

als And Church History :: Gelassenheit—Purposeful Detachment by Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von K

Gelassenheit—Purposeful Detachment by Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von Karlstadt - posted by sermonindex (), on:

Overview of a tract by Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486-1541)

An explanation of the concept of the German word Gelassenheit.

One who lets go of or leaves something is a “detached” person. Although one who has been abandoned may be called a detached person, the difference is that “abandoned” is passive (the action has been done to him) and “detached” is active (or reflexive, meaning the person does it to himself). If you wish a Latin term for this, I can think of no better one than the word of Christ, who said, “Whoever leaves father and mother, etc.” The Latin uses *relinquo* (relinquish). However, there are other Latin terms, such as *deserere* (desert) or *renunciare* (renounce) or *dimittere* (dismiss), which describe Gelassenheit.

Take note how that the love to a wife surpasses and cuts out the love to father and mother, where it is written, “A man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife.” In the same way, the love of God ought to displace all love and delight which we naturally have toward created things. Yes, we must dismiss all created things if we want to have God as our Protector and Indweller or Lord.

From the Gelassenheit that married couples experience (letting go of father and mother to adhere to a spouse), we can learn how we are to divest ourselves of all things and rise above the created, for the uncreated and higher things.

Gelassenheit

Bind the gift upon the altar,
Break the alabaster bowl,
Lay Thy hands upon my spirit—
Hold me under Thy control.
I would not be found unwilling
When my Master gives commands;
Though I struggle, keep me, Savior
In the Potter’s tender hands.

Take my dearest heart’s desires,
If they tend away from Thee;
Lift my eyes from fleshly baubles
So that Thou art all I see.
Joy is here upon Thy altar—
Pain and tears may be the price—
But I will not, cannot, offer
That which is no sacrifice.

—Claudia Esh

What we must let go of

Note, then, that I am not in any way to seek my own. The word “mine” includes my honor, my advantage, my hurt, my desire, my displeasure, my reward, my suffering, my life, my death, my sadness, my joy, and everything that might affect a person—be it in material goods, or in things that affect the body or inner being, such as intellect, willpower, and desires. Everything to which the ego and “I-ness” may cling must leave and fall off, if I am to be “detached.”

We must continue in this path, not just start in it. I must be so fully immersed in God’s will as to have truly died to self. I should desire therefore to be nailed to a cruel, shameful cross and have a holy dread of “myself” and to become wholly ashamed of “my” thoughts, desires, and “my” self-centered deeds, as if they were a horrible vice that should be avoided, just like one avoids a yellow, pussy boil. I should see my inability to do the good and, on the other hand, my ca

capacity for and inclination toward everything evil, punishable, and shameful.

Seek only the necessary

I should seek nothing from created things but what is necessary for survival. We must seek God, but we must not seek the created unless it is to serve, just as a sick person eats his food with great trepidation, from sheer necessity or as a medicine for survival, but not for mere pleasure. Yes, eating and drinking is the body's necessity, but a God-fearing person does so with great fear, being ever mindful not to forget that the One who gave him food and drink is God alone.

Christ says in clear words: "Unless a person leaves all he possesses, he cannot be my disciple." Note how bitter and harsh the school of Christ is, and what a frightful, pitiable thing it is to our intellect, will, and nature. Note also that Christ was right in saying, "Whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Lk. 14:27 Christ teaches that the kind of Gelassenheit (detachment) which surrenders everything is a daily cross that we must carry without standing still. Rather, we must follow Christ and be where Christ is in will, thought, love, and desire, suffering at the right hand of God. Everything that is ours must be fused into God's eternal will and become nothing.

Christ did not speak of this virtue only one time or in a farewell speech. Rather, He said many times—and in one epilogue frequently—that an apprentice had to do the same as the person who is considering building a house or tower: he would have to check his pouch or bag and count his wealth to see whether he could finish such a building. When he finds himself sufficiently capable, he then begins building.

All Christians must do the same. Those who intend to become students of Christ must first consider and mull over everything. Yes, in the end, they must bid them farewell and yield them in a way and with the intention of one who finally lets go of something he hates and no longer wants to take to himself. This is called renunciare (renounce)—to completely let go of a thing and drive it away from oneself.

Anyone who thus surrenders all things can become a disciple and apprentice of Christ. The soul must be "without form", i.e. naked and deserted of all created things, if it is to receive God and let God possess, rule, and adorn it, just like the first creation (of heaven and earth). Until we can divest ourselves of everything created, we should not dream of becoming a disciple of Christ. Let no one think that God enters, as long as creatures fill, comfort, or please the soul, as it says in Jeremiah 7:24, "They departed from me in their desires and the wickedness of their hearts and refused to hear me." If we turn our backs on such a Lord and repudiate Him, should He then turn His face toward us and be well-disposed? No, these "two-timers" have turned Christ's forgiveness into a lottery.

Spiritual circumcision

Were I to love something besides God, I should not love God with my whole heart. For that place in my heart which loves something else is taken away from God; hence, I cannot love God with all my heart. This love is spiritual circumcision, i.e., a cutting away from the heart of all created things. As long as not all of the created things are separated from the heart, the heart is not able to love God fully. When help, comfort, and trust are sought in a thing which is not God, the heart is uncircumcised. For this reason it is said that faith circumcises the heart, because it lifts up the heart to trust God, robbing it of comfort in everything else.

