

The Heartbeat of

The Remnant



The Hutterite Mission Machine
Marine Corps of the Early Anabaptists
See page 18

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A church membership does not make one a Christian any more than owning a piano makes one a musician.

~Meador

Opening the Ancient Wells

For the last three weeks I have been on a very interesting trip to Eastern Europe. A small church group from the Czech Republic city of Auspitz (*Hustopecce*) had requested Anabaptist preachers and historians to come to their city for a historic celebration. The event was the celebration of the 480th year since the Anabaptists came to their city. Specifically this was when the Hutterites were first organized in Moravia in 1531. It was a great opportunity to tell people about Jesus and preach the gospel.

Landing in Germany, we were able to visit many historical sites as well as several small groups of believers along the way to Moravia. In each place that we stopped we earnestly prayed and asked God to visit this land with radical, living Christianity once again. The theme we used for the trip was the passage about opening the ancient wells found in Genesis 26:14-33. Isaac was

hard at work reopening the ancient wells that his father Abraham had dug early in his life. The Bible reports that Abraham's wells, which were once flowing with the rich blessings of God, were now stopped and filled with dirt. What's more, as Isaac attempted to reopen the wells the Philistines fought with him to keep the wells plugged. But Isaac persevered, and eventually a well was opened. The rich water of God's blessing flowed again.

As we visited the remains of these ancient powerful churches and compared it to modern times, the comparison was sobering. An impotent church and a presumptuous world greets the spectator. But just as in the days of Isaac, the ancient wells lie just below the surface. A fight is certain. The world will always fight to keep these wells filled with dirt. Our prayer was that God would visit us again and let the blessings of these ancient wells flow anew.

It's been a long trip: three weeks, 12 countries, and over 6000 kilometers of driving have made me very tired. As my plane currently flies over Greenland on the way

to Chicago, I ponder what lies ahead for modern Christianity. I love history, but my heart longs to see radical expressions of Christianity living in our time once again. Sometimes the fight seems too strong. But God is stronger, and it's a fight that we must join.

In this issue Mike Atnip explains that he is going to be slowing up with writing and editing *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*. Mike wrote a little article in this issue explaining his new plans. I also have been very pressed lately. More help is needed to keep the magazine flowing in the right way. Mike and I have met with *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* board, and we all fell that it would be best to put the publishing of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* on hold. Once we have more time or more people to help with this ministry, we can discuss publishing once again. For now, you will notice a break in the publishing.

In preparing for my preaching in Moravia I did a lot of study on the early history of the Hutterites in Moravia. I was impressed with what I found. In the late 1500s and early 1600s they were a powerhouse. Their zeal for following the Lord radically and their persistence for mission and outreach really challenged and inspired me. I developed the research into an article for this issue called "The Hutterite Mission Machine."

Also in this issue you will find a lament, several centuries old, about the flood of lukewarmness that had invaded a revival movement. This makes one wonder what feelings Thielemann van Braght would have about us. Also, you will find an excerpt from an old, rarely published allegory about the heavenly city and its citizens. For the sisters we have a meditation on the life of Esther, and for everyone we have a mixture of smaller articles to stir us from our spiritual lethargy. May this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* be a goad to stir up our love for our King Jesus Christ!

~Bro. Dean



The Bridegroom's Friend

By Shane D. Curran - Kentucky

If all of our study of God in the past or future reveals only one thing—our utter ignorance and truly insignificant identity—then it has accomplished its goal.

The purpose of man is to glorify God (Isaiah 43:7). How is this accomplished? The same way our beloved brother John did. "... He must increase, but I must decrease."

How do we decrease? By obeying and following the One who did it before us—our Lord Jesus Christ. If we live after the flesh we will die, but if we through the Spirit do mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body, the world will hate us—and yet some will glorify God—and we will live. If we are big to the world and to ourselves, then Christ is defrauded and belittled. But if we are little in our own eyes and the world's, then Christ is enlarged, exalted, and glorified.

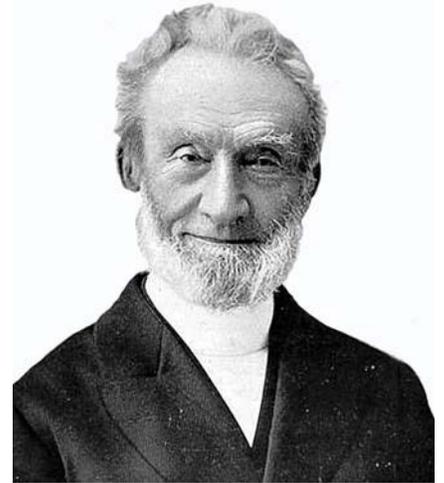
"Love your enemies." When we obey that, we decrease and Christ increases. "Do not your alms before men." More decreasing of self, and more glorifying Christ. "When thou prayest enter into thy closet." Obeying Christ will always decrease self and glorify Christ. If it does not, we are probably obeying the wrong one!

"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." "Give to him that asketh." Again and again, over and over, Jesus is saying, "Take the low road." Seeking to give Christ glory does not mean obtaining much wealth and a large estate to "show the world I'm a Christian." It means selling it and giving to the poor. Glorifying Christ does not mean exercising God-given talents to draw attention to one's self; it may mean dumping those in exchange for the priceless gem of humility.

Glorifying God does not mean going on a mission trip and making sure everyone knows about it—it may mean staying home and dying some more. Lest someone accuse me of portraying a dreadful Christian experience, let me remind them that we have something to rejoice in ... but only if we are small. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom [not you or me]: but the friend of the bridegroom [you and I], which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled" (John 3:29).

Is our joy fulfilled in hearing the bridegroom's voice? Or do we want more: more honor for ourselves? We admire great men like Isaiah who said in the presence of God, "Woe is me! For I am undone ..." We admire Moses who in God's presence hid his face, "for he was afraid to look upon God" (Exodus 3:6). We admire Job, the perfect man in the Bible who told God, "... I am vile; what shall I answer thee?" (Job 40:4).

God can only be glorified if we surrender our identity to His—our dreams, plans, wishes, ambitions, talents; everything in exchange for the mind of Christ, who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:6b-7). How can men and women



George Müller gave the "secret" of his ministry: "There was a day when George Müller died."

claim this man as their Master while demanding respect and honor from the world? Men are not supposed to be able to see us, but the Divine Presence who permeates our being. A godly young woman should be so hid in Christ that a man has to seek Christ to find her. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Are we willing to be hid? Or must we be seen?

George Müller, a man of great faith, said concerning his ministry: "There was a day when George Müller died." We see the huge orphanages, the many thousands that flocked to hear him preach; we see a life richly blessed by God. But do we see the death that George had to die? Many hundreds of thousands of dollars passed through his hands, but he considered none to be his own, and all to be Christ's. This requires death of the flesh!

Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted;
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard;
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action,
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word.

Not I, but Christ, to gently soothe in sorrow;
Not I, but Christ, to wipe the solemn tear;
Not I, but Christ, to lift the weary burden,
Not I, but Christ, to hush away all fear.

Christ, only Christ, no idle word e'er falling,
Christ, only Christ, no needless bustling sound;
Christ, only Christ, no self-important bearing,
Christ, only Christ, no trace of I be found.

Not I, but Christ, in lowly, silent labor,
Not I, but Christ, in humble, earnest toil:
Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling:
Christ, none but Christ, the gatherer of the spoil.

Not I, but Christ my every need supplying,
Not I, but Christ my strength and health to be;
Christ, only Christ, for spirit, soul, and body,
Christ, only Christ, live then Thy life in me.

Christ, only Christ, ere long will fill my vision;
Glory excelling soon, full soon I'll see—
Christ, only Christ, my every wish fulfilling,
Christ, only Christ, my all in all to be.

~Ada A. Whiddington

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled” (John 3:29). ~

Follow peace with all men,

and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. He. 12:14

From a sermon delivered by George Brunk II.

Preached at Orrville, Ohio in September, 1951, titled “God's Provision for Holiness.”

Now this passage of Scripture says that we are to follow peace with all men, especially those in the church, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. There is a certain responsibility that we have to those who are brethren in the church. We are to love them, and to love them devoutly. And for you people out there that claim to be nonresistant, and love your enemies, you don't go to war ... I'd like you to tell me how on earth you're going to ask Uncle Sam to exempt you from military service, from going out there and engaging in warfare against your fellow men when you haven't demonstrated your ability yet to love each other in the church. That's a problem I can't figure out—can you? Hmm? That's one I can't figure out.

Beloved, if I understand the doctrine of nonresistance and the refusal to go to war, it rests on one's love for men, love for his enemies, that's what I understand. Am I right brethren? We love our enemies! We love them! “No, no no, we can't go to war ... we love our enemies!”

Oh, you do? And yet you're down there grinding your mouth and eating your gums day after day against somebody else in the church, and scoffing and scorning and finding fault and criticizing and condemning and judging and jealous and envious and covetous and critical ... and then when wartime comes you send in a special application in to Washington, to President Truman, and say “I'm one of the chosen saints of God out there in Wayne County, Ohio, and I just love my enemies so much, Brother Truman, I just can't go to war.”

No, you can't go to war—but you can stay at home and shoot a dagger into the heart of one of your brethren in the church, and you can use that tongue to lash people in the community, and you can gossip and criticize and find fault with preachers and everybody else under the sun, but you're such a sanctified little saint of God you can't go to war. You show me a fellow that can whip people with his tongue, gossip, covet, and envy, and be jealous and proud, and I'll tell you he's eligible for the front lines of the army. ~

OF
**THE GREATER
DANGER**

*THERE IS AT THIS TIME,
THAN IN THE BLOODY AND DISTRESSING
TIMES OF THE MARTYRS¹*

Introduction

You know that big, fat book on your bookshelf? Yeah, the one you take down and read a little from every couple of years. Yes, I'm talking about *Martyrs Mirror*.

Did you ever wonder what got into Thieleman J. van Braght to compile all those stories? He tells us why in the preface. A century had passed since Dutch Anabaptism had begun its bloodstained career. But the blood flowing on the chopping block had since ceased, and wealth and worldliness now abounded. (Those two are old running buddies, not?)

Thieleman decided to try to stir up his people by reminding them of their history. The fruit of his labors is called *Martyrs Mirror*.

Listen now as Thieleman pours out his heart. I wonder what he would say to *our* generation?

These are sad times in which we live. Nay, truly, there is more danger now than in the time of our fathers, who suffered death for the testimony of the Lord. Few will believe this, because the great majority looks to that which is external and corporeal; and in this respect it is now better, quieter, and more comfortable. Only a few look to that which is internal and pertains to the soul, and on which everything depends: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mt. 16:26

1 When Israel under Pharaoh, in Egypt, had to burn brick and to perform other hard labor for the king, they remembered God, yea, cried unto the Almighty, so that God was moved to compassion, Ex. 1, 2, 3, etc. But when God had delivered them, and brought them into a goodly land where it went well with them according to the body, they forsook the Lord and became wanton. De. 32:15 This difference is found to exist also between the times of oppression and the times of freedom.

These times are certainly more dangerous. For in those days Satan came openly, through his servants, even at noon-day, as a roaring lion, so that he could be known, and it now and then was possible to hide from him. Besides, his chief intention then was to destroy the body: but now he comes as in the night, or in the twilight, in a strange but yet pleasing form, and in a two-fold way lies in wait to destroy the soul. First, to trample under foot and annihilate entirely, if this were possible, the only saving Christian faith; secondly to destroy the true separated Christian life, which is the outgrowth of faith. Ps. 91:5,6

He reveals himself on the one hand as an angel of light, (2 Co. 11:14-15) as a kind, pleasant, yea, even divine messenger, with humble countenance, downcast eyes, plain garb, and living in seclusion from the throng of the worldly-minded, even as the holiest people, yea, the martyrs of God, formerly did. His words are modest, trembling, and full of contrition—seemingly coming from deep meditation, inward fear, and apprehension, lest he might speak amiss or untruthfully. Meanwhile, and before one is aware of it, he seizes hold and tears like a wolf in sheep's clothing, robbing the innocent lambs of Christ of their precious faith, which he pretends to be of small importance. But without this faith it is impossible to please God; (He. 11:6) nay, without which we—according to the words of Christ—shall be condemned. Mk. 16:16 For Paul says whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Ro. 14:23

It grieves us to the heart that we must live to see these times and therefore speak in this way. O Lord, strengthen our faith! Help Thy weak, trusting lambs, that they may not be led into error nor moved from the foundations of the most holy faith.

On the other hand, through his instigation, the world now reveals itself very beautiful and glorious, more than at any preceding time, in a threefold pleasing form—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.² Almost all men run after her, to worship her as a queen supreme. But all are deceived thereby; yea, many who have drunk of the poisoned wine of her lusts from the golden cup of her iniquities and deceptions die a spiritual death.

As the first objective is aimed at the faith, so the second is directed against the true Christian life. Here lies great danger. Who shall escape these snares? He that would at

2 John, the friend of Christ, has presented the deceptive, beautiful appearance of this world in its threefold view of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. 1 Jn. 2:16 Solomon portrayed the same as a harlot or wanton woman, who allures young men unto her; who is loud and stubborn, and whose feet abide not in her house; but where those who follow her are led, as an ox to the slaughter, to certain destruction, nay, to death and hell. Pr. 7

no time be taken unawares by it must indeed be cautious and watchful. But our very flesh seems prone to it. Here must be fasting, watching, praying, and calling upon God for help, otherwise there is no escape.

Many of the ancients who supposed that they had been circumspect and observed their duty, were deceived hereby.³ Some were lulled into a careless sleep, so that they paid no heed to themselves or to their vocation; others were brought to despair of the divine truth; others were drawn away totally from God. Some died a spiritual death; others died both spiritually and bodily. And some have plunged themselves helter-skelter into the abyss of the disfavor of God, to be punished by Him soul and body, forever.

These things which we tell you are no riddles or blind speeches, for we speak the truth, or the Word of God must be false. But as the Word of God cannot lie, what we have said is certain and infallible since God in His Word bears witness of it, yea, declares it emphatically and abundantly. Other histories which make mention of this we pass by in silence and dismiss them altogether, because we do not hold them in equal estimation with the Holy Scriptures. It was the world and its lusts that of old caused all the great calamities of which we have spoken. And not only this, but it has also caused thousands who live in various cities, countries, kingdoms, empires, yea, on the face of the whole earth, to mourn, weep, and wail on account of their natural misery as well as on account of their experiencing the wrath of God in their souls because of the magnitude and enormity of the sins perpetrated by them.

