

# The Remnant

WESAKAU  
CONVERT  
OF WAMPANOAG  
TRIBE  
PACHGATGOCH  
MISSION, NY  
DIED  
JULY 28, 1746  
OF SMALLPOX

JOSEPH  
MOHEICAN  
DIED  
JULY 21  
1746

## THE MORAVIAN MISSION MACHINE

Page 16

MAGDALENA  
ANTON  
BORN IN  
1751 — 66  
BETHEM  
DAUGHTER OF  
ANTON, NEGRO  
AND ELIZABETH  
INDIAN

RACHEL POST  
WAMPANOAG INDIAN  
BECAME WIFE OF  
MISSIONARY F. POST  
IN 1743  
1747

THEODORA  
1742 — 61  
DELAWARE INDIAN  
BORN NEAR  
DELAWARE  
WATER GAP  
AT MENNASSINK

The Heartbeat of

## The Remnant

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# Thank you!

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*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. He. 12:1-2*

This issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* is short on short articles and long on long articles. Although the variety is short, we trust the nourishment is long. In the area of natural nourishment, Mike Atnip has urged us toward temperance in eating with an article on the “touchy” subject of gluttony. Dave Esh teaches about the correct spirit in the area of reconciliation and forgiveness, while the sisters get a short article and a good poem on the beauties of “hiddenness.” Finishing out this issue is an old Anabaptist tract on the doctrine of the two kingdoms, explaining why the church should not participate in the state’s business.

May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His sufferings!

—Bro. Dean

## From the Editor

**B**efore 1954, most people assumed that it was just about impossible to run a mile in under four minutes. People would try hard and come close, but it was accepted as a general norm in those days that the 4-minute barrier was the human limit. However, one young man, a medical student from Oxford University felt that it wasn't impossible. As a matter of fact, he was so confident that it was not impossible that he determined in his mind and body that he would break the 4-minute barrier—and he did. The news report from that day tells the story:

Roger Bannister, a 25-year-old British medical student, has become the first man to run a mile in less than four minutes. His time was 3 minutes 59.4 seconds, achieved at the Iffley Road track in Oxford and watched by about 3,000 spectators. Just over 200 yards from the finish, Bannister took the lead with a final burst of energy. He sprinted to the line in record time and fell exhausted into the arms of a friend, the Rev. Nicholas Stacey. Pandemonium broke out when spectators heard news that Bannister had officially beaten the four-minute mile.

Today, most all Olympic-class runners break the 4-minute mile. The current fastest mile record is held by Moroccan Hicham El Guerrouj, who came in at a blistering 3 minutes 43.13 seconds in Rome, Italy, on 7 July 1999.

When people tell themselves that something is impossible, it usually is—at least for them. Such preconceived limits become our cages—cages that prevent us from dreaming, growing, and pursuing other possibilities. We could aptly name all such cages: “Tyranny of the Impossible.” When we make up our mind that something is

“impossible” we cripple ourselves and prevent our true capabilities.

When the impossible is something like running a mile faster than everyone else, perhaps you could argue that it really doesn't matter. But I am afraid that we as Christians are more apt to fall prey to this crippling mental condition in the Christian world than anywhere else, and it is here that the consequences are most devastating. The “Tyranny of the Impossible” is killing the dreams, visions, creativity, and most catastrophically, the faith of the Church—the kind of faith that moves mountains.

In this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*, we have a large article featuring a radical group of believers called the Moravians. These believers of the 1700s were not afraid to dream—and accomplish—“the impossible.” Their legacy of genuine revival, committed prayer life, and astonishing mission exploits defied the “Tyranny of the Impossible” at every turn.

I will acknowledge from the start, there were things that they did and practiced as a church that I would struggle with. They certainly were not a perfect church in life or in doctrine. But that's not why I wrote the article. I wrote the article so that we as a church today could recognize that the “4-minute mile” of church life was broken once again over 200 years ago in a little city called Bethlehem, Pennsylvania! I wrote the article in hopes that our “Tyranny of the Impossible” can give way to a new generation of Christians who dare to dream the impossible and then to put it into action, with the Lord Jesus Christ being our helper! As we run, let's be encouraged that there have been saints such as these Moravians who have gone on before us, who are waiting at the finish line, cheering us on!

*Cont. on p. 2*



**Roger Bannister breaking the 4-minute mile barrier.**

# Forgiving— The Easy Part of Reconciliation

Dave Esh



**F**orgiving is a beautiful attribute of a Christian and a needed characteristic for the follower of Christ. The Bible tells us that unless we forgive, we cannot be forgiven. Matthew 6:14-15 instructs us, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Our forgiving of others must be totally unconditional. We have heard people say things like, “I could forgive him, if he only would apologize.” Or “I can forgive; but I can’t forget.” If these are our attitudes, it means we are not yet willing to forgive.

Another thing we hear is, “I have forgiven them as much as possible. Their actions did a lot of damage to me. I have to face it every day! But I have forgiven as much as I can ...” We really need to think about this. Would we want God to forgive us only “as much as possible”?

Our forgiving of others must be total and sincere. It dare not be dependent on the repentance of the offender, or whether or not he deserves to be forgiven. How many of us deserve the mercy and forgiveness of God? In Matthew 18, Jesus tells the story of a king who forgave a servant a great debt. But then the forgiven servant went out and persecuted a fellow servant who owed him a trivial amount.

Forgiving is sometimes easy. The overwhelming love the father had for the prodigal son far surpassed a duty to forgive. And that is often the case. If we have a Christlike love, forgiving is not a chore. What a blessing it is when an offender comes to ask forgiveness, and we can honestly tell him he was forgiven long before he asked for it.

## Abusing forgiveness

Although forgiving is obviously a needed Christian trait, it can be presented wrongly. When it comes with a smug attitude, it can be downright obnoxious to the other party. Telling an offender that we forgive them while they still believe they are on the right side of an issue can be, and often is, deemed self-righteous and arrogant. And it may very well be just that.

We get this good feeling because we took the initiative and forgave. We convince ourselves that we are spiritually superior because we took the “holy” step of forgiving one who offended or perhaps betrayed us. We believe that the ball is now in their court, and if they only forgive us as freely as we have forgiven them, it would all be over. We think, “Of course, an apology on their part would also be in order ... in any event, my heart is clear. I have forgiven.”

But God tells us in Jeremiah 17:9-10, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” We are also warned in Proverbs 28:26 that, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.”

So how do we resolve conflict? If we can look at this issue objectively, the answer is very obvious. But it requires us to go much deeper than simply saying “I forgive you.”

## The biblical answer

In a nutshell, the answer is “Repent.” Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:23-24: “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Please notice that He does *not* say, “If you have ought against your brother, forgive him.” This instruction is for when you remember that “thy brother hath ought against thee ...”

Repentance, or *asking* forgiveness, is a far more effective way to be reconciled than *offering* forgiveness to another. Forgiving is usually the easy part. True repentance and *asking* forgiveness from others requires humility, brokenness, and sorrow for one’s actions. This kind of repentance comes only from a heart that is of a broken and a contrite spirit, which God promises not to despise. Ps. 51:17, Is. 66:2, etc.

We can be sure that encouragement to repentance from Jesus, Peter, Paul, and others is not only repentance toward God, although that is of utmost priority. Our repen-

tance must also be to those we have offended. When possible, restitution should be part of our repentance.

Perhaps you ask, "But what if the other person is wrong and I know I am right on the issue? His actions and words were so far off that it is no wonder that I became angry and said things I shouldn't have! Should I ask him to forgive me when I am certain the things he said or did were wrong?" The answer is an unequivocal "Yes!" But if I apologize for losing my temper or having an un-Christ-like attitude, will I not be conceding that he may have been right on the issues? The answer is: Absolutely not!

The opposing party will be far more likely to reflect on the correctness of his position when he sees our repentance. Invariably, a sincere apology that is absent of excuses or reasons will awaken a desire for reconciliation. If we can grasp this clear biblical principle, it has the potential to restore business, personal, and even church relationships.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14 God tells us: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." This can be applied to our families, communities, and even our churches.

When our children have their little quarrels, we tell them the most mature will be the first to ask forgiveness. We would do well to also apply this truth as adults.

## Conclusion

When Christians clash it is almost always that both parties are at fault. One side may be mostly right and the other mostly wrong. But there is usually much room for even the side that is more right to repent. And often this will be a step toward healing broken relationships.

Repentance is often a fast track to forgiveness, in both forgiving others and obtaining forgiveness from them. It is the road to freedom from anger, bitterness, and resentment. When we acknowledge our own sins, it becomes very easy to forgive others of theirs. Hence, the title of this article: "Forgiveness—The Easy Part of Reconciliation."

We can't control the actions of other people. They may at times be hurtful, obnoxious, and wrongheaded. They may not respond right to our repentance. We can't help that. But we can control our own actions and reactions, with the help of the Holy Spirit. And we can choose how the actions of others will affect us. Godly sorrow and repentance is a beautiful and healing attribute. And it is the will of God. ~

## Prayer of a Hidden Woman

Amy Smoker

*Lord, I would be a helper meet  
For this dear man I love,  
The one I reverence and respect,  
As to my Lord above;*

*The one I prize and I esteem,  
Admire exceedingly;  
The one to whom I will submit,  
Adapt to joyfully;*

*The one to whom I give much worth,  
To whom I will defer;  
The one I bless above the rest,  
I honor and prefer;*

*The one I venerate and praise,  
I value and adore;  
The one I notice and regard  
And reverence more and more.*

*Lord, I would be a virtuous wife—  
May godly fear be found;  
My husband's heart can trust in me;  
I am to him a crown.*

*Support, encourage, and forgive—  
I'll do him good always;  
A mouth that utters wisdom's words  
And kindness all my days.*

*A meek and quiet spirit, Lord—  
Adornment of great price;  
It is not vain and will not fade—  
Nought else, Lord, will suffice.*

*Lord, I would choose to build my man  
Into a leader strong,  
A man of faith known in the gates,  
Forsaking worldly throng;*

*A man who sets his vision high,  
Pursuing godly seed,  
Who leads our home in holy fear  
And humbly sees his need;*

*A man of purpose, man of prayer,  
Who hungers for the Word;  
A man who yearns for those yet lost,  
For those who've never heard.*

*Lord, I would stand behind my man,  
Engage in fervent prayer—  
For prayer can move Your mighty hand  
When battles are fought there.*

*Lord, I would be Your servant here—  
Oh, fill me with Your power;  
A hidden woman I would be—  
Oh, use me in this hour.*

# The Sin of Gluttony



*And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Pr. 23:2*

Mike Atnip

It's the sin we are all afraid to touch. I am not even sure why that is, except maybe it is like the sin of materialism; so many of us are guilty of it we hardly know where to start. Or, simply put, if we speak out we will be incriminating ourselves ... so we conveniently move on to a subject that we feel more comfortable with.

As I ponder the situation, though, it is sort of amazing that in over four decades of church life, I can only remember one sermon that was specifically focused on gluttony as a sin. And I cannot recall one time in my lifetime that a church disciplined any member for gluttony. Is it because we do not have that problem in our midst? Or is it, like the sin of materialism, something we have just grown so used to that there would be a major revolt in our churches if people who obviously do not have their eating under control were barred from the communion cup?

To be sure, my heart sort of trembled—as I started writing this article—like Gideon's probably did when he thought of destroying his father's altar of Baal. To destroy something that family, friends, and fellow believers worship with a passion? I have to wonder just how much Gideon struggled with that command.

Before beginning, let me say that this article is not directed at anyone in particular. People in the past have asked me, after speaking or writing on a topic, "Were you thinking of me when you said that?" Or, "Did you have so-and-so in mind when you wrote that?" I usually refuse to say yes or no, and tell them, "If the shoe fits, wear it."

And so my advice to anyone who wonders if I was thinking of anyone in particular as I write, is this: If this article fits you, wear it.

Gluttony is a sin that historically has been closely associated with wealth. Even Sodom was used as an example, later in history, for "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness ... neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." Ez. 16:49 It strikes me that Sodom is remembered for laziness and gluttony rather than the gross immorality which we often think of when we think of Sodom. Sodom was wealthy, proud, and gluttonous, and did not use her extra resources to help the poor. So God let her be destroyed. Doesn't that remind you of our North American society?

Do we have ears to hear?

## What is gluttony?

We really do not need to spend a lot of time defining gluttony. We all know that gluttony is uncontrolled eating. And yes, skinny people can be gluttons. Some people simply will have a harder battle with this sin than others.

But let's park here at this point for a moment. It seems our culture has made it taboo to speak against being overweight. There is virtue in not making fun of overweight people; in fact, we should make fun of no one. But we need to overcome our fear of speaking against being overweight, and face reality. And that reality is that most overweight people are overweight because they are gluttons.

Ouch! Do I have proof for such a statement?

In a recent conversation with a Christian Canadian medical doctor, I told him that from my observations, I think the percentage of people who are overweight from a medical condition is quite low; definitely single digit, and probably in the 1-2% range. Then I asked him what he thought of my opinion.

His answer somewhat shocked me. He told me frankly that I was wrong. He said the percentage of people who are overweight from reasons other than overeating was 0%.<sup>1</sup>

It is quite simple, he explained. If a person's body is storing fat, then the person is eating more calories than what he/she needs to live. And it really is that simple! The answer to stop the fat-storing process is quite simple: eat less calories, or exercise more. He then told the story of how a lady came to him for advice about her weight gain. She had been to several other doctors, trying to find out what medical condition it might be that was causing her to gain weight. The other doctors could find nothing abnormal with her body, so she came to him.

<sup>1</sup> He did not mention it, but I assume he was referring only to fat buildup, not fluid retention.

He told her in plain words what the answer was: she was eating too much. But she wasn't convinced. So he asked her, "If you stopped eating, do you think you would still gain weight?"

"Yes!" was her convinced reply.

So he told her, "Why don't you go on a two-week fast. This will see whether you gain weight even if you don't eat." She agreed, fasted for two weeks ... and of course lost several pounds of weight.

But the story doesn't end there. The doctor told me that the lady quit coming to see him for advice. He sadly remarked, "I suppose she went seeking for another doctor somewhere who would tell her that she had a medical problem of some sort that was causing her weight gain."

I relate this story because it sums up so well the way we have come to view gluttony. We have convinced ourselves too many times that our sin is indeed an "eating disorder" or a "medical problem," and not a sin. But I do want to be careful. There may well be some cases of people who have a medical condition that causes weight gain, even if a person totally fasted. But from my research, such cases are indeed rare. And, in some cases, weight gain may be from fluid retention, not fat buildup. If you truly have a medical condition that causes weight gain even though you eat nothing or practically nothing, you need feel no conviction. But for the rest of us, it is time we simply face the facts: fat buildup is from gluttony.

## The "epidemic"

Our government here in the US is getting concerned. Two out of every three people in the USA are now overweight. One out of three are not overweight by a couple of pounds, but obese, which means seriously over ideal weight. Another recent statistic that I read stated that about 33% of all school-age children in the United States are now considered overweight or obese. In the US, the cost of dealing with obesity is estimated at \$100 billion annually.<sup>2</sup> Yes, that is billions, not millions; enough to eradicate starvation in the whole world.

There are several reasons for this "epidemic," but it can basically be narrowed down to two words: gluttony and laziness. What can we expect from a generation of children who grow up sitting on the couch watching TV

and stuffing Twinkies down their throats? Obesity rates have tripled in the last three decades. Instead of making the children plant, weed, and harvest the green beans in the garden, and feeding them the beans when they are harvested, many in our society have opted for the "easy," automated life. When children grow up with nothing to do besides eat Twinkies and watch perverted TV programming, can we expect anything but a 33% overweight rate and twisted ideas of morality? This is compared to a 12% overweight rate for children among "Plain" churches.