Attached to God

It must be noted, moreover, that God attaches and affixes us with that glue called love. A truly believing heart clings to nothing other than God, and since the love of God is the glue that binds us to God, it follows that a circumcised and loving heart has abandoned all created things and in love clings to nothing other than God. Further, it is impossible for God's love to enter a heart unless love, desire, comfort, and trust in anything created have gone from the heart. Circumcision and expulsion of the created happens so that we might love God with all our hearts, saying, "God shall circumcise your heart that you might love him with all your heart." De. 30:6

Gelassenheit and circumcision of the heart are the same thing

Consider whether it is not the same to say, "No one can love God unless his heart is circumcised of all desires, trust, comfort, and fear of created things," and what Moses and Christ say, "Unless we let go of all we have (i.e., the things in which we find comfort, pleasure, and trust, or which we fear), we cannot be His disciple." We read that Christ called numerous people to His supper, none of whom came, since each of them had an excuse. One had bought land, another

had bought some oxen, the third had entered into marriage, etc. Lu. 14:18-21 All of them discovered their clogged and unyielded hearts in that they could not or would not hear God's voice and accept the invitation to a good meal.

In this parable, Christ also names the created things we must abandon if we wish to hear and obey His voice and teaching and truly know and love God. Christ names land, oxen, and a wife. Although these point to all other creatures which we are to let go of, I will name a few other things Christ also mentioned: houses and fields; brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers, children, and wife; and further, our own soul.

Idleness and self-idleness

If we wish to be yielded persons and to become disciples of Christ, we must let go of everything and surrender all that might affect us in any way. For example, nothing good must be appropriated to ourselves. Neither must we covet anything natural. It is certainly true that if you reach the point at which you have divested yourself of your own person, you are free of everything.

I do think it necessary to say again that such Gelassenheit is not the same releasing as one might drop a nickel out of his hand. We must not, of course, kill either father or mother, or commit suicide. Hence, this Gelassenheit is a cutting off of love, pleasure, worry, trust, and fear that we may have in and for ourselves and the things that are ours. In short, such letting go is to destroy all that we are and a turning away from everything that we might covet, so that God alone is our love, pleasure, worry, trust, help, fear, and everything. To Him we must cling!

We must let go of earth so that we can grasp heaven.

This "letting go" is "Gelassenheit."

Letting go and letting God provide

In common with animals, we seek food and drink. And, we relate with our relatives. But as a Christian, we do not have in common with unbelievers to be full of care about these things. We must be free of care, like animals, and enjoy our food only as a necessity—as cattle do.

Yet, we are worse than horses and mules, for we eat and drink more than is necessary and what is good for our health. We anger God by setting up our belly as our god. We ought to open our eyes and look to the lilies and trees and to birds and learn from these creatures just who it is that clothes and feeds them, and whether they worry or not. But because we worry about clothing, a place to rest, and food and drink, we must needs cling to these created things. But Christ has this to say about that: "O ye of little faith."

Anyone who is burdened by confidence, comfort, desire, care, and fear with regard to money or food sins against faith by as much as he has cares about money and food. Why? Because Christ says that we always show little trust and confidence in His heavenly Father when we worry excessively about food, drink, and clothing.

Note that this sin (unyieldedness in trusting God) indicates or reveals an uncircumcised heart, and that with such a sin a person must hate or at least neglect God and count Him for naught or little. You may conclude from all this that we must cling to God, and His kingdom alone, in sure confidence, with fervent love, and in certain fear... and all necessities will be added unto us. Mt. 6:33

No looking back

Yes, we must firmly and with steadfast eyes seek God alone so that we would rather die than look back. Similarly, we should prefer to die a thousand times rather than willingly step away from God even once. Whenever we fix our eyes on temporal goods, it means stepping away from God. Christ says it like this, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Lu. 9:62

Hear then, my brothers, that we are unfit to enter the school of Christ when we look back. And understand how you must cut away everything or sever everything from your heart and you must sweep your house clean, if you wish to be an apprentice of Christ. Place Luke 9 and Luke 14 side by side and compare them by combining their meaning, and you will undoubtedly get a shock and cry out! What poor people we are! O, how we are in need of the suffering of Christ at all times

Remember Lot's wife

Lot's wife was probably looking back on her goods, income, or friends when God had sulphur and fire rain down on Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying everything that was blooming. Now, the same thing that will happen when Christ shall appear, must also take place within a person when Christ secretly lets His light shine in the heart. If we wish to be yielded Christians, we must not be anxious to acquire goods and preserve wagonloads full of food. Neither must we be shocked when the goods we now have already acquired vanish in an instant. Neither should the goods we now have either comfort or console us. Instead, we ought to accept the kingdom of God, that is, His eternal will, with love and delight.

Pride not yourself of your Gelassenheit

Note that when you recognize, confess, and shun the above-named things that we must detach ourselves from, do not let your knowledge, confession, and letting go become your love and joy, lest you perish for loving your Gelassenheit. It often happens that a person is slapped in the face for God's sake, and he decides not to take revenge or offense. Yet, he would very much like to have his patience praised, or to be taken for a Christian on account of his patience! Or, he might be secretly irked for having allowed himself to be hit without hitting back, although he was strong enough to have defended himself, or allowed himself to be called a donkey, partier, or peasant, without retorting. Nonetheless, he has an eye on his suffering and stands there, enjoying and loving it when he should have fled this love also, for God's sake, to serve God alone and focus his eyes on God only.

It all boils down to this: all who wish to serve God ought not to serve Him halfheartedly, but with all their soul and will.

God gave things to man to be used, not to be loved.

Origen - Commentary on Song of Songs

Self

From all this you may learn the meaning of self and also how a true and detached service of God uplifts the eyes of the soul toward the unfathomable will of God, creeping into the fathomless good which is God himself, where there can be no ego or self. For as long as the soul looks upon nothing other than God's will and the eternally good which is God, the heart, too, will not be grounded in any created thing.