It certainly was through worldly lusts that the old world perished, and that Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboim, and Admah were consumed, overthrown, and totally destroyed by fire from heaven. It was because of lusts that in forty years, through serpents, fire, and other plagues, the wanton and lustful people of Israel perished to the number of over 600,000 in the wilderness. Because of lusts, the mighty maritime cities, Zidon and Tyrus—whose ships were trimmed with embroidered, silken sails from Egypt; whose rowers sat upon benches of ivory; where incalculable riches were bought and sold and, from carnal incentives, almost inconceivable arts practiced—were reduced to a heap of stones and so leveled to the ground that the fishermen stretch out their nets to dry on the rocks upon which these cities stood.

³ The following and other misfortunes which were caused by worldly and carnal lusts cannot be numbered. O, that Solomon, the wisest among the children of men, might have known, conquered, and taken care of himself in this respect.

I will not now speak of Jerusalem, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, and other mighty licentious and luxurious cities, which, with all their inhabitants who had in this respect sinned against God, have borne His wrath and felt, to their destruction, the plagues of His afflicting hand; for this would consume too much time.⁴ O awful judgments of God! O pernicious worldly-mindedness! O corroding and cankering luxury, that drags after yourself such a train of unspeakable miseries! Help, Lord, that our soul be delivered from all these dangers!

But what danger would there be if none but the open enemies of God and His holy truth were guilty in this matter? What harm could be done if they alone, and no others, would arouse and call down upon themselves the wrath of God? For then every pious and serious soul would beware of their example as of a savage beast, venomous serpent, or deadly basilisk.⁵

But now such is the state of things that many professing Christ—who, as they say, would be glad to be saved; and who, therefore, though they are not truly enlightened, glorify and praise God and His Word with their mouth—show nevertheless (to the seduction of the simple) that the world is their dear friend. Yea the world lies nearest to their heart, since most of their works are directed to its service, that they may thereby partake of its glittering but deceptive reward.

Hence arises that shameful and vast commerce which extends far beyond the sea into other parts of the world (see Ezekiel 27),⁶ but which notwithstanding cannot satisfy those who love it. On the contrary, it brings great danger, that that which has already been gotten may be lost, others defrauded, and they themselves, both in soul and body, stripped and robbed of their possessions.

Numerous large, expensive, and ornamented houses, countryseats of splendid and towering architecture, parks magnificent as a paradise, and other embellished pleasure-grounds—which are seen on every hand—indicate this love of the world in no small degree. Da. 4:29-30

The wearing of clothes from foreign countries,⁷ whether of foreign materials, uncommon colors, or of

⁴ See Josephus on the Jewish wars; also Egesippus, Eusebius, and Pamphilus.

⁵ [Ed. note] A mythical reptile that could kill someone by just looking at them.

⁶ [Ed. note] The author may be referring to the fact that some Dutch Mennonites were stockholders in the Dutch East India Company, called by some “the first multinational corporation,” the first company to offer stock, and (arguably) the first megacorporation.

⁷ [Ed. note] At that time, foreign-made clothes would have been more costly and mainly for the upper class. Today, in

strange fashions as change in the course of time according to the custom of the openly worldly-minded (which are as changeable as the moon), and which custom is followed by many humble and seemingly plain people, confirms greatly what we have before said about loving the world. Ge. 35:2; Ze. 1:8; Is. 3:16-24

The giving and attending great dinners, lavish banquets, and wedding-feasts (though one may never be found in taverns or tippling-houses), where everything is in profusion, and where the beneficent gifts of the Lord that should not be used otherwise than with great thankfulness (and of which a portion naturally belongs to the poor) are squandered and consumed without the least necessity, even by those who are considered sober and temperate. This is an irrefutable evidence of a sensual and wanton heart, and proves also that those who have much to do with these things cannot be free from blame of living after the flesh. Such a carnal life certainly has no promise of salvation. On the contrary, many severe threatenings of the wrath and displeasure of God—nay, of eternal damnation—are recorded in the blessed pages of the Word of God, which contains nothing but the truth. Es. 1:3-8; Da. 5:1-3; Lu. 12:19,20; 16:19

O how different is this from the life of a true Christian, who has forsaken himself and his lusts. How great the step that is between their walk and that of the holy martyrs, who delivered up not only their carnal desires, but also their bodies and lives, unto death for the Lord's sake! But how great a difference will also be between the two classes afterwards. The former, having had their good things in this life, shall be shut out from the true, heavenly riches. But the latter, because they have love to God, and have renounced and abandoned their possessions (which might have led them into sin), shall be admitted to the true enjoyment of the heavenly riches and pleasures, and that forever and ever. Mal. 3:18 Here they shall obtain what is recorded concerning the end of the luxurious rich man and that of poor Lazarus: that the rich man, when he saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, while he himself was in hell, received this answer to his doleful lamentations: "Son, remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Lu. 16:25

Nevertheless, these and similar evil examples are constantly presented to our eyes. They are the more pernicious and dangerous for the reason that some worldly-minded people pronounce them to be "non-essentials,"

the USA, foreign-made clothes from "3rd-world" countries are often more economical and are often seen as "cheap, lower class" clothing.

"unimportant" ... and therefore allowable. It is the same with them as with the fruit from the tree of knowledge, which stood in the midst of Paradise, and was pleasant to the eyes, but deadly in the use; for whoever ate of it had to die. Ge. 2:17

O that Satan would show himself as he really is, and that the world, too, might come forth without disguise or mask. Then certainly no one possessing reason would allow himself to be deceived by them. For in Satan nothing would be seen but deadly snares, traps, and murdering daggers for the soul, poisoned arrows wherewith to destroy everything good in man, through unbelief, apostasy from God, impenitent obduracy, and despair. These are followed by a train made up of the fears of hell and horrors of damnation. In the world men would perceive nothing but vanity, mingled with much vexation, sorrow, grief, and misery, and this in such abundance, that if as many tears could be wept over it as there is water in all the sea and all the rivers, yet the weight of the true sorrow that springs from them could not be adequately expressed; for they draw after them not only temporal, but also everlasting miseries.

But, O how lamentable! All this is hid under a beautiful appearance. Satan appears to be a prince or king, and the world a noble princess or queen. The servants and handmaids who follow them as pages and maids of honor appear as cavaliers and ladies, reveling in joy and delight. As regards the soul, however, they are poor and deformed; yea, poorer than beggars, and without the true joy which delights the upright soul in God.⁸

There is, therefore, great danger of being deceived. O, ye upright children of God, be on your guard!⁹ Let your simplicity be coupled with prudence. Your faith as well as your life are the targets. If Satan gain the mastery over you, your precious faith—which has been commended to your keeping as dearly as your soul—is ruined. If ye are overcome by the world it will soon put an end to your

⁸ It is a very lamentable fact that the things loaded with danger are not as they appear, and appear not as they really are. Is not the fish caught with a bait in which is concealed the hook? Are not the birds ensnared in the net in which berries or grains of corn are scattered for them to eat? Certainly! Is it to be wondered then, that blind, carnal, and worldly-minded men are deceived and led into perdition by the wiles of Satan and the alluring lusts of a deceitful world?

⁹ Meanwhile the prudent knight and valiant champion of Christ must be on his guard and constantly in arms so that he may neither by the one nor by the other be diverted from his noble watch over his soul, which has been entrusted to him, and thus be led away and cast, either in soul or body, or according to both, into the direful abyss of perdition.

Christian and virtuous life, without which latter the best of faith is of no avail. Watch, therefore, my dear friends, equally well for both, for the one is as important as the other. Faith without the corresponding life, or the life without the faith, can, will, and may not avail before God. They are like two witnesses who must agree, and of whom the one cannot stand or be received without the other.

Knowing then that we must care for both, there remains nothing for us but to do it. However, this work must certainly not only be begun, but also finished, according to the example of the steadfast martyrs of God. This finishing—whether it be brought about in a natural or a violent manner according as liberty or persecution brings about—we must comfort ourselves, since it is certain that the crown is not to be found in the beginning or in the middle, but at the end.¹⁰

But as necessary as it is to finish well, so necessary it is also to begin well, and, having begun, to go on well; for without a good beginning and a good progress it is impossible to attain to a good end.

We speak to you, then, most beloved in the Lord, who have begun with us, received the same faith with us, and with us as a token of this have been baptized.

Surely we have made a vow to the Lord, which we cannot recall, as David sings: “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High.” Ps. 50:14

We have, through faith, received Christ, the Son of God, as our Prophet, Priest, King, Shepherd, Friend, and Bridegroom; and in this we must go on and grow stronger. Paul teaches this to us, saying: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught.” Co. 2:6-7 Hereby we have come from the darkness of ignorance to the true light of knowledge, which we are commanded to keep in perpetual remembrance. In this direction tend the words: “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.” He. 10:32 In short: “Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” Ph. 3:16. “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life . . . Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Ju. 20-21,24-25, Is. 40:30,31; Ph. 4:13

10 O that this would be considered, as it should!

We would now commend you, beloved brethren and sisters, to the Lord and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Our work, which has been done for your benefit, is now finished in this respect. That you may make good use of it is our friendly desire. Remember us always in your prayers, until we depart this life (Philippians 1:23) that God may be gracious unto us now and in eternity. We hope, on our part, to do the same for you. O that God would grant that we all, without one missing, might behold one another face to face in the kingdom of God! 1 Co. 13:12

Meanwhile we rejoice in the salvation of the Lord. It sometimes seems to us as if Heaven had come down upon earth, or that we were ascending from earth to heaven. 2 Co. 12:1-12 Or, that we, who are still among men, held communion with God and His holy angels; or that eternal heavenly joy and glory were offered to us; nay, that we had a foretaste of those things which mortal eye hath never seen, nor ear heard, nor heart experienced in this life.¹¹

We walk no longer upon earth with our thoughts; nevertheless, we are still encompassed by a cloud of earth, a body of clay, a heavy load of the soul. O, that we were free from it, and that our soul, liberated from this load, might return to God in heaven—her true origin!—like a freed dove which has been confined in a strange place returns to her nest and abode. But we must wait for this until the time comes that God has appointed.

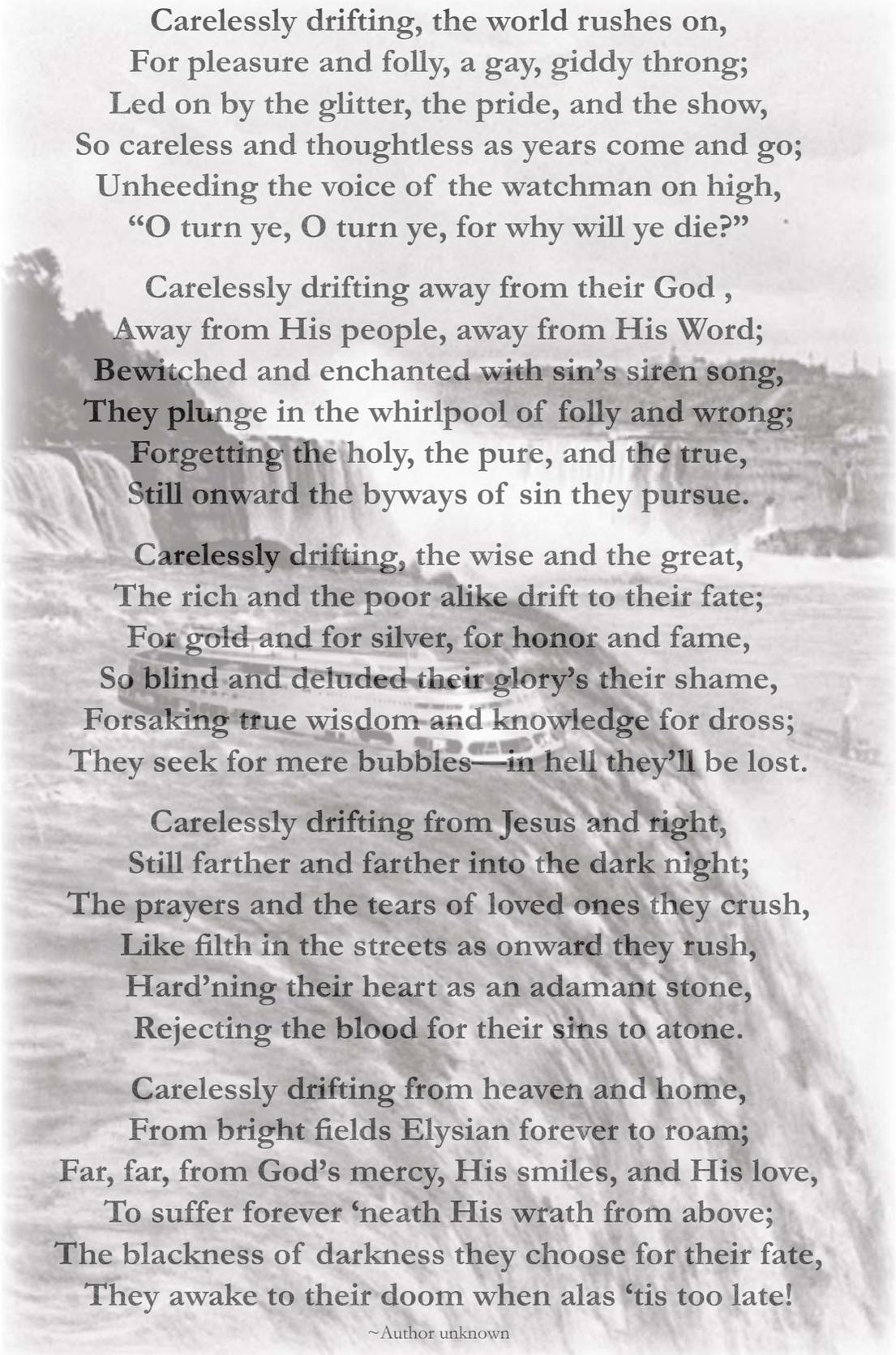
Let us then be patient together, most beloved in the Lord, till the day come, which, if we remain faithful unto the end, will assuredly bring us that which we here wait for in hope. Then the tears, which we—sighing and longing for the highest salvation of God—have wept here shall surely be wiped away from our eyes. Then shall we no longer see through a glass, darkly, but face to face. Then shall the heavenly be shown us no longer in thought or in spirit, but it shall be given us, and we shall be made participants of it by experience alone, in truth and in deed. O great and precious subject! We can go no further: our reason cannot comprehend it; our earthly tongue cannot express it!

Yours very affectionally in the Lord,

TH. J. VAN BRAGHT

Dort, July 25, 1659

11 These things can appropriately be understood to have been caused by meditation and holy contemplation; and in like manner the passage: “For our conversation is in heaven.” Ph. 3:20



Carelessly drifting, the world rushes on,
For pleasure and folly, a gay, giddy throng;
Led on by the glitter, the pride, and the show,
So careless and thoughtless as years come and go;
Unheeding the voice of the watchman on high,
“O turn ye, O turn ye, for why will ye die?”

