

In Defense of Biblical, Historical, Christianity

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There is much confusion today caused by reading histories of Christianity that were written from decidedly different perspectives. It seems that many historians have written very biased histories of those early Christians that were considered enemies of the historians "Church." These biased "histories" have caused much confusion regarding the true doctrines that were held by our Christian forbears. The following is a defense of our forebears gleaned, not from the biased writings of their enemies, but from their own writings. Most of the names used to identify these early Christians were given to them by their detractors in an attempt to identify them with men, rather than with the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be understood that all who went by the names below were not always orthodox, but within the ranks of these historical movements, the true churches of Jesus Christ were present, and the "faith once delivered unto the saints" was preserved for us today.

The Montanists

The second century of the Christian era saw the rise of a group of Christians called Montanists. In most church histories the Montanists are classed as heretics (as were all groups that tended to hold doctrines that did not agree with the writer of the history book, most of which were either Catholic, or liberal Protestant). However, a careful study of their beliefs and practices reveal they were orthodox, and a part of our Baptist heritage. Montanism was the first general stand against the drift away from church purity and spirituality.

The Montanists were named because of the preaching of a man named Montanus. He had been a priest of the pagan cult of Cybele, but was converted to Christ about 150 A.D. Montanism began in central Phrygia (now called Asia Minor) in a town called Ardabau, but its teachings quickly spread to Europe and Africa. Montanism was found in Rome, and Lyons, France, in 177 A.D. Montanus began preaching in 156 A.D., and gathered many followers, including two women of prominence, Maximilla and Priscilla. Soon after the apostolic age, great changes began to occur in many of the churches. Some of these changes were: a drift toward ritualism; the rise of a clergy class; a lack of spirituality, and a developing laxity in discipline and church membership standards. Montanism was in reality a crusade to restore churches to their spiritual simplicity - to get them back to the New Testament basics. The Montanists were sarcastically called "Spirituals." Montanus laid great emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers and the churches, and declared that the clergy had no franchise on the Gospel. He was an enemy of worldly philosophy and religion. Apart from emphasizing the ministry of the Holy

Spirit, the Montanists held the following beliefs and practices: a regenerate church membership; believers baptism, by immersion only, and re-baptized those who came to them from the "established" churches; holiness of life, opposing second marriages, laxity in fastings, and flight in persecution; church discipline, their creed stated "Against a mortal sin the church should defend itself by rightly excluding him who committed it, for the holiness of the church was simply the holiness of its members." They believed in Trinitarian theology; the complete word of God, accepting all the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments; premillennial eschatology, looking for the soon return of Christ to set up His millennial kingdom on earth. These chiliastic views were also held by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian. It may be that the unpopularity of the Montanists contributed to the demise of premillennialism in the early years of the church. The Montanist churches were not popular with the "established" churches, so, much of what was said about them was unkind, to say the least. Recent historians in general have sided with the opponents of Montanism, and several charges have been laid against them. The most common charge was that the Montanists were "ancient holy-rollers." It is claimed that Montanus said he was the Paraclete, and that his followers claimed extra-Biblical revelations. Unfortunately there is no proof to support these charges. The spirituality and life of Montanist churches so contrasted with the formality and deadness of the main-stream churches, that such conclusions may easily have been drawn. If a Roman Catholic or High Anglican came to a Bible-believing Baptist church today, he would probably think it was very emotional too, what with strong preaching, and an invitation at the end! The Lutheran historian Mosheim accuses Montanus of calling himself the Paraclete, but the translator of his history, McLean, adds the following footnote: "Those are undoubtedly mistaken who have asserted that Montanus gave himself out that he was the Holy Ghost" (Church History, Mosheim, Volume I, Page 188). Armitage concludes, "For this reason Montanus was charged with assuming to be the Holy Spirit, which was simply a slander" (Armitage, T.; A History of the Baptists, page 175). W. A. Jarrell cites Tertullian's explanation of an "ecstasy" and concludes that he probably meant nothing more than what David said- "My cup runneth over." Tertullian, referring to visions and extra-Biblical revelations said: "But truly according as the Scriptures are read, or Psalms are sung, or addresses are given, or prayers are offered, thence, FROM THAT MEDIUM are materials by which we are ASSISTED by visions." The context of this statement clearly indicates what we would call "illumination" today. Nothing "extra-Biblical" about that! It is generally admitted that the Montanist churches accepted the received doctrines of the "established" church - their only differences being that of emphasis and practice. It is POSSIBLE, but not conclusively PROVEN, that SOME Montanist churches did hold to questionable or unscriptural practices, such as ordination of women. Some churches MAY have allowed women to preach because of their belief that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are dispensed to Christians of every condition and sex, without distinction. Triune immersion may have been practiced in some Montanist churches. Some of the Montanist Pastors may have remained celibate, but no conclusive statement to that effect can be found, however, it may have been the more practical precaution in time of persecution according to 1 Corinthians 7:26-29 (compare to verses 8 and 9). They were accused of practicing harsh asceticism by those who lived very liberal life styles, and that they practiced harsh church discipline. It should be noted that each of these practices, even if true, are not unknown in some Baptist churches today. The preaching of the Montanists had far ranging results. Tertullian was a noted convert to Montanist ideals, who helped to refine those teachings and left a legacy in North Africa (Tertullianists) which would later give rise to the Donatists. Several church councils were called against the Montanist

movement, and it was finally officially condemned by the "established" churches. The influence of this movement may be seen in the Novatian schism, the Donatus schism, and through its contacts in Armenia and the rise of the Paulicians. Several defenders among historians may be found for the Montanists, some of whom are cited here: (1) "The conclusion of an early historian, Dr. William R. Williams, is that it was hard to find doctrinal errors in their teaching. Their emotionalism stemmed from their belief that a true experience of grace is evident in the believers life, as many other teachers have stressed in much later periods of reform. (2) Dr. Dorner wrote of their movement that it was a democratic reaction of the church members against the movement to install church leaders as overlords in the church body. (3) Moller, contributor to the Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, wrote, "But Montanism was, nevertheless, not a new form of Christianity; nor were the Montanists a new sect. On the contrary, Montanism was, simply a reaction of the old, the primitive church, against the obvious tendency of the day, to strike a bargain with the world and arrange herself comfortably in it." (Quoted from : Griffith, J. W., A Manual of Church History: Volume II, page 36).

