

Establishing Kingdom Communities - Part 2

by Dean Taylor

Dean Taylor encourages listeners to focus on simplicity, practical application, and community, and to seek guidance from the Bible and Anabaptist leaders in order to put Jesus' teachings into practice and build kingdom communities.

Duration: 56:05

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Luke 4:18-19, John 13:34-35, Acts 4:32, 1 Corinthians 14:40, Galatians 6:1, Hebrews 10:24-25, James 1:19

Topics: "Community"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living out the words of Jesus and putting them into practice. He shares a parable about a law school project that studied the deliberation process in juries, highlighting the need for purpose and mission in our lives. The speaker also quotes Conrad Grebel, stating that the words of Jesus are meant to be put into practice. He then provides examples of the power of enthusiasm and dedication, referencing the Wright brothers' first flight and the impact of small groups of committed individuals throughout history. The sermon concludes with a story about George Foster, who preached the gospel with power and established church communities despite facing persecution.

Transcript

When I heard the announcement of who, when Brother Nathan called me and asked me to do it, and I heard the different people that have been on it, on the different speakers, and I thought, well, that's just going to be a collection of all my friends. And so, all of you brothers have been a huge influence on my life, and I appreciate every one of you. From, where is it, Chester? Way back in the years when he was putting up with us in our little radical church in Texas, to all the years meeting Brother Ernest, and of course, David took me in right out of the army, and it's just been, John Dee's been incredibly influential to me with this articulating of the Kingdom Gospel, and all those different things, and thank you all very much.

It's been a blessing to be here with you. He gave me this title, and it's a bit academic, and it's, see, I have this strange allergy, seriously. And it took me a while to find out.

I love history. It's why, as soon as I got out of the army, I went to live, you know, with the church there with David. And, but I finally, so I went to this phase where I was really buying a bunch of old books, and I'd buy these old books, and I love them, I love those old leather books and everything, but I come to find out that I actually have an allergy to old books.

I mean, it took me the longest time. I would literally break out, I have this place over here that would, like, break out with a hive and everything, and so I would get, like, surgical masks from work, and then I would try to read the books, you know, and everything. And I finally started to say, okay, God, I've got an allergy to old books.

And I wonder to say, okay, Lord, are you trying to tell me to stay out of the old and make it new? I don't know. But nevertheless, we're going to be looking at some quotes and some different things, and I'm hoping that it's not too overly academic. But if you didn't hear the message before talking about kingdom communities, then listen to that if you want to hear any of my various disclaimers about community or something like that.

So a lot of people have asked me some questions about community, because I live in a Hutterite community and those types of things. And I'll say for the record now, again, what I'm trying to encourage all of us is I believe built into the spirit of Anabaptism is a true sense of community. And if you look at from my background to coming into any of the Anabaptist groups, the difference is huge.

And it's something that I don't want you to lose. There's a community of goods, there's a community of production, there's a community of charity. And all of you have expressed that, and I think of the difference.

I have a friend that I just got out of the army with, and his daughter just died. And now he's going around, and I just found out today that he's asking for offerings to pay for the whole funeral. 22-year-old daughter died.

And I've just never experienced that kind of a need in any of the Mennonite Anabaptist churches I've been a part of. And so what I want to do is encourage you, and I want to take it further and focus this concept of being together and glorifying God together in a greater way. And that's the burden that's in my heart.

Does Dean believe you have to have a complete community of goods for the common purse to be a real Christian? Absolutely not. So I said it, okay? So don't misquote me and say that. I thought some people kept asking questions.

I just wanted to give a quick, people think it's strange, and that's okay. This is a picture of Elmendorf, where a lot of us come here for today. And just here's the main living area.

That's the turkey barns, and that's the pig barns over there. And I'll tell you, one of the biggest challenges of coming out there is the city boy from Dallas-Fort Worth living on the farm. There's a lot of funny stories with all that, but especially with my wife and daughters.

But anyway, here's a little closer up of the living area. This is old picture, maybe even 10, 15 years old. And here's the Altona community.

Here is pig barn. And I used to, just until last weekend, live right there, right next to the pig barn. I was saying they put me in the isolation barn.

So I don't know. So here, there, it is a little close up. And now I just moved in last weekend to that little part of that house right there.

And don't get the wrong impression. It's actually very nice houses. I don't want to look like I'm overly radical.

As a matter of fact, Tonya was listening in to the message, both messages this morning. And I got a text from her. And she said, there'll be a burn barrel when you get home.

I wanted to go through more things and live radical. So anyway, we are continually wanting to follow Jesus in a better way. And we haven't arrived.

And I don't want to give any kind of false impression about me being there. But I think there's something inside of us that we all feel like we want to go further. There's something.

And a quote that I came to a few years ago is the introduction to the martyr's mirror, written right at the turn of the century into the 1700s. That's very interesting the way it's worded. I'm going to give it to you from Thieleman van Brack, written in the martyr's mirror.

