

Supported by God:

In the sermon “How the Revivals Began”, preached in August of 1951, George Brunk said that when he and Lawrence began, they determined that their provisions would be totally met on faith. George recalled that when they were dreaming about a real revival crusade, one of the things that had grieved them about the meetings they had been to was all of the time spent begging for money. “We thought it a terrible pity that a campaign in which the Gospel is preached had to be spoiled by begging people for money.” The Brunk brothers took an offering, and sometimes even that was considered scandalous. However, through the years they went into each new area on faith, with no promise of how things would work out.

The blessing that came to Lancaster County during the revival is still felt today. As I have talked to people who were alive during the Lancaster revivals, even if they themselves are not too keen on the idea of revival, I found that they still admit that what happened here in 1951 was a real move of God.

Since the 1950s Lancaster County, along with many other areas around the country, was “sifted like wheat”, especially during the latter part of the 1960s. Divisions separated the county into various camps, ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Driving down a road in Lancaster County today, you could see one parking lot filled with people with plain dress, all coming into church on their horse and buggies. Then on the other side, you could see another church with a conspicuous lack of modest dress, all on their way in to hear their female preacher expound on the need to have toleration with the new homosexual members. What is surprising—and sad—is that both of these churches share the same denomination name on the front of their church buildings. It doesn’t have to be this way.

Ironically, both of these extremes have tended to drop the cause of revival. Sadly, today many ultra conservative churches have actually grown fearful of revival meetings and foreign missions. Likewise, liberal churches can hardly dream of a church-life that experiences daily prayer meetings, speaking directly about sin, or encouraging separation from the world. Both extremes make the Church of Jesus Christ saltless in today’s world.

Anabaptist History (Day 21) Anabaptist Missions to the Present

Menno Simons said...

Preach everywhere!

A citizen of Heilbronn testified before a court in 1539 that prior to his baptism he had fled from the Anabaptists as from the devil himself, because of the fervent energy with which they sought to persuade him. Perhaps no one demonstrates this passion more fervently than leader Menno Simons:

- Therefore we preach, as much as is possible, both by day and by night, in houses and in fields, in forests and wastes, hither and yon, at home or abroad, in prisons 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.

NAME OF MISSIONARY	KNOWN NUMBER OF CONVERTS BAPTIZED	TIME OF BAPTISM	ESTIMATED TOTAL	TIME OF SERVICE
Jakob Gross	35	1 day		1525
Jorg Schad	40	March 12		1525
Wilhelm Roubli	60	1 day		1525
Balthasar Hubmaier	360	Easter	6,000	1525-28
Conrad Grebel	"a whole procession of men and women"			1525-26
				1525
Johannes Brotli	"nearly a whole village"			1525
Hans Bichter	30	March 8-15		1529
Martin Zehentmaier	40			1527
Leonard Dorfbrunner	about 100	few mts	3,000	1525-29
Jorg Blaurock	1,000		4,000	1525-29
Hans Hut	about 100	2 weeks	12,000	1527-29
Georg Nespitzer	22	2 years	4,000	1527-29
Leonard Schiemer	over 200	6 mts		1527
Michael Kurschner	about 100	11 mts		1528-29
Jacob Huter	19	Aug '35		1533-35
Leenaert Bouwens	10,378	31 yrs		1551-82
Hans Mandl	about 400		4,000	1561

The Hutterites: 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"

In order to be able to fulfill the task laid upon them by the Lord, the congregation **semiannually** (usually in the spring and fall) chose from the preachers a number of Brethren to perform a widespread missionary service in all directions, to preach the Gospel in accordance with the commandment of Christ, and to lead the converts to the "promised land" or [Moravia](#).

Each missionary had his field assigned to him; thus Brethren went out to all parts of [Germany](#) ([Bavaria](#), [Württemberg](#), Hesse, [Thuringia](#), [Rhineland](#), also [Silesia](#) and [Prussia](#)), to [Switzerland](#), to [Poland](#), and in two cases also to Venice, Italy. A few even came as far as [Denmark](#) and [Sweden](#), but that was hardly their actual field of work.

Equipped:

Each brother had epistles and tracts in his knapsack. The home congregation **supported** its missionaries not only by prayers but also by writing them letters and, in case of imprisonment, by dispatching Brethren to maintain contact, bring them these letters and receive their replies, also to bring home all news of importance.

The missionaries, on the other hand, never tired of writing letters home about their success or, if arrested, their trials and their good cheer and unshaken trust in God.

