The Church of Monett

"Knowing therefore the Terror of the Lord we persuade men."

The Root and the Fruit of the Modern Salvation Message

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Did Luther Finally Beat the Anabaptists?

The Anabaptists of old made a clear distinction between they're message and Luther's. Michel Schneiders impriosnment bears witness to this, there was a difference. But what about the Anabaptists of the modern era? Do they still adhere to Schneiders simple message. Or have they succumbed to Luther's faith alone theology? Looking into it, we have already made some startling discoveries.

In it's inception the Anabaptists resisted the enemy by publishing tracts, writing articles and preaching against Luther's doctrines, and for a time they resisted. However, time got the best of them - most of them to a burning stake. But eventually, the remaning Anabaptists found their way to North America, only to fall asleep to the Lullaby of the American dream, and by the time the 1800s rolled around the Anabaptists had comatosed. And while men slept the enemy snuck in unanwares changing the message of Gods grace into...

Original sin in mainstream Protestantism

In order to understand just where things broke down we need to take a more indepth look at the great slumbering of the eighteen hundreds. If we trace the teachings of this movement back to their origins we find Wesley as the source; yet even Wesley's inspiration came out of a bucket drawn by the Moravians. However, the spring which the Moravians drew from to water a thirsty Wesley, was poisoned by Original Sin microbes, and Faith Alone bacteria. Of course Wesley contracted this, and eventually it found it's way to the Mennonites. For those concerned, we will track this whole thing back to the vector.

The notion of original sin as interpreted by Augustine of Hippo was affirmed by the Protestant Reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin. Both Luther and Calvin agreed that humans inherit Adamic guilt and are in a state of sin from the moment of conception. This inherently sinful nature (the basis for the Calvinistic doctrine of "total depravity") results in a complete alienation from God and the total inability of humans to achieve reconciliation with God based on their own abilities. Not only do individuals inherit a sinful nature due to Adam's fall, but since he was the federal head and representative of the human race, all whom he represented inherit the guilt of his sin by imputation. John Calvin defined original sin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* as follows:

> ¨ **Original sin**, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19). And that is properly what Paul often calls sin. The works that come forth from it--such as adulteries, fornications, thefts, hatreds, murders, carousings--he accordingly calls "fruits of sin" (Gal 5:19-21), although they are also commonly called "sins" in Scripture, and even by Paul himself¨

As stated before John Wesley was influenced by Luther's teachings of total depravity. The Methodist Church, founded by John Wesley, upholds Article VII in the Articles of Religion in the *Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church* it reads:

> ¨**Original sin** standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually¨

Why did the Methodist uphold these doctrines? Maybe because eventually John Wesley came to assurance of salvation through Luther's influence. His own testimony reads:

> Wednesday, May 3, 1738. My brother had a long and particular conversation with Peter Boehler. And it now pleased God to open his eyes; so that he also saw clearly, what was the nature of that one true living faith, whereby alone 'through grace' we are saved. Wednesday, May 24. In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, **where**

> **one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans.** About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change that God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. Friday, May 26. My soul continued in peace, but yet in heaviness, because of manifold temptations. I asked Mr. Telchig, the Moravian, what to do. He said: 'You must not fight with them as you did before, but flee from them the moment they appear, and take shelter in the wounds of Jesus'.¨

Sounds Like Wesley got a Luther salvation experience too. Notice how similar Wesley's experience is to Luther's. Where do the Anabaptists come into play in all of this? I think you'll find it interesting to know. If you take note you will notice that Wesley was visiting a group on Aldersgate Street, who was this group? They were Moravians!! Notice the name Peter Boehler and Mr. Telchig, the Moravian. These guys came straight out of this revival. Let's take a closer look at the Moravian's behind this thing.

As a side note: It would be good to take a look at what the first Moravian's believed before this revival. I wonder if they were originally on tract with what Bohemian Reformer, John Hus was teaching in the 1400s. It might be worth looking into. Nevertheless we'll see here how a young German nobleman, Count Zinzendorf led the Moravian's into ¨A Modern Pentecost¨…

Following are some quotes copied from a book called ¨Power from on high¨ written in 1927 by Rev. John Greenfield a Moravian evangelist celebrating the 200th anniversary of ¨The Great Moravian Revival¨. If anyone wants to read an abbreviated version you can find it on Charity Gospel Tape Ministries' web site. It's titled: **Power from on High. A Modern Pentecost** The Moravian's and Count Zinzendorf *by John Greenfield.*

> "The Moravian brethren had sprung from the labors and martyrdom of the Bohemian Reformer, John Hus. They had experienced centuries of persecution. Many had been killed, imprisoned, tortured or banished from their homeland. This group had fled for refuge to Germany where the young Christian nobleman, Count Zinzendorf, offered them asylum on his estates in Saxony. They named their new home Herrnhut, "the Lord's Watch". From there, after their baptism in the Holy Spirit, they became evangelists and missionaries."

Sounds like they might have had some real faith before meeting Zinzendorf…

> "The disgruntled community at Herrnhut early in 1727 was deeply divided and critical of one another. Heated

> controversies threatened to disrupt the community. The majority were from the ancient Moravian Church of the Brethren. Other believers attracted to Herrnhut included **Lutherans, Reformed, and Baptists.** They argued about predestination, holiness, and baptism." "The young German nobleman, Count Zinzendorf, pleaded for unity, love and repentance."

Notice who else was in fellowship with Zinzendorf and what his solution for unity was.

