

# Anabaptist History: Mission & Missiology - (Day 21)

by Dean Taylor

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*This sermon explores the history and approach of Anabaptist missions, emphasizing the importance of a Jesus-focused and community discipleship model in spreading the gospel and establishing church communities.*

**Duration:** 1:30:39

**Scripture:** Acts 1:8

**Topics:** "Anabaptist Missions", "Evangelism History"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the history and evolution of Anabaptist missions, exploring the involvement of Mennonite and Anabaptist churches in spreading the gospel. It discusses the tension between evangelicalism and Anabaptist missions, highlighting the desire to take the gospel to all corners of the earth as a core element of the Anabaptist vision. The sermon also reflects on how Mennonites borrowed strategies from broader Protestant mission movements and the importance of allowing God's method to establish His kingdom on earth.

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## Transcript

All right, well, good morning. Well, today, Lord willing, we're going to look at Anabaptist missions up to recent times and Anabaptist missiology. Some of this is somewhat controversial, that one.

And so these are my opinions, I'll have to say. But I'm hopefully to back them up with what I have to share today. My goal today is to let you see, first of all, how the Mennonite churches, the different Anabaptist churches, has been very involved in missions since the beginning.

I did a lecture before we went to the Moravian Anabaptists about that, where I talked about it a little bit. I'd like to focus that more on this lecture to more of the current themes, the current expressions of missions. But then I'd like to, towards the end of the lecture, somewhere in there, I would like to bring up the Lancaster County missions to Africa as a test case for us to review.

And then I would like to look at how this conflicting themes between evangelicalism and Anabaptists have conflicted on the mission field. And some of the mistakes that I see still we feel the repercussions of, or some of the confusion the repercussions of the Lancaster approach to missions, or the Lancaster attempt at missions in the 1940s, and how we're still kind of struggling over some of those things. So I'm going to

bring that out as a test case and then give some ideas of Anabaptist missiology in general.

I'm going to bring in towards the end of, hopefully, if I don't rattle too much. I'm going to bring in towards the end, actually, that I believe that even many conservative evangelicals are now beginning to see their own evangelical model as being deficient, and they're turning to some of the Anabaptist writings and saying, hey, we need church community even on the mission field. And I'm going to hopefully bring some of those towards the end of the lecture as well.

So let's start with prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for your presence, that you promised that you would be with us. And you said that you would never leave us.

And it's because of that promise that you said, lo, I will be with you even to the end of the age, that we take the first part of that promise and go. As you said, if we go, then you followed with, and lo, I will be with you to the end of the age. So Father, as we've been talking about the all things of Christ through these five weeks and the importance of returning to Jesus and your message of the Sermon on the Mount, your message of the church community, your message, these different things, we also dare not miss this part of it, the spreading forth of that gospel to all the world.

And so, Lord, we ask you now, Father, to be able to see your heart in that. I pray that you'd be with me as I present this, that your name would be glorified. So help me, I pray, Father, to present this lecture.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Amen. Okay, Anabaptist missions and Anabaptist missiology.

All right, starting from the beginning, and again with the other lecture, I'm not gonna spend a lot of time with the very early times, but we saw missions was part of it from the very beginning. Even missions and revival, and we're gonna see that through the day-to-day, that those tend to go hand-in-hand. In many different situations.

And I brought this chart back up. I have it there in your paper. I showed it to you in weeks before.

But again, just to see some of the spontaneous flowing of the gospel and conversions in missions, whether you call this a revival or a missions, they seem to come together. Again, Hubmeier, 360 there right after the beginning, ended up with 6,000. You see Conrad Grebel, a whole processions of men and women, and that was a revival in St. Gall.

They believe that's around 500. You know, lots of different people. Hans Hoot, 12,000 in his ministry.

And again, I brought this up yesterday, Leonhard Bowens, who documented 10,378. Binder takes that down to like 10,200 by looking at the documents of some crossover names. But still, 10,200, 10,378, still a lot.

And so the, and this is just a few of the examples, that from the beginning, the desire to take the gospel everywhere was built in to the Anabaptist vision. Some of the, I just recently, just studying for this lecture, some of the critiques of Harold S. Binder's Anabaptist vision did not include this element. And it's really a bit of a shame, because this should have been an element in the Anabaptist vision.

I do appreciate the Anabaptist vision, but this mission burden of spreading the church community to all the earth was certainly part of that original Anabaptist vision throughout all the different places. A quote here I liked, I've given to you when we got to Mendel Simons, but let me give it to you here as well. And just the

idea of how he saw these early Anabaptists spreading even in Holland.

Mendel Simons said this, he said, therefore we preach as much as is possible, both by day and by night, in houses and in fields, in forest and waste, hither and yon, at home or abroad, in prison and in dungeons, in water and in fire, on the scaffold and on the wheel, before lords and princes through mouth and pen, with possessions and blood, with life and death. We could wish that we might save all mankind from the jaws of hell, free them from the chains of their sins, and by the gracious help of God, add them to Christ by the gospel of his peace. For this is the true nature of the love which is of God.

The true nature which is of love, which is of God. And so he sees intrinsic within this whole message that this is part of the true nature of God is spreading the spark of fire to all nations. I'm not gonna again get into the Hutterites in the particular we saw, we've talked a lot about their different communities and certainly in this time period was the shining example of an organized mission.

But I found just a few points in the Mennonite Encyclopedia last night that I wanted to bring out as lessons for us today of their structure that they had way back in the 1500s. This is taken from the Mennonite Encyclopedia and it says, it was an organized effort. They sent brethren every year to lands near and far according to the commandments of Christ and the practice of the apostles to teach and to preach and to gather for the Lord God's people.

So I wanted to emphasize that it was something they did every year. And so instead of this next year, okay, where are we going this time? Where are we going that time? And it was a constant burden to the church community of saying, okay, let's send out new missionaries. And it was a yearly process and a burden of what they felt they needed to do.

It goes on and says, in order to be able to fulfill the task laid upon them by the Lord, the congregation semi-annually chose their preachers, a number of brethren to perform a widespread missionary service in all directions, to preach the gospel in accordance with the commandments of Christ and to lead the converts to quote, the promised land in that time to Moravia. And say, since it was impossible to plant the church communities in Germany and in these different places, they then tried to bring them to Moravia and then would plant these different communities around there. Each missionary, this is an old term in the encyclopedia, each missionary had a certain field assigned to him.

Thus, brethren went out into all parts, went to Germany, to Wurttemberg, to Thuringia, to the Rhineland, to Prussia, to Switzerland, Poland, in some cases, even to Venice, Italy. A few made it all the way to Denmark and to Sweden, but that was not the usual thing. The other thing is they were equipped.

These are early times, these are the early 1500s. They were equipped with the epistles. They had their letters and they had their tracts to hand out in their knapsack.

The home congregation supported its missionaries, not only by prayers, but also by writing them letters back and forth. This is something, of course, obviously economically, they're Hutterites, they were supported, they didn't have to wonder, those sorts of things. But as you could imagine, as you're living out in the fields of Switzerland, it was still very difficult for them just probably to make a living and to go about the great sacrifice that they were doing.

The point that I wanna bring out here is the involvement between the congregation and the missionary. You see this with Zinzendorf and the, excuse me, the Moravians under Zinzendorf the same way. Each

one of those missionaries with Zinzendorf, like say you went to St. Thomas, let's say you went to Greenland, you were required to keep three journals.

You could do a journal for yourself there. You had to copy and send a copy to Hernhut in Germany, and you then had to give a copy to Bethlehem. And in each of those places then, when the church gathered together, they would read these journals, and so the church felt very much a part of what was going on.

It was a continual effort to make sure that this was a branch of the church. Everything we were doing in the church was a branch of what we're doing out there. And I think that's an important element here of this Anabaptist missiology, kingdom missiology in the case of Zinzendorf.

