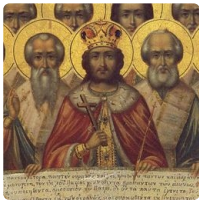


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The Rise of the Radical Reformation



Church History - Steve Gregg

In this presentation, Steve Gregg discusses the rise of the Radical Reformation, which saw individuals such as Zwingli and Anabaptist disciples going back to the Bible as the sole basis of authority in the church. While Luther and other reformers also held the doctrine of sola scriptura, they took a different approach to its implementation. The Anabaptist movement became known for its rejection of infant baptism and emphasis on congregational-style government, as well as its practice of shunning and opposition to war. Despite being persecuted, this movement survived and gave rise to various groups such as the Mennonites and Hutterites, some of which still exist today.

Transcript

The Rise of the Radical Reformation The Left Wing of the Reformation The Anabaptist Movement The Radical Reformation The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement The Anabaptist Movement Luther retained a lot of Catholic practices to the end of his life Luther retained a lot of Catholic practices to the end of his life Luther retained a lot of Catholic practices to the end of his life Luther retained a lot of Catholic practices to the end of his life Luther retained a lot of Catholic practices to the end of his life Luther retained a lot of Catholic practices to the end of his life Luther retained a lot of Catholic practices to the end of his life at least in Zurich, that were not done in Germany. Also, we shall find in a moment that Zwingli more radically changed the view of the mass than Luther did. Luther had a only very slightly altered view of the Lord's Supper from what what he had held as a Catholic monk before.

Zwingli totally rejected that and had a view much closer to what most evangelicals I

think today would agree with. He almost merged his movement with that of Luther, but they could not agree concerning the nature of the mass. At the Marburg Colloquy, a meeting of Luther, Melanchthon, and Zwingli, as well as a couple of others, which was held at the castle of Prince Philip of Hesse, he was a Reformation prince, he saw that there was a tremendous movement under Luther in Germany and under Zwingli in Switzerland, but these guys weren't working together.

They weren't cooperating with each other and Philip of Hesse thought, well, these guys need to get together and draw up some articles that they both agree with. Then you have the strength of the union of those two movements in the two countries. So Philip of Hesse actually asked Luther and Melanchthon and Zwingli and a couple of other men to come to his castle in Marburg and to try to draw up some articles of agreement.

And Luther came armed with some articles, 15 what are called the Marburg Articles. There were 15 of them and it turned out that Zwingli and Luther agreed on 14 of the 15 points, but there was one which they simply couldn't agree on, and that was the nature of the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper. Luther's view, as I think we've mentioned in previous lectures, was what is called consubstantiation.

Now substantiation obviously comes from the word substance. Con is a prefix that means with in Latin. The Catholic Church believed in something called transubstantiation and of course still does.

Transubstantiation means that the elements, the bread or the wafer and the wine that were used in communion actually were transformed into the substance of the body and blood of Jesus. This is still the doctrine of the Catholic Church, that at the Mass when the priest blesses things and so forth that the the wafer becomes the actual body of Jesus, sacrificed again, and the wine becomes the blood of Jesus. So that you really do eat his flesh and drink his blood in the most literal sense.

Luther didn't want to move very far from that. He didn't believe in transubstantiation, that is the belief that these elements turn into the actual body and blood of Jesus, but he didn't want to remove himself from the idea that you actually are taking the literal body and blood of Jesus. So he taught that the literal presence of Jesus physically is above and below and around and through the elements.

They don't turn into the body of Jesus and the blood of Jesus, it's just that the real body and blood of Jesus are with the elements and when you take the elements you take the real body and blood of Jesus along with them. Well Zwingli considered that to be a Catholic superstition and he couldn't agree with Luther on it and they disputed for several days about this and it was the one thing that was a bone of contention that prevented them from joining. At one point during the proceedings it was said that Luther, I think he took his shoe off and started banging it on the table and saying, it says this is my body, this is my blood.

And you know Luther in other words wouldn't move from his position and Zwingli just thought that was Catholic superstition and he said no. Zwingli's position was that it's just a memorial, that when you take a regular wafer it remains a regular wafer and nothing goes into your body but bread but you do it to remember the blood of the body of Jesus and you drink wine it remains wine beginning to end and there's no real blood going in there with it and it just is to remember the blood of Jesus. Now of course most of you here probably come from traditions where that is the view that your church holds so in that sense Zwingli in this one point was less Catholic than Luther and much more like most modern evangelicals would be today and they never agreed on it and they separated and the two movements never merged and they separated on unfriendly terms.

Zwingli eventually died as I said in battle on October 11, 1531. Switzerland in those days was divided into 13 cantons. A canton was sort of a country, county kind of a administration.

Each one had one vote in the larger body or Parliament of Switzerland and these were independent cantons. Now through the preaching of Zwingli most of these cantons became reformed and sided with Zwingli but there were five of them in particular that did not and they remain Roman Catholic. Now because of Zwingli's increasing influence throughout Switzerland the five Roman Catholic cantons decided to suddenly and without warning attack Zurich and try to you know stamp out the Reformation there and Zwingli as leader.

Well in an effort to to fight back Zwingli led the troops out against these Catholics and in the battle that followed he died. He was killed. Now he died carrying the banner.

He was the chaplain of the army. He wasn't carrying a sword but he did lead the troops out carrying a banner and it's a rather tragic thing that his life came to an end that way. When Luther heard of the death of Zwingli his response was it serves him right.

Good old Luther. Now good old loving Luther. Brotherly.

When Zwingli died his movement and his position as leader of the movement was taken by a follower named Henry Bullinger and we won't go any further with the discussion of Zwingli's Reformation because as I say his influence was eventually swallowed up in the influence of another inhabitant of Switzerland and that would be John Calvin. One difference being though Zwingli's movement was almost entirely within German-speaking Switzerland. As I recall most of Switzerland was German-speaking but the western portion was French-speaking and the southern portion was Italian.

