

**(XII.) OF OTHER FACTIONS [HERESIES] AND SECTS,  
Which Never Embraced the Augsburg Confession.**

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1] In order that such [heresies and sects] may not silently be ascribed to us, because, in the preceding explanation, we have made no mention of them, we intend at the end [of this writing] simply to enumerate the mere articles wherein they [the heretics of our time] err and teach contrary to our Christian faith and confession to which we have often referred.

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| 1. Anabaptists<br>2. Schwenkfeldians<br>3. New Arians<br>4. Anti-Trinitarians |
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**Erroneous Articles of the Anabaptists.**

2] The Anabaptists are divided among themselves into many factions, as one contends for more, another for less errors; however, they all in common propound [profess] such doctrine as is to be tolerated or allowed **A.** neither in the Church, **B.** nor in the commonwealth and secular government, **C.** nor in domestic life.

*Articles that Cannot be Tolerated **A. in the Church.***

3] 1. That Christ did **not** assume His body and blood from the Virgin Mary, but brought them with Him from heaven.

Christology Flawed
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4] 2. That Christ is **not** true God, but only [is superior to other saints, because He] has more gifts of the Holy Ghost than any other holy man.

5] 3. That our righteousness before God consists **not** in the sole merit of Christ alone, but in renewal, and hence in our own godliness [uprightness] in which we walk. This is based in great part upon one's own special, self-chosen [and humanly devised] spirituality [holiness], and in fact is nothing else than a new sort of monkery.

Justification Flawed
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6] 4. That **children who are not baptized are not sinners** before God, but righteous and innocent, who in their innocency, because they have not yet attained their reason [the use of reason], **are saved without Baptism** (which, according to their assertion, they do not need). Therefore they reject the entire doctrine concerning **original sin** and what belongs to it.

Infant Baptism Errors
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7] 5. That children are **not** to be baptized until they have **attained their reason** [the use of reason], and can themselves confess their faith.

8] 6. That **the children of Christians, because they have been born of Christian and believing parents, are holy and children of God even without and before Baptism;** and for this reason they neither attach much importance to the baptism of children nor encourage it, contrary to the express words of God's promise which pertains only to those *who keep His covenant and do not despise it.* Gen. 17, 7ff

9] 7. That that is **no** true Christian congregation [church] in which sinners are still found.

Pastoral Office & Church
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10] 8. That no sermon is to be heard nor attended in those churches **in which formerly papal masses have been celebrated** and said.

11] 9. That one [a godly man] must not have anything to do with the ministers of the Church **who preach the Gospel according to the Augsburg Confession**, and rebuke the sermons and errors of the Anabaptists; also that he is neither to serve nor in any way to labor for them, but to flee from and shun them as **perverters of God's Word**.

*Articles that Cannot be Tolerated B. in the Government.*

12] 1. That under the New Testament the magistracy is **not** an estate pleasing to God.

13] 2. That a Christian **cannot** with a good, inviolate conscience **hold or discharge the office of magistrate**.

14] 3. That a Christian **cannot** without injury to conscience **use the office of the magistracy against the wicked** in matters as they occur [matters so requiring], nor that subjects may invoke for their protection and defense the power which the magistrates possess and have received from God.

15] 4. That a Christian **cannot** with a good conscience **take an oath**, nor with an oath do homage [promise fidelity] to the hereditary prince of his country or sovereign.

16] 5. That under the New Testament magistrates **cannot**, without injury to conscience, **inflict capital punishment upon malefactors**.

*Articles that Cannot be Tolerated C. in Domestic Life.*

17] 1. That a Christian **cannot with a good conscience hold or possess property**, but is in duty bound to devote it to the common treasury.

18] 2. That a Christian **cannot** with a good conscience **be an innkeeper, merchant, or cutler [maker of arms]**.

19] 3. That **the married may be divorced on account of [diverse] faith, and the one may abandon the other and be married to another person who is of his faith**.

