

THE ANABAPTISTS IN AUSTRIA AND MORAVIA

Franz Rathmair, Wittenberg 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Re: myself: Franz Rathmair, born 1955, MDV, M.Th.

- I grew up Catholic but was just a nominal Christian
- At 17 I gave my life to Jesus at a free church event, was baptized, and became a member of the Mennonite Free Church
- For 30 years I was a pastor, Bible school teacher, and director of missions
- My current spiritual home is the Free Christian/Charismatic church in Steyr
- I am not a historian. I only concerned myself intensively with the Anabaptist story when I was asked to give a lecture on it.

OUTLINE

1. Geographical expansion of the Anabaptist movement
2. Theological convictions
3. Three leading figures and their ministry
4. Persecution of the Anabaptists
5. Commemoration, reappraisal, steps of reconciliation

GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION

Spread of Anabaptism starting from Switzerland (Zurich)

Principle region of expansion in Austria:

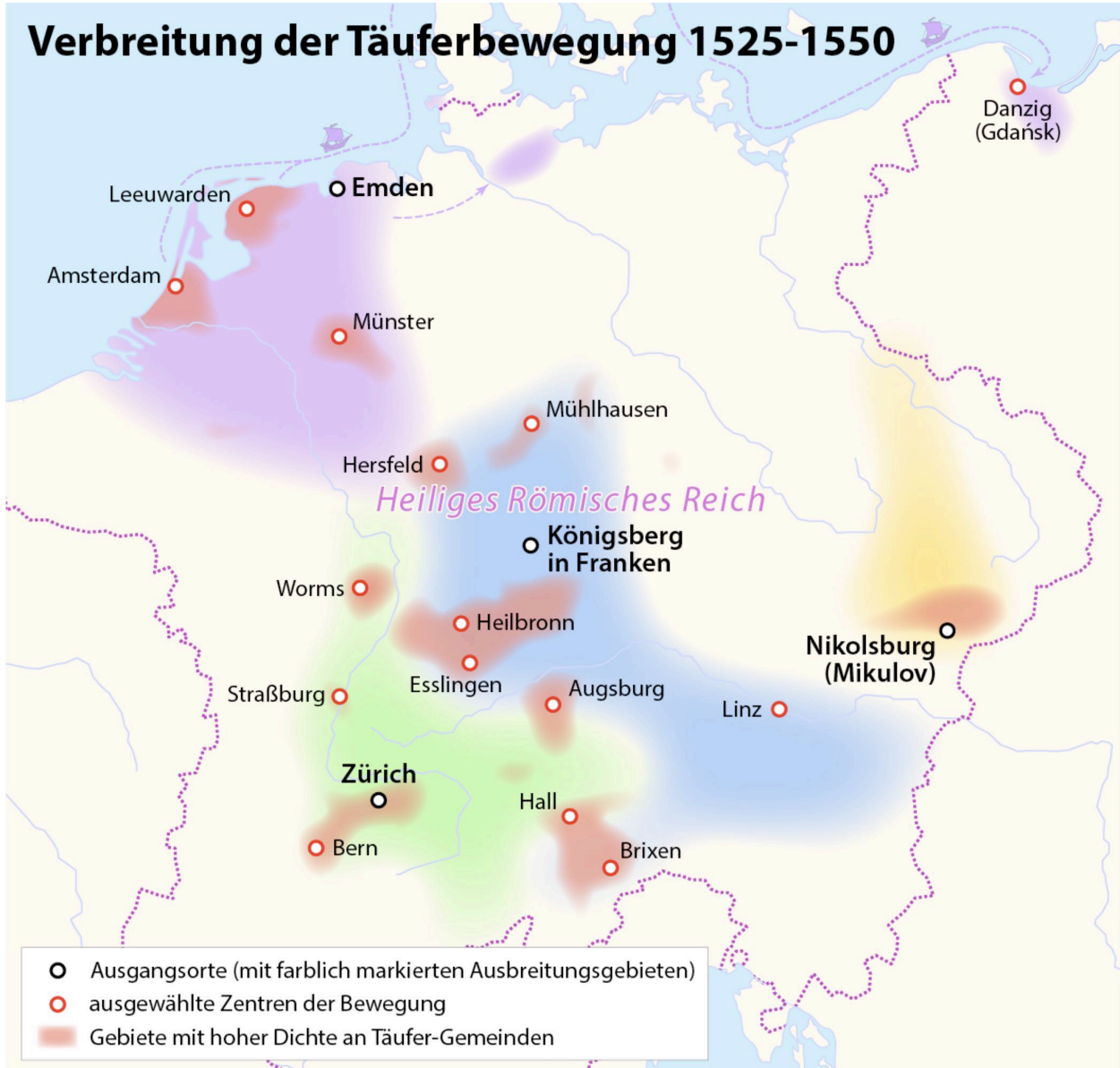
the Inn Valley, Tirol and South Tirol

Steyr-Linz-Wels-Freistadt

Vienna, northern Lower Austria

Moravia

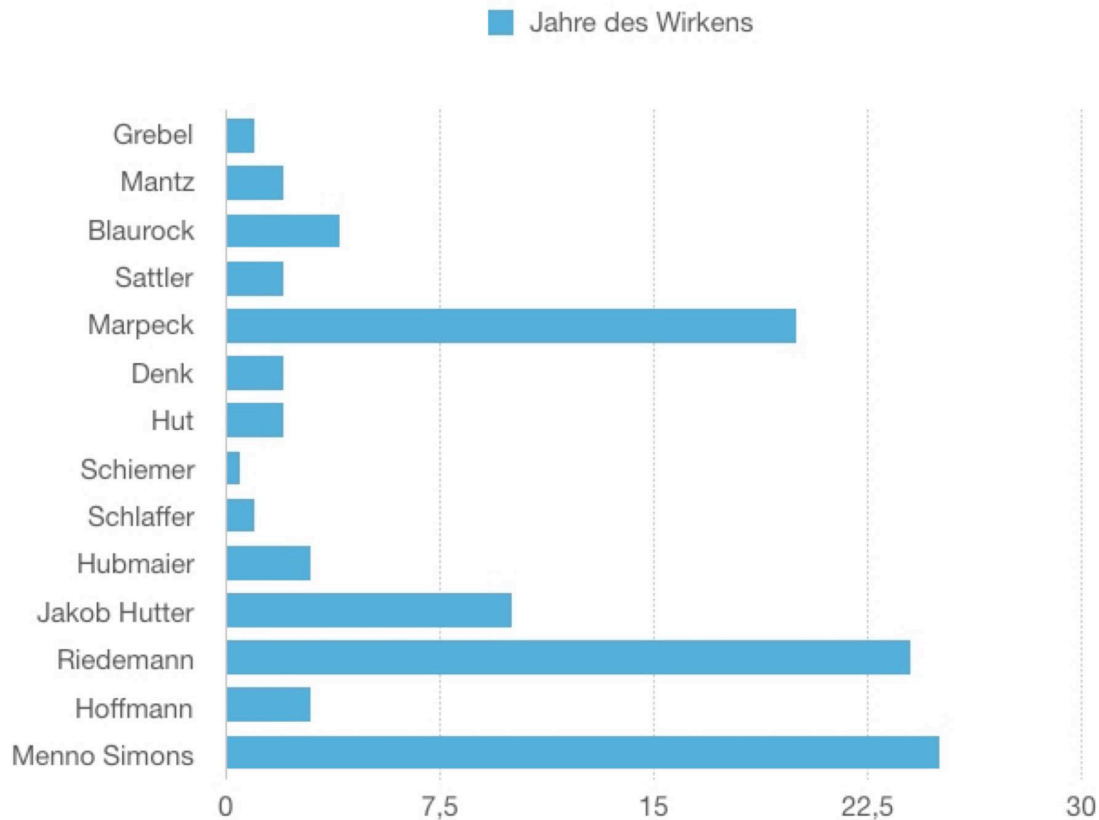
This map illustrates the different currents in color



THEOLOGIZING “ON THE RUN”

The Anabaptists did not have the privilege of developing a theology in peace and security. For the most part, they were theologizing on the run or in prison. For this reason there is no uniform Anabaptist teaching (even if they made efforts in that direction). It was much more a colorful mix of various influences and emphases.

The following graphic illustrates for how short a time most of them were able to work.