Calvin was French and so his Reformation there in Switzerland took place initially in the French part of Switzerland but those who had been reformed under Zwingli's influence basically adopted Calvin's views eventually and so the Swiss Reformation eventually was

impacted far more really by Calvin than by Zwingli. But the reason we have to tell you about Zwingli is because we want to talk about the movement that I'm much more interested in, much more excited about, and that is the Radical Reformation. This actually began with some young men who were followers of Zwingli.

In the same year of his conversion, which was 1520, Zwingli began to gather young students around him. These were young men, scholars some of them already, but they wanted to study the classics and Zwingli was a scholar and he taught them classical Greek. Some of these students not only became converted to the Reformation but actually became tremendous scholars, biblical and theological scholars themselves.

Among those who would fit that description were two of his students, Conrad Grebel and Felix Menz. These men later became the first to start the Anabaptist movement but they were followers and disciples of Zwingli under his personal mentorship. Now in the early days of Zwingli's influence there were some public debates held at the town hall of Zurich that were turning points in the thinking of that city while the Reformation was beginning to gain ground there.

One of these disputations took place in January of 1523. In that Zwingli debated a Catholic over certain Catholic doctrines and he presented his 67 articles, which there you have an example of one of my typos in the notes. It looks like a German spelling or something.

Anyway, in his 67 articles he attacked the authority of the Roman Church. He said that the scriptures alone should be the authority for the Christians, not the church traditions. He attacked the primacy of the Pope as the leading bishop of the church worldwide.

He attacked the worship of saints. He attacked the merit of good works as means of salvation. He attacked fasts and festivals and pilgrimages and monastic orders as means of being right with God, which of course all were practiced by the Catholic Church.

He also attacked the doctrine of the celibacy of the clergy. He was a clergyman himself. He was not celibate, if celibate means chaste, but he was not married at this point.

But he did not believe the clergy should remain celibate. He attacked the selling of indulgences, which also Luther, it was that issue that had sparked Luther's Reformation in Germany, and he was opposed to penances and purgatory. Now the city rulers of Zurich at this early time in his ministry there were persuaded by this debate to back Zwingli's Reformation by the policies they made for the city.

And from that time on Zwingli was somewhat, well they were sort of in his back pocket and he was kind of in theirs. There was sort of a mutual back-scratching relationship. And that's not too surprising because actually every state in Europe in those days, every country, was connected integrally with some religious movement, the Roman Catholic or

the Lutheran or in this case now the Reform movement in Switzerland and Zwingli.

Zwingli certainly was not unique in joining himself to political power. That was what the church did for 1,200 years before his time, since the time of Constantine, when the church became politicized. And so Zwingli, you know, as a product of his times, he enjoyed the support of the political officials of the city and they enjoyed his influence as well.

Now his students were all with him on this first debate. They were all in favor of these positions. Everything he attacked was, you know, some Roman Catholic thing that the Reformation opposed and they followed him completely on these issues.

But there was another debate later the same year, in October of 1523, Zwingli attacked the use of images in the church and he called for the abolition of the Mass, that is the Catholic Mass, which even though he didn't believe in it, it was still practiced in the churches there in Zurich. And he said, the Mass is superstitious, the Mass is heresy, and the Mass needs to be abolished. And he said, we will abolish the Mass in this city by Christmas of this year.

Now this is in October, he said it, and he said by December 25th they'd abolish the Mass in Zurich. Now his disciples, his students, were all for him on that too. But the city officials were not so sure, they weren't so quick.

They agreed with him that the Mass was superstitious and that it should be abolished, but they were not so sure that the populace would follow them that suddenly. And they were opposed to abolishing the Mass by Christmas, so they wanted to kind of drag it out a little longer. Well, there was some discussion and dispute about this, and in one of the meetings, Conrad Grebel, in a meeting with the city leaders and Zwingli, stood up and he said, if you're not going to abolish the Mass by Christmas, could we set a date? Could we set a time for the actual abolition of the Mass? And Zwingli said, well, that decision will be left up to the Lord.

And another of his students stood up and said, no, that decision should be left up to the Bible, the scriptures. And the scriptures have determined that the Mass is ungodly, and therefore it should be abolished immediately. And Zwingli went along with the city officials.

The city officials didn't want to rush this thing faster than the populace would accept it, and Zwingli just decided to defer to them. And that disillusioned some of his disciples with him. They saw him as not one who's really willing to put his money where his mouth is and to really carry out the reform completely.

So some of Zwingli's young students who had supported his conclusions in both debates felt that he'd betrayed his own principles by extending the practice of the Mass to please

the rulers of the city. These disciples had been influenced by Zwingli for years, for three years at this time, and he had told them, he had taught them to practice reading the scriptures and allowing the scriptures alone to determine their beliefs and their practices. And now they, by doing so, had concluded that the Mass was wrong.

And Zwingli himself concluded it was wrong, but he was not willing to follow his convictions. And so they kind of began to embark on their own studies in the scripture without him. Conrad Grebel was a Greek scholar of first rank, and Felix Manz was a Hebrew scholar of similar rank.

And these men, who had been students of Zwingli, began to meet with people who were interested in studying with them and they began to do intensive biblical studies on certain issues, apart from Zwingli. And one thing in particular they studied out during the year of 1523 was the subject of baptism in the Bible. And by the end of 1524, they had concluded a couple of things that were fairly radical.

One, was that baptism of infants, since it was not taught in scripture, should not be practiced. It was wrong. And only those who, as adults, or at least as responsible parties, had made a conversion, who had decided to follow Jesus and to embrace the gospel, only those should be baptized.

Now you and I might think, what's so strange about that? Who didn't know that? Anyone could read the Bible and see that, right? Well, not so easily. For hundreds of years, actually over a thousand years, there had never once been a church that practiced the baptism of believers, unless they were converted from paganism. But the church throughout the Middle Ages, and even the Lutheran and the Reformed Church in Switzerland, were practicing infant baptism.

Now, you need to understand that this was not just a matter of searching the scripture and finding out what's going on. There were political reasons to practice infant baptism. Because the church and the state were merged, a person had to be a member of the church to be a voting member of the state.

And it was unthinkable that a person would be under the ruler, but not be in the church. Well, you had to be baptized to be in the church. So everyone who was born under the state's jurisdiction was baptized into the church's jurisdiction.