By dispatching brethren to maintain contact, bring them these letters and receive their replies, also to bring home all news of importance. They did end up with conflict of what was your calling? Who sent you? Early on, we see the Calvinists and the Reformers asking them, well, who sent you? For instance, the Calvinist superintendent in Alcy, in the Palatinate, asked the Hutterite missionary Leonhard Dax, imprisoned in 1567, who had given him the right and authority to come to the Palatinate to, quote, confuse the people. Dax replied that he was not sent to confuse them, but rather to lead everybody from error to the right way of Christian discipleship.

Make a note of that. His concept, I'm gonna lead you out of error into what he thought he was giving them was a concept of Christian discipleship. The brethren owned it to the world to bring it to the pure and adulterated word of God.

And those who were sent by the brotherhood were properly called apostles by them, or sinbotan in the German, and must be considered as commissioned by God himself. Otherwise, also, the apostolic church would not have done right. He gave the argument, Dax said, well, if this is the case, then the early church was wrong, because this is, we're doing, we're following in that same kind of line.

So again, the Calvinists, the Hutterites make an excellent example, the Moravian Anabaptists in that time make an excellent example of an organized mission effort connected to the church, planting church communities of discipleship around the world, particularly Moravia in their case was the only allowable spot. But nevertheless, that was their burden of what they were given. Early on, we see this as an element in the Anabaptist idea of missions.

I don't want you to, it's gonna be one of the themes I press through this entire day, so just take note of that. All right, so let's get out of the ancient time and start coming a little closer. Before America, I wrote the category here.

I think this is from, this was from John D. Roth in his book, Stories. He said, the transformation of the Mennonite church from a tiny European fellowship to a global communion has unfolded in several steps. Yeah, this was from Roth.

It began in the second half of the 19th century with the renewed commitment among Mennonites, first in the Russia and the Netherlands, and then the North America to go to missions. The imperative of the Great Commission to take the good news of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. And so the first one that really in our, well, I can't say modern times, but in this 1800s, more recent times, was this interesting missionary by the name of Peter Jantz.

And a lot of us have been doing some studies here just looking into this mission, Chris and I, and it's an interesting mission to study. And I didn't quite realize that he was a bit of a pioneer in the whole missionary world in the Anabaptists and bringing it back. But you still see within him a very clear understanding of mission as kingdom.

Now, he was a Dutch Mennonite, but as he went to Indonesia, as he was there, he began to see that when he would try to give the gospel, he was coming into problems with people getting killed. If you converted, they killed them. So they began to ponder, well, what are we going to do? So he actually started taking the Russian Mennonite model of colonies and putting that into Indonesia and seeing what kind of fruit he would get there.

And the fruit was, it was interesting. Chris just sent me a book that a mission organization did, and I'd like to study him more, but everything I see from this mission seems like something it needs to be looked at even further. I have here written, I think this is again from John D. Roth.

It says, Peter Jantz and his wife on a journey to the Netherlands, East Indies, Indonesia. There, the Jantzes and their coworkers established a mission church in North Central Java and set about translating the Bible into Javanese and Malay. And there's a little picture from that book Chris sent me of them translating the Bible there.

It's interesting. And then what he gave again was this colony-based missions. The missionary model they introduced was based on small, self-sufficient agricultural colonies that could better support new converts in a Muslim setting hostile to Christianity.

Over the next century, the Javanese Mennonites could grow slowly, they grew slowly, reaching a total of 1,200 people by 1940s. It was a slow growth, but nevertheless, it was a steady growth. And by, I don't know, I'd say 1,200 converts in a Muslim country by the 1940s is still something very impressive.

Apparently there was then a second wave that came to them. But first, before I talk about the second wave, I have a little bullets that I put on there of just things that I highlighted of this particular mission of Peter Jantz. It was Jesus-focused.

He would bring the entire gospel to them. It seemed to be, in all the things that I've read, that seems to be, again, an Anabaptist model that was given to him of Jesus-focused. There was Bible translating.

Excuse that bad misprint there. Not Bible translating. Bible translating.

It was late last night. Cross that out. Bible translation was going on.

Discipleship. A community discipleship model, and also care for the whole person. These agricultural communities that he set up made places where these new converts could actually live out their Christian life in a sustaining world that gave an example and a light to the people around them.

Well, by the 1920s, a bunch of immigrants from China started to pour into Indonesia. And this led to a second wave. This little community that was there even further went up with a second wave of Christians that began to come.

And the Chinese then began to convert to Christianity, and there was many more converts. Today, it says here that there's several different branches of the Mennonite churches there in Indonesia. But today, the

Mennonite Synod, there's 15,200, and then one branch, 12,000, and another with a total of 48,000 members in Indonesia today.

Impressive. And so, still today, apparently this area has a lot of unrest. There's some interesting stories that John D. Roth gives in his book on just how these missionary pastors have tried to be peacekeepers and this type of thing in a very hostile area that's full of Buddhists and Hindus and Muslim and Christian all in the same area.

And it's a difficult place to be a pastor. But apparently, the Mennonites still today are trying to give a good example. So again, it's an impressive coming closer to our times.

All right, then coming close to us, I have here the Russians beat us. Just like in the space race, they beat us in the mission race. The Russian beat us.

In the 1880s, the Russian Mennonite in the Ukraine started their own overseas mission initiative, sending a couple who had spent the previous four years in training at a Baptist seminary, and they sent them to India. So they trained them at the seminary and sent them to India. Now, I made some comments yesterday that many times when we're coming into this great enlightenment period of the Anabaptists, the Mennonites and such, you have a little bit of a double-edged sword.

Sensing a need for revival, sensing a need for missions, you, many times we were trained by the evangelicals, and sometimes that was good, sometimes it was not good. And some of those things are still things we're sort of wrestling with today. Nevertheless, these early missions were very impressive.

And my, remember I told you my dialogues back and forth in my studies of the Russian Mennonites, Hoover sent me some of these documents talking about their emphasis there on missions. And again, you kind of get this idea of the importance of the local church community being in the missions that comes out. And here's, I gave you this writing here, and I think it's important for us understanding the Anabaptist missiology, I'm gonna give it to you here.

It says, he wrote me, he says, the church found its mission in fulfillment as it had never, as it had ever since its coming to the Netherlands in the Vistula Delta three centuries earlier. Modern mission terms, or the idea of a mission as an institution staffed by career missionaries was to them unknown. The Mennonites thought of missions only in the context of the Gemeinde, the church community.

And for them, every member of the Gemeinde was a missionary called by God to build on earth a working model of the kingdom of heaven. And in that statement right there lies what conservative modern evangelicals are even talking about today, the concept of a model of the kingdom of heaven. A signpost pointing to the rule of Christ and new heavens and a new earth to come.

This was a, I have a four part series on the Russian Mennonites, I can give you a copy of that in my studies of the Russian Mennonites. I'll post that and let you have a copy of that. He wrote on, he said, yes, the Mennonites visited and traveled and sought out seekers near and far.

They were not afraid of moving into the remotest wilderness to set up new Gemeinden as the Lord opens doors. But they understood the Great Commission as a corporate, never as an individual or institutional calling. Johann Wiebe, who settled with a group in old colony Mennonites in the Ukraine and then finally took the community to Manitoba, Canada, wrote this, and this is straight from his words, talking about his concept of what he was doing.

And for time's sake, I'm gonna just give the first few points there and go on to the next thing. He says, from the beginning of the world, God has kept and guarded his visible Gemeinden, his beloved people, and he will always preserve them to the very end. God's Gemeinden on earth began with Adam and Eve in paradise.

