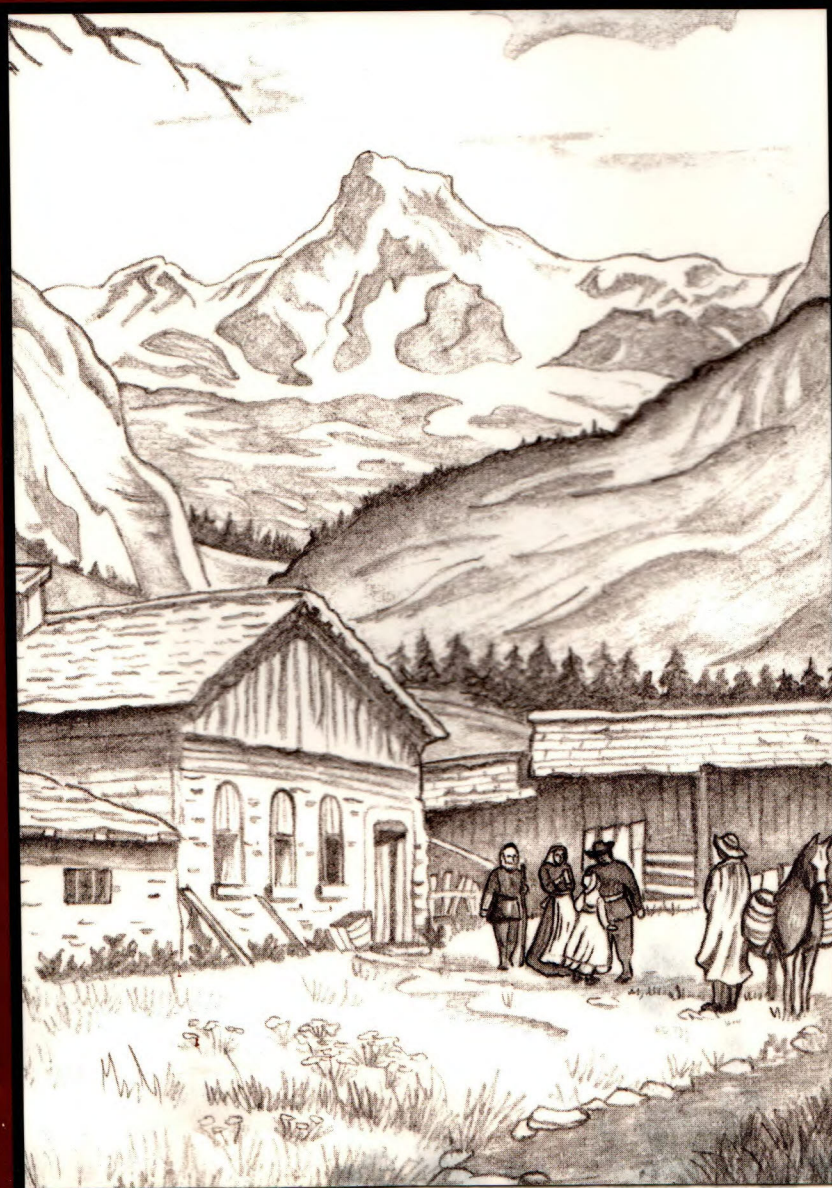


This Is My Heritage

This Is My Heritage



Gospel Publishers

This Is My Heritage

Gospel Publishers
Church of God in Christ, Mennonite
Moundridge, Kansas 67107

Table of Contents

1. Suffering for Christ	7
2. The Apostolic Fathers	10
3. The Church Fathers	14
4. Christian Life in the Early Church.....	17
5. The Early Church Is Challenged by False Doctrine	20
6. The Rise of the Roman Church	24
7. The Roman Church and the Apostolic Church.....	27
8. The Dark Ages	31
9. The Crusades	35
10. The Church Survives.....	41
11. Anabaptist Groups.....	45
12. The Waldenses: Their Life and Beliefs.....	50
13. The Protestant Reformation.....	54
14. Menno Simons, Part I.....	59
15. Menno Simons, Part II.....	62
16. Anabaptists Who Lost the Way	66
17. After Menno Simons	69
18. Mennonites of Switzerland and the Palatinate	73
19. From Switzerland to America.....	77
20. The First Century in America.....	81
21. John Holdeman, His Life and Call	85
22. Early Growth and Development.....	90
23. Mennonite Migrations	92
24. The Growth of the Church.....	99
25. The Christian in Time of War—World War I.....	102
26. The Christian in Time of War—World War II	107
27. The Continuing Peace Witness	112
28. Fulfilling the Great Commission	116
29. The Church Through Changing Times	123
Glossary	129
Index	132

Maps

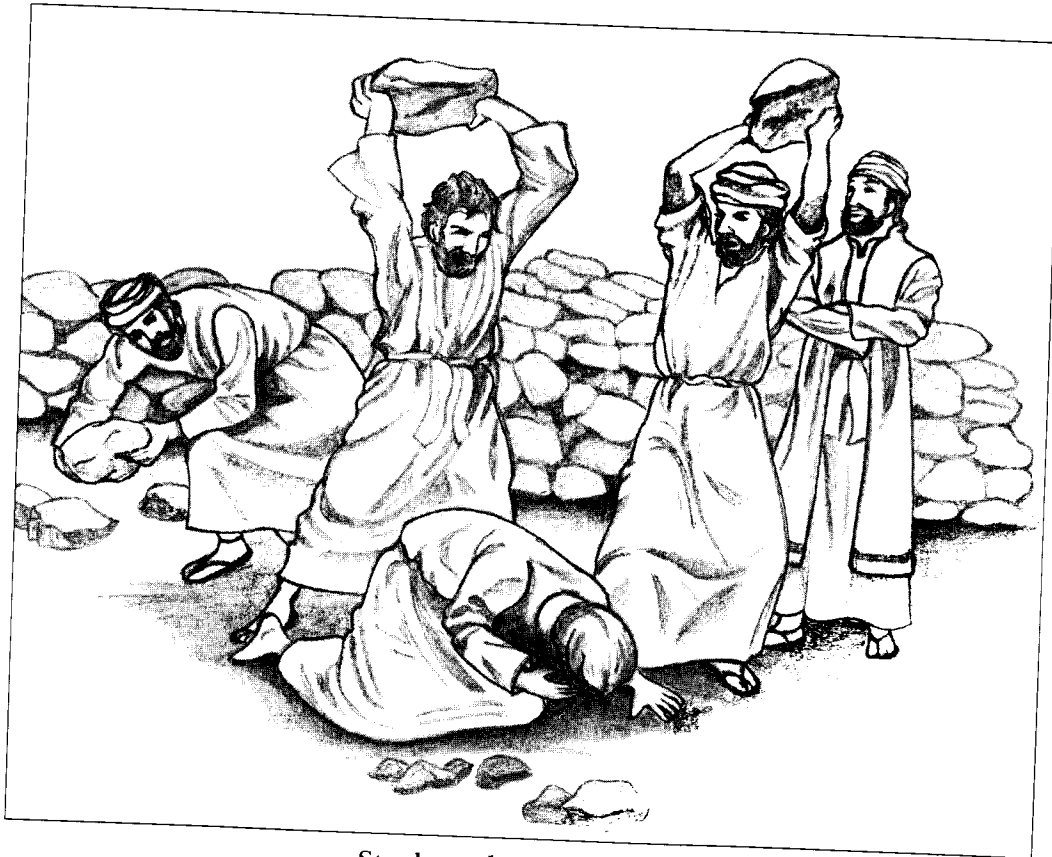
A. The Roman Empire	28
B. The Islamic World.....	39
C. Routes of the Crusaders.....	40
D. Area of Menno Simons' Life and Ministry	65
E. Switzerland and the Palatinate.....	74
F. Major Mennonite Migrations from Europe.....	98
G. Church Expansion into Foreign Countries	122

Preface

This Is My Heritage teaches the history of the Church and describes a succession of doctrine by the true people of God through all time, fulfilling the words of Christ, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

May this book help readers of all ages to realize that the true Christian’s life is incompatible with a hostile, wicked world. Although we may enjoy freedom of worship for a time, we have no promise that this blessing will continue to be ours in the future. May our determination be like that of Moses, who chose rather “to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25).

The cost of preserving the faith has been human suffering and sacrifice. May our hearts be stirred to a greater appreciation for God’s love for His people and for the preservation of this precious heritage, the “Church of the Ages,” which is ours today.



Stephen, the first martyr.

CHAPTER 1

Suffering for Christ

The history of the people of God is a fascinating story of the power of God in the lives of individuals from the beginning of time until today. It is a story of victorious faith that gave common people like you and me great courage in facing all manner of difficulties and hardships. In the Old Testament there are many examples of this.

Noah faithfully built an ark while the world scoffed and made fun. The three Hebrews were thrown into the fiery furnace because they took a noble stand for God instead of bowing to an idol. Daniel was thrown into the lions' den because he bravely prayed to God in spite of a clever plot to kill him. Many of the prophets also suffered great difficulties because of loyalty to God in proclaiming the truth. Elijah had to flee for his life when he preached against the idolatry of his times. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, was thrown into a cold dungeon because he bravely warned the kings and the people concerning their sins. Some of the prophets were stoned, and others were slain with the sword.

These are some of the witnesses referred to in Hebrews 11:32-38. Here

it states that the world was not worthy of them. From the beginning, God has permitted His people to be tried and tested. It is like the refining of gold. Just as gold needs to be purified by the heat of fire, so we are purified and improved by the heat of suffering.

Those referred to in Hebrews 11 were all Old Testament people. The martyrs who suffered since the time of Christ will now be considered. Thousands have died for the truth. The *Martyrs Mirror* tells of many of them. These gave their lives as a sacrifice because of the faith. Thus the faith, which is the pure doctrine of God as taught in His Word and practiced by His Church, was preserved and handed down through the ages. This is *our heritage*.

When the Christian Church was established, many people considered it to be an outgrowth of the Jewish religion. However, it did not take long for them to learn otherwise. In fact, the Jews themselves soon began to persecute the Church.

Within thirty years after Pentecost, the Church had spread from Jerusalem into Asia, Greece, and on to Rome. The Bible records the history of the Church up to this time, but



Nero, Roman emperor who persecuted Christians.

after this other sources must be relied on for many of the facts.

Before Bible history closed, persecution had already begun. It continued to plague the Christians for most of the next fifteen centuries. The book of Acts records the deaths of both Stephen and James, who were the first of a long train of martyrs who counted it greater gain to die for Jesus than to live for themselves. At first the persecutors were the Jews. Then the Romans also began to persecute the Christians. Neither the

Roman Empire nor anyone else has succeeded in stopping the spread of the Christian faith. Notorious among the first who tried was the Roman emperor, Nero.

In A.D. 64 fire broke out in Rome, destroying much of the city. Nero was suspected of personally planning the fire. He was able to divert the blame from himself to the Christians. The Christians were already hated because of their refusal to bear arms for the protection of Rome and because they would not bend their knees to Nero.

This brought upon them cruel persecution. Some were crucified; others were stoned, beaten, spiked to the ground, or thrown to wild dogs and torn to pieces.

The apostle Paul was Nero's prisoner and was kept in jail in Rome. Roman law limited the torture of its citizens but allowed the death penalty. Paul, who was a Roman citizen, was beheaded in A.D. 66 or 67. About this time the apostle Peter was crucified with his head down. This was his request because he felt that he was not worthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Master, Jesus. The apostle John died in A.D. 99. He was the last of the apostles to die, and he was the only one to die a natural death. All the others died as martyrs.

How mightily God used these faithful apostles! Even their deaths caused more people to turn to God and get converted. The early Church

was established through their labors. They wrote the books of the New Testament. After their death their followers carried on the faith.

The apostles taught their students the teaching which they learned directly from Jesus. John, especially, was able to instill in his students the needed love and respect for Jesus' teachings that enabled them to continue the work as it was established by Jesus. John knew the importance of teaching them well, because they would have to carry on after he, the last of the apostles, was gone. These students are now called the Apostolic Fathers because they were contemporary with the apostles.

The Church during the time of the apostles and the Apostolic Fathers is referred to as the Apostolic Church, although this term is also used in this book to denote those who followed in the same faith and teaching.

CHAPTER 2

The Apostolic Fathers

Christianity had now spread throughout the entire Roman Empire and beyond. There were many leaders, but records remain of only a few. Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna were outstanding leaders and martyrs. They lived at the time of John and were privileged to learn from him.

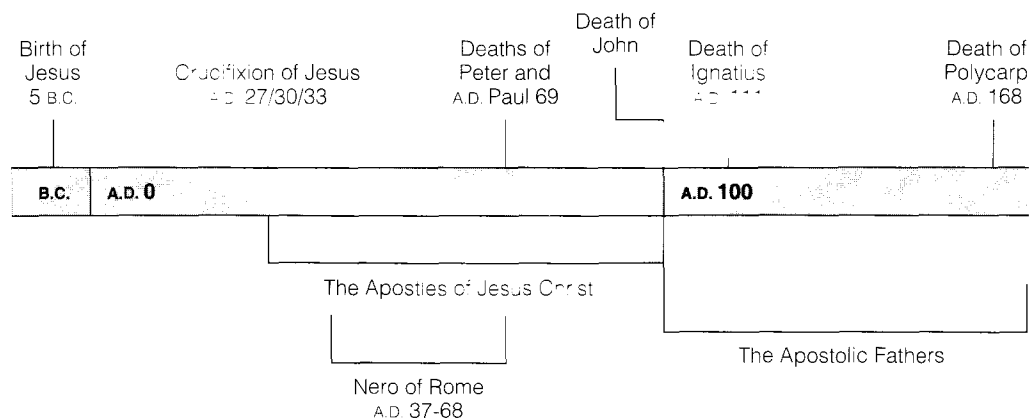
Ignatius

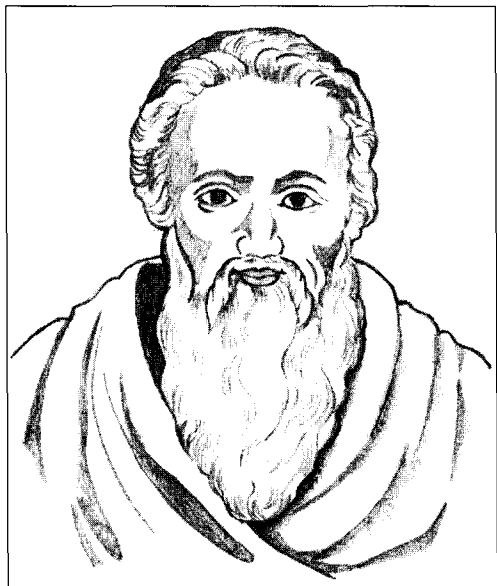
Ignatius was sometimes called Theophorous, which means *Bearer of God*, apparently because he often spoke the name of God. He has been

quoted as frequently saying, "The life of a man is a continual death, unless it be that Christ liveth in us."¹ Also, "As a world hates the Christians, so God loves them," and "The crucified Christ is my only and entire love."

The Emperor Trajan had achieved many victories for the Roman Empire. He traveled to Antioch in Syria to give thanks to the pagan gods. He offered great sacrifices to them, giving them the honor for his victories. Ignatius went openly into the pagan temple and reproved the emperor for doing this.

The emperor was very angry with



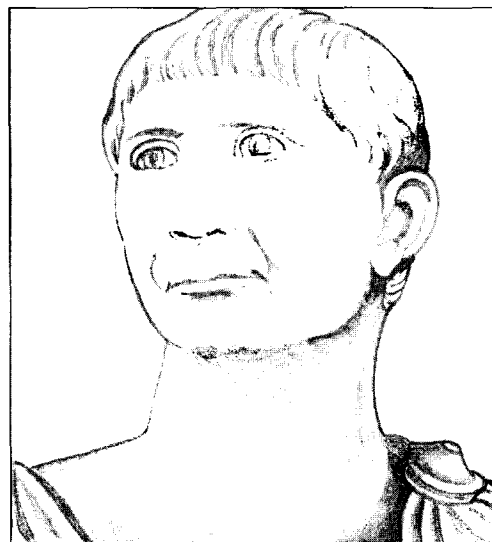


Ignatius

“O ye Romans, all you who have come to witness with your own eyes this combat; know ye, that this punishment has not been laid upon me on account of any misdeed or crime; for such I have in no wise committed, but that I may come to God, for whom I long, and whom to enjoy is my insatiable desire. For, I am the grain of God. I am ground by the teeth of the beast, that I may be found a pure bread of Christ, who is to me the bread of life.”³ Immediately after he had spoken these words, two hungry lions were let out into the arena. Ignatius was instantly torn and devoured. Thus this faithful martyr of Jesus fell asleep in A.D. 111, happy in the Lord.

Ignatius and had him arrested. Despite his great power, Trajan did not harm Ignatius there because he was held in great respect by the people. The emperor, fearing an uproar, gave Ignatius over to ten soldiers, who took him to Rome. In Rome, Ignatius was cruelly mistreated, but he loved Jesus so much that he constantly spoke of Him. When asked why he did so, he replied, “My dear Jesus, my Saviour, is so deeply written in my heart, that I feel confident, that if my heart were to be cut open and chopped to pieces, the name of Jesus would be found written on every piece.”²

When Ignatius finally stood in the middle of the arena, he spoke boldly.



The Emperor Trajan

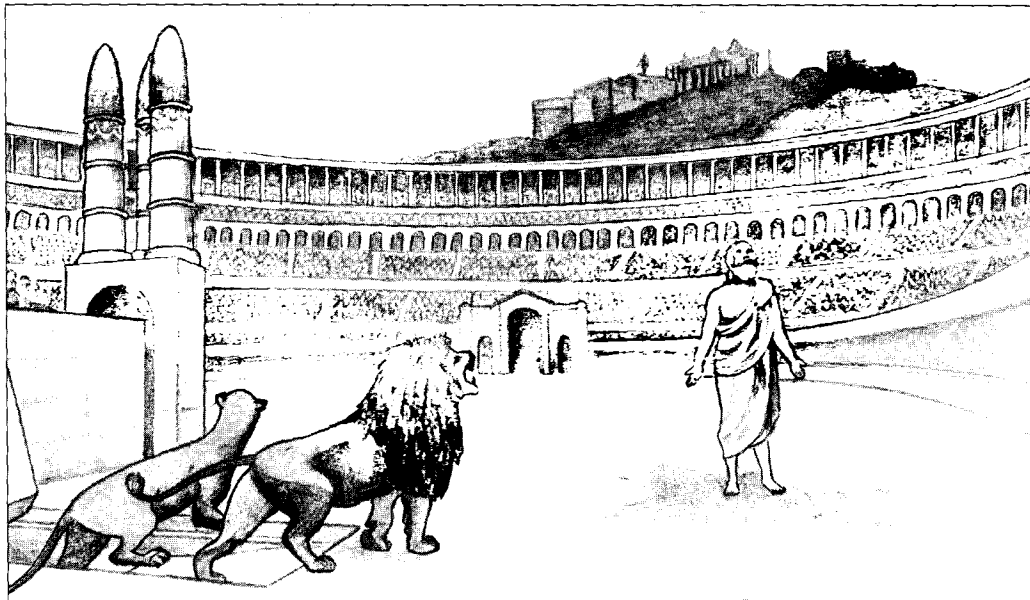
Polycarp

Polycarp was the last of the Apostolic Fathers who was known to have heard the apostle John speak and teach. Whenever possible he had associated with those who had personally known Jesus. He was a leader of the church of Smyrna and was a faithful teacher.

Because of Polycarp's faithfulness in teaching and winning many to the way of Christ, soldiers were sent to arrest him. He could have escaped, but he would not. Saying, "The will of the Lord be done," the aged teacher went to meet his captors. He was so

kind to them that some wondered why they had to take a man like him. "What need had we to make so great haste, to apprehend such an old man?" they asked.⁴

The *Martyrs Mirror* says, "Polycarp immediately had a table spread for his captors, and affectionately urged them to eat; begging them to allow him an hour's time in which to pray undisturbedly in quiet, while they were eating; which they granted him. When he had finished his prayer, and the hour was up, in which he had reflected upon his life, and commended the Church of which he was the teacher, unto God and his



Ignatius stood in the arena and spoke boldly to those who came to witness his death. Then two hungry lions were released.

Saviour, the bailiffs placed him upon an ass, and led him to the city.”⁵

Because of his age, Polycarp’s captors seemed reluctant to see him die. They repeatedly urged him to give up his belief, but he would not. While standing in the arena, he was given a final chance to escape martyrdom. All he had to do was to revile or curse Christ to be set free. Polycarp answered, “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has never done me any wrong. How can I blaspheme Him, my King, who has saved me? I am a Christian.”⁶

They threatened to destroy him with wild beasts. Polycarp was unmoved. They threatened to burn him with fire. Polycarp answered, “Bring on the beasts, or the fire, or whatever thou mayest choose: thou shalt not, by either of them, move me

to deny Christ, my Lord and Saviour.”⁷ He was ordered to be burned.

Firewood and shavings were brought and piled up in preparation for a large fire. Polycarp removed his shoes and undressed. The executioners were going to nail him to the wood, but he told them that was unnecessary—God would keep him there. They tied Polycarp’s hands behind his back and placed him on the wood, where he prayed, committing his soul unto God. After he had finished praying, the woodpile was lit. The flames circled high above his body, but Polycarp seemed to be hurt very little by it. Seeing this, the executioner commanded that he be pierced with the sword. So Polycarp died by both fire and sword in the year A.D. 156.⁸

1. Compare this statement with Galatians 2:20.

2. Thieleman J. van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror*, Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1992, p.107

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid. p. 113

5. Ibid.

6. B. K. Kuiper, *The Church in History*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991, p. 10

7. *Martyrs Mirror*, p. 113

8. *The Church in History*, p. 10

CHAPTER 3

The Church Fathers

The Apostolic Fathers were those who were contemporary with the apostles and received their instruction from them. The era of the Apostolic Fathers was approximately A.D. 100 to A.D. 160. The Church Fathers lived one generation later, learning from the Apostolic Fathers.

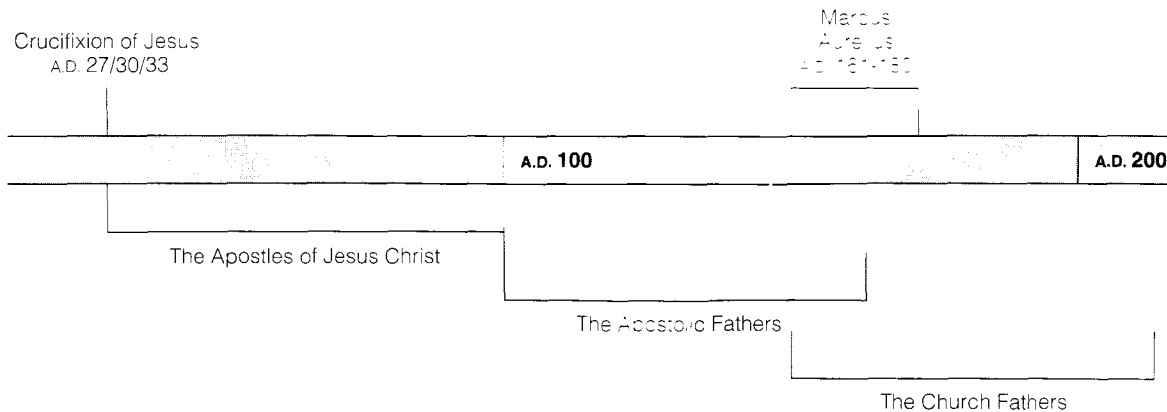
Justin Martyr

Justin was a worldly philosopher before his conversion to Christ. He studied much and reasoned about what he read. Apparently he tried to

find and to understand truth by reasoning and meditating.

One day as he was going to the seashore to meditate, he met an old man who taught him that true happiness consisted in the saving knowledge of the only, eternal, and immortal God. He would never find God through reasoning. After repeated discussions with the old man, he was led to a simple, trusting faith in God through Christ.

In his writings, Justin tells us about his conversion and newfound faith: "Immediately a burning desire was kindled in my heart, and a love for



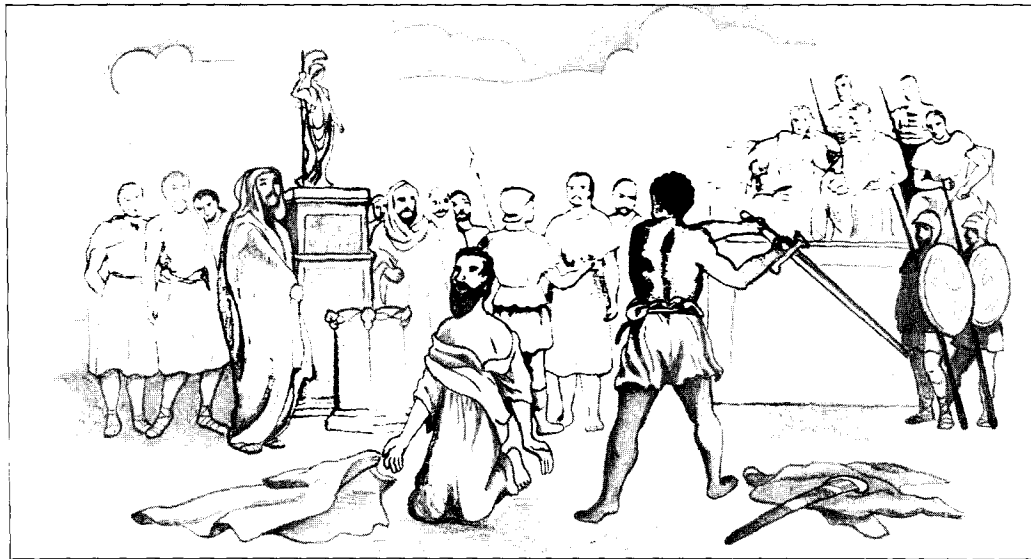
the Scriptures of the prophets and those men who had been dear friends of Christ, namely the apostles.”¹ He became a notable defender of the Christian faith. He was able to portray the gospel of Jesus Christ as being far superior to the philosophies of the world in his day.

In Justin’s writings there is one example of early Christian worship. “On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages, and a section is read from the Memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets, as long as time permits. When the reading is finished, the president, in a discourse, gives the admonition and exhortation to imitate these noble things.”²

One day Justin entered a discussion, or controversy, with a noted philosopher named Crescens. Crescens was confounded by the power of his convincing arguments. This so enraged him that he swore to avenge his defeat with the death of Justin. Crescens succeeded in having Justin apprehended and sentenced to death. He was beheaded in a public ceremony. He is often called Justin Martyr.

Irenaeus

A disciple of Polycarp named Irenaeus moved from Smyrna to Lyons in Gaul (now France), where he became the leader of the believers in that area. He recorded the doctrine



Justin gave his life for his faith.

of Christ as he had received it from Polycarp, who learned it from John, the beloved disciple of Christ. All writings were copied by hand at that time because the printing press was not invented until many centuries later. These handwritten writings are called manuscripts. Christians came to treasure these writings, reading them over and over. When valuable manuscripts wore out with usage, they were carefully recopied, thereby preserving their message for coming generations.

The Apostles' Creed

Out of the writings of this period of history came the Apostles' Creed. The word *creed* comes from the Latin word *credo* which means "I believe." A creed is a statement of belief. The apostles themselves probably did not write it, but it is a summary of their teachings. It was a valuable document of the Church through the ages. It is as follows:

To give evidence, then, of the faith professed by us, we declare, that we believe in our heart, and confess with our mouth:

The Apostles' Creed

1. I believe in one God, the Father, the almighty Creator of heaven and earth.

2. And in Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son, our Lord.
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary.
4. Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
5. Rose from the dead on the third day.
6. Ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the almighty Father.
7. From whence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Ghost.
9. I believe in a holy general Christian church, the communion of saints.
10. Forgiveness of sins.
11. Resurrection of the flesh.
12. And an eternal life.³

This creed helps us to understand and appreciate what the early Christians believed. Such teachings are known as doctrines. Many people do not like doctrines because they do not want to be told what to believe or how to live. But doctrine is important to the followers of Jesus. It is the record of doctrine that identifies true believers throughout history. Also, true believers in every generation continue to do as Jesus commissioned His disciples. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). They seek to understand and obey all gospel truth, thereby fulfilling Jesus' words, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

1. *Martyrs Mirror*, p. 112

2. Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook, an Abridged Bible Commentary*: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1992, pp. 763-764

3. *Martyrs Mirror*, p. 27

CHAPTER 4

Christian Life in the Early Church

Very little is known of the early Church because much of what was recorded was destroyed during times of persecution. The Christians were hated, their places of worship were destroyed, and their Bibles were burned. Many of their leaders were mistreated and, in some cases, killed.



Tertullian became a defender of Christianity.

Some records have survived. Interestingly, some of the best testimonies came from the persecutors themselves. An early writer wrote to Diognetus, a heathen of high social position who lived about A.D. 130, that Christians lived in their countries, but only as aliens, busying themselves on earth but claiming that their citizenship was in heaven. He also wrote that they loved all men, but by all men were persecuted, that they were reviled, and yet blessed; when they were affronted, they still paid due respect to their persecutors. He further stated that, while it was true that Christians were in the flesh, they did not love the flesh but loved those who hated them.

Tertullian was a Roman lawyer who became a defender of Christianity. He lived and wrote from A.D. 160 to 220. Here is one of his statements: "The Christian Church is called apostolic...on account of kinship of doctrine since she holds the doctrine of the apostles."