Conflict with the Reformers:

The established churches in [Germany](#) contested the right of the Brethren to send out missioners on the ground that they had not been ordained by God to do so. For instance the Calvinist superintendent of Alzey in the [Palatinate](#) asked the Hutterite missionary [Leonhard Dax](#), imprisoned in 1567, who had given him the right and authority to come into the Palatinate to 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. The Brethren owed it to the world to bring it the pure and unadulterated Word of God. And those who were sent by the brotherhood were properly ordained as "apostles" (Sendboten), and must be considered as commissioned by God Himself. Otherwise also the apostolic church would not have done right.

Before America:

This transformation of the Mennonite church from a tiny European fellowship to a global communion has unfolded in several steps. It began in the second half of the nineteenth century with a renewed commitment among Mennonites-first in Russia and the Netherlands and then in North America-to missions: the imperative of the great commission to take the good news of the gospel to the "uttermost parts of the earth."

Pieter Jansz and his assistant, Rd.
Ng. Djojo Soepono, translating the
New Testament into Javanese, ca.
1887

In 1851 Mennonite congregations in the Netherlands **pooled their resources to support the first overseas Mennonite missionaries**, Pieter Jansz and his wife, on a journey to the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia). There the Janszs and their co-workers established a mission church in north central Java and set about translating the Bible into Javanese and Malay.



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 Mennonite church grew slowly, reaching a total of 1,200 people by 1940.



In the 1920s another Mennonite church emerged among **Indonesians of Chinese descent**, founded by the visionary leader Tee Siem Tat. By mid-century, both groups had developed their own internal leadership, which often creatively fused Mennonite theology with insights from other Christian churches in the region.

Today Indonesia has three Mennonite synods. **The 15,200-member United Muria Indonesian Christian Church** (GKMI) and the **12,000-member** Jemaat Kristen Indonesia (JKI) are predominantly of Chinese ethnicity, while indigenous Javanese make up the majority of the Evangelical Church of Java (GITJ), which numbers around **48,000 members**.

Over the past decades Indonesian Mennonites have survived repeated waves of persecution triggered by both religious and ethnic hostility. Chinese Indonesians have been the particular target of rioters in recent years, suffering the loss of numerous stores and several churches. " The mission initiative that brought Jansz to Indonesia in 1851 has been repeated many times in countries throughout the world.

The Russians Beat Us!

In the 1880s the Russian Mennonites in the Ukraine started their own overseas mission initiative, sending a couple who had spent the previous four years in training at the Hamburg Baptist Seminary to India.

Early Russian Missions reveal a clear Anabaptist view of missions.

Peter Hoover writes that in this, the church found its mission and fulfillment, as it had ever since coming from the Netherlands to the Vistula Delta three centuries earlier. Modern mission terms, or the idea of missions as an institution, staffed by career missionaries, was to them unknown. The Mennonites thought of mission only in the context of Gemeinde (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. A signpost pointing to the rule of Christ in new heavens and a new earth to come.

Yes, the Mennonites visited and travelled 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 opened doors. But they understood the Great Commission as a corporate, never as an individual or institutional, calling. Johann Wiebe, who settled with a group of Old Colony Mennonites in a new Gemeinde on rented land near Melitopol in Taurida, in 1864, and later led them to Manitoba, Canada, wrote:

- From the beginning of the world God has kept and guarded his visible Gemeinde, his beloved people, and he will preserve them to the very end. God's Gemeinde on earth began with Adam and Eve in Paradise. Then, for a time, it consisted of faithful households like those of Noah and Abraham with whom he made his first covenants, and through whom he gathered his chosen seed. This seed of Abraham, the family of Isaac and Jacob, was the Gemeinde of the Old Testament.
- 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. All those that get converted, from the heart, all that trust in God and in his son Jesus, come together in one faith, in one baptism. All that believe in Christ get baptised into one body. In 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.
- In this way all believers become members of one body (einverleibt), received into the communion of the saints, all becoming one in heart and soul. Everyone carries the other along in love and all support one another through intercessory prayer. This is the Gemeinde that God, according to Acts 1, has called together from all people and tongues, all that fear him, love him, and do what is right.
- The Lord Jesus bought the Gemeinde with his blood, washing her with the Word, so she might stand in beauty before him, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. This is the Gemeinde he calls the temple and dwelling place of the living God.

- The Gemeinde stands on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone. And as such, she is known by her Scriptural teachings demonstrated in the love her members have one for another, by her blessed and good way of life in fellowship here on earth, and by how she keeps the commands of Christ.
- Jesus said he will stay with his Gemeinde, as he will stay with all that believe on him with a true heart, unto the end of the world. Neither Satan in all his power, nor the gates of hell shall withstand her advance and we pray that through knowing and following Jesus, his entire Gemeinde may stand in true fellowship (Gemeinschaft) with God.