I have that highlighted because that concept, many times we'll lose, that God had this people way back from the garden, okay? Then for a time, it consisted of faithful households like that of Noah and Abraham with whom he made his first covenants and through whom he gathered his chosen seed, the seed of Abraham, the family of Isaac and Jacob was the Gemeinde of the Old Testament. So again, this carrying forth the people of God through the different times. Then in the fullness of time, when the Lord Jesus came with his gospel full of grace, he sent his disciples into the whole world to call his Gemeinde together from all races and tongues of the earth and those that get converted from the heart, all that trust in God and his son Jesus come together in one faith and in one baptism.

All that believe in Christ get baptized into one body and this way we all become united with Christ through the faith that lives in our hearts, faith that brings about the fear of God and compels us to do what is right. And he goes on and I encourage you to keep reading through that. The question there that he talks about this idea of looking at even at Abraham, looking at the Garden of Eden, some of these different ones, is a concept that sometimes we lose.

Even in some of the methods I have down there highlighted, do modern methods lead the convert anticipating the kingdom? Think about it here for a minute. Some of our methods, the Jesus film, the creation to Christ, some of these missionary models, which are very good in and of themselves, but do you leave with that message a sense of God's people on earth are going to establish his kingdom? No, you usually end up with a sense of I'm forgiven and praise God for that. And like I said throughout the whole five weeks, and I will say it again today probably a few times, it's not what they say that I usually have a problem with, it's what they don't say.

And it's that silence which has become, started to become very loud. And through these methods, sometimes unwittingly, we're not realizing that the burden of this people of God through the Garden of Eden, through Abraham, through David, prophesied of the prophets, and foretold and proclaimed by Jesus Christ as the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's not something that you get out of some of these methods, even though I'm all for the, of course I'm for the concept of a needing to understand the atonement.

Many of the creation to Christ methods and such, which again, I love, I would still use them into the right idea. The whole emphasis ends on a person receiving the sacrifice and the theme of sacrifice through all the different Old Testament is the main thing that's given, which again, I have to keep balancing this. It's very important.

But the burden of the way Jesus Christ gave it comes out a little bit different. Do you remember that Jesus fire that I talked about, I keep talking about in the Russian Mennonites that I talked about during the revival? I just gave you a few quotes here to understand this Russian Mennonites spirit of what revival does to missions. And this is a Russian Mennonite speaking, and he talks about that, and I gave the rest of this quote, which I usually never got to in my different lectures.

Remember that Jesus fire we talked about in revival. He goes on to say, fire spreads quickly. This is him giving a sermon, preaching at the beginning of a mission conference in the Russian Mennonite colony.

Fire spreads quickly. It blazes up and sends showers of sparks high into the air. Then wherever a spark comes to rest, it sets off a new fire.

This is how it goes when the Jesus fire lights up in our hearts. If it blazes brightly, it lights up many more. To speak without a metaphor, it will drive us out with the Jesus fire in our hearts and the torch of the gospel in our hands to the uncivilized, the pagans and the Muslims, and no parents, no brothers, sisters or friends will dissuade us or keep us back.

The Savior wants the fire that burns in us to flare up and throw out many sparks. If we love him, catch this, none of us will fail to take part in the work of missions one way or another. It's part of the burden for the whole colony there.

For the one that refuses does not love the Savior or at least not very much. And oh, how much needs to be done around the world until the fire of Jesus has kindled will burn everywhere among all peoples of the earth. There now is estimated a world population of 1,400,000,000.

How many is there now? I think we just hit 7,000,000,000, didn't we? Well, we didn't keep up. Of these, only a very small part are Christian believers. He cries out to hear his burden.

Through the work of the church in the Dutch Indies and Java and Sumatra, the Jesus fire has started to burn in the hearts of more than 2,500 heathen and Muslims. That's the fruit of what the Russian Mennonites were already accomplishing. Even though it may not burn too brightly in some, it is burning.

And our missionaries are stirring it up so that it may burn all the more strongly and well. Oh, what a marvelous work, this work of missions to spread the Jesus fire throughout the world. Amen.

Some of this did end up starting the Klan of Gemeinde and some of this mission emphasis that some of the Russian Mennonites, just like when they faced this great awakening in America, the Mennonites united up with several different groups and the Russian Mennonites united up with the Klan of Gemeinde and some of those groups that had even a greater mission emphasis than the general colony Mennonites in general. So this concept of this church community going out and spreading is very much to the heart of the Anabaptist model. You know, they're not the only ones.

You know, we don't, fortunately, and I'm glad we don't, we don't have a patent on this model. And other people had this idea. Again, just before I came here, I finished the Moravian Mission Machine article and the remnant.

And in here, I was very impressed with how Zinzendorf copied, or not copied, but saw this kingdom model in the scriptures as well. And look at some of their early models that they put around this earth. They'd go into an area and bring in a Gemeinde, a mission outpost of discipleship, training, and a light to the world.

And the Moravian models did this throughout all the different places. Here we see up in the Greenland or something. This is the American Indians.

That's Ganada Huton, I think, actually, we see there. And he copied what he saw in Hernhut, what worked in Hernhut, what worked in Bethlehem, and he did this, Zinzendorf did this throughout all the different places of the earth. This one I liked particularly.

You see these up here, and these are big old glaciers, big glaciers, and here you have these little skin teepees. And again, the church community gathered up, and then from there, taking the gospel further. Here's another one.

In some sense, this whole concept is almost, it's almost ridiculed in missiology today. All the, many of the talks about, well, we don't wanna change their culture, we don't wanna do things, almost ridicules this kind of a thing. And I think it's a shame, because I think in a lot of ways, the missions has not been able to have this concept of training, discipleship, and a clear sense of church community as it was in these days by many people who have taken it.

Again, I see people, even today, starting to bring this up and talk about it in our time. So, now we come to America. Real quick, any thoughts on some of that? It does seem there was, there's, in that my discussion, when my study of Russian Mennonites, Peter Hoover wrote me, he showed me documents at first of the Russian Mennonites supporting financially the early Dutch missions.

And then this man was one of the first of even Holland, matter of fact, he was the first missionary when the, yeah, Jens was, of sending out even from Holland. From that quickly, not far after that, the Russian Mennonites started to send out their own missionaries, Bible translations, and up to the far north, Siberia, and some of those areas. And they were also in Indonesia.

And they were also in Indonesia, yeah. Well, are they? Yeah, that's good. Okay.

Oh, you ended up going, too? Okay, excellent. Like I said, that whole mission in Indonesia is something I'd like to study more. It's a fascinating piece of mission history.

Yeah, okay, well, interesting. Oh, that's right, he mentioned it right there. In Java, yeah, he mentions it right there.

Sumatra, he's even, in his sermon, he's talking about that, so you're right. He says it right there. He talks about 2,500 heathens converted.

So, praise the Lord. Let's do it again. Yes, sir.

Heinrich. Yeah, Dirks, mm-hmm. And I have that in those other handouts, particularly about the Russian Mennonite, Heinrich Dirks.

Okay, going on to America. So now, remember, we talked about yesterday in our Mennonite Great Awakening, or the Anabaptist Great Awakening that happened in the late 1800s, different Moody revivals and different things coming out. So now the church in America is wanting to get headlong into these missions.

And many of these things that happen are very impressive. In 1866, the General Conference in North America with the financial support and expertise of the Russian Mennonites in Prussia founded the Wadsworth Institute in Northern Ohio. And there you see a little picture.

And the goal of future training for leaders and missionaries. The school actually only lasted 10 years, but it started some seeds of thinking of different ways that we can go out and spread these things. From there, we remember that Funk, in spreading the truth and spreading laity, they heard about the great famine and distress in India.

And then one of the first places that the Mennonite missionaries then went out to from America was a relief organization in India in 1900. They then went to China in 1914. And then, since the Mennonite church entered overseas missions in 1899, sparked by the reports of a widespread famine in India.

This is John D. Roth speaking. Like many later Mennonite churches, mission projects and initial Mennonite presence in India began with a relief effort, the construction of an orphanage or a school that served the basis for more explicit evangelistic outreaches. So many times it was the burden of some kind of famine or terrible situation that caused them to get there in the first place.