It was just, that's how they did that. Now, to begin to oppose this practice would mean there would be people who didn't get baptized as birth, and maybe never got converted, never got baptized. And then what is their relationship to the state? Since they're not in the church, and the church and the state are one, it would undermine the authority of the state under persons who were not members of the church.

And so the city rulers of Zurich were not favorable toward the idea of believer baptism,

and they insisted on continuing with infant baptism. Zwingli himself, there is some evidence that he was almost convinced by these young men to abandon infant baptism and to embrace believer baptism. But he saw that the city rulers were not favorable toward this, and so he opposed them.

And he opposed them with a vengeance. His own former protégés, his former disciples, he began to attack them and oppose them. And there was actually an important debate that took place.

Oh, I didn't mention what the other conclusion they reached was. They reached the conclusion that not only should only believers be baptized and not infants, but that also the church should be separate from the state, and it should be made up not of everyone who's born in a region, but only of people who've been converted and been baptized. Only if people have been baptized as a convert to Christianity, to actual faith in Jesus, only then should they be baptized and only then should they be considered part of the church.

So this is a radical new idea of the church. Not radical to us, because the idea of separation of church and state, I mean, that's been a given in this country for hundreds of years. But it had never been understood since 325 AD until this time, 524, 1524 AD.

So it's, you know, it was a radical new move. And it really, you know, the state was threatened by this, because these people were now starting or saying that there should be a church that was not under the state's control and the membership of the church should not be coextensive with the citizenry of the state. And that would begin to divide loyalties and divide issues of authority and control over people and so forth.

And that was just a very uncomfortable thought to the powers that were at the time. And so a disputation was held January 18th and 19th of the year 1525 between Zwingli on one hand and his former disciples. This was another public debate held at the town hall in Zurich.

And it was for the town leaders to decide who won the debate. This time the debate was over infant baptisms. Zwingli defended infant baptism and his former disciples were defending believer baptism rather than infant baptism.

Well, no one was surprised when the city rulers decided Zwingli had won the argument. And that his view would be official. But they didn't only decide that Zwingli had won the argument.

They declared as a result of that debate that anyone who did not baptize their infants by eight days old or anyone who who was re-baptized as a believer was a heretic. And anyone who had done this, they had eight days to mend their ways to repent or else to flee the city for their life. Because heretics got burned in those days.

And so it was declared that anyone who did not practice infant baptism or anyone who did practice believer baptism, that that person had eight days to recant, repent. If they had babies they baptized within those eight days or else they better flee the city. Well, this put of course Conrad Grebel and Felix Manson in kind of a hard position.

As a matter of fact, Conrad Grebel had had a baby born to him and his wife the previous year. And they had already reached the conclusion that infant baptism was not scriptural so they hadn't baptized it. Their son or their baby was the first child probably since the days of the Apostles almost who was not baptized at birth in Europe.

And so they had to decide what are we going to do. You know, we've been told that we're essentially going to die if we don't comply with this new policy, this required policy of the city of Zurich. And they met together at the house of Felix Manson to discuss what they would do.

And they decided that they would go ahead and continue to preach their convictions. In fact, they decided that they would be re-baptized. All these men had been baptized Catholics with babies, but none of them had yet been re-baptized as converts to Christianity.

Now, if you wanted to be baptized, in fact some people here do, we need to get on that. There's a couple of people here who have already told me they'd like to be baptized and we haven't gotten on it very quickly. My pardons.

These guys took a while to get around to it too. But if you want to get baptized, there's plenty of places to go, plenty of pastors would be glad to baptize you and no one would think anything of it. But in those days, who was going to baptize them? All the ordained clergy were opposed to baptism of adults.

They only baptized babies. Now, if you were an adult sitting in a house with six or seven other people who all wanted to be baptized, but there were no clergymen. There were no ministers who would baptize anyone as an adult.

What they decided was that since Conrad Grebel was the undisputed leader of this group, that he would baptize another man among them. Let me see here. And that man was George Blaurock.

His last name Blaurock means blue coat and he was so called because he wore a blue coat and that's a fact. But George Blaurock had been a Catholic priest before his conversion. So since he was a man of the cloth and had been ordained, even if it was the Catholic church that ordained him, they figured, well, he's the closest thing we have to a clergyman here.

So Grebel, the leader baptized Blaurock and then Blaurock turned around and baptized everyone else in the meeting there in Mance's house. And this was the beginning

formally of the first free church since the year 325. Free church because it was free from government control, free from any connection to the government.

And it was a radical thing. What they did really signed their own death warrants as they pretty well knew it would. I mean, there was no place in Europe you could go where this kind of mentality would be tolerated.

There was nothing like religious pluralism in Europe in those days. We have what we call religious pluralism here. That means there's no one religion that can require everybody to conform to it.

But in Europe after the time of Luther, after a certain point it was decided that every nation, the citizenry would be required to conform to the religion of their prince. And there were two possibilities. Your prince could be Lutheran or he could be Catholic.

So if you lived in a Catholic country where the prince was Catholic and you wanted to be Lutheran, you had to move to a Lutheran country because the law required you to be the same religion as your prince. Now these guys were neither Lutheran nor Catholic and there were no princes who were Anabaptists. Now the reason they were called Anabaptists, the word Anna as used in this word as a prefix means again.

And Baptist is someone who baptizes. So Anabaptists means re-baptizers. This was the term that was given to them later by their enemies, the re-baptizers.

It was actually a term of derision but they themselves would never have called themselves Anabaptists, although that name has stuck to this day. Nowadays modern Anabaptists don't seem to object to the term but Grebel and Mance and these guys would never have allowed themselves to be called Anabaptists with their approval because they didn't believe they were re-baptized. They believed that when they were baptized as infants that wasn't baptism.

You can baptize a baby but you haven't made a Christian out of him, you've made him a wet sinner. And so they believed that this time when they got baptized in the house of Mance, that was the only time they were baptized. They weren't re-baptized, they were just baptized.

They would have rather been called Baptists. Now when we think of Baptists today, of course there's a major sector of Protestantism today, it's called Baptists, over 40 different Baptist denominations. But their roots are not in the Anabaptist movement per se.