Jesus Fire in Missions:

Fire spreads quickly. It blazes up and send showers of sparks high into the air. Then, wherever a spark comes to rest it sets off a new fire. That is how it goes when the Jesus-Fire lights up 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 uncivilised, the pagans and the Muslims. And no parents, no brothers, sisters, or friends, will dissuade us or keep us back. . . .

The Saviour wants the fire that burns in us to flare up and throw out many sparks. If we love him, none of us will fail to take part in the work of missions, one way or another. For the one that refuses does not love the Saviour, or at least not very much. . . . And oh, how much needs to be done around the world until the fire that Jesus has kindled will burn everywhere among all the peoples of the earth! They now estimate the world's population at one billion, four hundred million people. Of these only a very small part are Christian believers. . .

Through the work of our churches in the Dutch East Indies, on Java and Sumatra, the Jesus-Fire has started to burn in the hearts of more than 2,500 heathen and Muslims. 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!

In the face of incredible adversity, great challenges from within and without, the flight of the Mennonites to eastern Europe had spread the fire and light of Jesus' Gospel. But their adventures in Russia, by Heinrich Dirks's time (he was the son of refugees from Prussia), had barely begun. Other events, apostasy, turmoil, revolution, famine, war and mass emigrations already stood on the horizon.

Examples of Moravian Missions:



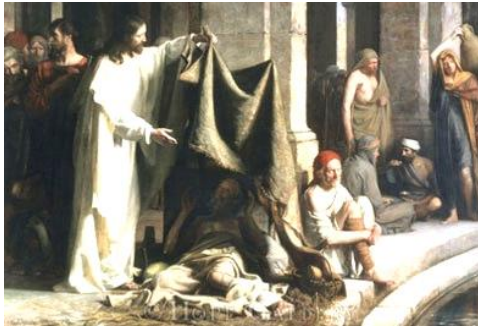


In America:

In 1866, General Conference Mennonites in North America-with financial support and expertise from the Russian Mennonites in Prussia-founded **the Wadsworth Institute in northern Ohio** with the goal of training future church leaders.

Although the school closed after only ten years, many of the General Conference's pioneer missionaries received their training there, going on to serve in its first **foreign mission fields in India (1900) and China (1914).**

The Mennonite Church entered overseas missions in 1899, sparked in part by reports of **widespread famine in India.** Like many later Mennonite Church mission projects, the initial Mennonite presence in India **began with a relief effort-the construction of an orphanage and school-that served as the basis for more explicit evangelistic outreach.**



Other Mennonite Church mission efforts soon followed: to Argentina (1917), East Africa (1934), Puerto Rico (1945), Ethiopia (1948), Japan (1949), and a host of other African, East Asian, and South American countries in the 1950s. Once established, the various Mennonite mission boards and agencies took up their tasks with energy and optimism.

According to mission historian Wilbert Shenk, European and North American Mennonites created **twenty-five new missions between 1850 and 1945.**

Following World War II, mission initiatives increased exponentially, with **fifty-two new ministries begun between 1945 and 1959,** and well over a hundred during the second half of the twentieth century.

Were these Mennonite Missions from America different?

John D Roth 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 the Netherlands and the Palatinate consciously modeled their early efforts after the Baptist Missionary Society in England. In Russia, Mennonites followed the lead of Lutheran Pietists and German Baptists; **and in North America, the revival meetings of Dwight L. Moody, the YMCA movement, and texts like John R. Mott's The Evangelization of the World in This Generation (1900) left deep imprints on Mennonite mission 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 from that of other Protestant groups.

Does obeying Matthew 25 count as Mission?

The relief and service ministries of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provided North American Mennonites with another important connection to the worldwide church. Established in 1920 to provide relief supplies to famine-stricken Russia, MCC quickly extended its outreach to other countries offering "a cup of water ... in the name of Christ."

Through MCC and the opportunities for service in the many ancillary agencies spun off from it (Teachers Abroad Program, PAX reconstruction work in post-war Europe; Inter-Mennonite Trainee program; Mennonite Economic Development Agency, to name a few), thousands of Mennonites, especially young people, gained direct exposure to the emerging international church.

In the years following World War II, MCC also helped hundreds of young Mennonite men complete their alternative service overseas, far from the rural communities of their childhood. Deeply shaped by their experiences, this generation of service workers returned to their home congregations with a new awareness of the world's needs.