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Edward Gibbon began

a study of the complex history of the Roman Empire. Since the Christian Church had its beginning during Roman rule, a great deal of its history is included in Gibbon's book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon wrote in great detail, but here are some of his observations in brief: The early Christians did not use oaths or swear. They would not shed the blood of their fellowmen under any circumstance. They believed it was wrong to participate in politics, use the sword of justice, or go to war. They cheerfully submitted to the authority of the pagan governors under which they lived. Gibbon tells us that the early Christians "were dead to the business and pleasure of the world." He also tells us that they exercised church discipline and the avoidance of disobedient members. This means that when a person was excommunicated, he lost membership privileges: taking part in councils, Communion, and Church-related activities. Even in everyday life they did not eat with the disobedient member or keep close company with him. The desired effect was that the person would repent of his sin and return to the Church. Christians shunned pride in the form of gay apparel, magnificent houses, and elegant furniture. False hair, shaving, and musical instruments



Early Christians worship together.

were also considered unchristian. They believed in a simple way of life and had only a moderate amount of property and material things. They considered too much wealth or education a threat to their faith. They preferred to have only enough education to be able to read the Word of God and to earn their living in a humble way. They also believed they should not be idle, but should support themselves.

Ignatius, one of the Apostolic Church leaders, wrote about the *oneness* of the Christian Church. He taught that the Church was spiritually united in life and conduct by their belief in a common Master.

The early Christians also believed

in the need for a distinct separation from the world in life and conduct. According to historian C. J. Cadoux, they maintained a clear separation from the world, as well as from the political system of that time. One practice that really made them different from others around them was the returning of good for evil, even when they could have used the courts of law to defend themselves.

Their neighbors considered them odd and could not understand why they lived as they did. The Christians were often criticized for the way they

believed and lived. Such doctrines as nonresistance, separation from the world, and the holy kiss brought them much ridicule. Whenever the worldly attitude became more intolerant of them, Christians had to suffer for their faith.

1. J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976. pp. 251-259

CHAPTER 5

The Early Church Is Challenged by False Doctrine

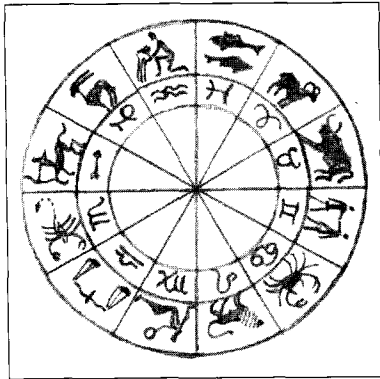
From the earliest times the thinking and ways of the world have been a threat to the Church. During the Old Testament times, there was a continual temptation to worship idols. There was something appealing about the symbol of a god, together with the chanting, dancing, and ritual which accompanied its worship.

Jesus very carefully and thoroughly taught about Christian worship. It was to be spiritual worship coming from the heart. He warned His disciples, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Christian worship is to be simple, decent, and in order.

Paul warned many times against false and deceptive traditions and rituals becoming a part of the Christians' way of life. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). In many of the letters Paul wrote to the churches, he

warned about observing pagan holidays, about those who practiced magic and witchcraft, and about those who taught traditions of men as oracles of God. When John wrote to the seven churches of Asia, he included warnings and reproofs of the sin and decay which had already crept into the circle of believers. True Christianity declined sadly in the following centuries. Following is a look at what was happening.

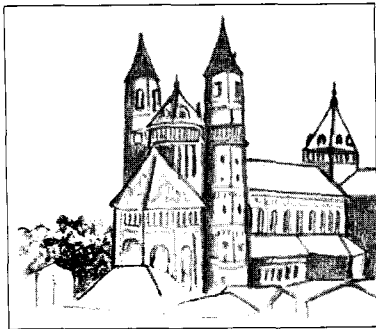
Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History tells of a certain Cerinthus who lived around A.D. 100: "But Cerinthus, by means of revelations which he pretended were written by a great apostle, also falsely pretended to wonderful things, as if they were showed him by angels, asserting, that after the resurrection there would be an earthly kingdom of Christ...again inhabiting Jerusalem...."¹ He said that there would be a space of a thousand years for the things he craved—eating, drinking, and marrying. This false interpretation of the millennium, or thousand-year reign, still confronts God's Church today.



Astrology



Mythology



Catholic Idolatry



Rituals



Pagan Government

Another heresy was a false interpretation of speaking in tongues. Eusebius also writes about it. "One of those who was but a recent convert, Montanus by name,...in the excessive desire of his soul to take the lead, gave the adversary occasion against himself. So that he was carried away in spirit, and wrought up into a certain kind of frenzy and irregular ecstasy, raving, and speaking, and uttering strange things, and proclaiming what was contrary to the institutions that had prevailed in the church, as handed down and preserved in succession from the earliest times."²

During the period of time from A.D. 150-200 there were two major challenges that tested the Church. They were known as Gnosticism and Montanism.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism represents a heresy, or departure from the truth, that is a mixture of Christian ideas and the pagan ideas of Greek mythology. The Gnostics were known for their emphasis on knowledge and worldly wisdom. Even the term comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning knowledge. They boasted of having deeper understanding of the Scriptures than the common people, yet they denied some basic doctrines held by the Church. They even maintained that Christ never dwelt on earth in human form. Irenaeus main-

tained that the man named Simon in Acts 8 was the Gnostic in the Church, and that the later development of this heresy in the second century was built on his teachings. With time it became evident that the ideas of the Gnostics were false and that those who followed them became worldly in heart and practice. After the leaders of this false doctrine were excommunicated, its influence gradually died out. There were many who left the Church to follow this new teaching. However, with the power of God, the faithful believers kept the doctrines of true Christianity alive.

Montanism

While Gnosticism was a mixture of ideas from paganism, Montanism was a heresy that grew from within the Church. Montanism grew out of the false teachings of Montanus, who lived in an area near Phrygia of Asia Minor. Montanus saw that many people in his day were not really living free from the ways of the world. Rather than helping to restore the original Christian teachings, he became radical in teaching extreme self-denial, much fasting, and eating no meat. It resembled the teachings of the Pharisees in Jesus' time. Finally, the Montanists rejected the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, believing that the promise was being fulfilled in themselves. They believed that soon the Lord

would return and it would be shown that the rest of the Church was wrong. It was the followers of Montanus who proved to be wrong. After several conferences were held, the Apostles' Creed was affirmed as official doctrine. The Apostles' Creed disproves both Gnosticism and Montanism. In time, those who taught these false doctrines were excommunicated as heretics, and

their influence on the Church gradually died out.

Although the early Church passed through severe trials from persecutions and deep controversies over false doctrine, it survived and remained true to God. It was their loyalty to the Bible as the Word of God and their obedience to the Holy Spirit that kept the believers victorious over the evils of their day.

1. Eusebius Pamphilus, *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*: Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1977, p. 113

2. Ibid. p. 196

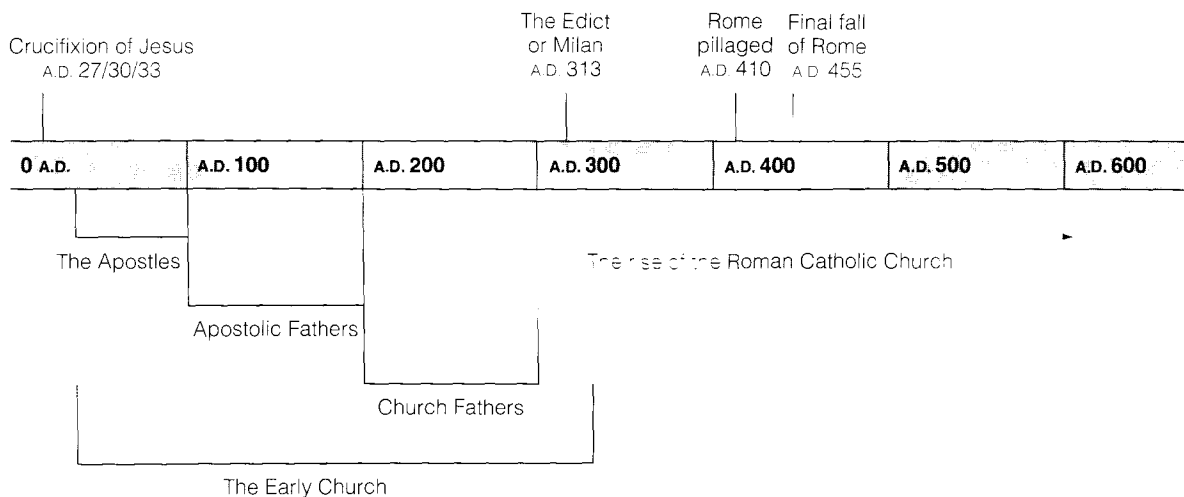
CHAPTER 6

The Rise of the Roman Church

As was described in the last chapter, the Church* was soon encountering false ideas and teachings. There needed to be a constant alertness to these dangers in order to maintain pure teachings and a scriptural separation from the world. A hundred years after Christ, the gospel story had been carried to all of the known world. The true Church was able to maintain its purity in the outlying countries such as Armenia, Bulgaria, and other places. However, in the larger cities such as Rome and Constantinople, many

began to depart from the true doctrine in various ways.

There is a distinct difference between the true Church of God and the state church, which professed the Christian religion but had deviated from the true way. Until Emperor Constantine's time, about A.D. 304, it was difficult to be a Christian. The Roman government imposed many laws Christians could not obey. One law was that people must sacrifice to idols and to heathen gods. Sometimes people were required to worship the emperor himself. Some emperors did





The Emperor Constantine

not enforce all these laws, and during their reign the Christians enjoyed more freedom. When an emperor arose who enforced these laws or when an emperor who hated the Christians came into power, life became more difficult for them.

Then came Emperor Constantine, who was more tolerant of Christians because of his own acquaintance with the Christian way of life. There were growing numbers of people in the Roman Empire who accepted the Christian religion, even though they only lived up to part of it. They could see that it gave them a better way of life than their old pagan religion. Such people, who accept the Christian religion but who are not converted

from the ways of the world, are known as nominal or professing Christians.

Constantine started a process that eventually led to a state church. In a state church, the civil government decides what religion people should follow, and church leaders are under the direction of government officials.

It is said that of the 120 million people in the Roman Empire at that time, about half were professing Christians. These people were happy to follow Constantine in his desire to promote a government-favored church. Professing Christians had attained high places in government, and many of them were soldiers in the Roman army. Now, under the new order, if a soldier became a conscientious objector (one who believes that war is wrong) and laid down his weapons, he was promptly excommunicated from the state-favored church and branded as a heretic.

The Roman Empire was involved in many wars, and some historians say that Emperor Constantine could not have fought his wars without the help of professing Christians. He felt he needed the Christians because the Roman Empire was entering a struggle for survival, and there were rivals for the throne. Therefore, Constantine decided to become a professing Christian himself. According to one historian, Constantine said that during one of his battles he saw a flaming cross in the sky and the words, "In this sign conquer." He began to fight his

was under a banner bearing a cross and the motto he was to have seen.

Constantine had his reasons for letting it be publicly known that he supported Christianity. He might have had a true sympathy for the Christian cause as he understood it, and he needed the help of the Christians. On the other hand, Constantine may have had political reasons for becoming a Christian. Since religion and government commonly went together, all the people had to belong to the religion the government favored. When a government combines the power of religion with political power, its influence is multiplied. It is then easier to control the people and stay in power.

Constantine should be remembered for one very special thing. In the year A.D. 313, he made a decree called The Edict of Milan, which granted freedom of religion to the people. This did not set up Christianity as the only official religion, nor did it forbid the practice of heathen religions. It did more than merely grant tolerance to the Christian believers: the government stopped its persecution of the

Christians and proclaimed freedom of conscience. It placed the early Church on an equal footing with the other religions in the empire. This gave the Church a time of rest, although some persecution continued toward those who believed the state church was no longer the true Church.

By adopting Christianity, Constantine gained the support of the Christian-professing leaders. This strengthened his position as emperor and gave him more respect and authority. In return, he supported the church leaders by encouraging the masses to become members of the state-favored church. The emperor offered a white garment and twenty pieces of gold to anyone who would be baptized into the church. This brought many people into the church and secured his position. These people came in because of material and social rewards; they were not required to meet the qualifications as set forth by Christ, the apostles, and the Apostolic Church. The large numbers baptized without the fruits of repentance and without the Spirit of God accelerated the deterioration of the state church.

* To distinguish between the churches, from this point on *church* will be capitalized when referring to the true Church, and will not be capitalized when referring to other churches unless the word is used as part of a proper noun.

The Roman Church and the Apostolic Church

It is certain that Constantine did not become a true Christian in his experience. He was not baptized until near to the end of his life. He did many things which have never been found in the true Church. He caused members of his own family to be put to death. At times he participated in pagan rites. At other times he took it upon himself to preside over certain church conferences because he was the emperor.

Many of the ministers and bishops in the church of Rome were becoming men of much influence. Some of

these were very rich. When Constantine made Christianity his profession, this opened many opportunities for them. They quickly moved to positions of power and influence within the government. The church and the state were in the process of being firmly joined into one ruling force.

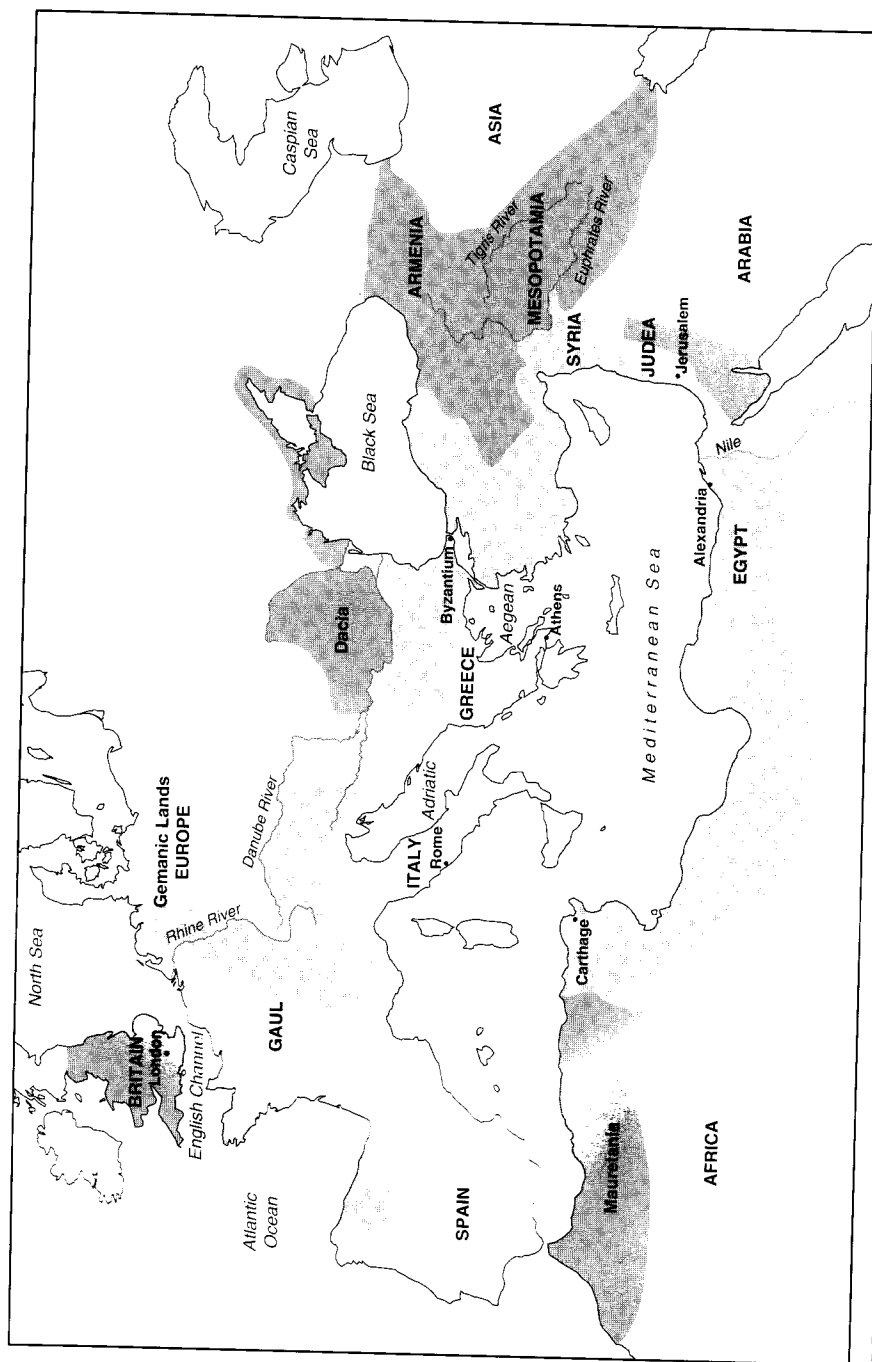
Great differences continued to be in evidence between the Apostolic Church and the church of Rome. Following is a list of some of the principle differences:

The Apostolic Church

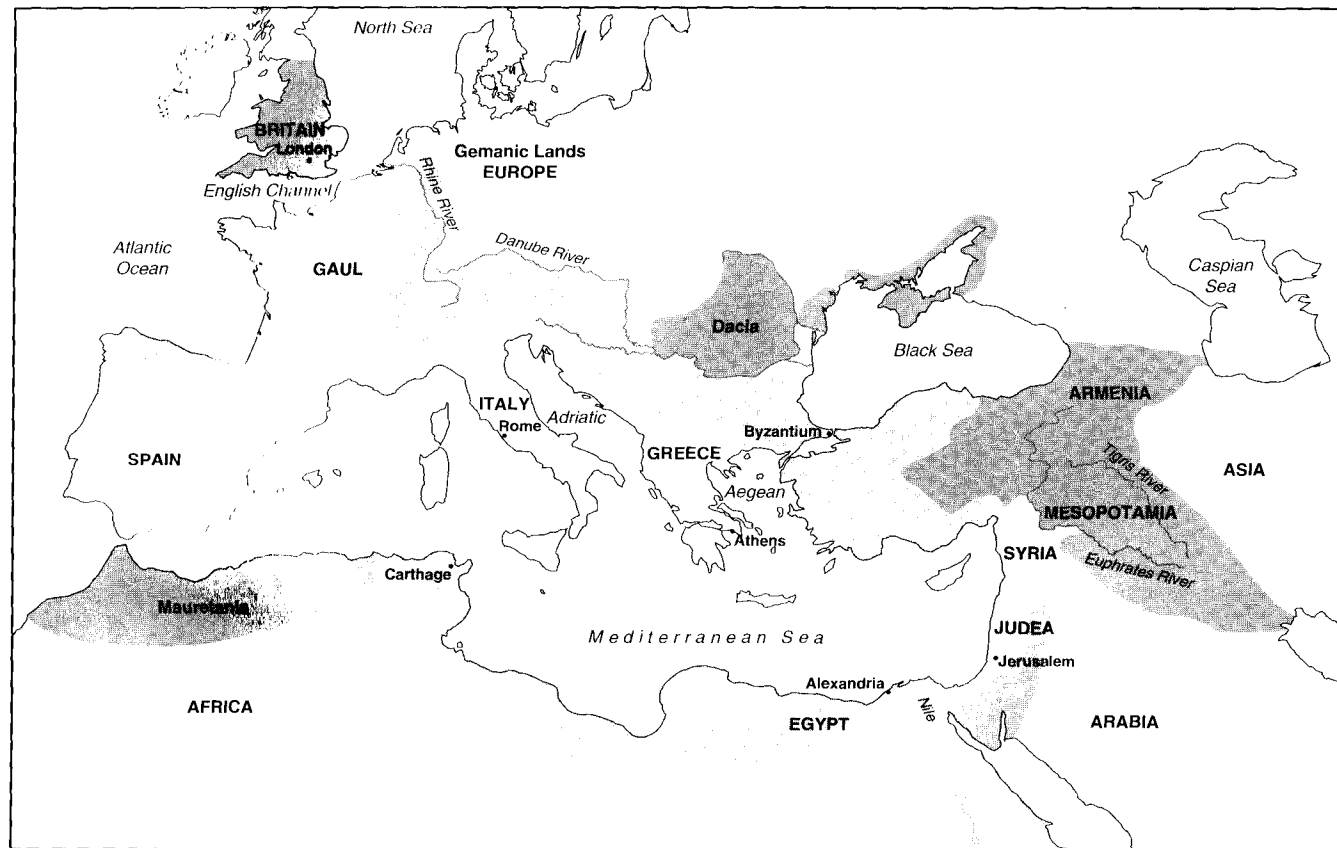
1. Took no part in government.
2. Remained nonresistant; did not fight or defend herself.
3. Disciplined disobedient members.
4. Believed in separation from the world.
5. Was willing to be lowly and despised.
6. Baptized only upon true repentance and confession of faith.

The Roman Church

1. Became active in government.
2. Had many soldiers in the army; encouraged the use of force.
3. Tolerated disobedient members.
4. Adopted worldly pagan practices.
5. Became proud and arrogant in power.
6. Baptized infants.



Map A
The Roman Empire at its greatest extent, about A.D. 117.



Map A
The Roman Empire at its greatest extent, about A.D. 117.

Sometimes it has been said that the Church, or a part of the Church, apostatized in the time of Constantine. Actually, the greater part of the apostasy had taken place earlier, but it became more evident during the reign of Constantine.

About this time, the practice of infant baptism became popular in the Roman church. The rulers of the empire wanted to make sure that everyone belonged to the state church, so they insisted that all babies be baptized into that church. They claimed this made them Christians and that without it they could not be saved. True Christians believed in being baptized only after they had repented of their sins and had found forgiveness through faith in Christ. The true Church firmly believed that baptism was valid and scriptural only after a person realized that he had sinned, had a sinful nature, and had thoroughly repented, thus showing a changed life and spirit (1 Peter 3:21).

It was this Church that remained true to the apostolic teaching and remained separate from the state church. Years earlier, a minister by the name of Novatian had taken a stand against the drift from Christ's teaching. He would not accept the baptism of the apostate church as valid because he could see how it had drifted from the truth. Novatian baptized those who came to the Church, even if they had previously been baptized. There were scattered Christians who



The Roman Church required that all babies be baptized.

testified that the popular churches were taking on worldly ways and therefore could not be called the true Church. The faithful believers who had remained separate from the apostate group believed that the truth was with them because they held to the teachings of Christ and the apostles.

This was also the teaching of those Christians called Donatists, who were numerous in Africa. The Donatists baptized everyone who joined them, even if they had previously been baptized. The church at Rome did not like this, but the Donatists believed that they alone were the true Church.

They especially pointed out the lack of discipline in the church of Rome.

Many people believed that the church of Rome continued to be the true Church of God, even though it had departed from the truth. Those who believed that way were not concerned about dealing with sin in their churches. They believed that a church can continue being God's Church even though it does not separate (excommunicate) disobedient and sinful members. In the true Church, sin must be repented of with the evidence of forgiveness. Those who do not repent must be excommunicated and avoided, according to the Scriptures, until they find repentance. The Christians of the third and fourth centuries who were faithful in keeping the Church pure continued to be God's true Church.

When the true Church insisted upon rebaptizing converts who had already been baptized in some other church, those professing Christians from the popular state church began to refer to them as *Anabaptists*. The prefix *ana* is Latin for *re*; so Anabaptist means *rebaptizer*. Although this was a word coined by the brethren's enemies to make fun of them, there is no term that better identifies them through the centuries that followed. The Donatists have been called "the original Anabaptists" (although Novatian preceded them and the Donatists were influenced by him and the Church of his time). This teaching of believers' baptism became a major

issue which for many centuries caused the Christians to be attacked and to suffer persecution. Through it all, they remained true to their belief that baptism was valid only upon sincere repentance and confession of faith.

In the year A.D. 384, a Christian named Priscilian was accused by the Roman church of various things of which he was not guilty. When he reproved them of the error of their ways, the Roman church used its influence with the civil authorities to have Priscilian, together with seven other brethren, put to death for what was called heresy. Jesus said in John 16:2-3, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." By their very actions, they confirmed that they did not know or follow God and His Son. They were not God's children and, therefore, could not be His Church.

There were still leaders in the church of Rome who objected to the persecution of the believers. Nevertheless, the Roman church was entering a long, dark period of time in which persecution would be used in dealing with the religious groups it opposed. In the following centuries, many thousands of Christians were put to death because of their faith. The persecution that followed was indeed a tragic development, and the agony the Christians suffered makes a long, sad story.

CHAPTER 8

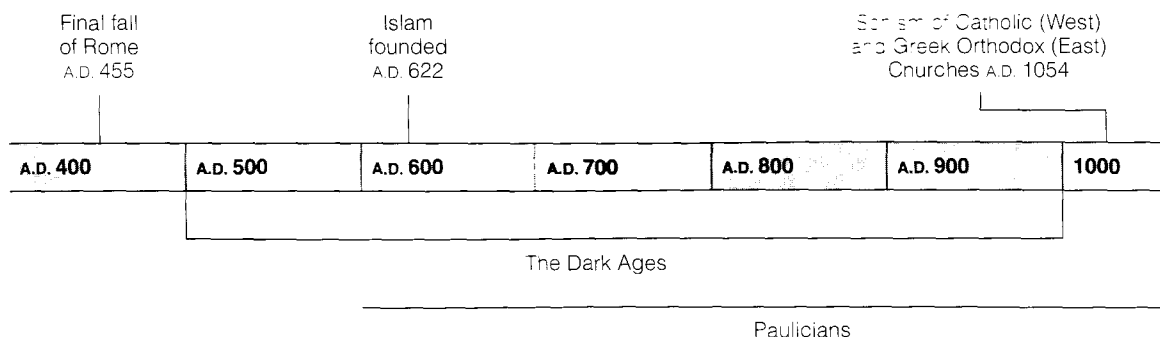
The Dark Ages

The period of history from about A.D. 500 to A.D. 1000 is commonly referred to as the Dark Ages. After the fall of the great Roman Empire, Europe and Asia were plunged into political disorder. Nations were not able to rise to strength, and government was mostly confined to large plantations or estates under the power of noblemen, called lords. The serfs, or peasants, lived on the land and were not allowed to leave. It was a warlike society with well-trained armored soldiers, called knights, who served the noblemen. There was very little travel and almost no education for the com-

mon people. For hundreds of years Christian believers endured a very restricted life that had few comforts.

The Apostolic Church

The Scripture teaches that the Church of Jesus Christ will continue until the end of time. A look in history reveals signs of the true Church throughout the first ten centuries after Christ. It is difficult to find accurate records of this time because the true Church was often under persecution and dared not keep many records. Also, there was very little transportation





Christians endured great persecution during the Dark Ages.

and communication from one locality to another. Whenever their books and writings were found, they were destroyed by their enemies. Much of the evidence showing that the Church continued in truth comes from enemies of the Church, through court records of trials and other writings. These records, though critical and unfair, often are enough to establish the beliefs and pureness of the brethren. Even the names the world used to designate

these groups tell much about them.

Some of these people were called Cathars, which means "cleansed" or "pure"; Bogomils, which means "friends of God"; others were called Paulicians because they often quoted and applied the writings of Paul. There were groups scattered throughout many countries, namely, Armenia, France, Spain, and Bulgaria. The *Martyrs Mirror* records faithful brethren dying for the faith in these and other countries. The Donatists, likewise, tried

to maintain the same standard of purity in the Church as the time of the apostles. This group remained in existence until the seventh century. Still other groups which endeavored to maintain the purity of the true Church were the Novatians and the Apostolics.

In Asia Minor the emperor issued a decree of execution against a minister named Sylvanus and his congregation in A.D. 684. He sent his officer, named Simeon, to put this decree into effect. In order to put special significance on the execution of Sylvanus, Simeon supplied a number of Sylvanus' friends with stones. There was a young man named Justus present, who had been brought up and treated with special kindness as the adopted son of Sylvanus. This Justus flung a stone and killed his benefactor, winning high praise and reward from the authorities, who compared him with David slaying Goliath.

Simeon was impressed by all he saw and heard while conversing with the Christians. He was convinced of their righteousness and the truth of their doctrine. Returning to the city of Constantinople, he could find no peace of soul. After three years of inward conflict he abandoned his way of life and returned to the former country of Sylvanus. He repented of his past life and took up the work of the man whom he had caused to be executed. It was not long until he, too, joined the company of martyrs.

Justus, with his knowledge of the

brethren, gave information which led to the capture of a large number of Christians. Expecting to scare the rest of the so-called heretics into submission, the emperor had all of them burned at one time. Simeon was one of the number. The patience and endurance of the sufferers, however, defeated the emperor's plan. The death of so many Christians at one time fanned the faith and courage of many into a flame of devotion and testimony. Many others became true Christians, and the believers increased in numbers.

An Armenian named Sembert, who lived in the eighth century, became so prominent in his ministry that he has been referred to as the father of the Paulicians. However, there is evidence of the Paulician Church in the seventh century. No doubt Sembert was a leader in that church rather than its founder. The Paulicians remained in existence until the thirteenth century. Some historians say the Paulician Church later became the people of the Waldenses. That cannot be proven, but we can see that the same doctrines were practiced and taught by both groups.

Sergius was a man of strong conviction who lived and taught during the ninth century. Though he worked as a carpenter, he visited almost every part of the central highlands of Asia Minor before he was finally put to death by his enemies. His writings were greatly valued and read.

These great men of faith labored

diligently in the Church to preserve its apostolic purity, carefully teaching its doctrines. It was during this time that the book *The Key of Truth* was written. This book gave a vivid picture of the beliefs and practices of the Paulicians. For centuries they suffered patiently the dreadful wrongs inflicted upon them and did not retaliate.

These groups which maintained the doctrines of the true Church of God did not recognize any baptism other than their own. Many times these groups were named after their minister, leader, or location. They all came under the name of Anabaptists. They baptized, upon the confession of their faith, only those who were born again.

Islam

Another major religion, known as Islam, began during the Dark Ages. Its founder, Muhammad, taught his new ideas for many years in the town of Mecca, Arabia.