Twelve percent is still too many, but the difference is the work ethic and a more conscientious approach to controlling eating habits.

Is it not time for the church of God to speak to the issue? Actually, now is not the time ... the time is *way* past in our culture. The last few generations seem to have been too quiet about the sin of gluttony in our land.

Interestingly, up until a century or so ago, the church was not quiet about gluttony, and through the ages men of God have spoken and written about it in plain terms. Let's take a look at some of them.

## The early church

"The Shepherd of Hermas" is an early church document from the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century that was held in high esteem among the early church. It is written in an allegorical style, and could be called "The Pilgrim's Progress of the Early Church." The author had this to say about gluttony:

For some through the abundance of their food produce bodily ailments, and thus damage their bodies. Meanwhile other people are damaging their bodies because they don't have enough nourishment. And their bodies waste away. This intemperance in eating is harmful to you who have abundance and do not share it with those who are needy. Give heed to the judgment that is to come! You who are well-to-do, seek out the hungry [while there is opportunity].

I find it interesting that the author sees two evils in gluttony. First he mentions health reasons. The knowledge that overeating is harmful to a person's physical health has been around a long time. It doesn't take 21<sup>st</sup>-century medical technology to figure that out. But the other evil of gluttony is that of not sharing when we have more than we need. Woe to the man who has more than he needs, but does not share it. Gluttony is also harmful to a person's

"If  
you stopped  
eating, do you  
think you would  
still gain weight?"

"Yes!" was her  
convinced reply.

<sup>2</sup> <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/123702-overview>

spiritual health! Paul tells us quite plainly in Romans 8:13, “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.” In modern “Street English” we could say, “If you keep feeding your face just because it feels good, God will have to depart from you.”

## Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria lived during the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century into the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century. A prolific writer, he touched many themes. The following are extracts from the first part of Book 2 of “The Instructor,” concerning gluttony. I forewarn you, he minces not his words.

Some men, in truth, live that they may eat, just like the irrational animals do, “whose life is their belly, and nothing else.” But the Instructor enjoins us to eat that we may live ... [Food] is to be simple, truly plain, suiting precisely simple and innocent children—as ministering to life, not to luxury. Our eating should lead us to two things—health and strength ...

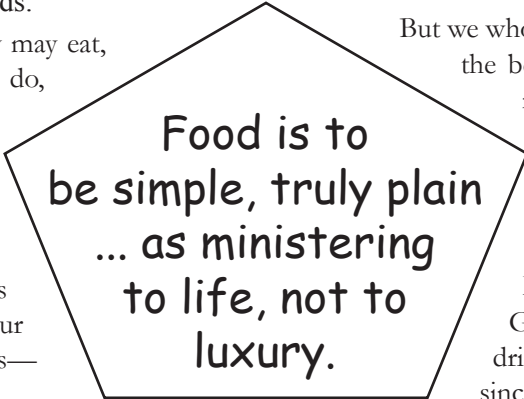
They are not ashamed to sing the praises of their delicacies, giving themselves great trouble to get lampreys in the Straits of Sicily, the eels of the Mæander, and the kids found in Melos, and the mullets in Sciathus, and the mussels of Pelorus, the oysters of Abydos, not omitting the sprats found in Lipara, and the Mantinican turnip; and furthermore, the beetroot that grows among the Ascræans: they seek out the cockles of Methymna, the turbot of Attica, and the thrushes of Daphnis, and the reddish-brown dried figs ... Besides these, they purchase birds from Phasis, the Egyptian snipes, and the Median peafowl.<sup>3</sup> Altering these by means of condiments, the gluttons gape for the sauces. “Whatever earth and the depths of the sea, and the unmeasured space of the air produce,” they cater for their gluttony. In their greed, the gluttons seem absolutely to sweep the world with a dragnet to gratify their luxurious tastes. These gluttons, surrounded with the sound of hissing frying-pans, and wearing their whole life away at the pestle and mortar, cling to [material things]. More than that, they render plain food impotent, namely bread, by straining off the nourishing part of the grain,<sup>4</sup> so

3 His point is that to buy expensive foods shipped in from other countries is a form of gluttony.

4 Quite plainly, white flour. The point is that in those days, making white flour would have been more labor intensive and

that the nourishing part of food becomes matter of reproach to luxury.

There is no limit to Epicurism<sup>5</sup> among men. For it has driven them to sweetmeats, and honey-cakes, and sugarplums; inventing a multitude of desserts, hunting after all manner of dishes. A man like this seems to me to be all jaw, and nothing else. “Desire not,” says the Scripture, “rich men’s dainties,” (Pr. 23:3) for they belong to a false and base life. They partake of luxurious dishes, which a little after go to the dung-hill.<sup>6</sup>



Food is to  
be simple, truly plain  
... as ministering  
to life, not to  
luxury.

But we who seek the heavenly bread must rule the belly, which is beneath heaven, and much more the things which the belly craves, which “God shall destroy,” (1 Co. 6:13) says the apostle, justly condemning gluttonous desires ...

For they have not yet learned that God has provided for man food and drink for sustenance, not for pleasure; since the body derives no advantage from extravagance in foods. For, quite the contrary, those who use the most frugal fare are the strongest and the healthiest, and the noblest; as domestics are healthier and stronger than their masters, and husbandmen than the proprietors; and not only more robust, but wiser, as philosophers are wiser than rich men. For they have not buried the mind beneath food, nor deceived it with pleasures ...

For it were not seemly that we, after the fashion of the rich man’s son in the Gospel, should, as prodigals, abuse the Father’s gifts; but we should use them, without undue attachment to them, as having command over ourselves. For we are enjoined to reign and rule over foods, not to be slaves to them ...

But how totally irrational, futile, and inhuman is it for those that are of the earth, fattening themselves like cattle, to feed themselves up for death; looking downwards on the earth, and bending ever over tables; leading a life of gluttony; burying all the good of existence here in a life that by and by will end;

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therefore more expensive. And it was only to please the taste buds.

5 Epicurism was the philosophy that nothing is wrong as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone else. This is contrasted with Christianity, which states that nothing is right unless it is holy.

6 Meaning, not long after the fancy food is eaten, it passes out of the intestines and becomes dung.

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courting voracity alone, in respect to which cooks are held in higher esteem than husbandmen. For we do not abolish social events, but look with suspicion on the snares of custom, and regard them as a calamity. Wherefore daintiness is to be shunned, and we are to partake of few and necessary things ...

We are not, then, to abstain wholly from various kinds of food, but only are not to be taken up about them. We are to partake of what is set before us, as becomes a Christian, out of respect to him who has invited us, by a harmless and moderate participation in the social meeting; regarding the sumptuousness of what is put on the table as a matter of indifference, despising the dainties ...

Wherefore we must guard against those articles of food which persuade us to eat when we are not hungry, bewitching the appetite. For is there not within a temperate simplicity a wholesome variety of eatables? Bulbs, olives, certain herbs, milk, cheese, fruits, all kinds of cooked food without sauces ...

**We  
must  
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## The seven deadly sins

Sometime during the first millennium of Christian history, a list of seven “chief” sins was compiled. These seven “deadly sins” were lust (or luxury), greed, wrath, envy, pride, laziness ... and gluttony. My inclusion of this list in this article is not an approval or disapproval of the list or its use. But it is interesting to see that gluttony—and its close relative, laziness—were put right up there with what we usually consider to be among the “bad” sins of lust and anger. Essentially, these seven deadly sins were a list of the fruits of a self-centered life, the “me-first” syndrome. They are the opposites of seven virtues: humility, charity, kindness, patience, chastity, diligence ... and temperance.

## Temperance

Temperance is self-control. When applied to gluttony, several aspects come into play. We think of overeating, which indeed is a form of intemperance. However, let’s consider the five ways that Gregory “The Great” spelled out eating intemperance in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century:

1. *Eating before the time of meals in order to satisfy the taste buds.* In other words, unnecessary snacking. Children easily fall into the habit of wanting a premeal

snack, then they are not hungry when the beans are passed at meal time.

2. *Seeking delicacies* and better quality of food to gratify the “vile sense of taste.”

3. *Seeking after sauces and seasonings* for the enjoyment of the taste.

4. *Exceeding the necessary amount of food.*

5. *Taking food with too much eagerness*, even when eating the proper amount, and even if the food is not luxurious. In other words, making it obvious that the eating is done for pleasure and not for nourishment.

These five forms of gluttony are summed up in the matter of *timing, quality of food, use of stimulants, quantity, and undue eagerness* in eating.<sup>7</sup>

## Potatoes, or potato chips?

Gregory’s five ways of being a glutton can perhaps be summarized in the war between eating potatoes and eating potato chips. Say you have the bag of chips lying around. Dinner is still an hour away, and the belly growls a little ... “Give me some food!” So you pop open the bag of barbecued chips. “Ummm, these are really good!” exclaim your small children. They entered the kitchen just as you opened the bag, and of course you didn’t feel good about eating some yourself and telling them to wait for dinner.

The chips cost about \$3/lb. The potatoes cost about 1/10 of that. The barbecue sauce tastes so good that you eat more than you intended. The children can’t stop exclaiming how good barbecued potato chips taste. Now, reread the five ways of being a glutton above, and compare that to the situation just described. Gluttony is more than just overeating.

And, of course, when the potatoes are served an hour later, the children grump about having to eat plain old potatoes, and they are not hungry they say. So they eat a few bites of potato. Then two hours after the meal, the children complain that they are hungry, and want a snack ...

This is not to say that to eat a between-the-meals snack is always gluttony. The point is to show that such habits are setting the stage for eating intemperance. Children who grow up in such an atmosphere are certainly more likely to fall into the 33% “overweight” statistic we looked at earlier. And have not most of us here in North

7 Orby Shipley, *A Theory about Sin in Relation to Some Facts of Daily Life, Lent Lects. On The 7 Deadly Sins*, 1875, 270–271.

America grown up in that very atmosphere, at least to a degree?

## A Czech reproof

Moving on in time, we come to the late Middle Ages, in what is now the Czech Republic. Here we find Peter Chelcicky and the beginnings of the Bohemian revival that produced the *Unitas Fratrum*. Peter is rebuking the civil leaders and the authorities of the State Church for their gluttony. I warn you again that, like Clement, he minces not his words:

[They are] ‘honorable’ men, who sit in great houses, these purple men, with their beautiful mantles, their high caps, their fat stomachs. As for love of pleasure, immorality, laziness, greediness, uncharitableness, and cruelty—as for these things, the priests do not hold them as sins when committed by [the upper class]. They do not tell them plainly, ‘You will go to hell if you live on the fat of the poor, and live a bestial life,’ although they know the rich are condemned to eternal death by such behavior.

The [friars] pretend to follow Christ, and have plenty to eat every day. They have fish, spices, brawn, herrings, figs, almonds, Greek wine, and other luxuries. They drink good wine and rich beer in large quantities, and so they go to sleep. When they cannot get luxuries, they fill themselves with vulgar puddings till they nearly burst.<sup>8</sup>

It almost sounds like Peter may have been looking into the future at North America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

## The Anabaptists

Many of us are familiar with the Schleithem Confession. However, there is another early Anabaptist document called the “Congregational Order” that circulated widely—sometimes right alongside the Schleithem Confession—among early Anabaptists. Our concern in this article is the sixth point of the Order:

<sup>8</sup> Mike Atnip, *The Birth, Life, and Death of the Bohemian Revival* (Primitive Christianity Publishers, 2009), 34–35.

6. All gluttony shall be avoided among the brothers who are gathered in the congregation; serve a soup or a minimum of vegetable and meat, for eating and drinking are not the kingdom of heaven.<sup>9</sup>

Compare that with some of our fellowship meals, or times when we have a get-together in our homes with long tables filled with exquisite foods. Imagine a church standard against big, fancy meals! While it is arguable whether the Order constituted a “church standard” as such, one thing is clear: the early Anabaptists considered lavish meals to be gluttony.

Heinrich Bullinger—Zwingli’s successor in the Swiss Protestant Reformation—had said some nasty things about the Anabaptists. But he had this to say about their conduct:

Those who unite with them will by their ministers be received into the church by rebaptism and repentance and newness of life. They henceforth lead lives under a semblance of quite spiritual conduct. They denounce covetousness, pride, profanity, drinking, and gluttony.<sup>10</sup> They “denounced” gluttony. Do we?



The early Anabaptists considered lavish meals to be gluttony.

## Finney on gluttony

If you are inclined to eat too much, you must deny yourselves those kinds of diet that betray you into gluttony. Whatever those kinds of diet are, of which you are so fond, and that overcome you when placed before you, and lead you to transgress the laws of your being, put them entirely away. Do not suffer them to find a place upon your table.

The exact opposite of this course is generally pursued by mankind. From the general conduct of mankind, it would seem that they fear starvation a thousand times more than they do gluttony, and that the utmost attention must be paid to preparing tempting dishes, or mankind would not have sufficient appetite to meet the demands of their nature. Now glut-

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/S345.html#ART13>

<sup>10</sup> Guy F. Hershberger, *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to Harold S. Bender* (The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., 1957), 44.

tony is one of the most common sins in the world. It is the testimony of the best judges upon this subject, that excessive eating is the most common form of intemperance that prevails among mankind, and is the cause of more disease, especially in this country, than any other form of intemperance. How unwise then, how wicked, what tempting God is it, to continue to prepare and set before yourselves those tempting dishes, instead of furnishing your tables with those wholesome, bland articles of diet of which you will be likely to eat only the necessary quantity.<sup>11</sup>

## Asceticism

When calling men to holiness, there will always arise the cry of “Asceticism!” among certain folks who love this world. And, there is indeed an imbalanced view of eating within asceticism. Let’s look at it ...

Asceticism tends to view any activity that brings bodily pleasure as sin. So if eating good-tasting food brings pleasure, then in asceticism eating that food is sin.

But that is not what this article is promoting. We are lifting up the idea of holiness, which says that whatever we do, we do it with the chief aim being to glorify God. If our glorifying of God also brings bodily pleasure, we accept that pleasure and enjoy it. However, many times the path to glorifying God brings physical pain, or just a lesser pleasure to the body than what could be had if we would just “let loose and live.”

We can sum up three views concerning pleasure in this way:

1. *Carnality* has pleasure as the prime goal in its decisions.
2. *Asceticism* forbids any pleasure.
3. *Holiness* does what is right and joyfully accepts either the pleasure or the pain that accompanies the act.

The following quote, by Alfonso Maria de’ Liguori, says it very well:

However, it is not a fault to feel pleasure in eating: for it is, generally speaking, impossible to eat without ex-

periencing the delight which food naturally produces. But, it is a defect to eat, like beasts, through the sole motive of sensual gratification, and without any reasonable object.<sup>12</sup>

## My personal “Battle of the Bulge”

I grew up on a farm and spent most of my life working in construction, farming, and logging. As well, as a youth I was active in hunting and other outdoor activities and sports. In other words, I had lots of physical exercise. We were “middle-class” Americans—which is actually “upper-class” if you consider the whole world—and I cannot recall a single day in my life when I didn’t have enough to eat. I can recall very few days when the opportunity to be a glutton didn’t present itself. There was desert available after most meals, and plenty of bacon and ham and cheese. And ... the ice cream and cake for visitors in the evenings, after supper.

With an active lifestyle and some basic moderation, I never put on any extra weight. That is not to say I was never a glutton, as we have seen that gluttony is more than overeating.

Then came the change in lifestyle. And middle age. Instead of lugging a big chainsaw into the woods and cutting timber, or laying concrete blocks all day, I was sitting at a desk staring at a computer screen. And I started the “battle of the bulge.” Within months I gained maybe 10 pounds of weight.