The Novatians

The Novatians were named because of the leadership of a man named Novatian (?-258 A.D.). Novatian was saved in about 250 A.D., from a pagan philosophical background. Because he became very ill and expected to die, he was not scripturally baptized, but received "clinic baptism." There is no record that after his recovery he was baptized correctly. This lack of a record does not prove that he was not properly baptized, only that there is no record of it. Novatian was ordained to the ministry of the church at Rome by the Pastor, Fabian. The edicts of Decius Trajan (250 A.D.) brought severe persecution to the churches. When those who had denied Christ and sacrificed to pagan idols and the "genius of the emperor" sought readmittance to church membership, a great controversy began. Two views were popular. (1) The view of strict discipline held that such people could never again be fit for church membership because of the nature of their apostasy, although the possibility of receiving God's forgiveness was not denied. (2) The second view was that of loose discipline, believing that such people could be restored to church membership following public confession of their sin and a period of probation. One of the fore-runners of Novatian was the Roman pastor Hippolytus who was a disciple of Irenaeus and was martyred by being drowned in the Tiber river. He was an advocate of strict discipline, and caused a schism in the church of Rome. Novatian was a strong advocate of the strict discipline viewpoint, and upon the death of Fabian in 250 A.D., Novatian rivaled the popular Cornelius (who held to the loose discipline viewpoint) for the vacant position of Pastor. When the people chose Cornelius, Novatian withdrew from the church, taking a large group of people with him. The division was bitter, and a number of false charges were spread about Novatian to discredit him. It has been said that the reason for this great division was Novatian's ambition for personal power, and that when he was not selected to be the pastor, he formed a rival church out of spite. Historical records show that the issue was over church discipline, and that in fact Novatian was chosen pastor by the withdrawing group against his wishes. The doctrines of the Novatian's are well recorded by their own writings. They stood for: the purity of church membership, believing that a church should separate itself from all apostasy, impurity, and worldliness. They practiced rigid church discipline, the re-baptism of apostates; baptized by immersion only, without great ceremony, on church authority (as opposed to the authority of a man), of mature believers only. These doctrines led to the first real and lasting division among

the ranks of Christendom. The Novation churches would no longer accept the baptism of the "established" churches. The separation occurred in 251 A.D. The greatest charges brought against the Novations is the assertion that Novatian was not scripturally baptized. To this I would answer: Novation's teaching concerning baptism was that baptism was by church authority and was to be performed by immersion only. He practiced "rebaptism" of all who came from the "established" churches. This suggests, to me at least, that he was correctly baptized, although no evidence has survived to this day. Even if Novatian was never scripturally baptized, he taught that the authority for such baptism was with the church concerned, not with the actual person administering it. Thus Novationist baptism would not have been invalidated. While the name and initial beginnings of the Novations were in Rome, the teachings quickly spread. In 250 A.D. at Carthage, a similar split occurred prior to that in Rome when a lenient pastor by the name of Novatus, and a deacon named Felicissimus, withdrew from the church following the hasty election of Cyprian to the office of pastor. At the time, Cyprian held stricter views on the issue of re-admittance, but after the split, Novatus reversed his stand and joined the strict Novatian cause. By 254 these dissenters were complained of as having "infected France with their doctrine." Schaff notes that in spite of this strong opposition the Novatian sect, by virtue of its moral earnestness, propagated itself in various provinces of the east and west down to the sixth century. In Phrygia, they combined with the remnants of the Montanists. Robinson, in his *Ecclesiastical Researches*, (page 126, Cambridge) states: "The Novatians were the earliest Anabaptists; refusing to recognize as valid the ministry and sacraments of their opponents and, claiming to be the true church, they were logically compelled to rebaptize all who came to them from the Catholic church. The party gained great strength in Asia Minor where many Montanists joined it, and, in spite of persecution, the Novatians survived to the 6th or 7th century." "Dr. Robinson traces a continuation of them up to the Reformation and the rise of the Anabaptist movement. Great numbers followed his, i.e. Novatian's, example, and all over the empire Puritan churches were constituted and flourished through 200 succeeding years. Afterwards, when penal law obliged them to lurk in corners and worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names and succession of them continued until the reformation." "On the count of the purity of their lives they were called the Cathari, that is, the pure. "What is still more," says Mosheim, "they rebaptized such as came over to them from the Catholics" (Mosheim: *Institutes Of Ecclesiastical History I*, page 203, New York, 1871). "Since they baptized those who came to them from other communions they were called Anabaptists. The fourth Lateran Council decreed that these rebaptizers should be punished by death...They were, says Robinson, 'Trinitarian Baptists.' They held to the independence of churches; and recognized the equality of all pastors in respect to dignity and authority."

The Donatists

The Donatists were named (again, by their enemies) after Donatus, who died in 355 A.D. He was a north African pastor and one of the leaders of the schism that began in Carthage in 311. A large group in the church protested at the ordination of Caecilianus as Pastor. This ordination was presided over by Felix of Aptunga, a man who had wavered badly during the Diocletian persecutions. Both Felix and Caecilianus were considered to be "traditores" - men who had surrendered the Scriptures to be burned in Imperial persecutions. The protesting group ordained Majorinus as their pastor, then, following his death shortly hereafter, they ordained Donatus in 316. Donatus at first appealed to Emperor Constantine, but to no avail. The Emperor ordered

their suppression - a move which fired them into a great separatist movement which covered the whole of North Africa and lasted until the Moslem conquest of that region. The doctrines of the Donatists were very similar to the Novations in that they believed in church purity; separation of church and state; scriptural baptism; independence of the local churches; and freedom of conscience. The charges made against the Donatists are few, but need to be addressed. The Donatists were accused of being Circumcelliones. The Circumcelliones were a fanatical group of Christians in North Africa, existing around the same time as the Donatists, who sought a martyr's death as a means of grace, often provoking this death wish through violent behavior. Mosheim writes: "...nor were their lives less exemplary than that of other Christian societies, if we accept the enormous conduct of the Circumcelliones which the greater part of the sect regarded with the utmost detestation and abhorrence." It has also been said that the Donatists arose only through a personality conflict, but history teaches us that a very important issue was, in fact, at stake - the qualifications of bishops. It has also been charged that the Donatists practiced infant baptism. The writings of both Augustine and Optatus - both strong opponents of the Donatists - disprove this charge. Both writers charge that the Donatists insisted on rebaptism of those who came to them from the "established" churches, and further insisted on baptism of believers only by total immersion. The Council of Milevi in 416 A.D. passed the following edict against the Donatists: "Whosoever denies that newly-born infants are to be baptized...let him be accursed." This edict proves that the Donatists denied the practice of infant baptism. It has been charged by others that the Donatists sought a Church - State relationship. This accusation is based on Donatus' appeal to Constantine in 316 and a later appeal to the Emperor Julian in 384. These appeals were to the Emperor in his capacity as protector of life and property, and sought the lifting of decrees against them. The Donatists are credited with the following statement: "What has the emperor to do with the church? What have the bishops to do with the palace? What has Christianity to do with the kings of the world?" (J.W. Griffith, A Manual Of Church History, Volume II, page 40). It has also been charged that the Donatists formed their own church "hierarchy." Jarrel states: "Long, an Episcopalian historian: 'The Donatists rejected the Catholic liturgy and set up for themselves a more congregational way.'" Reports of Donatist pastor's meetings indicate large numbers of pastors in attendance, something that would be foreign in a hierarchical arrangement. The Donatists suffered great persecution, and were the first Christians to feel persecution at the hands of the State-Church. In 377 Gratian published edicts against Donatists, depriving them of their buildings and prohibiting their assemblies. They were noted for the fact that they patiently bore suffering for Christ, and did not retaliate with any persecutions of their own against Catholics. By the end of the 4th Century, their teachings had spread abroad to Italy and Spain. The Donatists were often also called Puritans and Anabaptists.

