



***“Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His Name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing Psalms to Him; talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy Name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face evermore! Remember His marvellous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,”*** 1 Chronicles 16:8-12

### **Working for Reformation Today**

This was my fourth Mission in four months. We have been promoting 2017 as Reformation 500 for many years, actually, since my Mission to Europe in 2005, so it is understandable that we have received many invitations to conduct Reformation 500 conferences in so many countries.

### **Across the Atlantic**

The day after Resurrection Sunday, I flew off to Pennsylvania, where I was a speaker at the Reformation 500 Conference. Leaving Cape Town after an intense flurry of activity, I had hoped to catch up on some sleep on the International flights, but that was not to be. The seats were so crammed that one cannot help but be jostled, bumped and pushed by passengers to the left, right and behind. Being a light sleeper I found it impossible to sleep for more than a few moments at a time before being jostled by one of the neighbours in such close proximity on these crammed flights. There was also a lot of intense traffic in Philadelphia and my host, Ben Francis and I, barely had time to quickly change and dash off to make the evening meeting of the Reformation 500 Conference. At that stage I had been awake for 2 days and nights.

### **Reformation 500 Conference**



This was held in scenic Lancaster County amidst Amish and Mennonite communities. The

presentations I was requested to present, included: *A Geo-Strategic Overview of the Greatest Century of Reformation*, *A Call to Prayer for Revival*, *How the Reformation Changed the World and the Church*, *John Calvin and the Huguenots*, *The English Reformation*, *Martin Luther and the Reformation in Germany*, *Ulrich Zwingli and the Swiss Reformation*

and

*Reformation Today*

. (You can hear these messages on our

[Sermon.Audio](#)

page.)

### **Great Speakers and Fellowship**

Also speaking at the Conference was Dr. William Einwechter, a long-time friend and supporter of our Mission, author of *Walking in the Law of the Lord* and *Ethics and God's Law*. His presentations on *The Just Shall Live By Faith*, *The Theology and History of Reformation Bible Translations* and *Sola Scriptura in Worship*, were outstanding. Rev. Steven Hamilton from Northern Ireland and I had numerous friends in common, including the late Dr. Ian Paisley of Martyrs Memorial Church in Belfast. There was much to discuss and praise God for.



### **Educational Projects**

Most of the homeschoolers who participated in the conference were from Mennonite families. Benjamin organised educational activities of printing and woodcuts, copying Scriptures with quills and bottles of ink and educational projects that had the students scouring the over 40 Reformation displays he and his family had put together in a major labour of love throughout the previous year. I decided to take the home schoolers exam and sat down thinking I could complete it all from memory. However, Ben's questions were so involved and demanding that I found myself only able to answer half from memory and for the rest needed to carefully read the displays on the Reformation in Hungary, Spain, Sweden and Italy, to find the required answers!

### **Were the Anabaptists Persecuted for their Faith?**

Conducting a Reformation 500 Conference in Lancaster Country amidst Mennonites and Amish people, it was inevitable that I would be asked: *Why did the Reformers kill Anabaptists?* This is a volatile subject and there has been an enormous amount of misinformation on the subject. My

answer was: The Reformers did not kill anyone for their faith. The early Anabaptists were violent revolutionaries. Thomas Muntzer and John of Leyden, who incited the Peasant's Revolt of 1524-1525, have been claimed by Frederick Engels and Karl Marx as *"the world's first communists"*.

### **Violent Revolutionaries**



Muntzer issued proclamations damning all land owners, magistrates and Reformers to death: *"I would like to smell your frying carcass"*

he wrote to Luther. Muntzer exhorted his followers:

*"Let your swords be ever warm with blood!"*

Muntzer's army of Anabaptists struck terror throughout the country sides, robbing, burning and destroying homes, churches, castles and monasteries, looting and massacring old and young, men and women.

### **The Reformers Were Opposing Revolutionaries Not Pacifists**

Naturally, the Reformers dissociated from these violent revolutionaries and called on the princes to restore order. This was a matter of resisting violent revolution by communists. Just as it would be unfair to confuse the later generations of pacifist Anabaptists with these violent revolutionaries, it is not fair to blame Reformers who opposed the violent revolutionaries with interfering with the religious freedoms of the later pacifist Anabaptists.

### **Anabaptists Only Flourished in Protestant Countries**

The fact is that Amish and Mennonites only flourished in Protestant controlled areas. They were eliminated from Catholic controlled areas, such as Spain, Italy, France and Belgium. The Anabaptists of today can trace their ancestors to Protestant countries: Germany, Holland and Switzerland, where religious toleration and freedom of conscience were respected.

### **Ministry of the Word**

We also had the opportunity to explore the best library of Anabaptist and Mennonite writings and ancient Bibles in North America. On Sunday, I preached at Immanuel Free Reformed Church on *1 Corinthians 15:58: "Be Steadfast, Immovable..."* and in the evening gave a Mission Report.





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