From there then, it branched off into the missions that followed that. I see this happening today with Kim the same way. And I think it's a beautiful way to start missions.

Other Mennonite church's missions efforts soon followed, he writes, he says, in Argentina in 1917, East Africa, 1934, Puerto Rico, 1945, Ethiopia, 1948, Japan, 1949, and a host of other African, East Asian, South American countries in the 1950s, by the 1950s. Once established, the various Mennonite mission boards and agencies took up their task with energy and optimism. According to the mission historian, Wilbert Schenck, European and North American Mennonites created 25 new missions between 1850 and 1945.

Whole organizations, not just missions, but entire mission organizations were planted during those years. So again, it was a time, you can see why the title, The Mennonite Great Awakening, it was a time of feeling of revival of that revival producing fruit and going out and spreading these messages of the gospel. Following World War II, mission initiatives increased exponentially with 52 ministries begun during 1945 and 1959, and well over 100 during the second half of the 20th century.

It's impressive. So again, as conservative Anabaptists here today, some of those missions today, you would say, okay, I don't agree with this technique or that technique, but whatever, or some of the fruits, I will readily admit I'm not happy with. Nevertheless, wow, you gotta say wow.

As a matter of fact, I read a statistic, and I forgot the exact number, but if you were to take who claims to be Mennonite today in the world, the far majority of Mennonites in the world today are from non-American, non-white places. Matter of fact, I think I read once that an African female is the most, makes up the most of what is called a Mennonite today on this earth. And so, all right, so let's say you don't agree with this technique or whatever you see today, but the fact is that I'm very impressed with and I'm very blessed to see is you can see the seed of a vision, and it growing and growing and growing and it's impressive, nonetheless, of seeing what they accomplished.

Let's take a quick break, and then we're gonna take a look then of start to bring it to some of our people and look at John D. Roth's concern here. He brought up in his book the effect of evangelicalism on these missions and on revival. So take a quick break, three minutes, be right back.

All right, welcome back. Okay, well, as we were talking, this growth of missions, now we're coming into this Great Awakening period, and you see the Russians even sending them to evangelical schools. You see Funk trying to have a balance between being Anabaptist, but yet with revival and missionary zeal.

But some of that, you know, they were, at that time period, the evangelicals were around saying many of the things of revival and missions. So we began to get a lot of our understanding from them, and that began to have a bit of an effect on us. So John D. Roth says this.

He says, in both Europe and North America, Mennonites tended to borrow heavily from the strategies and methods of the broader Protestant mission movement. For example, Mennonites in Netherland in the Palatinate consciously modeled their early efforts after the Baptist missionary societies in England. In Russia, Mennonites followed the lead of the Lutheran Pietists and German Baptists, although still had an incredible concept of Anabaptists compared to today.

And in North America, the revival meetings of D.L. Moody and the YMCA movements affected the church in Mennonite strategies. This borrowing was undoubtedly a catalyst for early Mennonite missions, but when it was done uncritically, the gospel preached by Mennonites on the mission field tended not to differ in any meaningful way than of other Protestant groups. And so I ask the question here on page eight, what was the effect of fundamentalism and this new evangelicalism on the church? And then you saw my little evangel meter that I have there.

I found online while I was looking around. How many of you have ever heard the sermon 10 Shekels and a Shirt by Paris Readhead? Has everybody? Okay, all right. You should if you haven't.

All right, if you haven't today, listen to it. Do you remember how he talks in there that what happened to his church with the idea of fundamentalism itself? And he said he talked about the fundamentalists in their day stood for good things. Inspiration of the Bible, there's a heaven and there's the virgin birth and those sorts of things.

But the fundamentalists then began to talk and began to have that almost become a creed. So he says in the 10 Shekels and a Shirt where it got to the point where, oh, how does he word it? If you could spit out and say uh-huh to a few statements of the faith, somebody, how does he word it, would pat you on the back, shake your hand, and say, brother, you're saved. And so that became fundamentalism was again got to be a bit creedal.

Even though Paris Readhead argues that originally they were arguing for some important things, the creed of fundamentalists became to be identified of what it meant to be Christian. And again, that affected even in his camp, I think it affected our Anabaptist camp even more. Another thing that happened, and I still see this today, and it disturbs me, during the fundamentalists, it was the liberals who were helping the poor.

After the fundamentalism liberal split of the early 1900s, it became where if you were a good fundamentalist, then you were against, or you were talking about the rapture, you were talking about the millennialism, you were talking about these different things, and you had to get people saved before the rapture, and all these different things were happening. But it was the liberals that kept saying, well, we got to do what Jesus said about helping the poor. And the fundamentalists kept saying, no, it ended up being called a social gospel.

And it was labeled that we don't want to be a social gospel. Then suddenly, you had a very disturbing concept coming to even to missions and to evangelism work, where we're not going to care about their physical person, but only getting them saved. And this is a terrible thing that happened to the church.

I still, I've heard sermons from conservative Anabaptists who talk about helping the poor like it's part of the emerging church or something. And that should never happen. There's an interesting book out by a man called The Hole in the Gospel.

And he talks about, I forgot his name right now, but he talks about this whole idea of how during the fundamentalism phases, this gospel got destroyed. We are supposed to bring people to Christ and everything that Christ said. If our gospel isn't helping the poor, I don't think we understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But the early Anabaptists weren't quite as bad as the fundamentalists, or the Anabaptists of this time period. And they did begin some social things like in India and in different places. They started the Mennonite Central Committee, the MCC.

And this MCC was very involved in helping the Russian Mennonites come to America. They helped different relief organizations. And they helped Dean Taylor get out of the Army.

I have an eternal thanks to the Mennonite Central Committee. Actually, when I was a soldier in the Army, I didn't know what to do. I wrote to Herald Press after I read one of the books.

I said, me and my wife are soldiers. We don't know what to do. We're about to go AWOL.

I sent a letter off to Herald Press. Herald Press forwarded that letter to Mennonite Central Committee. Mennonite Central Committee then sent that to a couple counselors over in Germany, Andre and Kathy Stoner.

We'll have a very big debt to them as well who understood the regulations. And they were a group sent by Mennonite Central Committee to help soldiers get out of the Army. Excellent.

And so thanks, Mennonite Central Committee. All right, so those sort of things began to happen. Okay, some of the, now getting a little closer to us.

One of the groups that were revived during that Enlightenment period, remember, were the Igli Amish. And that was a revival that started there with Henry Igli there in Byrne, Indiana, and also some in Illinois, another bishop in Illinois. And it began to have this revived Anabaptist group, some former Amish that were wanting to take the gospel.

And they were very active immediately into missions. And they were one of the first people to go into the Congo in 1912. And just recently, I went to their website last night, and they're celebrating their 100th anniversary of missionary life in the Congo.

And we see that. And it was interesting. And today, through the different times during the 50s, the Mennonite Central Committee and things got the alternative services for different war relief.

And they were able to get the Congo to be considered one of those places to send people to help relief funds there. I see Cam doing this today with proactively making places for us to be in case of war, and I think that is an ingenious idea. Mennonite Central Committee did that with the Congo, and it really helped the Congo church during a time when it was faltering.

Today, there are over 200,000 members, Mennonite members, in the Congo, according to John D. Roth in his book, Stories. Impressive. Some of those, again, are this way or that.

I found this picture just last night on what became of the Igli Amish today, and they're celebrating their 100th. And this was the most conservative picture. There was others.

But it's interesting that all those ladies were covered. They all had this uniform even look on them there. And that was a picture here of a recent church in the Congo today.

So, again, some impressive, yeah, impressive things. Some of those, yeah, yeah, you'll have to check that out. And they're like, it's a blue and white uniform with a head covering on this kind of, you know, interesting looking, but yeah, nevertheless.