Of course they did glean a great deal from the Anabaptists but the Baptist denominations today have come out of another root over in England. Later, the Anabaptists of that period gave rise to an entirely different group of people that today would be the Mennonites and the Hutterites and the Amish. And there were some other

groups early on.

In fact, these men who had been disciples of Zwingli who became Anabaptists on this occasion in the year 1525, they were called the Swiss Brethren movement. So the first Anabaptist movement was the Swiss Brethren and these were the men who headed it up. They began to meet together secretly in a home.

In fact, they moved out of Zurich because they were banished from there and they had to. And they moved to a nearby city but they were hunted down there and put in jail. Grable and Mance both were put in prison or jail.

And after a while they were released but when they were released they just went out and preached some more of their doctrines and their doctrines caught on like wildfire in spite of the fact that they were being persecuted. So finally, the authorities in Zurich decided to really be no more Mr. Nice Guy and they pronounced a death sentence on anyone who was an Anabaptist. Felix Mance became the first martyr of the Anabaptist movement.

He was baptized January of 1525. He was martyred in January. Two years later, 1527, he was drowned.

There was supposed to be a certain irony about the method of his martyrdom because these people want to get wet. These people want to go into the water. Well, we'll put them under the water.

And that was actually the way that the reasoning went. And yet, now Grable died of natural causes. He didn't die a martyr's death though he was willing to.

He happened to just not be one of those who did. But the Anabaptist leaders that rose up shortly afterward, most of them died horrible deaths. One man in particular, Michael Sattler, the authorities decided to make an example of him and they tortured him mercilessly and did all kinds of things.

And actually, what I'm going to do is I'm just going to pass over these particular details until next time because next time I want to focus on the Swiss Brethren movement and the martyrs of that movement and the distinctives of that movement more in detail. Right now I want to give you more of an overview of what became of the Anabaptist movement generally. Anyway, the movement spread throughout much of Europe and all the other movements, all the other Christian movements in Europe had declared them worthy of death.

And so anywhere they went, anywhere that they arose, they arose with the sword of Damocles hanging over their head, as it were. They were born to die. And when they were born again, the Catholic church typically burned them at the stake.

The reformers drowned them and when they were simply left to state officials, they were easily beheaded. Altogether, at least four or five thousand Anabaptists were martyred in this way. It is said that probably four thousand of them in Switzerland were martyred by the command of Zwingli.

We have no reason to believe he ever repented of this. Luther originally was called on by the other movements to put his stamp of approval on the killing of Anabaptists and at first he was reluctant to do so. The peasants of Germany, many of them were favorable toward the Anabaptists and he was favorable toward the peasants initially.

Later on in the peasant revolt, he changed his opinion of the peasants and of the Anabaptists and he later came around to agreeing that they should be killed. And so the Lutherans and the Swiss Reformed Church and the Catholic Church, basically all the churches in Europe, agreed these people deserved to die. Now I want to just give you some information about other Anabaptist groups of that period, some of which have survived to this day.

We're just going to let that be the end of this lecture tonight. Next time, I want to go into more specific detail about some of the happenings and the people that were involved in the birthing of the Swiss Brethren Movement because that to my mind is extremely interesting and inspiring. Their movement is one of the most inspiring movements of the modern times, in my opinion.

Now, there are several other groups that are called Anabaptists besides the Swiss Brethren and I want to talk about them. One group would be called the Zwickau Prophets. These were the people, you might remember if you were here when we were talking about Luther, after the Diet of Worms, when Luther took his stand to refuse to recant his views and his life was then in danger of being killed.

As he was leaving that Diet, he was kidnapped. No one saw him for about a year and people assumed that the Catholics had caught him and killed him. But in fact, he had been kidnapped by his friends and he was taken away to the Wartburg Castle where his friends actually disguised him as a knight.

He grew his beard out so he wouldn't be readily recognized and he lived in a castle disguised as a knight for eleven months. During that time, he translated the entire New Testament into German. He made good use of his time.

But he came out of that hiding because he heard that in his town where he ministered in Wittenberg, there had come some troublemakers and they were stirring up the peasants to revolt. These troublemakers were called the Zwickau Prophets. Their leader, well let me just read this, prior to the break between Zwingli and his disciples, Grable and Manz, there had been some troublesome fellows called the Zwickau Prophets who had come to Wittenberg or Wittenburg, Germany, which was Luther's turf, had stirred up the peasant

revolt and caused a lot of bloodshed.

It was the appearance of these men in Wittenberg that had drawn Luther out of his hiding at the Wartburg Castle in 1522. Their leader, Thomas Munzer, would technically be called an Anabaptist. Now his movement was before the Swiss Brethren, but the only reason he would be called an Anabaptist is because he denounced infant baptism.

He didn't believe in infant baptism. He believed in, I guess, believer baptism rather than infant baptism, but he never was part of the Anabaptist movement. Almost everything about him, except his views on baptism, were at odds with what the Anabaptists believed.

He was more into political and social reform. He was not theologically oriented, generally speaking. He was interested in the peasants revolting against their oppressors and started a big bloody revolution.

He himself being killed when he was caught, and he was killed. Yet, because this particular fellow, Thomas Munzer, didn't believe in infant baptism, he was called an Anabaptist. Because of the revolts of the peasants and the bloodshed and the destruction of property and everything caused by this man's influence, it gave Anabaptists a bad name throughout Europe, to a large extent.

They seemed like troublemakers. There was another group that gave Anabaptists a bad name, and likewise this group was no more characteristic of the Anabaptists than was Munzer. In 1529, a man named Melkor Hoffmann, a Lutheran lay preacher, got banished from Stockholm to Denmark for denying the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

So he was maybe more like Zwingli in his beliefs about the Lord's Supper. He didn't believe in the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. He went to Denmark where he joined up with the Anabaptists in Strasbourg.

He became obsessed, however, with eschatology in the end times. He preached that the end of the world would occur in 1533, and he believed that he was divinely appointed to gather the faithful to the New Jerusalem, which he identified as Strasbourg, where he lived. And so he traveled extensively, gathering many followers in the Netherlands.