And this is the burden that made him write the martyr's mirror. And I think the obvious thing will be how it sounds so applicable to today. He says, These are sad times in which we live.

Nay, truly there is more danger now than in the times of our fathers who suffered death for the testimony of the Lord. Few will believe this because the great majority look to that which is external and corporal. And in this respect, it is now better, quieter and more comfortable.

Few only look to that which is internal and pertains to the soul and on which everything depends. See sort of Brother David's theology coming out there. It grieves us to the heart that we must live to see these times and therefore speak in this wise.

O Lord, strengthen our faith. Help thy weak trusting lambs that they may not be led into error nor move from the foundation of this most holy faith. On the other hand, through his instigation, the world now reveals itself very beautiful and glorious, more than at any preceding time, in a threefold pleasing form.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Almost all men run after her to worship her as Queen Supreme. But all are deceived thereby, yet many who have drunk of the poisoned wine of her lust, from the golden cup of her iniquities and deception, die a spiritual death.

As the first design is aimed at the faith, so this is directed against the true Christian life. And here lies a great danger. Who shall escape these snares? He gives the answer.

He that would at no time be taken unawares by it, must indeed be cautious and watchful. But our very flesh seems prone to it. Here must be fastings, watchings, prayings, and calling upon God for help.

Otherwise, there is no escape. Well, and that's the introduction to the Martyr's Mirror. And if you look at that, written in that time period, it was a time that's very comparable to our times, when there's so much things and political changes, the prosperity of the church that he's part of, and we're experiencing all those in ourselves.

And you hear the cry of his heart come out to the different generations. And I think we have it today. We brought up a bunch of statistics.

I found a couple in a book, and I wanted to bring them to you. And I wanted to put a little perspective spin on them. We talked about people leaving the church and all that.

It's interesting. Unfortunately, there's been some books written. What was the book Chester was giving us? What's that? Yes, yes.

And they did very good some statistics on the Midnight USA. And I don't want you to look at that and say, oh, that's them. I wish we would have that kind of things to look at some of the statistics.

And this came from Anabaptist World USA, these different graphs I had. What I want us to do is to look at a reflection on us and not look at a reflection on someone else. It's just they happen to have nice statistics.

But anyway, up into the 1970s, you had a progression. And then coming right at the 1970s, there was some decline in the church. And so you can fill in the blanks on the different things that we've discussed and the different things that happened there.

What does that mean? I'm just bringing it to you. Church of the Brethren, we have both Mennonites, Anabaptists, and Pietists here today. Again, a sharp rise with revivalism and the different things coming into the 1960s.

Interestingly enough, right after that, an interesting decline, also from the same book. So I just found these statistics, and we've been talking about them. Isn't it interesting? Okay, you wonder what the statistics is for the Amish.

How do you think the graph went? Here's the statistics for the Amish. And the next one is here is a statistic for the Hutterite communities, just for your information. Now, we say that, and what it tells us is several things.

We're talking about this. It seems that where there's a clear understanding and a clear culture, that there seems to have people stay within that community. What does that mean? Are these people sold out for the Lord? Well, I found this statistic just today.

The Hindus have an 84% rate. The Jews have 76%. The Muslims have 76%.

The Greek Orthodox come in at 73%. So it doesn't necessarily mean anything. It's good.

We want to take advantage of having strong communities and being strong communities, and we can see some perhaps, I don't know, just human nature concepts with that, but let's please not rest in that. We don't want to heathen morality in our church. We don't want to just exist for the sake of existing.

We want to be followers of Jesus, and we don't want our emphasis to be in this preservationism that we won't live out the words of Jesus because we're going to bury our talent in the ground. So, just want to bring that out. Alright, to start all this off though, what I'm most impressed about us all here is I'm excited about the energy.

I'm excited about the people we're talking to, and I hear people talking, and we're having all these nice coffee table revivals and all this type of stuff, and all these different ideas, and it frankly excites me. As I've gone through the last few years, I hear more and more people talking about putting the words of Jesus into practice. I hear kingdom theology being talked about, and it's getting me excited.

And here's an analogy of what I think a group like this can do. How many of you have ever heard of this man? Oh, very interesting, I was thinking. Okay, this is an interesting guy.

He was a senior officer of the Smithsonian Institution, a mathematician, who had also worked at Harvard. His friends included some of the most powerful men in government and business, including Andrew Carnegie, Alexander Graham Bell. Well, Langley was given a \$50,000 grant from the War Department to fund his project, a tremendous amount of money for his time.

And his project was to create the first airplane. This was the guy that was going to do it. He's got the credentials, he's got the right friends, and he's got the money, he's going to do it.

But guess what? None of you have heard of him. Well, how many of you have heard of these guys? Wilbur and Orville Wright. Raise your hand.

Alright! Wilbur and Orville Wright were working on their flying machine. Their passion to fly was so intense that it inspired the enthusiasm and commitment of a dedicated group in the hometown of Dayton, Ohio. There's no funding for their venture.

No government grants. No high-level connections. Not a single person on the team had an advanced degree or even a college education.