From Berne to the Congo:

Mennonites had first come to the Congo in 1912-as pioneer missionaries from the newly formed Egly Amish Church (Defenseless Mennonites) that started after Henry Egly conversion, near Berne Indiana. On the banks of the Kasai River in south central Congo, they had established a mission station that would serve as the hub of their outreach to five ethnic groups in the region. From the beginning, the missionaries were committed to learning local languages as the basis for their evangelistic and educational work. Through the years, that sensitivity to local context enabled the steady growth of the church.

In the 1950s generous government subsidies opened the way for dozens of young North Americans to **complete their alternate service work in the Congo** through MCC's PAX or the Teachers Abroad Program. In addition to agricultural programs, Mennonite missionaries created a training school that prepared new Christians for service as pastors and evangelists. The church grew rapidly, increasing by more than 270 percent in the 1950s alone.

Until 1960, Mennonite missions in the Congo looked much like any other mission program. But all that changed at a meeting in Djoko Punda Station in February 1960.

"From the early days;" the North American representatives said to the Congolese leaders, "our missionaries have lived and worked among you. By God's help, a large and growing church has

been planted. It is now time that the mission and the missionaries step back and make a larger place for you, our African brothers and sisters." The delegation went on to make it clear that the missionaries serving in the region would be happy to remain, but only if the indigenous Mennonite church of Congo invited them to do so. And if they did remain, they would be serving under the authority of the Congolese.



The Congolese Mennonite experience since then has been a story of intense suffering and pain. Decades of revolutionary violence, corrupt dictatorships, and a devastating civil war have left the country in ruins. Since 1998 at least four million Congolese have died in the fighting, making it one of the deadliest conflicts since World War II. **But through these difficult times, the Mennonite church has remained a strong and vibrant presence.** Amid unimaginable hardships, the church has continued to be a place of refuge and hope long after most missionaries have fled the country. Today, the three Congolese Mennonite denominations-the Community of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Congo, the Evangelical Mennonite Community, **and the Mennonite Community in Congo-number nearly 200,000 members and are among the fastest growing Mennonite churches in the world.**

Mennonites in Latin America:

The earliest record of Mennonites in Central America comes from a report from travelers visiting the country in 1877. They make note of three thriving Mennonite villages on the banks of Nievas Creek. They were from Russia and had already managed 2 excellent crops of wheat. Since then Colony Mennonites have forwarded a "colony style" missions to Central America ever since.

Since 1915 when the Canadians began enforcing public education on their children Colony Mennonites have poured into Central Mexico. The first community to settle there was a community originally from Chortitza. Sadly soon after being there Paraguay also wanted to enforce public education so the Russians ended up in Mexico in the state of Chihuahua.

Dyck says that “In 1948, a major movement, including 100 families of the Kleine Gemeinde who were troubled by the progressive [liberal] thinking of some of their leaders, like wise left for Mexico. By 1980 this ment 50,000 Russian Mennonites in Mexico.

The original mission emphasis of the Russian Mennonites finally bore fruit in Central America as well. Dyck says, [330] From the time of their arrival in the Chaco in 1930, the Fernheim group, and those who came later, as well as the Menno 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 1990. After years of work with the Lengua tribe people, it seemed best to locate them away from the colony center in Filadelfia and a separate settlement was formed at Yalve Sanga. The first congregation was founded in 1946 after many years of loving, but seemingly fruitless ministry.



Kornelius & Maria Isaak Family with children: Kornel, Rudolf & Rita, 1958. Photo: CMBS



David Hein with Moro spear that killed Cornelius Isaak. Photo: CMBS

By 1987, however, there were six places of worship with 1,4000 baptized members. Similarly the witness to the Chulupi tribe people, which had begun in 1958, led to seven places of worship and 1,500 members by 1987. Guaraní Congregations had a membership of 300 in 1987. The total Indian population in the Chaco colony area at this time was about 7,000 persons! A joint inter-church agency licht den Indianers (Light to the Indians) Had been founded early to carry this work.

Cornelius Isaak, was speared to death in 1958 for his attempted contact with the fierce Ayoreo (Moro) tribe people. Today many of them have been won to Christ! With the MCC they have tried to help the Indians form “colonies” of self-supporting agricultural communities.

Uruguay:

The Mennonites from the Vistula Delta were forced out of their cpuntry after WWII. Colombia many orphanages and even Leprosy clinics. West Indies , Caribbean.



