

Anabaptist History in Three Minutes

(To be read by two readers: Reader 1—the stanzas; Reader 2—the italicized words)

Luther knew he had to do something—
Because this verse was true:
For it's by grace you are saved through faith;
Through faith, not of yourselves.

So what did he do?

Wrote arguments, 95 theses
And hung them on the door
Of the Castle Church in Germany
In 1517.

What did he argue?

That all people should read the Bible
Not just the pope and priests
That the church should not sell forgiveness
That grace from God is free.

Did they argue back?

Back and forth, the Reformers and Church
Until the Reformers
Were kicked out of church, named heretics.
The Protestants were born.

And then there was peace?

The Reformers just couldn't agree.
"You need to go further,"
Said Zwingli to Luther, "Stop church fees.
And reading Latin texts."

And then what happened?

Zwingli expanded Luther's reforms,
And worked with the council
In Switzerland's city of Zurich
For calm, gradual change.

And then there was peace?

The Reformers still couldn't agree.
Grebel, Blaurock, and Manz
Told Zwingli, "Go further and faster.
Separate church and state."

What else did they say?

Having read the Bible like Zwingli
Had taught them, they told him
To baptize believers, not babies—
Way too young to know what they believe.

And then what happened?

"One week to decide," said the council.
"Baptize all your babies,
Or get kicked out of town, deported."
A trial, a showdown.

And what did they do?

They met on a wintery night, Manz,
And Grebel and Blaurock
And baptized not babies, but baptized
Each other, becoming the hunted.

No peace, I take it.

Not peace, but the dirtiest nickname
Of that time and that place—
Anabaptists. Baptized as babies.
Now re-baptized—again.

Still no peace for them?

Not peace. Fierce persecution, instead:
Beheadings and tongue screws,
Burnings, stretchings, cuttings, and drownings,
Thousands executed.

Tell me one story.

Anneken Heyndricks refused to recant.
Gunpowder in her mouth
Tied to a ladder set on fire
She looked up, prayed, and died.

And what can I say?

Over ice a guard chased Dirk Willem
Through cracked ice fell the guard.
Dirk turned back, pulled the guard from the pond.
And faced death by fire.

Did all of them die?

Not Menno Simons—a priest who watched
As people died and read
The Bible to see what it said and
Then asked to be baptized.

Then what did he do?

He traded status for poverty,
Well-being for danger,
Traveled to teach what the New Testament says:

- Believe to be baptized.
- Show love all the time.
- Don't join church and state.
- Do priest work with people.
- Live with one purpose—to glorify God.

And if you believe these teachings.
The Reformers are your parents.

And you help to bring the peace of God to people.