In short, anyone who wishes to be totally yielded and be the one who detaches himself must irrevocably divest himself of self and freely give up his I-ness or self-centeredness. Then the yielded self must become one with the divine will, so that he does not see, hear, taste, desire, understand, or will anything other than God's will. Whatever prevents or diverts a person from accepting God's will must become a place of martyrdom.

This is the cross which we must carry daily!

The new life in Christ

Then the despised, surrendered, and forsaken ego, selfhood, or I-ness becomes a Christ-like, Christian life. And one discovers that his life is no more human life, but divine life, and that it is not I, but Christ in me. Ga. 2:20 Whether or not we have thus yielded our ego or self can be determined and decided when nothing pleases us except what pleases God, and when we desire nothing of any created thing except what God wills. Then we are detached, because we no longer love what we will, but only that which God wills. And, we desire everything to will what God wills. In this, i.e., in God's will, our love, desire, joy, glory, life, and salvation are rooted. We therefore pray sincerely, "Lord, your will be done on earth as in heaven! Let your will work mightily in all earthly creatures!"

Christ—the way, the truth, the life

God sent us Christ His Son (who led such a yielded life in the highest and best manner), to be the way, the truth, and the life. We will not be deceived as long as we follow in His steps and walk as He walked. That is why we must see what Christ and the immovable truth teach.

Two kinds of seeds

Christ told a parable in which a seed that had not died bears no fruit and remains alone. To such a seed, Christ compare

s the person who loves his natural life, but ends up destroying it. He destroys it by keeping it alive, in the same way that a grain cannot bear any fruit as long as it is alive. According to this, we cannot have new life or good works as long as we love ourselves. Everything is lost and worthless and not of God, no matter how much we make a show of it, as long as we remain in self-love. God curses such a tree and its leaves, and consigns it to the fire because it bears no fruit. We may run, work, sing, fast, pray, suffer tribulation . . . but it is all in vain in God's eyes if we continue to love the natural life.

When the soul irrevocably turns away from the natural desires, it is a baptism in the death of Christ.
Hatred of the soulish life

It is not sufficient simply not to love one's soulish life. A strong salt must be added; a supernatural hatred and envy must replace our love for created things. There, the grain must die and bear fruit. There, love, desire, partiality, and all lusts of the soul must die. There, the soul irrevocably turns away from the natural desires. This is baptism in the death of Christ—the old, natural life is being attached to the cross of Christ; pierced, killed, and buried with Christ in baptism, to rise again. Not in the old, natural life, but in the new, unnatural life. Ro. 6:4-11 One is then able to say truthfully, "It is not I who live, but Christ in me." Ga. 2:20

There are two lives which are opposed to each other and in tension: the old and natural, and the new or supernatural; the life of the old Adam and that of the new Christ; the earthly and the heavenly life. The love of and inclination to the old life comes from below, from the earth and the flesh, and it is earthly and carnal. For that which is born of flesh is flesh. But the new life, the new love, the new inclination, and the new fear come from above, from heaven where rebirth takes place. Jn. 3:6

The old life consists of disobedience and self-will and loves itself in everything it does; it complains and groans when someone gets too close. The new life is the pure will and obedience of God and hates the soulishness of a person in all its active and affective aspects; it kisses the father's rod, however hard and long he may be hit.

The dangers of our life

You can see what great danger our life is in and how quickly an unyielded person destroys his soul. For as soon as we love ourselves and not purely for the sake of God's will, we are corrupted. I suppose that Gelassenheit may be seen in the words of Moses, "You must not till or plow the land with firstborn oxen. You must not shear firstborn sheep. They are holy to God." De. 15:19 What else is tilling and plowing to indicate to us, than that we must not serve ourselves with God's gifts? Firstborn oxen belong to God, therefore no one was allowed to till with firstborn oxen.

All good gifts and everything God wants, He creates in His servants; and all that is good belongs to God, not to us. For that reason, we must not serve ourselves, but God, with good things. And what does "You must not shear firstborn sheep" mean, other than that you must not seek your own advantage, honor, glory, or any other thing for your own benefit, in all the things God consecrated unto Himself—which is everything God created?

Faith

Christ does not conceal who is able to believe. "Seek God's honor, which comes from God alone, if you wish to believe," says Christ. When God's glory, honor, praise, will, and love rule in us with power, then ego, I-ness, and self-absorption must wither and become nothing. This is the very characteristic and nature of faith—to see God's glory and our shame, God's virtue and strength and our wickedness and weakness, God's something and being and our nothingness.

Therefore, it is impossible to have faith and remain outside of Gelassenheit, because God's honor must be directed to God and not to ourselves. Where there is no Gelassenheit, there is no faith.

Pure love

Christ says also, "I know that you do not have God's love in you, for you seek your own honor." Jn. 5:44 God's love and the love of our soulishness cannot stand together. Now, it might happen that we abandon lands, parents, children, and wife, and yet be unyielded in our soul. This happens when we love and enjoy the surrender and yielding in and of ourselves.

Whatever I am to love, I must love it for God's sake and because it pleases God. If I love a person for the joy of it or for my sake, I must relinquish love when such a person is against God.

The reason for our creation

God created us for good works, which He made so that we might walk in them. Ep. 2:10 If there is a good thought, a good will, a good existence, or a good work in us, it is God alone who is the Creator of them. We have no right to claim them or fancy ourselves to be the originator of them. If we attribute something to ourselves which we have no right to claim, we steal and rob God of what is His.