Friesen, Florence Coopriden (1887-1985):

Was born 6 January 1887 in [McPherson County Kansas](#) to In 1906, as a student at [Goshen College Academy](#), she heard [Mary Burkhard](#), whose husband Jacob had died in [India](#), emphasize the need for medical work among the women of India and felt an inner call to serve there. Florence graduated from the University of Illinois College of Medicine in 1914.

She served as a medical doctor in India under the [Mennonite Board of Missions \(Mennonite Church\)](#) from 1916 to 1941. In 1922, on her first furlough from India, Florence married [P. A. Friesen](#), whose first wife, Lena, had died in India, leaving him with four children:

Modern Conservative Missions:

Christian Aid Ministries (CAM), based in Ephrata, PA, is a para-church organization that provides relief efforts in disaster areas. While CAM is not exclusively a Beachy organization, the Beachys were instrumental in its founding and ongoing operation. Various conservative groups, including the Old Order Amish and various conservative Mennonite conferences, support and volunteer in CAM's efforts. Historic disaster responses has been made to several hurricanes that hit Central America. A sample of recent efforts include rebuilding in the gulf area after Hurricane Katrina, helping with flood relief along the Mississippi River, and rebuilding in a remote part of Pakistan after the 2005 earthquake.

During the first baptism a snake slithered between Elam Stauffer and the new convert,

Faith Mission Home (FMH) is a residential training facility for mentally handicapped children and adults. Located in the foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, Faith Mission Home has been home to more than 225 residents since it was established in 1965 during the height of Beachy church plantings and missions. Its purpose is to provide the mentally handicapped with the highest quality of life possible by teaching them life skills in a structured Christian environment. Faith Mission Home is staffed by volunteer families and individuals from supporting Conservative Anabaptist Churches and operates under the joint leadership of Amish Mennonite Aid and Mission Interests Committee. FMH was featured in the December 3, 1990 issue of *People* magazine.

Missions:

In the early 1990s, missionary efforts began in western Kenya. Because of the native's overwhelming interest in the Christian message, the number of churches grew. Lamp and Light Bible courses are distributed to natives, and after completing the course, the students receive a Bible. There is a possibility that regular missionary efforts may soon expand into neighboring Uganda. Like the El Salvadorian churches, the Kenyan churches have been at times recipients of hostility, inflaming rumors, red tape, and beatings, but God has faithfully delivered the churches from uncertainty many times. The account of each mission as well as numerous stories are found in the book *Bringing in the Sheaves*.

Eastern Mennonite has gone into several Central American countries. Charity ministries have gone into Ghana Haiti Tanzania. Keystone churches has developed Igo where teaching in forging countries is going on even from people who have studied right here.

The Strain of Mission on the Church Community:

Missions in Lancaster County:

After the initial excitement of the India mission had died down. Soon reports about the changes in the Missionaries began to be heard back in Lancaster county. Therefore, simultaneously right during the growth of the mission vision, there was also a disillusionment with General Board efforts in India. These feelings swept through the Lancaster Area. Reports circulated that India Mennonites sometimes wore moustaches, and that the missionaries lived in ostentatious bungalows and identified too closely with the British colonial authority. Some also discarded their plain clothes.

The result of these rumors ended up that the Support for missions then came to a trickle. Lancaster wanted to start somewhere fresh. So they chose their own mission. After much prayer and research they chose Tanganyika.

Lancaster Was Excited!

On February 21, 1934 475 Mennonites from Lancaster County and the East boarded a special ten-coach train. They all came to accompany the three new missionaries on the New your to board the SS *Deutschland*. It was quite a scene The New York times, Time Magazine, and the associated prss all carried the story in detail

It started:

- A special train of ten day coaches pulled into Manhattan's 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 backs of their heads. The men wore high tightly-buttoned jackets without lapels, high starched collars mostly without cravats. Many of them peering about in timid bewilderment through gold-rimmed spectacles, the 400 left the station and boarded buses.

The Parting word of John Mosemann enthusiastically cried out, “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!

Good Start!

The Mennonites were directed to consider working in an area of many tribes and at least twelve different languages, just north of where the Africa Inland Mission had been working in the Lake region of Tanganyika. The AIM was an American-based interdenominational mission and had enough to do in evangelizing the huge Sukuma tribe south and east of Lake Victoria. So they suggested that the Mennonites begin ministries to the north, all the way to the Kenyan border.

Orie O. Miller, secretary of the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (EMBMC), and Elam Stauffer, the first prospective missionary, were warmly received by the AIM field director of Tanganyika, Emil Sywulka, who was himself a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Church.("Egli Amish")



Elam and Grace Stauffer wed near Lake Victoria, with attendants John and Catharine Leatherman.