What's that? It was, when you clicked on their link that said, see us today, that was one of the churches. So, yeah. Well, it would have been coming down the line.

They changed their name today. They first were defenseless Mennonites and then became the, what is it? Evangelical, that's right, Mennonites. Oh, really? All right, yeah, and I gotta make sure I understand.

Most of the pictures didn't look this way. All the majority pictures didn't look this way. This was the most conservative one that I found.

Oh, grabbed it and stuck it on your paper, but yeah. I just, hey, bringing that out. Seeing, again, interestingly enough, for whatever, how you slice it, a seed now growing to 200,000.

John D. Roth mentions in his, again, his book *Stories* that they have had terrible civil wars and back and forth fightings and things that has very much hurt the church in different time periods and had to struggle through identity crises and that type of thing, but still an impressive growth of missionary life sent from America during that time. Okay, Anabaptists in Latin America. The earliest record, this is in your Cornelius Dick book.

There's this record that some travelers visiting in Central America in 1877 said that there were two Russian Mennonite colonies already there that had already established a successful wheat crop and everything and nothing else is ever known. And that's an interesting thing to me because we read these histories and a lot of these saints just went on living and doing these things we don't even know had happened. And that one, just because some report from a visitor mentions that this group was there that many times these Mennonites and Anabaptist groups were doing this and we don't even know today that they did that.

Following that, the Russian Mennonites were continually attracted to this area and establishing colony-style missions in Central America ever since. Since 1915, when the Canadians began enforcing public education, we get these whole communities pouring down into Russia. One of the sad stories is when the Canadians were forcing them, the community that had grown up in the Tortitsa Colony, then because of having to be challenged with their non-resistance and challenged also with public education of their children, migrated to Canada.

In Canada, they were finally, things quickly turned there and again, one of my most impressive stories I think of Anabaptist history is those entire thousands of people said, we're leaving. And they came to Paraguay. They weren't there long in Paraguay and Paraguay changed their laws and said, we're also gonna educate your children.

Again, even after all that, they moved up and came into the Chihuahua area in Mexico. A different group then came back into Paraguay and it was there that they reestablished their colonies. Just again, impressive stories.

Today, there are over 50,000 Russian Mennonites in New Mexico just since all these people have continued to pour in. There's an interesting story too here of somebody who was killed trying to give the faith in a tribal area. Cornelius Dick says here on page 330 of this book, he says, from the time of their arrival to the Chaco in 1930, the Fernheim group and those who came later as well as the Mennon colony churches more recently had been keenly aware of their mission responsibility and numerous programs have been undertaken.

Little did the early pioneers envision the scope these early beginnings would lead to by 1990s. After years of work, the Lingua tribe people, it seemed best to locate them in a different colony to their own away from Philadelphia to a separate settlement that was formed in the Yalva Sanga, I'm sure I'm butchering that. The first congregation was founded in 1946 after many years of loving but seemingly fruitless ministry, they finally actually established a colony there of the natives themselves.

In 1987, there were six places of worship with 1,400, you can take one of those zeros off, 1,400 baptized members and then in a different tribe here by 1958, 1,500 members in 1987. So again, hey, that's close to what? 3,000 converts from the tribal people there from the Russian Mennonites that we sometimes attribute to doing nothing in Central America. They even had a martyr, somewhat of a martyr.

One of the congregations that were down there, a man by the name of Cornelius Isaac was speared to death in 1958 for his attempted contact with a fierce Moro tribe people. Today, many of them have been won to Christ. I went and checked that out last night to do some research on it and there I found that picture that one man's holding the spear that he was actually speared through.

It actually went through like his kidneys and things so he was actually trying to drive his Jeep away from there and he finally just, I guess, bled to death and died. And there's the family underneath him there that I guess he left as an orphan and widow. So again, it was a very violent tribe.

They were trying to bring the gospel to them. Later, tribal missions and some Catholic missionaries went to the same tribe. They were also killed and then later on now, many of them have become Mennonites and there was a beautiful reconciliation time where I think it was the grandson of this man, the son of the grandson, I can't remember, had this reconciliation thing where he was blessing the tribe and forgiveness and that type of thing.

It was a beautiful story. So again, some of these incredible things that happen down in Central America when you begin to look at them. I would guess that just by just a glance picture, say a thousand words, it'd be more on the general conference sense.

Yeah, is what I saw. But still impressive stuff as you look at what was happening there. Also in Uruguay, there was the Mennonites from the Vestula Delta who were there.

Still up to World War II were forced out and they came to there. Other in Columbia, different Mennonite groups had come, set up orphanages, leprosy clinics, West Indies and the Caribbeans and all the way around the different Central America. Central America has been a big place for Mennonites and it is for us as conservative Anabaptists as well.

This next lady I just give for you girls, as I was going through all this, you hear all these men and all these churches that are started. There has been probably countless of these young ladies who have valiantly lived the gospel and given the truth out places that we never even know their names. They don't come up

to history and we just make a survey.

And there's just one that caught my eye. Just this beautiful example, this young lady, Florence Friesen, who grew up in Kansas in 1906. She went to Goshen College and decided she wanted to go into missionary work.

She first went through medical work, became a doctor and she ended up being a doctor in India. Start serving the sick there in India. There she is, just look at her, ready to go with her doctor bag in hand and her plain dress and a cap.

It was just inspiring to see this young lady's faith as I thought about her going off into India to serve. One time when she was back on furlough, you can see the serving heart of this lady. One time when she was back on furlough, she ended up meeting this man and married a widower with who had four children.

So this lady obviously had a servant's heart. So she threw herself into missions, later back on furlough, came back, got married, but even then she married a widower and sure had her hands full even then. And so anyway, she just impressed me.

Someone you'd probably never hear about if I didn't just even accidentally find her last night in my studies. Florence Friesen, who kind of represents these unknown women who served in far off mission fields during this time as well. I was very impressed with her testimony and what little I saw there.

So bringing it to more of us. You know, as we look now into our approach, I'm gonna go over the Lancaster Conference as a model here in a second, but just to say us, I'm very blessed of what's accomplished now and it's come out of the conservative voice, even in the last 50 years from your people, from our people, from different voices that has come out today. And I just threw some, I took some of this from the Beachy website and just some impressive things.

And I wanna say amen, good job, keep going. Christian Aid Ministries. I am so impressed with Christian Aid Ministries with their effort to be able to have a burden for the poor and then help to, alongside, partner alongside churches to come up and bring the church community part behind relief to the poor has been impressive.

They've been over to Romania, even Esther has been, what, 10 years you spent at an orphanage in Romania? Some of these different things, I am very blessed with Christian Aid Ministry and they're using a model of bringing the message of Jesus Christ with helping the poor, relieving the sick and giving the gospel and I'm impressed with that. The Faith Mission Homes, I was reading about and I've heard several of you, have any of you girls been, spent some time volunteering there? Impressive, a place that its whole ministry is to handicap people. I mean, this is something that's usually forgotten about.

We kinda don't wanna be around handicapped people and that type of thing. Again, I'm very impressed with an organization that would take the least of these and make an entire ministry, a little community of people around them to be able to bless them and live with them. It's impressive, I say amen to that.

The other ones in different missionary efforts, there's missionary efforts to Kenya and all this Lamp and Light. Lamp and Light is an interesting ministry that allows to go to different countries, they can get literature. I met a man at CAM once who was just coming back from, I think it was Liberia if I recall and there in Liberia, Lamp and Light had given out this literature and people were knocking on their doors to get into this course to be able to study the Bible and he was mentioning to me that even some policemen

of the area were coming in and the whole place was just packed with people wanting to know Bible knowledge.