I knew it was time to cut back on eating. But was it ever difficult! For over 30 years I had developed eating habits and tastes. To stop the gain, I had to cut back on my eating by about one third. And to lose that which I had gained? That was *Hard*, with a capital H. I have had to—and still have to—leave the table many times feeling not quite full. It is a simple fact; for every time a person overeats and gains weight, he/she will need to “undereat” to lose that weight. It is, boiled down, the law of reaping what we sow.

**Carnality has pleasure as the prime goal in its decisions.**

**Asceticism forbids any pleasure.**

**Holiness does what is right and joyfully accepts either the pleasure or the pain that accompanies the act.**

<sup>12</sup> Alfonso Maria de’ Liguori, *The True Spouse of Jesus Christ*, 1835, 282.

<sup>11</sup> The Oberlin Evangelist, Lecture XIX, October 7, 1840.

This battle has made me feel a little more supportive of those whose metabolism makes it hard to keep off the pounds. Those of us who have it easier need to be a support to those whose metabolic rate more easily reveals their intemperance. But let's be honest; even those with a low metabolism (and thus they gain excess weight very easily) are called to temperance.

Some people need more food than others. My parents had a friend who used to visit our house occasionally when I was a boy. He was a thin man, with an extremely high

metabolism or something. I have watched him eat up to a quart of ice cream ... after having a big, full meal. I also watched him jump into a 55-gallon drum, flat-footed, and jump right back out ... when he was 55 years of age.

Very few of us could eat like that and not be gluttonous. But this man needed to eat what seemed to be excessive amounts. Others have to eat less than normal to supply their needs. It doesn't seem fair! The one man can enjoy pints of ice cream, in fact, he *needs* to

eat a lot. But the next man can hardly eat a few spoonfuls of sweets without putting it on as excess body fat.

Each of us has to find what temperance means for our specific situation. The cross is heavier for us in some areas of our life than for others. If taking up your cross means denying yourself foods that others can eat, then take up that cross and recognize it is heavier than your brother's in that area of life. God chose your metabolic rate; learn to live by it, control your eating, and accept it. God does all things very well!

### Young man, I warn you!

If you are like me, in your youth you can basically eat until you are full, and then later eat a bowl of ice cream ... without any weight gain. But remember what was said above; gluttony is more than being overweight. Those bad eating habits—aka gluttony—will haunt you in days to come. Learn temperance as a 20-year-old, and when you hit 40 years of age the “middle age spread” will not be nearly as hard to control. Learn to say “No” to the ice cream and chips when you have already had a good meal. In fact, make it a habit not to replace nourishing

foods with junk foods. Learn to drink water instead of soft drinks. Learn to not get excited and start exclaiming about how good the ice cream is while you are still young, and when the time comes that you have to pass it by entirely, it will be easier to say no.

### Take care of your beast!

Proverbs 12:10 tells us that “a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.” This verse tells us that a good man will take care of his animals. He will feed, water, and provide shelter for them. Now let's think about it: is not our body, were it separated from our spirit, basically an animal?

The wisdom in Proverbs 12:10 tells us—beyond the normal application—that we live in a body that God expects us to take care of. It is for this reason that we do not smoke, do not use psychotic drugs ... and avoid gluttony. Wikipedia states that “obesity is a leading preventable cause of death worldwide.”<sup>13</sup> If obesity is preventable, by temperance, are we not called as Christians to prevent obesity?

### In summary

The Bible is clear on the matter of gluttony, so clear that we have not spent much time in this article with the verses that speak on the subject.

We have travelled down through the centuries and looked at a few examples of how the church has spoken on the topic. We have seen that historically gluttony was considered a serious sin.

Gluttony is harmful to our physical health. Therefore it is a sin to overeat, whether our intemperance shows itself in accumulated body fat or whether it doesn't. But more importantly than gluttony being unhealthy, it is also unholy. God has called us to holiness; God cannot dwell in an unholy temple. It is necessary, then, for us to overcome gluttony and control our eating habits.

Let's sanctify our eating. Eat, not for pleasure, but for His glory! ~

<sup>13</sup> Even though it is arguable whether obesity causes more deaths than, say, smoking, we have to agree that overeating is unhealthy. It is time churches began to look at it as being as sinful as smoking. Is it fair to expect our brethren (or even Social Security) to help pay our hospital bills caused by our intemperate eating?



If taking up your cross means denying yourself foods that others can eat, then take up that cross.

Let's sanctify our eating.

Eat, not for pleasure, but for His glory!



That they may teach the young women ...

## *Common Women like You and Me*

**I**f God would add another part to the Bible, could it be that your name would be in it?

How special do you need to be to get mentioned in the Bible?

Are you a grandmother that influences her grandchild's life? **Lois** influenced Timothy's life in such a way that Paul knew it and reported it. 2 Ti. 1:5

Are you a mother that stands alone in caring for the spiritual welfare of her children? **Abijah** and Hezekiah, her son, followed God. He opened the temple that his father had closed. 2 Ch. 29:1

Are you taking care of somebody else's children, doing house chores for someone else, and not being important in the eyes of others? **Deborah**, Rebecca's nurse did. She left her country to help Rebecca when she married Isaac. She was faithful until the end of her life, and her name was only mentioned at her death. Ge. 35:8

Are you working hard for the Lord, doing good, helping the poor right there where you are? **Tryphena**, **Tryphosa**, and **Dorcus** did, and today people still read about their work for the Lord. Ro. 16:12, Ac. 9:36

Have you opened your heart for hospitality? The **Shunammite** woman did. Do you feel that this is a small thing? She provided some minor but essential service that helped move God's message into other hearts. 2 Ki. 4:8

Maybe you don't get human love, attention, and respect. **Leah** didn't, but Israel's priestly line came from her third son, Levi, and the Messianic line from her fourth son, Judah. Ge. 29:31

Does your life have unexpected turns in the road? Do your children leave the family business? **Salome's** sons James and John did. They left all their securities to follow Jesus. You appreciate that, but you would also like a place of honor for them. Salome desired a good place for her sons, but Jesus redirected her wishes. She accepted the changes. It didn't damage her faith. She was one of the women mentioned at the crucifixion and at the resurrection. Mk. 15:40

Are you single but living a life dedicated in devotion to your God? **Anna** was so tuned in with God that she immediately recognized Jesus when He came into the temple as an eight-day-old baby. Lu. 2:36

Maybe your husband heard God's call and he is making plans. Neighbors, friends, and relatives are laughing. They don't understand, but you don't discourage him. You go with him, and stand beside him. Maybe you wonder what will happen with your family. Maybe you have to live in very uncomfortable circumstances. **Noah's** wife had to face this kind of life. Stress-free living was not a part of the ark experience. But she became a part of God's salvation plan. Sometimes, like Noah's wife, we end up as part of a mission that doesn't have our name on it. When your husband takes a role in church leadership or in a mission project, it will impact your life too. How do we respond? Are we supporters, or do we complain? Complaints never glorify God, but willing service always will. Ge. 7:7

Maybe you are in a very difficult situation. Your family is suffering, there is no security for the future, and your husband is not able to help you. Will you still be supportive? Satan used **Job's wife** as a tempter. Through great trials, even greater faith may grow if we don't give in to despair like Job's wife did. Job 2:9

Let us focus on **Mary**, Jesus' mother. When she was a young girl, she found favor in God's eyes. She was just a simple girl, nobody important. She heard the message of the angel, and she felt free to share her problem with him. She waited for the answer and believed in faith. Yes, she found favor in God's eyes, but the people around her saw her as a fornicator. Lu. 1:30

She had normal motherly feelings and was concerned when Jesus was lost. Lu. 2:48 She told Jesus about problems other people had and learned to wait on Jesus' timing in solving the problem. She saw Jesus leaving the business and starting His ministry, a life without securities, no pillow to lay His head on. Jn. 2:3 She wasn't able to convince her other children that their brother was the Messiah. At the cross, Jesus told John to take care of His mother. We don't read a lot about Mary during the years of Jesus' ministry, but she must have heard all the gossip and bad things people said. She was willing to see her Son suffering. She followed Jesus until the end. Jn. 7:5

Let us follow Jesus till the end as faithful, common sisters. With much love, *Geraldine Kouwen*

## ~ COVENANT WITH GOD ~

I am resolved to persevere in sin, and follow the maxims and customs of those around me—though it costs me the loss of my soul, and exposes me to everlasting damnation.

I am resolved to reject the Son of God—I will not have Him reign over me. I am resolved that I will not accept the liberty which God presents to me in the gospel, though it cost Jesus His life to procure it—and I know I must eternally perish without it. I am determined not to submit to God's way of salvation, and I consent to be lost forever! I have made up my mind that I will never consent to be rescued by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—I will not have it!

I am resolved ...  
to reject God's message,  
to dare His justice,  
to defy His power,  
to refuse His mercy,  
to brave His threatened wrath, and  
to harden myself against all His invitations, expostulations, exhortations, and promises!

I am resolved that I will not ...  
bow to His authority,  
yield to His entreaties,  
believe on His Son,  
repent of my sins,  
love His name,  
or obey His precepts!  
I am determined that there shall never be joy in Heaven among the angels of God—on account of my conversion.

I will never ...  
desert the ranks of Satan,  
give up my sinful practices,  
ask for mercy at God's hands,  
or take up my cross and follow Christ!  
I am resolved ...  
to keep on in my old wicked course,  
to persevere in my present sinful path,  
to associate with my carnal companions—  
and if it secures my eternal damnation—then let it do so!

I will not receive salvation on God's terms,  
I will not stoop to be saved by grace,

I will not take the yoke of Christ upon me, and engage to be His subject and servant—even though heaven and all the glories of eternity would be secured by it.

If I cannot escape the wrath of God—but by faith, repentance, and holiness—why, I am determined to go to hell, for I am resolved not to yield to any such terms!

It is of no use for the preacher to spend his breath upon me! My mind is made up, I will be my own master, I will take my own course! No one has any right to interfere with me—for I shall injure no one but myself!

I have no objection to going to church, or to attending to some religious forms—but to give my heart to God, to be crucified to the present world, and to make God's glory the purpose of life—will never do for me; therefore I gladly take the consequences.

If this is required of those who would be true Christians—then you must stop urging me—for I will not yield! You must stop all attempts to convert me, for my mind is made up! I have heard hundreds of sermons, I have read the Bible myself—but I have hardened myself against the whole, and I am not going to yield now!

Tell me no more of the Savior's love,  
tell me no more of the pleasures of holiness,  
tell me no more of the terrors of death,  
tell me no more of the dreadful judgment,  
tell me no more of the joys of Heaven,  
tell me no more of the agonies of hell—

for you will never induce me to yield myself unto God, and seek the salvation of my soul. For my mind is made up, and my daily conduct is enough to convince you of it, if anything would. I am resolved to never yield—let the consequences be what they may!

I will go on just as I have done!  
I will not be Christ's servant!  
I will not be God's child!  
I will obey only Satan!  
I will follow the course of this evil world!  
I will serve my lusts and pleasures!

In proof thereof, witness my signature, \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Will you now sign your name? Will you now solemnly put your seal to this statement?**

Why are you so afraid?

Do not your actions speak louder than your words? Is not your daily practice stronger proof—than just putting your name to a statement once? If you do not say the above in words—yet if you do so in your actions—then where is the difference? Does not God read the language of your life? If you say it in your daily practice—then why not boldly take the pen and openly sign your name?

Soon the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened—and your criminality and folly shall be published before assembled worlds!

Well, will you sign the above? Why not? Is it true of you—or is it not? ~

*by James Smith 1802-1862 (Altered)*

# The Moravian Mission Machine

By Dean Taylor



**"Our Lamb has conquered,  
let us follow Him."**

Revival, by its very definition, implies something is brought to life that was once sleeping or dead. Throughout history, God has repeatedly sent revival to awaken His church from sleepy self-indulgence to an active, world-changing force. It is interesting how history repeats itself, and it becomes apparent that we will never "arrive" at any destination on this earth in which we will outgrow our need for this continual, life-changing phenomenon we call revival. The church lives or dies in direct proportion to the measure in which it operates under this Holy Spirit anointing. In Acts 2 and 4 when revival came at Pentecost, it didn't just usher in great feelings; it was the birth of the church—a gathered, called-out people.

These people changed the world around them. When you read the book of Acts, you encounter the amazing testimony of a people who were obsessed with the propagation of the Kingdom of God. These radical brethren sold everything they had and changed all their plans and earthly attachments, just to be followers of Jesus. Throughout the centuries—once in a great while—it happens again. When it happens to an individual, it makes a great testimony; but when it happens to a church—it makes history.

Not far up the road from me, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, are the remains of a Moravian mission community from the 1700s. A few years ago, impressed with some Moravian literature I was reading, I decided to do some research on this little mission outpost. Early on in my study, I could hardly believe what I was reading. While I had hoped to encounter some good mission stories—what I discovered was so much more than that!

## Visit to Bethlehem

As soon as I stepped into the old graveyard in Bethlehem, aptly named "God's Acre," I immediately noticed

that, there amongst the stones of the founding bishop and other well-known missionaries of the time, were dispersed the stones of numerous American Indians. One tombstone really caught my attention. It read simply, "Joseph, a Mohican, Departed July 21st, 1746." I thought, "Wow, so few words—but what a story!"

At the time, each stone seemed to conceal a treasure trove of untold mission stories—all seemingly locked between the dusty pages of time. Eager to know more, I dug deeper, and what I discovered was just how effective this often overlooked mission outpost actually was. Between this humble little community in Bethlehem, PA and their sister community in Herrnhut, Germany, their mission activity spanned an amazing distance—four continents in under 14 years. What's more, their converts were successfully disciplined and trained, many of them going on to become pastors and missionaries themselves. I was impressed when I read this, but when I stopped to consider the conditions of the time in which they lived, I was simply astounded:

- No modern transportation
- No modern communication, such as Internet, e-mail, cell phones, etc.
- No hospitals or antibiotics
- No developed postal system

Indeed, I now found myself smack-dab in the middle of one of the biggest treasure troves of mission histories I had ever read! I knew this had to be the work of God among another revived and called-out people, but I also knew I needed to know more. And I knew that if I wanted to fully understand the Moravians of Bethlehem, I would first need to know where they came from.



## How did they do it?

### From Moravia to Herrnhut

Forged in the kilns of centuries of revival fires, Moravia (located in the modern day Czech Republic) was a melting pot of radical Christianity for over a millennium. From the Cathari, Bogomili, Albigenses and Waldensians, to the Hussites, Hutterites, and Czech Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*), this area gave birth to a heritage of radical Christianity like no other.

But in the 1700s, a new wave of Catholic persecution came upon the non-Catholic church all over Moravia. As a result, many recanted and some grew cold. Those who refused to recant were severely persecuted. Then, in 1722, a small remnant of the *Unitas Fratrum*<sup>1</sup> felt the Lord urging them to flee to nearby Germany. Once in Germany, they ended up on the property of a young, newly married count named Ludwig von Zinzendorf.<sup>2</sup> Ludwig had a deep desire to follow Christ in a radical way. As Moravians moved onto his property, he developed a relationship with them. Ultimately, Ludwig was so moved by their devotion to Christ and their godly example that he soon joined them. Together, they propelled one another on to greater devotion. Eventually, God would bless them with something truly extraordinary.

Not long after the first group of refugees settled at Herrnhut, Christian David (one of the original Moravian leaders) had a longing to invite more of his fellow brethren back in Moravia to escape to Herrnhut. Subsequently, in August 1723, he returned to Herrnhut with many new believers. However, rapid growth had its predictable effect and substantially stressed the little community. Instead of an idyllic “retreat” for the spiritually inclined, the surrounding area, lying as it did near the borders of Silesia and Bohemia, became a raw refugee camp. There were all kinds of Christians showing up—Schwenkfelders, Anabaptists, Lutherans, Calvinists, and more.