After A.D. 610, Muhammad gained a substantial following as he began to preach that he was the latest prophet sent from God. He rejected idolatry and taught that all men are equal and are brothers. He rejected Jesus as God's Son, claiming Christ was a prophet like Abraham and Moses. He called his god Allah and his religion Islam. The followers of Islam are called Muslims.

Since Muhammad felt that he was God's latest messenger, he rejected and


persecuted all who professed to believe in Christ. His bloody sword persuaded people to become his followers. His beliefs suddenly found acceptance in Arabia, his homeland. He organized armies which swept on to Syria, Palestine, Persia, Egypt, and North Africa. As these nations fell, Christianity was driven from the area which had cradled it. Slavery and polygamy were permitted. Even today the social status of women in Muslim countries is low. There are millions of Muslims (Muhammadans) in the Middle East today, and many more are scattered throughout the whole world.

The Roman Church

During the ninth and tenth centuries, the Roman Church experienced further decline. The papacy was filled by men who did not hesitate to commit any evil or injustice imaginable. They stole other men's wives. They robbed whomever they could. They bribed any and all who would accept their stolen money, and some even bought their way into power. Then they announced to the world that the pope was lord of Christendom and could do no wrong! The armies of the Roman pope brutally overthrew the armies of the Greek church at Constantinople. The Greek church resented this treatment and finally, in A.D. 1054, broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and refused to be united with it. Both churches remain until today.

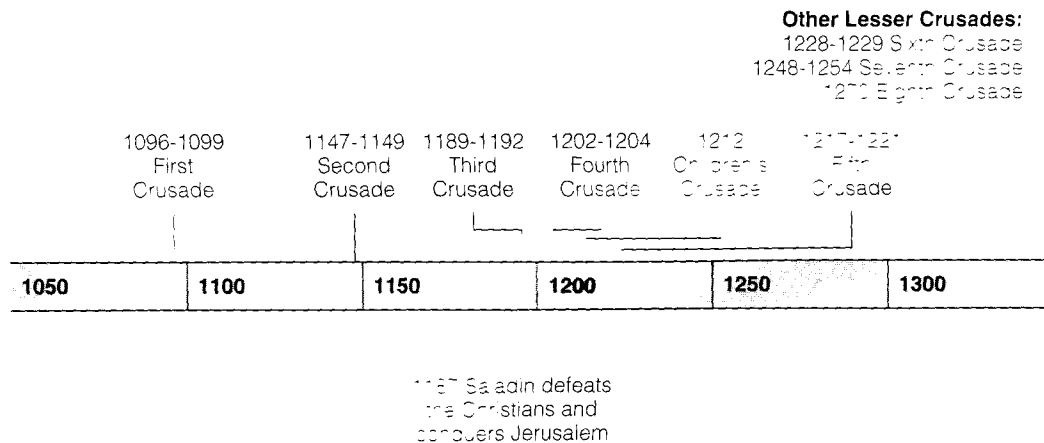
CHAPTER 9

The Crusades

 person living near a main road in southern Europe in the year 1095 and in the years following would have seen many different kinds of people—knights, serfs, peasants, monks, nobles, merchants, and criminals—traveling toward Jerusalem.

In the early 700s the Muslims had captured the Holy Land and had ruled the country. During this time many so-called Christians had made pilgrimages to Jerusalem and other

places in Palestine. In the eleventh century, a less tolerant group of Turkish Muslims became rulers of Palestine. They began to persecute the pilgrims, making it very difficult for many of them. The Roman Catholic Church, which encouraged these pilgrimages, became alarmed with this situation. Furthermore, the Turks, whom the Roman Catholic Church called infidels, were a warring people and were advancing toward Europe. The leaders of the Catholic



church encouraged the people to take up arms and fight.

In 1095, Pope Urban II convened a church council at Clermont in France. He urged the people to take up the sword and deliver the Holy Sepulcher (Jesus' tomb) from the hands of the infidels. Being a gifted orator, he excited the people with his speech, and they responded by crying out, "It is the will of God." The pope then proclaimed this their rallying cry. They were to place a white cross on their homes and also to wear one as they joined the Crusades, or holy wars. To encourage the people to go, the pope promised that this journey to the Holy Land would take the place of all penance for sin. This meant that the humiliation and self-denial the transgressor must go through, according to Catholic teaching, in order to be reinstated in favor with God was no longer considered necessary. Furthermore, if the Crusader lost his life on the way or in a battle, he was assured of immediately going to heaven. They were persuaded that the Lord would surely bless them on their journey and give them prompt victory over the infidels.



The Crusades were encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church, and many people took part in them.

Many other advantages were also promised the Crusaders.

Historians list four major Crusades and four minor ones over a period of two hundred years. Of the first group of Crusaders traveling across Germany and Hungary, many thousands died of hunger and exposure on the march. Those who crossed the Strait of Bosphorus were surprised by the Turks, and almost all were slaughtered. While the first group was traveling, an army of about 300,000 was gathering in western Europe under

various dukes and knights. They marched across Europe and into Asia Minor, where many died along the way. They finally arrived in Palestine in 1099, and Jerusalem was captured with a terrible slaughter.

About 90 years later, Jerusalem was again captured by the Muslims, and the Crusaders were unable to regain it. People in Europe began to think that God wasn't blessing their endeavors because the Crusaders had sinned in their lives. They thought if innocent children went there, it would be successful. The children, who had the same attitude as their parents, became excited about delivering Jerusalem. Most of them were boys under twelve years of age, but there were also many girls.

Somewhere between twenty to forty thousand German children set out. Many died or turned back. Those who continued down the shore of Italy were looking for a miraculous pathway through the sea to Palestine. The children who reached Rome were persuaded by the pope to return home. It became known as the Children's Crusade. About 30,000 French children set out, with no concept of how far it was to the Holy Land. Whenever a city came into view, they would eagerly ask if it was Jerusalem. The children arrived at the Mediterranean Sea and were disappointed that it did not open up as the Red Sea had before the children of Israel. Most of the children turned

back, but five or six thousand accepted the proposal of some merchants who offered them free passage to the Holy Land. They were crowded into seven ships and taken to various places, where they were sold as slaves. The passengers of two of the ships perished in shipwrecks. Few, if any, of the children ever returned home.

Although true Christians were not directly involved in the Crusades, they were affected by the outcome of the wars. The Crusades are important in understanding the historical setting at the close of the Dark Ages. The Crusades helped bring about the closing of the Dark Ages. As Europeans were exposed to life beyond their borders, they began to explore new avenues of learning and to expand the trading of goods throughout the world. European nations began to form out of the crumbling empire controlled by the Catholic noblemen.

Peter Waldo

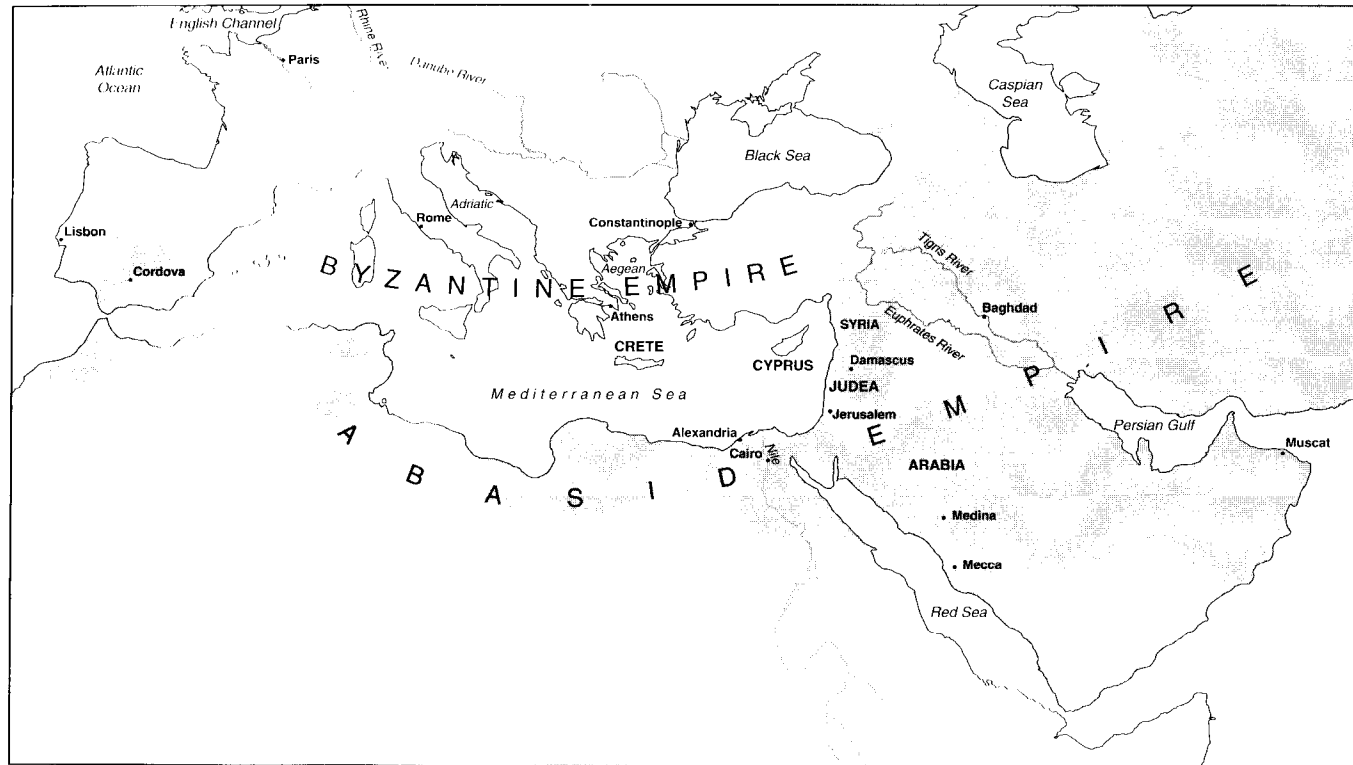
During the time of these Crusades, Peter Waldo (about 1140-1218) was converted and began proclaiming the truth. The true Christians, who were known as the Waldenses, spread rapidly. Pope Urban III at Rome was very displeased with this and instituted severe persecutions against them. He used some of the same methods to incite the people against the true Christians that the former popes had used to persuade their people to go



**Statue of Peter Waldo
in Worms, Germany.**

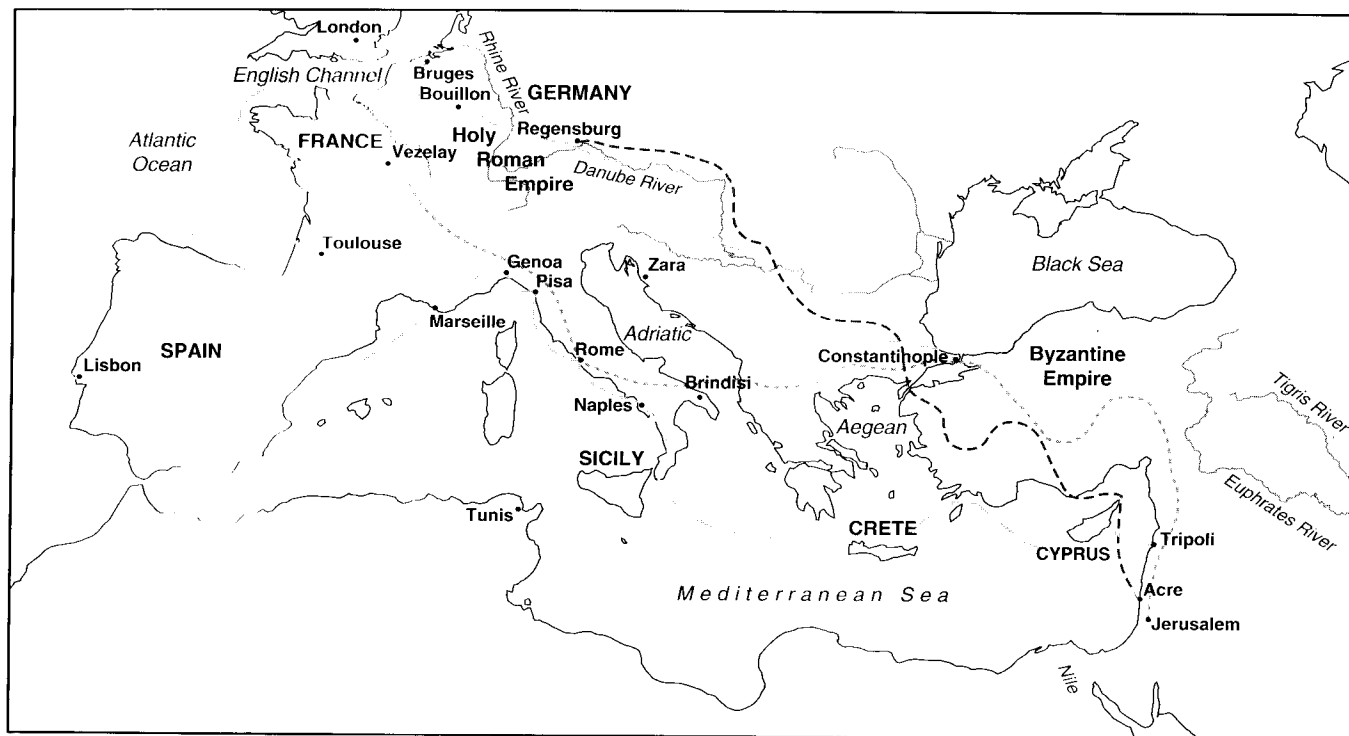
on the Crusades. The pope promised similar favors for those who would help exterminate the Waldenses and Albigenses, who were Christians from another area. This had the effect of causing many people to hunt and destroy the Waldenses, not even sparing the babies.¹ The words of Jesus were being fulfilled when He said, “The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service” (John 16:2).

1. *Martyrs Mirror*, p. 304



Map B

The Islamic World approximately 9th and 10th century A.D., as encountered by the Crusaders.



Map C
Routes of the Crusaders.

The Church Survives



ur faith in God is strengthened when we see how He has preserved the Church in the face of all the opposition she has received. At times she was torn from one side, then from the other. Her doctrines were ridiculed. Sacred writings were burned in public bonfires. Leaders were hunted as criminals, often with a reward offered for them—dead or alive! Still converts turned to the Church in increasing numbers. Christ's Church grew faster than the resistance could destroy her. Jesus stated once, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

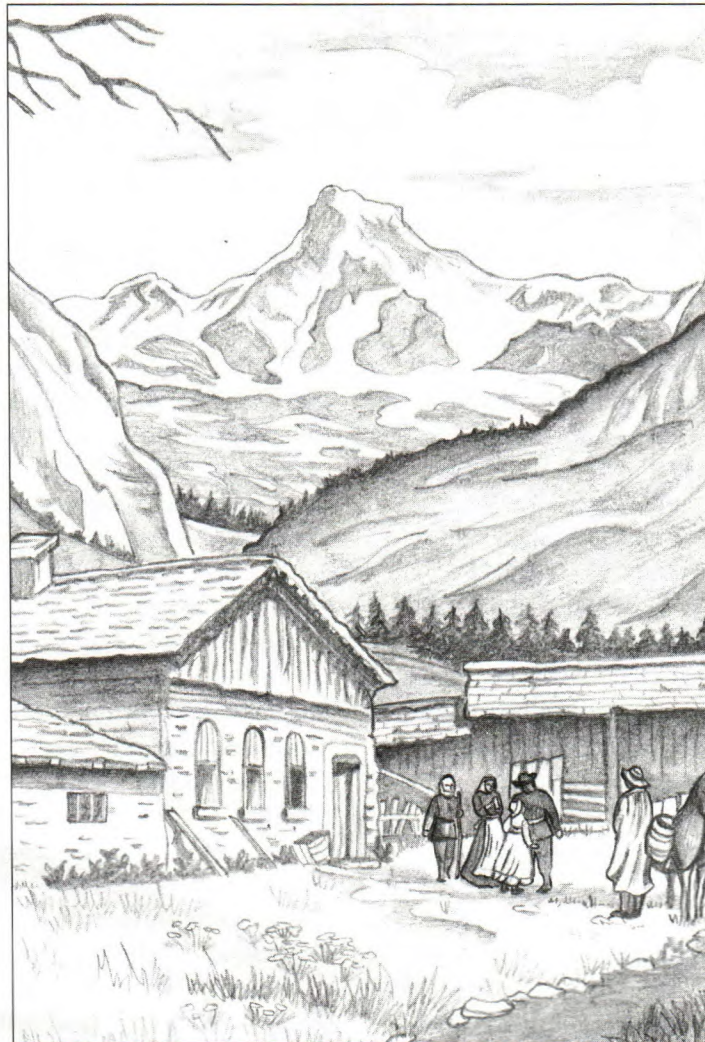
The Church which Jesus established was composed of believers only. They knew Jesus, not just as a good man, but as their personal Savior and Lord. They believed His doctrine, had faith in His promises, and were faithful and obedient to Him.

The church known as the Roman Catholic Church lost the vision of true repentance and was no longer composed of born-again believers. Infant baptism was accepted, and eventually force was applied to insure that everyone would be baptized. Nominal Christianity, a mixture of

pagan rites and Christian practices, became the accepted way of life over much of Europe and parts of Asia.

As the power of the Roman church leaders increased, they came to consider the members of that church as their subjects. The New Testament teaching to love one another and not to esteem one higher than the other was lost. A powerful hierarchy developed. This system of authority was like a pyramid, with the pope at the top, followed by cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, ministers, and finally, the laity. A man who rose to the position of pope was thought to be infallible. In general, these priests, bishops, and even the popes, were men who were determined to achieve wealth and honor regardless of what was right or wrong.

The people were taught that they could not contact God directly and that only the priest had access to Him. They were to receive God's blessing through the priest when they took Communion, were baptized or married, or were blessed in a special ceremony. They ignored the teaching of the new birth and obedience to Jesus. Under this system, salvation was to be earned through works as



**Anabaptist teachers travelled about and taught. Many
Waldenses lived in the Alpine valleys**

required by the church. Religion of the heart was being lost and was being replaced with ritual.

There were many restless hearts who were not satisfied. There was a

continual seeking for the truth.

There were those who felt that if they could lay aside all earthly cares and give themselves completely to the church, they would satisfy the longing

in their hearts. Both men and women sacrificed their ordinary way of life to enter monasteries and convents. These are places where monks and nuns live during and after their training. They gave up the right to home and family life, private property, independence, and freedom, hoping that by performing good works they would find peace of heart. These acts of self-denial were attempts to soothe the restlessness within, but they were empty and meaningless.

At this time not many Bibles were available because they had to be copied by hand. Those that were available were usually written in Latin or Greek instead of the common languages of the people. Moreover, the common people were unable to read. Even the priests were discouraged from reading the Scriptures. Because of these conditions, the masses did not have direct access to the Word of God, and worship was only in form.

Through these trying times, God miraculously preserved His Word and His Church (Matthew 24:35). There were always Christians who did not follow the practices of the Catholic church; they tried to live pure lives in spite of the corruption about them. Sometimes their numbers were few and the groups were scattered, but they kept the true faith. From time to time, there would be a revival in God's Church. Often this would be followed by a wave of persecution.

It is inspiring to discover that

toward the end of the Dark Ages, the Waldenses left a clear witness of Christian life in spite of the pressures of the world in their day. One historian, who wrote especially about their godly approach to education, says, "A third group that put God at the center of education was the Waldenses. Against a worldly, secularized church, with Rome for its authority, a body of witnesses in the Alpine valleys of Piedmont silently protested and continued through the centuries to preach and teach the Bible, uninfluenced by the relations existing between church and state. Always they were persecuted, but always they survived...."

"They considered the Scriptures to be binding for all time and not rendered obsolete by change of circumstances. They were well versed in Scripture, and maintained its supremacy over the traditions of men. Their whole life in thought and action seemed to be devoted to the task of holding fast the character of original Christian teaching...."

"Always and everywhere they observed the practice of regular individual reading of the Bible, regular daily family worship, and regular instruction of children in Bible truth.

"They were earnest teachers of the Word of God, going about by twos from house to house, teaching whole families the Word. Laymen among them did the work of teachers."¹

Thus the Christian Church survived through history. The Jews bitter-

ly opposed her since her beginning.
Islam uprooted her from a portion of
the earth, but she moved on to flourish
in another area. The Roman
Empire tried to crush her, but it could
not. The Roman Empire crumbled
into decay, but the Church remains

until today. Sometimes the light has
been very dim, but the Church has
never been overpowered. She will
never be conquered by the powers of
darkness. The bride of Christ will
remain until Christ returns to take
her to heaven to be with Him forever.

Anabaptist Faith

Tested and troubled, weary and worn;
Hunted and hated, never forlorn.
Greatly despised and not understood;
Hiding in forests, caves, or in wood.
Tethered and tempted, drowned in the lake;
Tortured and torn, then burned at the stake.

Father, such faith!—these children of Thine;
Rooted and grounded, faith divine.
Strengthened by Thee, made strong by the storms;
Followed Thy Word, refused other forms.
Radiant eyes intent on the prize,
Waiting beyond the cloud-covered skies.

Father, with shame we look in Thy face—
We, what a thoughtless, unthankful race!
Showered with blessings, placed here in peace;
Lacking in zeal and wanting release.
Forward, yes, forward now let us go.
Let us not wait for strong winds to blow.

Lois Ellen Miller
used by permission

1. C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education*: Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1964, pp.117-118

CHAPTER 11

Anabaptist Groups

There were a number of church groups in history that were known as Anabaptists. The word *anabaptist* is from a Greek word meaning *rebaptizer*. The Anabaptist groups had the practice of baptizing everyone who got converted and joined the Church, even if they had been baptized before as infants or in another church. Enemies of the Church used this term to identify such churches that could not accept the baptism of the state church. Other doctrines that identified the Anabaptists were also important. They believed the Bible was the final authority in all matters of doctrine and Christian life. They believed church membership should be voluntary, and only for those who truly repented of their sins and were converted.

Bogomils

In the tenth century a large number of people moved into Bulgaria to inhabit the lands taken from the Russians. The believers in this group felt they should be witnesses of their faith and do as Christ had commanded. They preached to those about them and organized congregations over a

wide area. Because of their vision of the purity of the Church and the commission to teach all nations, these people came to be known as Bogomils, which means “friends of God.”

A Christian named Basil, who was a physician, lived at this time and taught by example that everyone should work to earn his own living. In this way he rebuked those lazy men who made religion an excuse for begging. Basil preached and taught untiringly for about 40 years (1070-1111). After this period of uninterrupted ministry, he received a message from the emperor, telling him he admired his character. The emperor claimed to be interested in Basil’s teaching and pretended he wanted to be converted. He sent an invitation to Basil for a private interview in the palace of Constantinople. Believing the emperor’s sincerity, Basil accepted the invitation. A discussion of the doctrines took place in which Basil spoke with the freedom of one addressing an eager inquirer. Suddenly the emperor drew aside a curtain and revealed a writer who had taken down the conversation for evidence. A servant was ordered to put Basil in chains and cast him into prison. Here Basil

remained for a number of years. Because he refused to recant any of the truths he had been preaching, he was burned in the public hippodrome in Constantinople. During this time, many Bogomils were burned or imprisoned for life because they refused to give up the faith.

There is no evidence that these Christians were guilty of any wicked practices. It was generally admitted, even by their enemies, that their standard of life and morality was superior to that which prevailed around them. These were the practices which attracted many who failed to find that which satisfied them in the state church. Their churches had neither bells nor altar, but only a table upon which lay a copy of the Gospels. A part of the money earned by the brethren was set aside for the relief of those who were sick or poor among them, as well as for the support of those who traveled to preach the gospel among the unconverted. These Christians kept contact with their fellow believers in Italy, France, Bohemia, Flanders, England, and in other parts of Europe.

Albigenses

In southern France, northern Spain, and northern Italy, there were groups known as Albigenses, or Cathars (the pure). They were bold in reproving the priests and members of the Roman church for their idolatry.



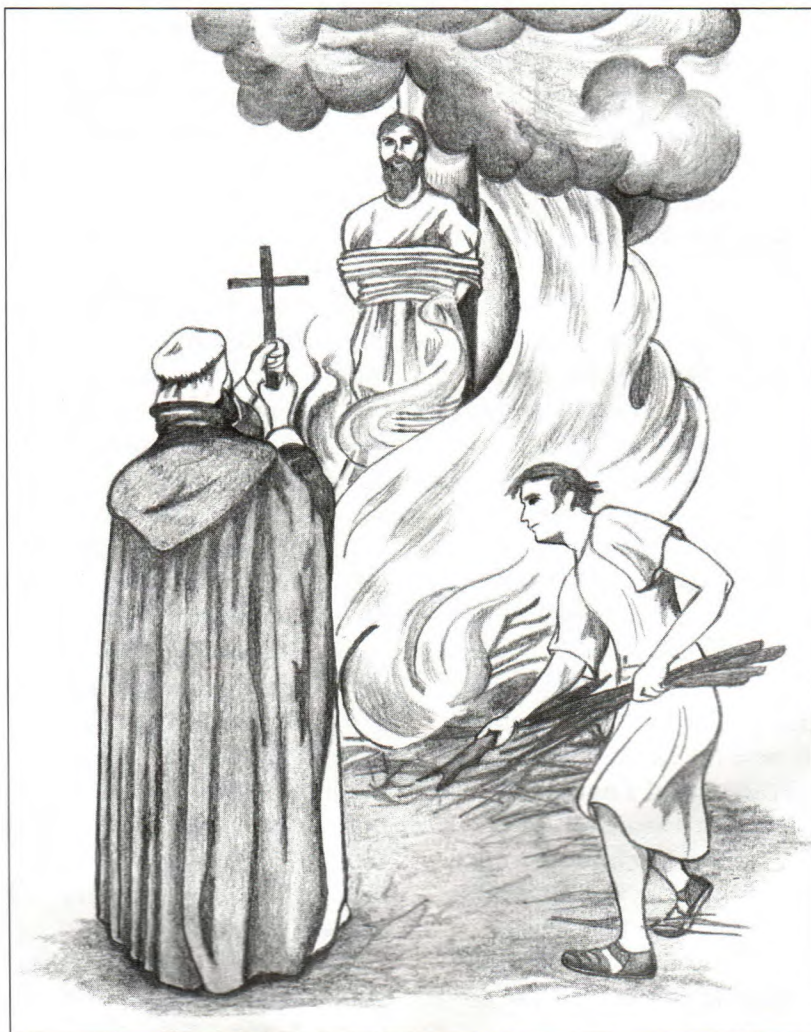
Pope Innocent III reigned from 1198 to 1216. During his papacy, the Roman Catholic Church reached its greatest heights of temporal power. Pope Innocent III, like Pope Urban II, launched persecution against the Waldenses and Albigenses.

They believed the priests were using the church as a means to gain power for themselves. The system of rule with the pope as the head came to be known as the papacy. The Albigenses claimed that the papacy had come between God and the people. They taught that each individual was able to come directly before God. They lived self-denied lives according to the teachings of Jesus and His disciples.

The Albigenses were very numerous by the year 1200. In 1208 Pope

Innocent III ordered a crusade to exterminate them. The bloody years which followed have scarcely been paralleled in history. Town after town

was destroyed and everyone murdered regardless of whether they were men or women, old or young. By 1229 the Inquisition was in progress; within 100



Many true Christians were burned at stake during the Inquisition. Christians were offered leniency if they would recant, and often they were tormented with such offers until their dying moments.

years the Albigenses were almost entirely crushed.

The Inquisition, also called the Holy Office, was a court system used by the Roman Catholic Church to detect and punish heretics. They considered anyone a heretic who did not agree with the church leaders. Everyone was required to inform against heretics. Anyone taken as a suspect was subject to torture. Prisoners were not told who had reported them. After a secret trial, the accused were imprisoned and tortured or burned publicly. Their property was divided between the state and the church. The Inquisition was used by the popes to maintain their power and to crush dissent.

Pope Innocent III is believed to have been the most powerful of all the popes. He claimed to be the vicar of Christ, the supreme sovereign over the church and the world. He claimed authority over kings and rulers. He claimed power over all things in heaven, in hell, and on earth. The kings of Germany, France, and England, as well as almost every monarch of Europe were subject to him. Few men have ever controlled as vast an empire or exerted as much power.

The papacy was guilty of hideous crimes of evil and of the blood of thousands of martyrs. Pope Innocent III was anything but innocent! He actively used his power. He ordered one of the crusades. He declared that the bread and wine used in the com-

munion service changed into the actual body and blood of Christ. This is called transubstantiation. Pope Innocent III demanded confession of sins to the priest for forgiveness. He declared that the pope could do no wrong. He forbade the reading of the Bible in the everyday language of the people, and he required it to be read only in Latin.

Waldenses

The outstanding Anabaptist group of the Middle Ages is known as the Waldenses. There are more written records and evidence remaining of their beliefs and teachings than from other early Anabaptist groups. In statements they made before government officials, they witnessed to their belief that the Church had existed from the apostles' time. Even their Roman Catholic critics and persecutors could not completely deny this. They admitted to the possibility that the Anabaptists really had existed since that time. This lineage could only be claimed by tracing it through the brethren called Cathars, Paulicians. Apostolics, and other Anabaptist groups.

Peter Waldo (about 1140-1218) was a successful merchant and banker of Lyons, France. At a feast he was giving, one of his friends died suddenly, causing Peter Waldo to see his need of salvation. He became so interested in the Scriptures that he employed clerks to

translate them into the Roman dialect. He had them make copies of it by hand, since the printing press had not yet been invented. As he became acquainted with the Word of God, he had an experience of true conversion. He gave his land to his wife. Other property was sold, and the money was given to the poor. After spending some time in study of the Scripture, he and some of the brethren went on a preaching tour. By 1177, some of the brethren from Lyons were preaching in Frankfurt and Nuremburg, Germany, as well as in Bohemia. Peter Waldo traveled and preached until 1218, when he died in Bohemia.