Carelessly drifting away from their God ,
Away from His people, away from His Word;
Bewitched and enchanted with sin’s siren song,
They plunge in the whirlpool of folly and wrong;
Forgetting the holy, the pure, and the true,
Still onward the byways of sin they pursue.

Carelessly drifting, the wise and the great,
The rich and the poor alike drift to their fate;
For gold and for silver, for honor and fame,
So blind and deluded their glory’s their shame,
Forsaking true wisdom and knowledge for dross;
They seek for mere bubbles—in hell they’ll be lost.

Carelessly drifting from Jesus and right,
Still farther and farther into the dark night;
The prayers and the tears of loved ones they crush,
Like filth in the streets as onward they rush,
Hard’ning their heart as an adamant stone,
Rejecting the blood for their sins to atone.

Carelessly drifting from heaven and home,
From bright fields Elysian forever to roam;
Far, far, from God’s mercy, His smiles, and His love,
To suffer forever ‘neath His wrath from above;
The blackness of darkness they choose for their fate,
They awake to their doom when alas ‘tis too late!

~Author unknown



The Way to the City of Peace

Pieter Pietersz (1574-1651)

Most of our readers are familiar with John Bunyan's allegory called *Pilgrim's Progress*. What few realize is that Bunyan's story was not the first allegory; in fact, it followed a number of other similar stories. The following was written 50 years before *Pilgrim's Progress* was penned.

As you read this Anabaptist allegory, think about how it compares with Bunyan's Puritan story. There is a major difference in outlook. Can you see it? ~

Pieter: Good day, friend. Where do you come from on your journey? Have you any news? What have you heard? (He. 12:22)

Jan: I have been traveling diligently in the wilderness of this world, seeking a city called the City of Peace, and through intense seeking have found it.

Pieter: Dear Jan, tell me something about it; I would love to hear nothing more eagerly, for strife and lack of peace is everywhere in the cities and villages. Can such a city still be found?

Jan: You will be surprised to hear it. This city is little known, and so many people pass it by without paying attention to what it is inside. (Mt. 7:14)

Pieter: Well, why does this happen? Why do people pass it by without looking at it? Does one not gladly go into a nearby city to look at it? What is the reason, is it attractive?

Jan: This city has such a narrow entrance, and the path branches away from where most people walk, that few people return to see it. (2 Esd. 7:7; 9:15; 8:3) Besides this, there is such heavy traffic on the broad way where most people walk, both young and old, since it offers pleasures for the eyes and the flesh, (Re. 18:11) with beer and wine in the celebration of the god Bacchus: whatever one wishes, to fill the stomach as each one pleases, as the masses go by, drunkards, whoremongers, exhibitionists, greedy people, haughty people, cruel people, selfish people; all these and many others pass by. (Ro. 1:29) Only seldom does someone turn around and come to the City

of Peace, so lonely, separated, and unwanted is this path to carnal people.

Also, as one seeks to enter the city one observes that the gate is very low and that one must bow down in order to enter (Lu. 13:24); those who are somewhat fat and coarse in their carnal desires cannot make it, (Ga. 5:20) or the clothes—called the old being—must be removed before entering that the old sinful flesh and blood may remain hanging at the gate posts. (Ep. 4:22; Co 3:8) Also, since the external city has no beauty or worldly splendor the carnal person does not want to enter, to press on despite the pain. (Is. 53:5)

Nevertheless, I have never seen or known of such a beautiful city with greater unity, where its citizens themselves are the living stones formed together (1 Pe. 2:5; 1 Co. 3:11), and where the foundation of the city was the indestructible foundation stone which no flood, thunderstorm, or earthquake can shake or move, even if the entire sea should flow against it. (Ps. 46:4) And those who live in it have such a firm faith in their king that they are secure under their fig tree without fear. (Is. 25:4; Wis. of Sol. 3:9) It was such that I was surprised that this could be found on earth, which is such a wilderness; but it must cost work, suffering, prayer, and tears before one can enter.

Pieter: Dear Jan, I must ask; tell me and I shall listen patiently: What kind of people live in this city? What kind of king does it have who has overcome others to win it?

Jan: I have found such a friendly fellowship in the City as though I were in another world. (Ga. 5:22) As I stayed there longer, I saw their noble virtues, how their nobility increased in humility the higher they were, and that their knights—who had the most respect—were the smallest among them. (Mt. 3:11; 1 Co. 15:8) Their noble fellowship consisted in that they never had strife among themselves, and their king, who has made knights of all of them, is king of the spiritual Jerusalem¹ where there is always peace.

Pieter: Well, when there was something to distribute, whether inherited or taken from others, did it go well, did no one look cross-eyed?

Jan: Oh no, for their king had given a law which stood in the midst of them, that they should love their neighbor as themselves. (Mt. 22:37-39) They believe this law so firmly, and cling to it so zealously, that they never begrudge others, unless it were that some felt that they had received more than their fair share. (Ro 13:9; Ph. 2:4)

Pieter: Well, Jan, there might well be greedy ones among them who would want the most?

¹ Remember ... the name Jerusalem means "City of Peace."

Jan: There is not a single greedy person living in the City of Peace for they cannot enter the narrow gate and remain greedy. (Ep. 5:5) Greed is ungodly and the root of all evil which has no inheritance in the kingdom of God and can therefore also not be present in the holy church of God, except of course by the clever ones who carry the name, but in vain. (Mt. 19:22; 1 Ti. 6:6; Co. 3:5)

Pieter: But someone else could enter; wouldn't it happen then?

Jan: If that should happen, the City would be destroyed in that moment and her beauty lost. The citizens are those who have been washed in the blood of the

Lamb: no one can become a citizen

in this city unless they first humble themselves under the king who has built it in great love. (Ga. 3:27; 2:21)

While this city seems poor in the eyes of others and he himself, when he was building it, was very poor according to the riches of this world, not even having a place to lay his head, (Mt. 8:20)

he has nevertheless, unlike other kings who take riches from their citizens for themselves to protect their wealth, provided the City with great abundance of riches, riches which are hidden from the carnal eyes of the world. (Ep. 5:27; 2 Co. 8:9, Ep. 1:11) Not only this, but

when he ascended to the heavenly Jerusalem, he promised them that he would come again to give eternal life, and to live together with them in eternity. (Ac. 1:11; Mk. 16:19) While he does all of this out of his great love and goodwill, still, no one can enter the City until he has reached agreement with the king, and is united and accepted by him. (Jn. 14:5; Co. 3:1-11)

Pieter: Does this king watch closely, is he particular?

Jan: Oh yes, for he has eyes of fire (Re. 1 and 2), which see through the human heart and no one can deceive him with an appearance that is not genuine. This king is such an enemy of greed that he himself left his own kingdom in order to build this city and to share his kingdom here, and all of this because of love. (Ph. 2:5-8) Therefore no one can walk honestly in this fellowship unless he is an enemy of greed and is of one mind with this king and follows him with a pure and honest spirit free of false pretensions, secret hatred, deception, conceit, spiritual pretensions, or self-righteousness. (Ps. 24:4; 1 Th. 5:22) All this must remain outside the City of Peace. (Mt. 23:26; Lu. 18:11)

Pieter: I can understand this, but I must ask further. While I feel that this is a wonderful city, I see in the cities

and towns all around a running and a chasing after riches, a holding on to your own advantage, insisting upon your right. Do the citizens of the City of Peace also judge: Surely there must be judges, for it is so tense among people that it is difficult to satisfy everyone, even between husband and wife.

Jan: Oh, no, Pieter, the people in the City of Peace are so far from clinging to their own and insisting upon their rights, that they would rather give their coat also in addition to what is asked. Their king has taught them that

if anyone wants to have their coat, they should give them their cloak as well (Mt. 5:40), so that the citizens see their gain in giving and forsaking the things over which others quarrel. (1 Co. 6:7) This always wins, for there is always peace, and in their giving they sometimes win others and bring them to conversion. (Pr. 9:6) All are thus minded, both men and women, and as they walk this path with joy they find great rest for their souls. (Mt. 11:29) If you could only taste how sweet it is to have inner peace with God, and how difficult it is

to live in strife and for the sake of perishable things (Ja. 3:16; 1 Co. 6:7), you would undoubtedly choose the good before evil and the most before the least.

Pieter: Yes, yes, Jan, one would then indeed become totally poor and forsake all. Please tell me what your counsel would be then?

Jan: Yes, Pieter, that is the reason why most people fear to go into this city; they are afraid of poverty and the loss of their possessions, but this is because of their blindness and ignorance. (Ep. 4:28; Is. 5:8-10) First, people always look upon their physical, earthly well-being, not upon the welfare of their souls, and therefore choose darkness rather than light (Jn. 3:19), calling the good bad and the bad good, choosing the temporal before the eternal, and hold on to these things so firmly that they cannot depart from them. (2 Pe. 2:13) Their own will has chosen their own righteousness and their own self-love.

Because of the indwelling of these evils they always remain the old being, but this must be forsaken and die which is to them as bitter as death itself. (Mt. 23:27; Lu. 9:23; Jn. 9:4) Through their darkened understanding they believe they are right but their vision has been blurred by their stubborn minds. Therefore their trust and refuge remains in the present carnal and temporal riches, believing themselves to be secure but even that which they believe is their assurance of rest brings them the greatest unrest,

The citizens see their gain in giving and forsaking the things over which others quarrel.

and that which they believe will be their greatest security in time of need turns out to have forsaken them when that time comes. (Je. 17:5; Lu. 12:19) Thus their assumed wealth brings them into their deepest poverty. (Lu. 16:25)

Pieter: Nevertheless Jan, it is generally believed to be good to have some possessions; those who do not are not as respected?

Jan: Pieter, my friend, listen carefully to what I have to tell you. What you have said is indeed what the whole world says, but I tell you that those who put their hope in things, as many do, are worshipping an idol named Mammon, before which all people kneel as before a golden portrait. (Mt. 6:24; Lu. 12:19) Let me assure you that as long as you place your well-being there, your heart will not be unburdened of worry and fear, of unrest and torment. (1 Ti. 6:9; 1 Co. 6:6) It is precisely what people consider to be their welfare that causes the lack of peace in the world, the cause of judging² and fighting, of wars and strife, of hatred and envy, and selfish profit with each one seeking to win the largest share for themselves. Therefore, people run stiff-necked into each other, buying, selling, lying, deceiving, each one seeking to undercut the other in order to possess the god of gold. (Am. 8:5; Bar. 3:17) This is why there is no peace in the world. Open your eyes!

Pieter: Well Jan, tell me further: If the citizens of the City of Peace do not seek to become rich, how can they then feed the poor?

Jan: Oh, no, they do not seek earthly treasures, but they can feed the poor for God's blessing is upon the righteous who are content with little. (2 Co. 8:2) They respect the command of the king when he says: do not gather for yourself riches which thieves can destroy and steal (Lu. 12:33), and because they need little for themselves, they are busy sharing their abundance with the poor. They heed the warning of the king when he says: It is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven, and easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom. (Mk. 10:23; Mt. 19:23) Since God is the comfort and strength of the faithful and multiplies their small gifts, so their trust is secure in God and they taste the sweetness of heaven rather than what is earthly. (Co. 3:2)

This Paul taught when he entered the City of Peace and became a citizen, that what he had formerly counted

as gain he now regarded as loss because of the king and the love he had experienced from him. (Ph. 3:7) Therefore he also warns his brothers to avoid those who place gain before godliness, as do most of the citizens of Babel. (1 Ti. 6:5) He counted it great gain to be blessed and content, for we brought nothing into the world and it is clear we will carry nothing out; therefore as we have shelter and food, let us be content. Those who want to become rich fall into many temptations and are trapped and condemned by harmful desires and greed, which is the root of all evil.

The citizens of the City of Peace consider this teaching so worthy and avoid the temptations of wanting to become rich, so that I did not find a single one who was a true citizen of the City who sought wealth through greed or the pursuit of money. If the Lord so blessed their work that they have more than they need, they know that these things belong to God, lent to them not that they might attach their heart to them as a treasure, but that they, according to the will of God, will use it to serve their neighbor. (Jb. 31:24; Ps. 50:10; Mt. 6:11) Thus the perishable goods will not soil their heart nor draw it to the treasure as though that was their wealth; rather their riches and treasure are in heaven where they are registered in the book of life. That is the treasure they seek. (Lk. 10:20)

Pieter: What counsel do you have, dear friend, for a poor family with a house full of children, who have no income, who cannot work in difficult times because they are sick, or they would like to but cannot work, what then?

Jan: Oh, my friend Pieter, do listen to the full provisions in the City of Peace, where they are much better provided for than are those who have chests full of gold, for it is God who cares for them out of his abundance; he has also assigned his angels to watch over them so that they lack nothing. Those who are rich in this world also fail, and suffer want, but those who trust in God have every need met. (Ze. 2:5; Ps. 34:8; Ps. 121:4)

Pieter: Is it true that angels watch over those who fear God? This is invisible, which makes me think that there must be some money or visible material things which these people can find and feel secure.

Jan: Well, Pieter, you should be ashamed to answer that way; do you think that your money can protect them better than the care of God? That sounds too heathenish and godless. (Lu 12:20; Mt. 6:32-33) Listen further and

Therefore no one can walk honestly in this fellowship unless he is an enemy of greed.

2 Lawsuits ...

understand. I have told you that they have a rich king who sustains every living thing of earth, the fish in the sea, the birds in the heavens, and above all the people; but this king is so rich that he sustains everything without his wealth being diminished. But the most unusual fact is that he has tied himself to these citizens of the City of Peace with a covenant in which he promised that he would never leave them nor forsake them and further asking them to cast all their burdens upon him for he will care for them. (He. 13:5)

He also urged that we should seek his kingdom and his righteousness and everything will be supplied for us; yes, above all this, that he will be our Father and we shall

These citizens prefer doing useful work and look upon useless trade and shameless profit as useless, in contrast to which their work meets general human need and the welfare of their brothers.

be his sons and daughters. (2 Co. 6:18) Do you think, O doubting Pieter, that this rich, good father would allow his children to suffer want, that he will forsake them? That is impossible, for with mighty promises he told his people, saying that even if a mother forsakes her child, and does not take pity upon the fruit of her womb; what do you say to this, my friend, must you not confess that it is impossible?

Pieter: Well, yes, that cannot be a motherly heart.