> "It was a condition and not a theory which confronted the young noble man in1727 at Herrnhut. How to unite in faith and love the pious but disputations followers of Huss, Luther, Calvin , Zwingly, Schwenkfeld,etc.,etc., seemed a hopeless problem apart from divine intervention…"

> "At Herrnhut, Zinzendorf visited all the adult members of the deeply divided community. He drew up a covenant calling upon them "to seek out and emphasize the points in which they agreed" rather than stressing their differences. On May 12, 1727, they all signed an agreement…"

Sounds like the beginning of modern ecumenicalism to me…

> " On May 12, 1727…A spirit of grace, unity and supplications grew among them. On July 16 the Count poured out his soul in a prayer accompanied with a flood of tears. This prayer produced an extraordinary effect. The whole community began praying as never before.

> On the 22nd of July many of the community covenanted together, on their own accord, to meet often to pour out their hearts in prayer and hymns.

> On Sunday, August 10, Pastor Rothe, while leading the service at Herrnhut, was overwhelmed by the power of the Lord about noon. He sank down into the dust before God. So did the whole congregation **(in ecstasy of feeling)***. They continued till midnight in prayer and singing, weeping and praying. On Wednesday, August 13, 1727, the Holy Spirit was

> poured out on them all*…"

***this statement in parenthesis found in the original book was omitted by Charity's publication in the remnant..**

> "Their first great experience that gave the Moravians such spiritual power was a **personal experience of salvation**. The second great experience that gave them such spiritual power and leadership was the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Zinzendorf who gives us the deepest and most vivid account of this wonderful occurrence says it was ¨A sense of the nearness of Christ bestowed in **a single moment...**¨ **This spiritual experience deserves to rank in depth of knowledge and extent of influence with the historic conversions of St Augustine, Martin Luther** and John Bunyan.

What were they preaching???

> "Moravian sermons were just as **full of Christ** and his atonement as Moravian hymns. In one of Count Zinzendorfs letters we find the following declaration: ¨Our method in proclaiming salvation is this: To point to every heart the Loving lamb who died for us.. ..by the preaching of his blood.. ..Never either in the course of the argument , to digress even for a quarter of an hour from the loving lamb ; to name no other virtue except in him, and from him and on his account; **to preach no commandment except faith in him; no other justification but that he atoned for us…"**

Full of Christ? Full of a Christ without commandments I´am afraid, sounds like they wanted Christ to just be quiet. Here's how this affected Wesley…

> "In 1736 John and Charles Wesley sailed to America as Anglican missionaries. A company of **Moravian immigrants** was also on the vessel. During a terrible storm they all faced the danger of shipwreck. John Wesley wrote in his journal: "At seven I went to the Germans. I had long before observed the great seriousness of their behavior. Of their humility they had given a continual proof by performing those servile offices for the other passengers which none of the English would undertake; for which they desired and would receive no pay, saying, 'It was good for their proud hearts,' and 'heir loving Savior had done more for them.' And every day had given

them occasion of showing a meekness, which no injury could move. If they were pushed, struck or thrown down, they rose again and went away; but no complaint was found in their mouth. Here was now an opportunity of trying whether they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from that of pride, anger and revenge.

In the midst of the Psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began among the English. The Germans calmly sung on. I asked one of them afterwards: 'Were you not afraid?' He answered, 'I thank God, no.' I asked: 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He replied mildly: 'No, our women and children are not afraid to die'".

In Georgia, John Wesley sought spiritual counsel from the Moravian Bishop, A. G. Spangenberg. **Back in England in 1738 the Wesley brothers became intimately acquainted with the Moravian's, especially Peter Boehler who later became a leading Moravian bishop.** On March 4, 1738, Wesley wrote in his diary: "I found my brother at Oxford recovering from his pleurisy; and with him Peter Boehler: by whom (in the hand of the great God) I was, on Sunday, the 5th, clearly convicted of unbelief; of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved. Immediately it struck into my mind, 'Leave off preaching. How can you preach to others who have not faith yourself?' I asked Boehler whether he thought I should leave it off, or not. He answered, 'By no means.' I asked: 'But what can I preach? He said: 'Preach faith till you have faith.' Accordingly, Monday, the 6th, I began preaching this new doctrine, though my soul started back from the work. The first person to whom I offered salvation by faith alone, was a prisoner under sentence of death."

The Methodists and Moravian's often met together then for Bible study and prayer. George Whitefield's biographer wrote: Whitefield began the New Year (1739) as gloriously as he ended that which had just expired. He received

communion, preached twice, expounded twice, attended a Moravian love feast in Fetter Lane, where he spent the whole night in prayer to God, psalms and thanksgivings; and then pronounced “this to be the happiest New Year’s Day he had ever seen.” This love feast at Fetter Lane was a memorable one. Besides about sixty Moravian's, there were present not fewer than seven of the Oxford Methodists, **namely John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Wesley Hall, Benjamin Ingham, Charles Kinchin and Richards Hitchins, all of them ordained clergymen of the Church of England.** Wesley writes: “About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice ‘We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord!’”

Wesley’s estimate of the Moravian revival which resulted in his own conversion was prophetic. When Peter Boehler, nine years his junior, left England for America after several months, Wesley recorded in his journal: Peter Boehler left London to embark for Carolina. Oh what a work hath God begun since his coming into England! Such an one as shall never come to an end, till Heaven and earth pass away! **Peter Boehler wrote to Count Zinzendorf, saying: “The English people made a wonderful to do about me; and though I could not speak much English they were always wanting me to tell them about the Savior, His blood and wounds, and the forgiveness of sins”.**

Didn't anyone want to hear about Christ’s teachings??

“A number of years after his conversion Wesley wrote another great hymn on the atonement ¨Arise my soul arise¨! Its theology and its language bear witness to the power of that great experience of salvation into which under God Boehler led him. The third and fourth stanzas are distinctly Moravian in their teaching and phraseology.”

So there you have it, this is how the Moravian's and Wesley fit into the whole picture. Now we will examine how the Anabaptists of North America contracted the disease.

Chapter 5 →

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