Eventually he was arrested and died in prison, but he had an influential, obsessed follower. One of his disciples, Jan Matthys, would be the Anglicized form of the pronunciation of his name. There's another typo.

He proclaimed himself to be the prophet Enoch. Hoffmann had predicted that Enoch would come before the end of the world, and Jan Matthys, after Hoffmann was imprisoned, he proclaimed himself to be that Enoch that Hoffmann had said would come. And so he became the new leader of those people who had been influenced by Hoffmann.

And he, when 1533 came and went and it wasn't the end of the world, that didn't bother Matthys. He just said, well, Hoffmann was wrong in that prediction. He was also wrong in another thing, and that was that Hoffmann had thought that Strasbourg would be the New Jerusalem, but in fact it would not be Strasbourg, but Münster would be the New Jerusalem.

Now Münster was a city of Westphalia, or Germany, close to the Danish border. Münster had wrongfully obtained a reputation of being an Anabaptist city, because one of the leaders in that city had decried infant baptism, but generally speaking, the city was not favorable toward the Anabaptist movement. But because this false reputation that Münster was an Anabaptist city was kind of circulating, the followers of Hoffmann and of Matthys and other Anabaptists flooded into that city thinking that they'd find some kind of a refuge there from persecution in other places.

Once he got there, Matthys attempted to take over the city by an armed revolt, and he wanted to establish the kingdom of the saints there, because that was, after all, the New Jerusalem. And the end of the world, though it didn't come in 1533, would come eventually, and they wanted to make sure they were at the New Jerusalem at the time. Now, this Münster revolt under Matthys did not get very far.

The Bishop of Münster, with the assistance of both Lutherans and Catholics, besieged the city and recaptured it. In that battle, Matthys was killed, although before the battle was over, he was succeeded in leadership by Jan Bachelson, who then was captured and tortured and killed, and that was pretty much the end of that rebellion. There were a lot of rumors that spread about this group in Münster.

One of the things that is said about them is that they practiced polygamy. I don't know if they had time to in the short time they were there, but polygamy is one of the things that they sought to restore. And so, I mean, that gave Anabaptists a real bad name.

Now, I want to say this. I consider that the times that we live in right now have a lot of things in common with the times in which the Anabaptist movement arose. The Anabaptist movement arose because there were some frustrated people who just wanted to follow the Bible, and all the establishment churches around seemed to be not as radical, not wanting to follow the Bible in all respects.

They were committed to their traditions and immovable. These people tried to change it from within, but it didn't change, so they started meeting in homes. I'm not trying to give some kind of endorsement to home fellowships, but this thing is happening right now.

It's a very similar situation. People who are not pleased with the way the churches are recalcitrant and not changing and not willing to be radically biblical, there's all over the country, maybe all over the world for all I know, Christians are gathering in homes, in loose associations, probably very similar to what the original Swiss Brethren did. And

they're just trying to follow the scripture.

That's all they want to do. But, of course, we don't have the persecution of this movement here at this time. Maybe there will be later, or maybe there won't.

We live in much more enlightened times than those, I think, and very possibly there won't be persecution by the church, at least not in the sense of burning people at the stake. But we also have at this time those people who are not willing just to be disenfranchised outsiders to the church, but they want to force the kingdom of God on society in general, who want to arm themselves and set up a Christian colony, as it were. There are people like that.

You may not have met them, but I know of them right now. And they seem to be, you know, some of them are the same, you know, they also meet in homes. It's like this Munster group, you know, they were branded as Anabaptists because their theology was somewhat Anabaptist, but they were in most respects totally of a different spirit than the Anabaptist movement proper.

The Anabaptist movement proper has always stood for pacifism, not fighting. Certainly, Jan Matthys was not of that spirit. He actually led an armed revolt.

Unfortunately, though, whenever some wacko does this kind of thing, it makes everybody in the general, you know, movement have a bad name. And all it takes is a few really radical wackos to make the whole movement seem illegitimate or dangerous or something. And that is exactly what happened in Europe with the Munster revolt.

People thought of the Zwickau Prophets and the Munster group there, and that's what they thought of as Anabaptists. And that gave a lot of popular support to the getting rid of these people. Although most Anabaptists were wonderful people, wonderful, unassuming, peaceful people, just trying to follow the scripture according to their conscience, not really trying to overthrow anything except to preach and convert people, overthrow things that way.

But they got a bad name. And to this day, to this day, there are those who are opposed to the Anabaptist movement, especially Lutheran, Presbyterian, some of the Reformed groups and Catholics. When they think of Anabaptists, they think of the Munster group.

They think of this kind of wild-eyed cult, really. I mean, that's what it was. The original Anabaptist movement, when it rose, was the rise of, in my opinion, a true movement of the true Church of Jesus Christ.

The Munster group was more like a cult, an armed cult that didn't really represent at all the mainstream of the movement. Now, apart from these groups that we just talked about, there were and are still to this day the Hutterites, the Mennonites, and the Amish. I just want to quickly tell you what their distinctives are or how they came into being.

The Swiss Reformation spread from Switzerland to other places, Germany and Austria, Moravia. And in Moravia, there was a significant number of leaders that liked the Anabaptists. And so a lot of the Anabaptists that were persecuted elsewhere, like in Austria, fled to Moravia.

Now, Moravia, I believe, was basically the same region as what was more recently Yugoslavia, if I'm not mistaken. Now, it's not Yugoslavia anymore since the breakup of the Soviet Union. But that landmass that, until recently, was called Yugoslavia, I think is essentially the same region that was Moravia back in those days.

And the Anabaptists in Austria who were persecuted sought refuge from persecution in Moravia. These people eventually took on the name of one of their leaders, Jakob Hutter. Now, there were other leaders before Jakob Hutter that led these people and were martyred and so forth.

But Hutter is the one who organized some communities of them. And the groups took on his name. They became the Hutterian Brethren or the Hutterites.

Now, a lot of people today would call them Hutterites. And the reason for them Hutterites is that in English, if you have a double T in the word, that would make the U a short U instead of a long U. In German, however, there's no short U. It's always a long U. So, technically, Jakob Hutter is the correct pronunciation. They are the Hutterites.