Jan: But now listen with intent to what the Lord says: And if a mother should leave her child, I will, nevertheless, not leave you. (Ps. 37:5; Mt. 14) Let this be a comfort to you, my friend, together with many other examples. That he used a raven to feed Elijah, Daniel in the lions' den, and three men in the burning oven, and many similar powerful deeds and promises are imprinted on the heart of those who truly believe, that they lose their fear and pagan worries, trusting fully in their Lord who alone is their helper. (Da. 3:21; Jn. 6:13; He. 11:1; Lu. 8:22) That is their firm confidence, and if he is with them they fear no evil nor poverty. (Ps. 23:1)

Pieter: Although you admonish me, Jan, because of my question, you speak as though God tosses everything in to you through the window; and will you not then remain lying on your back and say: "God will supply it?"

Jan: Well, Pieter, how difficult it is for you to grasp and understand the truth. (Lu. 24:21) Do you think we are so blind that we would tempt God? Why did God create everything, simply in order that it might exist? Oh, no, God in his wisdom has ordered everything: the sun, the moon, the stars, the winds, summer, winter, everything in its order, and in addition, also all creatures, with human beings as the principal image of God in his creation. (Ge. 1:26) And all this not in order that people should become infatuated with creation and lose their heart to it, but in order to cultivate the earth and to eat their bread in the sweat of their brow. (Ps. 62:11; Ge. 2:15; 3:19)

That is why you find few idle people in the City of Peace, profiting no one; each one receives their work under the blessing of the Lord and sustain them by his order of all things, so that the citizens see their calling in the fear of the Lord, working in a quiet manner that their heart may not be depressed or burdened with clinging to earthly things, but completely trust the promises of the Lord. These citizens prefer doing useful work and look upon useless trade and shameless profit as useless, in contrast to which their work meets general human need and the welfare of their brothers. (Lu. 12:31; 2 Th. 3:12) For they seek only to supply their own needs.

Selfish concern or not to care for the neighbor's welfare as well as one's own, or to interfere in the work of others, is hardly found in the City of Peace. (Ph. 2:4) If it were otherwise, there would be no peace or contentment. Therefore, these citizens look upon big banquets, excessive drinking, expensive clothes and jewelry, large houses and decorations as needless expenses. These things do not fit into their manner of living. They are unhappy with ostentation and pride.

It may well be that a person can wear poor clothing and their heart still be selfish and full of pride, but nevertheless, an upright, humble heart cannot produce arrogant fruit. (Mt. 7:19; 11:29) They are humble, first, because they wish to follow their king in his humility; second, because all unnecessary concern people have about things forces them to run and work to the extent that they forget the work of the kingdom. (Ph. 2:7; Mt. 11:29) Third, it would be so difficult for the heavenly citizens, who are pilgrims here, to so tie themselves to their desires through the lust of the eyes, that they would easily be lost in the world. (Mt. 22:5; Lu. 14:18; Ph. 4:11)

Therefore, these citizens reject these desires and are content with simple clothing and, even if they had only bread and water, would thank their king more than those who have a big stomach because of all their celebrating, for to them their belly is their god. (Ro. 16:17) Therefore, these citizens of the City of Peace receive everything out of the hand of God and say with David that although my soul and body may perish, you (O Lord) are still my heart's desire and comfort. (Ps. 73:25) This is what sustains them in peace and their hearts in full contentment.

Pieter: I understand Jan, that it is true that those who are content with little are the most at rest. But Jan, people also want to be known in the world, they treasure being called an important person, they also like to have a good table in order that a friend may be invited, they also like to have good clothes when necessary. (Mt. 6:1) I can understand when you say that these citizens are very different from the common people, they are attractive and honest, and therefore it would seem that they would also have some wealth to work with. Therefore, I must ask further whether there is no citizen in the City of Peace who has more on hand than they need for their daily needs?

Jan: Oh, my friend, listen with understanding. It seems that you and most people look only upon the present life; what you need is a living faith which hopes firmly in God and will yield better goods than you can find here on earth. You want to reign already here on earth and be respected. You would rather sit at table with the rich man than with the poor beggar Lazarus. What you need are the words of Scripture in which Paul writes in Philippians 4:8: Whatsoever is honest ... But before he says, Dear Brothers, whatever is true—it must be in harmony with eternal truth. Therefore your last question about whether there are any citizens here who possess more than necessary for their daily needs, I answer yes, there are citizens here who carry a heavier burden than those who have nothing, for their king has installed them as managers. (Lu. 16:1) This is a greater burden than the poor have. Yet even so they are so surrendered to their king, whether they have the burden of these goods or not, because they carry it out of love for the Lord and a service to their neighbor.

Therefore, they have extra treasure added to them not in order to use for themselves, as some might say “this is mine; I can do with it as I please.” Oh, no, they only use this when there is a need, as their teacher taught them, being sober and righteous, etc., and what they have left, which they do not own, but call it that of their Lord, that they use for the needs of their fellow brethren and keep it for those places where their king has ordered their treasures to be kept. (Ti. 2:12) Therefore, they are not con-

cerned about this added treasure, that they should not be angry, not hoping for uncertain riches but alone upon the living God who has enabled them to use all things abundantly.

Therefore, they have learned this lesson well that they with a mild hand can distribute these goods not unwillingly but gladly, whether they possess them or as if they did not, and through this cheerful, generous giving lay up treasures in the coming life, knowing that their Lord has promised to repay a hundredfold here, and finally eternal life. (1 Ti. 6:17; Mt. 19:29) Even if they did not have these promises of a great reward, their king is so dear to them that they give much more out of love than for the sake of reward. Particularly since they know the love and faithfulness of their Lord who has bought them with his own blood in love, which drives these citizens to eagerly share this love with others. (Re. 1:5; 1 Pe. 1:19; 1 Jn. 4:6-8)

Pieter: Well, but are they not afraid that this generous giving will make them poor?

Jan: Oh, no, Pieter, these citizens are careful to avoid the fellowship of those who worry first about the fear of poverty, second about heathenish worry, third about greed, and fourth, love of money. These four guests come as though it were their right and mostly speak to warn these mild citizens, seeking to hang towels over their eyes, thereby hoping to cover the eyes of faith. These towels are dyed with a color of mistrust against God, but since these citizens have the laws of their Lord so firmly in their hearts, they are careful with these serpents, not letting themselves be deceived, thus resisting this fellowship. (Ps. 37:31; Mt. 10:16; 24:4) For these are thieves who steal peace, which would be enough to take away contentment and trust in God, though they appear to be innocent. In order to recognize these thieves, they have

Pieter:
Well, but are
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poor?
Jan:
Oh, no, Pieter ...

anointed their eyes with a salve which prevents them from being deceived. (Re. 3:18)

Pieter: Well, Jan, it is not necessary to think back, the times are difficult as it is and we ourselves have many needs: one might fall ill or become helpless, one wants to go through this world with God and honor, one prefers to stay in one's own home for that is honorable, it is more blessed to give than to receive, those who do not take responsibility for their own home are worse than unbelievers, so if one keeps something it is satisfying to our nature, but to make ourselves naked in order to clothe another is going too far. (1 Ti. 5:8)

Jan: Oh, my friend Pieter, I can see how the deceiving fellowship I mentioned has darkened your eyes, so it is good that we think back since the times are evil, but do you want to withhold it from the poor in order that your own needs may be met? (1 Co. 9) Oh, no, my friend, for if the times are difficult they suppress the poor more than others, but it is necessary that the evil guest is not mentioned in our house; that is a damaging guest who always complains about what is good, whose eyes lust for more, and whose tongue longs for the best food. Yet this must be for their belly is their god who controls them (Ph. 3:19), and this idol with his unwholesome fellowship makes the times difficult. That which the truly poor need this guest does not understand and must therefore be pushed out of the door without mercy, which our citizens are mindful to do; and when this evil guest has been locked out God will bless that house so that, though they might themselves have been in deep poverty, they will have overabundance in mercy. (Ac. 11:29; Jn. 2:16; Ro. 13:13)

You also mention what is well known, that one may become sick. But, Pieter, it appears as though you have thrown your trust in God behind you, whereas these citizens hold that for their true security in all emergencies. (Ps. 46:2; 55:23) You also mention that one would like to walk through the world with God and honor. Oh, Pieter, the first of what you mention is so certain here in the City of Peace that no evil times can rob us of that, for over a long period of time and from the prophets of the old City of God has come the lesson that those are blessed who put their trust in God; they are as a tree planted by the water, bringing shade and fruit. When drought comes they do not wither, so you see that they cannot miss; they are always fortunate with God in the world. (Je. 17:7)

You speak of honor and dignity. Pieter, do you seek vainglory? These citizens bring all honor to God, because of which they are always completely satisfied as far as it concerns themselves, so long as all honor comes to God their Creator. Nevertheless in their minds they are aware

that they should do a hundredfold more according to the worthiness of God to whom praise and thanksgiving always belong. (Ps. 100:4)

You also say that one prefers to stay in one's own place. But these citizens possess everything. If not, it is as you said that giving is more blessed than receiving. I also know, my friend, that I myself prefer this. The citizens of the City of Peace would rather give than receive, but if God wills otherwise, since everything is under him, they are also fully content with his will, saying with Job: The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. (Jb. 1:22)

You also spoke of managing one's own household, that it is worse than an unbeliever not to do this. In this the citizens are very careful that they always follow the laws of their king, therefore managing their own household, particularly in following the holy example of Christ. (1 Pe. 2:11; 1 Co. 8:2) It happens then that they may suffer damage inflicted by other people, or that they need to give much and their goods be diminished, of that in helping the poor they sometimes neglect their own needs. Yet they consider this their profit: they would rather eat dry bread with peace than have a house with many things but with strife and no peace. They consider it managing their own household well if they have followed the teachings of their king in sobriety, moderation, a careful use of time, but they reject the desire for unnecessary things in order that they may give more generously. Thus their work is an asset to their house and to the house of God. (Ti. 2:2) They do not consider your last question valid, that nature should have its own right, but we admit that we sometimes suffer loss for the sake of others, not seeking costly clothing, but rather what is simple in order that they may clothe the naked. (Mt. 25:36) This produces a good conscience and a peaceful soul. ~

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Did you see it? Did you recognize the great difference in perspective between Bunyan and Pietersz?

The difference is, of course, that the Anabaptist view is that the City, the kingdom of God, begins here on earth, with the citizens living out here and now the virtues and character that Christ defined in His Sermon on the Mount. The Puritan waits until death to enter the City.

That difference may seem insignificant to you. If it does seem insignificant, you need to seriously consider what the gospel of the kingdom really is. ~

Continued from p. 29

Not so. He established His kingdom with His first coming; His second coming will expand it exponentially.

The kingdom of God is mentioned over 120 times in the four gospel accounts. The bottom line is that the focus of Jesus' teaching was on the kingdom: its values, ethics, morals, and function. It was to be set up right in the midst of evil, and overcome that evil with good. Some day the evil will be completely removed, but for now the kingdom functions surrounded by evil spirits and evil men.

Jesus' work as prophet and high priest were in fact only channels or means so that the kingdom could be realized. He gave the "laws" of the kingdom (the "laws" of Jesus are simply a reflection of the character of God, not just another set of rules to obey) so that men would know if their heart was like God's heart or not. The Mosaic Law was not evil or bad, it was simply inadequate, with no means to put Eternal Life back into the heart of man.

Jesus then gave His own blood to quicken (give life to) sinners who were dead in sins. After all, God is Eternal Life, and life and death cannot mix. So to make the atonement between God and man, Jesus gave life to dead men so that life could be united (or, better said, reunited) with Life. But this atonement was for a purpose: to establish the kingdom of God. Men cannot live the kingdom ethics without the life of God within to empower him.

And, of course, those who are given Eternal Life have their sins forgiven, and if they remain faithful in the kingdom here, they will inherit it forever in heaven!

Four years later ...

We have been trying to say these things for four years now. Some have agreed; others (whole congregations, in fact) have asked to be removed from the mailing list. We try not to be too hard on those who do not understand the distinction between the gospel of the kingdom and the kingdomless gospel. After all, not too many years ago we ourselves were caught up, unawares, in typical Evangelical/Protestant ideas.

But we consider the kingdom gospel to be fundamental to everything the Bible has to say. Anabaptism was founded on a kingdom gospel, and today's North American Anabaptism is in danger of degenerating into Evangelicalism by reason of the flood of teachings that come through hymnbooks, devotionals, and preachers who do not preach the gospel of the kingdom. So while we come rejoicing in the front door, we raise our voices in alarm at the mass exodus at the back door.

May God bless you now. ¡Adios! To God I commend you! May His kingdom come, may His will be done *on earth*, in you ... and me! ~

2nd Quarter 2013 Financial Report

Thank you for your support!



04/01/13 Beginning Balance	\$6,966.80
Receipts	
Tape/CD Ministry Donations	\$16,745.59
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$5,383.35
Total Receipts	\$22,128.94
Disbursements	
UPS & Postage	\$1,447.86
Tapes, Albums, CDs & Labels	\$2,361.00
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$279.99
Equipment Maintenance & Repairs	\$125.96
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$118.08
Rent	\$2,250.00
Telephone	\$649.28
Website Development & Maintenance	\$428.32
Building Improvements	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$108.96
Payroll Expense	\$7,200.00
Books & Catalogs	\$0.00
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$8,155.58
Total Disbursements	\$23,125.03
06/30/13 Ending Balance	\$5,970.71
Difference	-\$996.09



The Hutterite Mission Machine

*The Marine Corps of the early
Anabaptists*

By Dean Taylor

A few issues ago we published an article entitled “The Moravian Mission Machine” in which we highlighted the mission activity of the Moravians of the 1700s. We used the label “mission machine” to describe their particular type of church structure, where the church community utilized everything they had—their lives, their homes, and particularly their businesses—for the propagation of the kingdom of God.

Since then, my studies of early Anabaptist churches have led me to discover another group that was anointed in nearly the same way almost 200 years earlier: the Hutterites. Birthed out of the “Radical Reformation” of 1525, the Hutterites combined an unusual dedication to the words of Jesus with a decidedly organized missionary outreach.

As with all the Anabaptist groups of their day, evangelism and church planting had to be done in secret. Martyrdom was a frequent end for many missionaries and evangelists. Because of this persecution, things like strategy and organization were difficult. The temptation to hide and be the “quiet of the land” was strong. But apparently Jesus’ command to “go into all the world” was even stronger. When I started to read the history of the early Anabaptists, I saw that just about all of the groups fought this spiritual war valiantly and died bravely. But in particular I was impressed when I read about the tenacity, determination, and—especially—the systematic approach the Hutterites had for missions and evangelism. Based on the number of converts and court testimonies, it is assumed

that most of the early Anabaptists were active in evangelism and mission work. However, when it comes to actual recorded history from this time period, compared to the early Hutterites nothing even comes close.

Where did the Hutterites come from?

In the early 1500s radical Christianity was at a peak. Martin Luther became an overnight celebrity when his 95 theses were translated to German and spread all over Europe. With this act the Protestant Reformation officially began. In Switzerland, another zealous reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, began reforming the city of Zurich. Soon after arriving in Zurich, Zwingli began preaching through the Bible in the common language. As people heard the Word of God preached, revival broke out and many had their lives changed in powerful ways.