Not even Wilbur and Orville. But the team banded together, note, the team banded together, in a humble bicycle shop and made their vision real. On December 17, 1903, a small group witnessed a man take flight for the first time in his history.

I took that from a business book, Simon Shirk from Start With Why. So, the point is this. The power of being enthusiastic, committed, and dedicated to something does things that all the money and academics and things in the world cannot do.

It was an interesting, Margaret Mead was what's called an anthropologist. That's a big word that means a person who studies cultures. She was a famous anthropologist.

And somebody once asked her, can a small group of committed people make a difference? You know what her answer was? There's never been anything else. It's always been a small group of dedicated, committed citizens that have changed the world. It's always been that way.

And I believe today with us, it's going to be the same. It's going to be the same. Now, what did I tell you yesterday? The essence of anabaptism.

My favorite quotes come from a letter from Conrad Grebel that he wrote to Vadian. And in that letter, there's two nuggets that I think is the essence of anabaptism. I think it's the essence of biblical Christianity.

He says this. Remember this quote. I believe the Word of God without a complicated interpretation.

And out of this belief, I speak. That's it. I told you yesterday.

We need an anabaptist study Bible that says, if it says love your enemies, you look in here and you look behind and it says, okay, what it really says in Greek is to love your enemies. So, that's the kind of thing. It's easy.

The Bible is easy to understand. It's all these gymnastics that make it very difficult. And then the other one, which is the most profound statement of them all.

The teachings of the Lord has been given for the purpose of being put into practice. Those quotes were the seeds that led the revival of anabaptism that shook this world, and still is why we're here today. And it's those seeds that will do it again.

Alright, so let's look at this. When it comes to the anabaptist movement, why would the Protestants, Brother David, why would the Protestants who escaped persecution just ten years before this now turn on the anabaptists and put them to death? Why? Let's look at why. Interesting.

Remember, the whole topic is this. I'm trying to show you kingdom communities and putting the words of Jesus into practice. Now, here in Zurich is where the whole thing started here.

And Zolokon, we'll show in a minute, was the first church that spread from that really quickly. They were captured, put in jail for a while. They escaped, and they didn't go into hiding.

They went preaching again. And Felix Mons actually made it all the way over here to Chur. Now, I've been there.

That doesn't look that far on a map, but wow, when you see those Alps and everything that they crossed. It's really quite a distance. So he went over there, and as he was there, he was captured and put to death.

And January 5, 1527, he was put to death. And why? What's interesting, if you look at the letter, they got a letter that they have that's found from the magistrate of Chur that then they sent back to Zurich. And in those days, being a part of a city was kind of like being a member of a church.

Everybody's sort of the peasants and all that sort of, you owned your people. As a matter of fact, why George Blaurock was kicked out of town and Felix Mons was killed because George Blaurock wasn't a citizen of Zurich. Sometimes it pays not to be a citizen.

So they wrote a letter. Here, he's from Zurich. They're writing a letter from Chur, and this is what's in the letter.

And it's interesting because in this we get some of the nuggets of those things that made them move. Here's a letter of complaint that they wrote about Felix Mons. It says, For a long time, we have had among us one who calls himself Felix Mons.

The same has created much trouble and discord among our people by baptizing old people and corner preaching. Amen. That's what it said.

And to such an extent that we ordered him to leave the city. And after this, he returned and did as before, disregarding the public proclamation in the church forbidding adult baptism on penalty of death, loss of honor, and loss of property. Therefore, we arrested him and held him a few days.

But because he is an obstinate and irreverent person, we released him from prison, and because he is one of yours, we have sent him to you with the friendly request that you look after him and keep him in your territory so that we may be rid of him and our people remain quiet. And that in case of his return, we are not compelled to take severe measures against him. That's the letter from church.

Isn't that interesting? Well, they captured him. He kept preaching, they captured him, and they finally put him to death. And what I'm going to read you now is the proclamation of the death sentence that was read from the town halls and the different places in the churches from Zurich on the proclamation this is why we're putting to death the first Anabaptist.

Interesting. Let's see what it says. Reading out from all you can imagine from the city halls and from the churches and all the different things.

Because contrary to Christian order and custom Remember, this is why he's being put to death. Because contrary to Christian order and custom, he has become involved in Anabaptism. Had accepted it, taught others, and become a leader and beginner of these things.

Because he confesses, having said that he wanted to gather those who wanted to accept Christ and follow him. Amen. And unite himself with them through baptism and let the rest live according to their faith, so that he and his followers separated themselves from the Christian church and were about to rise up and prepare a sect of their own under the guise of a Christian meeting and church.

Because he has condemned capital punishment. Since such doctrine, watch, is harmful to the unfamed usage of all Christendom and leads to offense insurrection and sedition against the government. To the shattering of the common peace, brotherly love and civil cooperation and to all evil months shall be delivered to the executioner who shall tie his hands, put him in a boat, take him into the tower hut, then strip his bound hands down under his knees, place a stick between his knees and arms and thus push him into the water and let him perish in the water.

