

Suffering Mission in the Passau Songs of the *Ausbund*

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During the mid-1530s, an imprisoned Anabaptist songwriter named Hans Betz wrote the following words about the mission of Jesus Christ:

Christ the lamb came on earth and took on himself human weakness. . . .
The entire fullness of divinity was in Christ. . . . Through him everything shall be healed. . . . The humanity of Christ became a dwelling of the gentle divinity (*Gotttheit zart*).²

The words of this song were eventually printed in a song collection that was incorporated into the influential *Ausbund* hymnbook, which is why these words about “Christ the lamb” continue to be sung by Old Order Amish congregations during each Advent season.³

The picture in this song of the mission of Jesus Christ—becoming a “dwelling of the gentle divinity” through which “everything shall be healed”—reflects also the vision for mission that shaped the particular Anabaptist community with which Hans Betz associated. Nearly sixty of the members of that community were imprisoned with him in the Passau castle at the time he wrote these words. Betz’s fellow Anabaptists were members of a larger communitarian circle that had been centered at Auspitz and led by Philip Plener, a weaver and

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2 *Etliche schöne christliche Geseng*, (n.p.: 1564); Irvin B. Horst, ed., *Mennonite Song-books*, German series, vol. 1., Facsimile ed. (Amsterdam: Fritz Knuf, [1974?]), 60–61; Robert A. Riall, trans., and Galen A. Peters, ed., *The Earliest Hymns of the Ausbund: Some Beautiful Christian Songs Composed and Sung in the Prison at Passau, Published in 1564* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora, 2003), 252.

3 Many of these songs also became part of Hutterite hymnody. See William I. Schreiber, “The *Ausbund* Hymns in the Newly-Found Ehrenpreis MS,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 43, no. 4 (October 1969): 330–32.

itinerant Anabaptist missionary whose ministry had gathered around him a band of converts primarily from southwestern Germany.⁴ The particular group of Philipites imprisoned at Passau responded to their circumstances with joyful and doctrinally provocative singing, led by the poetically gifted ministers Hans Betz and Michael Schneider, who, between the two of them, authored the majority of the songs in the collection.⁵

The Philipites, like numerous other German Anabaptist refugees, came to Moravia because of the region's greater toleration for dissident Christianity during the first decade of Anabaptism. At first the Philipites joined the community of Silesian Anabaptists at Rossitz led by Gabriel Ascherham, and then, as a result of conflict with the Gabrielites, moved on to Auspitz, where they established a distinct communalist Anabaptist society. Despite earlier disagreements with the Silesian Gabrielites, the Philipites maintained fraternal relationships with them as well as with a growing community of Anabaptists from both Nicolsburg and South Tyrol who had settled at Austerlitz and were shaped by the leadership of Jakob Wiedemann and, later, Jakob Hutter.

The formation of these migrant Moravian Anabaptist conventicles displays a pattern of Anabaptist mission practice and migration: itinerant evangelists like Hans Hut, Philip Plener, and Jakob Hutter established small groups of converts in regions hostile to Anabaptism; these converts were commissioned to evangelize their family members, neighbors, coworkers, and friends.⁶ When such communities faced persecution by authorities, Anabaptist leaders encouraged the new church groups to migrate to more tolerant locations with established Anabaptist congregations, such as Moravia. Such a pattern intensified a trans-European Anabaptist identity unprotected by sword or prince, that prioritized relationships within the network over those in the community or region of birth.⁷

4 Robert Friedmann, "The Philippite Brethren: A Chapter in Anabaptist History," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 32, no. 3 (October 1958): 273–78.

5 For more on Schneider and Betz, see William I. Schreiber, "Hans Betz: Poet of the *Ausbund*," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 53, no. 2 (April 1979): 128–36; John Oyer, "Michael Schneider: Anabaptist Leader, Hymnist, Recanter," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 65, no. 3 (July 1991): 256–86. Schneider's wife, Gertaut Schneider, was among those imprisoned at Passau. Her trial testimony has survived in the sources (Oyer, "Michael Schneider," 263).

6 Wolfgang Schäufele, "The Missionary Vision and Activity of the Anabaptist Laity," in *Anabaptism and Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1984), 74–79.