Another important aspect of this revival was that the New Testament was being published in the common language for the first time. Eventually this personal reading of the Bible produced another wave of the Reformation that historians have called the “Radical Reformation,” from which sprang the “Anabaptists.”¹

The Anabaptists

The Anabaptists were birthed out of a group of young converts who were studying the Bible with Ulrich Zwingli. Felix Manz, George Blaurock, and Conrad Grebel were among these zealous young converts. The young converts prospered for a time, but as they studied the New Testament, they soon found a big sticking point over the concept of a state church and the way their teachers were treating the words of Jesus. As the Reformation went forward, they felt that the words of Jesus were getting neglected or explained away. The young converts objected to this sharply. For example, Conrad Grebel, a natural leader among the young converts, objected in a letter arguing this point to an estranged friend. In this letter Grebel wrote something that I think encapsulates the whole Anabaptist movement in one sentence. He said:

The teaching of the Lord has been given for the purpose of being put into practice.²

It wasn’t long until the new group started believer’s baptism, rebaptizing adults on the profession of their faith. In their day rebaptism was a capital offense. Even in Zu-

1 To this day the Mennonites, Amish, Hutterites, and even many of the Church of the Brethren would claim this history as their origin. Many newer groups also throughout the centuries have shared the same convictions and therefore would have shared the “Anabaptist” name.

2 Get your highlighter and mark this quote. It is a core gospel concept.

rich the Protestant Reformers issued the death sentence for these who practiced it. It was from this practice of rebaptism that the Anabaptists got their name: their enemies called them “Anabaptists,” which simply means “re-baptizers.” From the start, persecution poured out on the new Anabaptists from both the Catholics and Protestants. Many were imprisoned and soon the Anabaptist sealed their beliefs with martyrdom, beginning when the Protestant Reformers drowned Felix Mantz in the Limmat River.

Jesus said “Go”

In the days of the Reformation, the Protestants did not have a developed teaching on evangelism and missions. In their thinking, most new Christians entered the church as infants, and proselytes were usually made by converting the king of a country or province. In contrast, the new Anabaptists were trying to look at the Bible as a blueprint. Because of this, their view of missions flowed naturally out of the way they read the New Testament. The Anabaptists saw Jesus’ teachings on missions and evangelism not as mere historical notes, but as commands.

Within days after the birth of the movement, with death sentences still over their heads, the early Anabaptists went into neighboring cities with remarkable success. In one account, Conrad Grebel went north to St. Gall and interrupted an Easter parade with the preaching of the kingdom of God. By the end of the day over 500 new believers repented and believed. Following Grebel’s lead, the new converts actually left the procession and were baptized in the river flowing past their town.

Dangerous work

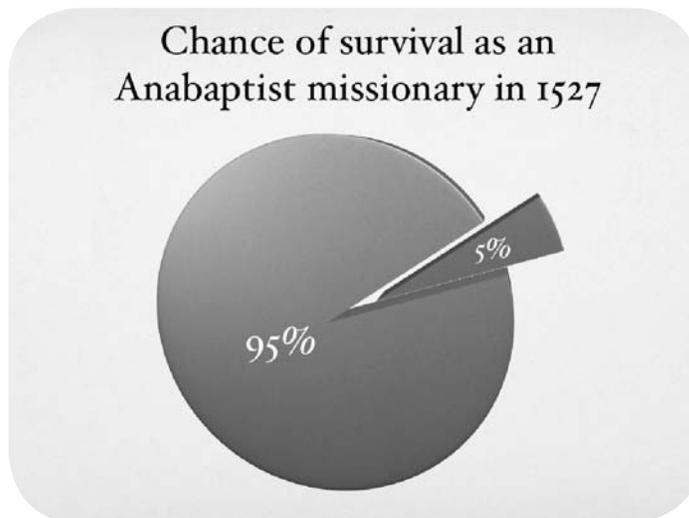
As the work continued, the early Anabaptists started to organize. In August of 1527 a group of about 60 missionaries and leaders met in Augsburg, Germany to divide up the different regions and to discuss strategies for spreading God’s kingdom. The meeting is known as the Martyrs Synod because after five years, out of those 60 ministers,

only two were left!³ The persecution was brutal. Some recanted and gave up; others hid or moved to remote areas. Regardless of the persecution, evangelism and mission continued. In spite of the persecution, Anabaptism was quickly popping up in all parts of Switzerland, south Germany, Austria, Moravia, and even Holland.

To Moravia

After a few years of hard persecution, a break came for some Anabaptists. Lord Liechtenstein of Nikolsburg opened up Moravia to the Anabaptists. Testifying to the evangelism activities of these early Anabaptists, 12,000 spiritual refugees took up Liechtenstein’s offer and moved to Moravia. For a while the region around Nikolsburg

was almost completely Anabaptist. Liechtenstein himself was even re-baptized. Unfortunately, however, the peace was short lived. The Muslim leader Suleiman the Magnificent had pronounced a holy war—Jihad—on Christian Europe. Inadvertently, these Moravian Anabaptists found themselves on the front line. With the fear of enemy attack and pressure from superior nobility, Liechtenstein ordered all citizens to wear the sword and be ready to defend the country at all times. Sad to say, most of the Anabaptists of this first wave consented



58 out of 60 missionaries who attended the Anabaptist “Martyrs’ Synod” in 1527 were martyred within five years.

and picked up the sword.

The few

However, a small band of approximately 200 refused to compromise. Meeting together and upholding Jesus’ teachings on things like the sword and radical views of economics, the little group began experiencing difficulty from their former brethren. Feeling the pressure from his superiors, Lord Liechtenstein ordered them out of the country. It was tough. Hardly a year had passed since most of them came to Nikolsburg, now they were heading into the wilderness armed with nothing more than the Word of God and zeal to follow the Lord anywhere He led.

³ “Direction: Anabaptists and the Great Commission in the Reformation,” Hans Kasdorf, <http://www.directionjournal.org/4/2/anabaptists-and-great-commission-in.html>.

Once out of the city, the group stopped to evaluate their situation. Surveying the sick and weak among them, they covenanted to stick together and help each other to the very end. The Hutterian Chronicles records the moment happening in the spring of 1528.

These men then spread out a cloak in front of the people, and each one laid his possessions on it with a willing heart—without being forced—so that the needy might be supported in accordance with the teachings of the prophets and apostles.

The small band petitioned the ruler of Austerlitz, Moravia if they could occupy one of his old burned-out farms. The lord enthusiastically accepted them. Starting out poor and weak, the brethren in Austerlitz modeled themselves after the book of Acts and set up a little settlement with full community of goods.

Amazingly, right from the beginning the little group started following Jesus' command to reach out. The Hutterian Chronicles records:

As the members of the church began to increase in number, their zeal and divine grace moved them to send brothers out to other counties, especially to Tyrol.⁴

Growth came with challenges. The first year was rocky. Leadership struggles and discipline issues tempted the community to lose focus. However, their evangelism paid off. Eventually an anointed missionary and preacher from

Tyrol named Jacob Hutter joined the brethren. His leadership skills were quickly recognized, and Hutter helped to give the new group much needed organization and vision. Many noticed his influence, and soon the brethren were being labeled after his name—"The Hutterites."

Actually, Jacob Hutter was a leader for only two years

(1533-1535). But what he accomplished in that time was substantial. Perhaps the most significant thing that Jacob Hutter contributed to the movement was a laser sharp vision, with the organizational skills to back it up. Jacob

ended his life heroically. Being sent out on a mission trip to his home area of Tyrol, Austria, Jacob fell into the hands of his persecutors. In February of 1536 Jacob was taken to Innsbruck, where he was severely tortured and interrogated. When they saw that Jacob would not deny the faith, he was taken to the city square and burned at the stake.⁵

Following the lead of Jacob Hutter, a new type of leaders emerged in the Hutterites with an even greater zeal to spread the kingdom of God to the ends of the earth. The high ideas and rare dedication to the words of Jesus attracted gifted men from all around Europe. This infused this new movement with talent and exceptional leadership.

Get organized

These were tough times. With the Muslims advancing from the south, Protestant and Catholic fighting to the West, and death threats and warrants posted in every land, the persecution was strong and effective. In many places the Anabaptists were forced into hiding. The Hutterites had every reason to hide out and play it safe in Moravia. But they didn't! The Hutterites felt that Jesus' words about evangelism were not just suggestions, they were commands; and they were dedicated to obeying Him in everything. They organized themselves into a society devoted to putting the words of Jesus into practice.

When I started reading the Hutterian Chronicles, I was very surprised to find this organized mission activity. Community of goods I expected to see. But an organized mission society surprised me. Organized missions were unheard of in these days. The Hutterites were centuries ahead of the rest of the Protestant world in this. Hutterites are usually remembered for their community living. But as I studied the early Hutterites, it became clear to me that their community living wasn't an end in itself. Their goal was following Jesus and spreading His kingdom no matter the cost. Their communities were strategically arranged to do this very thing.

Immediately following Jacob Hutter's death, Hans Amon and Peter Riedemann took on leadership roles. In turn these men were followed by still another wave of zealous men such as Leonhard Lanzenstiel and Peter Walpot. These men were fashioned by the Holy Spirit for the work. Walpot, for example, was exposed to harsh spiritual battle from his early childhood. While only eight years old he stood in the city square as they burned George Blaurock at the stake.⁶ These men were exceptional or-



Plaque in Vienna, Austria, placed as a memorial to the execution of Jakob Hutter.

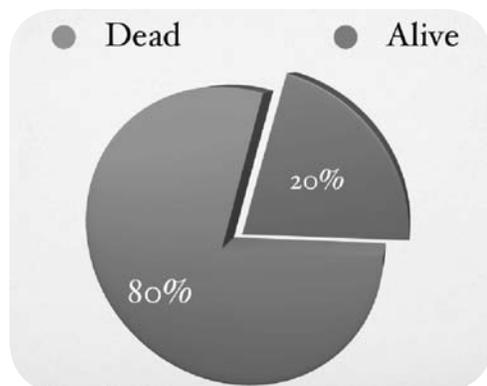
4 Hutterian Chronicle, Vol. 1, p. 82.

5 Ibid. p. 145.

6 Ibid. p. 53.

ganizers, teachers, and zealous Christian soldiers. It was under their leadership that the Hutterites became a *mission machine*.

The survival expectancy of these Hutterite missionaries was only about 20%.⁷ When I read of what these



Four out of every five Hutterite missionaries were eventually killed on the field.

brethren endured for the faith, I was inspired. All the early Anabaptists took part in missions in some way. But when I read about the dedication, tenacity, untiring zeal, and particularly their organized systematic approach, it

caused me to call the Hutterites of this time period *The Marine Corps of the Anabaptists!*

What did the Hutterite mission machine look like?

Several areas of early Hutterite missions stand out. Perhaps the most significant thing is the way they structured the communities to continue missions even when it wasn't convenient. To accomplish this they instilled several biblical principles into the everyday running of the community.

Dedicated ministry

In obedience to Scripture, the Hutterites felt that a local congregation's ministry is only complete when *all* parts are working together. The Scriptures say:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Ep. 4:11-13

⁷ Statistic by Anabaptist historian Robert Friedmann, *Hutterite Studies* (MacGregor, Man.: Hutterian Brethren Book Centre, 2010), p. 43.

The word that we use in English for "apostle" is a transliteration of a Greek word that means "sent out" or "sent away." The German word is *sendboten*. In the time of the Reformation this office was much neglected. The early Hutterites realized that to keep the proper focus in the church, they would need to revive this position. Without this office, mission work could become neglected.

Peter Riedemann

While imprisoned for his missionary activity, Peter Riedemann was called on by the authorities to explain the faith of the Anabaptists. In reply to their questions, Peter Riedemann wrote two books during two different imprisonments. Both are gems of early Anabaptism.⁸ His second work has now been called "The Hutterite Confession of Faith."⁹ However, the title is somewhat misleading. This book is more than just a dry denominational treatise. Riedemann goes into detail about many aspects of Christian living and doctrine. This book is one of the earliest books written during the beginning years of the Anabaptists. Incidentally this book is still considered the official "Statement of Faith" for the Hutterites today.

In the section entitled "*Differences in the Offices*," Riedemann explains the necessity of having a dedicated ministry designed for outreach. Writing from prison, he said:

In the church, Paul says, "God has first appointed apostles." These are the ones who are sent out by God and His church in accordance with the command of the gospel, to go throughout the country and establish the obedience of faith for His name's sake. This they do by teaching and baptizing.¹⁰

After the section on "apostles," Riedemann goes on to explain the role of shepherds, helpers, elders, etc. To the early Hutterites, only when all the offices were present was the local congregation's ministry considered complete. He explains that each office has a different purpose and calling. The ministerial offices should flow together, but their roles are quite different. This was insightful. The

⁸ Peter Riedemann, *Love Is Like Fire: The Confession of an Anabaptist Prisoner* (Plough Publishing House, 1993). Available for free download at <http://www.plough.com/en/ebooks/1/love-is-like-fire>. The second, larger work is: Riedemann, Peter, and John J. Friesen. *Peter Riedemann's Hutterite Confession of Faith*, Herald Press, 1999. A Kindle edition is now available at a reasonable price.

⁹ In German it is titled *Rechenschafft unserer Religion, Lehrer und Glaubens*

¹⁰ Riedemann, Peter, and John J. Friesen. *Peter Riedemann's Hutterite Confession of Faith*, Herald Press, 1999, p. 113.

temptation for the local church pastor to be heavily involved in shepherding and thus neglect foreign missions is great.

Evangelism and pastoral care

The local bishop of a congregation is commissioned to care for the local congregation. He has been given a natural bias for the holiness and purity of his flock.¹¹ Therefore, his bias is characteristically inward focused. The Hutterites understood this. They saw that without the office of “apostle” as part of the local congregation’s ministry, the bias of pastoral ministry would shy away from outreach.