Thereby he shall have a tone to the law and justice. His property shall also be confiscated by my lords. These are the Protestants.

These are the brand new evangelicals who just got saved 10 years ago. Now, shortly after that, the movement moved over to to Zolacum and they began to have the first church there and they began to and George had all those famous scenes that you've heard about and he's banging on the church and saying all those interesting things. But then when they were there, and this is where I'm coming to, we get another nugget.

They wrote an order, a congregational order, which is the very first Anabaptist statement ever created. Now, to back up just a little bit, to give you a little bit of explanation, right before this whole Anabaptist time, there was a peasant revolt time where the peasants revolted and they were trying to come against the government. They were taking a lot of Luther's teachings and saying, okay, we're going to come against those monasteries, we're going to come against those things and have rights within ourselves.

And it wasn't a completely unscriptural or biblical, well, it was that. They had Christian intentions to them, I should say. How do you word that? They had good intentions they thought were Christian.

But you could see within Switzerland itself was a concept of this parish idea. We want the people of our area to be able to appoint our own pastor, pay him his tithe and that type of thing. And the people of this area in Switzerland thought more as a community than in many other places.

So there was a concept of community that was Swiss in general that they took a part of. As a matter of fact, you see within the Swiss movements like the Hutterites and the Swiss Brethren and the different Swiss groups, the South Germans, much more of this community concept than perhaps you would in the

Dutch churches. Much more.

So now we look at this now and there's been an interesting book. It's a bit academic, but there's an interesting book by a man named Packle, William O. Packle, who wrote a book called Hutterite Beginnings. And he shows in here how that this very document that I'm about to read to you made a guide for all the for several of the earliest documents that followed.

This document that I'm about to read to you was found with Michael Sattler in the bound book when he was burned at the stake from the Catholics. It's been ignored for some reason when we typically look at history, but it's interesting for the purpose that I'm trying to emphasize. The way the kingdom communities got together and just related and became this family of God in the area right from the very beginning.

And I wanted to show you those things. Since the almighty eternal and merciful God has made his wonderful light break forth in the world and in this most dangerous time, we recognize the mystery of his divine will that the word is preached to us according to the proper ordaining of the Lord whereby we have been called into his fellowship. Therefore, according to the commands of the Lord, notice their emphasis on the commands of the Lord, all the things that I'm showing you here next.

Therefore, according to the commands of the Lord and the teachings of his apostles in Christian order, we should observe the new commandments and love one towards another so that love and unity may be maintained, which all brothers and sisters of the entire congregation should agree to hold to here as follows. Number one, the brothers and sisters should meet at least three or four times a week to exercise themselves in the teachings of Christ and his apostles and hardly to exhort one another to remain faithful to the Lord as they have pledged. Number two, when the brothers or sisters are together, they shall take up something to read together.

The one to whom God has given the best understanding shall explain it. The other should be still and listen so that there are not two or three carrying on a private conversation bothering the others. The Psalter shall be read daily at home.

Number three, let none be frivolous in the church of God, neither in words nor in action. Good conduct shall be maintained by them all also before the heathen. And number four, when a brother sees his brother erring, he shall warn him according to the commands of Christ and shall admonish him in a Christian and brotherly way as everyone is bound and obliged to do out of love.

And number five, listen to this one. Of all the brothers and sisters of the congregation, none shall have anything of his own, but rather as the Christians in the time of the apostles held all in common and especially stored up a common fund from which aid can be given to the poor according to each will have need and as in the apostles time permit no brothers to be in need. So it's interesting this concept of at least a community of charity.

I don't think that that's what they had in the complete communities that were being experienced a little later in Moravia, but nevertheless it was a radical sense of being together in this family. We've got a mission we're on. We're doing something and we're going to take care of each other in a radical Christ following way.

Incredible right from the beginning. Number six all gluttony shall be avoided among the brethren who are gathered in the congregation. Serve a soup or a minimum of vegetables for meat and eating and drink for

eating and drinking are not the kingdom of heaven.

Ouch. Number seven The Lord's supper shall be held as often as the brothers are together, thereby proclaiming the death of the Lord and thereby warning each one to commemorate how Christ gave his life for us and shed his blood for us that we might also be willing to give our bodies and life for Christ's sake, which means for the sake of all the brothers. So interesting.

So just reading all those you just get a sense and a flavor of what did those guys think like? What were they like? And these are the things that came out right from the very beginning, right from the very beginning. Yes, sir. Oh, you have the whole thing on your handout.

Oh, excellent. Thank you. Very good.

Then from there we went to Schleidheim for time. I'm going to skip through Schleidheim because I think most of you've heard of that. I hope Andrew St. Marie has just written a nice book on the whole coming up to Schleidheim, which you can get back there, which I would recommend.

It's very good. He brings the whole story of the process to Schleidheim. So, but again, over and over you're getting these people who are on a mission, a kingdom mission, with purpose, living together radically, putting the words of Jesus into practice in everything in their life, from economic to ministering to helping the poor to all those things.