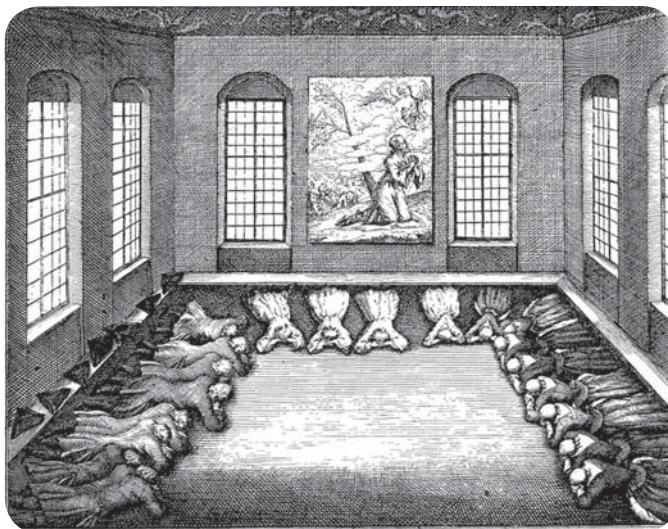
1 Sometimes called “The Unity of Brothers” or “The United Brethren.” This is not to be confused with the later group in the USA of the same name. The *Unitas Fratrum* was a small branch of the Hussites who practiced the Sermon on the Mount (most Hussites did not), beginning in the early 1400s.

2 His life is a story in itself!

Desiring to be more intimately involved with what was going on at Herrnhut, Ludwig and his wife eventually moved into the community and threw in their lot with the Moravian refugees. Quickly sensing the unrest among the refugees, Ludwig and his wife invited all the settlers to join into “bands” for interpersonal responsibility, confession, and prayer. Several times a week, members of the bands—usually from three to half a dozen—voluntarily met to share their thoughts. They shared their temptations, pointed out faults, and opened themselves up to one another in the presence of God. Miracles happened, but even more amazing happenings were yet to come. (Hoover, 170-171)

### “Brotherly Agreement”

The Moravian refugees had come from a church heritage that believed that the Holy Spirit could lead the church in both spiritual and practical matters. As Christ’s incarnated witness on the earth, they believed that when they—Christ’s church—met together to pray, the Spirit would lead them to unity in just about every matter. In May of 1727, with the help of the settlers from Moravia, Ludwig drew up a plan of “brotherly agreement.” This agreement gave the growing community some needed expectations and boundaries. Then, following their ancient custom, the people



A Moravian prayer meeting.

at Herrnhut chose four men to be their overseers: Christian David, Georg and Melchior Nitschmann, and Christoph Hoffman. On May 12, 1727, they all signed their names and shook hands, promising to keep the rules in Christ’s peace. This was a time of radical, and at times even painful, transparency and honesty.

Zinzendorf wrote in his journal about one of these accountability meetings saying, “David Nitschmann and Christian David sat at my table today. We took stock of ourselves and told each other what still remained to mar the image of Christ in us. First I let them say what was the matter with me, then I said what was still the matter with them.” (Hoover, 175) With this kind of sincerity and honesty, a genuine unity started to emerge. And it was with this heart of unity that they began to call upon God in prayer.

## Prayer

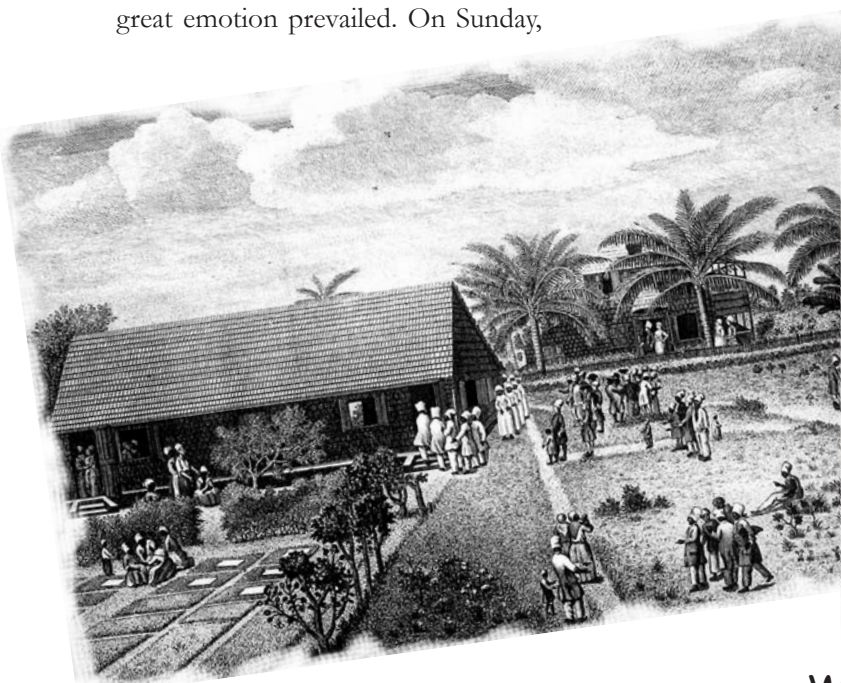
The historical account of the prayer life of these people is tremendously challenging. One such account reads:

On July 16th, the Count poured out his soul in a prayer accompanied with a flood of tears. This prayer produced an extraordinary effect. The whole community began praying as never before. On 22 July, many of the community covenanted together on their own accord to meet often to pour out their hearts in prayer and hymns.

On 5 August, the Count spent the whole night in prayer with about twelve or fourteen others following a large meeting for prayer at midnight, where great emotion prevailed. On Sunday,

Loud weeping and cries to heaven nearly drowned out the singing. The service did not end until, as Ludwig [Zinzendorf] described it later, true *Herzensgemeinschaft* (communion of the heart) had descended upon them all. Where they had been one body before, now they were one in spirit, the Spirit of Christ. ... Those who had seriously annoyed each other, now embraced and promised to serve one another in peace, so the whole congregation came back to Herrnhut as newborn children. (Hoover, 174)

Following the communion service, their prayer meetings did not stop, but increased in both commitment and fervency.



10 August, Pastor Rothe, while leading the service at Herrnhut, was overwhelmed by the power of the Lord about noon. He sank down into the dust before God. So did the whole congregation. They continued till midnight in prayer and singing, weeping and praying.” (Greenfield)

## Revival

The Lord had blessed them with unity in practical matters and in prayer. Then, on August 13, 1727, Zinzendorf called for a special communion service. During this service, God poured out a special blessing on them. One participant reported, “No one present could tell exactly what happened on that Wednesday morning, 13 August 1727, at the specially called Communion service. They hardly knew if they had been on earth or in heaven.”

Another account of that morning reads:

Wherever they moved, the Moravians found here (L. to R.) in St. Croix (West Indies), Guiana (the Native Americans), Labrador

## Non-stop prayer begins

One historian records the beginning of the famed, non-stop prayer chain of the Moravians. While there is nothing dramatic about the account, it does give us a glimpse of the simplicity of spirit behind the prayer burden: “The thought struck some brethren and sisters that it might be well to set apart certain hours for the purpose of prayer, at which seasons all might be reminded of its excellency and be induced by the promises annexed to fervent, persevering prayer to pour out their hearts before the Lord.”

So it was, that on the 26th of August, twenty-four men and twenty-four women covenanted together to continue

praying in intervals of one hour each, day and night, each hour allocated by lots to different people. On August 27th, this new regulation officially began. Others joined the intercessors and the number involved increased to seventy-seven. They all carefully observed the hour which had been appointed for them. The intercessors had a weekly meeting where prayer needs were given to them.

The children, also touched powerfully by God, began a similar plan among themselves. It is reported that those who heard their infant supplications were deeply moved. The children's prayers and supplications had a powerful effect on the whole community. (Greenfield)

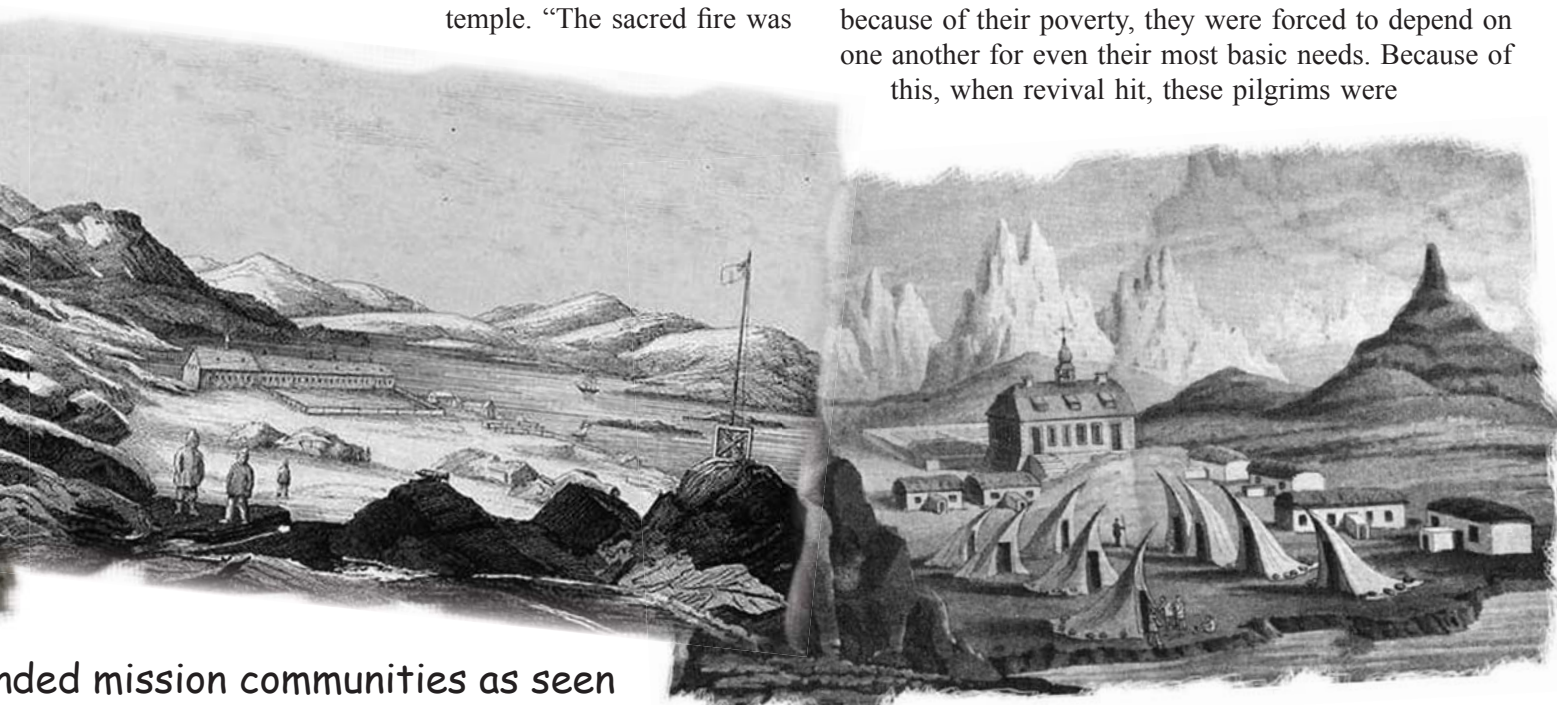
The Moravians felt that the call to nonstop prayer was likened to the Old Testament typology of the fire in the temple. "The sacred fire was

## But there's more ...

If the revival would have stopped there, I would have been impressed enough. But as I kept reading, I found that what happened next was even more extraordinary. Sadly, it's this next part that you never hear about in the typical accounts of the Moravians—and for good reason. Nothing about what happened next fits into our modern American idea of what we call "normal" church life.

## Disclaimer

Since most of the Moravians were poor refugees, they had a few advantages over us. First of all, they were already strangers and pilgrims in their new land. Their attachment to their surroundings was minimal. Secondly, because of their poverty, they were forced to depend on one another for even their most basic needs. Because of this, when revival hit, these pilgrims were



nded mission communities as seen  
naddenhutzen (Pennsylvania, among  
ador, and Greenland.

never permitted to go out on the altar (Leviticus 6:13).” Likewise, they said that “a congregation is a temple of the living God, wherein he has his altar and fire; the intercession of his saints should incessantly rise up to him.”

It is said that this prayer meeting continued, unbroken, for one hundred years. Also, young people should note here that this prayer watch was started by a group of young, zealous believers. The average age of people in this community was about thirty. Zinzendorf himself was only twenty-seven. (Tarr)

poised and ready to be moved anywhere the Lamb would lead them. It was in these early days that their motto became: “The Lamb has conquered, let us follow Him”—and they meant it!

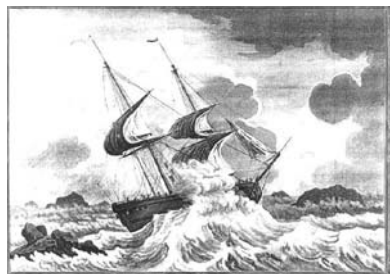
## Go ye into all the world ...

As they kept praying and asking God for more, it wasn't long before the Holy Spirit put them into action. They soon felt the call to spread the Lamb's kingdom to the ends of the earth. Feeling called to missions, the brethren sent out their first two missionaries to the island of St. Thomas. These “two young Moravian missionaries”<sup>3</sup> were named David Nitschmann and Leonhard Dober.

<sup>3</sup> Paris Reidhead's well-known sermon *Ten Shekels and a Shirt* tells the story, although some of Reidhead's details are not altogether historically accurate.

Their dedication was incredible. In order to win the souls of these slaves, they were willing to sell themselves into slavery. However, this was not legal because they were white, but they eventually found a way to get to know the slaves. These missionaries ministered in some of the worst conditions you could imagine.

Not long into the work, David Nitschmann returned to Herrnhut and later was made the first bishop of The Renewed Moravian Church. In a few years, Leonhard



**The ship "Irene" was owned by the church to transport missionaries and colonists to various parts of the world.**

Leonhard would also be called to return to Herrnhut to be involved in ministry in Europe until his death. The work in St. Thomas continued to grow rapidly as others came to fill the need. Eventually, David Nitschmann would lead the mission community to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he is now buried in "God's Acre."

The requirement to be one of these missionaries was nothing short of total surrender. In one interesting account, a young couple who wanted to be missionaries to St. Thomas were questioned about their desire to be missionaries. The wife was called before the conference, and the following questions were asked: "Had she lived long enough for herself?" Answer: "She had lived for herself long enough." "Had she lived long enough for the church?" Answer: "She did not know." "Had she the courage to die for this?" Answer: "She had the courage and joy to do this." Her husband was asked the same questions at a later time, separately. When they asked him if he had lived long enough for himself, he said that he had not. He also said that he was uncertain whether he was willing to die in this cause. Due to his hesitancy, they were both denied the work. (Sessler, 46)

Another requirement for those desiring to be missionaries was that they be married. Many young men took a wife for this reason. But they had a name for these marriages—they called them "Streiter-Ehe," or "militant marriage." (Engel, 50) Once they met all of the requirements, their names were given to the lot, where they let the Lord decide if they would be chosen to go to the mission field or not.

Obviously, these missions were very costly. But the brethren back home not only felt like they were laboring along with them, they actually were. While the mis-

sionaries were away on the field living sacrificially, the people back home didn't think it was right for them to live for themselves. In a short amount of time, everyone in Herrnhut was working and living sacrificially so that they could collectively propagate the Gospel. Their accountability groups grew into shared living quarters and working groups. Ultimately, they shared their lives, their prayers, and their stuff.