The following streams can be identified:

1. Swiss Brethren
2. Central or Upper German Anabaptists led by Hans Hut
3. The Hutterites, who lived in community of goods
4. “Melchiorites of the Sword” in Holland and the Münsterites as extremists
5. Peace-loving Mennonites

Most Anabaptists shared certain theological convictions:

- a literal interpretation of the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount
- Discipleship > Jesus’ commands and example are valid
 - Suffering and persecution as an essential element
 - Endeavor to put these beliefs into practice in life
- Refusal to swear oaths > assault on state order
- nonviolence (not all) > no military service or military taxes
- church as brotherhood > commitment > accountability
 - church discipline
- rejection of infant baptism; instead baptism of believers
- sharing based on love (all); community of goods (not all)
- insistence on freedom of religion (all), a church free of the state (however, not Hubmaier)
- Mission (Matt. 28)
- Expectation of the return of Christ

EXAMPLES OF SOME LEADING FIGURES presented in chronological order

1. 1525: Balthasar Hubmaier (Waldshut, Moravia)
2. 1527: Hans Hut (Franconia, Bavaria, Moravia, Austria)
3. 1529: Jakob Hutter (Tirol, Moravia)

DR. BALTHASAR HUBMAIER

Hubmaier, born 1480/85 in Friedberg, Bavaria, became a Catholic priest, then a doctor of theology. For a short time he led the University of Ingolstadt as pro-rector. Then he became cathedral preacher in Regensburg. Hubmaier is an eloquent traveling preacher. He is responsible for the expulsion of the oldest and largest Jewish community in Germany, Regensburg. (Even later, as Anabaptist leader, he does not give up his anti-Semitic attitude.)

1521 Hubmaier is appointed pastor of the Marienkirche in Waldshut on the Rhine, which belongs to Austria. He makes contact with the reformers in Switzerland becomes increasingly a reformer himself. He is initially in agreement with Zwingli that children should not be baptized until they are old enough to be taught the Christian faith. Hubmaier represents the point of view that if the New Testament does not recognize infant baptism, it should not be practiced. Zwingli, on the other hand, says that if something is not expressly forbidden in Scripture, it can be practiced.

In 1524 Hubmaier writes to a member of the council in Schaffhausen: “Don’t be afraid of me, and I will not be afraid either, for **divine truth is immortal**. Even if it lets itself be caught, scourged, crowned, crucified, and laid in the grave, it will rise victorious on the third day and reign triumphant in eternity.”

At Easter 1525, Hubmaier is baptized with 60 others. After that he baptizes more than 300 members of his church in Waldshut, the majority of the citizens. With this step he becomes the most educated leader of the Anabaptists.

At this time the city of Waldshut forms an alliance with the peasants of the surrounding area who rebel against the Austrian government. Hubmaier actively supports them. In November 1525 the peasants are defeated in the slaughter of Griessen. Waldshut is occupied by Austrian troops and forced to become Catholic.

Hubmaier flees to the nearby city of Zurich. There he is immediately arrested as an Anabaptist leader. The city government forces him to recant. Later he writes about this: “That was Zwingli’s attempt to teach him a theological lesson by torture.”

In April 1526 Hubmaier is able to leave Zurich. He makes his way to Moravia, stopping off in Steyr. In Nikolsburg Hubmaier wins over the clergy, who are sympathetic to the Reformation, to believers baptism. He even convinces the manorial lord, Leonhard von Liechtenstein. Hubmaier works very successfully in Nikolsburg for a year, publishing 18 theological writings about baptism, Lord’s Supper, church discipline, free will, and use of the sword. Persecuted Anabaptists keep coming to Nikolsburg from Switzerland and southern Germany, looking for refuge.

When Hans Hut arrives in Nikolsburg in May 1527, there are serious theological debates. The Anabaptists from Switzerland and southern Germany see no place in the church for a sword-bearing government. Neither will they pay war taxes. Hubmaier defends the view that the government is allowed to wield the sword. He rejects the strict separation between church and

worldly government. According to Hubmaier, only Christians are in position to hold government jobs responsibly.

In July 1527 Hubmaier is arrested by order of Ferdinand I, the new king of Bohemia and Moravia. In chains he is transferred to Vienna. There he tries to justify himself theologically, to no avail. On 10 March 1528, Hubmaier is burned before the city gates of Vienna. His wife is drowned in the Danube three days later¹.