We want to live out the words of Jesus. Remember what Conrad Grebel said? The words of Jesus are meant to be put into practice. All right.

Now I got some book quotes now, so stay awake here. I wanted to just, this is not just me coming up with some of these. I wanted to show you some of the, some primaries, a few primary sources, and then some of the scholars that say something on this.

And I think it's fascinating. And this is the scary part of this message because I don't want to bore you with this stuff, but these are, these are interesting that they give you. A lot of things have been said about the Anabaptists, and I want you to get this nugget.

So, I don't want to go back to my secular job and have you all fall asleep. But, all right. Okay, I'm a nurse anesthetist, so I put people to sleep for a job.

So, people always kid me. Dean, you're the preacher that puts people to sleep. And yeah, I don't know what they're always saying about that.

But, okay. Interesting quote from Ambrosius Spittlemeyer from 1527, Upper Austria. No one can accept the kingdom of God except those who are poor in Christ here.

For a Christian has nothing of his own. He should have nothing of his own in such a manner that he would not wish to say the house is mine, the land is mine, the coin is mine, but rather, it is all ours. This is the way we say, this is why we say, our father.

In sum, a Christian looks more to his neighbor than to himself. Interesting. He was not a Hutterite, just a southern German and Austrian Anabaptist.

Hans Leopold, who was martyred in 1528, talking about, if they know of anyone that is in need, whether or not he is a member of the church, they believe it is their duty, out of love to God, to render him help and aid. Heinrich Bullinger, speaking about the Swiss brethren, in his work against the Swiss brothers, and made the charge that they were of the opinion that to be rich is inconsistent with Christian principles. Where would they get that? Jesus? James? I don't know.

Alright. And the concept at this time, I think Brother John D. or David, or one of you talked about the idea of the parish. Maybe it was Brother Ernest.

I mean, one of you did. Talked about the idea of there was this state church, and then everybody thought there was this invisible church. And that still permeates today.

People say, well, we don't know who. The Anabaptists made a very strong point on the church being visible. Do we believe in the incarnation of Jesus Christ this evening? Did Jesus Christ come in both the spirit and the flesh? Yes! And so the church must be visible, they argued.

And the concept of them being together is very interesting. Here's three primary sources. Michael Sattler, was burned at the stake, said this, forget not the assembly, but apply yourself to coming together constantly, that they and that you may be united in prayer for all men and the breaking of bread.

And this all the more fervently as the day the Lord draws near. In such meetings together, you will make manifest the heart of the false brethren and will be freed and will be freed of them more rapidly. Interesting.

Very interesting. Peter Ritteman wrote it this way. We confess also that God has through Christ chosen, accepted, and sought a people for Himself.

Therefore it is such a people, community, assembled, or church gathered, and led together by the Holy Spirit, which from henceforth rules, controls, and orders everything in... I skipped a question there. Thus, it is evident that the church is gathered together by the Holy Spirit, that she has being and is kept in being by Him. And that there is no other church apart from that which the Holy Spirit builds and gathers.

Amen. Dirk Phillips wrote it this way. The church of the Lord, although existing in spirit and in truth, is nevertheless also visible.

The name church or congregation indicates that it is not only invisible, but also visible. From the term used is ecclesia, that is a gathering or a meeting or a congregating together. One of John Dee's big points always.

A coming together to govern. The apostles according to the command of the Lord, notice again the emphasis on the command of the Lord, gathered a church out of all nations. This was not an invisible body for they did not write nor send their epistles or generals in a discriminative way to all people, but specifically did nominating the believers and God fearing people and designated many places and calling many persons by name.

How is it possible for all this to be invisible? Yeah, it's a good point. Good point, Dirk. Good point.

All right. Now I'm going to give you some of the different Anabaptist scholars. Just a few quotes from them.

And I want to give this to you. Harold S. Bender, who I think Brother Chester talked about today, quoted by Robert Friedman in his book *Anabaptist Vision*, said this, The answer is to be found, brother, in their doctrine of the two worlds. The new kingdom of God, which is being established in their terms and through them, is of necessity distinct from the world order which is dominated by Satan, Brother Ernest.

This goes with his message earlier. That the church and the state join in persecuting the true church is only one more bit of evidence of the wickedness of the world order, they concluded. The old church, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, has felled particularly in its mixings of the two kingdoms.

Hence the true church must be and is being reestablished separate from the world. The true church is the present kingdom of Christ which is being established in the midst of and alongside of the kingdom of this world is not to be deferred to some millennial future. Again, that was my background.

All this stuff's for some millennial reign. But I always ask, how hard is it to love your enemies in heaven? It's ridiculous. This stuff's for today.

Robert Friedman goes on. We may point to their unique and most concrete idea of the community. The brotherhood church, otherwise unknown in the Protestant world.

It is the gathering of the reborn an attempt to, watch this, an attempt to translate kingdom ideas into practical forms of everyday living. Did you catch that? It is an attempt to translate kingdom ideas into practical everyday livings. If not in terms of the fullness of the kingdom itself, then at least in what it is foreshadows.