And they would know themselves as Hutterites because they came out of a German-speaking background. And that's a German pronunciation. But Jakob Hutter, or Jakob Hutter, set up several settlements, community settlements, called Bruderhof.

Now, Bruderhof still exists. Bruderhof means the brother's place. Isn't that what Hof means, place? I think it means the place of the brothers, if I'm not mistaken.

Bruder means brother. Anyway, the Bruderhof movement still exists, largely in Canada today and in some states in the United States and, of course, a few other places. But the Bruderhof movement, organized by Jakob Hutter, was characterized largely by the community of goods, that is, shared property.

They read in the early chapters of Acts how that no one called anything that he possessed his own. And they had all things common. And so they felt like that's what the Christian church should do.

And they set up their communities on a strict communalistic program. They were also characterized by pacifism. This is still true of the Hutterite groups today.

They're still characterized by these distinctives. In addition, the Hutterian brethren, or the Hutterites, were distinguished for a number of other important things. They had unusual expertise in agriculture and in handicraft and in surgery.

They actually specialized in medical practices and surgery. And this was kind of wise. I don't know if they did it for this reason, but it kind of made them indispensable.

They were the best surgeons in Europe and the best farmers in Europe. And for this reason, many of the nobility in Moravia wanted them around to do surgeries on them and their loved ones and so forth. And so Moravia became a place where Hutterites and the Baptists generally were pretty well received, kind of a peaceful place.

However, the government officials didn't much like this. And eventually, they cracked down on the Anabaptist movement in Moravia as well. And Jacob Hutter fled for his life.

He and his wife, however, were captured. And he was cruelly tortured and eventually burned at the stake on February 25, 1536. His wife was martyred a few days later.

Now, as I mentioned, the Hutterites still exist today. And by the way, they're still distinguished, especially for their farming. The Hutterite colonies are some of the most wealthy people in the Western world because they are extremely prosperous farmers.

Now, they're not like the Amish who farm with, you know, mules and horses and stuff like that. They farm with all the modern conveniences and they just, they were very, very productive people. Anyone here familiar with the Hutterites? Any have first-hand experience? Dan, did you, were you around Hutterites in Canada? All around your area.

Your area was Mennonite, though, huh? But is that right? Are they known for their, you know, productivity as farmers? They're just excellent. Best machinery, biggest machinery. But the thing, though, about the Hutterites is that they are not distinctly a Christian group anymore.

I mean, it's not like they're Hindu or something like that, but it's that they've become more of a cultural phenomenon. There are, however, I think there's some revival going on in some of the broader hopes. But to a large extent, because of persecution, the Hutterite movement became sort of ingrown and introverted and are not as involved in evangelism as they were in the early days.

But they started out as a pretty on-fire group and a fairly right-on group, in my opinion. Of course, everyone has their opinion about what's right on. It's whatever they believe.

The next group I want to talk about is the Mennonites. And certainly the vast majority of Anabaptists today are the Mennonites. They take their name from their leader, Menno Simons.

Simons was an outspoken priest, actually. He was a Roman Catholic priest, but he spoke out against the fanaticism of the Münster group, although he held many Anabaptist beliefs himself. He came to be an Anabaptist, but he was really against the Münster group.

And it's a good thing to see that, because that proves that here he was more mainstream Anabaptist, but he was against what happened in Münster. The Münsterites were not at all characteristic of the Anabaptist mainstream. Though he was a Roman Catholic priest, he was led through the study of Scripture to break with Rome and to begin just preaching the evangelical gospel in 1530.

So he was a few years later than the Swiss Brethren in his conversion from Catholicism. It was actually in 1536 that he joined the Anabaptists, and the views he adopted were essentially the same as those of the Swiss Brethren. Basically, separation of church and state, pacifism, believer baptism, no infant baptism.

These were the distinctives of his movement as well. But he was mainly influential in the Netherlands and in northern Germany. Now, he was persecuted, as all of them were, and as a result of it, he had to live most of his life as a fugitive and an outlaw.

I mean, he had to sneak from town to town by night on short notice, you know, because they were hunting him down. The Catholic and the Lutheran authorities, they were hunting him. And he was married and had children, but he snuck around from town to town, preached his gospel, and had a tremendous influence on people, and the Anabaptist movement really grew a great deal under his influence.

He eventually found refuge on a nobleman's estate in Denmark, and he spent the remainder of his life there, since it was a relatively safe place for him. But from there he wrote, and he taught, and he would make excursions out to other areas to establish and encourage and to organize congregations of Anabaptists in North Germany and Netherlands, where he became basically the principal leader of the movement in those regions. Of course, there are Mennonites today, as I mentioned.

Most Anabaptists today are Mennonites. There's about half a million Mennonites in the world, and about half of them are here in the United States. About 500,000 Mennonites today in the world.

Now, that doesn't sound very large when you consider that, you know, Southern Baptists alone probably, I don't know what they have, but they have millions anyway. But there's a reason for that. Southern Baptists have not been persecuted since their beginning, in the same way that the Anabaptists were.

It's amazing that the Anabaptist movement survived at all when there was no sanctuary for them in the continent that they lived in for centuries. Everywhere they went, there was a death warrant on them. And yet the group grew and grew and grew, and the martyrdoms of these men are just remarkable.

As I say, we'll have more detail about that next time. Let me just say, I want to introduce another group real quickly, and that is, of course, the Amish. Most of us know about the

Amish.

They resulted from a serious split among the German-speaking Mennonites in the late 16th century. One of the elders in a Mennonite congregation was named Jacob Aman, and the Amish are named after him, Aman. He was apparently a very contentious kind of a guy, and he was insistent on a more radical separation than the Mennonites generally practiced.

He wanted to shun all unbelievers, and he wanted to have a more severe shunning of lapsed members. That would be members that were backslidden or didn't really, what he would call backslidden, anyone, you know, probably who just didn't keep the strict Mennonite distinctives. But he excommunicated everyone from the church that didn't agree with him, and eventually he separated from the Mennonites and started his own group.