‘Balthasar Hubmaier was the most outstanding theologian of early Anabaptism and his writings were considered authoritative among the Anabaptists in Switzerland, southern Germany, and Moravia. From the time of his baptism in April 1525 until the end of that year, he was the most significant leader of Swiss/south German Anabaptism and shaped its ecclesiology. In 1526 he brought this ecclesiology to Moravia and led the Moravian Anabaptists through their first year.’ (MennLex)

HANS HUT

Hut was born around 1490 in Haina, Thuringia, and later lived in Bibra, Frankonia. On his travels as a book dealer he came into contact with the ideas of the Reformation in Nuremberg and Wittenberg. He began distributing the numerous Reformation writings himself. He was strongly influenced and impressed by the “mystic spiritualism” and apocalyptic ideas of Thomas Müntzer.

Hut takes Müntzer’s criticism of infant baptism seriously, and at the end of 1524 refuses to have his third child baptized. So he and his family are expelled from Bibra. He joins Müntzer in the Battle of Frankenhausen between the revolting peasants and the government troops but is able to escape the carnage. Hut compares the impaled heads of Thomas Müntzer and Heinrich Pfeiffer with the corpses of the two witnesses in Revelations 11. He believes that the Peasants Revolt marks the beginning of the End Times and calculates the return of Jesus and the end of the world for Pentecost 1528.

Ultimately Hut perceives the Anabaptists to be the ones who, after the apocalyptic chaos, will judge the spiritual and worldly governing elite with Christ. He is baptized by Hans Denck at Pentecost 1526 in Augsburg and begins an extensive missionary activity.

In his hometown he wins veterans of the Peasants Revolt to Anabaptism as well as disillusioned people who are dissatisfied with the course of the Reformation thus far. Hut understands baptism differently from other Anabaptists. He sees it as the “seal” of the eschatological 144,000 of Revelations 7, who will reign with Jesus after they have been tested in cross and suffering for Jesus’ sake. For this reason, he marks a cross on the foreheads of those he baptizes with his wet fingers.

In spring 1527, Hut moves to Augsburg with his fellow believers and consolidates the Anabaptist church there. Then he travels to Nikolsburg in Moravia. He has heard of the Anabaptist church there under the leadership of Balthasar Hubmaier, supported by the government.

¹ According to *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*, p.48-49, while in prison Hubmaier “realized that he was guilty of giving way too much to worldly freedom in regard to retaining the sword. ... He added, “If Hans Hut were here now, we would soon be united.” [note added by translator]

In Nikolsburg there is already a certain tension between two theological camps. Balthasar Hubmaier and his followers wanted to leave the existing structures in place and are also willing to pay war taxes. Those who are more strongly influenced by the Swiss Anabaptists want a church that is free from governmental regulations. The first group is called “Schwertler” (or sword bearers), the second “Stäbler” (staff bearers).

Hut gets involved in these tensions and joins the side of the Stäbler. Even so, his pacifism is probably not a fundamental belief as much as it is tactical. He believes that after Jesus’ return his followers will take part in judging the godless – also bearing the sword in hand. But until that time believers should refrain from violence.

A second point of conflict is the question of community of goods. The Stäbler want to be a committed church and also share their material possessions with each other. Hubmaier is deeply troubled by Hut’s apocalyptic beliefs and his understanding of baptism. Already before Hut’s arrival, he puts together a list of 52 points, based on hearsay, that he wants to dispute with Hut.

The differences between the two become clear in their understanding of baptism most of all. In Hubmaier’s eyes, their views are “as far apart as heaven and hell, as orient and occident, as Christ and Belial” (Hubmaier, Schriften, 487.)

Hut is arrested in Nikolsburg but is able to escape prison. Now his autonomous mission work begins in Austria. He baptizes 50 persons in Vienna. Then he moves to Waldegg, where the church increases by 100 brothers in fourteen days. Melk and Krems are his next stops before he arrives in Steyr. Here he sends out four messengers, chosen by lot. After a short stay in Steyr he has to move on because he is being hunted: through Linz, Freistadt, Gallneukirchen, Wels, Passau, Schärding, Braunau, Laufen, Salzburg, and back to Augsburg. Wherever he goes he finds open ears. He preaches and “seals” the newly converted with baptism for the return of Christ.

Hut usually travels with a whole contingent of Anabaptists. Again and again he sends them out in all directions to missionize and call people to discipleship. His sermons are convincing. He brings thousands into the movement. Because people can’t explain how this is possible, the rumor arises that he has a „magic bottle“ from which people drink, after which they have to do what the Anabaptist apostle commands.