And so again, amen, keep it up, keep up those good things. The Eastern Mennonites, the Pilgrim Mennonites, the Fellowship Churches, even the New Order Amish I hear about different things have gone into some of these different places. Ourselves with the charity ministries have gone into Ghana and Haiti and Tanzania and other places in Central America now.

And the IGO, even some people from here with the different Keystone Churches and some of that, there seems to be again with our people and I wanna say amen to it, is a burden of being able to take this message and to spread it to all the world. And I think it's a very important part of what Jesus said to go into all the earth. So amen, keep it up.

So in these different missions, these different recent ones and many of those that I mentioned, I hear a tension though. And I'm changing the chapter now. I hear a tension.

And the tension that seems to come up in our mission several times is this tension of being able to, the evangelical model and the Anabaptist model, and there seems to be within conservative people a constant fight between this concept found in mission. So I'm gonna give you my opinions on this thing and then you can think what you want. But I'd like to look at the starting of the missions in Lancaster County as an example.

There's been a couple books that have talked about this whole thing in history. Here's a couple of them. The Gentle Wind of God.

And this is talking about the East African revivals and when the Lancaster Mennonite missionaries met the East African revivals. Written by, if I can use the word, liberal perspective. And same here, Mennonite Safari by David Schenk.

Again, just talking about the East African revival and some of the back and forth struggles they had with Lancaster Conference Mennonites and their planting of churches there in East Africa. And as I read these accounts, mainly started studying about 2007, 2008, it burdened me. Because I saw a repeated pattern.

I saw missionaries on the field with kind of an unclear commission. Getting many of their things from the evangelicals and then trying to present that into a somewhat of something that they knew they had back in Lancaster County and then being tossed to and fro by many different voices that came their way. I saw that here in these books that I read.

Then I saw back in Lancaster County the response of the church that it seems many times the insecurities of trying to understand who they were as a community of people would then sometimes come off kind of harsh and sometimes quick with the missionaries. And it ended up both people ended up hurting each other back and forth and it's sad. And it'd be sad if it just happened in 1940.

It's really sad if it's gonna happen in 2040 or 2140. In other words, when it keeps happening. And I think that this is something that we need to look at.

And so I'm gonna bring this last part of this lecture and I'm gonna use the Lancaster mission as an example of what I see as conflict in our understanding of revival, church planting and mission work. So now I enter the chapter of the Anabaptist missiology. Coming in this time, the 17, excuse me, 17.

In the 1930s, the late 1920s, the Mennonite church remember was involved in India. And as they were sending the missionaries over to India, however, the missionaries in India, who again had some good things and some evangelical things already began to struggle with, are we Mennonite? Are we Anabaptists? Or does that whole word mean nothing? And is this just, are we just here with the rest of the evangelical missionaries? And they struggled with this. Reports started to come back to Lancaster that people, oh, I have some exact quotes here.

This mentioned in Mennonite Safari, he mentions this. He says, the feeling swept through Lancaster area that things were not doing well in India. Reports circulate the Indian Mennonites sometimes, the Indian Mennonites sometimes wore mustaches and that their missionaries lived in ostentatious bungalows.

And they identified too closely with the British colony authority and some were discarding their plain clothes and living more like the area around them. And so the Lancaster Mennonites were like, okay, we're not completely happy with what we're seeing and the response of the missionaries and the influence of the missionaries back on the church in the West. And so they say, we're gonna do this differently.

So they begin to talk and they pray and they just say, we're gonna start our own mission. So then Lancaster County then got together and they decided Tanganyika, this is now Tanzania, the place where they are going to go. This was exciting times for Lancaster County.

And the whole atmosphere was alive with Lancaster County, the conservative Mennonites are now going into the mission field. And on February 21st, 1934, 475 Mennonites from Lancaster County all got on East border, they followed the missionaries all the way to the coast to be able to send off, I think it was what, 10 missionaries that were being sent out. And it was such a big ordeal that it actually made the newspapers.

It made Time Magazine, it made the New York Times, it made the Associated Press. And here's just a glimpse from Time Magazine of the reply of seeing all these Mennonites showing up in New York City, sending these guys off to the mission field. It says this, Time Magazine, said a special train of 10 day coaches pulled into Manhattan, Pennsylvania station one afternoon last week.

Out of it trooped 400 men, women, and children. The women wore plain, straight dresses with little lace caps perched on the back of their heads. The men wore high, tightly buttoned jackets with lapels, high starch collars, mostly without neckties.

Many of them peering about in timid bewilderment through old rimmed spectacles. The 400 left the station and boarded buses. So, it just gives you an idea of the excitement of all these conservative Mennonites coming to New York and it even made a, or Philadelphia here at the station, and making a big to do here.

The Mennonite words from John Moseman as they were sailing out on the SS Deutschland was, hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Overheard is his banner. We trust him for the future.

What a blessing it is to carry the evangel to the whole world. Wow, it would have been a time in Lancaster County for the Anabaptist people to be there and to experience what was happening. So, they went out.

There's a little picture of the first missionaries as they made it there to Shirati, which is the far north part of Tanzania. Originally, they met with an evangelical missionary organization. This ended up being a bit of a problem, but it seemed good at the time.

They didn't know these people were doing it and they were there, and so they worked with them. And actually, one of the people that were on staff of AIM, the missionary, which was the name of the African Inland Mission, was actually a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Church, an ugly Amish man. And so, they thought, wow, this is great.

And she helped with them and they worked with them and the evangelicals worked with these conservative Mennonites very well. And so, they ended up in Shirati, is where they thought they should be. And that's what they did.

And so, they started there. And by 1940, they started in 1934. In 1940, there was approximately 20 Mennonite missionaries on the field.

And they had baptized 100 members and had 10 little churches. Okay. So, all that worked, what, six or seven years.

They ended up with around 100 converts, little, with actually baptized converts, and 10 little churches. One of the things that was interesting is when I read through some of these books that talked about this time, they speak kind of disparagingly of that time. Like, that was nothing.

Like, you know, what happened next, this next chapter after 1940 is what really happened. I look back at this time, pre-East African revival, 1940, and I ponder. They've been there six or seven years, which, you know, being involved with a church that started an African mission in Tanzania, I would say 10 churches and 100 baptized converts in six or seven years is pretty good.

Especially if those were solid converts. I don't know, I haven't dug up that deep to know if they were. But nevertheless, what happened next changed Lancaster County.

The East African revivals. East Africa revivals was one of the most long-lasting revivals in revival history. And it swept through this area, and it collided with the Lancaster County missionaries head-on, right where they were.

The East African revivals here is taken straight from the proponents of the East African revivals. I'm gonna give you a little here, it's the bottom of page 14. Here's the quote coming from the Gentle Wind of God book.

It says this, in the early 1930s, a few spiritually hungry Africans and Europeans received a new vision of the cross of Jesus Christ in the small East African nation of Rwanda. Circle the word Rwanda. This is where this revival started.

When they saw the Lamb of God crucified and raised from the dead, they then saw the sinfulness of their own hearts. Consequently, they fled to Calvary for cleansing. There at the cross, they not only received forgiveness for their sins and a new inrushing of the Holy Spirit, they also discovered another delightful gift, and I highlighted this, a completely new family, which knew no color, denomination, or station in life.

A new family, circle the word, a completely new family. All those who fell at the feet of the crucified one loved one another with a compelling love. These Christians who had formerly known Jesus Christ only as a historical figure or a passing acquaintance found to their amazement and joy that Jesus wanted to relate to them in a living presence constantly.

This was an exhilarating discovery. I've read the accounts of this revival. I've read, and I do have to say that I believe it was a genuine outpouring of God.

Homes got put back together, marriages put back together, and people truly came under the conviction of actual sin in their life, and it was repentance and coming to Christ in a real way. But Pentecost is what? The birth of what? The church. And if there's one thing that seemed to be lacking is that the East African revival, as it swept through, it lacked the concept of the church, and that has been a problem, I think, still to this day.