Peter Waldo was an outstanding leader of the Waldenses. Many historians even call him the founder of that church. Others believe that this group derived its name from the word *Vallenses*, which means "people of the valleys," because many of them lived in the Alpine villages of the Piedmont, or northern Italy.¹

Peter Waldo was held in high esteem among them, but he was not their founder. After his conversion to Christ and after he made a diligent study of the Scriptures, he joined the true believers. He was able to help unite them in doctrine and inspired them to become a powerful influence for the cause of Christ.²

It has already been noted that, as the Roman Catholic Church grew and became stronger, it left the doctrine of true repentance as a requirement for baptism. Instead, they baptized infants, making them members of the Catholic church. The death sentence was passed on any who dared to leave the Roman Catholic Church or who refused to become members. Historians estimate the number of martyrs to total in the millions.

The term *Waldenses* prevailed for several hundred years and was still in use in the year 1500, but in the sixteenth century (1500-1600), the word *Anabaptist* was much more common.

1. John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe*, Scottdale, Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1950, p. 4

2. E. H. Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church*, Basingstoke, Hants, England: Pickering and Inglis, Ltd., 1985, pp. 85-101

CHAPTER 12

The Waldenses: Their Life and Beliefs

The Waldenses held the Word of God in highest regard. Because Bibles were not plentiful before the invention of the printing press, they committed large portions of the Scripture to memory. Many members of the Waldensian Church could recite whole books of the Bible. The Waldenses believed that the Sermon on the Mount was the Christian's rule book of life. They taught the principle of nonresistance and did not permit going to law before civil courts. They would take no part in civil government or accept worldly offices. The swearing of oaths was held to be explicitly forbidden by Christ. Attending places of worldly amusement, such as the ballroom or theater, was not tolerated. Church discipline was, generally, strictly administered. "He who goes to a dance," says an old Waldensian church writing, "is going in company with the devil." Their ministers were unsalaried, and most of them supported themselves in ordinary occupations such as farming, woodworking, or animal raising. Church order was practiced in

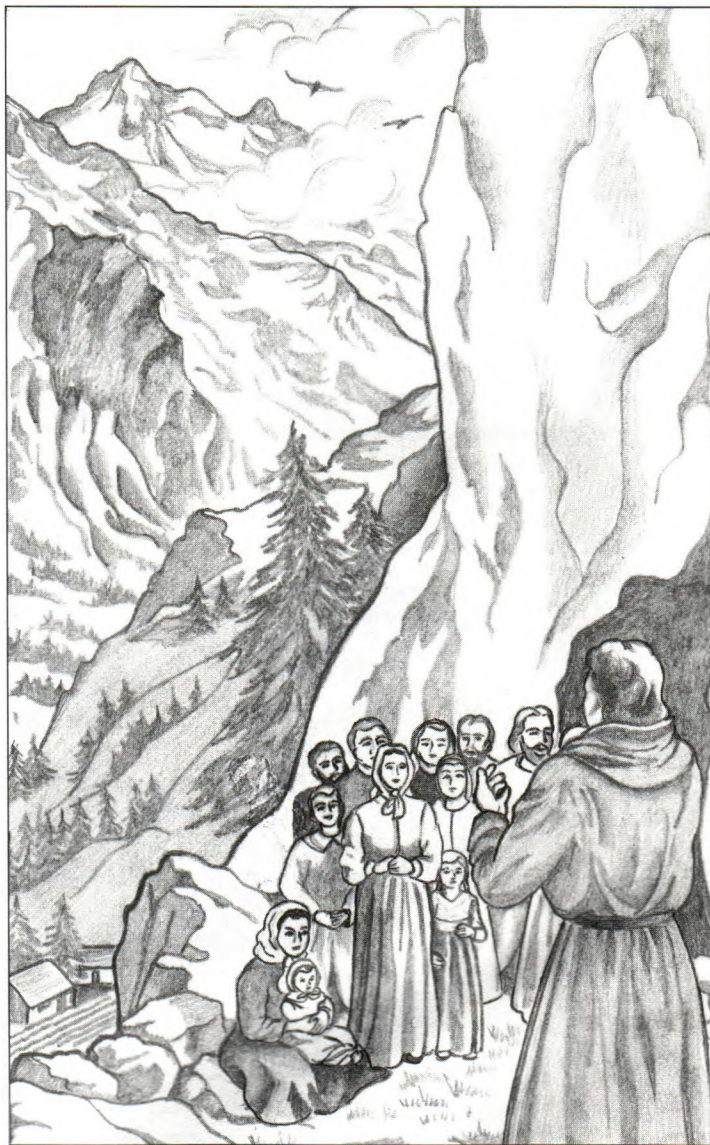
simplicity. In the appointment of elders, as well as in matters of discipline or in any other problems, the whole brotherhood took an active part together with the leaders. All believers participated in the Lord's Supper. The bread and wine were regarded as a remembrance of the broken body and the spilled blood of their dear Lord. The Communion service was also considered a strong exhortation to the members to yield themselves to be broken and poured out for Christ's sake. They believed that baptism did not save children, for the Bible says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), and children cannot yet believe. They believed that the laying on of hands should be practiced on those who were truly called and were being ordained into office.

Regular individual reading of the Scriptures, daily family worship, church worship services, and church conferences were among the most highly valued means of maintaining spiritual life.

Practices and beliefs of the primi-

tive Church were characteristic of the Waldenses. Because the Waldenses were so numerous, they were included when Pope Innocent III organized a crusade to eliminate the Albigenses from the world. The result was that Waldenses were scattered throughout Europe, where they survived in small groups. However, great numbers died in this persecution, praising God in confident assurance of a blessed resurrection.

In 1415 a group of Waldenses became tired of the persecution by the pope and his soldiers. They decided to do something about it. They organized an army which went out to fight the pope's army. This group of Waldenses won, but their brethren rejected them because they had rejected the doctrine of nonresistance.



Some of the Waldenses found refuge in the high valleys of the Alps.

Some of the Waldenses found refuge in the high valleys of the Alps, where some who are known by this name are still to be found.

About 1440, the printing press was invented. The first printing presses were chiefly used in printing the Bible. Erasmus of Rotterdam was a well-known scholar and writer of that time. His greatest work was the publication of the Greek Testament with the new Latin translation accompanied by many notes. One hundred

thousand copies were sold in France alone. Now people were able to read the very words that had brought salvation to the world. Christ and the apostles became known to them through the printed page. Many printers and translators were forced to work secretly so the Bibles and other Christian books they were producing would not be seized and destroyed.

Although the printing press made the Bible more available, the rulers,



The printing press was invented about 1440. The first presses were mainly used for printing Bibles.

who were governed by the pope, used all available means to prevent the people from getting copies of the Word of God. By keeping the people in ignorance, they were better able to control them.



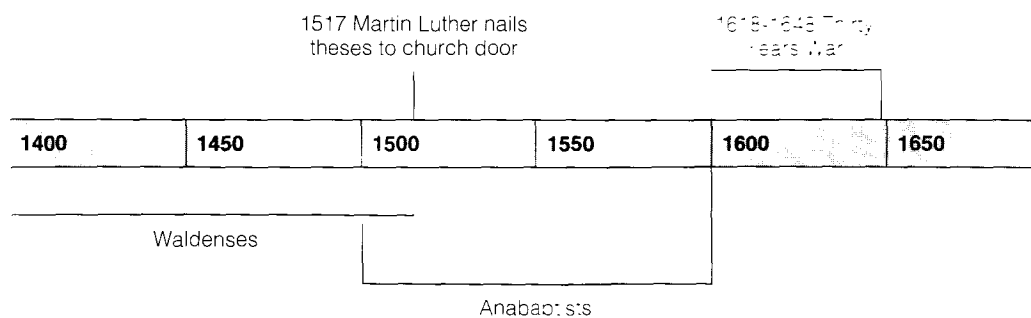
Erasmus of Rotterdam issued an edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516, making the original text widely available for the first time.

CHAPTER 13

The Protestant Reformation

Europe faced a period of great change during the years 1400 to 1600. For a thousand years the Roman Catholic Church had been the supreme authority throughout Europe in religious matters, and she had greatly influenced the political powers as well. Gradually, people were becoming dissatisfied with blind acceptance of ideas the pope and the Catholic church told them were right. The development of the printing press in 1440 put Bibles into the hands of the common people. They began to seek answers to the questions that bothered them. As they studied the Bible, they discovered that many of

their church's teachings were not biblical. They began to speak out, demanding that the church return to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. The high churchmen would not hear of it and sought all means to crush the growing dissent. However, the movement of reform could not be stopped, and it finally resulted in many new churches that broke away from the Roman Catholic church. This movement became known as the Protestant Reformation. These churches that "protested" the evils of the Catholic church and formed new churches are called Protestants even today.



The Reformers

There were three outstanding Protestant reformers in Europe: Martin Luther of Germany, Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland, and John Calvin of France. The best known of these is Martin Luther. He was a Catholic priest who began to break away from the traditional Roman Catholic teaching. Luther was followed by other reformers such as Calvin and Zwingli. These men advocated a return to Bible truths as they understood them. They strongly protested many of the evil practices, traditions, and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. These protests went unheeded, so the reformers finally broke away from that church. The reformers did not, however, establish churches separated from the state or administer discipline as the Anabaptists did. Rather, they established churches that became the official religion of a nation or region.

Martin Luther

When Luther resisted the power of the Roman Catholic Church, some princes sided with him. With the territories under their jurisdiction, they broke away from the Roman Catholic Church. In time the nation of Germany became independent of Rome and embraced Luther's religion.

As the Protestant leaders began to form their own governments with

their state religions, they tried to force the Anabaptist brethren to fall in line with them. The faithful Anabaptists suffered as much under the Protestant churches as they had under the Roman Catholic Church.

Luther tried to break the faith of the Waldenses and other Anabaptists, but he could not. In exasperation and anger he once declared, "They have been for ages expert in the use of the Scripture." Although speaking in anger, Luther witnessed that the Anabaptist Church was the Church of the ages.

Although Luther was excommunicated from the Catholic church and condemned to death, the sentence could not be carried out because Luther was sheltered by sympathetic noblemen. The Reformation continued unabated. The Reformation added to the problems of the Anabaptists, because now both the Catholics and Protestants were seeking to destroy them and their belief. The Reformers found it hard to grant to others the religious freedom they themselves so much desired.

Ulrich Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli led the Swiss Protestant movement, beginning in Zurich, Switzerland. He was both a religious leader and a politician. His country became so divided over religion that civil war broke out in 1531. Along with many of his followers, Zwingli was killed in the fighting. His



Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) was a leading figure in the Reformation in Switzerland.

teachings, though, lived on, and Protestant churches were formed, although part of the country remained true to the Catholic church. As a country, Switzerland did not insist on everyone accepting the same religion, so Switzerland remained neutral in the many wars that followed the Reformation throughout Europe.

John Calvin

Another famous Protestant reformer arose in France. John Calvin became a Protestant in 1533. Under pressure to give up his beliefs he fled to Switzerland, where he published the most influential book of the

Reformation, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Calvin's beliefs, known as Calvinism, spread through France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Scotland. Many denominations were influenced by his teachings.

The Protestant Reformation brought big changes to Europe. There were religious wars between the Protestant states and the Catholic states. It was not long until some of the Protestant states divided into independent nations. This conflict between Catholics and Protestants caused the Thirty Years War, which took place from 1618 to 1648 and cost many lives.

The Thirty Years War brought problems to the Anabaptists because they refused to take part in the wars. Because of this, the Anabaptists, later called Mennonites, moved from coun-



John Calvin (1509-1564) of France



The Reformation began when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenburg, Germany. This writing openly challenged many of the corrupt practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

try to country seeking a place where they could have religious freedom, practice their nonresistant doctrine, and faithfully serve the Lord.

This search for freedom took them from country to country and eventually caused many of them to move to Russia. From there they went to the United States and Canada. Some moved directly to America from Germany in the 1600s. These movements will be covered in later lessons.

The Anabaptists

The true Anabaptists were neither Catholics nor Protestants. During the Reformation they spoke out against the false teachings of both Catholics and Protestants. They remained a separate people, true to their heritage from the time of the apostles. Even though the Protestant reformers held to certain truths of the gospel, the Anabaptists could not accept them as brethren.

There was also an Anabaptist movement that was closely connected with the Reformation in the city of Zurich, Switzerland. This particular strain of Anabaptism began in 1525, when three individuals, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock, baptized each other and formed a church. Some Mennonite

historians believe this to be the origin of the Anabaptist movement and therefore the origin of the Mennonite church. However, this is not the historic belief of the Mennonites themselves, nor of the Church today. The Church traces its heritage through the faithful Anabaptists who preserved the faith of the former Waldenses.

One important document of the true Anabaptists during the Reformation was the record of a conference held in 1527. In order to strengthen and reaffirm their beliefs, they wrote up a confession of faith.¹ It consisted of seven simple statements that summarized important principles of truth.

1. Baptism is only for believers.
2. The Church is to exercise strict discipline.
3. Communion is restricted to saints only.
4. Members are to live separate from the world and avoid worldly churches.
5. Pastors are chosen from and supported by the congregation to teach and exhort.
6. Nonresistance is required by all. None are to take part in war or politics.
7. The swearing of all oaths is prohibited.

1. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*. Scottdale, Penn.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1982, Vol. I, s.v. "Brüderlich Vereinigung," p. 447. This confession of faith is known as the Schleitheim Confession. It was drawn up among the Anabaptists of Switzerland.

CHAPTER 14

Menno Simons

Part I

In the northwest corner of Europe in the village of Witmarsum, Friesland, in what today is the Netherlands, a child was born about 1496 to a Dutch peasant family. He was Menno, and since his father's name was Simon, the lad became Menno Simons, meaning Simon's son.

Menno Simons' parents, being religious people, felt it would be an honor to have their son serve in the church. He was placed in a Catholic monastery near his home, possibly the Franciscan Monastery at Bolsward.

Menno Simons devoted himself to his studies and the exercises of becoming a monk. He learned to read and write Latin quite well. He also learned to read Greek. Although he studied the earlier writings, such as those of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Eusebius, he remained a total stranger to the Bible. When he was twenty-eight, Menno was ordained into the priesthood, possibly at Utrecht. His first assignment was as a parish priest in the village of

Pingjum, next to his home village of Witmarsum. Here he served for seven years, from 1524 to 1531. He then was transferred to his home village of Witmarsum where he served for five years until January 1536. During the twelve years Menno spent as a priest, he performed the usual ceremonies and services that were expected of him. Besides holding mass, he prayed for the living and the dead, baptized babies, consecrated marriages, heard confessions, and handed out punishments. Like most others of his rank and time, he did not take his office and his life very seriously. He joined his fellow priests in card playing, drinking, and foolish pastimes.¹

Menno Simons had not been a priest very long when he began to entertain doubts about certain beliefs which the church held. For one thing, he had been taught that the bread and wine used in Communion were changed into the actual flesh and blood of Christ; this Catholic doctrine is called transubstantiation. What if they were *not* changed? What if these were only symbols? What if he



Menno Simons (1496-1561) born into a Dutch peasant home, God spared his life in spite of the great danger he lived under constantly. He died a natural death at about 66 years of age.

was teaching people a wrong idea? If this idea was wrong, might there be others which were wrong, also?

After struggling with these ideas for a couple of years, he decided to seek for the truth. He asked advice of other priests and those superior to him in rank and study, but no one could supply him with substantial proof that the way he had been taught was right. Finally, he risked the disapproval of his superiors and fel-

low priests by turning to that almost forbidden book, the Bible. Imagine his surprise and dismay to find that the Bible contained nothing of the Catholic church's teaching of the mass! Now what? He had been very carefully taught that not to believe the teachings of the Catholic church would result in eternal death. However, the teachings of that church and the Bible did not agree! What should he do?

Menno Simons himself wrote that he had received help from the writings of Martin Luther. Luther taught him that to violate the commandments of men would not result in eternal death, but to violate the commandments of God would. Menno did not become a Lutheran, but he was always thankful to Luther for teaching him to obey God rather than man.

Now that Menno Simons realized that the mass was not scriptural, he began to question other beliefs. As he studied the Bible more, he began to include it in his sermons. He had not thought of leaving the church, but he wanted to correct the errors in it. He was not ready to give up his position and salary. Menno wrote that he still loved the world, and the world him. In the next several years, he became more enlightened by the Scriptures and more aware of the Catholic church's error.

In the nearby city of Leeuwarden, in the year 1533, a tailor named Sicke

Snyder was publicly executed because he had been baptized a second time.² As Menno Simons thought about this, he began to question infant baptism, and he rather found that baptism should follow a confession of faith.

Still Menno Simons hesitated. He continued to celebrate the mass, which he believed to be unscriptural. He baptized babies. He held Communion and told the people the bread and wine became the actual flesh and blood of Christ while he himself believed they were only symbols. His mind knew the truth, but his heart had not yet accepted it. His conscience constantly condemned

him. Yet he was not willing to give up the money and honor his position brought him.

Menno Simons saw others about him who were willing to give their lives for their beliefs. Some of these were seriously in error, but they died willingly. He was hiding in the Catholic church even though he felt many of its teachings were wrong. Menno knew many of his people would follow him if he could find the courage to leave the Catholic church. Yet he feared to take up the cross of the Lord. Thus Menno struggled with his conscience and sought for answers to his dilemma for several years.

1. J. C. Wenger, editor. *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1985.

Harold S. Bender. "A Brief Biography of Menno Simons," pp. 4-5

2. *Martyrs Mirror*, p. 441

CHAPTER 15

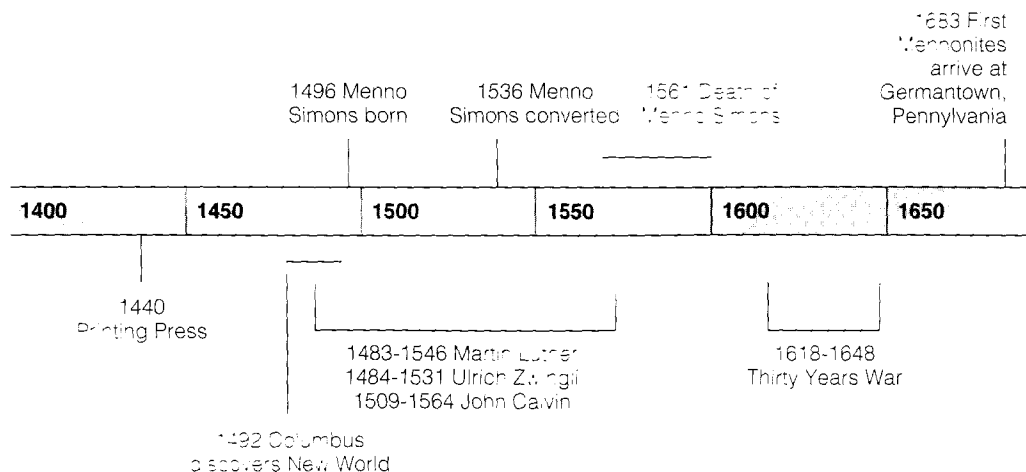
Menno Simons

Part II

The time came when Menno Simons could no longer silence his tormented conscience and innermost convictions. In his anguish of soul, he described his own feelings like this: “My heart trembled in my body. I prayed God with sighs and tears that He would give me, a troubled sinner, the gift of His grace and create a clean heart in me....”¹ The Lord heard Menno’s prayer and graciously forgave him. God gave him

a new mind, a humble estimation of himself, and a sense of divine mission.

Some may wonder why Menno Simons was so slow in changing his life. He had a slow-moving Frisian nature, and the full light dawned on him slowly. What is important is that once he stirred deeply, he never turned back. The change was so profound, so thorough, and so complete that, by the grace of God, he became an inspired leader, a mighty tower of

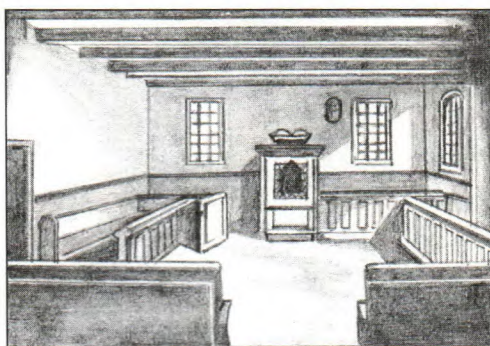


strength to his bitterly persecuted people for more than twenty-five years.

Menno Simons began to preach openly, in the name of the Lord, truths that were now his heartfelt convictions. These included repentance, a new faith, believers' baptism, and the Lord's Supper. He preached against the evils of the Catholic church from its pulpit. The interesting part of this is that he continued to preach this way for nine months without hindrance. By then Menno realized he could not reform the old church and could no longer continue his obligations to it. He voluntarily gave up his pulpit and his charge and left the village of Witmarsum. It is thought that on Sunday, January 30, 1536, he preached his farewell sermon and left his hometown.²

After Menno Simons' baptism, he continued to read the Scriptures to understand better God's will for his life. The brethren with whom he worshiped recognized his God-given gift and ability. A group of brethren came to him and requested that he accept the call to be a minister and preach the gospel. Menno hesitated. He realized it would be dangerous; he would be a hunted man. But even more, he felt his own weakness and inabilities. Menno prayerfully considered the call and came to the conclusion that God was calling him. He was ordained to the ministry shortly thereafter, probably by Obbe Philips in 1537.

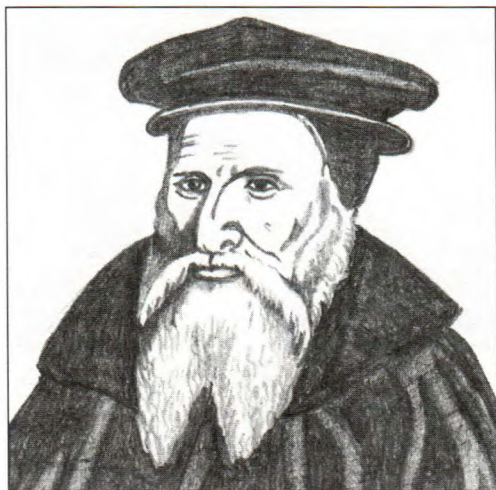
Menno Simons soon realized his



Interior view of a Mennonite church in Witmarsum that was built early in the eighteenth century.

need of a companion in his life and work. God gave him a wife, Gertrude, to fill this need. We know they had at least one son and two daughters. Most of their life on earth was spent as fugitives. To give them food or lodging was declared a criminal act, punishable by death. In 1541, a large reward was offered for his arrest. They moved to northwest Germany two years later, where there was more religious freedom for a time. However, this ended in 1546. That year a house was confiscated because the owner had leased it for a short time to Menno's wife, who was sick at the time. In 1549, Klass Jantz, who was not a believer, was executed because he had entertained Menno in his home.

During Menno Simons' lifetime, he wrote twenty-four books and pamphlets. It was often a dangerous and difficult task to get these printed. A secret print shop at Lübeck in the



**Dietrich (Dirk) Philips (1504-1586)
was Menno Simons' friend, colleague,
and fellow-bishop.**

Netherlands was used for this work. When this place was discovered by the authorities, the printer escaped, but a large quantity of Menno's books were found. The printer soon was at work again far away in a new hiding place.

Toward the end of his life, Menno Simons found refuge in the large estates of a nobleman in Holstein, which was then a province of Denmark. There he and his family lived until the end of his life. Menno could leave his family there in safety while he spent much of his time traveling and laboring in Holland and Germany.

Menno Simons died peacefully in his home January 31, 1561, when he was sixty-six years of age. He was buried in his own garden. Truly God blessed the labors of this man who became willing to step down from an exalted position as a priest to become a pilgrim and a stranger.

At the time Menno Simons left the Catholic church there were two brothers, Obbe and Dirk (Dietrich) Philips, who were influential leaders of the Anabaptists. Obbe traveled extensively, preaching, baptizing, and ordaining ministers. One of those he ordained was his own brother, Dirk. Obbe, however, accepted false doctrine later in his life and fell away from the truth.

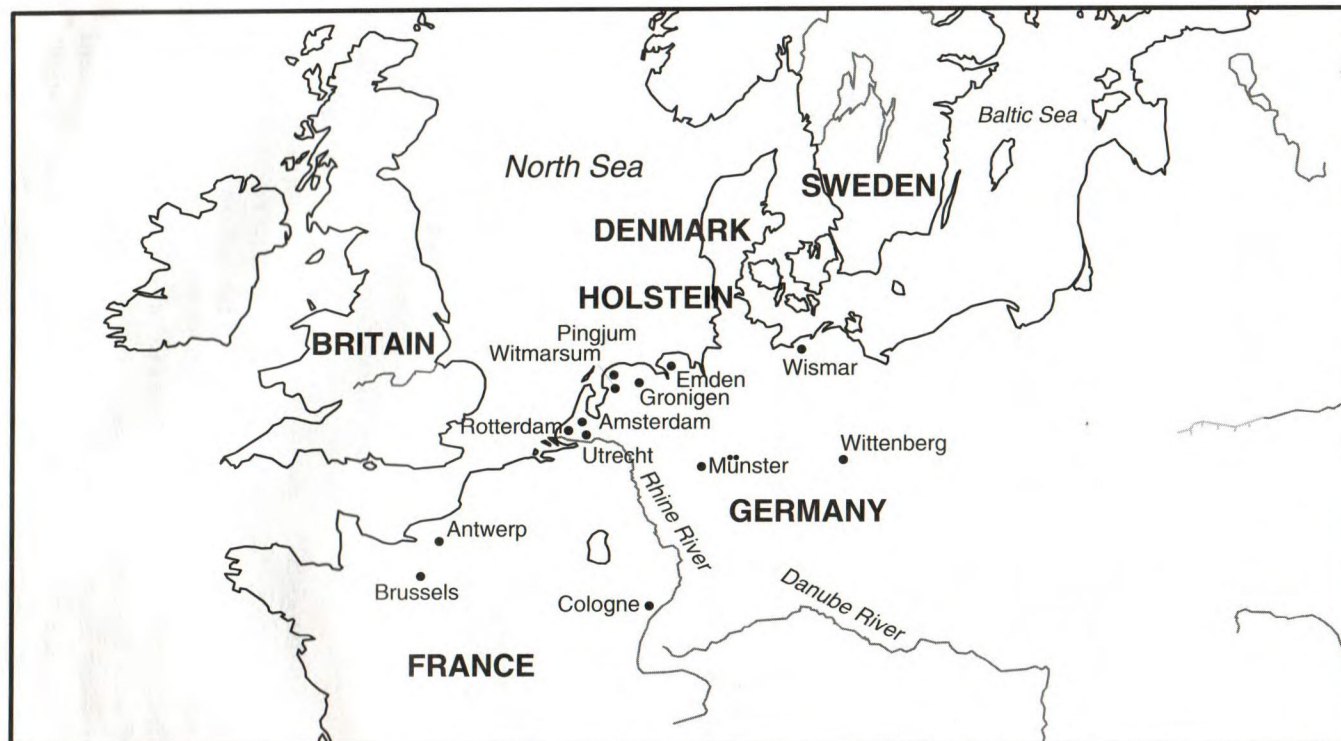
Dirk Philips worked together with Menno Simons and believed as he did. He also wrote numerous booklets to explain the faith to others. These booklets have been compiled in one book, *Dietrich Philip Hand Book*. One thing he wrote was that the Anabaptists are not "founders of sects" and "we are one with the true church of God, which was from the beginning."³ He continued preaching and teaching until the end of his life, seven years after Menno died.

In these men the Church found leaders who strengthened and led her during a very difficult time.

1. *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, "A Brief Biography of Menno Simons," p. 12

2. *Ibid.* pp. 12-14

3. Dietrich Philips, *Dietrich Philip Hand Book*. LaGrange, Ind.: Pathway Publishing Corp., 1978, p. 145



Map D
Area of Menno Simons' life and Ministry.

Anabaptists Who Lost the Way

The ministry of Menno Simons was fruitful, and the Church prospered during his lifetime. He became an outstanding leader in the Netherlands. Because of his influence and leadership, the Christian Church became known as Mennonites. However, the Mennonites of Menno Simons' time were, in reality, the old Waldenses or Anabaptists. Menno said, "I have been called unworthily to this office by a people who were willing to obey Christ and His Word, who in the fear of God led devoted lives, served their neighbors in love, bore the cross of persecution, sought the welfare and salvation of all men, loved righteousness and truth and abhorred wickedness and unrighteousness."¹

The Münsterites

In addition to the true Anabaptists, there were other Anabaptist groups which did not hold to pure doctrine. Some were fanatical or were even carried away with heresy. The following tragedy is an example of what has happened when the biblical nonresistant faith has been exchanged for the doctrines of men. In 1534 Jan Matthys and

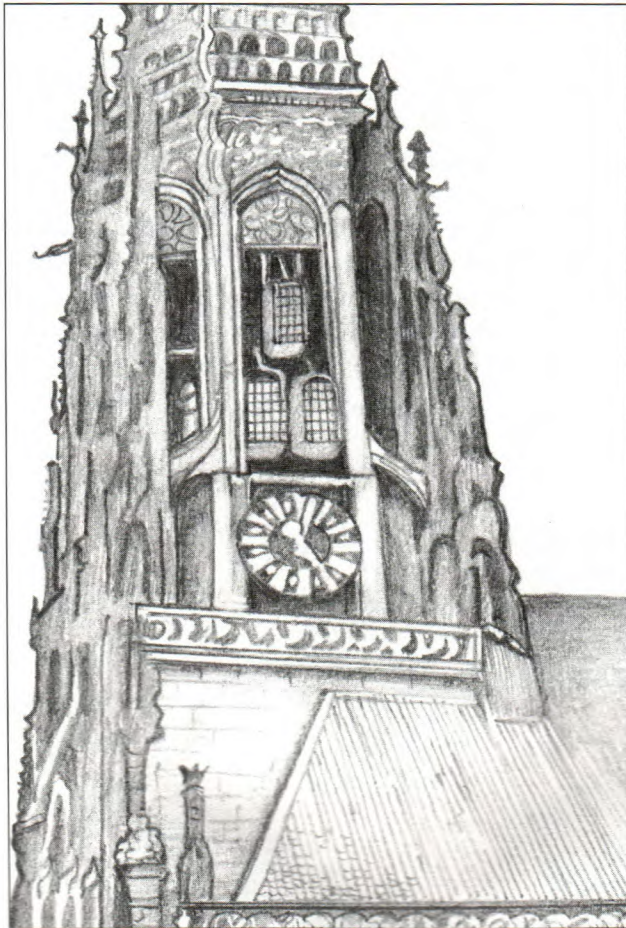
his disciples came to the town of Münster. The Anabaptists there had been peaceful and nonresistant until this time. Jan Matthys began preaching an aggressive spirit of revolution to them; this teaching soon replaced the original nonresistant belief. He insisted upon rebaptizing everyone, even if they had already been baptized into the Anabaptist faith. Within a few days, fourteen hundred had accepted his teachings. They sent disciples throughout the land, preaching that the Münsterites would immediately usher in the new kingdom of God on earth.