This system worked great for the Hutterites. The Hutterites found that the pastoral and outreach ministries actually complement each other brilliantly. Riedemann wrote in his confession of faith:

Let us note carefully what we are commanded. Christ gives us a twofold command. First, we should gather with Him, as those who have been sent by him. Second, we should do our utmost to keep those who are gathered, so they do not again become scattered and torn apart by wolves.¹²

The character of these early missionaries was inspiring. They had a simple faith. One of my favorite quotes from the Hutterian Chronicles gives a glimpse of what some of these early Anabaptist apostles were like by describing a missionary:

Another servant of the church of God, George Fasser, was sent by the church to Poggstall in Austria because of the fervent longing in a number of people. He did not know the alphabet, but preached the gospel with power. Even though he had just returned from prison in Modling (near Vienna), he set joyfully about the Lord’s work, gathered the believers, and established a church community in accordance with God’s command.¹³

11 Acts 20:28

12 Riedemann, Peter, and John J. Friesen. Peter Riedemann’s Hutterite Confession of Faith, Herald Press, 1999, p. 185.

13 Hutterian Chronicle, Vol. 1, p. 161.

Notice the basis on which the missions were founded: it was “in accordance with God’s command.” The Hutterites had radical views on economics. To this day that is what the Hutterites are known for. However, the early Hutterites saw Jesus’ command to “go into all the world” just as important as the command “do not store up treasures on the earth.” Disobedience to any teachings of Jesus will always cause imbalance and disorder somewhere.

Interestingly, still remaining to this day, when a Hutterite minister takes his vows during ordination, he is asked to answer this question:

I ask you, my brother, how do you stand? Are you willing to be obedient and allow yourself to be used, inside or outside of the country, as needed whether or not the time suits you, however God the Almighty may lead?

Indeed, the lives of these early missionaries were inspiring. Undoubtedly, the ability of the early Hutterites to recognize the biblical model of having “apostles” in the ministry team was pivotal to the success of the early Hutterites.

Dedicated areas

Like any good military campaign, the missionaries didn’t just wander aimlessly. Each Hutterite missionary had specific area assigned to him. The Hutterites strategically divided up the globe and assigned regions to the different missionaries. The area they covered was vast. It was recorded that brethren went out to all parts of Germany (Bavaria, Württemberg, Hesse, Thuringia, Rhineland, as well as Silesia and Prussia), to Switzerland, to Poland, and in two cases also to Venice, Italy. A few even went as far as Denmark and Sweden.

The following is an example of these geographic assignments, recorded in the Hutterian Chronicles from an entry in 1540:

To build up the house of God with His chosen, God gave his servants the courage and eagerness to send brothers out in various directions. A burning zeal for the truth was now kindled among people through the witness given ... who bore the cross as a sign of victory on their bloodstained banner ... In this same



Peter Riedemann wrote two excellent confessions of faith while imprisoned, to explain to the civil leaders what they believed.

year of 1540, the assembly of the Lord sent brothers out on mission journeys. Leonhard Lanzestiel was sent again to Tirol, Christoph Gschal to Styria and Carinthia, and Peter Riedemann to Hesse. Hans Gentner was sent to lower Swabia and Wurttemberg. From all these places God led many people to His church, which spread widely throughout Moravia.¹⁴

The idea of sending out missionaries was odd for both the Protestants and the Catholics. They were baffled by the Anabaptist concept of missions. When a missionary was captured, their theology of missions was, notably, one of the common things that they were interrogated about. A few entries that I found from the Chronicles that testify to this questioning from their interrogators:

- Claus Felbinger, a Hutterite evangelist of Moravia, wrote in 1560: “Some have asked us why we came into the country of the Duke of Bavaria to dissuade the people from him. I answered: We go not only into this land, but into all lands, as far as our language extends.¹⁵ For wherever

God opens a door unto us, shows us zealous hearts who diligently seek after Him, have a dislike of the ungodly life of the world, and desire to do right, to all such places we aim to go, and for this we have scriptural ground.”¹⁶

- Hans Kral: “He was traveling for God’s cause when he was captured ... When questioned about the mission, he said, ‘We are not sent out to harm anyone. Our mission is the salvation of men, to call them to repent and change their lives.’”¹⁷

14 Hutterian Chronicles, vol. 1, p. 197-198.

15 One may question why they did not go beyond Europe. The answer probably lies in the fact that four out of every five of the Hutterite missionaries died in the evangelizing process! This did not necessarily happen on their first trip, but sooner or later they were caught and martyred. This constant replacement was probably the biggest hindrance to going even further into all the world.

16 John Horsch. The Hutterian Brethren, 1528-1931. (Washington, D.C): American University, 1931, p. 29.

17 Hutterian Chronicle, Vol. 1, p. 34, see also p. 333.

Dedicated times

We all get busy with our daily life. It was true in their day also. So to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus, they put occasions in place that caused missions to be mixed into the flow of the community. The Mennonite Encyclopedia reports the way this was practiced:

[The early Hutterites] sent brethren every year to lands near and far according to the commandments of Christ and the practice of the apostles, to teach and to preach and to gather for the Lord God’s people. In order to fulfill the task laid upon them by the Lord, the congregation semiannually (usually in the spring and fall) chose from the preachers a number

of brethren to perform a widespread missionary service in all directions, to preach the gospel in accordance with the commandment of Christ. In these early days of terrible persecution they could not start churches in these hostile lands. Therefore they usually brought these converts back

to Moravia with them.

The Hutterian Chronicles is peppered with entries that testify to this scheduled outreach. For just one example:

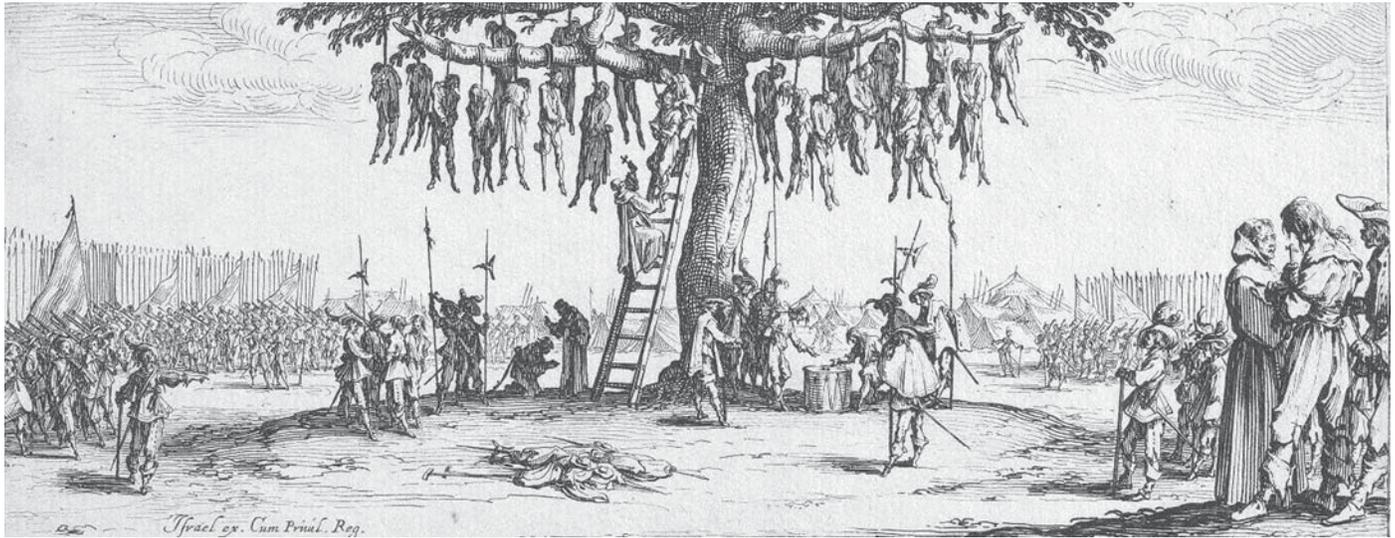
In this same year of 1540 the assembly of the Lord sent brothers out on mission journeys ...¹⁸

This idea of the setting aside of a specific time twice a year to send out missionaries caused their outreach to be built into the flow of the community. This is impressive. But what I found even more impressive is that the Hutterites continued this biannual sending out even during terrible persecution.

The Thirty Years’ War

Part of the Hutterian Chronicles deals with the years of the infamous Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648), fought between the Catholics and Protestants to determine whose religion would be practiced in their countries. Europe was devastated by this war. For example, Württemberg lost an estimated 75% of its population, while the average for the German states as a whole was from 25-40%. The armies

18 Ibid. p. 197.



"The Hanging," by Jacques Callot, graphically displays the miseries of the Thirty Years' War.

plundered the countryside as they passed back and forth as a part of their "pay." Unfortunately, both sides attacked the Anabaptists. In the section of the Hutterian Chronicle that covers this time period, the writer gives graphic details of the suffering that they endured. Some of the details are so bad that I had to mark warning signs on some of the pages of my copy. Whole communities were wiped out in a day. If there was any time for a community to "hide out and play it safe," it was then. But unbelievably, even through this time period the Hutterites kept the mission outreach going! Writing in the year 1620, right after describing terrible atrocities, the Chronicle records:

1620: This year too, we followed the example of our forefathers by sending out several brothers to various places in Germany. They went to seek those on fire for the truth and to call people to repentance. It amazed many people in Bohemia (where both hostile armies were encamped) as well as in Germany that our defenseless members set out during a time of such terrible danger, when scarcely anyone, whether of high or low estate, could travel in safety. But the Lord was their protector, and they relied on Him alone. When their task was completed (through the intercession of his people), He led them home again in peace and safety.¹⁹

Wow!

Dedicated calling from God

The Hutterites knew that organization was good, but without a clear faith and the anointing from the Holy Spirit their mission endeavors would be a waste of time.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 678

Speaking in the *Confession of Faith*, Peter Riedemann spoke on the necessity of the spiritual calling needed for the apostle/missionary:

For Christ says, 'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' Here we learn two things, namely, how Christ's messengers should be, and what their task is. First, as Christ, before He was sent by the Father, was filled with the Spirit, so He wants His messengers to be. They shall be blameless, and enter into and walk in the power of His Spirit. Second, their task is to gather with or in Christ and be led into the fold of grace, so that Christ's flock may be complete.

... If anyone is to go out for the Lord, he must be chosen by the Lord and endowed with His power; he must feel that power working in him. Above all, he must let the Lord's power rule over him and lead him ... Christ will not permit a messenger to go out who is not first clothed with the power of the Spirit. Those who feel this power will heed the command of their Lord, who has sent them.

Dedicated service

To the Hutterites, the sending out of the missionaries was a big event. In most cases the missionary was never seen again. Therefore the consecration service was a very special and solemn occasion. Hans Kasdorf, in his brilliant article "*Anabaptists and the Great Commission in the Reformation*," translated a previously unpublished ancient Hutterite commissioning service called the Graner Codex.²⁰ In this document, actual details of the Hutterite

²⁰ The Graner Codex is found in the Brunner Archives at Goshen, Indiana. "Direction: Anabaptists and the Great

This old woodcut, taken from an anti-Hutterite book written by a Catholic in 1589, is probably a fairly accurate portrayal of Hutterite dress and housing of the late 1500s.



commissioning service were recorded. Giving the order of the service, Kasdorf wrote that:

First, the candidates told the congregation how God had called them into the mission work and to the preaching of the gospel in “other lands.” This was followed by a session of admonition in which the missionaries asked the congregation to remain faithful in their local tasks of visiting the sick and the imprisoned, of providing for the poor and unemployed, and of remembering them (the missionaries) with prayers and material provisions. Then the people of the congregation pledged their support, wished them well, and prayed for God’s mercies upon their ministry. Then they would sing.

Hans Kasdorf selected and translated several verses from a 25-stanza song used in an early commissioning service. The ancient hymn reveals the depth and passion the early Hutterites had for serving God in missions:²¹

As God His Son was sending
into this world of sin,
His Son is now commanding
that we this world should win.

He sends us and commissions
To preach the gospel clear,
To call upon all nations
To listen and to hear.

Commission in the Reformation.” <http://www.directionjournal.org/4/2/anabaptists-and-great-commission-in.html>.

²¹ I sing this to the tune of “The Church’s One Foundation.”

To Thee, O God, we’re praying,
We’re bent to do Thy will;
Thy Word we are obeying,
Thy glory we fulfill.

All peoples we are telling
To mend their sinful way,
That they might cease rebelling,
Lest judgment be their pay.

And if Thou, Lord, desire,
And should it be Thy will
That we taste sword and fire
By those who thus would kill,

Then comfort, pray, our loved ones
And tell them, we’ve endured.
And we shall see them yonder
Eternally secured.

Thy Word, O Lord, does teach us,
And we do understand;
Thy promises are with us
Until the very end.

Thou hast prepared a haven
Praised be Thy holy name.
We laud Thee, God of heaven,
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen!

Kasdorf wrote:

The commissioning ceremony was observed by the entire congregation. In most cases the missionaries were married men, leaving wife and children behind; occasionally wives went with their husbands. In the event that the missionaries would be executed by "sword and fire," as expressed in the song, the church was committed to take care of their widows and orphaned children.

It worked!

Even in the time when persecution was strong and many were hiding out and becoming the quiet of the land, the Hutterites experienced amazing growth. Within the years 1530-1622 the Hutterites were able to plant over a hundred successful mission communities.

Summary of an era

Discussing these "Golden Years of the Hutterites,"²² it is noteworthy to see what the writer of the Hutterian Chronicles described as the reason for the success. At the end of an era, the Chronicler recorded what he felt were the ingredients that made these prosperous years possible. The Chronicles state:

They lived in the land God had provided especially for them. They were given the wings of a great eagle and flew to the place God had prepared for them, and they were sustained there as long as it pleased Him. Thus they gathered in peace and unity and preached the word publicly.²³

In conclusion, all twelve articles of the Christian apostolic faith and all things founded on Holy Scripture was confessed and observed. Christian mission was carried out according to the command of the Lord: 'As my Father has sent me, so I send you.' ...

22 The name given by historians to the era in which the Hutterites prospered numerically and spiritually.

23 Hutterian Chronicles, Vol. 1, p. 403.

Therefore, each year servants of the gospel and their assistants were sent out into the lands where there was a call. They visited those who wanted to change their lives, who sought and inquired after the truth. These they led out of their land by day and by night at their request, heedless of constable and hangman, with the result that many lost their lives for the sake of this cause. Thus they gathered God's people in a manner befitting good shepherds.²⁴

So what do you do with a history like that?

It is easy to dismiss a history like this as some strange historical coincidence. But the more I study history, the more I see that throughout the ages that whenever a group of

believers is willing to simply take the words of Jesus seriously, the result is similar.

Could it be any different today?