2. Mennonites entertain widely divergent doctrinal views but agree on *theol.* principles summarized in the 18 *arts.* of the 1632 *Dordrecht\* Confession*.  
Formal Principle: *Acc.* to Mennonite *theol.*, the source of Christian knowledge is the Bible; but at the same time the true understanding of saving truth is said to come from a mystical experience of Christ. Mennonites strongly emphasize the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit (*enthusiasm\**), who is said to “guide the saints into all truth.” The Holy Spirit is viewed as “the inner word” enabling Christians to understand the Bible. Mennonites insist that without this inner word, or inner light, the Bible is a dead letter and a dark lantern.  
Material Principle: The *cen.* doctrine can probably most appropriately be called “mystical pietism.” The pronounced mystical spiritualism, which seems to dominate the whole doctrinal system, appears most clearly in emphasis on the outward purity of the *ch.* Mennonites often claim affinity to Novatians (see *Novatianism*), *Paulicians,\* Albigenses,\* Waldenses,\** and similar groups, because these stressed abstinence from the world and advocated a life of self-abnegation. Mennonites believe that the *ch.* must be a visible organization of regenerated persons and that it must be kept holy by the strict exercise of the ban.  
Mystical pietism becomes the mother of a paradox: complete tolerance of conflicting and even mutually exclusive doctrinal views, and violent dissensions in matters of cultus. Mennonites offer shelter to “enthusiasts” of the Quaker type; to Socinians, who deny the doctrine of the *Trin.* and teach that personal piety is the essence of Christianity; to Pelagians and Arminians; to spiritualists and mystics; and to Quietists, who see in faith an intense consciousness of God without a definite knowledge about God.  
(Lutheran Cyclopedia)

# A Münster of Our Own Making Religiosity in Portland

JOSEPH BOTTUM



A violent gang of radical Anabaptists—now that's a phrase one doesn't get to use often, but there it is: In 1534, a violent gang of radical Anabaptists seized control of Münster,

the city in northwestern Germany, and announced to all the world the coming of the New Jerusalem.

It was there in Westphalia, they said, that they would create heaven on earth, founding the true community of saints.

You can probably predict the path the tale takes. This kind of story follows a familiar narrative logic, and it always ends in murder. The great temptation of radicalism is the attempt to "immanentize the eschaton" (a phrase of Eric Voegelin's, much used by conservatives in the 1970s and 1980s).

This is the belief that perfected human society is within sight and needs just one little further push. It's the idea that what religions promise for the end time can be brought about in the meantime, with only a little effort—a little revolution and re-valuation of values. A little spilled blood.

You can find that general pattern in the Killing Fields (where the Khmer Rouge executed more than a million Cambodians in the 1970s, in the firm belief they were bringing about a peaceable utopia). Or the Cultural Revolution (where, at the instigation of Mao Zedong, radicalized "Red Guards" killed as many as 20 million Chinese in the late 1960s, in the name of restoring true communism).

What's fascinating about the Münster Rebellion, however, is that it doesn't follow merely the general history of grand social revolutions that begin in claimed idealism and end in actual slaughter. It also follows a particular pattern familiar to Americans watching the news these days.

Find the riots in the big cities a little hard to

understand? They're reenacting a 16th-century morality play. [Portland, Oregon](#), is our mini-Münster. The members of [Antifa](#) and Black Lives Matter are our ersatz Anabaptists.



MADWYN HOUSE



WARWICK HOUSE

(Top) Protesters gather in front of a fire near the North police precinct in Portland, Ore., on Sept. 6, 2020. This was the 101st consecutive night of disturbances in the city. (Above) Captured citizens brought before an Anabaptist leader during the Münster rebellion.