In the meantime, the church in Augsburg has increased considerably. Here too there are tensions, namely regarding Hut’s end-time teaching, which offends the Swiss and south German Anabaptists. At the end of August 1527 there is a conference of over 60 Anabaptist leaders where they want to try to resolve the arguments. Later, Anabaptist scholars will call this conference, which lasts several days, the „Martyrs Synod” because most of the participants are executed on account of their faith within a short time. Hut promises to keep his calculated date for the end of the world (Pentecost 1528) to himself. Only if he is specifically asked will he speak about it.

Many of these Anabaptist leaders are arrested already in Augsburg. Hut too, who wants to leave the city on 15 September, is captured. Subsequently he is interrogated “gütlich” (amicably) and “peinlich” (under torture) in order to extract from him as much information about the movement as possible. On 6 December 1527 he dies in prison as a result of a fire. Nonetheless, his body is tied to a cart the next day, put on trial, and burned at the stake.

The Austrian Anabaptist researcher Grete Mecenseffy calls Hut the “Apostle of Anabaptism in Austria.” And Werner Packull writes: “Hut won more people to the faith than all other Anabaptist leaders put together.”

After Hut's death and the brutal wave of persecution by the government in the years 1527 to 28, this branch of the Anabaptists gradually dissipated and finally disappeared altogether.

JAKOB HUTTER

Jakob Hutter is born in Moos, St. Lorenzen in the Pustertal (today's South Tirol) around 1500. He learns the trade of hatmaking. He comes into contact with Anabaptist ideas through a preaching goatherd. He buys himself a New Testament and studies it. Because his family is not in agreement, he moves to Carinthia, and from there he returns to Tirol in 1529. There in the remote Pustertal Hutter founds his first church. This is destroyed by the authorities within a year. Some believers are thrown into prison, but Hutter himself is able to escape. From this time on, Hutter is considered the "principal Vorsteher," the most dangerous Anabaptist leader.

Because of the increasing persecution, more and more Anabaptists emigrate to Moravia. There they join the church in Austerlitz, which is led by Jakob Wiedemann and practices community of goods. In 1529 Jakob Hutter himself comes to Austerlitz for the first time to learn about the way of life of the Anabaptist group there. From both sides they accept one another. After his return to his Tirolean homeland, Hutter begins to preach community of goods more strongly.

Around this time the Tirolean authorities write to the Kaiser that in the last two years they have executed more than 700 men and women in Tirol, in several towns, or expelled them. More have fled, leaving their possessions, yes, even their children, behind.

According to sources of the time, in Götz (Gorizia, northern Italy, then Austrian) "perhaps 1000 people have been burned, beheaded, or drowned" (MLex 4:335).

In the next years the Anabaptist church in Moravia experiences two splits in which Hutter is centrally involved. The issue at stake is the style of leadership and practices of faith (pacifism and war taxes). Hutter travels several times from Tirol to Moravia to mediate and put things in order. In 1533 there is a major division with the neighboring Anabaptist communities.

Hutter establishes the Moravian Anabaptist church structurally and institutionally over the next two years. He travels between Moravia and Tirol, preaches, baptizes in secret meetings, celebrates the Lord's Supper, and arranges the emigration of Anabaptists from Tirol. This usually means taking a ship or raft down the Inn and the Danube. They disembark at Krems or Stein and continue on foot to Moravia.

In March 1535 persecution breaks out in Moravia. The church decides that Hutter should travel back to Tirol to avoid arrest. There he and his wife are captured at the end of November. He is transferred to Innsbruck, interrogated, tortured, and finally burned at the stake on February 25, 1536 in front of Innsbruck's "Goldenes Dachl" [in the main square]. His pregnant wife escapes prison. Two years later she is arrested once more and executed.

Grete Mecenseffy calls Hutter "the greatest Anabaptist leader of Austria."

THE HUTTERITES

Thousands of Anabaptists have settled in Nikolsburg. In 1528 200 adults under the leadership of Jakob Wiedemann begin their own community. They want to live in total community of goods and absolute pacifism. They find a new home in the neighboring town of Austerlitz on the estates of the lords of Kaunitz. Jakob Hutter visits this Austerlitz community repeatedly and brings more and more religious refugees from Tirol. In 1533 he settles there himself and is asked to take the leadership. With oversight and vigor Hutter directs the young community.