Eschatology, the brother from Caneyville brought up a point. Eschatology is part and parcel of the theology of the kingdom which represents the very center of Anabaptist thinking and believing. The kingdom, and not merely personal salvation, is the real concern of the reborn disciple of Christ.

This kingdom may have become realized already in the small brotherhoods which sprang up everywhere. Nuclei, little cells of brotherly love and sharing, where hatred and violence were absent as far as humanly attainable. And inhumanly attainable.

I mean, the grace of God. John D. Roth is here with us today. Put it this way.

Anna, from his book *Stories, How Mennonites Came to Be*. Anabaptist teachings represent something new and dangerous in early modern European society. By calling on Christians to refrain from swearing oaths, participating in lethal violence, or serving in magisterial offices, they seem to threaten the foundations of political stability.

Listen to brother Ernest's sermon today. He talked a lot about this. The Anabaptist model of economic sharing and social equality unsettled those in positions of power.

And by defining the church as a voluntary community separated from the fallen world, the Anabaptists raised doubts about whether Europe was entitled to call itself a Christian society. Well said, brother. So, just one more.

This is an interesting quote. During this time was Frank Little. How do you say his name? Little? How do you all usually say it? Little? Okay.

He wrote this very good point on, at this time communism, Marxism was growing and this council of church made this statement and all that. It's a great quote. And so he brings this and the council of church said this.

It is the main task of the Christian community this is quoted in the recovery of the Anabaptist vision. The main task of the Christian community and the greatest service which you can render to the world is to be the Christian community. For the real tragedy of our time is that we have on the one hand an incoherent mass of individual Christians and on the other hand a powerful impulse towards new forms of community but not Christian community.

Christians today do not form a true community. And the communities which shape the new world are not Christian. The present day task of the Christian community is therefore not to enter more deeply into the world but to rediscover itself.

It must learn to understand again what Christian community means before it can go out and change the world around it. Well said. So they did this and in that command of Christ, in that kingdom reality they went forward.

As a matter of fact Conrad Grebel as soon as he left there in Zolokon they were attacking him. If you ever read Fire on the Zurich Hills it's a great book just because it kind of reveals, it really makes you appreciate these guys because the whole town was getting it and then apostatizing and getting it and apostatizing but these guys stood firm and it really gives you a perspective of what was going on. Conrad Grebel goes right out then and breaks into like a big procession, an Easter procession where the Catholics are going and Bonnie starts to preach to them and like 500 people get baptized breaking into this thing.

They were unstoppable because they had a clear vision. They were representing the kingdom of God. They had a meeting in 1527 and all the different Swiss brethren and different radical groups, well many of them got together and it's called the Martyrs' Synod because of the 60 ministers that showed up there to take the map of Europe and they said okay you take this area you take this kingdom, your church go over here and you go over here and we're going to evangelize this entire Europe but of those 60 ministers that were there five years later there were two left, two left and here's what gets me.

They had this little meeting like we're having a little meeting now and the court records if you dig through that and you see the different things that two weeks later you find that there was laws written that responded to their missionary outreach. We have missionary conferences and we say wow that would be great, that would be nice. Two weeks later they were put into action and caught and persecuted for the results that led from this day.

What an expectancy and those days there was a 95% chance that you were going to get killed if you were a missionary. 95% chance if you take those odds. Later Robert Freeman says it grew to 80%.

Now here's something incredible and this is built in but here's the point that I want to get to you with the kingdom concept of community is that this stuff comes from being radical followers of Christ. We put a lot of emphasis, divorce, remarriage, non-resistance and a lot of these things but why they just took the words of Jesus and put it into practice. I'm afraid that some of the things of Jesus were anyway here's a great little document.

This is from a government court record. They're talking about the women. These are the women, the Anabaptist women and this is one of my favorite quotes of this area.

They say this in this proclamation. The propagation activity of the Anabaptist women through word of mouth and through booklets. If they were going to the mill or going to the store they're passing out little tracts or saying something.

It was so grievous. Now listen to this. That those quote mothers who could not be banished because of their little children must be chained at home to prevent their leading so many people astray.

Wow! And one of them in the martyr's mirror mentions a friend of an Anabaptist woman who was being captured and the friend was saying dear mother can you not think what you please and keep it to yourself and then you'll not die. The Anabaptist lady said dear sister watch now I am commanded to speak and am constrained to do so hence I cannot remain silent about it. The whole concept of sharing of when you're there in your everyday life and talking about Jesus they could not keep it in no one could.

No one could. Now I'm going to show you some particular now as we go forward of the Hutterites. Now one of the beautiful things about the Hutterite heritage is the chronicles that they kept and so we have a lot of writings.

I'm assuming from this we're also getting a flavor of the Swiss Brethren. From 1525 with that first baptism till they made it to Nickelsburg in 1527 28 there was 12 thousand people that made it to Nickelsburg. So there's a lot of talking going on to make that happen.