This kind of sacrifice is hard to imagine in our day and age. I have been challenged many times in the past from the cries of missionaries in the field, preaching that if we folks back home would live like we were on the mission field, a lot more could be accomplished for the Gospel. Often, I pondered, "Wow, if any of us today really heeded these cries from the mission field, it could really be radical." After reading about the sacrificial home life of the early Moravians, I realized that when a whole church does this, it is nothing short of invincible!

To keep in touch with those back home, the missionaries kept detailed journals of their travels and progress. I saw hundreds of these journals when I visited the vault of the Bethlehem archives.<sup>4</sup> In the evenings, at the completion of their typical 16-hour workday, the home community would all go to their nightly prayer meeting, and there they would read a copy of the journals. This kept them connected to the work. It must have made 16 hours of slopping the hogs feel a lot better, knowing that what you were doing was for the propagation of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. And it worked! As the reports from the mission field labors started coming in, they bought a few ships and started expanding their missions to other places.

## America

By 1735, they felt the call to America. Georgia was their first choice. Interestingly, on their trip over, they met a couple of young Anglican priests—John and Charles Wesley. It was on this voyage that John Wesley records in his journal that the ship ran into a hurricane. Apparently, everyone was in a panic, including Wesley—everyone, that is, except the Moravians. Wesley records in his journal on that Sunday, Oct. 25, 1735:

In the midst of the Psalm wherewith their [Moravian] service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans [Moravians] calmly sang on. I asked one of them afterward, 'Were you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, no.' I asked, 'But were not

<sup>4</sup> Sadly, most of them are not even translated into English yet!

your women and children afraid?’ He replied, mildly, ‘No; our women and children are not afraid to die.’ (Wesley, *Works*, 22)

After they had landed safely in America, the Moravians rebuked the young John Wesley for his lack of faith and therefore questioned his salvation. Wesley asked Bishop Spangenberg about the Moravians’ faith. The bishop took it as an opportunity to ask John Wesley some hard questions about his faith. Wesley records the account:

He said, “My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?” I was surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it and asked, “Do you know Jesus Christ?” I paused and said, “I know He is the Saviour of the world.” “True,” replied he; “but do you know He has saved you?” I answered, “I hope He has died to save me.” He only added, “Do you know yourself?” I said, “I do.” But I fear they were vain words. (Wesley, *Works*, 23)

Not long in Georgia, the Spanish started to make war against the British. Because of the Moravian nonresistant stand of loving their enemies, they felt it best to cut their losses and headed north to Pennsylvania. Some of the brethren had already been working in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, helping George Whitefield build a school for African-American children. However, not long after they were there, they got into a disagreement with Whitefield over predestination. Whitefield ended up firing the Moravian brothers because of their belief in free will. Once released, the brothers found the plot of land that they felt would be perfect for their mission outpost.

On Christmas Eve, 1741, Count Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, along with a small band of pilgrims, named the new community “Bethlehem.” Right from the start, this community was baptized with laser-sharp vision, purpose, and dedication.

### The start of the “Pilgrim Community”

One of the secrets for their unprecedented success at Bethlehem was due to their idea of a pilgrim community. A year before the founding of Bethlehem, Zinzendorf was forced off his own property in Saxony by the local government. Never losing an opportunity, Zinzendorf leveraged this setback to design something powerful. Zinzen-

dorf actually started a traveling mission community that he called the *Pilgergemeinde* (pilgrim community). He said that it should be a “school of prophets that moves like a blessed cloud, as the wind of the Lord pushes it and makes everything fruitful.” A year later, at Bethlehem, this vision came to fruition. This pilgrim spirit is what shaped Bethlehem.

When I stopped to consider my own life ... the Starbucks coffee houses and various restaurants that I have frequented along my mission trips and preaching engagements ... well, I must confess I felt pretty sheepish reading about their journeys. Even when the pilgrim community was sailing on the way to America, they conducted themselves like a military fleet prepared for war. I found a glimpse into the dedicated lifestyle of these missionaries from a letter, now in the Bethlehem archives, that gives details of ship life.

Even when the pilgrim community was sailing on the way to America, they conducted themselves like a military fleet prepared for war.

On board ship daily texts were read and meditated upon at their morning and evening devotions; the Night Watch or Hourly Intercession was observed; one whole day was set aside as a day of prayer and thanksgiving; Love Feasts<sup>5</sup> were frequently observed.... Regular times were set apart in these floating congregations for worship, and regularity and promptness were meticulously observed. At six o’clock in the morning came the call to arise, wash, and dress; at seven was the morning blessing; at eight, breakfast; from nine to twelve, the English Brethren studied the German language and the Germans the English; at twelve, the noon meal; the afternoon was spent in some useful occupation, as spinning, sewing, mess duties, and making hammocks; at six, the evening meal; at seven, song services, one in German and another in English; at nine, a conference of the officers, class-leaders, and supervisors; and at ten the night prayer watch began, continuing until 6 A.M. These night watchmen, working in pairs and hourly shifts, spent their time in prayer and vigil.

The letter continues:

A system covering minutest details was carried out to provide cleanliness, proper decorum, and discipline. Before the sailing of the second Sea Congregation,

<sup>5</sup> Moravian “love feasts” consisted of a bun and a cup of tea or coffee. They feasted on the love to God and man, and not the natural food. Love feasts were generally a time of singing, testimony, and exhortation.

Spangenberg, who was in Europe at the time, divided it into six groups, three of men and three of women. The women, both married and unmarried, lived on one side of the ship, and all the men on the other. Each person was assigned definite duties: one struck the hour on a bell; some were teachers, others exhorters; a health committee was appointed, consisting of a doctor and assistants; some were chosen as nurses; other committees were the cook and his assistants, the steward and his assistants, those who had to wait on the tables, and finally the ship crew, all Moravians working under Captain Garrison.” (Sessler, 77-78)

## Life in Bethlehem

Needless to say, when this committed group of believers landed in America, they hit the ground running! As you can imagine, a group this dedicated had no desire to settle down into nominal church life once they arrived in America—in fact, it was just the opposite. From reading their history, it almost appears as though they were racing each other to see just how far they could go.

What you are about to read next may shock you. Before I go on to tell you some of the ways the Bethlehem mission community conducted themselves, I should preface it with a few important facts. First of all, life at Bethlehem was very different than your typical American church. Nevertheless, the amazing thing is that the Moravians did not believe their way of life was “the only way.” That kind of sectarianism was not their way of thinking at all. To be honest, I would even say that, by my taste, they were at times a bit *too* ecumenical. So, please, keep this spirit in mind as you read their radical testimony.

Furthermore, as I read about “church life” at Bethlehem, I first felt humbled and even a bit ashamed, but I then felt inspired—inspired about what God could do with a congregation today that would be totally sold out to Him in the same way they were. The Moravians at Bethlehem knew what they wanted. They wanted to follow the Lamb and they weren’t going to let anything get in their way. I think it was Leonard Ravenhill who once said that in every age God has given the church the resources and ability to evangelize the whole world—if we would just do it. I used to think that he was exaggerating. But after reading what these Moravian brethren were willing to sacrifice for the Gospel, I began to understand what Ravenhill was talking about.

**We all belong to the Savior, as He is Lord, and what we have, that all belongs to Him, and He shall dispose of it as pleases Him.**

## Possessions

Out of a burden for the lost and a desire to be used of God as pilgrims and strangers, the brothers at Bethlehem did not feel they had the time to establish their own estates and businesses. Therefore, like the early church at Pentecost, they pooled their resources and worked together in community. To them, working as soul winners and missionaries was their entire life and business.

People desiring to move into the community had to understand this type of dedication. The following contract from the Bethlehem archives shows what Moravian newcomers chose to sign—and believe.

We all belong to the Savior, as He is Lord, and what we have, that all belongs to Him, and He shall dispose of it as pleases Him.

We do not, accordingly, regard ourselves as men-servants or maid-servants, who serve some man for the sake of wage, and who might demand hire or pay for their labor; but we are here as brethren and sisters, who owe themselves to the Saviour, and for His sake. We declare, therefore, not only in general, but also in particular each one for himself, that we do not for this time nor for the future pretend to any wage or have reason to pretend to any. We were received into the said Economy<sup>6</sup> with no idea of having, taking, or seeking wage, the Economy having dedicated itself to the service of the Saviour, and with no promise that wage or pay should be given; we, on the contrary, regard it a mark of grace that we are here and may labor according to the above-stated intention.” (Sessler, 85)

Wow, now that’s commitment! Keep in mind, as I said earlier, the Moravians did not feel that their way was *the only way*. Even Bishop Spangenberg, speaking about this way of life said, “It is a particular thing, and not advisable for all souls.” (Engel, 37) Nevertheless, after reading this you kind of have to say—“Wow!” Furthermore, like the disciplined life they maintained on the ship, the brethren kept looking for more effective ways to arrange their community. They soon combined their housing and working conditions for ultimate productivity with the sole intent—win more souls. Historian Engle, writing about this arrangement said:

Because they believed it to be more cost effective than forming many single-family homes, the people who built Bethlehem lived in a large communitarian

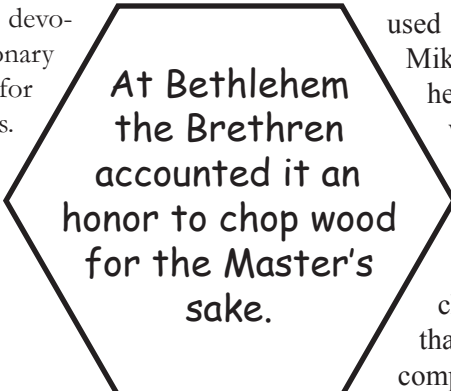
<sup>6</sup> “The Economy” was the name given to the whole system of management under which Bethlehem operated.

household. Those who stayed in town pooled their labor for efficiency's sake, so that they could maximize the number of pilgrims in the field at any one time. They shared dining rooms, dormitory-style housing, workshops, and ownership of buildings, tools, fields, and pastures, and they relied on their piety to render comprehensible all the sacrifices necessary to build a home in the rugged country of northeastern Pennsylvania. The missionary project thus led to Moravian communalism the town's most distinctive economic structure and a deliberate endeavor that maximized profit for the sake of spreading the Gospel. Bethlehem's *Oeconomy*, its communal household, embodied the Moravians; devotion to their task, and within it missionary work provided a religious context for even the smallest economic choices. During its twenty-year history it was the base from which grew all other negotiations between the spiritual and the material among Pennsylvania's Moravians. (Engel, 14)

## Work

Whenever new mission prospects came up, they often jumped at the opportunity. But these missions were costly—very costly. Accepting new mission fields meant more work for everyone back home. But again, the home congregation felt one with the work. At Bethlehem, literally everyone was a missionary. The brethren knew that the missionaries overseas were enduring deplorable living conditions, therefore they were willing to sacrifice back home as well. To them, whether you were slopping the hogs in Bethlehem or building igloos in Labrador, both were serving the Lamb. Speaking about this unity between the foreign workers and the home workers, Bishop Spangenberg wrote:

At Bethlehem the Brethren accounted it an honor to chop wood for the Master's sake; and the fireman felt his post as important as if he were guarding the Ark of the Covenant. They mix the Savior and His blood into their harrowing, mowing, washing, spinning, in short, into everything. The cattle yard becomes a temple of grace which is conducted in a priestly manner. ...Therefore, in our Economy the spiritual and the physical are as closely united as a man's body and soul, and each has a strong influence upon the other. As soon as all is not well in a brother's heart, so soon we notice it in his work. But when he is happy in Je-



At Bethlehem  
the Brethren  
accounted it an  
honor to chop wood  
for the Master's  
sake.

sus' wounds and his love to the Lamb is tender, then one notices that immediately in his outward conduct.

In another place, Bishop Spangenberg wrote, "...each child among us, when it is hardly four years old, spins or picks cotton for the pilgrims, serves the Gospel." (Engel, 49) Count Zinzendorf expressed it this way: "One does not work only so that one can live but rather one lives so that one can work, and when one has no more work to do, then one suffers or passes away." (Engel, 48)

One of my favorite quotes about the Bethlehem community came from my good friend, Mike Atnip. He and I were visiting Bethlehem, and as we marveled at all the factories and various mills and workshops they used solely for the propagation of missions, Mike looked at me and exclaimed, "Bethlehem was a mission machine!" His quote was my inspiration for the title of this article.

This "mission machine" mindset really made me think about the way I think about my personal career and life choices. I know that I would like to say that I consider my job and bank account completely dedicated to the Lamb, but after reading the way the Moravians did it—well, I had to wonder.

## Strong sense of membership and unity

Unlike your typical American church plant, Bethlehem was to be a place where total surrender to the cause of Christ was a prerequisite to get in the door. The brethren felt this prerequisite was crucial to winning the souls of the Americans of this outpost—both Indians and Europeans alike. They also knew that if they were not single-minded the work would be hurt. Zinzendorf was jealous to keep this unity and purity. Each person wanting to come to Bethlehem had to be sure that they meant business and that they could support the vision of the community completely.

Speaking at a brother's meeting only a year after the start of the community, Zinzendorf is already raising the red flag that they were letting people join too easily. The *Bethlehem Diary* records:

Indeed Bro. Ludwig gave the warning that Bethlehem must not be thwarted in its striving for purity. He stated that he was not satisfied with the congregation in that the individual brethren recently arrived from Europe had not been examined more carefully, prior to their having been admitted to the congregation. Brethren who arrive from a distance, even those

who have been considered outstanding brethren and confessors in the congregations from which they respectively come, must be tested, grilled, and dealt with in an impartial manner; all must depend upon humility and discernment. In this way a congregation could maintain its purity. All denominations and sects strive to grow larger and stronger; but our rule must remain that of keeping the door open for everyone to leave us, yet of being more cautious in admitting them. It is to be feared that in time our church may sicken due to its largeness rather than its smallness. (Hamilton, 106)

Sounds like today's trend of "seeker sensitive" churches, with all their amusements and enticements, wouldn't go over too well with Count Zinzendorf!

### Standards?

Church standards are a hot topic these days. Questions such as: "Is it right for a church to have 'brotherly agreements' about specific things that they feel the Holy Spirit is telling the congregation?" "What do you do if someone does not want to keep the agreements of the brotherhood?" "If an agreement has lost its meaning, should we keep it or discard it?" I was surprised to discover that questions such as these were prevalent in their day as well.

When I first started reading about the Moravians, I found people saying that since they were officially called "Pietists" they only focused on the inner life, and were not particularly concerned about external things. And while it is true that the Moravians did indeed stress the importance of the inner life, to say that they didn't care about externals is dishonest and misses an important aspect of their spirituality. I found that they saw their church more in terms of a Marine Corps than a social club. To them, everything mattered. At a brother's meeting in Bethlehem, Zinzendorf commented:

In a congregation of Jesus nothing should be done apathetically and by half measures, but everything should go on with constant uniformity and conscientiousness.

No, Moravians were not at all afraid of brotherhood agreements. However, they also believed that everything was done for a reason. If the standard lost its meaning or reason for being, they felt that it should be discarded or changed. Zinzendorf, addressing what should be done if standards become empty or slack remarks:

As soon as negligence develops, the proper earnestness with which congregation affairs should be treated and the appropriate spirit are lost, and thus their designed purpose is not maintained; they had better be dropped and allowed to disappear or they should be terminated rather than be allowed to continue impaired in this manner. This is a basic principle of our church, and it keeps it pure. In other denominations, on the contrary, once anything is introduced, it endures in spite of there being neither spirit nor power in it any longer (Hamilton, 105).

What the Moravians had was rare even in their day. They were able to be radically unified in purpose and design without being judgmental toward others.