Unyieldedness is a thieving robber, claiming good that is not its own. If God moves a person to do good, it is like a stick that is being moved. We cannot appropriate to ourselves that which happens through Christ's power in us, any more than we can attribute power to a dead stick that is moved.

I will soon write more on this subject. Meanwhile, be manly and strong in your desire toward God! Amen. ~

Re: Gelassenheit—Purposeful Detachment by Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von Karlstadt - posted by vdespinoza, on:

Wow... What an astonishing tract! This gives a totally other meaning to carrying your cross daily and death of the old life. To think of all that still "clogs" me from hearing his voice to "accept the invitation to a good meal."

We must let go of earth so that we can grasp heaven.

This "letting go" is "Gelassenheit."

Letting go and letting God provide

The detached person is perpetually waiting on God --- for everything. It would be a completely different and intoxicating world if Christians lived in this manner. Revival accounts would be too many to count; they wouldn't just be a past event or something to desperately look forward to.

Thank you for this strong post.

Re: Gelassenheit—Purposeful Detachment by Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von Karlstadt - posted by UntoBabes (), on:

Quote:
-----Christ says in clear words: "Unless a person leaves all he possesses, he cannot be my disciple." Note how bitter and harsh the school of Christ is, and what a frightful, pitiable thing it is to our intellect, will, and nature.

I am amazed at the bold language in this tract.

People don't write like this any more in today's evangelism. No wonder we are in apostasy.

Re: - posted by Aussiedler, on: 2011/8/12 8:00

Who is this guy? Although I am from Germany and familiar with many of the faith-heros, I never heard of him.

Amish Culture in Gelassenheit., on: 2011/8/12 11:01

Abiding in Christ is the only way we can bear fruit....not the adaption of an organized and legal church lifestyle.

13. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

14. !!"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."!!

15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

"The most important factor of Amish life is Gelassenheit, or submission to the will of God. Gelassenheit is based primarily on Jesus' words, "not my will but thine be done." By giving up individuality and any thought of selfishness, they

embrace God's will by serving others and submitting to Him.".....below in article...

The Amish, called "The Plain People" or Old Order Amish, originated in Switzerland about 1525. They come from an impressive list of martyrs. They were put in sacks and thrown into rivers in Europe. There are no Amish left in Europe; The Amish were saved from extinction by William Penn who granted a haven from religious persecution in America. Since early colonial days the Amish have lived in the United States preserving their distinctive culture, dress, language and religion in peace and prosperity.

To this day they endure as a distinctive folk group because they have preserved a mentality of separation from the world and the sentiments of persecuted strangers in the land. They wear plain clothing fastened with hooks and eyes, not buttons. Their men wear broad-brimmed black hats, plain-cut trousers and the women and even little girls wear bonnets and ankle length dresses. They generally oppose automobiles, electricity, telephones and higher education beyond eighth grade.

The Amish live in nineteen states, Canada, and Central America. However, 80 percent of the Amish live in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana.

Excerpts, adaptations, and/or slight modifications from Origins of the Old Order Amish.

The Amish broke away from the Mennonites nearly 300 years ago when differences arose among Anabaptist leaders in Switzerland and Alsace. Seeking a stricter lifestyle including the Streng Meidung, or shunning, which includes the social avoidance of erring church members.

Persistence of tradition and slowness to modernize have characterized the Amish as they have steadily sought to carve out their lifestyle which is a culture apart from the world.

General characteristics that encompass all Old Order Amish groups seem to include these:

- Separatism
- Simple life
- Family life
- Harmony with the soil and nature
- Mutual assistance
- Disciplined church community

Excerpts, adaptations, and/or slight modifications from The Amish in Northern Indiana.

The Amish do not despise technology and even have incorporated many technologies into their culture. Other technologies, however, have been rejected completely or used within certain limitations as a result of deep religious beliefs and the rules that guide and maintain their distinct culture.

The Amish prefer a culture based on a community of the faithful. Families tend to congregate in small communities. Most Amish have very few relations outside of the Amish faith. Those who are not Amish are considered outsiders and are simply referred to as the "English."

All clothing is sewn at home, buttons are not allowed, and only pins are used to keep clothing closed. Women's hair is covered at all times and men wear plain felt or straw hats when outside of the house.

The most important factor of Amish life is Gelassenheit, or submission to the will of God. Gelassenheit is based primarily on Jesus' words, "not my will but thine be done." By giving up individuality and any thought of selfishness, they embrace God's will by serving others and submitting to Him.

Any technology that does not uphold the Gelassenheit principles is banned from use. Electricity is seen as a connection with the outside world and violates the Amish principle of separation from society. Electricity also promotes the use of household items, such as the television, that allow the outside, "English," values of sloth, luxury, and vanity to infiltrate the household. Automobiles are not often used because they degrade the Gelassenheit principle of a small, close-knit community. The telephone is banned from the household because, much like the automobile, it promotes a separation of community.

Each Amish community maintains a list of written or unwritten rules, called Ordnung, that regulates all aspects of Amish activity. The rules pertain to all aspects of Amish life, such as clothing, child bearing, weekend activities, church activities, and occupational activities.

"!!The Ordnung is not considered the law of God; instead, it is interpreted as a set of guidelines for living a Godly and pious life. "!!...BT

There is a common misconception about the Amish opinion of medical technology. The Ordnung actually says nothing about the acceptance of modern medicine. Most Amish have no problem visiting an optometrist for vision correction, seeing a dentist for a semiannual checkup, or going to a local physician for an examination. The Amish usually will not refuse medical treatment for serious illness.

Excerpts, adaptations, and/or slight modifications from:

"The Amish: Technology Practice and Technological Change."

anabaptists.org

I thought this relevant and interesting.