Meanwhile, the bishop of Münster, who had previously been driven from his responsibility, gathered a small army to crush the revolt. When they laid siege to the town of Münster, Jan Matthys and his followers took up the sword in defense. In April 1534, Jan Matthys was killed while trying to break through the bishop's lines. This left Jan van Leiden in command of the fanatics. The bishop had the city surrounded so no one could leave. This also cut off the food supply into the city. When the spring of 1535 came, every available foot of ground within the walls was planted to seed. As food became scarce, famine and

disease threatened to wipe them out. At first they slaughtered the horses for food, then dogs and cats, and finally mice, rats, or anything that could be eaten. As starvation came on, they ate leather, leaves, and grass for their daily food. By the time

Münster was taken, famine, disease, execution, and suicide had brought their numbers down to only a few hundred. Those who were still alive were killed by the sword, except for a few of their leaders. Jan van Leiden, together with Bernard Knipper-

dolling, was taken captive. Later they were sent through all the towns of northwestern Germany as criminal exhibits. Finally, after severe torture, they were publicly executed as dangerous criminals. Their bodies were then placed in iron cages which were suspended from the towers of St. Lambert's church. They were left there, exposed to the public gaze, until they rotted. Their bones lay bleaching in the sun for many years as a warning to the passerby.²



Cathedral in Münster where cages were hung above the steeple clock to display the bodies of Anabaptists who took up arms to defend themselves.

The Jorists

The Jorists, who were followers of David Joris, arose after the fall of Münster. Joris was baptized into the Church in 1534. In time he lost true spiritual life and began to teach false doctrine. He believed himself to be a great prophet who could add new teachings not taught in

the Bible. He was finally condemned by the Church as a false prophet, but he continued to promote his ideas and strange experiences and gained a following of supporters in Holland and Belgium. Menno Simons wrote letters of warning to the congregations concerning this false prophet and firmly admonished the Jorists. Although Joris taught humility and self-denial, his teachings produced self-righteous followers who were religious but not spiritual. Joris taught that it was all right to pretend to be Catholics or Protestants to avoid persecution. In time the group became more ungodly, and it was evident that they had lost the Anabaptist faith.³

The Adamites

Adam Pastor was a German priest who joined the Anabaptists in 1533. For a time he was an able defender of the faith. Somehow he lost faith in some of the doctrines and began to depend on his own reasoning. He did not believe in the Trinity and held an

erroneous view of Jesus' relationship to God. Menno Simons and other brethren tried to persuade him to reconsider his ideas. However, he continued to put logic and reasoning above the clear teachings of the Bible, and he was excommunicated from the Church in 1547. His followers were known as Adamites.⁴

Many times all Anabaptists were erroneously thought of as being one people. As can be seen, Anabaptism actually included a number of different groups. There were radical and untrue churches which cast a doubt or shadow on the claim of true believers. Notwithstanding, there remained those who held to the true faith delivered to the apostles. This certainly was, and is, the Church of the ages.

1. *Mennonites in Europe*, p. 194

2. C. Henry Smith, *Smith's Story of the Mennonites*: Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1981, pp. 47-48

3. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, s.v. "David Joris," pp. 17-19

4. Cornelius J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History, Third Edition*: Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1993, p. 108

CHAPTER 17

After Menno Simons

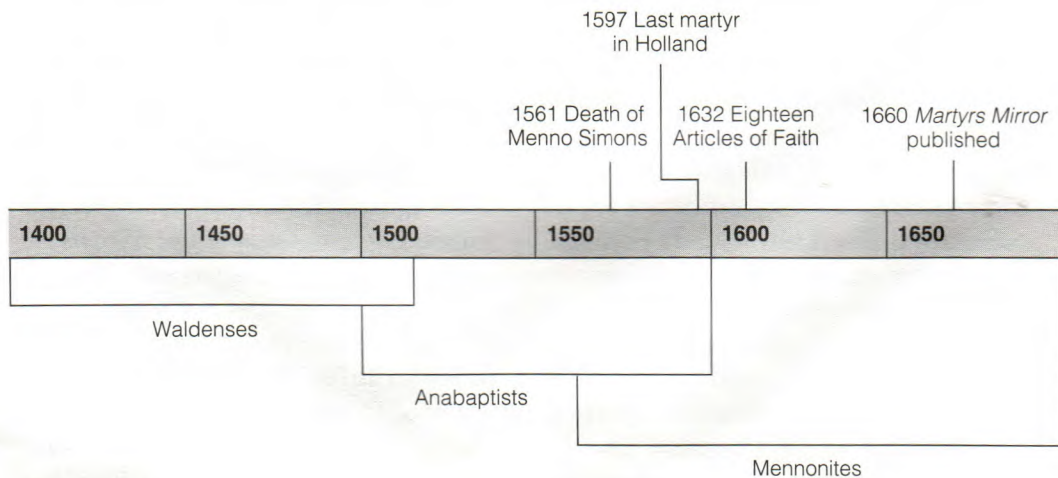
The last few chapters have shown that during Menno Simons' life the Mennonite Church enjoyed much growth. One of his fellow ministers is said to have baptized over 10,000 converts; Menno himself baptized nearly that many. The Mennonites were the most numerous of all the non-Catholic churches in Holland. Many Mennonites had settled in other parts of Europe. Many of those who were called Waldenses and Anabaptists came to be called Mennonites.

After Menno Simons died in 1561,

there was still persecution, although it was becoming less severe. Anneken van den Hove was the last person to suffer martyrdom in the Inquisition in the southern part of the Netherlands. She was buried alive in 1597.

Although after this time many were still imprisoned or banished from their homelands, persecution for religious reasons became less and less.

Holland was the first country favorable to the Mennonite Church. By the year 1581, persecution was almost nonexistent. Prince William III of Orange, who had come into power in





William III of Orange, tolerant Dutch leader, later became king of England.

Holland, was a kindhearted ruler who saw the injustice of persecuting a people who would not harm anyone. Thus the Mennonites found a friend in Prince William. This is an example of how God can put it into the hearts of rulers to be just and good to His people.

As persecution decreased, prosperity increased. Some members became permissive and liberal, and, under these conditions, it was difficult to maintain unity. A few leaders became unwilling to maintain church discipline as Menno Simons and other Church leaders had taught. It has been said in reference to the children of Israel, "Prosperity brought spiritual poverty." So it was at this time. The Waterlanders were the first to become lax in church discipline.

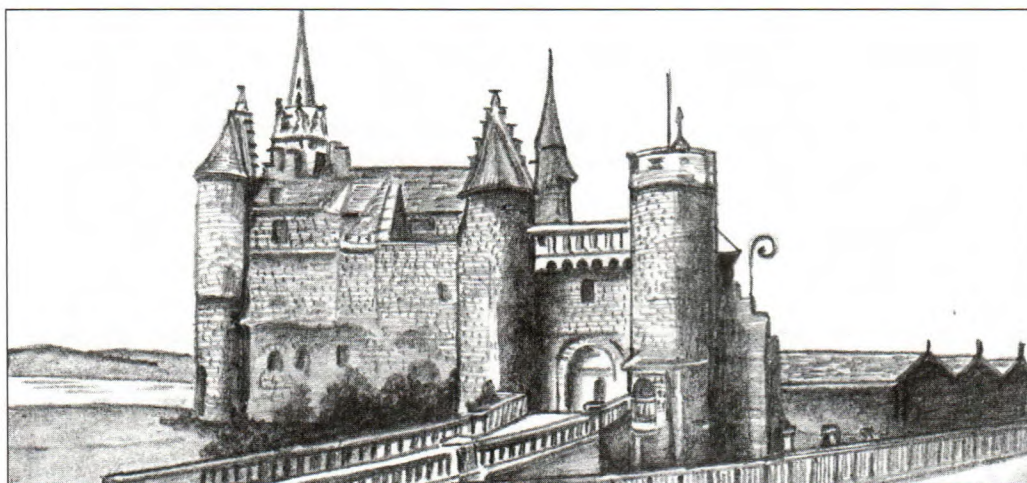
The Holland Mennonites were known as Flemish, Frisians, and Waterlanders. These distinctions were according to the area in which they lived. However, in time these geographical distinctions became party names because of differences in belief and practice.¹

One outstanding Church leader in this period was Peter J. Twisck, born in 1565. He wrote the *Thirty-three Articles of Faith*, which are still in use today. He also wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Peaceful Kingdom of Christ*. Peter J. Twisck was married to a granddaughter of Menno Simons and had ready access to Menno Simons' writings. He made much use of these writings.

Another minister whose name is familiar is that of Thieleman J. van Braght. About 1659, he finished compiling the *Martyrs Mirror*.

The *Martyrs Mirror* is a valuable book with a reliable compilation of accounts of many who have suffered and given their lives for the faith. It tells about the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection and recounts examples of the apostles and the early Church, continuing through the succeeding centuries. The emphasis of the *Martyrs Mirror* is on those martyrs who had repented of their sins and were baptized upon the confession of their faith in Jesus Christ. They left a living testimony of being nonresistant Christians.

Not only is the *Martyrs Mirror* an account of the suffering of Christians, but it gives many insights into the



Castle at Antwerp, Belgium, where many Anabaptists were imprisoned for their faith. Prisoners were kept in dungeons under the castle where the light of day never reached, and they were treated with great cruelty.

beliefs they maintained. In testimonies to the persecutors and in letters to their own families, they left a witness of their convictions.

Thieleman J. van Braght was convinced that the Church would always continue on its original foundation until the end of the world. He made it clear that the true Church, at any given time, will hold to the teachings of the apostles as the New Testament records them.

The proof of whether or not a church is that true Church will be in its doctrine and in the lives of its members. These must pattern after, and agree with, the New Testament Church. Menno Simons and the early Mennonites believed in the continuity of the Church from the time of the apostles. They believed that they were

of that Church. This is the priceless heritage which they left for the generations that followed.

After 1,600 years of the ravages of



Thieleman J. van Braght, writer of *Martyrs Mirror*

persecution intermingled with the dangers of prosperity, it would seem that almost nothing would have been left of the Church and its doctrines. However, God is faithful to His promise to be with His own, even until the end of the world. God has said that although heaven and earth should pass away, His Word will not be destroyed. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). The Church which obeys His Word will be preserved.

Various writers give references indicating that there were also congregations in Greece which were still maintaining the apostolic doctrines and principles. In 1540, the Turks captured people from Moravia and sold them as slaves in Thessalonica. As these slaves became acquainted with the people in the land of their captivity, they noticed that the Christians in Thessalonica lived and believed the same doctrines as the Anabaptists back in their homeland of Moravia. When the Thessalonian Christians heard about this, they decided to send three brethren to German Moravia to investigate.

The delegation first went to Nickelsburg and asked the local priest if there were such a people as they were seeking. The priest rode with them in a carriage to a neighboring

Hutterite village. After they had discussed with them their life, conduct, and articles of faith, the Thessalonian Christians found they did not agree on three articles. They could not agree with the way the Hutterites kept the avoidance, or with their belief in common ownership of property. The Thessalonians also found that when anyone would fall away from the belief of the Hutterites, the things he owned before becoming a member were not given back to him, but were kept by the Hutterites. Tears were shed when it seemed their journey was in vain.

The priest then took them to an Anabaptist church in the same area. Again they discussed their articles of faith. This time they found they agreed on every point. They were all filled with joy and acknowledged each other as brethren. Communion was held together with gladness, confessing themselves to be the true Church of God.

The Thessalonian brethren stated that they still maintained the faith, unchanged from the apostles' time. The letters which the apostle Paul had written to them with his own hand were still preserved and in good condition. They reported that at that time there were still over thirty congregations around Thessalonica.

One of the members of the delegation was a tailor by trade. He left his scissors with them as a memento.²

1. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, s.v. "Flemish Mennonites," p. 338

2. *Martyrs Mirror*, pp. 365-366

Mennonites of Switzerland and the Palatinate

In previous chapters, the Mennonites of the Netherlands have been discussed. However, there were Anabaptists in other parts of Europe, also. Some of these places were North Germany, Prussia, Switzerland, and the Palatinate. The Palatinate was an area west of the Rhine river in southwest Germany not too far north of Switzerland. Generally speaking, the Anabaptists in all these places suffered persecution. In some countries, such as Austria, persecution was so intense that Anabaptism was almost entirely rooted out. In such times of persecution, it was very difficult to maintain complete unity of belief and practice. Communication was slow, and it was dangerous for large groups of Anabaptists to gather at one place. Even so, records show that there was much communication among the Anabaptists of Europe, especially among the leaders.

Even in the face of opposition and persecution, there was a powerful force working for unity—the Holy Spirit and the Word of God working in every believer. True believers who

read the Word with consecrated hearts, having eyes anointed by the Holy Spirit, are brought into the light and become more united in their understanding of the truth.

The Eighteen Articles of Faith

Statements or confessions of faith also promoted unity. The most outstanding was the Dordrecht Confession, which is often referred to as the *Eighteen Articles of Faith*. These articles were written in the first draft by Adriaan Cornelisz, elder of the Flemish Mennonite congregation at Dordrecht, in Holland. On April 21, 1632, this confession was adopted and signed in a church conference by Flemish and Frisian ministers. "In 1660 this confession was subscribed to by thirteen ministers of Alsace, and about the same time the congregations in Switzerland, when asked by the authorities for a statement of their doctrine, handed them this confession."¹



Map E
Switzerland and the Palatinate.

Some historians doubt that there was any communication between the brethren in the Netherlands and the Swiss brethren in the sixteenth century. It is true that it is difficult to trace a direct link through this period of history. To seek evidence of this link it is necessary to look at the doctrines believed and taught by these brethren. The *Eighteen Articles of Faith* mentioned above are worthy of note in this

respect. One of these, Article 8, states, "We believe in, and confess a visible church of God, namely, those who, as has been said before, truly repent and believe, and are rightly baptized; who are one with God in heaven, and rightly incorporated into the communion of the saints here on earth."²

This was believed and taught by the brethren in the Netherlands. John Horsch says, "The Dordrecht

confession...had become known in South Germany and Switzerland at an early date."³ It is not known just how much before 1660 this was.

Mennonites in the Palatinate

The Palatinate was the scene of considerable Anabaptist activity. It is said that during the sixteenth century most of the population of the Palatinate changed its religion five times. First they were Catholic, then Lutheran, then Reformed, back to Lutheran, and again to Reformed. This was in accordance with the practice of that time that religion of a country should be determined by its ruler. The frequent change of religion in the Palatinate at this time may have been a contributing factor to the survival and growth of Anabaptism. Some of the rulers were rather tolerant and did not strictly enforce the laws against the Anabaptists.

In the cruel Thirty Years War (1618-1648), the Palatinate was devastated, and most of the Mennonites were driven away. Following the war, the ruler, Elector Karl Ludwig, determined to rebuild his wasted land. He was willing to tolerate people of other faiths if they were good farmers or artisans. So it came about that he permitted a limited number of Mennonites from Switzerland to immigrate.

However, they were only tolerated on certain conditions. They could meet for public worship, but not in a public church house, and in no case could such a meeting be attended by more than twenty persons. They were to furnish the authorities with lists of all members of the congregations, and they had to pay "protection money" each year. Later they were allowed to meet in larger groups, but were forbidden to admit any non-Mennonites into their meetings.

The Anabaptists of Switzerland appreciated their native land and wanted to stay there, but due to severe and continued persecution, there were those who emigrated. Some moved to the Palatinate, some to Holland, and some to Prussia. Later, some also moved to Russia.

In the years 1671 and 1672, about 700 Swiss Mennonites emigrated to the Palatinate. Because of the bitter persecution, they arrived almost destitute of material goods, with bundles on their backs and infants in their arms. They were welcomed and helped by their brethren of the Palatinate. Considerable aid was sent to them by the Dutch Mennonites.

The Amish

A great division took place among the South German Swiss Mennonites during the years 1693 to 1698. Jacob Amman, a bishop of Switzerland, began to teach and practice, among



Anabaptist preacher teaching, as depicted in a drawing similar to this found in Martin Luther's Bible.

other things, a very strict observance of the avoidance. Amman expelled different ministers who did not agree with him, as well as people whom he had never seen. Later the party of Amman confessed that they had acted rashly in expelling without the consent of their congregations. Attempts were made at reconciliation, but they were not successful.

Primarily the Mennonite churches of Alsace and some in Switzerland followed Amman. They came to be called Amish.

The doctrines of excommunication and avoidance are scriptural, but they should be practiced with much love and in harmony with the working of the Holy Spirit.

1. *Mennonites in Europe*, p. 263

2. *Martyrs Mirror*, p. 41

3. *Mennonites in Europe*, p. 263

CHAPTER 19

From Switzerland to America

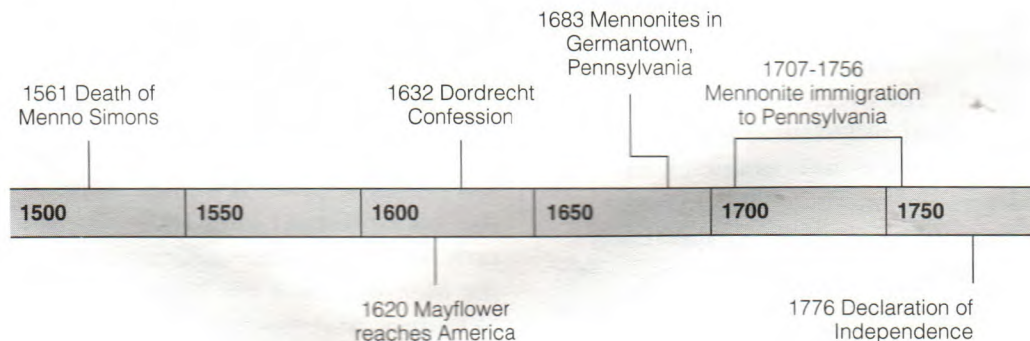
As a result of the Reformation, Europe was divided between Catholics and Protestants. Both the Catholics and the Protestants persecuted the Anabaptists. Even after the death penalty was no longer pronounced against the Mennonites, many ways were found to harass them. However, in Holland, North Germany, Prussia, the Palatinate, parts of Switzerland, and other areas of Europe, they remained and multiplied despite the efforts of the state churches to suppress them.

Some of the difficulties encountered by the Anabaptists were blessings in dis-

guise. Truth and error are in contrast and are more clearly defined in times of test. A firm commitment is required for Christians to remain faithful in such times of difficulty. Economic prosperity and freedom from persecution are often accompanied by spiritual decline. For an example, look at the Mennonites of Holland.

The Decline of the Dutch Mennonites

During the time of Menno Simons' life, the Mennonites of Holland were



persecuted, and many were martyred for their faith. Menno Simons died in 1561. It is believed that the last Dutch Mennonite martyr died in 1574. From about that time, the Dutch Mennonites enjoyed considerable liberty, although some oppression continued for many more years.

Shortly after the death of Menno Simons, some major divisions occurred among the Mennonites. As the main body became permissive, materialistic, and worldly, some felt they must withdraw in order to maintain a Church that would continue in scriptural purity and spirituality. Other smaller divisions that took place later were caused by less worthy motives. Strife and division are to be deplored. The apostle Paul wrote that there would be those promoting false teachings. This shows more clearly the contrast between those holding to the truth and those in error.

The Mennonites were engaged in the agricultural, textile, and lumber industries, shipbuilding, and other businesses. "The overseas trade with Greenland and whaling and herring fishing were almost completely in Mennonite hands." While material prosperity was increasing, spirituality was declining. Many of the Mennonites of Holland lived in towns and cities and were engaged in business and the professions. As they became increasingly worldly, they integrated more and more into the business, social, and educational life of the world around them. They

attended schools operated by other churches or by secular agencies. Some, being well educated, became doctors, engineers, poets, and artists. "In the seventeenth century a high percentage of the medical doctors in the Netherlands were Mennonite."²

There were those who strove for many years to live humble lives and to keep the Church pure. Finally they, too, lost the real essence of the faith.

In the Palatinate

The Mennonites of the Palatinate were subject to many restrictive measures. One troublesome law, The Right of Retraction, was put into effect in 1726. This law gave the Catholic and Protestant citizens the right to buy back at any time the land which the Mennonites had purchased from them. The Mennonites had to sell it for the same price they had paid. A war-devastated farm which had been bought for a low price and, by long, hard work, had been built back to high productivity would have to be sold back to the original owner at the low purchase price. A limited form of this law continued until 1801. This was only one of the many difficulties which the Mennonites of the Palatinate had to endure, and, no doubt, it contributed to their emigration.

Immigration to America

It is unknown who was the first



Many immigrants came to America in search of religious freedom. After an arduous ocean voyage they began to settle in their new homeland and make a new life for themselves and their families. Many arrived destitute with only a few personal possessions.

Mennonite to come to America. About the year 1662, there was a small settlement of Dutch Mennonites on Delaware Bay, but in time it was dissolved for unknown reasons. At least one of the group was later associated with the settlement at Germantown, Pennsylvania.

Crossing the Atlantic then was not as easy and pleasant as it is now. With good weather, it took two to three months. With adverse weather, it could take much longer. Insufficient food and water, as well as filth and disease, were some of the problems encountered. A Mennonite passenger, Gottlieb Mittelburger, reported "lice so thick that they had to be scraped off." In describing conditions on board that immigrant ship, he said most children under seven died.

The first permanent Mennonite settlement in America was made at Germantown, Pennsylvania, several miles north of Philadelphia (it is now part of that city). This came about with the help of William Penn, the peace-loving Quaker who secured permission from the King of England to establish an extensive tract of land in America for a Quaker settlement. According to legend, when Penn came through Holland and Germany

on his preaching tours, the Mennonites were some of his warmest friends. When he offered them a home in his territory, which came to be known as Pennsylvania, many of them eagerly accepted his invitation. The fear of hardship in the American wilderness seemed better than the bitter persecution they had experienced for many generations in Europe.

The first settlers, a group of thirteen families, reached America on October 6, 1683. After measuring off divisions of land, work was begun digging cellars and erecting huts. Within a year the settlement was well established. New settlers were arriving from time to time. Common family names were Graff, Hendrick, Kolb, Funk, Jansen, and Gottschalk. The first minister was William Rittenhouse.

During the period of 1707-1756 several thousand Mennonites immigrated to Pennsylvania. They were practically all of Swiss descent, some coming from Switzerland and others from the Palatinate. While other Mennonites and Amish came to America later, it was this Swiss group that carried the true doctrine and practice.³

1. *Introduction to Mennonite History, Third Edition*, p. 130

2. *Ibid.*

3. John Holdeman, *A History of the Church of God*: Moundridge, Kans.: Gospel Publishers, 1978, p. 64

CHAPTER 20

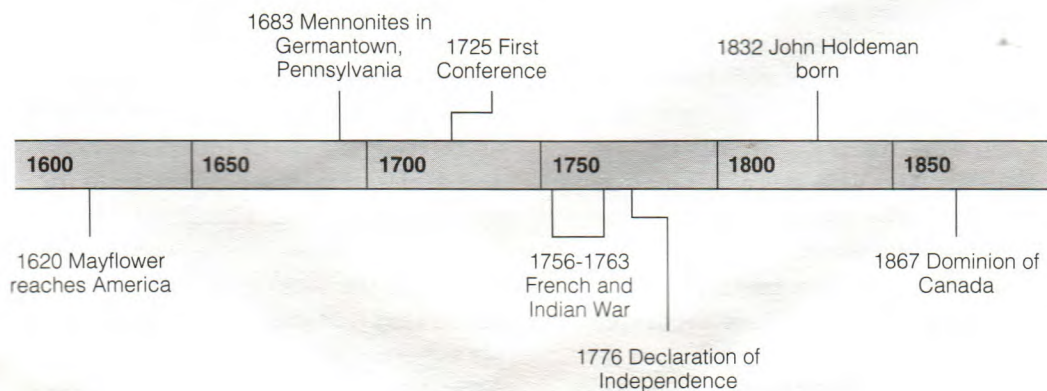
The First Century in America

Approximately four or five thousand Mennonite immigrants came to America during the years 1707-1756. They settled in Pennsylvania and the surrounding area. In 1725, various Mennonite leaders met to reaffirm the Dordrecht confession of faith as their accepted teachings of Bible doctrine. They wanted to be sure the Church would continue to follow, in teaching and practice, the faith of the Anabaptist forefathers.

However, by the years 1750 to 1800, there was a growing concern among the leaders of the colonial Mennonites to maintain spiritual life among the congregations and to propagate the

faith. One such leader was Bishop Henry Funk, an immigrant from West Friesland. He had a clear vision of the Church. Bishop Funk saw the necessity of scriptural discipline and church purity. He taught against the worldliness of the times and encouraged the brotherhood to live in the simplicity of the gospel.

During the French and Indian War (1756-1763), the principle of nonresistance was again put to test. The native Indians of the eastern United States began to fight against the settlers, who were gradually farming more and more of their hunting territory. The Mennonite settlements





Indian raids were a constant threat. Early Mennonite settlers did not defend themselves, but rather tried to live peacefully with the Indians.

in Virginia were prospering well until the Indians began raiding and plundering their homes. The Mennonites, of course, did not take up arms to defend themselves as did others.

One time a minister's home was raided. Minister Rhodes, his wife, and a son were immediately killed. Another son, who was a distance away, was shot as he climbed a tree to see what was happening. Two sons and two daughters were taken captive by the Indians, and three of them were killed. Another daughter fled to the barn to hide, carrying her baby sister with her. As the Indians prepared to burn the barn, she fled twelve miles

through the country with her sister in her arms to her brother's home. The son who was taken captive and spared remained with the Indians about three years. He was finally able to escape and return to his own people.

In 1776 the American colonies drew up the Declaration of Independence and declared themselves free from the control of England. The Revolutionary War which followed brought more difficulties for the Mennonites. England demanded that these nonresistant people support the British, while the American revolutionary forces sought support for their cause. The scriptural stand of nonparticipation in war was

often misunderstood as supporting the enemy. Also, when Christians would offer help and care to wounded soldiers from either side, they were considered traitors.

The end of the Revolutionary War in 1783 brought better conditions for the Mennonites. The new Constitution was built upon principles of religious freedom. It provided a system of government that granted liberties and opportunities for the Church in America that have been a great blessing.

Life in the 1700s

What was life like in the 1700s? One of the first things Mennonites did as they settled in a location was to

erect crude shelters that served as a house and barn combination. A generation or so later, these crude log houses were replaced by fine stone houses, many of which are still standing today.

The vast majority of these settlers were farmers, although there were skilled tradesmen among them. These hardy pioneers tackled the forests and cleared the land for farming. They raised grain among the stumps and used the well-watered meadows for pasturing their horses and cattle. They fished the streams. They trapped and hunted the woods. The women also worked very hard. They raised large gardens, wove flax into cloth, and made most of their household supplies and food.



A pioneer family anxiously prepares for an Indian attack on their cabin, while the father tries to secure the door by nailing a heavy board against it. Some nonresistant settlers who did not make any effort to run, hide, or arm themselves were spared when the warriors saw they would not fight.

Since they didn't have modern medicine and hospitals like today, they relied on home remedies handed down from generation to generation.

Each community arranged for its own school. There were no government-operated public schools for the common people, as in modern times.

While the Bible was the most important book to be found in the immigrants' homes, there were other books of importance. Some of the first books published in America by the Church were the *Martyrs' Mirror* and a church hymnal called the *Ausbund*. These books, along with the Bible, did much to preserve the vision of the Church as a separate people. A Mennonite worship service in 1750 would be much different than today, although the basic meaning of it would be the same. The meeting-house was plain and simple. The benches were crude flat planks with legs but no backrests. At the front there was a simple table on which the minister laid his Bible and by which he stood while preaching. The services were conducted in German. There was no Sunday school.

Other Settlements

With the coming of more Mennonites to America, immigrants began to settle in other areas of Pennsylvania. There are familiar names that show up among the early settlers in the Franconia district: Holdeman,

Leatherman, Stauffer, Swartley, Yoder, and Johnson, to name a few. Other counties of Pennsylvania that were settled in the 1700s were Bucks, Berks, Lancaster, and Montgomery.

In time the expansion moved westward into Ohio and Indiana. By the early 1800s there were a number of congregations in both states. The Church began to recognize the need for good order and leadership, and districts were formed with ministers and bishops to oversee the congregations.

The concerns felt by some of the earlier Church leaders regarding the spiritual decay were also shared by later leaders, one of whom was Minister Peter Eby. Some efforts were put forth in his day to restore the Church to faithfulness.

Amos Holdeman was a dedicated (Old) Mennonite living in Wayne County, Ohio. He enjoyed reading the Bible and Church history. This study gave him a deeper understanding of both. He served as a postman, member of the school board, and as a teacher for one year in the school where he had been a student.