Anabaptists (today called Mennonites, Amish and Hutterites) – A South German group that had its roots in German mysticism as connected with the teachings of Andreas Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer. Felix Manz began to publish some of Karlstadt's writings in Zurich in late 1524. Andreas Karlstadt's reformed theology rejected many Catholic practices, including infant baptism. The term "anabaptist" literally means "new baptism." Thus the anabaptists "rebaptized" those baptized as infants and others. Other leaders include Hans Denck and Hans Hut, both with German mystical backgrounds, Menno Simons (from whom the Mennonites received their name) and Jacob Hutter (from whom the Hutterites received their name).

from him.  
"After the collapse of the Anabaptist movement in 1535, the scattered remnants of these rebaptizers were gathered by Menno Simons and organized as the Mennonites. The *theology* of the Mennonites stressed freedom of the will (see Free Will), *enthusiasm* or *mysticism*, *asceticism*, and a literal interpretation of the Bible. The Mennonites placed great emphasis on the outward purity of the *church* and held that the restoration of apostolic Christianity must include Baptism by immersion." (Lutheran Cyclopedia)

## New Jerusalem

So, around 1532, a Dutch agitator named Jan Matthys came to Münster and began working tirelessly to rile up the city. His party soon found a local Lutheran pastor named Bernhard Rothmann to promote their cause and a local wool merchant named Bernhard Knipperdolling to finance it. Anabaptists poured into the city from Holland and Germany, with mobs shaming and bullying random citizens into being rebaptized in the new dispensation.

Winning the magistracy elections in 1534, the Anabaptists installed Knipperdolling as mayor and deposed the representatives of the prince-bishop who ruled Münster for the Holy Roman Empire.

Wild bouts of looting and iconoclasm followed, with the (mostly Lutheran) churches stripped of their art and valuables. Rebaptism into Anabaptism was made mandatory, and property was forcibly seized—with a declaration that, henceforth, all property would be held in common. The New Jerusalem, the world was told, had arrived.

The Westphalian prince-bishop and the Holy Roman Empire didn't share the euphoria, however, and they soon besieged the city. Not to worry, said Matthys, who announced that he was the new Gideon who would conquer for God—on Easter Sunday, no less. He and his indomitable band of 12 followers sallied out to smite the hundreds of professional troops surrounding Münster. They proved not quite up to the task.

After the deceased Matthys's head and genitals were nailed to the city gates, a 25-year-old Dutchman named John of Leiden took charge, on the basis of his claim to be receiving visions from God. Proclaiming himself the new David, and Münster the new Zion, John began to dress in royal robes and took several wives.

Of course, to have multiple marriages, he needed to enact a law allowing polygamy. When legalized polygamy failed to bring about the perfected kingdom, John—in a classic example of the escalating logic of radical social transformation—passed another law, making polygamy mandatory.

Even that, however, failed to end the starvation of Münster's citizens or shame the Holy Roman Empire into surrender. The city was retaken by the prince-bishop on June 24, 1535. John of Leiden and Knipperdolling were executed, with their bodies displayed in cages that still hang from a Münster church steeple.

## Using the Radicals

Portions of this story have echoes in other rebellions. Looking at the Russian Revolution, Gary Saul Morson [has written](#) about the ways in which the liberal party in Russia actually helped the radical Bolsheviks who despised them.

Picturing the radicals as merely a useful club with which to terrorize the opponents of reform, the liberals supposed that the Bolsheviks could be reined in once the conservatives were defeated. And so the liberal Kadet party maneuvered to have Bolsheviks released from jail and armed for street protests.

Not surprisingly, the Kadet politicians proved less smart than they imagined themselves. The Bolsheviks used the opportunity to seize power—and promptly executed the liberal politicians who had facilitated their rise.

The obvious parallel to the Münster Rebellion comes in the early days, when key Lutheran figures aided Matthys and the radical Anabaptists, taking them as tools to use against Catholic opponents.

And the parallel to the violence in U.S. cities today comes with the Democratic party figures who pay the bail of radical protesters, the facilitating of violence by liberal mayors, and the notion that agitation makes Antifa and Black Lives Matter useful weapons for defeating Republicans—all in the mad belief (so like the insanity of the Münster Lutherans and the Russian liberals) that the radicals can be dealt with easily, once the hated opponent has been eliminated.... (From "The Epoch Times" Sep 30-Oct 6, p. A15.)