The Britons

The old British churches were of great antiquity, originating around the close of the apostolic age, and remaining isolated from the mainstream of religious change. With the impending collapse of the Roman Empire, Britain was abandoned and its Roman garrisons sent home to Rome in 410. The churches, along with much of the population, were soon pushed back into Wales and Western Britain by the invading Saxons around 449 A.D. It is about this time that a Briton Christian named Patrick took the Gospel to Ireland (Patrick was a Baptist, not a Catholic!). Patrick was born in Scotland in 387, his father was a deacon in the local Briton church. In 403 Patrick was kidnapped and taken into slavery in Ireland. In 410 he escaped from

Ireland and returned home. In 432, Patrick returned to Ireland with 12 men to evangelize the Irish. Many were converted and baptized under his ministry. He died in 465, on the mission field, in Ireland. The issue over the date of Easter demonstrates that the Britons received their Christianity from Syria, possibly from the Montanists, and not from Rome. They rejected Catholic baptism, and obviously practiced congregational rule. Although these ancient churches were consigned to obscurity, they still played a role in subsequent events.

The Celtic Churches Of Ireland

These churches came about largely through the efforts of Patrick who preached in Ireland from 432 until 465. It is interesting that between 544 and 565, these Celtic churches in Ireland were revived through the ministry of the Welsh churches, which were the remnants of the old churches of the Britons, largely through the preaching of such men as "Saint" David. In 521 a man named Columba was born to parents belonging to one of these Celtic churches. In 563 he began to do missionary work among the Picts in Scotland. To do this, he established a base on the island of Iona in the Hebrides group off the west coast of Scotland (half way between Scotland and Ireland). From this mission station, missionary teams evangelized Scotland and England, then Normandy, Friesland, Denmark, and parts of Germany. Columba died in 597. Following his example, other mission bases were founded by missionaries from Iona, including one in Northumbria on the island of Lindisfarne (holy island in Gaelic), established by Aidan. This Northumbrian mission evangelized the Saxons from the north.

The Paulicians

During the darkest days of the Papal strangle hold on "Christendom" there existed a group of Bible believing Christians that stood tall for the faith once delivered unto the saints. The Paulician churches were the most maligned of all the enemies of the Roman system. In 1891 a Paulician book entitled "Key Of Truth" was discovered by the Armenian scholar Frederic Cornwallis Conybeare (1856-1924), and published in 1898. For the first time the Paulicians were allowed to speak for themselves. The Paulician churches were of apostolic origin, being planted in Armenia in the first century A.D.- according to their tradition, by the apostle Thomas. It is also quite evident that the Montanists, Novatians, and Donatists were perpetuated in the Paulicians. Schaff, in his History of the Christian Church (Volume II, page 92) states, "In spite of this strong opposition the Novatian sect...propagated itself in various provinces of the west and the east down to the sixth century." "In Phrygia it (the Novatians) combined with remnants of the Montanists." "A remnant of the Donatists, as we learn from the letters of Gregory I, perpetuated itself into the seventh century." (Volume III, page 153). In his classic, The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, Gibbon notes that the faith of the Paulicians stemmed from the first century and was a branch of Antiochan Christianity. They managed to survive for such a long period of time largely due to the fact that Armenia is a very isolated and mountainous region located mainly in modern Turkey, but also extending into present day Iran and the old Soviet Union. It lies between, and to the south of, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The name Paulician did not come into general use until the 7th century and was applied because of the emphasis placed by these people on the epistles of Paul, and their adoption of Pauline names for their leaders. The Paulician movement rose to prominence during the 7th century, but existed long before they

were called by that name. At the request of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, all of the Eastern Emperors persecuted the Paulicians. Even the Armenian-born Emperor Leo III permitted the Paulicians to be attacked, with the exception of his allowing many of them to migrate to Thrace, where he granted them a city in southern Bulgaria called Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and a certain amount of religious freedom in 970 A.D. The doctrines of the Paulicians were obscured by the writings of their enemies, notably Photius and Sidelites, which Gibbon called "malice and poison." However, the discovery of their book, "The Key Of Truth" has done more to shed positive light on these people than any other discovery of this millennium. According to their own writings the Paulicians claimed to have originated with Christ and the Apostle; accepted the Bible as the sole rule of faith; recognized only believers baptism by immersion; rejected transubstantiation; rejected ceremonialism; rejected penance as unprofitable and absurd; had no hierarchy or clerical office; they were strong Trinitarians; opposed all image worship (called the "holy relics" "JUNK!"); believed in holy living. They sound pretty good to me! The accusations against the Paulicians were the most strident in the attempts of their enemies to discredit them. The first of these false accusations was that they were Manichaeans. Manichaeism was a semi-Christian gnostic sect founded by Mani in 240 A.D. in Babylon. It was a combination of Persian Zoroastrianism and Gnostic tenets. It is true that one of the leaders of the Paulicians (Constantine) had been a Manichaean prior to his conversion. W. A. Jerrell writes in his history, "From the time he got acquainted with these writings (the Gospels and Paul's Epistles) it is said he would touch no other book. He threw away his Manichaean library and exploded and rejected many of the abused notions of his countrymen." Paulicians taught the two natures of the believer, and this biblical teaching has been twisted by their enemies to be the "dualism" of the Manichaeans. The major reason for the charge of Manichaeism - stigmatization, something the Roman church did very often to all who opposed them. The second charge is that the Paulicians rejected parts of the Bible. However, it must be noted that the Catholic church used the Old Testament to support their concept of a formal "priesthood" and the "church-kingdom-state." When the Paulicians reject those false doctrines, it was charged they rejected the Old Testament, a false accusation. When the Paulicians rejected the Roman dogma of the primacy of Peter, they were accused of rejecting the writings of Peter, i.e., 1 and 2 Peter, another false charge. The next charge was that the Paulicians rejected the ordinances. In fact, all that they rejected was the Catholic sacraments. It was also claimed that they were adoptionists, i.e., that the human Jesus was adopted by the eternal Word at the time of the baptism of Jesus (that is, that Jesus was not truly the eternal Christ, but was only used by Him during the incarnation). The charge most likely arose out of the Paulicians opposition to Mariolatry and the "Mother of God" teaching of the Catholic church. Like the Nestorians, who delineated the natures of Christ in their opposition of such heresy, the Paulicians were unjustly accused of being adoptionist. There were other charges, most of them merely ridiculous, i. e. that they were cannibals, making cakes from meal and the blood of infants; that they conducted their prayer meetings naked; they practiced incest; and taught marriage was a sin (in spite of the fact that every one of their leaders was married!). It is apparent the first century churches of Armenia remained in the backwaters of "mainstream" Christianity for many years, relatively unchanged in their New Testament simplicity. Nevertheless, such churches had a profound influence upon some major developments in Christian and world history. One of those was the Iconoclastic Movement. The Iconoclastic Movement began in 726 when the Eastern Emperor Leo III, who ruled from 717-741, issued an edict against the worship of images and pictures, followings with a persecution of image worshipers and the wholesale destruction of icons, images, and paintings. Thus began a