They were a tight-knit group, very legalistic, very structured. They're distinguished from other Mennonites largely by having a uniform that they wear and the forbidding of the cutting of their beards, even of trimming their beards. And most people know what Amish people look like and dress like.

We're not altogether unfamiliar with them. They are sort of a cultural oddity, especially back in Pennsylvania. They fled Europe to go to Pennsylvania back when William Penn was still there.

It was William Penn's colony there. And they found liberty of conscience there in Pennsylvania back in the 1700s, and there they have remained for the most part. They are known also for the practice of foot-washing, which also many other groups, including Mennonites, practice.

But the Amish probably are the one group of Anabaptists that have remained the most unchanged through the centuries. Of course, they have been very strongly resistant to change. They have rejected most technological advances that have come along, whereas the Hutterites have embraced those advances.

The Amish people, as well as the Hutterites, in many respects are more of a cultural movement than an evangelical movement today. I mean, the Anabaptist movement originated as a gospel preaching movement. But largely because of persecution, the colonies of these people began to be engrown and self-protective and so forth, and to keep from letting the world infiltrate them, they became more institutionalized in their distinctives, and to a large degree just became legalistic people, some of whom don't even know the Lord.

And in some cases, they even discourage personal conversion, because the Hutterite and the Amish communities have a value that the group matters more than the

individual. And when people start talking about being individually converted, it separates too much. And there are some colonies of Amish and Hutterites that actually discourage personal conversion.

Not all. There are some good things, some revival things happening in some of these areas. But to a large extent, the movements, they don't have the life that they originally did.

The Mennonite churches have stayed alive a lot more so, spiritually speaking. Although in some cases, certainly the Mennonite churches, some of them are extremely legalistic too. There are some really wooden, legalistic churches that are just as legalistic as the Amish in their own ways.

But of course, most of us know Mennonite people that don't fit that description. You probably don't know any Amish people that don't. But there are Mennonites that are just like, seem ordinary.

They don't seem like a cultural oddity at all. And yet they do maintain the distinctives of the Anabaptists. What are those distinctives? Well, there are four distinctives that basically all mainstream Anabaptists have adhered to.

And by mainstream, I would say the Swiss Brethren, the Mennonites, the Hutterites, even the Amish would still be more or less mainstream as opposed to the Munster group, or the Zwickau Prophets. These groups, these more enduring groups that have become more the mainstream of the Anabaptist movement, had four distinctives. And this began with the Swiss Brethren.

This is what they taught. The first was discipleship. One of the criticisms the Swiss Brethren had of the Lutheran movement was that although Luther did preach that people should be saved, and he did preach that people should believe the gospel and so forth, he never broke from the Catholic idea that everyone in town is a member of the church, whether they're saved or not.

So that the church was always made up of mostly people who had never been converted. And as I said, the Anabaptists were insistent that the church should be made up of only people who were converted. It's a community of believers who are dedicated to Christ, and that believing in Christ would be seen through a commitment to personal discipleship.

Now, personal discipleship means following Jesus. And the early Anabaptist leaders wrote frequently and emphatically about this, that a Christian must follow the teachings of Jesus. The most characteristic passage of scripture that exemplifies the Anabaptist ideas is the Sermon on the Mount.

It is from the Sermon on the Mount that Anabaptists draw their ideas about non-

resistance, not taking oaths, not tolerating divorce, and a lot of things like that. Why? Because the Sermon on the Mount talks about those things in very strong terms. And following Jesus is what discipleship means.

And the Anabaptists said everyone needs to be a disciple of Jesus and need to do what he said. Now, I will tell you frankly, that I admire that about the Anabaptists, but I feel that the Anabaptist movements in many cases have misunderstood some of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Now, that's my opinion.

Everyone can understand them the way they think they should, but as I study the Sermon on the Mount, I don't fully agree with all of the ways in which its teaching has been applied by the Anabaptists. They have taken it in an extremely literalistic way, and in my opinion, have not recognized passages which clearly, to my mind, are clearly hyperbole. But anyway, we can talk about that some other time.

But it's admirable, I think. It certainly was a step way forward of anything that had happened before them in recent history that they said, no, being baptized as an infant, being born in Europe doesn't make you a Christian, doesn't make you a member of the true church. You have to be a disciple of Jesus, and as such, you have to be committed to doing what he said and willing to lay down your life doing it.

And they proved that they meant it, because they did die, almost all of them, that began to teach this. So that was the first distinctive, discipleship. The second distinctive of the Anabaptists was love.

And of course, that's an outgrowth of discipleship. Jesus said, by this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you have love one for another. And they emphasized the need to love one another, both friends and enemies.

In terms of loving their enemies, they were absolute pacifists. They were opposed to bearing the sword in war. They were opposed to capital punishment.

They were opposed even to personal self-protection in a personal attack. They believed that you could not show any form of violence or resistance without violating the command of Christ to love your enemies. Therefore, they would rather die and absorb injury than inflict injury.

This, to my mind, is extremely commendable, though as I say, I think they could have done further study on the nuances of Jesus' teaching on this subject. I think it's a nuanced teaching, not just a black and white teaching, frankly. And I think there's more in Scripture than just the Sermon on the Mount to guide us in this matter.

But I think it's tremendous what they did. It was radical in those days to say, well, Jesus said, turn the other cheek. Jesus said, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you and who persecute you and bless those who curse you.

Therefore, love of Jesus' style means that you do not resist, you do not harm, you don't even wish evil on anyone, even if they're killing you. Jesus, after all, when they were killing him, said, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.

Stephen, when he was being stoned, said, Father, do not lay this sin to their charge. They loved their enemies. A classic example of this in the early Anabaptist movement.

By the way, there's a book that I just got a hold of. I've heard about it for years, but I wasn't able to get a hold of it until very recently. It's called The Martyr's Mirror.

It is the Anabaptist version of Fox's Book of Martyrs. You know what Fox's Book of Martyrs is? It's just a record of martyrs. There's a whole book that's like the book of Anabaptist martyrs.

Now, I have both books. Fox's Book of Martyrs is about the size of my commentary, a few hundred pages. Average size, large book.