The Hutterite missions in particular gave some and I'm inspiring us with this kingdom communities for all of us to think of the ways and I'll say this we can't relive everything exactly like they had in the past. God is a creator God. One of our whole things on Anabaptist identity conference is to be inspired by them to look for future things today.

Watch what they did. They sent brethren every year to lands near and far from the chronicles near and far. Watch now I underlined it.

According to the commands of Christ and the practice of the apostles to teach and to preach and to gather for the Lord's God's people. So in order to be able to fulfill the task laid upon them by the Lord the congregation I mean they're busy. You're in community.

It's busy. You got the canning season. You got, you know, you got to make the sausage.

You got all these different things. It is busy. So they realize in that busy schedule we're going to somehow have to schedule in this command of Christ.

So semi annual usually in the spring or the fall chose from the preachers a number of brethren to perform a widespread missionary service in all directions to preach the gospel. Watch in accordance with the commandment of Christ. They kept emphasizing this in the chronicles.

In the early days of terrible persecution they usually brought these converts back to Moravia with them. This quote just got me. You go through the Hutterian chronicles and you can study this and you get to the 30 year war.

And it's so gruesome in my copy of the Hutterian chronicles that I had to write warnings on the top because it's frankly graphic of the different things. And I don't think anybody in this room would have faulted them. Hide low.

Take it easy. Take it easy guys. But when I came to this I couldn't believe it.

So in the midst of all that terrible persecution, graphic stuff going on, whole communities burnt. In 1620 it says this. This year too we followed the example of our forefathers by sending out several brothers to various places in Germany.

They went to seek those on fire for the truth and to call people to repentance. It amazed many people in Bohemia where both hostile armies were encamped, both the Protestants and Catholics, as well as in Germany that our defenseless members sent out during times of such terrible danger where scarcely anyone, whether high or low estate, could travel in safety. But the Lord was their protector and they relied on Him alone.

When their task was complete through the intercession of His people, He led them home again in peace and safety. Although, maybe 20% of them at least. Ridderman brings out this point in the Differences of Office.

He says, in the church, Paul says God has first appointed apostles. These are the ones who are sent out by God and His church in accordance with, watch, the commands of the Gospel. To go throughout the country and establish the obedience of faith for His namesake.

This is great. Again, the last one of these quotes. Another servant, this is from the Chronicles.

Another servant of God... No, you didn't give me a ten minute. Well, you know, contracts are contracts. I've got my lawyer here.

Ten minutes is what you said. So, David, we'll talk, you know, okay. Another servant of the church of God, George Vassar, was sent by the church to Pogstahl in Austria because of the fervent longing in a number of people there.

He did not know the alphabet, but preached the Gospel with power. And even though he had just returned from prison in Modling near Vienna, he sent joyfully about the Lord's work, gathered the believers, and established a church community in accordance with God's command. Now, during that time of terrible persecution, they were able to put up a hundred different communities spread throughout because of this.

And this is just one that we happen to have nice records. The Swiss Brethren also had the same kind of spirit. The South Germans that were scattered, we just don't have as nice literature as we do from this period.

Incredible that this idea. Now, let me ask you today. In those days, they were clearly a city on a hill.

Now, are we a city on a hill today, or are we a village in the valley? Are we a city on a hill or a village in the valley? Now, let me say, I'm not throwing stones. I can't. Who gets the most accusation of being a village in the valley? Well, yeah, us.

Okay. So, I'm not throwing any stones, but I want us all. The second listing of the AIC mission statement says this, Brother Nathan.

To hold forth the ancient faith of those who have gone before us as an example for ourselves. I'm not throwing stones, but we're here today not to just congratulate ourselves. We're here to see what was it that moved these people? And then make changes for us today.

So, please, I'm not throwing stones. I'm seeing it in myself and my own people. But here's the point.

The most important point that I want to say this entire day and yesterday and the whole thing. The seed that birthed the Anabaptist movement was nothing other than Jesus. Jesus.

That's what it was. And remember, I believe the word of God without a complicated interpretation and out of this belief I speak. The teachings of the Lord have been given for the purpose of being put into practice.

They just got a bunch of young guys who said, you know what? I got an idea. Let's do it. This is great.

Let's do it. And they were excited and they had vision and they did it. I'm wrapping it up.

Without this type of emphasis, we're over and over going to get the right answers to the wrong questions. You actually get right answers to the wrong questions. And sometimes we have to.

Something comes up. Something comes in our church. We have to fight with a heresy and all this type of things and we get way away.

We talk about this, but eventually we have to bring it back to the core and say once again, it's got to look like Jesus. It's got to be his words. It's got to be his dream.

It's got to be his plans for humanity. It's got to come back or we're going to get the right answers for the wrong questions. Let me tell you just one quick parable or a story.

