clearly something that Jesus taught, and yet it’s something that we wrestle with, that makes this into a hot button issue, and also makes it into something that can’t be ignored. The fact that it creates this kind of tension and wrestle within us is probably a clue that it is something that we need to wrestle with. It is something that we have to engage with, and I appreciate the ways that our panel kept bringing us back to the fact that this is really about Jesus and what he’s calling us to.

KW: As I was listening to what was said, I thought of a quote by Soren Kierkegaard and it’s a popular quote, but I think it bears repeating here. “The Bible is very easy to understand, but we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand we are obliged to act accordingly.” I know there’s a lot more nuance to it, but I think there’s a piece of it that this Kierkegaard quote really gets at, where, you know, we want to explain away something that’s actually quite simple. Jesus says love your enemies. You know it’s not that complicated to actually understand, but it’s just really, really hard to actually do.

JP: I mean, I think we’re done the podcast. I think it’s one and done.

KW: Well, we’ll see. We’ve got a bunch of other episodes and a lot of other guests to talk to.

JP: No, I’m excited to dig into this more. It is one of these things where while the actual principle seems to be quite simple, the truth of applying it in our culture today and understanding how it applies to different sorts of relationships and contexts does take a lot to dig into, and I’m excited to walk forward and talk with a lot of different people about how we do this in our lives.

KW: One of the other things we’re doing in *The Armchair Anabaptist* is we are bringing you some music that we have been selecting that goes along with the theme of loving our enemies for this season. This very first episode we have selected a song by Brandon Post. The song is called *Noise*, so in closing us off today, this is Brandon Post, his song *noise* here on *The Armchair Anabaptist*.

Closing

The Armchair Anabaptist is a *Theodidaktos* podcast and *Theodidaktos* is a publication of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference. You can check us out online and get in contact at www.thearmchairanabaptist.ca, and find us on iTunes, Spotify and wherever podcasts are found.

The special thanks to our guests who have joined us today, Betty Pries, Brian Zahnd and Layton Friesen. We were also honored to be able to interview Doctor Ronald J. Sider in April of 2022, just a few months before his passing, and what you heard of him today was from that interview.

Our intro song is *First Communion* by Dane Joneshill, and our feature song today was the song *Noise* by Brandon Post.

Our executive producer is Erica Fehr, our producer and audio engineer is Kevin Wiebe, and our administrative assistant and wizard of all things web related is Ruth Block.

I’m Kevin Wiebe. And I’m Jesse Penner and we have been your hosts for *The Armchair Anabaptist*. We certainly hope that what you have heard today will do more than stay is merely food for thought, but that it can help inspire each of us to get up out of the comfort of our armchairs and translate into living more like Jesus.

Join us next time as we continue our journey looking at the life of peace, the second half of this particular topic, the controversy, part two.

*Edited for clarity.