Re: - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2011/8/12 11:01

Aussiedler,

Here are some cut/paste information about him from Global Anabaptist-Mennonite Encyclopedia.
Karlstadt, Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von (1486-1541)

Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein Karlstadt studied scholastic philosophy and theology at the universities of Erfurt (1499) and Cologne (1503), became an influential professor of theology at the University of Wittenberg (1505-1522), in a short time winning high honors and offices. In 1516 he acquired the juristic doctorate (in Siena) and the prospect of a higher ecclesiastical position.

Returning from Rome and Siena to Wittenberg early in 1517, he joined Luther in promoting the Reformation. Influenced by Augustine, the German mystics, and Luther, he attacked with tongue and pen the known errors and abuses of the Catholic Church. In this he was on Luther's side; but in his efforts at reform and his doctrinal ideas he went his own way, which often brought him close to the position of Anabaptism.

Karlstadt was a Biblical theologian. "Turn your eyes and ears toward the Scriptures!" The text and canon he regarded with remarkably scholarly independence and freedom; yet he insisted on the unconditional spiritual authority of the entire Bible, including the Epistle of James, which he, contrary to Luther and in accord with the Anabaptists, valued very highly for its ethical content. In the summer semester of 1520 he declared before a large audience: "I am grieved by the bold depreciation of James" by Luther. Faith and works belong together organically. "Beware that you do not take a paper and lawless faith for the greatest work," he warned the Lutherans, who at once accused him of legalism and fanaticism.

As early as 1521 he took a genuinely Anabaptist position on the oath: "It would be better if oaths were discarded, because through oaths no one becomes better; many, however, become worse. He who does not honor God will never honor an oath. Therefore let it fall into disuse."

At the communion service held with a large congregation at Christmas 1521, which was the first to be observed in both kinds, he emphatically stressed the necessity for faith in receiving the emblems. Outward formalism and images in the churches he considered reprehensible. "Having images in our churches is contrary to the first commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods!" Nevertheless Karlstadt cannot be held responsible for the iconoclasm of the masses early in 1522. He had scarcely any contact with the Zwickau prophets and Thomas Müntzer. "There is a deep chasm between their views and Karlstadt's religious thinking" (Barge, 403). Karlstadt disliked disorder and always defended orderly government. In his church innovations and social improvements (abolition of begging) he proceeded hand in hand with the Wittenberg council, and was the instigator of the famous "Ordnung der Stadt Wittenberg," which the council passed on 24 January 1522.

Elector Friedrich III was, however, displeased with Karlstadt's conspicuous reforms, especially in his change of the cult. So the Mass was restored, Luther having come from the Wartburg to Wittenberg on 6 March for that very purpose. Karlstadt retreated to his pastorate in Orlamünde and here continued his reformation. As an ardent exponent of the priesthood of the believers—he himself wished to be called a "new layman" and took off his priestly robes—he now sharply attacked the Mass, without Luther's regard for "weaker brethren." He spiritualized the sacraments, denying the necessity of baptism and communion. These reforms disturbed Wittenberg to the extent that Luther had him banished from electoral territory in September 1524; he then fled to South Germany and Switzerland.

The Swiss Brethren, who eagerly read his tracts, sided with Karlstadt against Luther. Conrad Grebel, who was corresponding with Karlstadt, wrote to Vadian, "A reasonable reader will judge from the Karlstadt books that Luther is retrogressing, and that he is an excellent procrastinator and a competent defender of his scandal." In the letter Grebel and his associates wrote to Müntzer on 5 September 1524 (the letter written to Karlstadt by Andrew Castelberger, in the name of the group was unfortunately lost), Karlstadt was frequently mentioned.

Against infant baptism Karlstadt, unlike the Anabaptists, spoke only incidentally, classing it as an "outward thing" with circumcision. He said, to be sure, that it was better to postpone baptism until the candidate was sure of his faith, and that it was superficial of Luther to baptize infants who do not understand their lusts, to say nothing of the death of their lusts through Christ. Karlstadt's wife refused to have her own son baptized (1525).

After a short meeting with the Swiss Brethren in Zürich, in October 1524, there were apparently no contacts between them and Karlstadt. They did not enter into his dispute on the communion, though they read and distributed his tract on the subject; its printing in Basel was arranged for by Felix Manz and Karlstadt's son-in-law, Dr. Gerhard Westerburg.

Ludwig Haetzer, however, was banished from Augsburg for siding with Karlstadt against Urban Rhegius in the dispute on communion. —The strange view of Karlstadt that in the words, "This is my body," Christ was referring to His own body, was accepted in some Anabaptist circles, as the testimony of Veit Frick of Württemberg (Gutenberg) before the magistrates on 29 July 1563 shows: The words, This is my body, and this is my blood, had reference to Christ's body and not to the bread and wine; the meaning is, this body sitting at table with the disciples must be given and His blood shed, and bread and wine are a symbol and memento of this suffering and death (Bossert, 228).

Caspar Schwenckfeld in his *Judicium* also accuses the Anabaptists of having adopted Karlstadt's view of communion. Nor does Marpeck in his *Verantwortung* repudiate the idea: "When Christ says, this is my body which is given for you, we believe it naturally as referring to His real body which sat at table, was betrayed, and truly given for us. But of the bread and wine we understand it figuratively, as the bread that we break and the wine that we drink is a memorial of the body and blood of Christ; thereby we shall remember that Christ gave His body and shed His blood for us" (Loserth, 56).