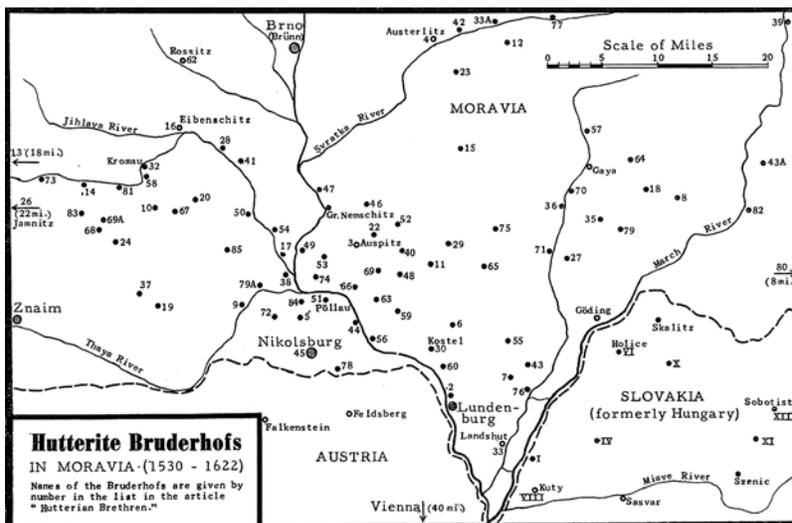
Stories like these of the early Hutterites, and others like them, show us what is possible if we are truly willing to deny ourselves and devote everything we have to serving and following Jesus. The early Hutterites were clearly at war with the world and the devil. It is true that they lost many lives to martyrdom. But when I consider how many young

people I see walk away from the faith today, losing their souls to materialism and complacency, I wonder what is worse. Perhaps the truth is that the church is destined to lose people somewhere; it's just that we have to decide if we will lose them to martyrdom or worldliness.

So what happened?

Through the centuries there has been a few times in their history when the Hutterite church really suffered. During this time, spiritual decay and complacency prevailed and the faithful were reduced to a small remnant. Noticeably, every time this condition occurred, mission and outreach were at a standstill, and the role of apostle was either neglected or eliminated.

24 Ibid. p. 404.



It worked!

This map shows the locations of the many Hutterite communities located in southern Moravia and Slovakia in the late 1500s, thanks to the persistent mission outreaches of the Hutterite evangelists.

In the 1700s God sent a revival to Germany,²⁵ which brought a new wave of believers to the area where the Hutterites were living. Discovering the old Hutterite writings, the new converts were inspired about by what they were reading.²⁶ With zeal these new believers desired to put the old ways back into practice again. The result caused a whole new wave of Hutterite growth and missions. It also brought in a new wave of persecution.

Over the next century, while fleeing from country to country, the Hutterites ended up in Russia. Unfortunately, there again the evangelism and outreach eventually stopped, the role of the missionary/apostle ignored, and the spiritual condition grew very poor.

However, once again God raised up faithful men on fire for the truth who desired to follow Christ in a more radical way. One of the men who brought in this next wave was Michael Waldner. Waldner led the new wave of Hutterites from Russia to America in 1874. He and other brothers at the time revived many aspects of the early Hutterites. From the beginning Michael Waldner spoke out for missions and evangelism. For example, the newly reformed Hutterites were not in America even one year until they felt the burden for others. The Chronicle records:

Michael Waldner and Joseph Waldner were sent back to Russia in 1875 to save more people from destruction and bring them to America.²⁷

Writing to the church 10 years after they started the Bon Homme community in South Dakota, Michael Waldner rebuked the church for its lack of evangelism and then said:

The Lord has chosen us for His people, and not only for material things, but much more for spiritual reasons, that we should proclaim His gospel, and with the net of His Word fish His chosen ones out of the sea of this world. This will be the increase that we shall bring to the Lord. Whoever has saved a soul from the destruction of this world will be rewarded.²⁸

Albeit, through the difficulty of managing the enormous task of mass migration from Russia to America, coupled with a new wave of persecution during WWI, Hutterite evangelism and missions once again dwindled.

25 Hutterian Chronicles, Vol. 2, p. 369.

26 Ibid. p. 377.

27 Ibid. p. 755.

28 Ibid. p. 760.

What can we all learn from this?

The children of the “Radical Reformation” were made for spiritual war. After being in the Anabaptist circles for over 20 years now, I am convinced that the children of the Radical Reformation only function well as *radical* Christians—nothing less works! We either continue to move forward for the Lord or we decline. We simply were not designed to be nice, quaint little churches.

Borrowing the Marine Corps metaphor again, imagine a military brigade in which the children now grown have taken over the leadership of the base. Now imagine that these “Marines” no longer went to war, but instead just sit around and played with the weapons. You could imagine that eventually these “Marines” would hurt themselves and the people around them. It is the same for the church.

It is hard to admit when our churches are experiencing spiritual decline. To observe worldliness in mainline churches is one thing, but to see it in the children of radical believers is a travesty. This is true of all of our churches. It is the same trend that plagues the Amish and Mennonites, and it is the same plague that has been plaguing the churches I have been in the last while as well.

They look back and think the war is over. But they are deceived; if they would live the life they would get persecuted again.

~ Hieronymus Käls, Hutterite schoolteacher and missionary

Are you at war?

The early Hutterites proved what could be done when genuine believers lose themselves to the cares of the world and engage the enemy for the prospering of the gospel. Reading their testimony convicts me. Oh, how I dream of being one of those “Marine Corps of the Anabaptists.” But in reality, when I take a hard look at my life I sometimes wonder if I really believe that we are at war.

Hieronymus Käls is one of my favorite early Anabaptists. He was an early Hutterite schoolteacher and missionary from the 1500s. He wrote many songs and children’s prayers that are still used today.²⁹ At the end of his life, Käls was captured while on a missionary trip between Moravia and South Tyrol. Writing a letter back to the community from prison, Käls took an opportunity to warn the brethren to keep fighting and not to grow cold. The letter convicts and inspires me to the core. I could not think of better words to end this study of early Hutterite missions.

Many in our time think the opposition has ended. They look back and think the war is over. But they are deceived; if they would live the life they would

29 Hutterian Chronicles, Vol. 1, p. 150.

Continued on p. 33

Wrapping It Up

Mike Atnip

¡Adios!

Yes, it is true. I am “retiring” from my work here at *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*. The word “retire” has a literal meaning of “drawing back from.” So while I by no means plan to go into what our society calls “retirement,” I am drawing back from my labors with this magazine.

I suppose some will have a simple question stirring in their minds: Why? ☺

Many reasons have played into the decision to “retire,” but the most prominent one has to do with seeing a need to focus on needs in my family. Minor issues factoring into the decision include trying to spend less time in front of a computer monitor, a desire to focus my editorial energies on other projects, and an inner feeling that it is simply time to have this part of my life pruned from me.

What does NOT figure into the decision? Well, several have asked me if I am quitting because I had a fallout with Ephrata Christian Fellowship or *The Remnant* board. Simply said, “No.” In a roundabout way, the board has let me know that they hope I come back after a break.

So with this little explanation I now say, “Adios.” Many will recognize this as the Spanish word for “Good-bye.” But there is more to that word than good-bye. Those who know Spanish may recognize it as a compound word made up of “a” (meaning “to”) and “Dios” (meaning “God”). “Adios” is rooted in the idea of “[I commend you] to God.”

Summary of the last four years ...

Our main burden over the last twenty-some issues has been to stem the “leak” that our churches have towards the Evangelical world. Both Dean and I have come into today’s Anabaptist churches after reading church history and realizing that while Anabaptism was not “perfect,” it was one of the best revivals of primitive Christianity that still has any remnant left. The old Waldensian church is nowhere to be found today. The Bohemian Brethren (Moravian Brethren) revival has likewise gone into worldliness and apostasy. The old Methodist/Wesleyan type of Christianity is fast disappearing, and simply was not as doctrinally sound as the Anabaptists. Simply said, the “Plain People” are about the only revival movement left that still holds, in varying degrees, to practicing Jesus’ teachings.

So with great excitement Dean and I have “charged” in the front door, excited to find people who actually do what Jesus has said, only to find that there is a mass exodus out the back door into churches that explain away Jesus’ words. (Not to mention that too many still inside are very complacent and lukewarm, if not plain cold ...)

So we are left scratching our heads. Do those people realize where they are headed out that back door? Do they know that “out there” is a false Christianity that says, “Lord, Lord” but does not do what the Lord told us to do?

For that reason we have focused on the error of the Protestant/Evangelical world. We have said it before and we will say it again: the label is not the issue; the terms we use are labels to signify a mindset. There are plenty of people who might use the label “Evangelical” to describe themselves who are walking with God in the light they have. And certainly not everyone who uses the label “Anabaptist” is right with God.

Yet we have not been ashamed to use the label “Anabaptist” to describe the kingdom gospel. Unfortunately one can hardly say just plain old “gospel” because there are various “gospels” out there. So we use the term “kingdom gospel” to designate, well, “the gospel of the kingdom” as Jesus called it. In fact, Jesus did not call it any other name. So what is that gospel?

Defining the gospel

“The gospel is that Jesus died on the cross so you could have your sins forgiven and go to heaven.”

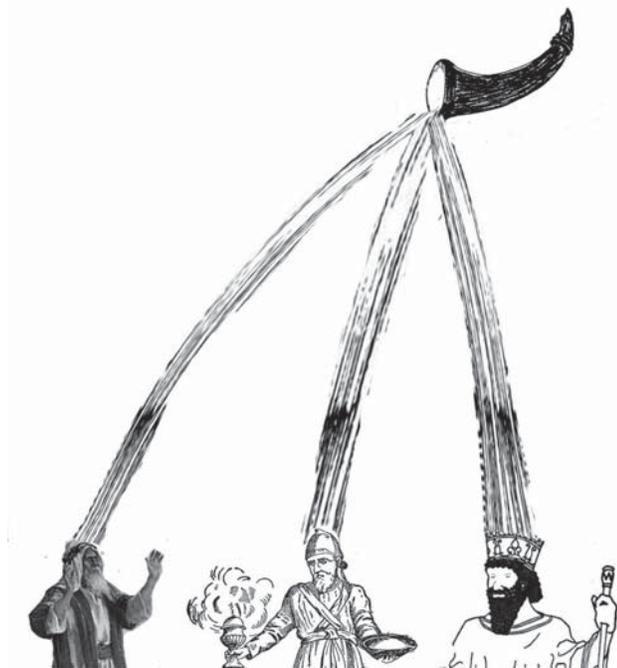
If that is your definition of “the gospel,” you need to take another look at the Bible. The gospel *includes* both forgiveness of sins and going to heaven, but those two details are only *part of the gospel*. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and Elijah all had their sins forgiven and will be in heaven for eternity. If our gospel consists only of having our sins forgiven so we can go to heaven, *we have nothing more than the Old Testament had!*

Just what is it that we have in the New Testament that the Old Testament saints did not have? We have the kingdom of God! Here and now! (And some day, at the second coming, in a more glorious way yet!)

The gospel, the good news, was that Jesus was incarnated and came to live among us to teach us about His kingdom, and to provide a way for us to enter therein. Up until He came to establish that kingdom, men could be forgiven of their sins ... but they could not have a new birth that would so infuse the character of God into them that they could have power to live the way God originally intended men to live. But now, in the new covenant, we can do it. God’s will done on earth, here and now! What a gospel!!!!!!

The gospel in a picture

The following little picture is an illustration of the gospel.



For centuries the Jews awaited the coming of Messiah. Messiah is a Hebrew transliteration that means anointed. The Greek word was *christos*, which also means anointed. The Law required the High Priest to be anointed, and by custom all kings were anointed with oil in their inauguration ceremony. Prophets were also sometimes anointed with oil. This anointing was so unique that the Jews began to call their kings and priests “the anointed.”

When Jesus came, God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) in recognition of His offices as prophet, high priest, and king. Melchisedek was the only man who had held all three offices simultaneously.

Jesus was the prophet that Moses had promised would come. De. 18:15 Moses was a law-giving prophet, and Jesus fulfilled Moses’ prophecy by giving us the “laws” of the kingdom of God, the new morals and ethics, which were in reality a revelation of the character of God.

Jesus was the High Priest, the only one allowed to minister in the inner sanctuary (the spirit of man). He took His own blood and cleansed the sanctuary of sin.

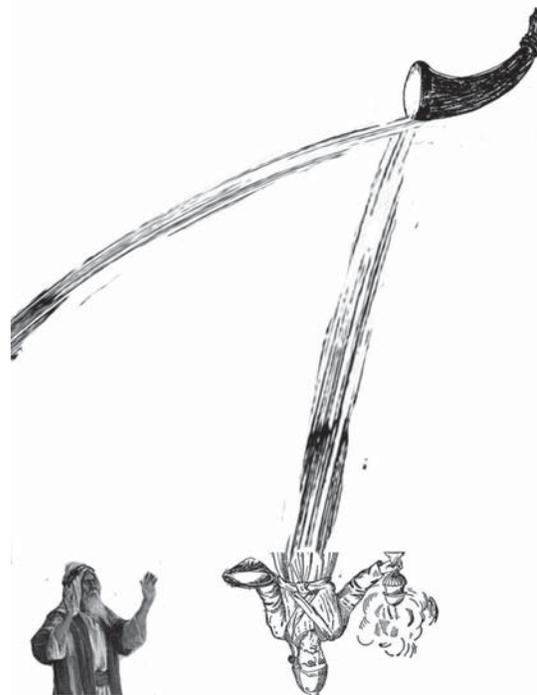
And, Jesus was the promised King whose kingdom would never end, and who would lead His people into victory over the world.

The coming of Messiah (Christ, Anointed One) who would be prophet, high priest, and king was the good news ... the gospel.

So how is that gospel twisted today?

The twisted gospel in a picture

The following little picture tells another story.



Here we see the anointing oil completely missing the prophet. This illustrates how many people treat Jesus’ teachings where He said, “You have heard it has been said, but I say unto you ...” I mean, most churches end up reverting to what Moses said. Think about divorce, war, wealth, and swearing oaths: most churches end up going by what Moses said, rather than what Jesus said! So, we might as well say that Jesus wasn’t the Anointed Prophet that Moses talked about in Deuteronomy 18:15.

And the poor high priest ... he is upside down. Yes, he got the anointing. But what happens is that his ministry is made to be that of converting God, rather than converting man. Think about what many people say about salvation and atonement, and you end up with a view of salvation that converts God from an angry God to a happy God, but essentially leaves man unchanged! Of course, if the atonement is such that it cleanses *man* from sin—actually removes the sin out of the sanctuary as per Leviticus 16:30—then God can be at peace with man. But many salvation/atonement teachings of today try to appease God’s wrath without cleansing the sanctuary from sin.

And the king? What happened to him?

Well, he won’t be here until the second coming according to many gospels of today. Some say that Jesus came as Saviour the first time, but will come the second time as King.

Continued on p. 17



That they may teach the young women ...

Meditations on the Book of Esther for the God-fearing Woman

Roline van der Merwe

Part 1

Vashti—the foolish plucketh down her house with her hands.