The Moravian spirit was surprisingly open to other sincere believers. They certainly didn't feel that these brotherly agreements added to their salvation. But as far as their local community was concerned, they felt the Holy Spirit wanted to make a testimony of their unity. Therefore, they submitted to the Spirit in everything they did. When doing this, they knew that everything must be done in fear and trembling before a God who sees to the heart.

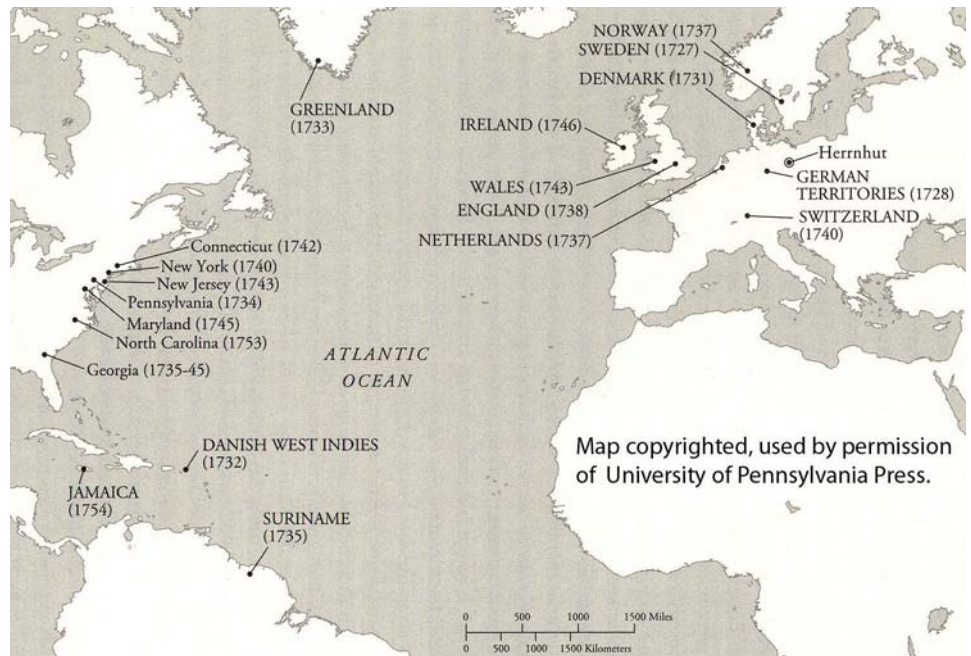
Like me, you may be asking, "So, what kind of things did they feel they wanted the community to represent?" Here are a few of the things they hammered out in the brother's meetings. When you read them, remember that it was "absolute purpose and dedication" they were after. I'll mention only a few here to show how they dared to speak about detail, about clothes:

1. The brothers shall not wear any fresh colors, lay-down collars or lapels, double-breasted coats, unnecessary pleats, or starched garments. But the one who still has clothes like this is allowed to wear them out.
2. The sisters shall not wear any type of lace or embroidery on their dresses, nor lacy veils. They shall not use sheer materials, fancy headbands, buttons, or ribbons, nor shall they use white yarn to decorate their clothes. They shall not wear white gloves, nor white or colored stockings, colorful caps, or any fresh or bright colors whatsoever. They shall use no colorful ribbons in their bonnets, but only black or blue ones. Red striped or blue printed aprons are to be dyed solid blue on both sides. No printed cotton shall be worn, except for winter head coverings, where plain brown is allowed, but no multi-colored prints.
3. Pointed shoes and slippers shall no longer be worn, nor shoes with high heels. Form fitting or short-sleeved jackets shall not be worn, nor ruffled clothing,

The Moravians saw their church more in terms of a Marine Corps than a social club.



Moravian missions in the Atlantic area. Not shown are the missions in Russia, Nepal, South Africa, and many other places. After a few years, Saxony government officials forbade any more Moravians to settle at Herrnhut, so a worldwide hunt for colony locations began. Mixed with missionary zeal, these colonizations led Moravians "into all the world."



nor straw hats that cost more than two Groschen. Hat bands shall be of uncolored, rough linen only. Cloth printed on a white background shall only have black patterns and no big-flowered or flashy designs. ...

4. The one who does not follow this prescribed manner of dressing, exactly, shall be excluded from the Gemeine [community], and should not be surprised if in his stubbornness he does not get included in future activities. (Hoover, 191)

By today's taste, these standards on clothes may seem a bit "over the top." However, I find it interesting that even in their day, other groups noticed their unity and wrote about it. John Wesley, speaking late in his life, wrote a surprisingly painful letter, anguishing over the fact that he had not led the Methodist societies in this course:

I am distressed. I know not what to do. I see what I might have done once ... With regard to dress, in particular, I might have been as firm (and I now see it would have been far better) as either the people called Quakers, or the Moravian Brethren: ... I might have said, "This is our manner of dress, which we know is both scriptural and rational. If you join with us, you are to dress as we do; but you need not join us, unless you please." But, alas! The time is now past; and what I can do now, I cannot tell." (Wesley, *Sermons*)

## Prayer Watch

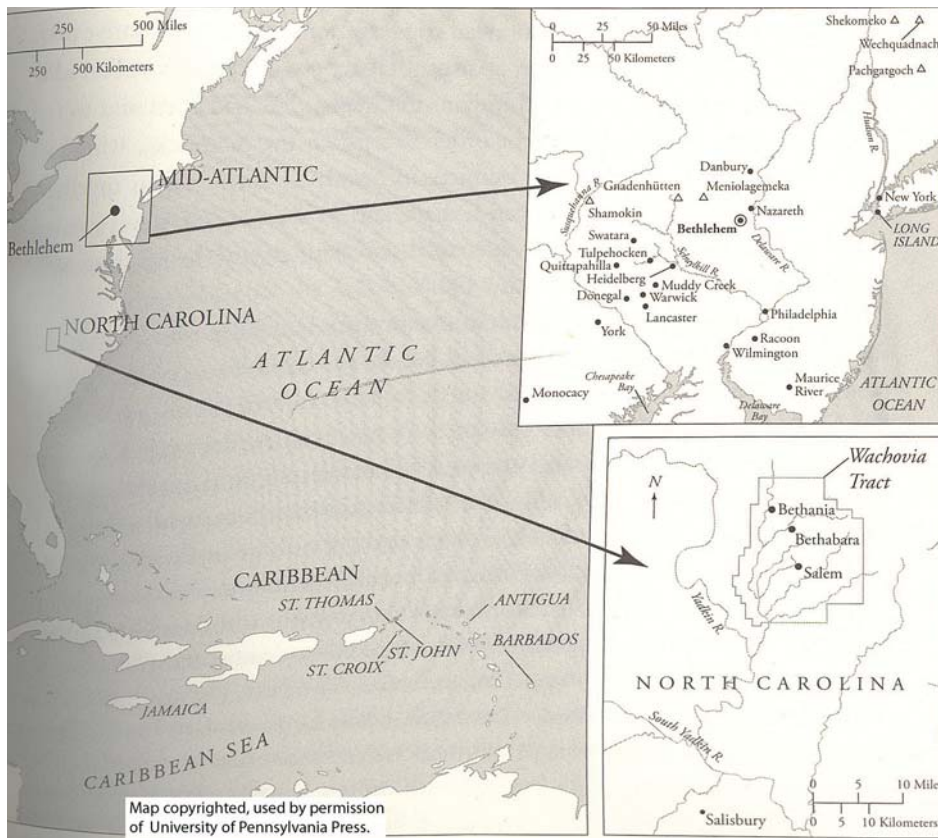
As I mentioned earlier, a powerful witness of prayer was birthed from their original revival. When I started researching the Moravians, I just had to find out whether this prayer meeting was real. I was blessed to discover

that right there in the Bethlehem journals, right along with the other practical details of community life, was their insistence on the continuing need of prayer. To my amazement, I discovered the actual names and times, chronicling the faith of those soldiers that kept watch throughout the day and night! As a matter of fact, these prayer watches were so important to them, that if you were not part of the prayer warrior team, then you were not welcome in the brothers' meeting. (Hamilton, 85)

## Detailed plan of evangelism

As soon as the brothers and sisters set foot into Bethlehem, they started making plans for evangelism. In addition to their extensive mission-forging endeavors, the Moravians also felt that local missions should not be neglected. The *Bethlehem Diary* records that they had different categories of evangelists, all working at different times and places. The first classification was a group called "fishers." These evangelists were to go "in the countryside." Their job was to win the locals to the Lord, both Indian and others. Next were the "rural ministers." They were to go a little further from the home base and were consequently away on a more fulltime basis. Some of these were commissioned to go to a specific Indian nation. Finally, they had their famous "messengers to the heathen," which took the Gospel to the ends of the earth. (Hamilton, 118)

When they started a new work among the Indians, the Moravians copied the colony pattern established at Bethlehem and Herrnhut. All around the world, little mission communities started popping up. One of the greatest ad-



Map of the local outreaches from the two main Moravian settlements in the United States.

Not shown are the many missions to the Native Americans.

David Zeisberger, for example, helped to found about 15 Christian Indian villages in Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Michigan, and Ontario. These native converts laid the war hatchet aside and followed Christ in nonresistance. Alcohol was totally banned from these villages as well.

vantages of these communities was that they converted, educated, and disciplined the new converts. Once established in the faith, these little communities continued the pattern and set up their own little mission communities. Not all of these little native colonies were as communal as Bethlehem, but all of them carried the same Moravian spirit of community and common purpose, and they were all devoted to serving the Lamb with everything they had. Speaking of the Indians' acceptance of this colony structure, Engel wrote, "The Delaware and Mohican Indians lived in an extended series of networks that stretched throughout the region. The advent of the Moravian missions as a new form of native community thus fit within a pattern already familiar to the Indians." (Engel, 85)

### It worked!

Over time, the missions to the local American Indians proved very successful. By 1757, there were 214 American Indians living in Bethlehem alone—82 of them had actually become a part of the community "Economy." In addition to these Indian converts, the brotherhood also continued to grow among European converts. Together, with everyone working as a "nation of priests," they grew in personal holiness and labored to spread the Gospel to the entire world.

I marvel at all the people groups and countries these little communities were able to reach. After hearing of their successful missions, it makes me ask myself, "Just how serious am I about reaching the lost? If we as churches were this serious, what could we accomplish?"

Here are a few of the mission settlements that I was able to identify for the article. Beginning with the 1730 mission to St. Thomas, the missionaries also reached Greenland (1732), Suriname (1735), Georgia (1735), South Africa (1736), Gold Coast (1736), Switzerland (1740), New York (1740), England (1740), Connecticut (1742), South Africa (1742), Wales (1743), Maryland (1745), North Carolina (1753), Jamaica (1754), India (1760), and that's not all—countless other scouting trips and short term ministries were going on all the time in many other places.

### So what happened?

About 35 years after Bethlehem started, America declared its independence with England and ended up in the Revolutionary War. Since the Moravians were nonresistant and therefore refused to go to war with England, their patriotic neighbors mistook them as loyalists to England. Moravians then became very unpopular. They suffered much reproach and some persecution. During this time, some of their strong nonresistant ideas began to weaken.

Also, in time, their previously radical, pilgrim way of life made way for a more moderate household model. Eventually, a more “moderate” or “relevant” Moravian church evolved. Some felt that this new Moravian church was healthier and more balanced. They felt it was good that they had shed their extreme practices and rough edges of the past.

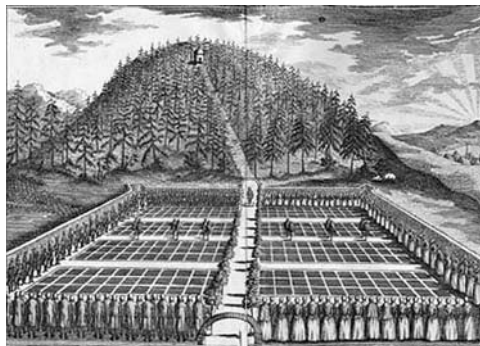
As for me, when I go there, I can’t help but mourn the loss. I feel that something rare and precious on this earth has been forever lost. Many of the old buildings are still there. Visitors are met by museums, quality buildings, cobblestone streets, quaint shops and restaurants, limestone rockwork, and scattered blue historical marker signs, telling of a people centuries ago who carved out a heavenly city from the wilderness.

But those days are long gone. While I can’t say for sure there are no radical individuals there today who might have a similar otherworldly mind-set, I can definitely tell you there are no churches in existence today like the one we’ve just discussed. Things are different now. Historian Jacob Sessler closes his history of the Bethlehem Moravians with this thought:

Where once the Pilgrim Congregation went forth, ‘their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,’ today stands the thriving city of steel.<sup>7</sup> These grounds, hallowed by the incarnation of the Invisible Church, have been defiled by the smoke and sordidness of American industry. The rule of Spangenberg has given way to the rule of Schwab,<sup>8</sup> and Bethlehem, though it cherishes its religious origins as the seat of Moravianism, now lives on steel. The spirit that prevailed when the foot-washing and the “kiss of peace” were significant symbols, has yielded to the principles of competition and mechanical progress necessarily adopted by modern Moravian business men. The exclusive brotherhood has lost both its former holiness and its communal regime. The quiet devotional atmosphere of the old Choir houses, still standing, is displaced by the clanging and grinding of the wheels of industry.” (Sessler, 213)

7 Bethlehem was known as the “city of steel” from the big steel factories acres long. Ironically, the steel industry has faded away and part of the old buildings has been rejuvenated ... into a \$600 million casino.

8 Charles M. Schwab was the head of Bethlehem Steel for many years.



At God's Acre on Easter morning, celebrating the resurrection!

So, if you ever make it to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, be sure you go to the old graveyard, “God’s Acre.” If you have a bit of an imagination, you can still imagine those saints that walked those grounds a few hundred years ago. In those days, on Resurrection Morning, in each of the little communities around the world, the whole community would come out and circle the graveyard. At sunrise, they

would sing and pray to the Lamb. They sang in earnest expectation, anticipating the time when these “seeds” of the resurrection would one day rise with them. Actually, that’s why they called it “God’s Acre.” They waited for the harvest when, the field, having been seeded, planted and watered, would rise again—the church militant and the church triumphant—praising their Lamb that was slain, forever and ever and ever.

Find some of the old gravestones of saints like David Nitschmann.

Then cast your glance across the field and survey all those Indian names. But don’t stop there. Dare to ask yourself a searching question, “What’s stopping us from doing this today—isn’t God worth it?” The saints of Bethlehem thought He was. I still love the cry of that ancient Moravian motto, given at the end of Paris Reidhead’s sermon, *Ten Shekels and a Shirt*. “May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering!”

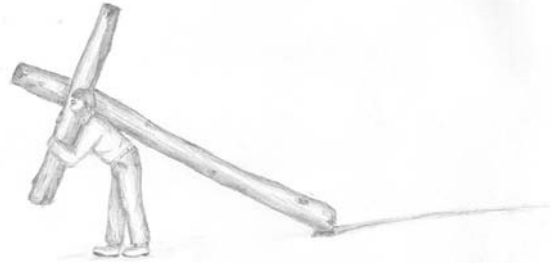
Could it happen again today? If God gives you the faith to believe that it could, then let’s pray earnestly together, “Do it again, Lord—do it again!” ~

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# The Two Kingdoms

Hans Schnell



## Introduction

The principle of separation of church and state is now generally considered a fundamental in Western civilizations. However, it was not always so. Whatever religion or church the ruler or rulers decreed “Official” was the only one accepted in that domain. Untold suffering was the result of the welding of the church to the state.