When Bohemia and Moravia come under Austrian rule, the government in Vienna forces the Moravian parliament to expel the Anabaptists in 1535. They are dispossessed and forced to disperse. Some try to return to their former homes. The Hutterites remain in Moravia and try to survive in woods and caves.

After freedom of religion is established at the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, the Hutterites dare to return to their former homes. The next years are a time of gathering and rebuilding. 1565 to 1592 is the period later known as “the golden years.” 20,000 to 30,000 people live in 80 to 100 Bruderhofs. Some people have estimated their numbers to be 50,000 or more.

The church grows and flourishes. In the end there are communal households, called Haushaben or Bruderhofs, in many towns of Moravia. They take an outstanding position in the economic life of the region.

The communities are well organized. Children are cared for in their own nurseries already from the eighth week after birth. The school system is equally exemplary; among the Hutterites hardly anyone is illiterate. Each young person learns a trade and is integrated into the economic life.

The needs of all members of the community are cared for from a communal account, into which all incomes flow. Thanks to their hard work and good organization, the Haushaben reach considerable prosperity in the second generation.²

With the onset of the Counter Reformation, pressure to return to Catholicism mounts. In 1622 a mandate is decreed, giving the Hutterites four weeks to convert to Catholicism or leave the country.

More than 20,000 leave house and home. Some move to Slovakia (at that time belonging to Hungary), where there are already some Hutterian communities. Others move to Transylvania. According to Hutterite researcher Astrid von Schlachta, up to two thirds of the Hutterites remain in Moravia and over the course of time convert to Catholicism due to the tremendous pressure.

In 1760 Empress Maria Theresia commands that all Hutterite children be baptized by Catholic priests. Hutterian religious books are confiscated, burned, and replaced by Catholic books. Their preachers land in jail. Catholic masses are celebrated in their worship rooms, and Anabaptists are forced at gunpoint to take part.

This strategy of force is ultimately successful: most Hutterites in Slovakia convert to Catholicism. They keep the name “Habaner” and are slowly absorbed into the general population.

By 1750 the Hutterian community in Transylvania is also almost destroyed. Only nineteen persons have withstood the pressure of re-catholicization. Into this situation unexpected reinforcements arrive from Carinthia, Lutheran exiles who were driven out of Austria because of their faith and banished to Transylvania. Because they do not find in the Lutheran church what they are seeking, some families join the Hutterites. On their instigation, community of goods is reintroduced.

But when their children are taken away, to be placed in a Jesuit orphanage, the community decides to flee secretly. Sixteen “old Hutterites” and fifty-one “new Hutterites” (Carinthians) escape over the Carpathians into Romanian Wallachia. They found a new Bruderhof near Bucharest. They bring many of their old writings from Moravia and Transylvania.

In 1770 they accept the offer of the Russian empress Catherine the Great to immigrate to the Ukraine. In this way community of goods is reestablished. However, while their situation

² translator’s note: I moved 3 paragraphs here, describing the “golden years”

improves economically, things deteriorate culturally and spiritually over the course of time. In 1819 these Hutterites abandon community of goods, and they fall into poverty.

A move to the fertile Molotschna area north of Crimea, where Mennonites are already living, brings recovery. Imminent military service in Russia prompts the Hutterites (as well as the Mennonites) to emigrate to America.

The first three Bruderhofs begin in South Dakota in 1874. The families who immigrate to the USA at the time have only fifteen last names: *Decker*, *Entz*, Glanzer, Gross, Hofer, Kleinsasser, *Knels*, Mändel, Stahl, Tschetter, Waldner, Walther, Wipf, Wollmann, Wurz. (Underlined names are Carinthian exiles, *italicized* came from the Mennonites.)

In the USA 400 Hutterites remain faithful to community of goods, while twice that number accept the offer of the government to cultivate the land given to each family. Today they have expanded to 465 colonies, each with 60 to 150 members, that is, a total of 45,000. Three quarters live in Canada and one quarter in the United States.

ADDITIONAL LEADERS

Apart from these three defining characters, there are many other men and women with fascinating stories.

Peter Riedemann, for example, was in prison in Gmunden, Austria, for three years. There he wrote his first “Account of Faith.”³ He later became one of the main leaders of the Hutterites in Moravia and left many writings. His “Large Account of Faith,” written in Hessen, Germany – also in prison – serves the Hutterites to this day as an important testimony of faith.⁴

PERSECUTION AND EXTERMINATION

The *Martyrs’ Mirror*, published in Holland in 1660, tells in 1290 pages the stories of the Anabaptist martyrs, beginning with Stephen and ending in the year 1614. The book reports on 1396 martyrs, a third of them women. About 800 are introduced by name and described.