controversy which lasted until the reign of Theodora in 842. The Paulicians, like other non-conformist groups, were very much opposed to the veneration of images, a practice which had been going on since Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 325, and returned with (supposed) pieces of the cross and nails used in the Lord's crucifixion. The emperor Leo was himself from the Isaurian Mountains, part of the Taurus chain, and Armenian. "Leo was virtually a Paulician, and it has been maintained that his successor, Constantine Copronymus, 741-775, was a 'pure Paulician'" (Newman, A.H. A MANUAL OF CHURCH HISTORY, Volume I, page 381). It is doubtful that Leo was actually a Paulician, for he was a ruthless man in many ways, but he certainly held some Paulician sentiments. The greatest impact of the Paulician movement was seen in its spread into Eastern Europe. The first Paulician emigrants settled in Thrace about 775. Thrace is an area which comprises part of Macedonia (present day Greece) European Turkey, and Southern Bulgaria. During the comparative respite of the iconoclastic period, a vast amount of missionary work was done by Paulician preachers. The Gospel was preached all over Asia Minor, into Bulgaria, and as far West as Bosnia. During the severe persecutions of the ninth century, many Paulicians fled to the Balkans, where many churches were established. As mentioned previously, in 970 a large number were settled in Southern Bulgaria. In Bulgaria, the Paulicians came to be called "Bogomils", a word thought to mean "friends of God". These dear Christian people spread across the land with their simple (New Testament) brand of Christianity. Further Byzantine persecutions sent many Westward into Serbia where the Serbian Orthodox Church pushed them into Bosnia in the twelfth century. Pope Innocent III, in 1203, tried to eradicate these Bible-believing Christians in Bosnia, who were now often called "Cathari," meaning "pure ones." In 1291 a Dominican and Franciscan Inquisition was launched against them, the end result of which was to once again weaken the barrier against the onslaught of Islam, and by 1400 much of this area fell under the control of the Ottoman Turks. Paulicians also found their way into Europe, particularly Southern France in the Languedoc region, and had a profound influence in the revival of the ancient Christians there. When Bogomils from the Balkan countries fled to Europe, they met many believers of like faith - the Albigenses.

Petrobrussians

Peter Du Bruys, who died in 1126, was a student of Peter Abelard (1079- 1142) at the University of Paris. From around the year 1105, he began preaching in the South of France, doctrines which ran contrary to the Church of Rome. His converts were called Petrobrussians by the Catholics. The chief antagonist of Peter de Bruys was Peter the Venerable (1092-1156) the abbot of Clugny who listed five "heresies" of the Petrobrussians: (1) They declared invalid the baptism of any person before they reached the age of discretion. They taught believers baptism, and practiced rebaptism of those who joined them from the Catholics. (2) They declared Church buildings and consecrated alters as useless. (3) They were opposed to the adoration of images and rejected the use of crucifixes. (4) They denied transubstantiation. (5) They rejected prayers, alms, and good works for the dead. In addition, the Petrobrussians rejected the Catholic use of tradition, teaching the authority and literal interpretation of Scripture alone as sufficient. They saw the "church" as being a body composed of regenerated, baptized people, and rejected the Catholic doctrines of penance and celibacy. Peter Du Bruys became extremely popular in Languedoc where he preached for twenty years. He was seized and burned, by the Roman clergy, at St. Gilles in 1126.

Albigenses

The name "Albigenses" is taken from the French town of Albi, 70 kilometers north-east of Toulouse, on the river Tarn. Albi was a major center of Catharist (Purist) activity. The doctrines of the Albigenses, when taken from their own writings, rather than from the writings of their enemies, was very baptistic. These people rejected the Catholic concept of the "Church" and formed simple congregations with pastors in the place of leadership. Enemies of the Albigenses thought they had no churches because they had no formal, visible organization of officers, etc. A (Catholic) synod at Toulouse in 1191 and at Albi in 1165 condemned the Albigenses for their rejection of infant baptism. With regard to the Word of God, the Albigenses accepted the scriptures over tradition. There have been many (false) charges made against the Albigenses, the most frequent of which was that of Manichaeism. This no doubt came about through the connection of the Albigenses and the Paulicians. No hard evidence is available to support this charge, except the dubious statements of their enemies. In his book, "The Glorious Recovery of the Vaudois, lxvii, London, 1857, Acland writes, "Care must be taken at this point, and too prompt credence should not be given the accuser. The Roman Catholic Church sought diligently for excuses to persecute. Even Luther was declared by the Synod of Sens to be a Manichaeist. The celebrated Archbishop Ussher says that the charge 'of Manichaeism on the Albigensian sect is evidently false.' It would be difficult to understand the Albigenses from this philosophical standpoint. They were not a metaphysical people. Theirs was not a philosophy, but a daily faith and practice..." The Albigenses were some of the most persecuted people on Earth in their day. The Catholics at first attempted to "convert" the Albigenses through ecclesiastical coercion. This failed largely because the Albigenses knew the Word of God! The Catholic Councils of Lateran II in 1139 and Tours in 1163 condemned them as heretics. The Count of Toulouse, Raymond IV, was forced, under threat of excommunication and interdict, to join in the crusades against his own subjects. This crusading army was led by the cruel Simon De Montfort and Arnold, the abbot of Citeaux. As an example of man's inhumanity to man, this period was one of the blackest spots in history. "Their thirst for blood and their unbounded rapacity continued to rage in spite of the feeble attempts of the pope to check them." (G.P. Fisher, History of the Christian Church, page 194). One instance will serve to show the nature of these persecutions. The town of Beziers was before the attacking armies. Rather than systematically seek out the Albigenses from the Catholic population the papal legate gave the order to "kill them all. The Lord knows His own." The blood thirsty crusaders obliged. Women and children were not spared. Almost 20,000 innocent people were slain in just this one attack. Further campaigns of terror were conducted in 1215-1218, 1226-1229, and 1232-1233. At the last, the business of the inquisition was entrusted to the Dominicans, called "the hounds of the Pope." So widespread and devastating were these crusades, that the testimony of Christ was all but exterminated in the South of France. Those who did escape fled to Italy and Germany where they sowed the seeds of the Anabaptist movement in Europe. Some returned from whence they came - to Bulgaria, where the Bogomils continued to exist. The Albigenses were also called Paterines, meaning "sufferers."