On January 31, 1832, a son, John, was born to Amos and Nancy Holdeman. This son later became a leader of a new awakening with far-reaching effects. A new chapter in the history of the Church of God was about to be written.

CHAPTER 21

John Holdeman, His Life and Call

John Holdeman was born in Wayne County, Ohio, on January 31, 1832. At the age of twelve, he was spiritually born again, but he did not remain faithful to this experience and fell into carnal living during the years following. On November 18, 1852, he married Elizabeth Ritter. The next spring, in 1853, he got into great trouble about his sins. His burden continued until August of the same year. During this time, he truly repented and reconsecrated his life.

Upon finding forgiveness the darkness lifted, the burden departed from his conscience, and he received a joyful light. A short time after this experience, he again came into a time of darkness which caused him to search and pray. He then went to his father for help, and was reminded that he had not received baptism. This gave John a great desire to be baptized and to become a member of the Church. In October, 1853, John Holdeman was baptized by Bishop



John Holdeman's home, Wayne County, Ohio.



John Holdeman travelled much to visit, teach, and establish churches. Many of his travels were by train.

Abraham Rohrer and became a member of the (Old) Mennonite Church.¹

John Holdeman said he received the Holy Spirit at the moment of his baptism. "For it overshadowed me as a soft cloud."² He then experienced a special power and love as he never had before. After being received into the Church, he began to study the English, German, Dutch, and Greek languages so that he could read the Scriptures and the writings of Menno Simons and Dietrich Philips in their original languages, and also other writings.

During this time of study, John Holdeman soon became aware that the (Old) Mennonite Church was no longer faithful in upholding the gospel standard. He was surprised at how many had come into the Church unconverted. This caused him severe heartache and led him to appeal to the leaders of the Church to reestablish those doctrines which had been ignored or forgotten. He stressed the need to be born again and to receive the Holy Spirit, that child-training should be practiced as taught in the Bible, that disobedient or unfaithful members should be disciplined, and, if excommunicated, that they should be avoided according to the Scriptures.

The (Old) Mennonite Church referred to the *Eighteen Articles of Faith* as their confession of faith. However, it was explained to John Holdeman that some things, such as the avoidance, were spiritual, not physical, thus denying the seventeenth article in the

confession. This troubled John Holdeman; if they did not agree on all the articles, they should not send them into the world as their own.

John Holdeman was not aware at this time of what God had in store for him. The concerns and admonitions he brought to the leaders were not being received. In 1857, he came to the conclusion that he would live as faithfully as he could in the (Old) Mennonite Church. Holdeman was not alone in his concern for the Church. One of their leaders, Peter Eby, at the time of his death in 1843, recognized that the Church had drifted. He believed they should have practiced Church discipline as Menno Simons and Dietrich Philips taught, even if it would have melted them down to half their membership.

One day John Holdeman clearly heard his name being called, but he saw no person. A few weeks later the same voice called his name again. His wife also heard the voice, and they were both impressed that this was something extraordinary or supernatural. He resolved to answer the voice if it called again, but he never heard it after that. God revealed Himself in a special way a short time later. This came after a time of not being able to eat or sleep properly because of his great concern for the decay of the Church and the salvation of all concerned. On the morning of January 22, 1858, as he went into the kitchen and opened the door of the stove to

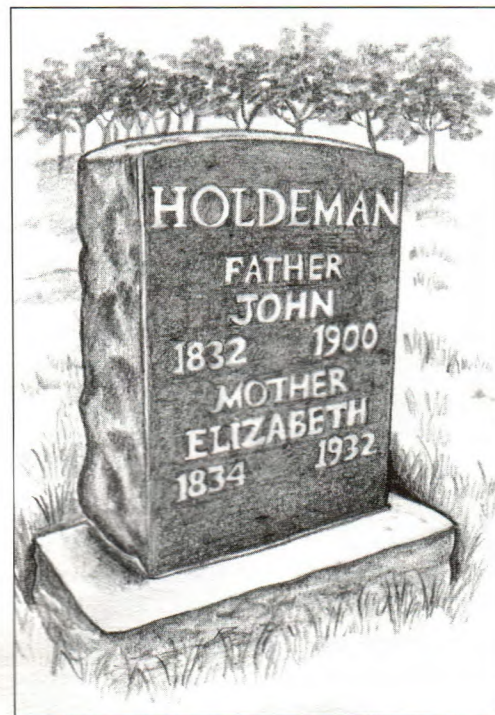
kindle the fire, he was touched by the Spirit of God. He then told his wife, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "This Sunday father and mother, brother and sister must come, and father will be converted, and this will happen before your eyes, so that you may believe." His wife answered, "This cannot come to pass, for your mother is sick so that she does not go from home."³

The following Sunday afternoon eleven people came to John Holdeman's home, including his father and mother. (Through the marvelous providence of God, the impossibilities involving his mother's health had been removed, and she was able to come also). He spoke to them for two hours about the convictions that lay so heavily on his heart concerning the decay of the Church. Holdeman's message made a deep impression on his father. The following week he came to John Holdeman and said with tears in his eyes that he had found himself in error; he had repented and had been renewed in his vision.⁴

Upon this experience, and not long after, a group of nineteen members separated themselves without being excommunicated from the (Old) Mennonite Church and established the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. This Church is based upon the same foundation as the Apostolic Church, and the churches of the Paulicians, Waldenses, and the

Anabaptist groups through the centuries. God used men such as Menno Simons and John Holdeman as instruments to reaffirm these beliefs and to lift them out of the worldliness which was trying to smother the Church.

John Holdeman was not a very tall man. He was stockily built and had a long beard. He was a farmer by trade, but his call as a minister outweighed his occupation. He did much traveling to establish congregations and assisted in revivals in many churches in others parts of the United States and Canada.



John Holdeman died in 1900 and was buried in the cemetery at Lone Tree Church near Moundridge, Kansas.

He and his wife had six children, three of whom died in their childhood.³

In 1882 John Holdeman moved his family to Jasper County, Missouri. The entire congregation relocated in Missouri with him. Holdeman continued to travel much in the interest of the Church while he labored to make a

living by farming. They had many hardships and worked hard to pay debts. The Church assisted them at times, since he was needed in ministering to the new congregations he helped establish. The last few years of his life were spent near Moundridge, Kansas.

1. *A History of the Church of God*, pp. 7, 119-120. The term *(Old) Mennonite Church* distinguishes the original Mennonites from the various branches of Mennonites today. They are known today as the Mennonite Church, without the prefix *(Old)*.

2. *Ibid.* p. 121

3. *Ibid.* p. 122

4. *Ibid.* pp. 122-123

5. Inez Unruh, *Portrait of a Prophet*: North Newton, Kans: unpublished research paper, 1958

Early Growth and Development

In 1858 John Holdeman began to take steps which led to the separation from the (Old) Mennonite Church. It was his desire that the faith of our fathers, "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," should live on.

The faith that John Holdeman embraced and which the Church has upheld through the ages believes that the Church of God can be distinguished by the truth, which is its foundation. God's Church can be recognized by the following:

1. Only those who are truly born again may be baptized. Baptism is upon repentance and confession of faith.
2. She has a history of peace, non-resistance, and noninvolvement with secular government.
3. Discipline of disobedient members is practiced.
4. Members practice separation from the world.
5. Her members are bound by love and unity into a fellowship not found elsewhere.
6. Feet washing and Communion are observed only after each member has carefully examined himself and is assured that his life is acceptable before God.

7. Marriage is for life between one husband and one wife.

8. Ministers are elected and ordained to teach and practice faithfully all the doctrines of Christ, the apostles, and the Church.

John Holdeman was a reformer urging a return to the old ground, to the faith and foundation that the Church of God has stood on through the past centuries. He endeavored to labor on this foundation and fully embraced the *Thirty-Three Articles of Faith* and the *Eighteen Articles of Faith*. He also studied the teachings of Menno Simons and other Church fathers of that era, and he was in harmony with them.

He was a prolific writer, in both the English and German languages. *The Mirror of Truth* is one of his most outstanding writings. He wrote and published a confession of faith consisting of twenty-three articles in which he set forth the reasons for his separation from the old church.¹

John Holdeman was a powerful preacher and evangelist, traveling much and preaching the truth, which planted conviction in many hearts.

In 1859 John Holdeman, with those who shared the same vision,



A sketch of the "Johnny Holdeman" church in Wayne, County, Ohio. It was a small wood frame structure which could hold 60-100 people. It was used for worship for 4-5 years, after which the entire congregation left Ohio and moved to Jasper County, Missouri.

united into a group that became known as the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.² As more people were baptized upon the confession of their faith, the Church began to grow. The need for more ministers was soon evident.

In 1862 Frank Seidner was elected and ordained to the ministry by the Church. The following year Mark Seiler was baptized; later he was also ordained to the ministry. By the fall of 1865 there were about twenty members.

During this time, the Church had to endure many false and slanderous accusations, as it has from the begin-

ning. This is the testing fire that brings out the fine gold.

Communion was held in November 1865. The Lord's Supper was observed, and feet washing was administered in the manner upon which they had agreed.

The first conference was held in 1868. Some weighty matters were discussed and agreed upon by the ministers through the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

By the grace of God, the Church began spreading into various states and Canada, as well as into other countries. This growth is continuing.

1. *A History of the Church of God*, pp. 161-176

2. *Ibid.* p. 124

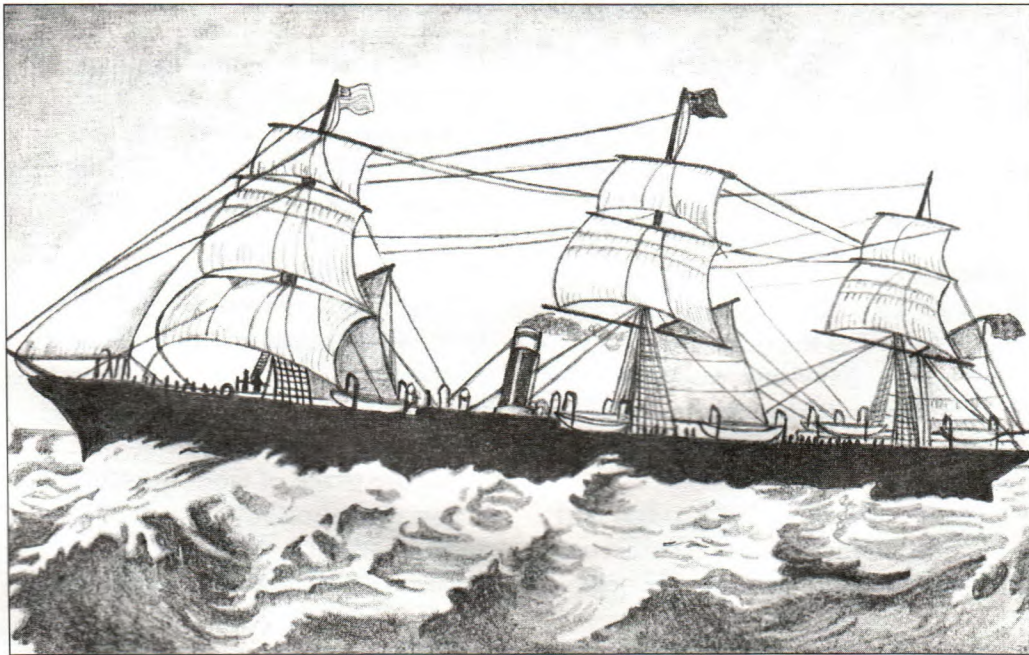
CHAPTER 23

Mennonite Migrations

In previous chapters, the early immigrations of Mennonites to America have been considered. Yet, while the Church was enjoying religious freedom in America, there were many Mennonites who remained in Europe. Some of them lost the faith as they drifted into worldliness and lost

their vision of nonresistance, as well as other doctrines. Others among the Mennonites lost the true vision of spiritual life in Jesus Christ and became too rigid with rules and discipline.

This chapter will not cover all the distinct Mennonite churches who fled from country to country. A brief his-



S.S. City of Montreal, one of the ships which brought Mennonite immigrants from Russia to America in the 1870s.

tory of the background and migrations of only two groups will be considered: the Kleine Gemeinde and the Ostrogers.

During the time of Menno Simons, some of the Dutch Mennonites of Holland began settling in northern Europe near the delta of the Vistula and Nogat Rivers. Menno Simons knew about these congregations. He had even visited among them, as is shown in an encouraging letter he wrote in 1549, "Exhortation to a Church in Prussia."¹

For many years Mennonites were appreciated in this area for their diligent efforts of building dams and dikes. As a result of their work, much wasteland became productive farmland. It appears that these Mennonites continued longer in keeping the true, Anabaptist faith than did the Mennonites in Holland.

This region was under the rule of Poland until 1772, when Frederick the Great from the German Empire took control over it. He guaranteed the Mennonites exemption from military service, providing they would pay five thousand talers annually for the military school at Culm. However, by the late 1700s, Prussia became stronger in military strength and began to take away their privilege of military exemption. What a disappointment it was to these people! They had come to appreciate and enjoy this area as their home for many years. Sadly they began to con-

sider moving on in search of a land of religious freedom.

When emigration from Prussia finally came about, almost half the Mennonites moved. Upon the invitation of Czarina Catherine II, they chose various areas of south Russia for their new homes. There were large settlements along the Chortitz River, and also farther south along the Molotschna River. Another group of Mennonites settled in various colonies in the Ostrog district in the province of Volhynia. These immigrants soon settled in their new land and devoted themselves to farming, dairying, linen-weaving, and other trades. Those who remained in Prussia were more worldly and liberal-minded on nonconformity and non-resistance than those who emigrated. Also, many who stayed in Prussia were more wealthy Mennonites, and for that reason had not been allowed to leave by the Prussian government. Most of them eventually lost the vision of the Anabaptist forefathers.

The Kleine Gemeinde

In 1814 the Kleine Gemeinde (Little Church) had its beginning in the Molotschna settlement. Although they were rightly concerned about the lack of spiritual life in the churches of that area, they lacked clear Bible teaching on conversion and the assurance of salvation.²

The Mennonite settlements in

Russia prospered materially and grew in numbers. Eventually new colonies were formed in other areas. However, dark clouds were on the horizon. The Mennonites thought that the privileges given them by the Russian government were permanent, but in 1870 a law was passed that removed these special rights, including exemption from military service. Numerous visits with government officials failed to resolve the problem, and many among them felt they would need to leave Russia to find a place of religious freedom.

When news of the unrest among the Mennonites in Russia reached America, the Canadian and United States governments extended invitations to settle their frontiers. The following privileges were offered them by Canada: (1) exemption from military service, (2) one hundred sixty acres of free land per family, (3) freedom of religion, (4) the freedom to use the German language, and (5) control of their own schools.

In 1874 and 1875, the *Kleine Gemeinde* migrated to the New World. The majority of the immigrants of 1874 settled in Manitoba. Their leader, Peter Toews, came with a deep concern for his own salvation and the well-being of his people. He studied the Bible as well as the writings of the Anabaptist and Mennonite forefathers in search of the true faith.³ Some common family names of this group were Barkman, Dueck,

Enns, Friesen, Giesbrecht, Hiebert, Isaac, Penner, Toews, Wohlgemuth, and others.

The Ostrogers

During this same period of time, another group of Dutch Mennonites was inspired with reports of religious freedom in America. These people have been referred to as Ostrogers since they came from several colonies near the city of Ostrog in the province of Volhynia, Russia.

The Russian government tried to persuade these productive Mennonite farmers to stay. When they finally decided to migrate to America in 1874 and 1875, it involved great sacrifice. Many colonists had their life's savings invested in the improvements they had made on their homesteads. The new owners took advantage of them and, as a result, they were reduced to poverty when they were forced to sell everything at extremely low prices. Many were not even left with enough money to get to America! They earnestly cried to God for direction and appealed to the American Mennonites, who graciously helped them move to the New World.

Though they believed the Lord was leading them, it was a sad and dreadful day when they left their homes and all that was familiar and left for a foreign country across the great Atlantic Ocean.

There were several groups of immi-



Mennonite home with attached barn.

grants who came during this time. They settled in various states, including South Dakota, Ohio, and Kansas. A group arrived in Hutchinson, Kansas, one cold miserable winter night. These destitute people were without homes and money. A special committee was organized by the Mennonite Board of Guardians, called the Kansas Relief Committee, to help these people. The following spring these committees, together with the Santa Fe Railroad Company, helped the whole group to settle in Lone Tree Township, McPherson County, Kansas. Some common family names among them were Becker, Boese, Buller,

Dirks, Eck, Jantz, Johnson, Koehn, Nichols, Nightengale, Ratzlaff, Schmidt, Unruh, and Voth. This group greatly appreciated the aid given them by these good-hearted Americans.

What became of these Ostrogers who came to be known as the helpless Poles? David S. Holdeman, a member of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, who served on the Kansas Relief Committee, saw the spiritual and material plight of these people.⁴ He invited his nephew, John Holdeman, to visit them. The Lord was opening the way for a revival, which will be studied in the next chapter.

1. *Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, pp. 1030-1035

2. *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, s.v. "Kleine Gemeinde," pp. 196-199

3. John M. Penner, *A Concise History of the Church of God*: Moundridge, Kans.: Gospel Publishers, 1986, pp. 77-85

4. Abe J. Unruh, *The Helpless Poles*: Moundridge, Kans.: Gospel Publishers, 1991, p.175

Map Explanations

1. The first Mennonites appear to have moved from the areas of the Lower Rhine to America between 1683 and 1705. Numbering about 100, they settled in Germantown, Pennsylvania.

2. The second wave of several thousand (between 3,000 and 5,000) came between the years 1707 and 1756. Some came from mountain areas of Switzerland, while others came from the Palatinate. These also settled in Pennsylvania. Some of the first Amish came in this wave.

3. From 1815 to 1860, about 3,000 Amish Mennonites moved from Alsace, Bavaria, and Hesse and settled in Ohio, Ontario, Indiana, and Illinois.

4. Between 1830 and 1860 about 500 Mennonites left Switzerland and settled in Ohio and Indiana.

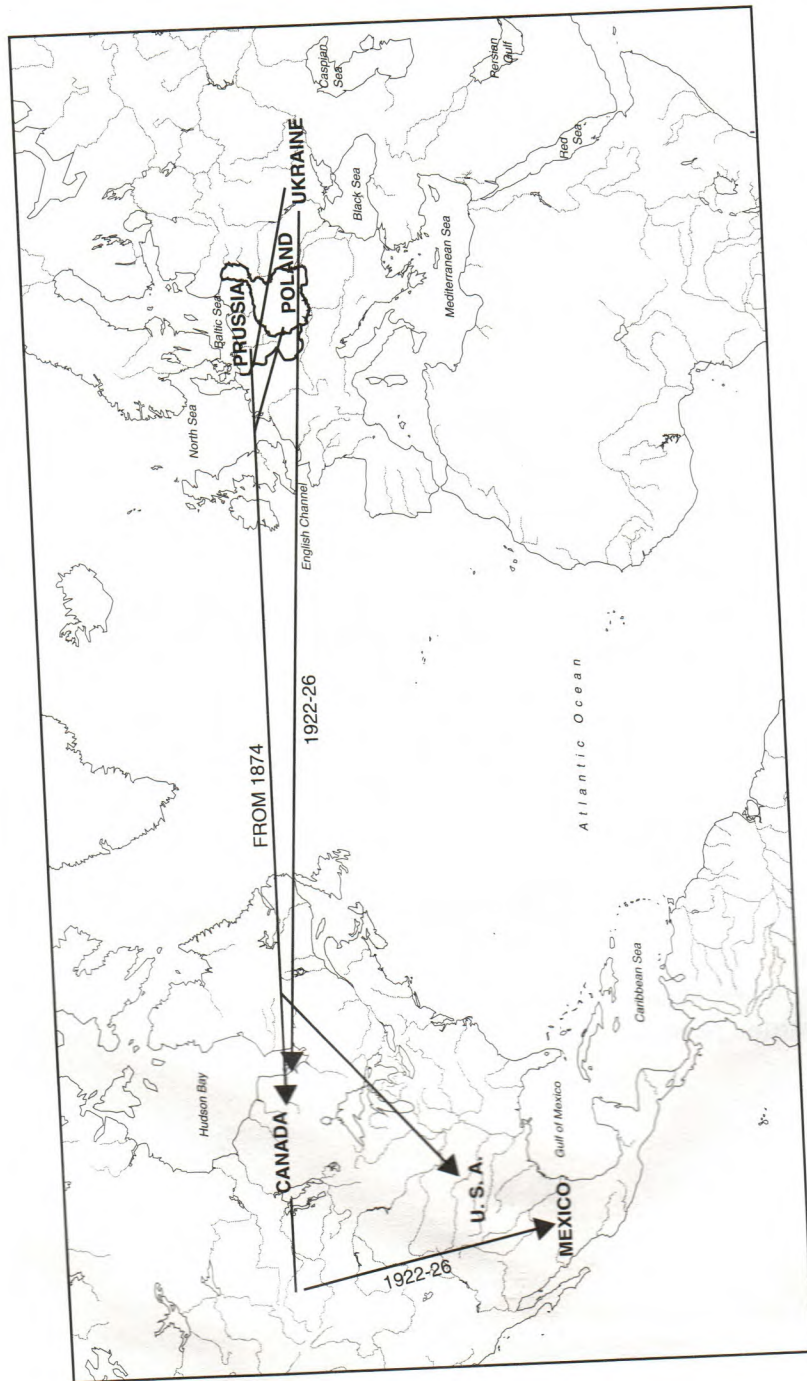
5. In the years 1865 to 1895 about 300 Mennonites of Swiss origin left the Palatinate and settled in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.

6. Much greater numbers came over in the sixth wave. When Russia would no longer guarantee perma-

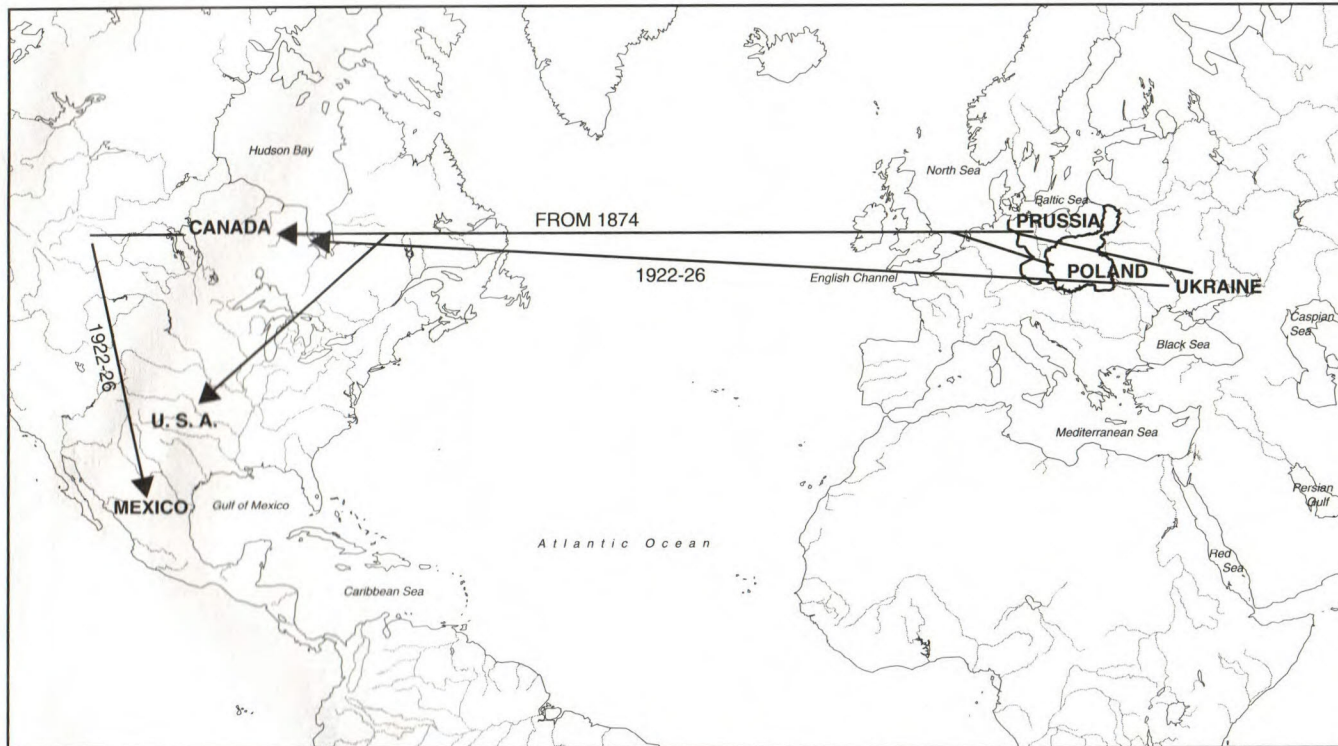
nent military exemption in the 1870s, about 18,000 Mennonites mostly of Dutch origin left Russia. About 10,000 settled in Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Another 8,000 settled in Manitoba. An additional 400 Mennonites left Poland and settled in Kansas and South Dakota.

7. Following World War I, from 1922 to 1930, about 25,000 Mennonites fled from Russia to escape communism. About 21,000 of them settled in Canada, and the rest of them settled in Paraguay, Brazil, and Mexico.

8. The eighth wave was composed of about 35,000 Mennonites who left Russia in 1941 to 1943 during World War II with the help of the German army. Unfortunately, almost two-thirds of them were recaptured by the Russians and forced to return to Russia, but about 12,000 were able to escape. Of these, about 7,000 settled in Canada, and the rest in South America.



Map F
Mennonite Migrations to America



Map F
Mennonite Migrations to America

CHAPTER 24

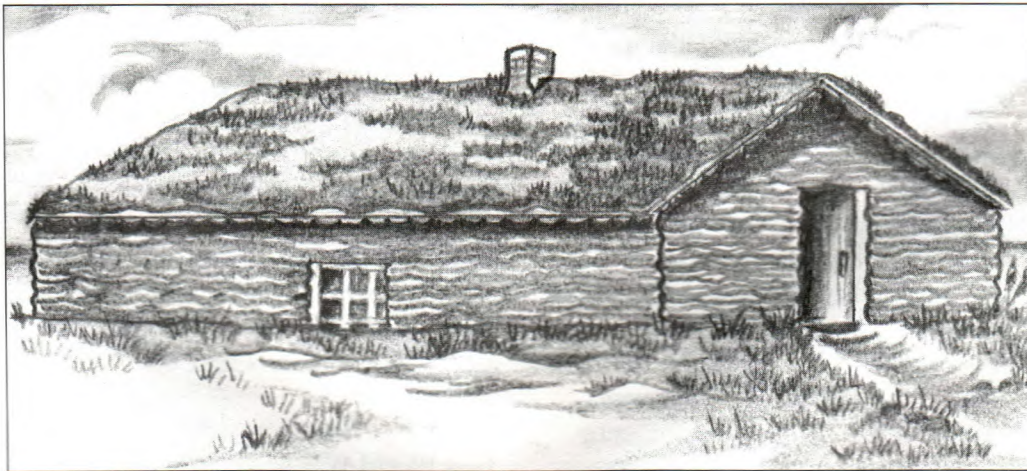
The Growth of the Church

Since the time of Christ, faithful Christians have been more concerned about genuine conversion and heartfelt consecration to God than about great numbers. God's people rejoice with the angels of heaven when people are willing to forsake the pleasures of this world and accept the abundance of spiritual life in Christ Jesus.

There have been times when the

Church grew rapidly and times when the faithful were very few. Jesus referred to this when He said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). There will be a great multitude in heaven (Revelation 7:9), including all the innocent children; yet of all people few choose to be saved.

Throughout history, the Lord and His



The first Lone Tree meetinghouse was a sod dugout. It had only two windows, and the dirt floor was four feet below ground level. The backless benches ran lengthwise. This structure was used from 1879-1880, and was located seven miles north of Moundridge, Kansas.

Church have kept the door of the kingdom open to every nation and people who truly want to be saved.

While every true Christian is a soul-winner for the Lord, there have been zealous brethren who have sacrificed much to spread the gospel. Minister John Holdeman was one such man. He traveled extensively and wrote much in the service of the kingdom. Holdeman had the vision that the gospel would be spread into all the world before the end of time. To understand the difficulty of fulfilling this conviction, remember that travel was slow in those days. They did not have jet airliners to transport people around the globe.

Revival Among the Ostrogers

In 1878 John Holdeman was invited to visit the destitute Ostrogers who settled in the Lone Tree Township of central Kansas. Worship services were held in their homes. Holdeman preached to them the pure doctrine of the apostolic faith. Seventy souls were converted and baptized upon the confession of their faith. Within a year, two ministers and two deacons were elected. A sod church building was built. By 1882, there were several small congregations and over two hundred members in the state of Kansas.

In 1882, Tobias Unruh, a preacher

from another church, was converted and baptized. He was later called of God and the Church to the ministry and became an influential evangelist.

Revival Among the Kleine Gemeinde

For some time Minister John Holdeman corresponded with Peter Toews, a respected leader among the Kleine Gemeinde group that settled in Manitoba in 1874-1875. Later he was invited to visit among them, which he did. Peter Toews began to see that John Holdeman was preaching the true faith of their forefathers, the very thing he was searching for. Others also shared this feeling.

In 1881 and 1882, with Ministers John Holdeman and Mark Seiler as evangelists, there was a revival among the Kleine Gemeinde. One hundred sixty-five souls, including Peter Toews, were baptized into the Church upon the testimony of their experiences of the new birth. Out of this group came many able leaders and writers to serve in the growing Church. Within two years, five ministers had been chosen and ordained.

The period from 1882 until the first World War was a very important one for the rapidly growing Church. Conferences were held in which basic doctrines held by the Church of God throughout the ages were recon-

firmed and supported. To strengthen the brotherhood and to propagate the faith, the publication of two periodicals was begun. Because the preaching and teaching in those days was in German, the *Botschafter der Wahrheit* was printed in that language. As the language used in the Church shifted from German to English, the need arose for an English publication, and the *Messenger of Truth* came into being.