The “Table of martyrs” in the *Chronicle of the Hutterian Brothers*, covering the years 1527 to 1544, lists more than 2000 martyrs.

The number of the victims of persecution can only be “reasonable guesses.” Conservative estimates of executed Anabaptists of the 16th century run to 2000 – 2500. They are divided more or less evenly between the Netherlands and southern-central Europe.

Other estimates for the Netherlands alone (Holland and Belgium) suggest 1500 to “at least 2500” Anabaptist martyrs.

Anabaptist research assumes that the documented number of victims has to be at least doubled. From this I conclude that we can assume 4000 to 5000 Anabaptist martyrs, over 1000 in Austria.

The executions in southern central Europe take place primarily in the first years after the beginning of Anabaptism. 80% of all executions occur between 1527 and 1533.

The Catholic historian Eduard Widmoser estimates that Tirol produced 20,000 Anabaptists and that more than 600 of them were horribly executed (MLex 4:399).

The Catholic governments of Tirol, Austria, and Bavaria proceed more rigorously against the Anabaptists than the Protestant governments. They are responsible for 84% of all executions.

³ Available in English from Plough Publishing House as *Love is Like Fire*. It can be found as a PDF (81 pages) on our German homepage under “Resources.”

⁴ Available in English from Herald Press as *Peter Riedemann's Hutterite Confession of Faith*

Only in Catholic areas are Anabaptists burned, primarily the male leaders. Women are usually drowned. In general, most are executed by sword.

In parts of Austria and Tirol, Archduke Ferdinand institutes a secret council, the so-called "Ketzerkollegium." He directs local priests to obtain information on anyone who does not participate in confession and communion. In this region, buildings or farmsteads where baptisms take place are systematically destroyed. Heretic searchers are installed and informers, paid by the government, are sent out as spies to infiltrate the Anabaptist movement. In 1563 Ferdinand offers a reward in the amount of a third of the Anabaptists' possessions for anyone who betrays them.

On 4 January 1528, an edict declares categorically that Anabaptism is equivalent to political revolt. This law is stated more precisely in 1529 at the second diet in Speyer. It makes it easier to avoid the tedious ecclesial heretic trials and find ways of punishing the Anabaptists for worldly crimes.

This so-called Anabaptist mandate demands the death penalty not only for rebaptizing but also for refusing to have one's child baptized. People who aid, incite, or fail to denounce Anabaptists are to be executed.

With the terrible events of the Anabaptist kingdom in Münster 1534-1535, the charge of insurrection is renewed dramatically against all Anabaptists. The events in Münster justify even tougher means against the Anabaptists in the following decades

In Austria, the Anabaptist movement is in its "last convulsions" after the strong persecutions of 1528-29. In 1618 the last two executions of Anabaptists in Europe are carried out in Vorarlberg. There is no mention of Anabaptists in Tirol and Austria after 1627.

It is more than 200 years later, in 1847, that Baptists return to Vienna – craftsmen who came to faith in Hamburg. Baptisms of faith are carried out again and the first free church, based on the model of the early church in Jerusalem and the Anabaptists, is created.

REPROCESSING AND RECONCILIATION

In the last ten years, several things have happened in Austria to bring to mind the little-known history of the Anabaptist movement:

- 1) Anabaptist museums in Niedersulz (2008) and Falkenstein (2011)
- 2) Opening of the Huttererpark in Innsbruck (2015)
- 3) Plaque for Conrad Grebel on the façade of the old university in Vienna (21.10.2017)
- 4) An Anabaptist Decade, 2015-2025, announced by the Free Churches in Austria.

Even more important, in my opinion, are steps towards each other, mutually getting to know one another, and the resulting signs of reconciliation. One example is the request for forgiveness of the Tirolean bishops and the provincial governors towards the Hutterites in 2008.

The words spoken by Cardinal Schönborn in 2011 on the occasion of the museum project "From Falkenstein to the galleys" and for the Grebel commemoration in 2017. (These can all be found on the website of the Round Table (www.rundertisch.at) under "Doku".)