7 Martin Rothkegel, "Pilgram Marpeck and the Fellows of the Covenant: The Short and Fragmentary History of the Rise and Decline of an Anabaptist Denomina-

Migrating groups typically settled in locations where there were already communities of believers who had been evangelized by the respective group's leader/s and who therefore had originally come from the same region as the newly migrated believers. So, for example, the Philipite community at Auspitz consisted primarily of migrants from southwestern Germany—Swabia, the Palatinate, and the Rhineland—who had been converted by Philip Plener or his associates. The Gabrielites at Rossitz were mainly from Silesia, where they had encountered the preaching of Gabriel Ascherham and his associates.⁸ Although there were some distinctive teachings among these Moravian Anabaptist groups, they shared in common with most Anabaptists a vision of Christian discipleship that included repentance, believers baptism, and living in community. Moreover, such Anabaptists assumed that all converted believers shared in the missionary task articulated in the Great Commission—to teach, to baptize, and to make disciples—a concept that has been described as a “lay apostolate.”⁹ While some Anabaptist leaders were assigned specific tasks of evangelism and church planting, their work was understood to be a shared project of the entire community of faith: all were called by virtue of being disciples to be involved in the work of proclaiming Christ.¹⁰ Throughout this essay, the word “mission” is thus a designation for the central task of the church as Anabaptist communities conceived it: to make disciples by teaching and baptizing. Of course, the specific content of such teaching, as well as the practices by which such teaching was displayed, varied from community to community.

The Moravian Anabaptists, including the Philipites who ended up in the prison at Passau, expressed a distinctive implementation of the mission of the church, inherited from the mystical social teachings of the enormously influential South German Anabaptist evangelist Hans Hut, as well as from the contemplative spirituality of the *Theologia Deutsch*. This anonymous mystical medieval source text was translated into German by Martin Luther and pub-

tional Network,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 85, no. 1 (January 2011): 7–19.

8 Werner Packull has provided a detailed account of the formation of the Philipite and Gabrielite communities in Moravia. See Werner O. Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings: Communitarian Experiments During the Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 77–132.

9 Schäufole, “Missionary Vision,” 72–73.

10 According to Abraham Friesen, the Anabaptists insisted that the earth “did not belong to temporal rulers, nor even to the established churches” but instead “to Christ” who had “commanded his followers—not merely the professional clerics—to proclaim his teachings” (Abraham Friesen, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998], 99).

lished in many editions, including an “Anabaptist” version edited by Ludwig Haetzer with a preface by Hans Denck.¹¹

Hut advocated, among other distinct teachings, a “communitarian ideal” supported by a frame of apocalyptic expectation and the experience of mystical identification with Christ in his suffering.¹² Ray Gingerich has described the “mission impulse” of Hut’s network as follows: “The Anabaptist missionaries understood their own salvation and that of Christ’s corporate body (the church) to be completed in the process of being Christ’s suffering presence and proclamation in the midst of a fallen world. They understood their own redemption to be completed in the process of being the redeeming ones, the incarnational community.”¹³ Gingerich’s account of this distinct mystical Anabaptist mission impulse demonstrates how specific practices of discipleship that are often considered internal to the life of the church were regarded as practices of mission. Inner experience and outer display had become identified together as a witness of faith. This understanding explains how suffering could become a defining feature of mission for Anabaptists who were shaped by Hut’s mystical teaching of yielding to Jesus Christ and sharing in Christ’s suffering.¹⁴

The communalist Anabaptists in the Passau prison who inherited Hut’s mission program and teaching acknowledged two distinct sources of missional suffering in their song collection: (1) persecution by the offended surrounding world and (2) conflict with the brothers and sisters within the fellowship of faith.¹⁵ The imprisoned Philipites certainly experienced persecution by the religious and political authorities of this world; that is why they were detained in the Passau castle. They had been forced to leave Auspitz after revolution-minded Anabaptists established their regime of coercive communism at Münster and the Moravian nobility felt obliged to respond to the demands of Ferdinand I

11 Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 55–66. For a discussion of the influence of the *Theologia Deutsch* on Moravian Anabaptism, see Riall’s introduction to *Earliest Hymns*, 17.

12 Werner Packull, *Mysticism and the Early South German–Austrian Anabaptist Movement* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1977), 81.

13 Ray C. Gingerich, “The Mission Impulse of Early Swiss and South German–Austrian Anabaptism” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1980), 302.

14 For Hut’s account of the beginning of the Christian life, see his “A Beginning of a True Christian Life,” in *Jörg Maler’s Kunsbuch: Writings of the Pilgram Marpeck Circle*, ed. and trans. John Rempel (Kitchener, ON: Pandora, 2010), 118–36.