As God blessed the early Church, even so He blessed the growing brotherhood as “they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship” (Acts 2:42). Nevertheless, conditions leading to World War I were developing in the world. With war comes the test of faith and loyalty. The Church would need to cope with the crises brought by the world wars.

CHAPTER 25

The Christian in Time of War *World War I*

Jesus taught the way of love, even for one's enemies. That is why Christians believe war and violence are wrong. They are called conscientious objectors to war (COs). Their conscience does not permit them to take part in war, violence, or to harm anyone in any way. They believe the Scriptures, the example of Christ, and the Holy Spirit teach against it. In some countries, the governments have permitted Christians to claim this right or privilege. This is often taken for granted, but there has been a price attached.

Both the Canadian and United States governments have granted the privilege to their citizens to worship God according to their conscience. However, exemption from taking part in war has come with a cost. In World War I, this exemption was not granted in the United States, as it was in Canada.

Mennonites in Canada in World War I

The Dominion of Canada was organized in 1867. Just a year later a

militia law was passed which provided that Quakers and Mennonites were exempt from military service. "In 1873 an Order of Council of the Dominion government promised complete exemption from all military service to the Mennonites who were about to migrate from Russia to western Canada."¹

When Great Britain entered World War I, Canada was also drawn into the war, since it was a part of the British Commonwealth. In 1917 Canada enacted a law requiring military service for all able young men. There was considerable confusion for a while on the interpretation of this law because some local officials felt that Mennonites should serve in the military, although not on the actual battlefield. The special exemption of 1873 held firm, however, so that the brethren were not faced with severe testing as were the young men from the United States. There was, however, some opposition from local Canadian citizens who did not appreciate the special freedoms granted to the Mennonites.

Mennonites in the United States in World War I

The experiences of Noah Leatherman during the war give us

an idea of what it was like in the United States for young men who faced the draft.

Noah Leatherman, together with thousands of other young men, was called to register for the draft and to



World War I was a difficult time for the peace-loving, nonresistant Christian because the government made no provisions for conscientious objectors.

be trained for the armed services. He decided to give his heart to the Lord and follow Him regardless of the cost. Upon his confession of faith, he was baptized into the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

At that time, there were no alternatives for conscientious objectors. They were drafted and sent to the military training camps. They then came under military law, which was more rigid than civilian law. Disobedience to an order made one subject to court-martial and severe punishment. In September 1917 Noah Leatherman was sent to Camp Funston in Kansas, one of the worst places to which a conscientious objector could be sent.

A military atmosphere is designed to have a disciplinary effect upon anyone who is under it. The continual influence of the uniforms, discipline, schedules, music, instructions, and training is intended to make soldiers out of young men and to teach them to obey without question every order given.

This military environment was quite a change for a young man who was used to a home influenced by Christian teachings, devotions, and church attendance. Suddenly Noah Leatherman found himself facing this military law in reality. Of the thousands of young men called to service, only a few took a stand as conscientious objectors. This was indeed difficult.

The conscientious objectors were subjected to rough treatment because

they refused to be part of the war machine. For this reason, they could not obey certain orders from the officers. They were taken to the guard-house, where soldiers mistreated them severely. Some were bayoneted. Some were beaten. Others were ordered out of bed on cold nights and made to stand outside for hours or days at a time in bad weather with their arms outstretched while the soldiers ridiculed them. At times conscientious objectors were made to run as fast as they could while being chased by men on motorcycles. Mock trials were held in which they were tried and sentenced to death. At other times men would be sent to argue with them. The men told them they were wrong and read verses from the Bible, attempting to convince them that fighting was right for Christians or that it was a Christian's duty to do whatever the government ordered him to do.

For Noah Leatherman, the second year in the military camp was a time of testing. As punishment, he was given only bread and water for not doing the work he was ordered to do. At times all food was withheld. His cot was taken away from him, and he had to sleep on the floor. He was required to wear a cap that said, "CO Won't Work." One snowy day he was forced to take a cold shower and stand all day on the north side of the barrack. Another time he and others had to stand for hours while a guard held a rifle on them. They did not

dare to make the slightest move or speak to each other. This harassment continued day after day.

Many efforts were made to put fear into the young men's hearts. One day three young soldiers were hung for their disobedience. Everyone in the camp, the COs as well as the soldiers, was required to watch this execution.

God was near to these young men. Precious hours were spent in some quiet spot where they spent time reading their Bibles, praying, and encouraging one another. The Lord comforted them with peace, and lifted their spirits.

The Lord also worked in the hearts of the officers. At times some of them listened to the discussions and Bible classes. Some officers felt sympathetic toward them and would have liked to help them. One captain's wife wrote her husband a letter, warning him to be very careful with these men. These conscientious objectors were strong witnesses for the truth.

Germany surrendered on November 11, 1918, and the armistice was signed. For conscientious objectors, this was an uncertain time. They had been court-martialed and were awaiting their sentences. On November 12, they received orders to begin twenty-five year sentences in the federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas. As they prepared for departure to the penitentiary, the return of

the soldiers from abroad was beginning. While there was rejoicing that the war was over, Noah Leatherman and the other conscientious objectors faced the depressing prospect of twenty-five years in prison. But when the officers asked them whether they were sorry they had not accepted orders, one of them replied, "No, sir, if I had it to do over again, I would do the same thing." They knew they had done what was right.

Life in prison was not easy. Days were dreary and filled with work. The food was poor with little variety. The discipline was severe, with solitary confinement for those who did not comply. There was no freedom or consideration for personal feelings.

It was helpful to Noah Leatherman that there were quite a number of other young men who took the same stand. While in prison he became acquainted with four Hutterites who had spent some time in Alcatraz, a prison in California. The cruel treatment received upon entering the prison at Leavenworth resulted in the death of two. These young men took the Word of God seriously when it says, "Love your enemies. Do good to all men. The servant of the Lord must not strive."

After about two months in prison, Noah Leatherman picked up a newspaper and saw his name among others who were to be released from prison! Within four days, he was on his way home.

When Noah Leatherman was released, he was compelled to accept payment for the time he had served. He did not want to do this, but he accepted it upon the condition that he would return it to the United States Treasury, which he did as soon as he got home and had the opportunity.²

The faithfulness of the conscientious objectors in World War I helped pave the way for exemption from military service in the wars that followed.

There have been many good men in government who have realized that prison is not the place for Christian men. To be faithful to what is right is very important.

-
1. Guy F. Hershberger. *War, Peace, and Nonresistance*. Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1969, p. 120
 2. Noah Leatherman. *Diary by Noah H. Leatherman*. Rosenort, Man.: PrairieView Press

CHAPTER 26

The Christian in Time of War *World War II*

After the years of the Great Depression in North America, agriculture and industry began to prosper. As people earned better wages and farmers realized more profits from their crops, they could afford to buy better clothes, build better homes, and enjoy more conveniences. But prosperous times did not prevent conflict between nations. Many people thought World War I would surely end all strife and no one would want war again. They were disappointed.

If everyone really served God and loved his fellowmen, there would be no war. However, some rulers of the nations of the world desire to be great and powerful.

They wish to conquer other nations and lands and become richer. Some wars are fought to defend a country's borders, while other nations go to war in revenge to punish another country. Some leaders, like Adolf Hitler of



Japanese airplanes dropping bombs on American naval ships stationed at Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, caused the United States to enter World War II. The war ended with the surrender of Japanese forces September 2, 1945, after the United States dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities.

Germany, believe they can conquer the whole world. He told his people, "We shall be masters of the earth," and they set out to accomplish this.

In the late summer of 1939, the German armies invaded Poland, plunging Europe, and later the world, into one of the most terrible wars in history. Canada entered the war almost immediately, and the United States entered the war in 1941 after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

As World War II approached, leaders of the peace churches (Mennonites, Friends or Quakers, and the Church of the Brethren) began to recall experiences of World War I. They remembered how citizens who opposed war had been mistreated in military camps and how Christians were not respected for their beliefs and their love for all men. A delegation from the peace churches approached the United States and Canadian governments to make them aware of the Christians' convictions regarding nonresistance and military service.

In 1940 these governments honored their convictions, allowing such people to do work of national importance under civilian direction in lieu of military service. It was called alternative service because it was an alternative granted to those who did not believe in joining the army. Many young men worked on government projects such as dam building, forest service, and others.

The governments of both Canada and the United States required that all young men register as potential soldiers at eighteen years of age. After this they were required to fill out a questionnaire to determine whether their convictions qualified them for alternative service.

Conscientious objectors were frequently called cowards for not going to war. It takes courage to stand up for the truth, but the Scriptures teach, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). It takes courage to show love when others hate or misunderstand you.

In the United States, three young men from central Kansas, members of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, were going to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, for their physical examinations. As they boarded the bus, it was soon evident to the other boys, also going for physicals, that these were conscientious objectors. They began to question the brethren concerning their stand regarding participation in war. They threatened to molest them if they were going to take the conscientious objectors' stand. The other boys got a razor and scissors and approached the three brethren, cutting up their hair, leaving it disfigured. They took the razor to their beards and, in the process, even cut their faces. When the bus stopped at an eating place, one of the brethren was forced to go inside for a glass of beer. It so hap-



Some COs served in forestry camps. Firefighting was one of the kinds of work they performed.

pened that the beer was sold out, so he was not put to the test. Later, the boys took off their belts and began to beat the brethren with belts and fists. One brother was pulled aside and was threatened to be killed if he did not change his mind and go to the army. He earnestly prayed to God, who answered his prayer for help.

In some areas, the local officials were very harsh toward the COs. They considered it unfair that some young men would not have to fight for their country. Some of the conscientious objectors were imprisoned for a period of time, including several brethren of

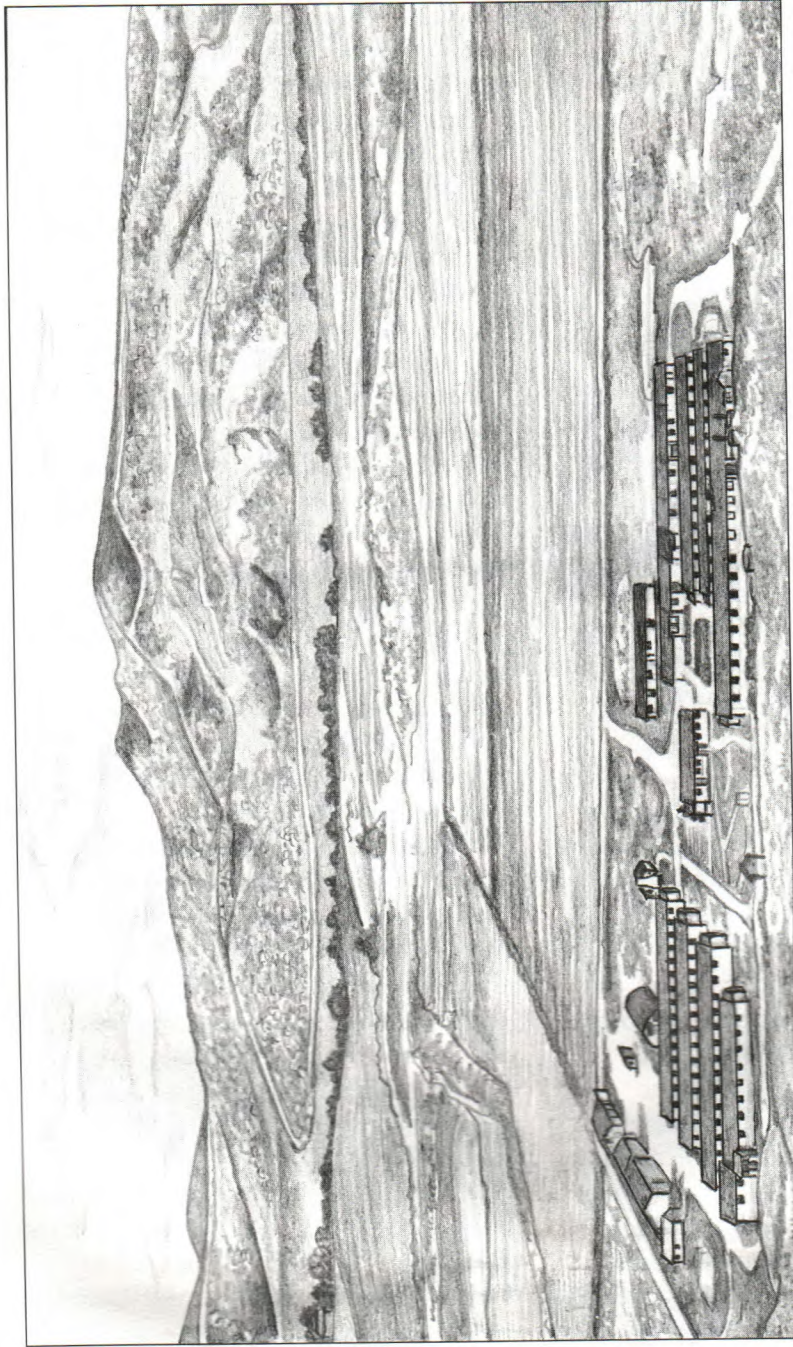
the Church. These indignities provided opportunities to witness of their beliefs and their love for all mankind.

In Canada also, the COs were required to render some public service in lieu of military service unless they were granted a farm leave. Those who were fortunate enough to remain on their home farms were required to make a monthly payment of money to the Red Cross. At the outset of the war this alternative service was for a period of only three months, but this was later increased, and many young men spent considerably more time away from home, working mostly in forestry duties in public parks. Although some officials in charge of these camps were critical of the COs, there were no reports of major physical harassment.

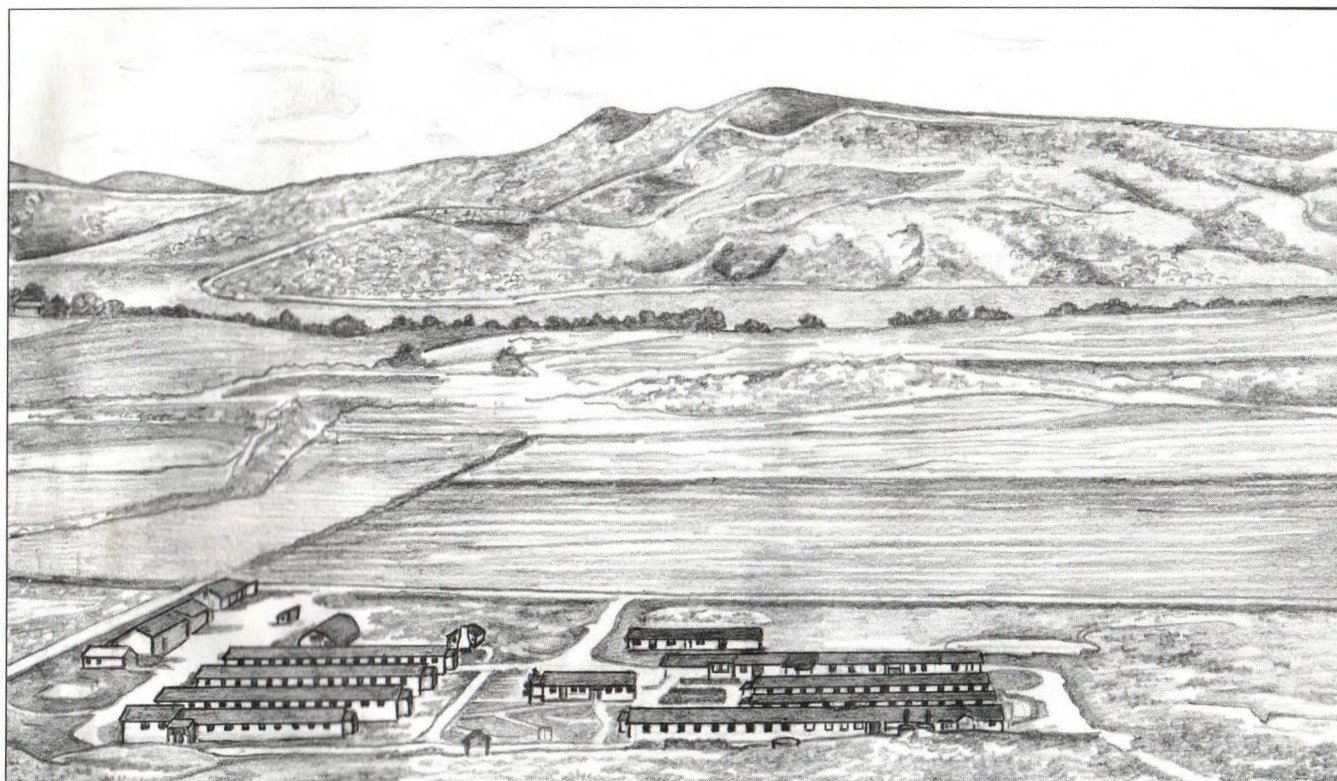
In 1945 the war was over, and conscientious objectors were privileged to return to normal life.

Though the bombing and bloodshed were over, the effects of the war were to be felt for many years. The war-torn countries were left with much poverty and ruin. Homes were shattered. Many husbands and fathers had died, leaving widows and orphans destitute.

The suffering caused by the ravages of war touched the hearts of many people, moving them to send relief in the form of money, food, and clothing to twelve European countries and Egypt. The Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, also contributed to this relief work through the



Civilian Public Service camp at Fort Collins, Colorado. This camp was administered by Mennonite Central Committee, and there were more than 400 young men who were stationed at this camp at one time or another. Thirty-six different religious denominations were represented. The work consisted of projects directed by the Soil Conservation Service.



Civilian Public Service camp at Fort Collins, Colorado. This camp was administered by Mennonite Central Committee, and there were more than 400 young men who were stationed at this camp at one time or another. Thirty-six different religious denominations were represented. The work consisted of projects directed by the Soil Conservation Service.

Mennonite Central Committee, a relief and peace witness organization supported by the North American Mennonite churches. This organization was helpful to the Church in distributing material relief overseas on other occasions, also.

What did the Church gain through the war experiences?

(1) It made the Church recognize more clearly the need to be consistent in the peace stand both in times of war and of peace. (2) It helped the Church to realize more keenly the need to be grounded in the faith of the forefathers. (3) It helped the Church to

realize more clearly the need to witness of the kingdom of peace to the troubled world. (4) It moved the Church to compassion, causing her to share the blessings of prosperity with a needy world in relief and mission work. (5) It moved the Church in thankfulness to God and the governments for the privilege to live the faith, even in times of national crisis.

If the governments had not given the Church consideration, her young men might all have been sent to prison, killed, or forced to leave the country.

CHAPTER 27

The Continuing Peace Witness

World War II ended in 1945, and the young men who served in the government's Civilian Public Service (CPS) projects returned home to be reunited with their families. The Church turned its attention from the young men in CPS camps to other needs.

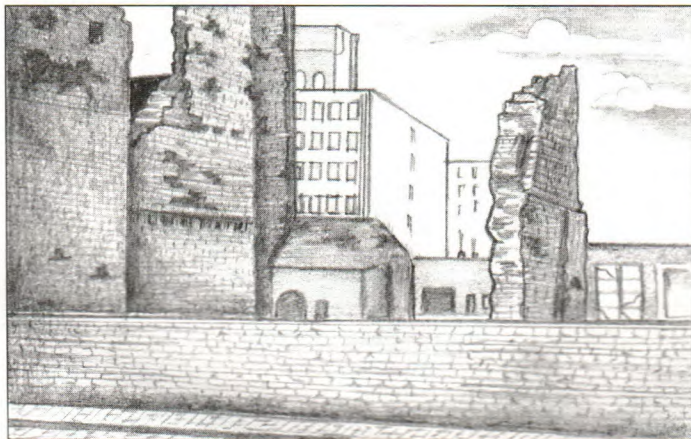
Many people were left homeless and destitute of food and clothing by the devastation of the war. The Church responded to their need by

sending materials for relief to these areas. The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), an agency which helped all Mennonite churches in the aid of those suffering from the war, was very helpful in distributing these commodities.

The end of World War II ushered in an era of peace and continued prosperity. This brought some new problems, but it was also a blessing. The mission outreach was increased during

this time of peace and prosperity. The next chapter explains more about it.

The nations of the world, though tired of war, soon became tense as the communist countries tried to further their aims. By 1948, the United States began to rebuild its armed forces. In 1950, a shadow came over the United States as it became involved in the Korean War. The draft was soon reinstated. In lieu of mili-

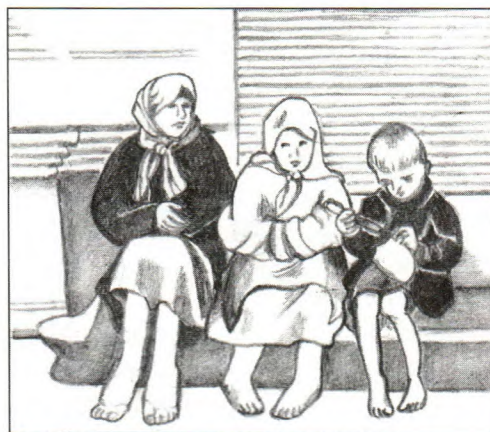


Large ruined structures in the center of Warsaw, Poland told of the terrible destruction that had taken place during the war. New buildings erected after the war are shown in the background. More than 16 million soldiers died in World War II, along with countless civilians.

tary service, young men with nonresistant convictions were allowed to serve two years in hospitals and other public services. The MCC was helpful in finding places of service, and a unit was opened in Roseburg, Oregon, where young men worked in a veteran's mental hospital. This came none too soon. Within months, a law was passed requiring those drafted who had received a conscientious objector's classification to serve in the nation's health, safety, or interest. Other units were opened, and many young men served as aides in mental and general hospitals. Some served their terms as maintenance men and schoolteachers in the Church's mission programs. An experimental farm near Tucumcari, New Mexico, provided opportunity to others.

The Canadian government did not become involved in the Korean conflict. Although there was not a draft, a number of young Canadian brethren gave their service in various projects and so added their testimonies to the peace witness of the Church.

Many experiences are given in the *History and Report of the 1-W Program*. This book tells of an instance where brethren were attacked by mental patients where they worked. The patients had obtained a knife, and some brethren were stabbed when they came to the help of a fellow aide. The doctors testified that someone greater than humans had saved the brethren.



Many people were left homeless and hungry as a result of war.

It was during this time that the Church organized the Preparatory Classes for young men entering service. The young men needed to prepare for their future work in public service projects. A class for this purpose was established in the mission house at Tucumcari, New Mexico. This program of teaching is still in use today. The classes are hosted by various congregations. Many young men from the United States and Canada participate. It has been helpful for those entering service, and good for all who have gone for their own benefit in preparation for life.

In 1961 Vietnam was the scene of conflict which finally involved various nations of the world. The United States government continued to grant COs the opportunity to serve in humanitarian work in lieu of military service.

In 1965 there was a large increase in the number of boys called to service due to the mounting involvement in the Vietnam war. The number of young men serving through the Church agency called Christian Public Service (CPS) continued to increase until 1969, when it peaked with 129 men in service.

Many of the young men in public service projects received wages, but some did not. Two alternative service programs came into use. In one, the

brethren were allowed to keep their pay. The other program was called Voluntary Service. Young men in this program did not keep their wages, although they received a small monthly allowance. Their wages went to the maintenance of their units and to charitable causes through Christian Public Service.

There was a growing concern that the peace witness could be improved by having only one program. In the 1967 Conference it was decided that



On the way to market in Haiti. Tuberculosis and malnutrition treatment centers have been operated in Haiti to alleviate suffering and to render humanitarian aid.

the Church would sponsor only one kind of alternative service, a voluntary service program. Voluntary service units were established under the administration of CPS. Houses were rented or purchased. Married couples were placed in the unit houses whenever possible to serve as houseparents.

The units that involved working in hospitals included Grand Rapids, Michigan; Kansas City and Halstead, Kansas; Tulsa and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Reedley, California; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Lebanon, Oregon. Other brethren served in agricultural projects and in foreign missions, teaching schools, building roads, and helping the poor. Several brethren who spent time in Haiti and Mexico were responsible for providing food-for-work projects, deworming programs, building roads, and providing relief for the poor.

One example of this was in Haiti where food-for-work projects were

used to distribute commodities. One small can of rice and one can of beans were given for a day's work. Up to fifty people would respond, even though only a few could be used. Nutrition centers were set up to provide food for malnourished children and instruction for their mothers.

In the early 1970s, Selective Service, the government agency that administered the draft system, altered the draft by introducing the lottery system. This system drafted only those whose lottery numbers were below an official cutoff point. Fewer and fewer men were drafted until, in 1973, the draft ceased altogether. Soon the units were closed down.

Who knows what the future holds? There are disputes and armed conflicts in many regions of the world. God only knows what the future holds. His children are assured that He will not forsake His own.

C H A P T E R 28

Fulfilling the Great Commission

Just before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His disciples this charge: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Earlier in His min-

istry He had prophesied that the gospel would be preached, or published, throughout the whole world. Since that time the Church of God has tried to fulfill that commission.

John Holdeman believed that the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite,



Philippines. Meeting places for worship are much like houses built of coconut, bamboo, and nipa palm.

would take the gospel to many parts of the world. However, from the time of his death in 1900, until 1921, there was little organized mission activity in the Church. At the General Conference at Greenland, Manitoba, held in October 1921, the following decision was made: "That according to the words of Jesus, 'Go and teach all nations,' more should be done to spread the Gospel."¹ Five ministers were chosen for this work: Hiram J. Mininger and Fredrick C. Fricke, both from Michigan, Isaac N. Mastre from North Dakota, and Frank H. Wenger and John A. Koehn from Kansas.² These men actively promoted the early mission efforts of the Church.

In addition to conducting preaching tours in the United States and Canada, the Church's attention was drawn to mission possibilities in Mexico in about 1930. This followed a move in 1927 of four Koehn brothers, Benjamin, Henry, Edward, and Cornelius and their families. These families moved from Oklahoma to the state of Chihuahua in Mexico, where they had purchased a tract of land. Partly to visit the Koehns, and partly to investigate mission possibilities, Min. John A. Koehn of Montezuma, Kansas, began making evangelistic trips to Mexico. Through his efforts and those of the Koehn families who lived there, the first Mexican convert, José Francisco Parra, was baptized in 1934. Because the possibilities continued to expand,



African village. Mission workers have taken the gospel to remote areas.

mission workers were sent to establish direct mission work in 1941. The early workers became involved with health needs, and for a time a hospital and schools were a part of the mission work. Mission efforts have continued in various areas of Mexico since that time. The Church there has become well established, and in 1994 reported 367 members.

Developing together with the Church's mission outreach has been its literature program. In 1921, the Western District Mission Board was organized. A. L. Yost from Hesston, Kansas, was chosen as its chairman. This board was responsible for print-



Southern India has rolling hills, fertile soil, and sufficient rain for tea growing. The Church has had difficulty keeping mission workers in India because Hindu government officials do not welcome Christianity.

ing and distributing gospel tracts. In 1934 this work was given to the newly formed Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, Free Tract Association. In 1935 they reported that they had distributed 10,000 tracts. A. L. Yost served as superintendent of the tract work from 1942 to 1959. In 1965 the board's name was changed to the Gospel Tract and Bible Society. This work has grown steadily from its beginning. Tracts and other literature are furnished to a network of distributors worldwide. Distribution centers are operated in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Mexico,

Nigeria, the Philippines, and Ukraine to satisfy the ever-increasing demand for literature. In 1994, over thirty-four million tracts were distributed, and also Bibles, New Testaments, Gospels, and doctrinal literature.

Often the distribution of tracts has paved the way for personal mission work. This happened in Nigeria in the early 1960s. Contact with those who had read the Church's literature prompted the General Mission Board to investigate interest in the gospel in Nigeria. At the General Conference held in 1959, it was decided to send men to investigate the possibilities of

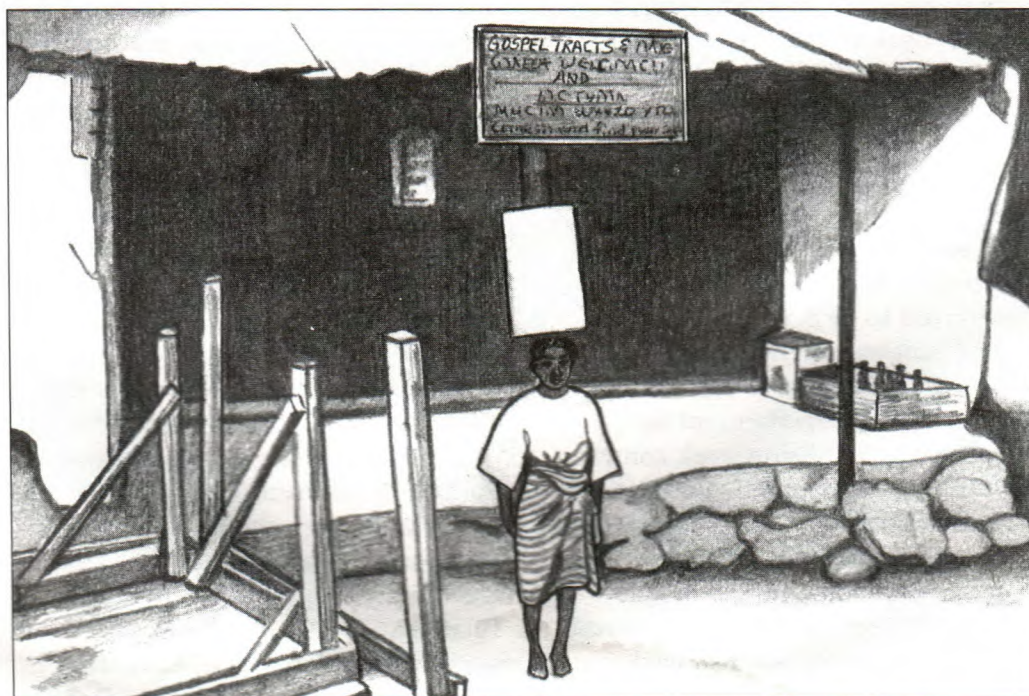
mission work in Nigeria. J. A. Wilson and Harry Wenger were chosen to make this investigation. Soon several mission workers were sent to Nigeria. Mission work in Nigeria has continued, and the Church has grown and matured. In 1992, the Nigerian church numbered 271. Mission activity has since spread to other nations in Africa, with mission workers stationed in Ghana, Kenya, and Malawi.