That's Fox's Book of Martyrs. The Martyr's Mirror, the Anabaptist Book of Martyrs, is the size of Strong's Concordance. It's huge.

You can't fit it on any normal bookshelf. But it's full of inspiring stories. And one of the classic stories in it, and I forget the man's name, but he was one of the early Anabaptists being pursued by an agent of the Catholic Church.

And he fled from his pursuer across a frozen lake and he got safely to the other side. His pursuer, however, attempting to follow him, fell through the ice and was going to die of hypothermia and drown. The Anabaptist, when he looked back and saw that his pursuer had fallen through, instead of seeing that as God's deliverance for him and keeping going, he went back, he rescued the man, the man took him back to his own execution.

And so he was executed by the man whose life he saved. But typical, typical of the Anabaptist spirit in those days. That was, they were totally into non-resistance and into loving their enemies.

They said it's what Jesus did. And Jesus said, by this you'll know. The people will know that you're my disciples, that you have love for one another as I have loved you.

So they were, maybe some would say extreme, but I'll bet they went to heaven doing that. I'll bet they went to heaven ahead of Luther, if he got there at all. I think he did, but I don't know.

I don't have any doubts about these people. Another expression of love that they believed was not toward their enemies, but toward each other. And they believed largely, most Anabaptists did, in something of a community of goods.

Not all of them actually formed, you know, structured communities where they had a

common purse, but they definitely believed that the Christian love is seen by those who have extra, support those who don't have enough. There's a principle of scripture. Paul states it in 2 Corinthians, that those who gathered little had no lack, and those who gathered much had no extra.

There's an equality. God gives the body of Christ just enough for everyone to have enough. Some people gather more and some less, but there's an equality of goods.

That's what Paul taught in 2 Corinthians. That's what the early church seemed to practice in Jerusalem in the early chapters of Acts. And the Anabaptists believed that that is a true expression of love among the brethren, is you put your money where your mouth is, literally.

You don't just say, I love you. You show it by sacrificing what you have for your brothers. A third distinctive of the Anabaptists generally was that they were the first to introduce what we call a congregational style of government.

There are three forms of church government in the world today. Two of them existed before the Anabaptist movement, and the Anabaptists introduced the third. The form they introduced is probably the most common today among Protestants.

There is what's called the Episcopal form of government, where a bishop, the word episkopos in the Greek means bishop. In the Episcopal form of government, which is like the Catholic and Episcopal churches have, there is a bishop over a region, over a diocese, and under him there are the individual priests or whatever, and they answer to this bishop. This bishop oversees all the churches of a region.

That's the Episcopal form of government. Then there's what's called the Presbyterian form of government, which is not actually named after the Presbyterian church, but it comes from the Greek word presbyteros, which means elder. And the Presbyterian form of government believes in the rule of eldership, that each church has its own body of elders and is ruled internally by an eldership, a group of men.

That's called the Presbyterian form of government. The third form of government is called the Congregational form of government. It's more democratic.

The people of the congregation make the decisions as a group as to what will be practiced and what will be done in the direction of the church. It's sort of a democratic form of government. In this respect, I would personally disagree with the Anabaptists.

They formed a Congregational form of government, and it was a democratic form. Now, most modern evangelical churches followed that. I don't know about all of them, but the Baptist church I was raised in did.

The Pentecostal churches I've been in do. And I think an awful lot of modern churches

have adopted more of a democratic form of government, where if something has to be decided, they call together the congregation and take a vote. That's, of course, the American way.

But before there was an America, that was the Anabaptist way. Now, I don't personally, as I say, believe that that's the most scriptural way. I don't know how they came up with the Congregational form of government, although it has had tremendous influence on the modern church, what they came up with.

I personally believe the Bible teaches a Presbyterian form of government, eldership in each church that lead. Anyway, what I think is not so important here as to just tell you what their distinctives are. The final distinctive, and we've certainly made reference to this already, is that of the separation of church and state.

That it was never the case that Jesus or the apostles sought to join the church to the government and have the government extract tithes from people like a tax. And the government pays the clergy. And the government and the clergy scratch each other's back and in some sense are joined inseparably so that the government sword is used to enforce church policy on people who aren't quite toe in the line.

That's that merge of church and state that happened in 325 AD when Constantine the Emperor became a Christian. And that continued to be the case until 1525 when the first free church of Anabaptists was formed, free from the state rule. The Anabaptists believed that there are two different realms in God's kingdom.

That which is overseen by the state officials and that which is overseen by the church. The church is God's instrument of conversion, of mercy, of grace to the world. The state is God's instrument of justice and punishment of criminals and so forth.

And they're two different spheres. The church and the state are not mixed. They don't have the same goals.

They don't have the same calling. And the church is to operate quite independently of the state. The Anabaptists taught and lived this way that the church is a pilgrim people.

They're not an essential part of the system. They are pilgrims passing through. Peter said that of course in 1 Peter 2. Just before he said that we're supposed to submit to the government authorities, he said, I beseech you therefore brethren as strangers and pilgrims that you abstain from worldly lusts that war against the soul.

And then he told them to submit to the government authorities as you would if you were a pilgrim traveling through some foreign land. You'd obey the government of that land. But you're not part of it.

You're an alien. Permanent aliens. That's what they believe the church is.

And of course that is not agreed on by most evangelical Christians today. But it is still an Anabaptist distinctive and probably always will be. So frankly I agree with them on that.

So we have the four distinctives. Discipleship, love, including love for enemies, a congregational form of government of the church, and the separation of church and state, maintaining the pilgrim character of the church. This is a summary of the movement as a whole from its beginnings down to the present time.

The distinctives still exist in the Anabaptist movement. Mennonites and Hutterites and Amish. Next time though I don't want to move along to something else, although we will be getting to Calvin after we finish with the Anabaptists.

We'll be talking about Calvin and we certainly need to give him at least a couple sessions. But the Anabaptists deserve more than just this brief summary. There's some details of the founding of this movement and its development that are nothing short of totally breathtaking and inspiring.

And I'm going to be sharing some of those with you next time.