He took Stauffer to Shirati, just south of the Kenya border and on Lake Victoria, which the two men agreed was a good location for the first Mennonite station. Stauffer quickly obtained permission to begin a mission on that spot.

After establishing a station at Shirati, They placed outpost in different spots. By 1940 there were approximately twenty Mennonite missionaries. By 1940 they already had 100 baptized members with 10 little “churches”

Collided With the East Africa Revival:

Soon the “Revival fires “ were blowing. The Mennonite missionaries before coming to Arica attended Evangelical schools. Once in Africa they leaned heavily on the Evangelicals for the information on how to do things.

From the Start a Lost Sense of Community:

What was the essence of that movement of God's Spirit? The report of International Revival Conference held in Les Diablerets, Switzerland, in 1991 gave a fair description of East Africa Revival and the Spirit's work within it:

- 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. 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 in-rushing of the Holy Spirit; they also discovered another delightful gift, a completely new family which knew no color, denomination, or station in life. 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 an historical figure or a passing acquaintance found to their amazement and joy that Jesus wanted to relate to them as a living presence constantly. This was an exhilarating discovery.

Advocates of the revival told Lancaster that:

- The revivalists were a people who "walked in the light" and who lived in "brokenness" in their relationships with one another. They challenged one another to live in complete transparency and humility. They lived in the joy of precious fellowship. This fellowship is the only community in East Africa which authentically transcends ethnic, racial, denominational, economic, or national barriers. It really is a new peoplehood.'

Attending a prayer meeting held by the Evangelical missionaries. Elam Stauffer soon found his background as a “bondage.”

- "Bill Stier read portions of Scripture and eighteen or twenty missionaries were on our knees all day, praying for revival." 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, **especially his bondage to custom and tradition.**

In August 8, 1942 At the Mennonite Mission outpost in Shirati A revival came where there was much crying and confession of sins. Elam Stauffer writes:

“I moved round from group to group. Such pouring out of sins. Sins of long ago and up to date. Sins we had not known to preach against. So burdened were they that they could hardly wait to confess. Some impatiently walked back and forth awaiting their turn. Eventually some began to sing spontaneously. The burden was gone. They were praising God for forgiveness and a new life. We gathered in the church again as one group to praise. Great was the joy. The meeting continued well into the night.

Conflict of Community: Who is “We?”

The Mennonites who came to Africa to preach the gospel to "the natives" were conditioned to submit humbly to the church in matters of daily life. Though they would have denied it, that submission fostered a certain level of legalism. It was in their contact with balokole that they discovered afresh the centrality of Jesus and **recognized a wider community of believers.**

Their Greater “community “ were disassociated evangelical Christians. It was reported that the Evangelical missionaries. Interestingly the Evangelical Missionary **society warned against getting involved in the Revival.** The Mennonites did not know how to respond and let the Mennonites get involved. Were they unprepared?

Because AIM was a nondenominational mission, the few missionaries who were involved in the revival had no denomination "back-home" because they were selected as individual missionaries, not commissioned by a single denomination.

Church Tension in Lancaster:

At that time mighty forces were eroding the traditional faith of the Mennonites. Many counted it as a time of theological disarray, as though the church had lost its sense of direction. So the denomination set about to establish new guidelines to bring Mennonite communities back together again.

In 1943 a proposal came before the Mennonite Church's general conference to make nonconformity (separation from "the world") and nonresistance (noninvolvement in the military) tests of church membership.

The nonresistance issue was fairly clear-cut and a reaffirmation of traditional Mennonite Christian pacifism. But nonconformity to the world involved myriad rules and regulations about dress, possessions, and conduct.'

One of the missionaries came back on furlough and each church he spoke at was excited to hear his messages. The ministry however were concerned with his emphasis on the East African Revival instead of the Mission. The young missionaries began to see their Mennonite heritage as holding them back.

- Communion became an issue.
- Women Leadership

Recognition of spiritual oneness with Christians from other churches affected every aspect of the Mennonite mission.

Scofield Bible course had been spoken against in Lancaster. However, now with the new believers they were going through a Scofield bible course and likening it more and more.

One of the Missionaries **Abram Gish**, while home in Lancaster County continued to teach the Scofield bible class locally. He also spoke against Foot washing. The bishops decided not to send him back to Africa.

The group that was meeting with Gish from the Marietta Mennonite church supported Gish and eventually they broke off from the church and founded one based on Evangelical principles.