And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small. And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: For he sent letters into all the king's

provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people. Es. 1:16-22

These words were written after an ungodly, fierce, drunken king ordered his queen to be paraded before many other drunken nobles so he could brag about her. Yet the wisdom of Memucan rings the same clear bell as in the New Testament where Paul exhorts Titus regarding the ministry of the aged women:

That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Ti. 2:4-5

Here in the letter to Titus it is also spoken of a king, the King of kings, whose honor is affected by our obedience unto our earthly king, the lord of our own house.

Does it make you cringe a bit when these two passages are looked at? Even when thinking of your underserving, sometimes proud and boastful, sometimes rude and impatient, husband? Have you heard of others doing harm to their wives whom they are to love and cherish and protect? Nevertheless, I know there are some with God-fearing, upright husbands, and yet even there do we as wives sometimes chafe under their rule and command.

It is a sobering thought about who is really blasphemed by our behavior—God brings Himself into the equation. That makes me tremble.

The whole world lies in wickedness awaiting destruction, and we see it clearly in that which is portrayed by the media and the “educated” regarding the position and “rights” of the woman. The enemy has used many different tactics to bring this about. Yea, for many generations, and even still today in some religions and races, women are oppressed and mistreated by countless evil means, and men are used of Satan to bring about destruction to the purpose of God in making them male and female, man and wife. The Christian woman has taken up the reproach caused by fallen man and brought it into her house, whereby she is tearing it down with her own hands.

Let’s look again at our first passage from the book of Esther. They are such sobering words, and hold true even today. Even today when a prominent lady would stand up against her husband, many would be there to write news reports and magazine articles commending her, and many would be influenced. There were certain ones that would also be influenced by Vashti’s doing, as Memucan mentioned.

First is the fact that she caused reproach to the king, her husband. He was ruler, and the one who was supposed to be his crown and glory refused him. He took six months to show all his glory to the people, and after six days of feasting, on the very last day he wanted to bring out his most prized possession, a beautiful wife arrayed in the royal garments and crown jewels.

Was he very loving and considerate? Surely not. Was he worthy to be honored? Definitely! He was the king! If a king does not have rule over one, he is not that one’s king. It’s actually simple. And it is the same with Christ. He is the King of kings and those that do not seek His kingdom first cannot call Him “Lord.” And if His servants do not His will, He is not their Lord. Those whom He doesn’t rule have no part in His kingdom.

In our country, if you are not subject to the law, you are in danger of being thrown into prison. It is very simple. And the heavenly kingship of the Lord over His church points to the husband-wife relationship in definite, certain ways, and to rebel against that authority is to declare that you are no servant of the King. There is only one place for the child of God to not bow the knee, and that is when the human authority goes against God’s commands. Daniel

and his friends serve as a good example, and the apostles confirm this again in Acts 5:29:

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said,

We ought to obey God rather than men.

This they said to the high priest. But this is the only reason for excuse. Vashti was not in this position. Her quiet obedience, such as that of Sarah, would have been wisdom. A soft answer could have turned away the wrath. Does not even Peter in his first letter confirm that the husband in disobedience *can* be won ... but by what? By subjection without a word. By seeing your chaste

conversation coupled with fear. Not with outward adorning, but the inward ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. And here Sarah is named, giving us the example of obedience not being afraid with amazement.

The next to be influenced by Vashti’s refusal was the princes, and thinking of it again, all the people. But why? The women will hear (and they definitely do) what their queen, their example, did. She also held a feast for the women at the same time, so her favor and influence with them would have been at a high point.

Here I want to add a thought. I have seen the looseness and frivolity when many women come together, where their goal (although they do not realize it) is not to glorify God. They might even say that they are Christian and come together in His name, but at the slightest unction of one, the conversation erupts into discussions about their husbands and church leaders, or fashions and hairstyles. Scripture is so clear:

The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Ti. 2:3-5

Many a time I have gone home grieved from a women’s meeting because of foolish talk. The women will be talking in such dishonoring ways about their husbands and men in general. Oh dear woman, young or old, let us not bring shame upon our husbands and ultimately our King. Fear the Lord and serve Him with trembling. Let us be sober-minded and not be drawn into the vain philosophies of our time and culture, brought about by psychology.

It is a sobering thought about who is really blasphemed by our behavior—God brings Himself into the equation.

Now the rulers saw that the whole kingdom would be influenced by Vashti's refusal, the men disregarded in their homes, and they, the husbands, rise up in anger and the homes be filled with strife. There, in the home, the next generation will be looking on and learning from their example and the vicious circle continued, possibly even for many generations.

How zealous are you today that there might be a godly seed raised in your house, that will be like trees planted by the River of Life for the Lord's glory? Are you willing that the queen be dethroned in your heart and the King raise up another after His desire? Herein lies salvation, in the birth into a new life. To put away the old and to be transformed by the renewing that Christ brings about in the heart and the mind.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Jo. 3:3

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: Ez. 11:19

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Ro. 12:1-2

What has this all brought about? Destruction of a nation? No, but rather the salvation of God's people. He saved the nation of Israel by raising up unto Himself a new queen with a submissive heart, through whom He could destroy the enemy and vindicate His people, that in the end He might receive the glory.

Part 2

Esther - A queen of the King's choosing

Oh, the wisdom of God! He can use our faults to bring His will to pass. It is proven that His ways are not like ours. We will see the beauty of the new life in Christ as we take some time to look at the example of Esther. A quick look at their names will reveal some of the deep truths God has hidden, as treasure to be found, in His Word. Vashti means "beautiful," which she was ... from the outside. Scripture tells us:

... beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Pr. 31:30

Esther's Hebrew name was Hadassah, which means "myrtle." This is a lowly shrub which bears delicate, purple flowers, of which it is said that they are more fragrant than a rose. This portrays the fragrance brought forth from a humble life, which reflects Esther, even when she entered the harem and her name was changed to Esther meaning "star." Though it is said that she was "a fair maid," her life was marked with obedience and submission, which made her to shine brighter than all the rest. Consider these verses:

Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it. Es. 2:10

Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. Es. 2:15

Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him. Es. 2:20

What was most honorable about her life and testimony? It was not just the favor she found with men and the king, but also that God could use her, through His providence, to deliver the Jews from their enemy. God chose her because she qualified through the obedience and submission she had shown since her youth. He gave her favor because she was as clay in the Potter's hand. Later in the book she submitted fully unto her uncle, who had brought her up, and took it upon herself to endanger her own life; to go uninvited into the king's presence to entreat him for her nation. After fasting three days, she went in obedience to the wisdom she received from above, and God in His providence worked out the whole plan of salvation for the Jews.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Pr. 9:10

Were her circumstances so much different than that of Vashti? Was she, Esther, not queen of the same heathen nation and king? She even spread a banquet before the king and his most esteemed Haman; a banquet of wine. I believe God, also by providence to teach us, caused Esther to live such a life in the same circumstances as Vashti found herself. Therefore I am so convinced that God is

Are you willing that the queen be dethroned in your heart and the King raise up another after His desire?

not as interested in changing our circumstances, as He is to work holiness within us through the new life that He gives to them that believe in the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ. A death to the old that the new might reign.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Ro. 7:4

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Ro. 6:11-13

Oh how this meditation stirs my heart to seek my Savior King's rule and reign more in my life, that the King might have His dominion in me; that He might use me as a vessel, weak and lowly in myself, but filled with the fragrance of Christ.

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. 2 Co. 2:14-16

He alone is so worthy of all honor!

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Mt. 6:33 ~

.....
:There are two ways to rule the world.:
:
: The first is to conquer the world
: through force and coercion
: and rule the world as a tyrant.
:
: The other is to create a world so small
: that you remove all competition.
:
: In the end, both are just as destructive
: to the people around them.
:.....

Hutterite - continued from p. 27

get persecuted again. As long as the lion has its cubs with him he might act friendly and playful enough. But when he loses his little ones, or his prey, he cannot keep himself back. He rages and roars. He rants and he raves, as only lions can, until fire shoots from his eyes! Certainly Peter does not warn us in vain that Satan comes upon us like a roaring lion or a wolf at nightfall. But, may God be praised, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is bigger and stronger than the lion of the Philistines. He has already split the other lion's head and wounded his body. Therefore he knows that his time is short, and he will soon be overcome. Therefore he is so desperate, so angry. He sees the lake of fire into which he will be thrown. Watch yourselves, therefore, heroes of Israel! Take courage, strong men of Zion! Rejoice, oh city of Jerusalem! The time of your triumph is near. All tears will be washed from your eyes. The reward of your labors stands ready. Just hold on a little while longer! The fat cattle have already been butchered, the fowls have all been plucked. The tables stand ready and the guests have begun to arrive!³⁰

Amen!

The words of Jesus have not changed. To this day they wait, expectantly, for some brave souls to rise up and put them into practice once again. We serve a Creator God. What we do doesn't have to be a carbon copy of the past. However, let's not forget the great cloud of witnesses that cheer us on. Those who have gone before us prove it can be done. I wonder, "Will those who follow us say the same thing about us?"

If you are like me and you are also moved and convicted by this testimony please pray with me, "Change me, Lord, and give me spiritual eyes to see the battle that is going on around me. And please, Lord, gather your people once again and glorify your name. Do it again, Lord, please do it again!"³¹ ~

30 Ancient Hutterite letter translated in: Peter Hoover, *The Mystery of the Mark: Anabaptist Missions under the Fire of God.* (Mountain Lake, MN) Elmendorf Books.

31 For a few pages that I jotted down from the Hutterian Chronicles that discuss missions or evangelism, please see: Vol. 1-82, 145, 150, 161, 197, 227, 241, 352, 355- 357, 359, 369, 403, 404, 430, 431, 503, 597 678, 755, 760, 765, 766, 769, 770; Vol. 2-508, 510, 601, 602, 755, 759, 760. This is not a complete list. Also see Peter Riedemann's Confession of Faith, section on "Differences in the Offices" and "Concerning the Covenant of Grace Given to God's People in Christ."

VOICES FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

A Sudden and Rapid Divestment

Cyprian's (c. 200-258) New Birth Experience

While I was still lying in darkness and gloomy night, wavering hither and thither, tossed about on the foam of this boastful age, and uncertain of my wandering steps, knowing nothing of my real life, and remote from truth and light, I used to regard it as a difficult matter (and especially difficult in respect of my character at that time) that a man should be capable of being born again.

This was a truth that the divine mercy had announced for my salvation—that a man quickened to a new life in the laver of saving water should be able to put off what he had previously been; and, although retaining all his bodily structure, should be himself changed in heart and soul. “How,” said I, “is such a conversion possible, that there should be a sudden and rapid divestment of everything, both that which is natural in us and has hardened in the corruption of our physical nature, and that which has been acquired by us and has become deep-seated by long accustomed use?”

These things have become deeply and radically engrained within us. When does he learn thrift who has been used to large banquets and sumptuous feasts? And he who has been glittering in gold and purple, and has been celebrated for his expensive dress, when does he reduce himself to plain and simple clothes? One who has felt the charm of having authority and of civic honors shrinks from becoming a mere private and inglorious citizen. The man who is attended by crowds of clients and dignified by the numerous associations of politicians regards it as a punishment when he is alone.

I thought it was inevitable, as it has always been, that the love of wine should entice, pride should inflate, anger should inflame, covetousness should disquiet, cruelty should stimulate, ambition should delight, and lust should hasten to ruin, with allurements that will not let go their hold.

These were my frequent thoughts. For as I myself was held in bonds by the innumerable errors of my previous life (from which I did not believe that I could possibly be delivered), so I was disposed to go along with my clinging vices. And because I despaired of better things, I used

to indulge my sins as if they were actually part of me, and native to me. But after (by the help of the water of new birth) that the stain of former years had been washed away, and a light from above, serene and pure, had been infused into my reconciled heart—after that, by the action of the Spirit breathed from heaven, a second birth had restored me to a new man—then, in a wondrous manner, doubtful things at once began to assure themselves to me, hidden things to be revealed, and dark things to be enlightened. What before had seemed difficult began to suggest a way of accomplishing it, and what had been thought impossible, to be capable of being achieved. I was enabled to acknowledge that what previously, being born of the flesh, had been living in the practice of sins, was of the earth, earthly, but had now begun to be of God, and was full of life by the Spirit of holiness.

You yourself assuredly know and recollect as well as I do what was taken away from us by that vicious death, and what was given to us by that virtuous life. You yourself know this without my telling you. Anything like boasting in one's own praise is detestable. But we really cannot boast—but only be grateful—since we do not ascribe it to man's virtue, but declare it to be the gift of God. That we do not sin now is the beginning of the work of faith, whereas that we sinned before was the result of human wandering.

All our power is of God; I say, of God. From Him we have life and from Him we have strength, by power derived and conceived from Him we do, while yet in this world, have an indication of things to come. Let the fear of God keep you innocent, that the Lord, who of His mercy has poured into our hearts heavenly grace, may be kept lodged in a grateful mind by righteous submissiveness. May the assurance we have gained not lead to carelessness, and so the old enemy creep upon us again.

May the assurance we have gained not lead to carelessness, and so the old enemy creep upon us again.

But if you keep the way of innocence, the way of righteousness, if you walk with a firm and steady step, if—trusting in God with your whole strength and with your whole heart—you only be what you have begun to be, liberty and power to actually carry it out will be given you in proportion to the increase of your spiritual grace. For there is not, as is the case with earthly benefits, any limit or restriction in the giving out of the heavenly gift. The Spirit freely flowing forth is restrained by no limits, nor is it limited by any closed barriers within certain bounded

spaces. It flows perpetually; it is exuberant in its affluence. Let our heart only be athirst, and be ready to receive: in the degree in which we bring to it a voluminous faith, in that same measure we draw from it an overflowing grace.

Thence is given power, with modest chastity, with a sound mind, with a simple voice, with unblemished virtue, that is able to quench the virus of poisons for the healing of the sick, to purge out the stains of foolish souls by restored health, to bid peace to those that are at enmity, restfulness to the violent, and gentleness to the unruly. ~



Sacrifice?

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Lu. 14:33

You asked me to give up my home ...

Then gave me welcome in many homes.

You asked me to lay down my patriotism for my country ...

And put every tribe and nation on my heart.

You asked me to lay down my will ...

Then gave me a real desire to please You.

You asked me to give You my dreams ...

And gave me a life beyond what I could have ever dreamed.

You asked me to lay down my family and friends and follow You ...

And when I followed You, I found a family and friends that defined true fellowship.

You asked me to give up my sour attitude and puny plans of revenge ...

And promised pure judgment that is complete and just.

You asked me to lay down my finances and possessions ...

And then told me that I am an heir of all that You possess.

You asked me to turn all of my little affections over to You ...

And taught me a love powerful enough to reach my enemies.

You asked for my wholehearted allegiance ...

And pledged Your commitment to me with open arms on a cross.

~Janell Hege, Long Lake, SD

The Heartbeat of 

The Remnant

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Whatever keeps us from good is evil.