Against Karlstadt's doctrine of the communion Luther wrote his libelous pamphlet, *Wider die himmlischen Propheten*, which at the same time attacks the Zwinglians. In Rothenburg Karlstadt replied with three pamphlets. The Rothenburg schoolmaster, Valentine Ickelsamer, also defended him against Luther in his *Klag etlicher Brüder an alle Christen von der grossen Ungerechtigkeit und Tyrannei*, so Endressen Bodenstein von Carlstadt jetzo von Luther zu Wittenberg geschieht.

The sharp opposition between Karlstadt and Luther must be considered not only a matter of personalities, but also one of content. For when Karlstadt had to flee Rothenburg and begged Luther to receive him, Luther consented to let him return to Wittenberg on condition that Karlstadt recant his heterodox views on the communion and refrain from lecturing. But the old opposition could not be suppressed, and he finally had to flee again.

Karlstadt now turned toward Holstein at Melchior Hoffman's invitation, to take part in the Flensburg disputation on the communion, but was not admitted. After Hoffman was expelled from the country the two met again briefly in East Friesland, where Karlstadt remained nearly a year under the protection of the Zwinglian Ulrich von Dornum, writing polemics against Luther and his doctrines. Compelled to leave the domains of the strictly Lutheran Count Enno, he sought protection in Switzerland. With recommendations from Bucer in Strasbourg and Oecolampadius in Basel, he went to Zwingli in Zürich, who helped him to a position as proofreader in the Froschauer print shop and later as deacon at the Spital.

In Zürich and Altstätten, where he had a temporary pastorate, Karlstadt allied himself with the Zwinglians, who defended him against Luther's attacks. In 1534 he was called to Basel as preacher at St. Peter's and professor at the university. He died of the plague on 24 December 1541.

The elusive relationship between Karlstadt and the Anabaptist movement deserves further study. In his Wittenberg period he was certainly a near-Anabaptist, yet his visit to the Zürich brethren did not result in a union. Why did he not become an Anabaptist? -- GHE

1987 Update

Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von Karlstadt, a scion of Franconian nobility, became the first Reformer to develop a Baptist theology. He wielded a seminal influence, especially among nonresistant Anabaptists. Upon leaving Franconia, he took on the name "Karlstadt," after his native town. He studied at the modernist University of Erfurt (BA 1502), the Thomist University of Cologne, and the newly founded University of Wittenberg (MA 1505). He earned a doctorate in theology from Wittenberg (1510) and a doctorate in canon and civil law (*utriusque juris*) from the Sapienza in Rome (1515-1516).

During his teaching career at Wittenberg (1505-22) Karlstadt at first blended Thomism and Scotism and absorbed medieval mysticism when he annotated the Sermons then attributed solely to Tauler (Augsburg: 1508). Luther's publication of the *Theologia Deutsch* in 1516 was also influential. Karlstadt's *Gelassen* (1520), *Gelassenheit* (1522), *Sabbat* (1524), and *Axiomata* (1535) demonstrate the persistence of mystical ideas.

Prodded by Luther to purchase Augustine's writings in 1517, Karlstadt proclaimed the reformation of his thought on 26 April 1517, when he nailed his 151 Theses to the door of the Church of All Saints (the "Castle Church"). Although Luther influenced Karlstadt, their paths never fully converged.

Karlstadt's first major contribution came from his preoccupation with hermeneutics. As a result of his long-term study of Hebrew, he declared the Apocrypha to be non-binding (*Scripturis*: 1518-1520). The first sign of his social concerns came in his public attack on mendicancy. He publicly denounced papal supremacy in 1520 (a year after Luther). However, he attacked conciliarism well before Luther (1515-1516). He gradually moved from the thirteenth to the sixth century in dating the Fall of the Roman church. He saw the alternative as the *heuflein gottes*, the true church of the sainted few—a believers' church, congregationally led and governed. In *Gewaldt* (1521), Karlstadt denounced the use of force on behalf of the church, since it is in the nature of the church to endure violence.

Crucial was Karlstadt's lifelong dissent from predestinarianism. Karlstadt held that human inability is met by God's enabling power. This freely grants to all the power to choose, during the moment of discernment between good and evil—whether in this life or in a flameless purgatory in the afterlife. Also seeing human choice and divine enabling power as preceding baptism, Karlstadt had to reject infant baptism.

In May and June 1521, Karlstadt was in Denmark, advising King Christian II. He stimulated the enactment of legislation curbing the power of bishops, exempting only married clergy from taxation, reforming the monasteries, and disallowing appeals to Rome. This established the Danish national church.

Later in 1521, Karlstadt demanded that all clergy be married. He abrogated all his own monastic vows and became the first professor at Wittenberg to marry (January, 1522). He recognized that his reasons for opposing monastic vows voided all vows and the swearing of all oaths.

Karlstadt also opposed churchly images as prohibited by Moses and Paul, because they imbue the people with superstition and fear. He advocated their legal removal. However, when a new town council reneged on promises made by its predecessor, and students broke some images, Karlstadt neither participated with nor condemned the students. His *Bylder* (1522) was to be used as the basis of Ludwig Haetzer's *Ein urteil gottes* (1523). By January 1522, Karlstadt was also promoting social reform, including opposition to compulsory greater and lesser tithes.

His involvement as Archdeacon of the Church of All Saints kept Karlstadt from being a merely academic theologian. On Christmas 1521, without vestments, he conducted the first publicly reformed communion. He omitted the elevation of the bread and wine, expunged the canon and all sacrificial references from the Mass, and shouted in German (rather than whispering in Latin) the words of institution.