The Waldenses

Many so-called historians attempt to fix the beginnings of the Waldenses with one of their ablest leaders, Peter Waldo (born 1140, died 1218). This is in fact not the case. Two points can be

confidently made: (1) The Waldenses are of ancient origin. An Austrian inquisitor (Catholic) in the Diocese of Passau in 1260 wrote "some say that it (Waldenses "heresy") dates back to the time of Sylvester (A.D. 325); others to the time of the apostles." David of Augsburg said, "They call themselves successors of the apostles..." An early Waldensian document, *The Noble Lesson* (written in 1100, 40 years before Peter Waldo was born!) assigns the beginning of the Waldensian churches to the days of the Emperor Constantine under Bishop Sylvester! The Waldenses are closely linked to the Albigenses. The Jesuit, Jacob Gretsch, stated: "that the Toulousians and Albigenses condemned in the year 1177 and 1178 were no other than the Waldenses. In fact, their doctrines, discipline, government, manners, and even the errors with which they had been charged show the Albigenses and Waldenses were distinct branches of the same sect, or the former was sprung from the later." (Rankin, *History of France*, III, 198-202). The name Waldense seems to have sprung up at the time of the Catharist stirrings throughout southern France. This name apparently derives from the Italian word "Valdesi" or the French word "Vaudois" meaning "valley" and was applied because of the usual residence of these Bible believers was in the fertile valleys of the high mountain ranges, where they would be protected by the natural land barriers from their deadliest enemies, the Church of Rome. A great revival occurred under the preaching of Peter Waldo, who had been a wealthy Catholic merchant of Lyon, France, who was converted to Christ. He became absorbed in the Word of God and even hired two priests to translate the Scripture into his native tongue. Seeking the purity of New Testament Christianity, and desiring to preach the Gospel to the people, he literally "left all" and followed Christ. Waldo and his congregation called themselves "The Poor Men of Lyon." They were noted for their memorization of large parts of the Bible, their poverty, and their preaching. They inevitably ran afoul of the Catholic hierarchy, and were forbidden to preach without permission by Lateran III in 1179. In 1183, they were condemned as heretics. At this point they merged with other Catharist groups and for the next 35 years spread across France, Italy, and Bohemia. The Waldenses were very evangelistic. They had numerous traveling evangelists who carried small Bibles under their cloaks, always ready to preach the Gospel. Tradition says that Peter Waldo died in Bohemia. The doctrines of the Waldenses, when seen from their own writings, are easily discerned. The Waldenses accepted the whole Bible and regarded it as authoritative. They were noted for their love for and use of the Scriptures - in a time when possessing, hearing, or reading the Bible was forbidden - by the "Church"!!! They believed the Scriptures ought to be available to all people. Many of them knew the New Testament, or great sections of it, by heart. They opposed any spiritualized interpretation of the Bible, taking it literally. They rejected Rome's claim to be the "true" church, and believed preaching should be the right of every Christian, and denied the right of priest to bind or loose, consecrate or bless. In a Waldensian document dated 1120, in the twelfth article, they state: "We consider the sacraments as signs of holy things, or the visible emblems of invisible blessings. We regard it as proper and even necessary that BELIEVERS use these symbols or visible forms when it can be done, notwithstanding which we maintain that believers may be saved without these signs when they have neither place nor opportunity of observing them." (Perrin, *Histoire Des Vaudois*, I, xii, 53.) The 7th Article of a Confession of Faith dated 1544 says: "We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us...And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing our faith and the change of life." (Sleiden, *The General History Of the Reformation*, 347, London, 1689) Peter of Clugny, in 1146, brought the following charges against the Waldenses: "They say that infants are not to be baptized, or

saved by the faith of another, but ought to be baptized and saved by their own faith...And that those who are baptized in infancy, when grown up, should be baptized again...rather rightly baptized." (Hist. Eccl. Madgeburg, cent. Xii c. v. 834). An ultimatum issued by the Pope against the Waldenses and other "heretics" in 1176 said, among other things,, "We believe that none are saved, except they are baptized; and that children are saved by baptism, and that baptism is to be performed by a priest in the church." The Waldenses rejected outright this doctrine as well as the ideas of purgatory and prayers for the dead. They believed in Heaven for the saved and Hell for the lost! Other Catholic doctrines that were rejected by the Waldenses were: the veneration of Mary; prayers to the saints; veneration of relics; indulgences; use of images, absolution; and oath taking. Most of those who would deny the preservation of the scriptures in the traditional texts of the old and new testaments like to attack the Waldenses because they played such an important part in the divine preservation of the Word of God during the "dark ages" of Roman supremacy. From their earliest beginnings the churches of northern Italy had a Bible which was pure in its text. It was called the "Italic Bible" or the "Itala," which was produced about 157 A.D., translated from the Graeco-Syrian text. This made it quite different from the Latin Vulgate (official Catholic Bible) which was translated in 386 by Jerome from the corrupted manuscripts, many of which had been influenced by Origen of Alexandria. The pure New Testament text was preserved throughout the dark ages in the Byzantine manuscripts, as well as in the Waldensian Bibles in their vernacular. In the 14th and 15th centuries the Jesuits translated Jerome's vulgate into Italian and French, "to shake out of the deceived peoples' hands, the false heretical translations of a sect called Waldenses." An edition of the Waldensian 'Olivetian Bible' was influential in the translation of the English Geneva Bible - the Bible ultimately replaced by the Authorized Version of 1611. D.O. Fuller, writing in his book, Which Bible (Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975, page 212) states, "It is therefore evident that the translators of 1611 had before them four Bibles which had come under Waldensian influences: the Diodati in Italian; the Olivetan in French; the Lutheran in German; and the Genevan in English. We have every reason to believe they had access to at least six Waldensian bibles written in the old Waldensian vernacular." The persecutions of the Waldensians were legion. In 1179 the Poor Men of Lyon were forbidden to preach without the permission of the Catholic clergy. In 1183 Pope Lucius III excommunicated Peter Waldo and his followers at the Synod of Verona, and from this time on the Waldenses began to be persecuted with great severity. In 1212 five hundred Waldensians were taken prisoner in Strassburg and 80 of them were burned at the stake. In 1380 the antipope Clement VIII sent a monk into the Waldensian Valleys to root out "heretics." Over the next 13 years several hundred were burned at the stake. In the 15th century the persecutions began to increase, and in 1486 Pope Innocent VIII ordered an army of 18,000 men to exterminate them. In 1545 the Waldensians of Provence were exterminated, in 1559 those of Calabria, and in 1560 those of the Piedmont were all gone. In 1655 the terrible "Piedmontese Easter" saw troops of the Marquis of Pianezza bring about the final great massacre of the Waldensians in Piedmont, where the earlier persecutions had driven them, as well as into Provence, the Cottian Alps, and Dauphiny. Some were dispersed to Germany, settling in Cologne, Frankfurt, and Nuremberg, and some went into Austria and Bohemia. Churches calling themselves Waldensian exist in many cities of Italy today and have their headquarters in Piedmont, the major city being Turin. They represent the largest evangelical group in Catholic Italy. Unfortunately the Waldenses fell into the Protestant camp after the reformation. "Sick and tired of heart in 1530 the remnant of the Waldenses opened negotiations with the reformers, but a union was not effected until 1532. Since then the Waldenses have been pedobaptist (infant baptizers)." Today's Waldenses are

modernistic, ecumenical, and more of a social Gospel organization than a Gospel preaching group. Their compromise is a clear warning to all true churches to avoid the compromises, no matter how insignificant they may seem, of the protestants and evangelicals, who would invite us into their ecumenical associations, and by so doing, eventually, and gradually, steal away our doctrine and identity.