My opinion, I'm looking at this. Right where they were, these Lancaster County missionaries then began to get involved, and they started to be going to different sessions, and they started to go to things that an Anglican minister was preaching at, and then a Lutheran, an Evangelical, and everybody seemed to be having something exciting to say except Mennonites, you know? And so they began to think, oh, you know, I don't know. This background that we came from, I think we were just off.

And here they mentioned here, and during one of the meetings, Elam Stauffer, one of the key figures of the mission there said this in one of the meetings. He said, when the group prepared to leave the chapel for a meal, Elam Stauffer remained on his knees in a corner facing the wall. He later shared with them that God had dealt with everything in his life, and I highlight it, especially his bondage to customs and traditions.

I think it may be true in his life. Again, I don't like necessarily how the Lancaster Conference handled it, but they were already kind of losing their identity of who they were, and what does it mean to be a people of God? They were mixing with this invisible church concept. Now to throw a mission out there became very dangerous.

But this gave a general idea in the missionaries of this whole life was, this Mennonite that we came from Lancaster County, it was not real light. Conflict of community. Began to have this idea of, that they recognized themselves in a wider community of believers, which on one sense, again, is good.

If we go around thinking we're the only one true church, we've got a problem. On the other hand, I think we'll see through, I see through the New Testament that God creates called out people to covenant themselves with each other to accomplish the will of God, and they were, in my opinion, lacking some of that. This greater community, I have the bottom of 15, were disassociated evangelical Christians.

It was reported to the evangelical missionaries. Interesting, the evangelical missionaries themselves, okay, the different evangelical missionary organizations told their missionaries over there, like say if you were part of the Lutheran Church or this, don't get involved in revival. The Mennonites weren't up to snuff on that and gave no restrictions on that.

Interesting little note of history. It went on, they started getting more and more, and then they started coming back on furlough when they were preaching in the churches in the furlough. They preached at East Chestnut Mennonite Church in 1943.

Remember where the Brunk Revival started later in the 50s. They were beginning to bring these things out, and what they talked about was the East African Revival. They started talking about how we need to re-revive with these things, and they began to have this general disdain for their traditional ways of life.

They also started to begin to be talking about that you were using the Schofield Bible. There was like a mission Bible study that they were using the Schofield method over in Africa, and they were, then even when they were on furlough, were getting little groups of people that were studying through this Schofield Bible study, and things started to come to be an issue, a communion. Isn't it just open communion? Do we really have membership? Women leadership, Israelism, and rapture theology began to be some of the things they started to talk about, and finally, the Lancaster Conference said no, and then the hammer came down.

In 1943, the proposal came before the Mennonite Church General Conference to make nonconformity, separation from the world, and nonresistance a test of church membership. Interestingly to me, it wasn't before that, but you can see now a church that's kinda uh-oh, and now they start bringing down the hammers, and these guys over in Africa were like, what are you doing? And it began to just unravel and unravel and unravel in kind of a bad way. Abram Gish, who was one of the missionaries home on furlough began preaching through this Schofield method.

He had a collection of, a gathering of people from the Marietta Mennonite Church around him. He was told to stop, he didn't, and the Marietta Mennonite Church split, and he began to start a little fellowship. This whole type of thing began to go further and further, and to eventually, it got where it was a big, a bad taste in the mouth of the Lancaster Conference conservative Mennonites.

So, what are some of the lessons there? I don't know, as I ponder this, interestingly enough, oh, I have one more point on page 17 there. The missionaries did start talking about the need of a team. A man, a famous man, oh, his name escapes me here just for a second, Norman Grubb, he also wrote many missionary books, started to talk about the need of the church working as a team, and he gave this concept of a team, and it is here written, one of their quotes here, talking about that they struggled against Western individualism, now they had what they wanted to do in Africa, and they said, further, we were beginning to learn as a company of Christ's witnesses that the rivers of life to the world do not flow out through one man, but through the body, quote, the team, I have highlighted.

Our brokenness and openness must be two-way, horizontal as well as vertical, with one another as with God, and that was coming from an evangelical there in Africa. And it's not bad, but team is not church. The team is a bit superficial, it's good, God did choose us to work as a team.

A team does not covenant together, God did not say I will raise a team, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And so, although I think intrinsically, missionaries find that they need to work as a team, I personally believe that the church is the means by which this should be lived out. Now, here's the thing that happened.

Why, what happened from there? Interestingly enough, Rwanda, the area, they were beginning to say this was the widest spread revival in the world, and that this area in Rwanda, in East Africa, was considered a Christian nation. 90 to 80% of the people in Rwanda at this time were considered Christians, and yet then civil war started coming later on. A little further, different things started happening, and then finally, all through this time, by the time, as I study this whole area, by the time you end up into the 1990s, in our kind of recent history, a terrible tragedy happened in Rwanda.

I don't know if anybody of y'all remember, there was a terrible tragedy, a Rwanda genocide that happened, and I ponder this as I look at the whole missionary pouring out and revivals that happen in this area in Rwanda. If you look down the page of page 19, you see a picture there of what happened in the 1994

Rwanda massacre. Interestingly enough, that during the 40s, 50s, 60s, it says here in the Mennonite Safari, and it also brings out in different literature, they did not want to be the Holy Spirit of the Africans.

They wanted them to be able to decide which things they think are important. They wanted the Africans themselves to get out of the Bible these issues of non-resistance and these issues of separation and these types of things, and so they said, we're not gonna force that on them, we're gonna let them figure that out. What did Jesus say to do? Teach them all things.

Whatever I've told you, have them observe those things. And so, I think that this, I wonder now. Now, I can't blame the Rwanda massacre on them, but I'm not the only one that's raised this question.

But let me tell you what happened in 1994. Again, through the continual century, Rwanda was proclaiming itself to be a Christian nation. More and more missionaries have poured all kinds of revivals and things have happened to this area.

And then in 1994, a country that was actually called a Christian nation broke out into heinous acts of violence. To where it happened that over 800,000 people were massacred in a short amount of time by this Christian nation, one tribe against the other. And one of the worst parts of this violence, 1,000 bodies a day traveled up the river between Tanzania and Rwanda.

Was the message that they heard, was this Christian nation so-called a Christian nation that represented Christ? I asked that question. Later in my studies, just recently, I found out that I'm not the only one that asked that. I found an interesting website where an article written, it's the Missionalia, the Journal of South African Missiological Society, was asking, also asking the question, what did they get in Rwanda? What did East Africa receive? And here I have these quotes from this man on page 20 here.

He says here, these are missionaries, a missionary journal, being able to have a time for some self-introspection and say, let's take a look at what happened in Africa. He said, Rwanda generally is regarded as one of the most Christian countries in Africa and the world, and one of the real successes of Christian missions in Africa. Statistically speaking, some 80 to 90% of the population regarded themselves as Christians.

An absolute majority of Roman Catholics and a strong minority of Protestants. Much of Christianity is of a strong evangelical persuasion. He asked, then, why didn't the revival show the same transforming power during the conflict in the last three decades? They've been having this conflict in the last three decades.

The first part of the answer, he wonders this. The fires of revival had died down, and Rwanda's spiritual development rarely progressed much past the initial point of conversion. He asked this man, the saved were called to be saved, Sunday after Sunday.

They were called to be saved. The emphasis was on conversion, he says. The repentance that was called for was one limited on the pattern of no alcohol, no adultery, and pay your tithes.

There has been a lack of the Pauline terms of preaching the whole counsel of God. Testimonies received more emphasis than solid biblical teaching. And anti-intellectualism among the missionaries resulted in the church leaders not being able to give theological training and tools to deal with the complexities of the gospel and cultural issues.

Go to the other page. The second problem was a lack of relevance to everyday life. It was partly the result of the theological background of the missionaries, who tended to emphasize evangelism to the exclusion of any engagement with the public life of the nation.