These reforms led to friction with Friedrich the Elector and Luther, who now returned from the Wartburg and temporarily restored Roman practice. No longer being allowed to publish freely, and having been made the butt of Luther's *Invocavit* Sermons, Karlstadt withdrew to Orlamünde to establish his own reformation. The organ was removed from the church. Psalm singing by the congregation in the vernacular was substituted. Infant baptism was no longer practiced. Up to three members of the congregation were allowed to prophesy in the service. Karlstadt, meanwhile, took to farming, though he still led the little flock as "Brother Andrew," the minister whose congregational call had been divinely confirmed by the c

asting of lots.

In 1523, Karlstadt fully repudiated the intercession of the saints, even of the Virgin Mary. Until his expulsion in August 1524, Karlstadt composed six treatises on the Lord's Supper and one on baptism. Karlstadt and his brother-in-law, Gerhard Westerburg, then visited Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz and their followers in Zürich, who raised the necessary financial support to have the treatises printed. From late October till early November 1524 (while Karlstadt was secretly lodged at the house of Lorenz Hochrätiner) Westerburg, Manz, and probably Andreas Castelberger had the six works dealing with the Lord's Supper printed. This permanently rended the unity of Protestantism.

Karlstadt left Basel, entrusting the manuscript of *Dialogus Vom Tauff* to Manz, who tried to have it printed. However, both Johannes Bebel and Thomas Wolf, who had printed the other tracts, rebuffed him. On the basis of historical, theological, and philological evidence, Manz's Protestation on baptism to the Zürich council appears to have been based on the manuscript of Karlstadt's dialogue. Frustrated by the loss of the first manuscript, Karlstadt composed another dialogue, which he published anonymously in 1527. He felt grateful for Manz's earlier efforts, so a major participant in the new dialogue was named "Felix."

Karlstadt had already in 1523 demanded that baptism be administered only upon repentance and amendment of life as signs of dying and rising with Christ. Thus he no longer baptized infants during his final year (1523-1524) in Orlamünde. He was, however, a baptist, not an Anabaptist, for he did not baptize adults who had been baptized as infants. In that he resembled the mainline reformers, who also accepted Roman baptism as valid, despite its errors. Karlstadt was a transitional figure, but where he prevailed, his spiritual children became (Ana)baptists.

During the Peasant Revolt, Karlstadt found refuge in Rothenburg on the Tauber, but in the summer of 1525 he fled to Wittenberg. Forced to make his peace with Luther, his creativity as a theologian came to a halt. In 1529 he sought refuge with Melchior Hoffman in Holstein and composed with him the *Dialogus* on the trial of Hoffman in Flensburg. Karlstadt's writings, especially his doctrine of the church, had already left a remarkable imprint on Hoffman's theology.

Being driven out of Holstein, and unwelcome in Strasbourg and Basel, Karlstadt, for the sake of his starving family, made his peace with Ulrich Zwingli. In June 1534 he was called to Basel, where he spent the last seven years of his life as Professor of Old Testament, rector of the university, and pastor of the University Church of Saint Peter.

To what extent did Karlstadt compromise his Baptist insights during his final years in Switzerland? Obviously he had not capitulated to Luther from 1525-1529. However, he was received kindly in the Swiss confederacy, and the Reformed churches stood closer to him than did Luther. One way to gauge Karlstadt's influence in Basel is to compare the First Confession of Basel (1534), before his arrival with the Second Confession of Basel (1536), also known as the First Helvetic Confession. Although the Anabaptists were still reproached for secessionism and unspecified heretical teachings in the Second Confession, no special section was devoted to them anymore. Neither were their views on infant baptism described as an "abomination" and a "blasphemy."

The outright rejection of the Anabaptist position on oaths of 1534 was now (1536) replaced with an affirmation of oaths "where they are manifestly not opposed to Christ." This accommodated Karlstadt perfectly. Finally, in the Second Confession the section on predestination was worded so ambiguously that it could embrace both a Reformed and a Karlstadtian interpretation. Double predestination was opposed by implication with Karlstadt's favorite text: "Our salvation is from God, but from ourselves is nothing but sin and damnation."

While in Basel, Karlstadt promoted a compromise with the Lutherans on the Lord's Supper. He was accused of knowingly harboring unreconstructed Roman Catholics and Anabaptists in his congregation. He ministered to all during the plague of 1541, to which he himself on Christmas Eve fell victim.

For over three centuries, Karlstadt's reputation fell prey to his opponents, but he has been rehabilitated in the twentieth century, first by Hermann Barge, then by Ronald Sider (who refuted the traditional polemic against Karlstadt). Others aiding the rehabilitation include Ulrich Bubenheimer (who has filled in old lacunae in respect of Karlstadt's life and his concerns with jurisprudence) as well as Calvin Pater (who dealt with Karlstadt's views of Scripture, ecclesiology, baptism and his impact on the Swiss and northern Dutch and German Anabaptists). The popular sketch of Gordon Rupp in *Patterns of Reformation* (Philadelphia: 1969) is now obsolete. Only Denis Janz has recently accused Karlstadt of knowingly falsifying Thomism, but his whole argument assumes that Karlstadt wrote the annotations added to his 151 Theses in 1520 by the censors of the Sorbonne University in Paris. -- CAP

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Re: Amish Culture in Gelassenheit. America as the refuge., on: 2011/8/12 11:14

This is very interesting to me....

Abiding in Christ is the only way we can bear fruit....not the adaption of an organized and legal church lifestyle.

13. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

14. !!"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."!!

15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

"The most important factor of Amish life is Gelassenheit, or submission to the will of God. Gelassenheit is based primarily on Jesus' words, "not my will but thine be done." By giving up individuality and any thought of selfishness, they embrace God's will by serving others and submitting to Him.".....below in article...