15 Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 24–25.

that all Anabaptists be expelled from the Moravian territories.¹⁶ But they had also just experienced significant conflict with other Anabaptists in the larger network that included the Gabrielite and the Austerlitz communities, as well as another communal group at Auspitz distinct from the Philipites. A number of leadership conflicts featuring well-known figures like Wilhelm Reublin, Pilgram Marpeck, and Jacob Wiedemann had created mistrust among and within the congregations in the Moravian network. These conflicts ranged from questions about special privileges for leaders to arguments about practices of marriage and the disciplining of adultery to disagreements about matters such as war taxes and oath swearing.¹⁷

These ongoing and never-quite-resolved conflicts culminated in the bitter schism of 1533 when Jakob Hutter returned to Auspitz from his missionary work in the Tyrol and sought to assert his own leadership authority in relationship to other leaders such as Philip Plener and Gabriel Aescherham. The resulting feud led ultimately to a distinct community forming around the leadership of Jakob Hutter, who pronounced the ban on the Philipites and the Gabrielites, thereby breaking up the Moravian Anabaptist network. When the Philipite band imprisoned at Passau wrote and sang about their experience of the Christian life, they were reflecting on this experience of conflict, both with estranged Anabaptists as well as with a persecuting Christendom. Their suffering included both the trauma of being banned and the pain of being imprisoned.

Numerous accounts of these Passau songs generally have featured the songwriters' attachment to the German mystical tradition associated with Johannes Tauler and the *Theologia Deutsch*, including the emphasis on identifying with Jesus Christ in his suffering and death; resignation or yielding to the purposes of God; and the profound joy that follows the experience of God's presence amid pain and affliction.¹⁸ Some writers have debated the quality of these songs;

16 Packull explains the complex and stubborn resistance of the Moravian Estates to the persistent demands of King Ferdinand I to rid Moravia of Anabaptists. The Estates' decision to expel the Anabaptist communities at Auspitz, Austerlitz, and Rossitz was in essence a public cover for continuing unofficial tolerance of other Anabaptist congregations in Moravia. See Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 71.

17 The most thorough and balanced historical account of these conflicts is found in Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 214–35.

18 For example, in his pathbreaking study of Anabaptist hymnody, Rudolf Wolkan highlights the more mystical, less dogmatic emphases in Schneider's texts as compared with the texts of Hans Betz (Rudolf Wolkan, *Die Lieder der Wiedertäufer* [Nieukoop: B. de Graaf, 1965], 36).

others have situated them within the traditions of European folk singing or within the guild practices of the “Meistersingers,” who advanced the German Reformation by expressing Protestant doctrines through poetry and song.”¹⁹ Maureen Epp has emphasized the purposeful choices behind the diversity of musical sources for tunes associated with *Ausbund* texts, while downplaying the polemical qualities of the texts.²⁰ Rosella Reimer Duerksen has evaluated the doctrinal content of *Ausbund* texts, with some specific attention to the Passau songs, taking note of such themes as Christian love, martyrdom, the church’s future glory, believers baptism, Lord’s Supper, and the incarnation.²¹

Most researchers agree that the songs collected in the *Ausbund*—such as the Passau corpus—functioned both as spiritual practices and as doctrinal arguments. While written in poetic form and clearly meant to be sung, the songs also directly engaged Reformation-era debates about the nature and mission of the church, the work and authority of Jesus Christ, the ethical shape of the Christian life, and a variety of other theological questions.

Researchers have little evidence to work with in addressing the question of how early Anabaptist communities used these songs, although much speculation exists based on the thin evidence that appears here and there in the sources. In her recent dissertation, Beverly Durance provides a good summary of this speculation. Anabaptists, she notes, appear to have sung these songs both as individuals and in groups, both in the marketplace and in worship.²² When singing together, everyone in the group was expected to sing and to do so loudly and deliberately; “failure to do so did not reflect a lack of musical ability but a lack of belonging.”²³ Durance connects loud singing with the missionary zeal of the Anabaptists, citing numerous accounts of Anabaptist martyrs

19 For more on the Passau songwriters as possible practitioners of Meistersinger conventions, see Schreiber, “Hans Betz,” 131. Oyer (“Michael Schneider,” 279–82) offers a thorough evaluation of this claim.

20 Maureen Epp, “New Readings of Text and Music in the *Ausbund*,” in *Sound in the Land: Essays on Mennonites and Music*, eds. Maureen Epp and Carol Ann Weaver (Kitchener, ON: Pandora, 2005), 34–38. Epp does not focus specifically on the Passau hymns, although she mentions them.

21 Rosella Reimer Duerksen, “Doctrinal Implications in Sixteenth Century Anabaptist Hymnody,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 35, no. 1 (January 1961): 38–49.

22 Beverly Durance, “The Unifying Power of Song: The Swiss Anabaptist *Ausbund* as a Voice of Convergence in a Divergent Movement” (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 2007), 43.