While many Christians hold to the idea of separation of church and state, many do not understand the basic reason why—which is the idea that the two entities are in two distinct spiritual kingdoms and operate on two totally different ethical and moral standards. To mix them is to mix force and free will, or to cross-breed a wolf with a sheep.

The following tract was written in 1575 by a “Swiss Brethren” named Hans Schnell. This tract has not been published in English very widely and is practically unknown. Yet it succinctly brings out the doctrine of the two kingdoms well enough to merit its publication here.

We have only published excerpts due to its length, but the full portion of the translated document can be found in the July, 1994 issue of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*. The translation is by Leonard Gross. A special thanks to the editor of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* at Goshen College for permission to use the text. All subheadings are by *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*. The original title of about 78 words was replaced with a three-word synopsis.

## The Two Kingdoms

There are two distinguishable kingdoms on earth—namely, the kingdom of this world and the peaceable kingdom of Christ. These two kingdoms cannot share nor have communion with one another.

The people in the kingdom of this world are born of the flesh, are earthly and carnally minded. The people in the kingdom of Christ are reborn of the Holy Spirit, live according to the Spirit, and are spiritually minded.

The people in the kingdom of this world are equipped for fighting against their enemies with carnal weapons—spear, sword, armor, guns, and powder. The people in Christ’s kingdom are equipped with spiritual weapons—the armor of God, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit—to fight against the devil, the world, and their own flesh, together with all which arises against God and His Word.

The people in the kingdom of this world fight for a perishable crown and an earthly kingdom. The people in Christ’s kingdom fight for an imperishable crown and an eternal kingdom.

Christ caused these two kingdoms to be at odds with each other and set them apart, one from the other. There will therefore be no peace between them. They will fight against each other until the end of the world occurs, and these two kingdoms cannot be made alike nor can they be intermingled with each other.

Also, neither can participate in nor have communion with the other. But whoever wants to make them alike or intermingle them is acting like the old serpent which in the beginning mixed lies with God’s Word.

Those who are born of the flesh persecute those who are born of the Spirit: “They will wage war upon the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and sharing with Him in His victory will be those who are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

In the end, however, Christ will crush and destroy all the other kingdoms with His power and eternal kingdom, which will remain eternally.

## Separating light from darkness

To all nations the Lord has established a head. But Israel is the Lord’s portion. Therefore, to arrive at a true un-

derstanding of how to measure and distinguish the kingdom of this world from the peaceable kingdom of Christ in accord with God's order and the testimony of Scripture, each kingdom with its own nature—this, God indicated to us right at the beginning when He created heaven and earth. When He separated the day from the night He commanded the light to shine forth out of the darkness. The light God called day and the darkness He called night.

Thus Christ has chosen His elect from the darkness of this world and called them to His heavenly kingdom and enlightened them through the Holy Spirit with the true divine understanding of His eternal truth and thereby placed a bright, clear glow into their hearts; so that one can distinguish by their fruits the children of the night and darkness, and the children of the day and the light—the children of God and the children of this world.

Whoever has eyes to see, sees how the children of God, in accord with Christ's teaching, let their light shine with good works before the children of this world so that they shine amid this perverse generation like a light in all honesty. God symbolized thus for us with the dense Egyptian darkness in which the Egyptians sat, while it was day and light among the children of Israel (Exodus 10), a people in whom the day has dawned and the morning star has risen in their hearts. In order that it may also be day and light among them, God foresaw and chose them for Himself before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame and walk before Him in love.

## The origin of civil government

And this took place after God made His covenant with Noah after the flood, under which covenant He commanded vengeance and punishment with the power of the sword to punish the evil and to put to death the bloodguilty and murderers, saying, "Whoever sheds human blood, by a human shall that person's blood be shed" (Gen. 9:6). This vengeance to punish evil has ever since that time remained unaltered in the kingdom of this world with its temporal authority, and will remain until the Last Day of His coming, when God will annihilate all the power of this world.

Christ also testifies to this command to punish evil and to put murderers to death when He commanded Peter to keep the peace, saying: "Return your sword into its place; for whoever takes the sword shall perish by the sword." From these words of Christ we learn that the power of the sword will remain in the kingdom of this world for the

purpose of putting to death the bloodguilty and murderers in accordance with His Father's precepts, which He instituted and ordained in the second, new world.

But in Christ's kingdom peace shall be kept, as He says to Peter: "Put your sword back into its sheath and let them proceed." For that reason He quickly healed Malchus' ear again and does not want Christians to fight with the sword for their lives.

Concerning this power of the sword which God ordained and gave to the second, new world after the flood, Paul teaches us, saying: "... there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. ... For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad"; and "... the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer."

With these words Paul teaches us that the power of the sword in the kingdom of this world is ordained and commanded by God, and whoever resists the ruler, unless he orders what is against God, resists God's precepts. But if the authorities command something that is against God, I say with Peter and John: It is better to obey God than any human authority. For Eleazar and his seven sons as well as their mother refused to be compelled to eat pork against God's command. They preferred to suffer severe martyrdom patiently. Likewise, the three men in the fiery furnace and Daniel in the lion's den.

## Mixing vengeance with forgiveness?

Paul's words cited above prove that the vocation of being a magistrate and the vocation of being a Christian are diametrically opposed to each other, like light and darkness, like white and black, as Paul says: "The ruler does not bear the sword in vain; he is God's minister, an avenger to punish the one who does evil."

Therefore the government is a good institution in the world, in that it punishes the bad and protects whoever does good. For if there were no government, one could not exist on earth. Each person would then do violence to the other.

But Christ has given those in His kingdom a very different calling and office. For just as God has commanded the sword for the government to mete out vengeance and to put murderers to death, as Paul testifies in Romans 13, so also Paul forbids the Christian to execute such vengeance and says: "Repay no one evil for evil"; also: "Do not avenge yourselves, my dearly beloved, but rather leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, 'Ven-

geance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” Further: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

In the New Testament, Christians are forbidden every form of revenge and resistance; they are not to resist evil (1 Pe. 3). When James and John merely want to ask for permission to take revenge, Christ not only refuses them this, but reprimands them for it, saying: “Do you not know which spirit you are of?”

## Born of revenge

The government has a vengeful spirit and punishes all acts of evil according to the demands of the office committed to it by God, as a minister in God’s stead, according to each one’s desert. It is the rod of His wrath and the lash of His hand with which God punishes evil.

And just as the government has a spirit of revenge and the power to avenge all evil and put murderers to death as the office appointed to it by God, so on the contrary a Christian in the peaceable kingdom of Christ has a loving, peaceable, merciful spirit in the manner of Christ’s. He forgives the penitent sinner all sin and transgression. He does not resist evil. He kills nobody physically. He does not preserve his possessions with force, but rather presents also the other cheek rather than to oppose the one who strikes him with force. He does not go to war. He does not injure and kill people, but prays for those who persecute and rob him.

In this manner God has given the power of the sword to the world, with the government serving like a servant for pay. But Christians are children in the family and the true heirs of their Father who serve out of love like children, not for servant’s wages but as natural heirs.

Vengeance is contrary to the gospel. Therefore vengeance does not enter into Christ’s kingdom. In it there is only repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Believers in Christ do not have two different kinds of spirit, for they are all baptized with one Spirit into one body and all drink of one Spirit, although there are various gifts in the church of God which are created by the same Spirit. But vengeance is contrary to the nature and manner of Christ and contrary to the entire teaching of the gospel of Christ. Therefore it does not belong in Christ’s kingdom, but in the kingdom of this world.

## Born of peace

Whoever is born again through the Spirit has his Father’s nature and qualities in him and is like-minded with Jesus Christ. Christ not only forbade revenge in His kingdom, but also by His suffering on the cross left us an example for us to follow in His footsteps and prayed for His foes on the cross, which believers also do.

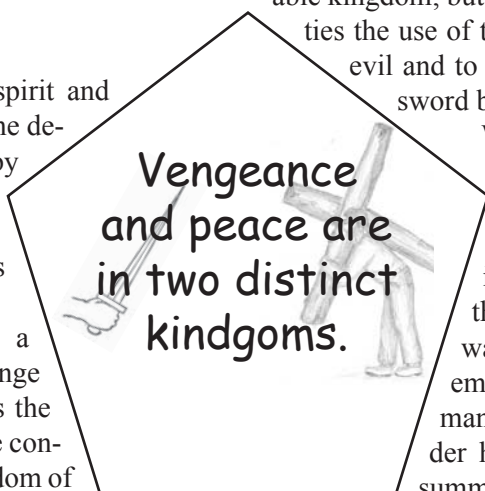
But whoever does not have the spirit of Christ is none of His, because Christ, our King of Peace, has forbidden ruling with force and executing vengeance in His peaceable kingdom; but He has committed to temporal authorities the use of the sword and vengeance to punish the evil and to govern; thus the power and use of the sword belongs to the kingdom of this world.

When Paul explained the power of the government and what its calling and function imply, he called it not only a minister of God, but also said that it is our obligation to pay taxes in order that it may offer such protection. That was at the time when Nero reigned as emperor, who was a pagan and a godless man who had the entire Roman Empire under his command, before whom Paul was summoned twice. And even though Nero, the great tyrant, out of a bloodthirsty, cruel spirit—even crueller than that of Saul—persecuted and destroyed the church of God and Christ as severely as possible, as history records, and shed innocent blood like water, nevertheless Paul called him a minister of God. For God used him as a rod of punishment until the rod was worn out; then He cast it into the fire.

Paul furthermore says that the powers that be are ordained of God. This even includes Pharaoh, who severely tormented the children of Israel. God had hardened his heart, and then aroused him, so that God might reveal in him His power and wrath. Pharaoh is called a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction, yet even he, according to Paul’s teaching, was also God’s minister.

Also the Babylonian king, whom God used as a rod of His wrath and a rod to punish His people, was a minister of God, over whom the Lord cried “Woe,” and in His anger He threatened to punish him. God calls this king His servant.

These words of Paul show that the governor was also a minister of God. To him was given the power from on high to crucify Christ. God used this Pilate as a vessel of wrath that is prepared for damnation, as it is written: “I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” For Pilate and Herod performed what



God's hand and counsel had previously planned. Through Pilate's false sentence sin was condemned by sin and removed. Through Pilate's false sentence and great sin which he committed against Christ, the sins of all of us were reconciled and annulled in Christ's guiltless death.

Thus God uses the government as His minister, whether it performs well or badly. If they are tyrants God uses them as His rod of punishment, who will, however, at the proper time be held accountable to their Superior and will have to render an exceedingly strict account, as it is written: The powerful will suffer powerful pain. But if they administer their office well and act reasonably, protect the godly, punish evil, and preserve law and justice, they will not be without reward and payment. But they are not children in the family, but slaves and servants who will not be cheated out of their pay. But those who are to inherit are the children alone, among whom all warfare, sword, and weapons have ceased and are laid aside, as has been shown above.

Thus we see that the Roman emperors and other rulers and authorities, whom Paul calls ministers of God, are a rod of God to preserve the common peace of the world and to carry out the natural law. Yet out of obstinacy and blindness they have also persecuted, murdered, and as much as possible rooted out the Christian church of God and have shed innocent blood like water, so horrible that one cannot even begin to describe it. The Holy Spirit prophesied about such persecution by the government against the church of Christ in Psalm 2, where the government is called the kings of the earth.

And by this Pharaohic obstinacy and Jewish blindness and Antiochal cruelty, the murdering and killing of Christians, the Roman government always thought it was serving God thereby. Even their hearts were darkened, and it is indeed still the case that those in the government that persecutes Christians and assails people because of their faith are smitten with gruesome and terrible blindness. Their heart is hardened like Pharaoh's; therefore they could also, no less than Pharaoh, be called vessels of wrath unless they are converted and repent.

### Carry the whip, or the cross?

Thus there is a separation between the precepts of these two realms, namely that of the world and that of the church of Christ. These two kingdoms cannot be made alike or mingle with one another, as little as light and darkness, or faith and unbelief, of which neither can have part and communion with the other.

These two kingdoms, the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of Christ, God has pictured and symbolized for us by the two following examples. First with Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac: they signify two peoples and two kingdoms, and each people in its own kingdom God has presented to us figuratively—but truly—each with its own regime and precepts.

### Born of Sarah, or Hagar?

For Abraham had two sons; one with the maidservant, the other with his wife. The one born of the Egyptian maid was born of the flesh. But the one born of the wife was born of the promise. These two women signify the two testaments and also two different peoples.

The first testament, Hagar, the maidservant, brings forth descendants only for servitude, those who are not heirs of Abraham's family, but are rejected and obliged to serve for pay.

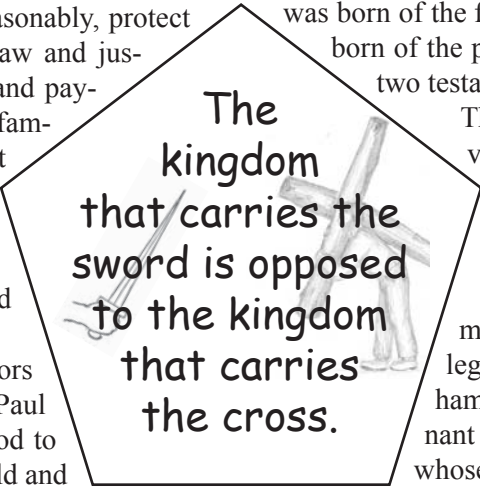
But Sarah, the wife, the "new testament," brings forth from the spirit true, legitimate children who are heirs in Abraham's family. For God established a covenant with Isaac, the son of the wife, through whose seed all the nations of the earth are blessed; wherefore Isaac's descendants are

heirs of the family, that is, of God's kingdom.

But Hagar, the maidservant, together with her son Ishmael, who was born of the flesh, is cast out of Abraham's family and does not inherit with the wife's son. And although the maidservant had many more children than the wife, she is nevertheless rejected with her children and is called the forsaken one. Ishmael was born of the maid according to the flesh. He is a wild man and his hand is against everyone. Therefore he is expelled from the family and forsaken.

What this mystery means, note: Ishmael, although he was banished and forsaken because he was not an heir with the wife's son, nevertheless also received a promise, as God says to Abraham: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make his descendants exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac." Note: The twelve patriarchs came from Isaac. They were great herders of cattle. To them God turned. Therefore they are the family heirs. But from Ishmael came twelve princes. They had their courts and fortresses.

Therefore Ishmael, born of the maidservant according to the flesh, must serve within the confines of a servant's marriage, with his twelve princes—that is, within the



The kingdom that carries the sword is opposed to the kingdom that carries the cross.

kingdom of this world—as long as the children of Hagar remain of carnal birth. And because God promised and granted to Ishmael twelve princes, together with the rule of this world, everyone knows very well what the ruling prince’s call and office consists in, namely, to rule and govern lands and peoples. As the Lord Himself says: “The worldly princes rule the nations, and their rulers govern with force. But not so with you.”

With these words the kingdom of this world is sufficiently differentiated from the kingdom of Christ, each kingdom with its rule and precepts, so that one can note which is the generation of the blessed seed of Isaac, namely, the one born of the wife, that is, of the Spirit; likewise that Ishmael, the seed of the servant, with his twelve princes, is born of the flesh and not an heir but one who receives his pay in this world. With this pay he and his must be there-with content, for they cannot inherit with Isaac. As Christ says: “Many shall come from the East and the West and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. But the children of the kingdom of this world shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

### Children of Jacob, or Esau?

Again, God has figuratively represented to us these two peoples—namely, the people in the kingdom of this world that are born of the flesh and the people of Christendom that are born of the Spirit—in the two sons of Isaac: Esau and Jacob. As the Lord says to Rebecca when the infants were struggling together within her: “Two nations are in your womb, and you will give birth to two types of people.” God loved Jacob and hated Esau. For Esau’s descendants were a people toward whom God is eternally wrathful. For his seed lives according to the flesh, is born of the flesh and is carnally minded.