Anabaptists

The sect known as the Anabaptists came to prominence at the time of the protestant reformation, although they are known to have been in existence long before that time. A study of the history of the Anabaptists shows them to be the connecting link between the ancient and medieval Baptists and the modern Baptists. The name Anabaptist means re-baptizer, and is a title given to this ancient group of Baptists by their enemies because of their practice of rebaptizing all who came into their ranks from the Catholic "Church." Anabaptist was a title of slander and reproach; the Baptists themselves would not accept this name because they counted all Catholic (and later Protestant) baptism to be unscriptural, thereby contending that there could be no re-baptism, for there had been no true baptism at all! Baptists of the reformation era were called by a variety of names other than Anabaptist - or Wiedertauffer in German. Some of these were: Catabaptists, meaning literally down dippers or immersionists. They were also known as Neo-Donatists or New Donatists, relating the Anabaptists back to the Donatists of the 4th century. In this charge history is seen to repeat itself. The Donatists were to the rapidly expanding Catholic "Church" what the Anabaptists were to the newly-formed Protestant "Churches" - a thorn in the side! The Donatists were slandered by their supposed connection with the fanatical Circumcellions just as the Anabaptists were connected, by their enemies, with the Munster Rebellion. Contention with the Donatists caused Augustine to retreat from some sound doctrine; contention with the Anabaptists caused several reformers (notably Luther and Zwingli) to retreat from their early statements supporting the baptism of believers by immersion and a pure (regenerate) church. The Anabaptist pastors were often identified through their practice of carrying canes or staffs - a custom which was in contrast to the sword and bishop's crook held by the hand of the establishment "Church" clergy. The term Staff Carrier became synonymous heretic. They were often identified with the Cathari, a word meaning pure ones, relating to the purity of life and purity of church practice by Baptists, even though this term was not new, but had been applied to true New Testament churches for 1200 years. One of the oft heard charges against the Anabaptists was that they were communists. One of the marks of the Baptists at this time was their willingness to live simple lives (in contrast to the opulence of the Catholic and Protestant Clergy) and to share their possessions with their needy brothers and sisters in Christ. They were attacked for practicing a 'community of goods'. They were also slanderously charged with practicing community of wives. As to these charges, let the Anabaptists answer for themselves. Hans Scherer: "If a man has a big income and with this drives a poor man from his homestead or field, such a man is more wicked than a thief, in God's sight." George Blaurock: "I do not advocate community of goods; however a man that is a Christian will dispense his goods, otherwise he is not a good Christian." Julius Leuber: "As to community of wives, I would say that if anyone teaches that, his doctrine is of the devil and not of God. However, as to community of goods, I am obliged to help the brother near me, out of brotherly love and without being coerced." Luther called the Baptists "Rottengeister" or clique-makers because of the threat their beliefs and practices presented to the monolithic Church-State system. However, it must be noted

that all who were called Anabaptists were not necessarily true Baptists. The name Anabaptist was a collective term in the day of the reformation. The practice of branding all non-conformists with the most odious name imaginable was not new. Earlier groups such as the Paulicians and the Albigenses had been marked as Manichaeans by their enemies in an attempt to discredit them, and the same practice was conducted against the Anabaptists. At the time of the reformation, Europe was undergoing a dramatic political, social, and religious upheaval - there were many who did not conform. Since the term Anabaptist was a particularly detestable one, anybody out of step was likely to be so called. It is therefore important to differentiate the several Anabaptists. Some of the various kinds of Anabaptists (apart from the true Biblical Baptists) were: The Social Anabaptists. The Anabaptists movement had its roots deep within the working classes of Europe. Thus it was easy to associate the name with the great peasant uprisings and social unrest of the times. While no one could deny that true Anabaptists were involved in many of these events, such as the role of Baptist patriots in the American Revolution, it is incorrect to ascribe radicalism as a tenet of Anabaptism. Some of the radicals of that day who were called "Anabaptists" were: Thomas Munzer and the Zwickau prophets. The fanatical Munzer (1489-1525) was in fact a zealous Lutheran who believed that Luther's reformation should go much farther. He fomented the Peasant's Revolt of 1534-1535 and was executed in its aftermath. Other men of the same persuasion as Munzer were Hans Hut who claimed that a Turkish invasion would end the rule of Rome and usher in Christ's return, and Melchior Hoffman who proclaimed the "New Jerusalem" would be established at Strassburg in 1533. Men such as these did much to harm the cause of true Baptists. Munzer and his followers were characterized by their claims to: Receive revelation directly from God in direct opposition of the first great Baptist principle, the sole authority of Scripture; to be ushering in the Millennium, in a form of early Post-Millennialism/Reconstructionism. Jan Matthys, John of Leyden, and the Munster rebellion. The shameful events which occurred at Munster in Westphalia were the result of years of harsh oppression and terrible suffering received from the hands of Roman Catholic masters. Already a center of Anabaptism, from 1532 the population of the city began to be stirred up through the preaching of the Lutheran Bernhard Tothman. Munster quickly became a city of refuge and magnet for radicalism. In 1553 a Dutchman named Jan Matthys proclaimed himself to be Enoch and announced the arrival of the Millennial Kingdom. In 1534 his companions, John of Leyden and Gert tom Kloster took charge of the government of the city. A bloody purge of the old order then began. People were forced to choose between baptism or death; monasteries were taken and desecrated; the wealth of the city was seized, and an enforced communist system of distribution enacted; Lutherans and Catholics were persecuted. This was a reign of terror akin to the French Revolution. In 1534 Jan Matthys following a "divine revelation" led 20 men out of the city to attack the armies arrayed against it. He was killed. John of Leyden then introduced a theocratic rule, had himself crowned as the king of New Jerusalem, and lived above the sufferings of his besieged subjects. Polygamy was introduced, despite the strong opposition of 200 true Baptists in the city, and over the dead bodies of 50 of them. After a year long siege, the city was retaken by the army of Bishop, ending with a horrible massacre of many of its remaining inhabitants and the most revolting torture and execution of the leaders. The enemies of the Gospel were quick to associate the Anabaptists with the events of Munster, and the effect of this tragedy was to blacken the name of true Biblical Baptists for years to come. A wave of persecution against Anabaptists across Europe followed. Another movement of that time was a revival of arianism or anti-trinitarianism led by men such as the German Johannes Campanus, the Spaniard Michael Servetus, and ultimately the Italian Faustus Socinus, which led to the rise of the Antitrinitarian