The Amish, called "The Plain People" or Old Order Amish, originated in Switzerland about 1525. They come from an impressive list of martyrs. They were put in sacks and thrown into rivers in Europe. There are no Amish left in Europe; The Amish were saved from extinction by William Penn who granted a haven from religious persecution in America. Since early colonial days the Amish have lived in the United States preserving their distinctive culture, dress, language and religion in peace and prosperity.

To this day they endure as a distinctive folk group because they have preserved a mentality of separation from the world and the sentiments of persecuted strangers in the land. They wear plain clothing fastened with hooks and eyes, not buttons. Their men wear broad-brimmed black hats, plain-cut trousers and the women and even little girls wear bonnets and ankle length dresses. They generally oppose automobiles, electricity, telephones and higher education beyond eighth grade.

The Amish live in nineteen states, Canada, and Central America. However, 80 percent of the Amish live in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana.

Excerpts, adaptations, and/or slight modifications from Origins of the Old Order Amish.

The Amish broke away from the Mennonites nearly 300 years ago when differences arose among Anabaptist leaders in Switzerland and Alsace. Seeking a stricter lifestyle including the Streng Meidung, or shunning, which includes the social avoidance of erring church members.

Persistence of tradition and slowness to modernize have characterized the Amish as they have steadily sought to carve out their lifestyle which is a culture apart from the world.

General characteristics that encompass all Old Order Amish groups seem to include these:

•Separatism

•Simple life

•Family life

•Harmony with the soil and nature

•Mutual assistance

•Disciplined church community

Excerpts, adaptations, and/or slight modifications from The Amish in Northern Indiana.

The Amish do not despise technology and even have incorporated many technologies into their culture. Other technologies, however, have been rejected completely or used within certain limitations as a result of deep religious beliefs and the rules that guide and maintain their distinct culture.

The Amish prefer a culture based on a community of the faithful. Families tend to congregate in small communities. Most Amish have very few relations outside of the Amish faith. Those who are not Amish are considered outsiders and are simply referred to as the "English."

All clothing is sewn at home, buttons are not allowed, and only pins are used to keep clothing closed. Women's hair is covered at all times and men wear plain felt or straw hats when outside of the house.

The most important factor of Amish life is Gelassenheit, or submission to the will of God. Gelassenheit is based primarily on Jesus' words, "not my will but thine be done." By giving up individuality and any thought of selfishness, they embrace God's will by serving others and submitting to Him.

Any technology that does not uphold the Gelassenheit principles is banned from use. Electricity is seen as a connection with the outside world and violates the Amish principle of separation from society. Electricity also promotes the use of household items, such as the television, that allow the outside, "English," values of sloth, luxury, and vanity to infiltrate the household. Automobiles are not often used because they degrade the Gelassenheit principle of a small, close-knit community. The telephone is banned from the household because, much like the automobile, it promotes a separation of community.

Each Amish community maintains a list of written or unwritten rules, called Ordnung, that regulates all aspects of Amish activity. The rules pertain to all aspects of Amish life, such as clothing, child bearing, weekend activities, church activities, and occupational activities.

"The Ordnung is not considered the law of God; instead, it is interpreted as a set of guidelines for living a Godly and pious life. "...BT

There is a common misconception about the Amish opinion of medical technology. The Ordnung actually says nothing about the acceptance of modern medicine. Most Amish have no problem visiting an optometrist for vision correction, seeing a dentist for a semiannual checkup, or going to a local physician for an examination. The Amish usually will not refuse medical treatment for serious illness.

Excerpts, adaptations, and/or slight modifications from:
"The Amish: Technology Practice and Technological Change."

anabaptists.org

Re: , on: 2011/8/15 4:25

Gelassenheit

Bind the gift upon the altar,
Break the alabaster bowl,
Lay Thy hands upon my spirit—
Hold me under Thy control.
I would not be found unwilling
When my Master gives commands;
Though I struggle, keep me, Savior
In the Potter's tender hands.

Take my dearest heart's desires,
If they tend away from Thee;
Lift my eyes from fleshly baubles
So that Thou art all I see.
Joy is here upon Thy altar—
Pain and tears may be the price—
But I will not, cannot, offer
That which is no sacrifice.

—Claudia Esh

"Lift my eyes from fleshly baubles"

The writer of this poem captures the sense of what is being called Gelassenheit but not that of Andreas Rudolff-Bodenstein von Karlstadt's piece, and has falsely been given the title because of this. Bodenstein has made the art of leaving the means by which a man is right with God, but this misses the mark. It is man's duty to be willing, but he himself cannot do the work of leaving. This concept is in line with the popular idea of today which is Buddhist and this is why there is the note of recognition when we hear it cloaked in Christian ideals. Self is not to be put to death. This concept is not the gospel. Self is to be ruled by Christ and not the old nature. Self is neutral.

If we are willing then Christ will 'lift our eyes from fleshly baubles' we cannot do this ourselves and the act of trying to do it will lead to pride.

It is when we admit we can do nothing that Christ gives the power to do it and not in the sense of this writer. The anabaptists had things scowered too and became legalistic.

Re: - posted by MikeH, on: 2011/8/15 7:56

Sorry, totally out of date with what is and isn't allowed on the site, but you will find details about him on Wikipedia here, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andreas_Karlstadt and also on the German Wikipedia http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andreas_Bodenstein. Interesting reading.

Kind regards

Mike

Re: - posted by brothergary, on: 2011/8/17 21:22

i agree with krautfrau

that is not the gospel

all babies in christ would not be born again with this gospel ,,,