Team Instead of Church:

Fellowships, a new basis for living The Mennonite mission continued to be blessed and helped by Christian men and women from other missions. The missionaries thus testified to their own experience of the oneness of the body of Christ. The unity of Christ's body in its reality as a living, breathing community was becoming visible all over East Africa. Fellowship meetings and conventions testified to the corporate nature of revival. The teams that gave leadership to these powerful meetings were quite ordinary people, linked together by the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Norman Grubb, director of the World Evangelism Crusade, saw this team approach as a counter to Western individualism and an important lesson taught by the revival in East Africa:

Further, we are 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, the team. Our brokenness and openness must be two-way, horizontal as well as vertical, with one another as with God

One of the most common reasons why revival leaves is when people forget why revival comes in the first place. Revival is a means, not an end. Let me say that again—revival is a means not an end. Revival comes to usher in the Kingdom of God—the Church. Remember that Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts, was not the birth of seminars, conventions, or even men's support groups. Pentecost was the birth of the Church—with everything that Jesus meant her to be.

We all remember that Jesus said in the end of Matthew's gospel, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...." But He also followed that command with the equally important directive, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt 28:19-20).

The damage that has been done by taking only a part of Jesus' words is incalculable. Discipleship is an essential component of a successful revival. This is seldom a problem in the early days of a genuine spiritual outpouring. Discipleship and intensive counseling are simply the expected norm during such times. Stories abound with things like all-night prayer meetings, reconciliations, ungodly jobs and habits forsaken, time spent searching the Scriptures, hungrily seeking God's will, etc., etc.



However, if a called-out assembly of believers—a church—does not rise up and continue with that same accountability and discipleship, then the revival never accomplishes what it was sent to do in the first place.

Lessons from History:

I believe that one of the most drastic examples of incomplete revival would be the famous revivals of East Africa during the 1930s and 1940s. By all accounts that I have read, these revivals were powerful, life-changing, and genuine. God poured out His Spirit in these places. The East African Revival spread from Rwanda and Uganda, to Kenya and parts of Tanganyika. After the revivals some were even calling Rwanda and Uganda “Christian nations”. However, what followed these revivals was discouraging.

By the 1940s one of the things the Africans were fed up with was Western colonization and control. With a Gospel message tightly bound with the State, Western “Christians” had exploited the Africans for centuries. Crippled by such things as the slave trade, hard labor camps, broken treaties, and land stealing, it was hard to distinguish the missionaries from the mercenaries. The colonizing style of 19th century missionaries had left a poor testimony.

Consequently, when reading the historical accounts of the revivalists and **missionaries of the 1930s and 40s, one of the things you quickly pick up on in the discussions and sermons is a lot of emphasis on not making the Africans “Western”—and who could blame them!**

However, as it often does in history, it would appear to me that the pendulum swung way over to the other extreme.

Along with their caution of not “Westernizing” the Africans, also came a strong reluctance to disciple them at all. It was repeatedly said that the Western church “could not be the Africans’ Holy Spirit.” It was taught that they should simply let the Africans figure out things on their own—almost as if the job of the preachers and missionaries was merely to drop the Gospel message and run. This often resulted in **evangelism without discipleship**. Was it the way of Christ? Did they “Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” (Matt. 28:20)?

The outcome was heartbreaking.

One of the saddest accounts I read actually came from the Mennonite missionaries sent from Lancaster County during the 1940s. Admittedly, these early Mennonite missionaries had a hard job. Finding their way between Lancaster County culture and genuine biblical truths was a real challenge for them. Soon after the revivals broke out, many Lancaster County missionaries started to feel that their biblical doctrines of life were merely “Mennonite denominational distinctives”.

David W. Shenk reports in *Mennonite Safari* that even fundamental Anabaptist teachings such as nonresistance and nonparticipation in warfare were left out of the indoctrination of new African converts. Furthermore, as these Mennonites linked up more and more with Evangelicals, the job of discipleship became only further remote.

The consequences were tragic. Not long after the revivals, WWII broke out and multitudes of young African converts, including scores of Mennonites, joined up with their country to fight in the war. After the war, the bloodshed did not cease. Just at a time when a true Christian witness could have made an international testimony, the generation following these revivals was bathed in blood, full of countless disastrous civil wars and battles in these very regions.



In 1994 Rwanda, the country that was actually beginning to be identified by some as a “**Christian nation**”, broke out into heinous acts of violence, culminating in a genocide of Old Testament proportions.

800,000 people were slaughtered between two rivaling tribes, the Hutu and the Tutsi. On some days during the worst of the fighting, it is reported that over 1,000 bodies a day floated down the Kagera River as an act of racial cleansing.