There was a law school project, David, and in this law school, the students got together and when the district judges said, we want you to study the way we do the jury and we're having some statistics about how the jury, we have a lot of court cases and all this and so the law school needed this grade and so they went out to do this study and they were trying to see how did the deliberation process happen in the jury. So they asked all kind of questions. Was it with men or women? What was their ethnic backgrounds? Were they younger? What did the place look like? What kind of clothes were they wearing? What kind of food? They asked everything and in their statistics, you know what they found out? The thing that seemed to make the difference is the table.

The students came up with the idea that they said, well, we think that it's the table. So they came out here and they had their statistics and they showed that the places that had the round table had more people talking. Everybody was included and the places that had this long table, just one guy dominated and the whole thing went on.

So we were suggesting we have round tables. They were so excited about their data. They went to the local district judge and said, here's what it is.

We think this is. So you know what happened? They were going through and the judge gave up this warning. He said this.

All jury rooms that have round and oval tables are to have them tables removed and replace them with rectangular tables. Now they had just proved that round tables were better and more equitable or

whatever and see, he didn't want that. He wanted to get his court cases done and he wanted to know whatever could get these court cases done.

If one guy dominates, I don't care. I want to get the court cases done. The question is here.

I think we all know what's wrong. I sometimes wonder if we want to know. Are we like this court judge? The words of Jesus are the answer.

They are the answer. Coming to the end. I want you to dream with me.

What if Jesus really meant every word he said? In this generation, let's put it to practice again. Are we a city on a hill or a village in the valley? I don't care who you are. I'm not asking you to change the different things.

The Amish that you're here, I'm so blessed that you're here and you have something to offer. Do you know from my background if the bishops of the Amish church today would make a press conference, not saying you would, just hypothetically, would make a press conference and say we have something to speak to the nation. CNN, all the news would be there to hear.

You have won the attention of the world. Now use it for his gospel. You know, and I love, you have a rebuke to us in all our fancy stuff and our cars and our houses.

It is a rebuke to us. Live that rebuke. But live it out.

I have a friend of mine in Boston, Matthew Milioni, had a beautiful vision of doing a farm community on the outskirts of Detroit. In 1912 the Egli Amish from Bern in 1912 going on all the way with buggies and trains and ships, made it to the Congo. Set up a little translating community.

Back when people thought the Congo still had dinosaurs, they pulled it off. I say live your radical way of life with a kingdom vision. People are listening.

People are watching. The Mennonites, the Brethren, the Hutterites, the radicals that are here, let's let the words of Jesus live out. Live this assembly with passion to see Jesus manifested.

And not abstract, but simple words of Jesus. Because that's what I'm talking about. So, my last slide.

I have a dream. I have a dream that armed with the faith of Jesus, the Anabaptist church would once again focus our energies on fulfilling Jesus' command to take the gospel of the kingdom and preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the jubilee of the Lord. Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You, Lord. And we do want to say right now, Lord, that You very clearly proclaimed You would build Your church. You would build Your church.

And so God, we want to confess tonight of all the different ideas and movements and different suggestions and all the different right answers to the wrong questions, and tonight, dear Heavenly Father, we want to lift up Jesus Christ and give You that liberty to build Your church. But, oh God, give us the grace in this age we're being cast to and fro by every wind of doctrine. May the simplicity of the gospel of the kingdom and the words of Jesus Christ permeate in our hearts and life again and be put into practice by Your grace.

I ask this Father to do it again in our generation. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Wes Weaver, Claypool, Indiana. Thank you, Dean, for that message. Thank you, David.

Thank you, Dean and David for those messages. My dear people, my last name was born in the Reformation days. Twelve generations ago, my grandfather was martyred.

He's in the martyr's mirror. But today God is not so concerned about preserving a particular name. It's His name.

Amen. And I just want to encourage every one of you. Let's seek the Lord until the fire of God's Spirit falls on us.

Will we remain silent? We have this movement called Revive Indiana. It's going to sweep this country. The goal is all 50 states and then Jerusalem.

It is the spirit of the Antichrist. It is the emergent church. It is joining hands with the Catholics.

It is joining hands with all denominations. For anyone that cares to study the background of it, I have found few people, few plain people, that are willing to stand up and call it for what it is. I've went to a meeting.

I have nothing in common. There was no spirit of God in that place. It is a big party.

They've got the rock and roll music. They're rocking around. All you got to do is say, you know, we're sinners.

And Jesus died for us. And party on. It's not from God.

But these people are out. They're going from door to door. And if we don't rise up and equip ourselves with the Word of God, they will be getting your young people.

They already are. And so it's just a word of encouragement. Let's rise up.

Men of God. Equip ourselves with the Word of God. Thank you.

What did you say your name was? Wes Weaver. Thank you for speaking. I was trying to get over there also to take in a meeting of that and I just wasn't able to get there.

So I thank you for speaking up and for sharing a word on this. I appreciate that. May God bless you.

Anybody else have a question? Because I wanted to question, but I don't know anything about the Indiana Revival, so we'll let it stand as... Thank you, Dean. God bless you. Thanks for sharing.

This is my heart. This is our hearts.

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