Anabaptists. Anabaptists were sometimes linked to this heresy because of their repudiation of Catholic creeds. This of course did not mean that they were anti-trinitarian. Some of those called Anabaptists may have tended toward adoptionism in their Christology. Hans Denck protested "that all kinds of evil doctrines were attributed to him which caused him to be avoided as a dangerous man." There is no question that he was somewhat of a mystic who rejected religious externalism and emphasized internalism. Furthermore, many who held to unsound doctrine and are referred to as Anabaptists were, to be more accurate, anti-Pedobaptists, i.e. they rejected infant baptism, but did not necessarily accept true Bible baptism. Some who were called Anabaptist may have exhibited docetist tendencies. This was said of Menno Simons who, unskilled in areas of speculative theology, apparently was driven to accept this position during debates with John of Lasco. So then, where did the Anabaptists originate? Most "Church" historians would say they originated at the time of the reformation, but this is not the case. Cardinal Hosius, a member of the Council of Trent in 1560, in an often quoted statements says, "If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and boldness of which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer and surer than that of the Anabaptist since there have been none for these twelve hundred years past, that have been more generally punished or that have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and even offered themselves to the most cruel sorts of punishment than these people. (Cardinal Hosius, Letters, Apud Opera, 112-113). That Cardinal Hosius dated the history of the Baptists back twelve hundred years is obvious in another statement by the Cardinal, "The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect. Of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem to have been....and have united with the Anabaptists." (Hosius, Works of the Heresies of our Times, Bk. I, 431, ED. 1584). "The sources single out no man as the originator of the sixteenth century rebaptism. In the words of Joseph Beck, 'From whom the idea of rebaptism issued, of this the sources say not a word'. This required an explanation. To rebaptize is to do an extremely radical thing...How so radical a practice sprung up anonymously is passing strange - if it is assumed, as the vogue is, that Anabaptism was simply the product of the sixteenth century. But this silence as to who must be credited with the idea becomes wholly explicable once it is realized that what was known as Anabaptism in reformation times was in no sense a new thing. Neither the name nor the practice was new...The Anabaptists did not initiate a new school of thought; they merely restated an ancient ideology - in the idiom of the sixteenth century to be sure, but ancient nevertheless. No one is credited with having invented the Anabaptism of the sixteenth century for the sufficient reason that no one did.' 'Rebaptizing is as old as Constantinianism. There were Anabaptists, called by that name, in the fourth century. The Codes of Theodosius already prescribed very severe penalty, capital punishment, for anyone who was convicted of having rebaptized. In fact the first Anabaptist martyrs of the reformation times were put to death under the terms of these ancient Codes'" (Verduin (Stepchildren) 189-190.) There is ample historical evidence to attest to the fact the Anabaptists descended from the medieval Waldenses. "The Waldenses entered Holland in 1182 and by the year 1233 Flanders was full of them." (J.T. Christian, page 138). Persecutions against the Waldenses of France and Italy in 1332, 1400, and 1478 drove many of their number into Germany, Switzerland, and Bohemia. These scattered Waldenses were the seeds of the Anabaptists. The remnants of the Waldenses in Piedmont united with the Protestants in 1532, and became pedobaptists. The Lutheran historian Johann L. von Mosheim said, "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed, in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany, many persons, who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine, which the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites, had

maintained, some in a more disguised, and others in a more open and public manner. "In Germany, large numbers of Waldenses, who were often skilled artisans, found safe haven within the trade guilds. Jerrell states, "So widely had the sect been scattered that it was said a traveler from Antwerp to Rome could sleep every night in the house of one of their brethren." In Switzerland the Anabaptists were well established before the reformation. Zwingli said of them: "The institution of Anabaptism is no novelty, but for three hundred years has caused great disturbance in the church, and has acquired such strength that the attempt in this age to contend with it appears futile for a time." In 1525 an edict of the City of Zurich (written by Zwingli) against the Anabaptists there said, "You know without doubt, and have heard from many, that for a very long time, some peculiar men, who imagine that they are learned...have preached, and without the permission and consent of the church, have proclaimed that infant baptism did not proceed from God, but from the devil..." In Bohemia, the Waldenses found natural allies among the Hussites and Bohemian Brethren. Luther said that the Anabaptists were Hussites. Waldensian 'strongholds' were to be found throughout Europe in cities such as Cologne, Strassburg, and Zurich - in fact all along the Rhine River - also at Metz, Emberg, Altona, and Hamburg. The Waldenses also spread to the Netherlands, Austria-Hungary, and Transylvania. In each of the places where Waldenses settled, Anabaptists were later to be found in great numbers. It is plain to see that the Anabaptists had an apostolic heritage. They were called Christians in the first century (Acts 11:26); Montanists; Novatians; Donatists; Paulicians; Albigenses; Waldenses; Anabaptists; and today, Baptists. The historian A.H. Newman in his church history (Volume II pages 153-156) enumerates the following beliefs, practices, and characteristics of the Anabaptists.

(1) Christian Charity. Content with what they had, Anabaptists believed in, and practiced, true brotherly love, willingly sharing their worldly goods with others.

(2) Regenerate Church Membership. They insisted that true New Testament churches be composed exclusively of born-again believers.

(3) Baptism of Believers. They rejected so-called 'infant baptism' and stood for the baptism of true believers only. Newman comments, "The earnestness and vigor of their protest against infant baptism constitutes one of the most marked features of the Anabaptist movement." An Anabaptist statement of faith, referred to as the Schleithem Confession of 1527 says: "Baptism should be given to all those who have learned repentance and change of life, and believe in truth that their sins have been taken away through Christ."

(4) Separation of Church and State. They regarded the State as an institution outside of and apart from the Gospel of Christ, whose authority was to be obeyed in all things lawful, but which had no right to interfere in matters of conscience.

(5) Liberty of Conscience. This was a fundamental tenet of the Anabaptists very similar to our doctrine of the priesthood of the believer.

(6) Rejection of the Magistracy. Anabaptists refused to serve as magistrates. This was because in their day, the magistracy was the civil arm of the 'church' which executed (literally) its decrees.

(7) Rejection of Oath Taking. They rejected this practice, yet distinguished between testimony regarding known facts and promises regarding future conduct.

(8) Rejection of Military Service. The reason most of our Baptist forebears refused to take up arms was because most wars prior to the 20th century were religious in nature, where force was used to coerce others to conform.

(9) Rejection of Capital Punishment. Since the kind of capital punishment most familiar to the Anabaptists was that carried out against 'heretics' - i.e. Anabaptists - we can well understand their objections.

(10) The Millennial Return of Christ. Anabaptists rejected Augustinian theology (Augustine, through his book, 'The City of God,' laid the foundations for the Church of Rome), so it was natural for them to be Premillennial. As noted above, some of the pseudo-Anabaptist fanatics thought they could usher in the Millennium themselves. Biblical Anabaptists repudiated and abhorred their excesses.