But those who are born of the flesh persecute those who are born of the Spirit. Therefore the godly Jacob had to stoop and bow before Esau until he had won his favor with friendly words and gifts and presents. Isaac’s and Jacob’s descendants beget the temporal and spiritual Israel. But Ishmael and Esau represent and beget the carnal people in the kingdom of this world. Therefore they have intermarried.

By twice presenting figuratively the oft-mentioned two kingdoms—once with Ishmael and Isaac, then with Jacob and Esau—by such repetition God wanted to encourage the world to be reasonable, to be circumspect

and truly and certainly to be aware of such matters which were figuratively indicated, presented and sketched by these two examples.

But the Antichrists are trying more and more to bring these two kingdoms together and intermingle them after the manner of the ancient serpent, as the devil also did in the beginning, mixing lies with God’s Word.

### Keep the kingdoms separate!

Therefore the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of Christ, each in its own realm, are to be kept separated from each other, as Christ Himself separated them and says: “They which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whoever among you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve.”

This demonstrates that in Christ’s kingdom here on earth none should consider himself higher than another. For that reason Christ set us an example by washing feet.

In everything the believers are bought with the precious blood of Christ and cleansed of their sins, and anointed and consecrated with the Holy Spirit as kings and priests.

Therefore they are equal to one another and none is to lift himself above another. For they are of one family and of equal rank. Rather, each shall esteem the other higher than himself.

It has now been sufficiently demonstrated that God has given to the heathen—that is, to the unbelieving world which lives according to its corrupt nature, which lies in evil and does not fear God—the government, in order to resist evil, as is written: “To all the nations God has given a ruler. But the Lord’s portion is Israel.” Therefore God gave Israel its own laws and commandments, with which it was widely separated from the heathen and in this manner differentiated, among which laws and commandments God also gave them the power of the physical sword to punish evil, to execute vengeance, and to demand an eye for an eye and body for body; thus, he who broke the law had to die without mercy.

Therefore our opponents, the supposed Christians,<sup>1</sup> insist on introducing into Christendom the civil power of the sword and, with it, the meting out of vengeance. But

**God  
has given  
civil authorities  
to govern the  
unredeemed.**

<sup>1</sup> Referring to Catholics and Protestants who persecuted Anabaptists in the name of God.



although God in the figurative law gave and commanded to Moses the vengeance and power of the sword to punish evil, this does not apply to Christians in the New Testament. For Christ, who is the fulfillment of the law, has canceled it.

### The new world order—Christ’s kingdom!

We have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that we are now no longer under Moses but with another—of course, with Him who was raised from the dead. Only what Christ teaches us by word and example applies to Christians. Therein they are to follow Him. For in His kingdom He has created a new order.

And as the figurative physical Israel, which in the law has a foreshadowing of what was to come in Christ, has many physical promises—a physical King Solomon, a temporal kingdom, and the fat land of Canaan which flowed with milk and honey, a physical, outward power, sword and rule, and a bodily priesthood with an outward worship and literal law—all this together foreshadowed the true essence in Christ and His kingdom: namely, a spiritual king, a spiritual power, sword, rule, and order, a spiritual kingdom that is not of this world, a spiritual, eternal promised land, Canaan, an eternal priesthood, spiritual law and new inner worship which is performed in spirit and in truth, foreshadowed and pictured. For just as the shadow on the wall reveals a man, so the law shows Christ and the new inward nature of His kingdom and its essence in way of His power, spirit, and truth.

Of this spiritual king, throne, kingdom, and power God speaks to David and says: “I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son.” Further: “Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you; your throne shall be established forever.” Solomon, a king of peace, foreshadowed this spiritual king, Christ, with his name and peaceable kingdom. Of this spiritual king and His reign Daniel prophesied and said: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up an abiding kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be given over to any other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these other peoples, and it shall stand forever.”

Of this spiritual king and His power, the Holy Spirit speaks through the Prophet and says: “But you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the princes of Judah, for from you shall come forth

unto me the ruler who shall be Lord over my people, Israel, whose origin is from the beginning, and from eternity” (Micah 5:2). Of His power, throne, and kingdom the angel of God speaks to Mary and says: “The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” This Prince of Peace—who will enlarge the kingdom, and the realm of peace—will come simply and humbly, as the prophet says: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, your King is coming to you, . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass . . .”

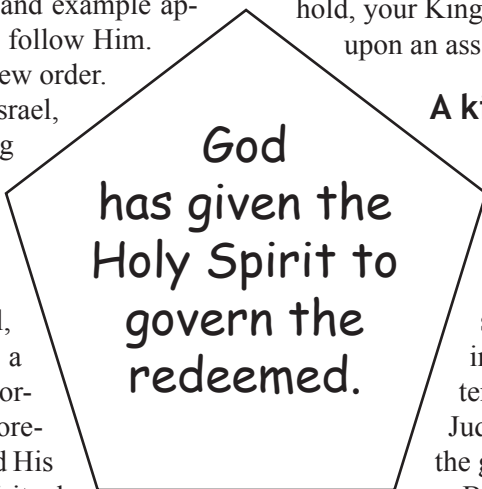
### A kingdom of peace

Thus this Prince of Peace and lowly King in Israel—who is likened to a lamb and was nevertheless a Lord of all lords and King of all kings—has inherited the royal throne, power, and scepter from the tribe of Judah according to the promise of God. As it is written: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come. Unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

But since Shiloh—that is, Christ—has come, the power of the Jewish kingdom fell outwardly and was taken away from him, as Jacob the Patriarch prophesied. Isaiah also testifies of this: “For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you abhor shall be forsaken of both her kings.” And the kingdom of Israel was indeed forsaken by its kings. They had no more power but were ruled and taxed by the Roman Emperor Augustus. Then the figurative royal throne, etc., was transformed into the spiritual and eternal kingdom of Christ.

But when Christ, a King of peace, came into the kingdom of Israel and was seated according to the promise of God on the throne of His father David, which He inherited, He then as a reigning Lord inaugurated in His kingdom a new spiritual regime and a new covenant which He sealed and instituted with His own blood.

For the Prince of our salvation was made perfect through suffering, which testament is not made according to the old one, which executes wrath, but He has a new peaceable kingdom in which mercy and forgiveness of sins operate, which glories in being against the law and against vengeance. As it is written: “Old things are passed away, and He who sat upon the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’” And again: “Old things are passed away and all things made new.”



This new Prince of Peace, who was born as King to be a Ruler in Israel, to rule Israel according to the content of the New Testament—this new Christ was also foreshadowed by Melchizedek, a king of righteousness. Christ not only inherited this promised royal throne of David, his scepter and power to be the reigning ruler in Israel, but He also received the eternal high priesthood from the tribe of Levi. Just as Christ inherited the royal throne from the tribe of Judah, he also inherited the office of High Priest from the tribe of Levi, which two high offices Melchizedek, a priest and king, foreshadowed. As it is written: “The Lord has sworn, and will not change his mind; you are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” Therewith the annulling of the previous law takes place because of its weakness and uselessness.

But now that the priesthood was changed and passed on to Christ after Melchizedek’s order, as Paul says, there is made of necessity a change also in the law. Our King of Salem and Prince of Peace and eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, was confirmed in both these high offices with an oath by God; He inherited and received both the royal throne of David as an anointed Prince of Peace, and also the priesthood. This event has altered the old symbolic literal vengeful law, eliminated vengeance, annulled it and destroyed its power and has transformed it into love and mercy; this vengeance and punishment of the law is a burden that neither we nor our ancestors could have borne.

### Destroy, or redeem?

For the letter of the law kills; but the Spirit makes alive. In the law sin takes the upper hand; in Christ, mercy takes even more the upper hand. Therefore He abolished vengeance. And just as a new sovereign who has just occupied a country or kingdom by inheritance in order to win the confidence of the subjects pardons and expunges all misconduct and transgressions and in addition releases all the prisoners, so also the new King in Israel annuls all the vengeance and punishment of the law in the kingdom that He inherited. He releases the prisoners, and pardons all their sins and transgressions. He makes the poor rich. He comforts the sorrowful and heals the wounded and has penitence and forgiveness of sins proclaimed among all peoples through the gracious gospel.

Note here how the office of government that executes vengeance contrasts with Christ’s teaching. Therefore, one who wants to be a magistrate must execute vengeance and punish evil. But whoever wants to be a Christian, ac-

ording to Christ’s teaching, shall not take revenge nor resist evil, and if he is struck he must suffer the consequences.

### Political power, or suffering?

It is the function of government to rule, that of the Christian to drink the cup and to suffer. Therefore ruling and being a Christian are two different things. Those who do not remain in the teaching of Christ have no God. Those who abide in it have both the Father and the Son, as He Himself says: “If you abide in my word you are my true disciples.” With these words which Christ teaches us (Mt. 5) He has sufficiently abrogated vengeance in His kingdom and New Testament and has taught love for the enemy. And what Christ teaches us, He has Himself done and prayed on the cross for His enemies as an example for us that we are to follow in His footsteps.

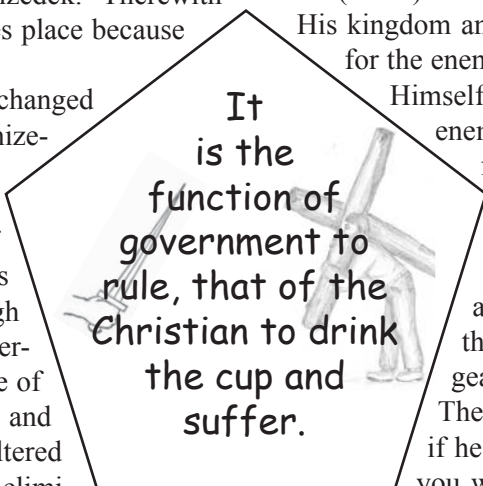
Paul has also forbidden taking revenge, saying: “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. ... Dearly beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written: Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore if your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

When God wanted to avenge the innocent blood of His Son Jesus Christ, He did not use Christians, but the Roman power, the heathen emperor Titus. Thereby He punishes the perpetrators in the final destruction of Jerusalem, as Christ had previously prophesied. For when the Lord wants to punish, take revenge, or thwart evil, He does not use the fig tree and the grapevine which bear good fruit, or they would have to abandon their sweet fruit. But He takes the thorn bush, that bears sour fruit and which is rough and full of thorns. He does not take meek sheep to execute His office against evildoers, or they would have to abandon their manner and nature.

The [true] Christian church has never exercised vengeance or resisted evil. It has always suffered violence, drunk the cup of suffering, and stood under the cross and persecution to be conformed to its Lord and Master. For the servant is not above his master, and a Christian should be minded as Jesus Christ was minded.

### Following the Lamb into suffering ...

If then a magistrate wants to be a Christian, he must be obedient to Christ’s teaching and follow His example. If



then a magistrate follows Christ's teaching and is minded as Jesus Christ was minded, he then may punish nobody according to the law or give vengeance, but must love the enemy, suffer blows, drink the cup of suffering, and also turn the other cheek, as Christ teaches. For the Christian church has not won the victory through domination, but through suffering and overcoming with patience, and so winning out over the world and gaining a martyr's crown through suffering.

Christ has redeemed us from the vengeance of the law and established a peaceable kingdom in which the vengeful sword is put away and broken, and warlike weapons have been recast. As Isaiah says of this peaceable people of the kingdom, anticipating the New Testament: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks. Neither shall they learn war anymore." Micah wrote similarly.

This does not refer to the world but to the peacemakers in the kingdom of Christ. They will maintain it in this manner because they are still wayfarers on earth. The Lord says to them: "My peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives, do I give unto you." Isaiah gives further testimony to this and says: "No one will harm or corrupt anyone else on the whole of my holy mountain." And again: "No one will injure or kill anyone else on the whole of my holy mountain." Concerning these peaceable people in the kingdom of Christ, the Holy Spirit speaks through Hosea saying: "I will break the bow and the sword and remove all warfare from the land, and will have them dwell in safety."

[The true] church of God and of Christ has been obedient to the Teacher's word and has never had the power of the political government within it; nor has it ever called upon this power to eliminate the office of the hangman, but always suffered persecution until the reign of Constantine. He was baptized by Pope Sylvester, the Antichrist, the son of perdition, whose coming took place through the work of the loathsome devil.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore he received the name Christian falsely. For the Christian church was at that time transformed into the anti-Christian church. This apostasy was foretold by Paul. At this time the devil, who had hitherto been bound by the Christian church, was released from his prison and pro-

ceeded to lead the heathen astray in the four corners of the earth. For the shameful Babylonian whore has made all the heathen drunken from her golden beaker into which the wine of sorcery, that is, a false, seductive worship, has been poured.

And although this Babylonian whore lives vilely and shamefully in sin and follows a devilish doctrine, it is nevertheless called the Christian and apostolic church by supposed Christians. Hence the lawless abomination exists in the holy place where it should not be.

### Don't try to mix revenge and forgiveness!

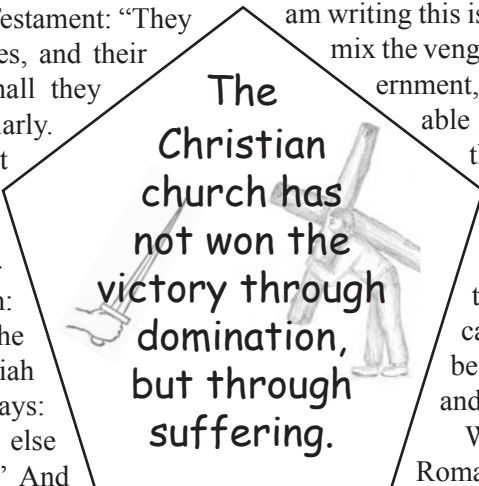
Whoever reads this, take heed of it. The reason why I am writing this is that now people want to introduce and mix the vengeful, bloodthirsty sword of secular government, along with its regime, into the peaceable kingdom of Christ after the manner of the ancient serpent, just as the devil in the beginning mixed lies with God's word. Thus they now want to mix together the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of Christ, even though one can see the evil that brought this mix into being, as well as the irretrievable misery and harm this mixing has precipitated.

When Constantine, the twenty-fourth Roman emperor, assumed and accepted the name Christian, which is indeed in itself a cause for lamenting, then the apostasy came, from which apostasy may God protect us eternally. Amen.

It has been sufficiently shown that in the New Testament Christ has annulled vengeance in the law of Moses and made it powerless and transformed everything into love and mercy. That is why the Holy Spirit likens to the raw winter the law which executes vengeance and demands body for body; but the time of grace, which Christ brought, in which through the gospel of grace only repentance and forgiveness of sins is preached, he likens to May and the pleasant summer.

For it is certain that Christ has paved this only and narrow path solely for His followers, and no emperor or king, no prince or lord, will find any other way to heaven than this way of the cross, which He Himself trod and which all those who will be saved must tread.

"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him; and he makes known his covenant to them" (Ps. 25). ~



<sup>2</sup> The erroneous story of Constantine being baptized by Sylvester had been perpetuated as truth during the Middle Ages. Schnell had no way of knowing that it was a fabrication dating from about 800 AD. We leave it in the text to show how he and his brethren viewed the marriage of church and state.

### Which kingdom are you a part of?

Do you bear a sword, or a cross?


The Heartbeat of

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Christ calls His people "sheep," for their Christian innocence should be like that of sheep. He calls them "lambs," that their simplicity of mind may imitate the simple nature of lambs. To put on the name of Christ—and yet not go in the way of Christ—what else is it but a mockery of the divine name? A desertion of the way of salvation?

—Cyprian (3rd century)