TREASURES OF THE ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT

I thank God for the great examples of love for God and humankind in the Anabaptist movement that flared up 500 years ago. I can learn so much from them:

- Love for the Bible ("outer word")
- Listening to the Holy Spirit ("inner word")

- Consistent implementation in everyday life
- Commitment in the church
- Expectation of the near return of Jesus
- Strong sense of mission
- Willingness to suffer
- Unselfish sharing of possessions
- “Only love does God’s work” (Peter Riedemann)

WEAKNESSES OF THE ANABAPTISTS AND THEIR DESCENDENTS

As a member of the free church who identifies with much that is exemplary in the 16th century Anabaptist movement, I also have to bow before God and admit their failures and outrages:

- I confess that they seldom succeeded to achieve, or at least strive for, a healthy balance between WORD and SPIRIT; instead they fell into one extreme or the other, either bible-based but anti-charismatic, or extremely charismatic and extending far beyond the word of God.
- I confess that my spiritual forebears sometimes considered their traditions as sacrosanct, although they were more cultural than biblical.
- I confess before God that there were terrible excesses and aberrations among the Anabaptists (events in Münster and Holland) that dragged the name of Jesus in the dirt and unjustly put the movement in the wrong light for centuries.
- I confess that many Anabaptists became very narrow-minded and judged, yes, condemned their fellow believers and fellow sufferers, who had so much in common with them, because of minor differences in teaching or practice, denying that they were Christians and renouncing fellowship with them.
- I confess that I recognize all these tendencies not only in my own heart, but also in the modern free church of the 21st century.

Lord, free me from all of this and deliver us all from these evils! Amen.

TIMELINE

- 1525: Anabaptist church in Zurich
Hubmaier in Waldshut, baptized with 60 at Easter, baptizes 300
- 1526: Hubmaier on his way to Moravia (through Steyr)
- 1527: Schleithem Articles as common important points
Quick dissemination, mainly through Hans Hut
Leonhard Kaiser (Lutheran) executed in Schärding (Caspar Tauber was the first Lutheran martyr in Austria in 1524; the Lutheran Martin Hofmann was executed in Carinthia in 1549)
- 1528: intense persecution, many executions (between 1527 and 1533, 80% of all martyrdoms)
The pacifist Anabaptists in Nikolsburg (Stäbler) separate from the “Schwertler” and move to Austerlitz
- 1529: Peter Riedemann is in prison in Gmunden for 3 years
Jakob Hutter comes to Moravia for the first time
Mandate passed in Speyer against the Anabaptists
- 1534-35: Münster established as the “New Jerusalem” by extreme Anabaptists
(worst case scenario, fuels persecution)
- 1536: Jakob Hutter is executed in Innsbruck
- 1537: Menno Simons gathers pacifist Anabaptists in Friesland
“last convulsions” of the Anabaptist movement in Austria
- 1618: last two executions of Anabaptists in Vorarlberg, total eradication of Anabaptists in Austria (The next Baptist baptisms only in 1847 in Vienna)
- 1622: Hutterites driven out of Moravia, exodus to Slovakia and Transylvania. Up to 2/3 remain in Moravia, are forced to catholicize and are eventually assimilated into the general population.
- 1627: last mention of Anabaptists in Tirol
- 1685: In Slovakia, the Hutterites give up community of goods
- 1688: Forced baptism of Hutterian children by Catholic priests
- 1755: Carinthian exiles join the Hutterites in Transylvania and save them from extinction
- 1763: Most Hutterites in Hungary have become Catholic (only 19 resist the pressure)
- 1767: Flight over the Carpathians into Walachia (Bulgaria)
- 1771: Emigration from Walachia to Ukraine (60 people)
- 1819: The Hutterites in the Ukraine abandon community of goods. Economic, cultural, and spiritual decline.
- 1842: Resettlement of the Hutterites in the Molotschna area
- 1859: Community of goods is reintroduced among the “Schmiedeleut” and “Dariusleut”
- 1874: Introduction of military conscription in Russia > emigration to America (as also many Mennonites). 1200 Hutterites in four waves to South Dakota. 400 form Bruderhofs; the “Prairieleut” accept private land.
- 1918: Because of government pressure to participate in war (two⁵ resisters tortured to death), the Hutterites move to Canada
- 1931: From the 400 [in 1874] there are now 3800 Hutterites in the US and Canada
- 2017: 465 colonies (Bruderhofs), each with 60 – 150 members > about 45,000 total

⁵ corrected by translator from “several”