(11) The Free Will of Man. Anabaptists believed a man must either choose or reject Christ as Saviour.

(12) Salvation by Grace through Faith. Anabaptists believed that grace, received through faith, was the great transforming agent whereby the sinner is not simply made to participate in Christ's merits, but enters into the completed union with Him. They also insisted upon good works as the fruit of salvation, not the cause of it. They would not baptize without seeing this fruit.

(13) Christ-like living. Compared to most Catholics and Protestants, the Baptists were 'ascetics'!! Newman notes: "Great stress was laid on the imitation of Christ in his life of self-denying toil and suffering and the Anabaptists gloried in being counted worthy to suffer for and with Christ. The idea of earthly comfort and enjoyment most of them utterly renounced. Luxurious living, personal adornment, social amusements, the accumulation of wealth, nearly all of them regarded as inconsistent with the Christian profession;..."

(14) The Lord's Supper for Church Members Only. They only admitted baptized believers to the Lord's Table, and then not before discipline was rigorously exercised upon the brethren. The Schleithem Confession, mentioned earlier, says: "...that all who would drink one draught as a memorial of the poured blood of Christ should before hand be united to one body of Christ (i.e., the local church), to wit: by baptism..."

(15) Separation From Unbelief. The Anabaptists refused to join hands with other religious parties, although to some degree at the beginning of the reformation, the liberty loving Anabaptists did offer their assistance to that movement - until it became patently evident that it was not going to be a return to pure Christianity. Several Anabaptist pastors debated with the reformers - until they were executed or exiled! Newman notes that they "not only [refused] to join with others in religious acts, but utterly [repudiated] their right to be regarded as Christian."

(16) Cooperation Among Churches. When conditions made it possible, Anabaptist churches cooperated in their common cause for Christ. Like the Waldenses, the Anabaptists were characterized by their itinerant preachers.

In addition to the above listing, W.A. Jarrell cites a paper read before the American Society of Church History, which adds the following distinctives:

(17) The Authority of the Scriptures. Anabaptists held the Bible to be the only authority in matters of faith and practice. An interesting question is, "Which Bible?" "The Waldenses translated the Bible into the Romance and Teutonic languages early in the thirteenth century, the Baptists retained these versions of the Bible two hundred years after Luther's version. The oldest German Bible is of Baptist origin." (J.T. Christian, page 91). This German Bible is the Tepl Version from the 14th century which "differs considerably from the Latin Vulgate, used by the Roman Church, and resembles the German translations in use from the introduction of printing to the making of Luther's translation, which latter shows many signs of its influence, as does still more a later translation again, used for a century by those then called Anabaptists and Mennonites." (Broadbent, page 112). These Waldensian Bibles were directly related to the ancient Old Latin translation (150 A.D.) and marked the 'living stream' whereby God preserved His pure Word.

(18) Salvation Through the Blood of Christ. Jarrell rightly notes that "This demonstrates that they were not Universalists or Unitarians. Since there can be no human blood atonement for sin, they certainly were sound on the deity of Christ."

(19) Missions. The Anabaptists sent forth a multitude of missionaries. According to W.W. Everts (as cited by Jarrell), "they were the most determined colporteurs and missionaries throughout Europe." "To the Anabaptist the religious life was to be an active, even aggressive, discipleship. One feature of this mission outreach was mass baptisms. At Munster in 1534 there were 1,400 in a week and at times nearly whole villages would be baptized in one ceremony." (Anderson, page 50).

In addition to the above, they also believed in the sin nature of all men, the security of infants, strict church discipline, and the right of each church to select its own pastor (local church autonomy). The (Ana) Baptists of the reformation period have been referred to as the 'second front' and the 'left wing' of the protestant reformation. Although somewhat inaccurate, such titles do reflect the radically differing opinions of the protestants, who sought to reform Rome using the Bible, and the Baptists who sought to replace Rome with the Bible. Although initially supportive of what the reformers were doing, the Baptists soon despaired of the course of events and quickly found themselves 'offside'. Before long, Baptists were facing persecution from two quarters - the Catholics and the Protestants. The Diet of Speyer (Lutheran) in 1529 decreed the death penalty for Anabaptists. In 1536, Luther signed a memorandum written by Melancthon assenting to the death penalty for Anabaptists. Only the Lutheran prince Philip, the Landgrave of Hesse, refused to kill Anabaptists. He was a true libertarian, and his lands provided haven for many Baptists. It was Zwingli's angry outburst, "Let those who talk of going under go under indeed!", which gave rise to the method of death by drowning of Anabaptists. Frustrated by his early debates with the Anabaptist leaders, Zwingli and the Swiss authorities became unmerciful

in their extermination of Baptists and great numbers of them perished. Those that escaped fled to regions of relative safety - Moravia, the Netherlands, and areas along the Rhine. By 1535 the Anabaptist movement in Switzerland had been overcome. John Calvin was a despiser of Anabaptists who advised that "Anabaptists and reactionists should alike be put to death." Calvin's fiercest theological conflicts were with...Servetus, ...the Anabaptists, the Socinians, etc. ...heresy he could [do] away with, and he soon decided that the only efficient argument against it was the fagot or the sword." (Newman, page 223). The influx of Waldensian believers had made the Netherlands one of the most liberal areas of reformation Europe. All kinds of beliefs were tolerated there, but up to 1533 the Anabaptists (often called Mennonites in Holland) were the most prolific. From 1555 Jesuit intrigue brought the Inquisition to Holland, and the Duke of Alva desolated the country from 1567 -73. Great atrocities were committed against Calvinists and Anabaptists alike. William of Orange was the one who saved Holland, and the Union of Utrecht proclaimed that "every individual should remain free in his religion, and that no man should be molested or questioned on the subject of divine worship." This was the result of the Baptist heritage in the Dutch Republic. By order of the emperor Ferdinand I of Austria many Anabaptists were burned and drowned in this country. Jakob Huter took up the mantle of Blaurock and held many meetings in hidden locations. Despite the most awful sentences of torture and death, churches continued to grow throughout Austria and Hungary. Huter was finally burned at the stake in Innsbruck in 1536 and the baton fell to Hans Mandl who courageously carried on the great work of the Lord. Balthasar Hubmaier published a tract in 1524 which said: "The burning of heretics cannot be justified by the Scripture. Christ Himself teaches that the tares should be allowed to grow with the wheat. He did not come to burn, or to murder, but to give life, and that more abundantly. We should, therefore, pray and hope for improvement in men as long as they live. If they cannot be convinced by appeals to reason, or the Word of God, they should be let alone. One cannot be made to see his errors by fire or sword."

Conclusion

From the earliest days of the first century until today, there has always been a representative people who held to the true doctrines of the Word of God, and thus represented the true New Testament church. We, as Baptists, are not protestants, reformed, or something new that arose in the 16th or 17th century. We are an ancient people, following the precepts of the Lord, in a 'trail of blood' that leads from the time of Christ's earthly ministry down through the ages until today. That is our Baptist Heritage. Think about it.

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