Recently, when one of the missionaries challenged an African Mennonite why they allow their young men to go off to war, the African Mennonite answered that they had bigger issues to deal with, like gross immorality.

Just recently I was reading from some missionaries taking an honest look at Rwanda revival and the Genocide.

The Mission team had the guts to ask themselves.

From the [Missionalia](#), the journal of the [Southern African Missiological Society](#)

- Rwanda is generally regarded as one of the most "Christian" countries in Africa and the world, one of the real "successes" of Christian missions in Africa! Statistically speaking some 80% to 90% of the population regard themselves as “Christians.” An absolute majority are Roman Catholics, and a strong minority Protestants. Much of this Christianity is of a strong **evangelical persuasion**
- Why didn't the revival show the same transforming power during the conflicts of the last three decades?
- The first part of the answer is that the revival had become institutionalised and nominal. The fires of revival had died down (Bowen 1995:16). "Rwandan spiritual development rarely **progressed much past the initial point of conversion. The saved were called to be saved Sunday after Sunday...**" (Scheer 1995:326). The emphasis was on conversion. The repentance that was called for was often limited to the pattern of "no alcohol, no adultery and pay your tithe! There has been a lack in Pauline terms of preaching "the whole counsel of God." Testimonies received more emphasis than solid biblical teaching. An anti-intellectualism among the missionaries resulted in the church leaders not being given the theological training and tools to deal with the complexities of gospel and cultural issues. This was not only the case in the revival. Bishop Nsengiyumva of the Roman Catholic Church humbly acknowledged: "...we have sacramentalized... not evangelized them..." (Bowen 1995:16).

- The second problem was the lack of **relevance for 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 the socio-political context (Bowen 1995:16, Bowen 1996:35). They spoke about "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 the Scriptures, led to either withdrawal from the public life of the nation, or a naive and uncritical support of whoever was in power (Bowen 1995:17). The revival therefore **didn't put its stamp on public life**. The "converts" were not readied for the rigours of life "out there." They were shaken to their foundations by the bloody events. We read in the REC News Bulletin:
- A year after the massacres in Rwanda... several pastors are in prison, accused of crimes against humanity, while others remain in exile... Pastors from the pre-war church who remain in the country have difficulty preaching... "If they preach forgiveness and reconciliation, they are accused of siding with those in exile." Many of them ignore the subject...
- A spiritual revival alone is not enough. It must work its way through to the daily life of the people. And it should be carried into every sphere of life.



The Lesson:

Now, I'm certainly not putting the blame for these atrocities on the Evangelical and Mennonite revivalists and missionaries. But I don't want to lose the lesson from this tragic bit of history. While I don't blame them, I do look back with remorse that a church on which God had so obviously poured His Spirit, did not take better advantage of the Pentecost example, and follow revival with true Christian discipleship. Could it have been different if the revivalists and missionaries would have continued to teach "all things of Christ"? Could it have been different if the Gospels were opened up and the words of Jesus were bellowed from the housetops with Holy Spirit anointing and passion?—We will never know.

What about us now? We often miss this point in American revivals as well. Let me say it again— revival is a means, not an end. Pentecost is the birth of the Church, not a social club or a prayer breakfast. In some ways the East African example demonstrates that a partial Gospel is worse than no Gospel at all. Breaking up their way of life without establishing Christ's Kingdom in its place is to make havoc of their entire society.

“It suited the white man to break the tribe...”

In a novel written during the tumultuous years of apartheid and severe racial segregation, Alan Paton wrote a book entitled Cry, the Beloved Country in which he portrays the story of an old, black Anglican priest who has come to Johannesburg in search of his prodigal son and wayward sister. All around him he sees his little village deteriorating. He grieves deeply as he sees sin and wickedness proliferate among his people. In his weak moments, he blames the Western influence. In one particularly touching scene the old priest cries to another minister from Johannesburg about the inner turmoil he is experiencing. The reply from the other minister is profound...listen to this scene:

- “...My friend, I am a Christian. It is not in 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. 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.

- **“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.” When real revival comes it must not only break down that which is wrong, it must likewise build up that which is right. As the prophet Jeremiah put it, “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” (Jer 1:10).

Let us never stop praying for revival. But when God, in fulfillment to His Word, stoops down from heaven to heal our land and pour on us another Pentecost—let's go all the way. Let's not ever forget Shiloh. God's glory is nothing to be trifled with. If we walk in the ways of Christ, He has promised us “I will be with you, even unto the end of the age”(Matt. 28:20).