The Church has gone to other parts of the world as opportunities and circumstances have allowed. Community and agricultural development, and health services have been provided

under the direction of a board known as Christian Service International (CSI). Ministering to physical needs in a Christian way has led to successful mission programs in numerous places.

In 1961 Christian Service International (then called Christian Foreign Welfare), investigated possibilities for projects of this kind in Haiti. As a result, the Haitian people responded to the gospel, and the Church was established there.

In 1973 a preliminary visit was made to the Philippines, and the following year mission work began there. Material aid projects have



Nigerian tract, Bible, and bookshop center in the downtown section of Ile Ife.

included assistance in building foot-bridges, digging irrigation canals, and draining swamps. Health services in the Philippines have included the treatment of tuberculosis and harelip repair surgeries. These programs have been successful and very rewarding, and at the end of 1994 there were 218 members on the islands.

In 1976 a serious earthquake struck Guatemala. A million people were left homeless, and 22,000 people were killed. Another committee, Christian Disaster Relief (CDR), which responds to disasters of many kinds, sent more than 200 workers to Guatemala to help in the rebuilding efforts. After the rebuilding work ended, mission workers were sent, and in time the Church was established in Guatemala.

After Hurricane Gilbert struck the island of Jamaica on September 11, 1988, and caused great destruction, CDR sent workers to build shelters and homes. Later this project was transferred to CPS, and a voluntary service unit was opened. These relief efforts ultimately led to the General Mission Board's involvement in Jamaica, where mission work continues and members have been baptized.

In 1972 mission work began in Belize, both among the Kleine Gemeinde people and the Maya Indians. There has also been interest shown by others of Spanish background. In 1975 mission workers were sent to the Dominican Republic,

which shares the island of Hispaniola with the country of Haiti.

India is a large, populous nation from which many tract requests have come. Although it has been difficult to secure long-term visas, numerous missionaries have been sent for short periods of time to India, and the first members were baptized into the Church in 1967.

Beginning in 1967, a number of families from North America settled in Brazil and began establishing congregations there. This has been a successful effort in mission work by colonization. Many Brazilians have been converted and baptized, becoming members of those congregations. The Church in Brazil has also reached out into other parts of the country, both with mission workers and an effective literature program.

Unexpected events in Europe in the early 1990s provided the mission program with both opportunities and challenges. The decline and collapse of communism in the U.S.S.R. and other European countries opened the way for the gospel to be spread, especially through literature distribution.

The Church has also sent mission workers to different places in North America through the years. In 1943 a work was begun among Spanish-speaking people in the Trementina-Tucumcari area of New Mexico. A small church developed. Also, this was the location of a Christian Public Service unit that served as the home

of the Preparatory Classes for a number of years.

Mission work began in Arizona with the Navajo Indians in 1951. Because of a severe drouth in the late 1940s, the Indians were living in extreme poverty. Several truckloads of relief goods were sent by the Church to the reservation in 1951, and those involved became concerned because of the great need of schools. Herman and Sadie Frank were the first mission workers, and by fall of 1951 Irvy and Imogene Goossen had arrived and opened a small school, which grew into a boarding school that was operated for a number of years.

A mission was established in 1951 among the Sunchild and Baptiste River Indian reserves for Cree and Chippewa Indians in northern Alberta. The government offered to build schools if the teachers would be supplied by the Church. A nurse and helper were provided to care for the sick, and a children's home was also operated for homeless children.

Also in 1951 work was begun sixty miles east of Fort Vermilion, Alberta, at the Little Red River Post. This remote location could be reached by boat and plane in the summer, and by plane or dogsled in the winter. This work, which did not last many

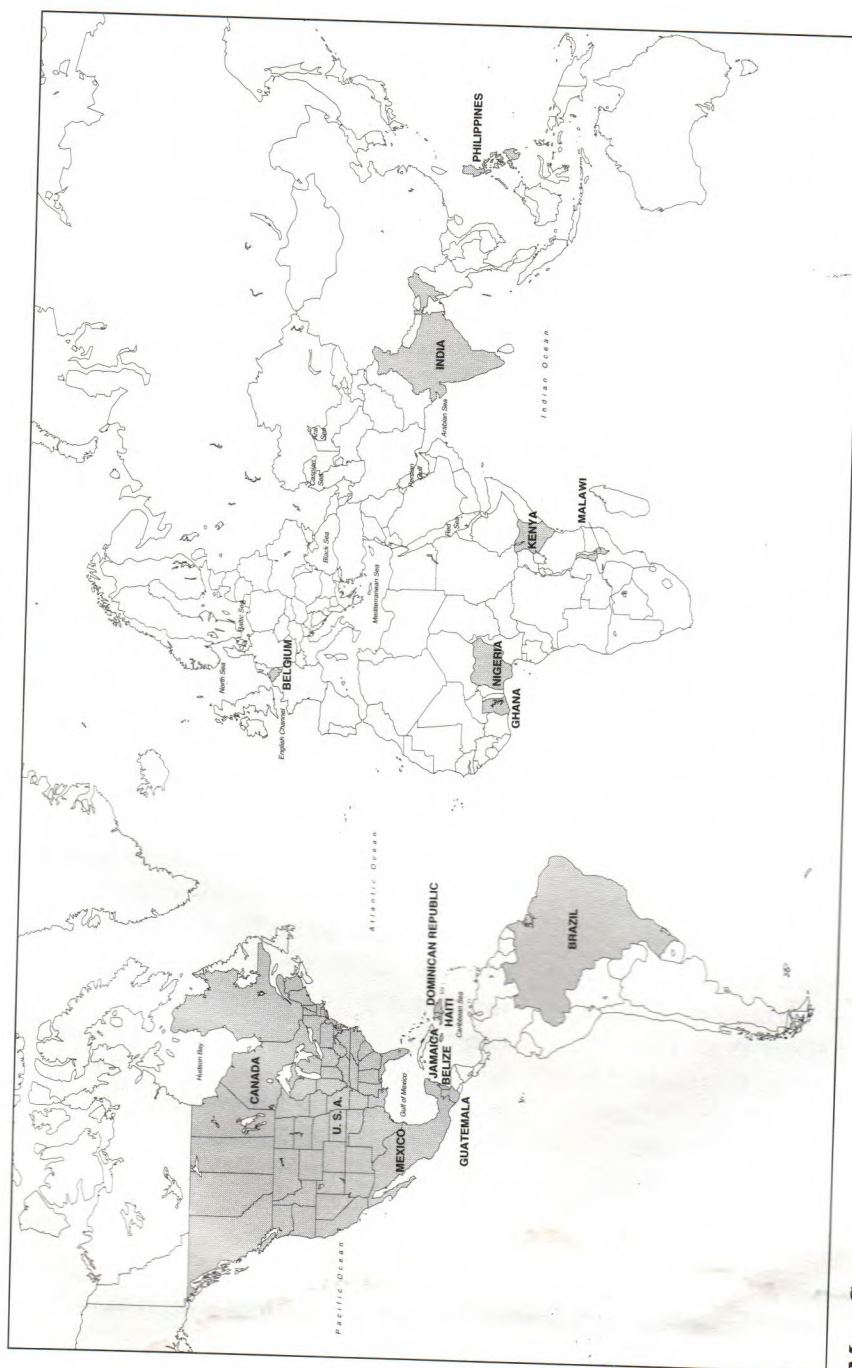
years, consisted of some agricultural work and some medical care.

Since 1950 several congregations have been established among the Amish and other conservative church groups in the eastern United States. More recently, interest in the gospel and the Church has come from many places, and U.S.A. Missions and Missions Canada have responded by sending mission workers to numerous communities in both countries. In connection with this, many families have moved from older, established congregations to some of these places to promote the growth of the Church. Mission activity has been carried to the large cities of New York City, New York; Los Angeles and Anaheim, California; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Montreal, Quebec. Some of these missions are operated in cooperation with voluntary service units sponsored by CPS.

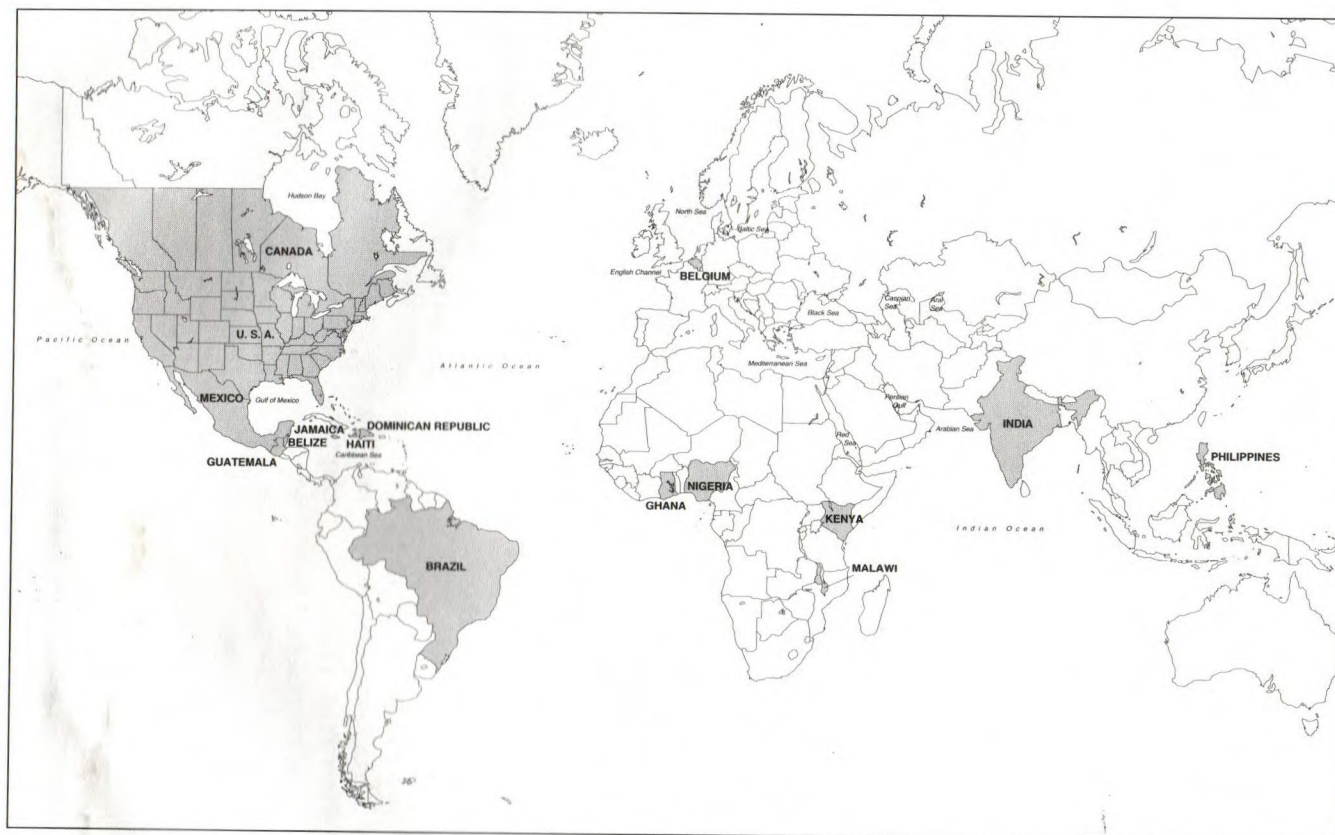
In North and South America, and around the world, God is calling many people to be His children and to come to His Church. He is also making it possible that His Church can take the gospel to many people, with both literature and workers. He is still asking His followers to fulfill the Great Commission.

1. *Congregation Reports*; Moundridge, Kans.: Gospel Publishers, 1984, p.25

2. Inez Unruh, *Twenty-five Years of Missions*; North Newton, Kans.: unpublished research paper, 1958, p. 1



Map G
Missions around the world.



Map G
Missions around the world.

CHAPTER 29

The Church Through Changing Times

God is the founder and preserver of the Church. He is an eternal being, and does not change. A thousand years are but as yesterday in His sight, and as a

watch in the night. "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6). "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

The Church is called "the house of



If God's Church will keep the faith in purity, His protecting hand will guard her against the storms and tempests that rage. "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). Truth never changes. The Church holds to the truth through changing times. She has come through the struggles of the ages as the true bride of Jesus Christ. As the world has changed, the Church has faced difficult situations, but God has always made a way for her to remain pure in doctrine and practice. The reason the Church has been able to stand throughout the ages is because she is built upon Jesus Christ and the changeless Word of God (Matthew 16:18; John 1:1, 14). She receives direction from God through the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, who has been sent into the world to "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). It has been the Holy Spirit who has given guidance to the Church to cope with the many changes that have come through the centuries—through times of peace, war, persecution, adversity and prosperity, as well as other changes and modern inventions of men. The Holy Spirit has given guidance where there is no clear teaching in the Bible to rely upon for direction.

Principles the Church has taught from the beginning are moderation, simplicity, and separation from the world. Jesus and the apostles taught that Christians are not to become involved in anything that robs them of spiritual life. When self-life is evi-

dent, spiritual vision becomes dim. This hinders the Christian's witness and light to the world.

At different times Conferences and ministerial councils have been held to find solutions to problems being faced at a particular time. This is a time of much prayer and concern as the Church gathers for direction. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is sought, and an open discussion follows. God leads in forming a resolution or Conference decision regarding the issue or question under discussion. In this way God has kept His people united and has charted a course for the Church through changing times.

In the early 1900s a need was felt for more instruction in the Word of God. The Church considered making Sunday school a part of the Sunday morning services. Sunday school was accepted and has been a real blessing.

Modern education has changed considerably in the past fifty years. At one time, small rural schools provided the children with their basic education. Today, there are large consolidated public schools. Unchristian theories, such as evolution, are taught, and much emphasis is placed on sports and activities that are not proper for Christians. Bible reading and prayer have been removed, and violence, disrespect for authority, and other undesirable practices have increased. These, together with the emphasis on higher education,



God's people have preserved and spread the faith. They have suffered persecution, moved to new continents, and endured changing times. The challenge remains to preserve the heritage for generations to come.

caused the Church much concern. In about 1970, a few of the congregations of the Church in the southern United States began operating their own schools. These were started in areas where the problems with the public system were most outstanding. This effort continued, and by 1992 almost every congregation had a school in operation. God has led and blessed this effort in many ways: with dedicated teachers, financial means, and cooperation from the authorities and government.

Principles do not change as times change. However, basic principles need to be applied to changing times. Because something is new does not necessarily mean it is wrong. However, it is not wise to accept a new thing too quickly just because it is convenient or useful (Luke 16:15). Through the ages, the people of God have been cautious about accepting new inventions or conveniences; rather, they should take time to prove the will of God first. This carefulness and dependence on the leading of the Holy Spirit has enabled the Church to maintain her identity through changing times. There are many inventions that have proven to be useful and beneficial to the Church when used in moderation. Some of these are the automobile, equipment for farming and business, the telephone, electricity, and air travel.

The people of God have historically been employed in farming or small

trades as a means of earning their livelihood, usually living in rural areas and communities. As economic conditions have made it more difficult to enter farming, and as increasing numbers of people from other walks of life have become part of the Church, there is a widening diversity in employment and enterprises. The Church has given guidance in these areas, and God has promised sufficient grace for those who are faithful and true to their Christian beliefs, whatever their circumstances. It is required of all Christians to be identified as followers of Christ, witnessing for Him in daily life and conduct.

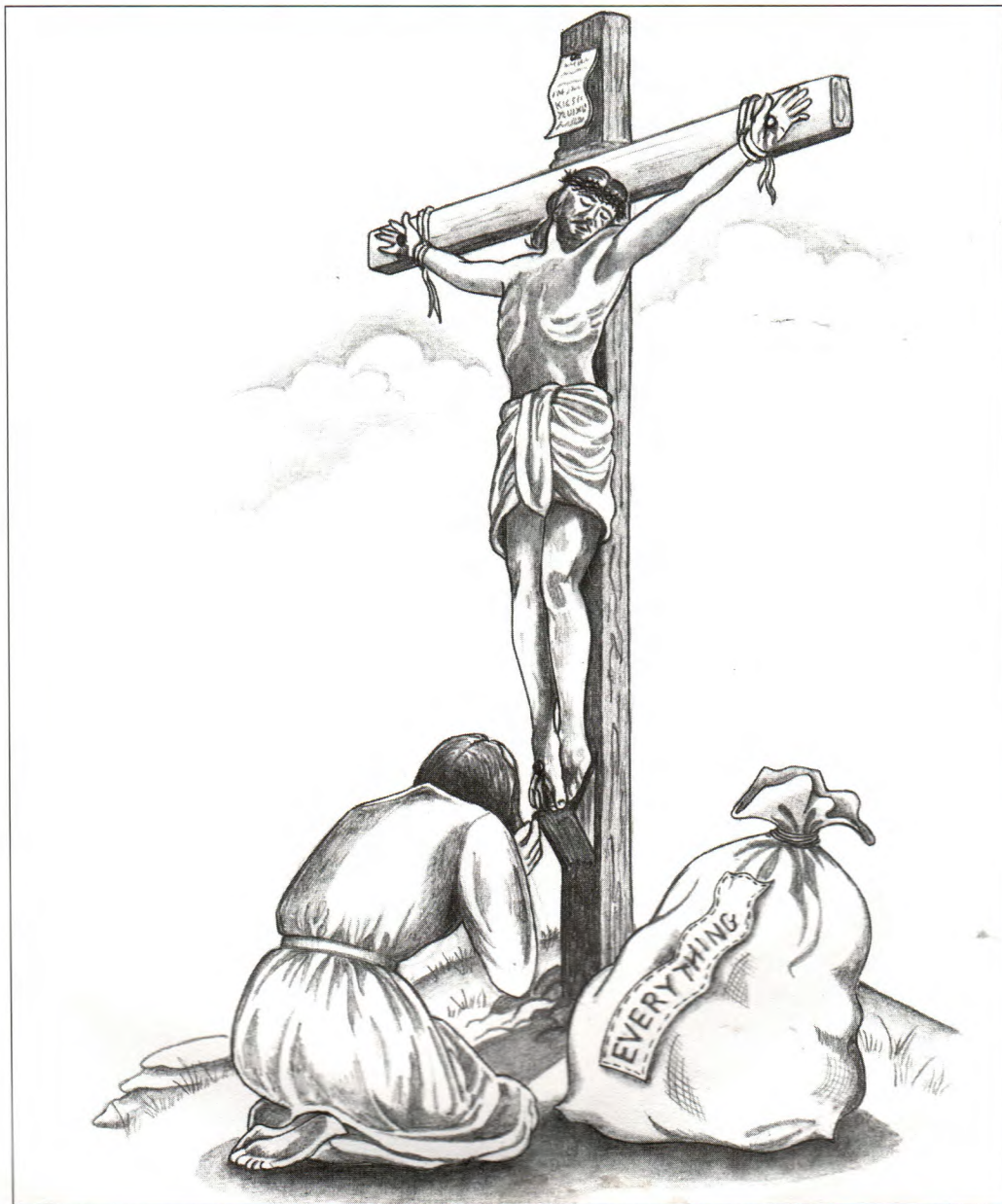
In former years it was customary for children to care for their parents in their own homes during their parents' declining years. In recent years the Church has built and operated homes for the elderly. By this means the Church has become involved in another important field of ministry and outreach.

The Spirit and the bride say come (Revelation 22:17). The Spirit's earnest promptings have brought about an awakening within the Church as the bride of Christ. In recent times, God has again called the Church nearer to Himself. A renewed vision of the role of the Church in the end time has been received. With Jesus at the head of His Church, there is no need to fear the future. Many predict dark and troublesome times ahead. God has

not failed His Church in the past, and He will not in the future. The floods cannot destroy the foundation. All the darkness Satan musters cannot extinguish the light.

The Church today upholds the principles of faith and doctrine that she has embraced through the ages. God's Church has weathered many storms. Sometimes the light grew dim, but it did not go out. Persecution tried to bleed the Church to death. Other organizations have tried to

weaken her. Times of prosperity and ease have tested her resolve. Empires and kingdoms have risen and fallen, and nations have come and gone. Man's way of living has undergone tremendous changes, but God and His Word remain the same. The Church of God in Christ has survived, confirming the statement of Christ in Matthew 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This is our heritage.



The cost of discipleship is the same as in ages past—surrendering everything to Jesus and taking upon ourselves the shame of the cross of Christ, regardless of the cost or consequences.

Glossary

Albigenses	al'b jen' sēz	Constantine	kān' stan ten
apostolic	a' pə stā' lik	Constantinople	kān' stan tə nō' pel
Ausbund	ös' bənt	Crescens	kres' əns
Baptiste	bap tis' te	Culm	cəlm
Basil	bā' zəl	Cyprian	sip' re ən
Blaurock	blau' rāk	Czar	zār
Bogomil	bə gə mē(ə)l'	Dietrich	dē' trik
Bohemia	bō hē' mē ə	Diognetus	dī āh' jə nē' təs
Bolsward	bāls' wərd	Donatist	dān' ə tist
Bosporus	bəs' pə rəs	Dordrecht	dör' drekt
Botschafter der Wahrheit	bōt' shaf tər der vār' hīt	Eby	ē' bē
Byzantine	biz' ən tən	Erasmus	i raz' məs
Cadoux	kə dū'	Eusebius	yū sē' bē əs
Cathars	kath' ārs	Flemish	flem' ish
Catholicism	kə thāl' ə siz' əm	Franciscan	fran sis' kən
Cerinthus	se rin' thəs	Friesland	frez' lənd
Chortitz	kōr' tēts	Frisian	frīzh' ən
Cologne	kə lōn'		

Pronouncing Guide

ə—abut	e—red	ô—orbit
ər—further	ē—east	oi—boy
a—ash	i—hit	ü—loot
ā—race	ī—ice	û—foot
â—mop, mar	ō—row	'—primary accent
ch—chin	ó—thaw	'—secondary accent

Pronunciation guide adapted from *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*, Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, Massachusetts.

Gnosticism	nās' tə siz' əm	Parra, José Francisco	pā' rā h(ō) se' frān cēs' kō
Grebel	grā' bəl	Paulician	pā li' sh(ē)ən
heretic	her' ə' tik	Philips, Dietrich	fil' ips dē' trik
hippodrome	hip' ə dröm'	Philips, Obbe	fil' ips ō' bē
Hutterite	hə' tə rīt.	Pingjum	pēng' yəm
Ignatius	ig nā' sh(ē)əs	Polycarp	pā' li kārɸ
Irenaeus	ī' rē nē' əs	Priscillian	pri sil' yan
Jantz, Klass	jants klās	Ritter	rit' ər
Kleine Gemeinde	klī' nə ge mīn' də	Rohrer	rōr' ər
Knipperdolling	nī' pər dāl' ling	Seidner	sīd' nər
Leeuwarden	la' vārd' ən	Sembert	sem' bərt
Lübeck	lū' bek	Sergius	sər' j(ē)əs
Lyons	lē ō(n)'	Smyrna	smər' nə
Manz	māntz	Snyder, Sicke	snī' dər sek' kā
Matthys, Jan	mā tēs' yān	Sylvanus	sil vān' əs
Milan	mə lan'	Tertullian	tər təl' yən
Molotschna	mə lātch' nā	taler	tā' lər
Montanism	mān' tən i' zəm	Theophorous	thē āf' ō rəs
Montanus	mən tā' nəs	Thessalonica	the sə lā' ni kə
Moravia	mə rā' vē ə	Trajan	trā' jən
Muhammad	mō ha' məd	Trementina	tre men tē' nə
Münster	mən' stər	Twisck	twisk
Nickelsburg	nik' əls bərg	Utrecht	yū' trekt
Nogat	nō' gāt	Vallenses	və len' ses
Novatian	nō vā' shən	van Braght, Thieleman	vān brākt te (ə)l' mən
Nuremberg	nur' əm bərg	van Leiden, Jan	vān lī' den yān
Ostrog	ōs' trāk	van den Hove, Anneken	vān den hōf ə ān' nā kən
Palatinate	pə la' t(ə)n-ət	Vistula	vis' chə lə
papacy	pā' pə sē	Volhynia	vəl ēn' yə

Waldenses wāl den' sēz'
 Waterlanders wā' tər landərs'
 Witmarsum vit mār' səm

Zurich zər' ik
 Zwingli, Ulrich zwing' lē ūl' rik

Pronouncing Guide

ə- abut	e- red	ô- orbit
ər- further	ē- east	oi- boy
a- ash	i- hit	ü- loot
ā- race	î- ice	û- foot
ā-mop. mar	ō- row	'-primary accent
ch- chin	ò- thaw	'-secondary accent

Pronunciation guide adapted from *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*. Merriam-Webster, Inc., Springfield, Massachusetts.

Index

A

Adamites, 68
Albigenses, 38, 46
Alternative service, 108, 114-115
Amish, 75
Amman, Jacob, 75
Anabaptists, 30, 45, 49, 58, 69, 88
Apostles Creed, 16, 23
Apostolic Church, 9, 31, 27, 33, 88
Apostolic Fathers, 9, 14
Apostolics, 48
Ausbund, 84

B

Baptism
— infant, 29
— true, 29
Basil, 45
Blaurock, George, 58
Bogomils, 32, 45
Botschafter der Wahrheit, 101

C

Cadoux, C. J., 19
Calvin, John, 55-56
Cathars, 32, 46, 48
Catherine II, Czarina, 93
Cerinthus, 20
Christian Disaster Relief, 120
Christian Public Service, 114
Christian Service International, 119
Church Fathers, 14
Civilian Public Service, 112
Communism, 97, 112, 120
Conference, General, 124
Confession of faith, 58, 73, 87, 90
Constantine, 24-25
Conscientious objector, 25, 102-111
Constantinople, 33
Crusades, 35-37

D

Dark Ages, 31, 37, 43
Diognetus, 17
Donatists, 29, 32

E

Eby, Peter, 84, 87
Edict of Milan, 26
Education, 124
Eighteen Articles of Faith, 73-74,
87, 90
Erasmus, 52
Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, 20

F

Food-for-work program, 115
French and Indian War, 81
Funk, Henry, 81

G

General Mission Board, 118
Germantown, Pennsylvania, 80
Gibbon, Edward, 17
Gnosticism, 22
Gospel Tract and Bible Society, 118
Great Commission, see *mission*
Grebel, Conrad, 58

H

Hitler, Adolph, 107
Holdeman, John, 84-90

I

Ignatius, 10, 18
Immigration to America, 78, 92-97
Innocent III, 46
Inquisition, 47, 69
Inventions, 126
Irenaeus, 15, 22
Islam, 34

J

James and John, apostles, 8
Joris, David, 67
Justin Martyr, 14

K

Key of Truth, 34
Kleine Gemeinde, 93-94, 100
Knipperdolling, Bernard, 67
Koehn, John A., 117
Korean War, 112

L

Leatherman, Noah, 103-106
Literature program, 117
Luther, Martin, 55, 60

M

Manz, Felix, 58
Martyrs Mirror, 7, 32
Martyrs Mirror, 70, 84
Matthys, Jan, 66
Mennonite Central Committee,
111-112
Mennonites, 56, 69
Mennonites, decline of Dutch, 77
Messenger of Truth, 101
Migrations, 92-97 *Mirror of Truth*, 90
Mission, outreach, 116-121
Missions Canada, 121
Montanism, 22
Moravia, 70
Muhammad, 34
Muslims, 34, 37
Münsterites, 66-67

N

Nero, 8
Nonresistance, 58, 90, 103, 107
Novatian, 29, 33

O

Occupations, 126
Ostrogers, 93-95, 100

P

Palatinate, 73, 78
Papacy, see *Pope*
Parra, José Francisco, 117
Pastor, Adam, 68
Paul, 9
Paulicians, 32, 33, 48, 88
Pearl Harbor, bombed, 108
Penance, 36
Penn, William, 80
Pentecost, 7
Peter, apostle, 9
Philips, Dirk or Dietrich, 64
Philips, Obbe, 63
Polycarp, 10, 12
Pope, 34, 41, 46
Printing, invention of, 52
Priscilian, 30
Protestant Reformation, 54, 77

R

Reformation, see *Protestant Reformation*
Revolutionary War, 82-83
Right of Retraction, 78
Roman Catholic Church, 27, 34, 54
Roman Empire
— decline and fall, 18, 31
— spread of Christianity, 25

S

Seidner, Frank, 91
Seiler, Mark, 91
Sembert, 33
Separation from the world, 19, 50, 58,
90, 124
Sergius, 33
Simons, Menno, 59-64
State church, 25
Stephen, 8
Sunday school, 84, 124
Sylvanus, 33

T

Tertullian, 17
Thessalonica, 70
Thirty Years War, 56, 75
Thirty-three Articles of Faith, 90
Toews, Peter, 94, 100
Trajan, 10
Transubstantiation, 48, 59
Twisk, Peter J., 70

U

U.S.A. Missions, 121
Urban II, 36

V

van Braght, Thieleman, 70
van den Hove, Anneken, 69
van Leiden, Jan, 67
Vicar, see *Pope*
Vietnam War, 113

W

Waldenses, 33, 38, 43, 48-52, 69, 88
Waldo, Peter, 37, 48
William III of Orange, 69
World War I, 102-106
World War II, 107-112

Z

Zwingli, Ulrich, 55