Or a critique of socio-political context. He's saying they weren't involved in real life there. And again, I don't agree with political involvement, but they weren't taking their gospel throughout their life.

They spoke of, quote, the deeper life and worked and prayed for revival. They were also greatly influenced by the pietist tradition. This coupled with a fundamentalist view of scripture led to either withdrawal from the public life as a nation or a naive and uncritical support of whoever was in power.

They didn't stamp on their public life. And he goes on, and I encourage you to read those things. For time, I'll skip past it.

So other people are beginning to notice, wow, all this stuff of revival, all this stuff of the church, what is the place and the representation of the church in the society, the church community? In my studies, when I went through this section, I began to ask the questions in our own people. Why do we always hear conflicts? How many of you heard conflicts of the mission and the church, the missionaries in Africa and your church back home, and the constant conflict that happens there? I think stems through the same kind of conflict that Lancaster County had here was not seeing the church in the foreign field as a church community that was giving the gospel, but as individuals who was giving the gospel. And that became to be the biggest difference.

What surprises me today, as I see many of our Anabaptist people giving up the church community concept of missions, I see conservative evangelicals picking it up. How many of you ever heard of Joshua Harris, the man who wrote Stop Dating, Kiss Dating Goodbye? He's a part of a group called Sovereign Grace Ministries, a conservative evangelical group, Calvinist-based. And they themselves see a crisis in this time.

They recently, a few years ago, wrote a man by the name of, oh, I forgot his name, Paul, I forgot his name, wrote a missiology book, Dave Harvey, on Sovereign Grace Ministry, put out this book, and they were asking these same type of questions as they began to go into the missions field. They started to say, wait a minute, these evangelical models keep falling on us, and we're not creating churches that are raising up to present the gospel. And this is interesting, this is not from an Anabaptist, but it's, I'm gonna read you some things that are coming from the conservative evangelicals.

And I'm giving this to you because I believe, and it breaks my heart when I see us, as conservative Anabaptists, giving up these things and going to copy outdated evangelical models, and now the conservative evangelicals coming around and picking up these models and saying, wait, we've messed up. Let me hear some of these quotes here. This is from the book called, a little booklet that he put out on missiology.

He says, healthy disciples, like healthy cells, reproduce themselves. And like mannered grouping of healthy disciples, local churches are called to reproduce themselves towards the goal of reaching Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. The Great Commission is an invitation not just to individuals, but to local churches.

When Christ said, I will build my church, he wasn't planting a permanent eagle boost in the pages of scripture so that we could all feel good about our churches. It was the grand mission declaration. And he quotes missiologists, Malthus writes, quote, and he's quoting someone else here.

A careful reading of Acts reveals that the early church implemented the Great Commission mandate primarily by planting churches. A study of the missionary journeys recorded in Acts reveals that they, in fact, were church planting forays into what was predominantly a pagan culture. As a result of these trips, Paul and others planted high impact churches in key cities.

And he mentions the different cities that we see in the New Testament. Armed with the good news, we are commanded to follow the New Testament pattern of penetrating new regions to communicate God's word and create God's community. Listen to what the evangelicals are saying.

And to create God's community. In contrast to traditional missionary enterprises, which often center primarily on the proclamation, church planting establishes a mission base for the threefold purpose of proclamation, going out and baptizing, integration, making disciples, and expansion, reproducing. Wow, Zinzendorf said it, the Russian Mennonites said it, the early Anabaptists said it, now the conservative evangelicals are saying it, and we're still wanting to copy the word out method.

He mentions here, and he goes through this. He says this is the way he sees it, and I have it here. The gospel plus the commissioned individual plus the local church community equals world evangelism.

This is from the evangelicals saying this now, the conservative ones. Sad to say, Christians in Western culture, with its emphasis on individual visions and personal spirituality, often erase the local church factor from the equation, and this is the way they do it. The gospel plus the commissioned individual equals world evangelism, and he's saying it's wrong.

He goes on, and for time's sake, I'm gonna have to skip through that, you can read through there, but he says that George Peters in his book on missions mentions that the whole problem of this started, guess where? George Peters, a conservative Baptist writing about missiology, says the whole problem stems to Zwingli and his concept of the church, his invisible concept of the church, and he says we are now bearing the fruit of Zwingli's mistakes, that we need a visible church community that presents itself, and he says, very wittily put, he says everywhere we're having churches without missions and missions without churches. Everywhere we're forming churches without missions and missions without churches, and he goes on to say, in common understanding, the church sends out missionaries and supports missions, but only as an afterthought. He said the disconnect is puzzling.

Why do churches cede to mission to non-churches as an eminent missiologist, Ronald Allen, who wrote *Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours*, says we cannot but recognize that everywhere we have established missions and missions are not churches. If we establish missions instead of establishing churches, it is because we differ from the apostles and the early church in principles and in spirit. Let's wake up.

The concept of the church. So when our people, conservative and abandoned, are going to these different countries and going to these different places, there does end up being conflicts, and I may not even agree with how some of our conservative churches would do it and some of the things that they're representing as their community, but I'll tell you what, I stand by the principle of what the whole thing is about, a church community planted in a different spot, representing something to the natives that they can get a hold of, be

an outpost for discipleship and church life. I'll close with this thought.

Out of time. I was reading a book during this time when I was discovering all this, and it's a novel by Alan Patton, and I'll end with this quote. And Alan Patton, it was a book written in South Africa during the time of apartheid, and apartheid was when they were separating the blacks and the whites and putting in, it's a story about an Anglican minister in Africa who loses his family, loses his sister, and he tries to go to Johannesburg to find him, and he starts to talk about how terrible life is, and he's an old Anglican minister, and at one point in the scene in the book, it's a novel, it's not a true story, it's a novel, but it really represents something.

Alan Patton writes here, in one scene, he's into Johannesburg, he can't find his son, he can't find his sister, and he's talking to another missionary Anglican there, and he says this, and here's the quote. My friend, imagine an old Anglican priest, African priest speaking, I am a Christian from a tribe somewhere. It is not my heart to hate the white man.

It was a white man who brought my father out of darkness. But you will pardon me if I talk frankly to you. Listen to this now.

The tragedy is not that things are broken. The tragedy is that they are not mended again. The white man has broken the tribe, and it is my belief, and again, I ask your pardon, that it cannot be mended again.

But the house that is broken, these are the tragic things. That is why children break the law, and old white people are robbed and beaten. He passed his hand across his brow, and he said this.

It suited the white man to break the tribe. He continued gravely, but it has not suited him to build something in the place of what is broken. I have pondered this for many hours, and I must speak it, for it is the truth for me.

They are not all so. There are some white men who give their lives to build up what is broken, but they are not enough, he said, they are afraid. That is the truth.

It is fear that rules this land. It suited the white man to break the tribe, but it has not suited him to build something in the place of what is broken. I believe that's the dynamic that is hurting the church all across Christendom, and our heritage as a people of God who believe in the community of the saints and believe in a community-based model of the church, we are the last people on earth who should be picking up worn-out, old evangelical models as we go into the missionary world, in my opinion.

And I'll leave you with Jeremiah 1, verse 10. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant. And that's the commission that we see fulfilled in the New Testament and the kingdom of heaven being presented, and I think we have an incredible heritage.

We have some incredible examples to be able to use for our day, and I encourage us to take that full kingdom model of the people of God into all the world without a disconnect, confusing community, but something, it doesn't have to be, but something that makes a difference to everyone involved. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you, Lord.

And again, we know that you said you would build your church. And that church that you build, the gates of hell will not prevail against it. God, I do pray that you would help us to stay out of this and allow your

method, your way, your burden be what teaches us, and we want you to establish your kingdom on this earth.

You told us to pray, thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. You said to seek first the kingdom of God. So Father, we do this and we ask you to plant that in our time and let us be a part of it.

It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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