23 *Ibid.*, 44.

singing loudly so that all could hear them, sometimes from their prison cells.²⁴ One contemporary account of Anabaptist singing emphasizes that it was in unison, by contrast to the four-part singing found in Reformed and Lutheran congregations.²⁵ A number of writings by Anabaptists in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries describe singing as a spiritual practice that should focus on the meaning of the words as echoed in the heart and as motivated by the Holy Spirit.²⁶

Certainly the practices of Anabaptist singing that appear to be confirmed in the historical record support the general claim I am making here that the Passau songwriters and singers understood their music as part of their Christian mission. However, my specific focus in this essay is to inquire into the vision of the church and its role in God's suffering and life-giving mission that is displayed in these song texts. That means I will read the mystical and contemplative features of these texts as descriptive of not only a spiritual experience (a spirituality) but also the work and mission of the church (a missiology), as these Anabaptists conceived it.

Suffering and Contested Mission

Central to the ecclesial mission pictured in the Passau songs is an understanding of suffering as intrinsic to, although not defining of, authentic Christian mission. This assumption of suffering for one's faith as a routine experience in the Christian life is prominent in Anabaptist literature and has already received considerable attention from scholars.

Alan Kreider, for example, explains how Anabaptist suffering needs to be understood as an outcome of social nonconformity arising from conversion to a freely chosen Christian life in imitation of Jesus Christ.²⁷ In early moderni-

24 Ibid., 49.

25 According to some Swiss Reformed ministers, the Anabaptists taught that "singing in four-part harmony is sinful babbling and displeases God." Ernst Müller, *History of the Bernese Anabaptists* (Aylmer, ON: Pathway, 2010), 144.

26 See, for example, Hutterite leader, missionary, and songwriter Peter Riedemann's discussion of singing in his Confession of Faith from the 1540s, written while he was in prison (John J. Friesen, trans. and ed., *Peter Riedemann's Hutterite Confession of Faith* [Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1999], 146–47). See also the "Instruction on Singing" that appears near the back of a key Swiss Brethren prayer book, published in 1702 (Leonard Gross, trans. and ed., *Golden Apples in Silver Bowls: The Rediscovery of Redeeming Love* [Lancaster, PA: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 1999], 289–90).

27 Alan Kreider, "The Relevance of *Martyrs' Mirror* for our Time," *Mennonite Life* 45, no. 3 (September 1990): 10–13.

ty, this conversion led to confrontation with the authority and privilege that supported the social order of Christendom at that time. Because Anabaptists continue to connect conversion with rejection of and by the corrupted world, they understand suffering as a “normal consequence of following Jesus.”²⁸ Such an expectation helps to strengthen Anabaptist resolve in the face of brutal persecution. But such an expectation also aligns with their experience of God’s presence amid their powerlessness and suffering.²⁹ Such a perspective explains why “Anabaptists of every era have known that there is no discipleship that does not lead to conflict.”³⁰

The Passau songwriters reflect this understanding of suffering as a routine outcome of taking up the mission of the church to teach, to baptize, and to make disciples. For example, song number 2 in the Passau collection calls “people everywhere” (*Volcker allgemein*) to “leave your sins, follow Christ the Lord, and live according to his will.”³¹ This evangelical invitation to live in Christ’s way and to share in Christ’s fellowship means also to participate in Christ’s suffering, according to the songwriter, Michael Schneider: “Whoever would inherit with him must have much pain (*leydens*) here for the sake of his name.”³²

It may be difficult for North American Christians to grasp how it is possible that the good news could include the likelihood of suffering, given the profound fear of suffering that pervades our culture and helps to monetize all manner of hedging against it, from the military industrial complex to the pharmaceutical empire to the insurance racket. In these songs, we find at least three ways in which suffering is offered and received as part of the good news: (1) the privilege of God’s attention; (2) the deep joy that suffering harbors; and (3) the possibility of divinization.

In a song attributed to Hanna Garber, for example, we find a standard Anabaptist use of the story of Cain and Abel to illustrate how suffering signifies God’s love and favor.³³ Abel, who pleased God, “had to suffer great distress (*leyden grosse not*) from his own brother who slew him.”³⁴ By contrast, “the false Satan . . . hates with cause those whom God has chosen,” because “he has been

28 Ibid., 12.

29 Ibid., 14.

30 Ibid., 15.

31 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 8; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 62.

32 Ibid.

33 Kreider (“The Relevance of *Martyrs Mirror*,” 12) has noted the theme of “innocent suffering going back to Abel” that is a common theme found in the *Martyrs Mirror*.

34 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 105; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 409.

rejected” and thus “has great wrath.”³⁵ On the one hand, God is said—depending on the stanza—to permit, send, and even ordain the suffering that comes to believers; on the other hand, it is clear that the rejected, wrathful, and hateful Satan “with all his servants fights against the Christians.”³⁶ This ambiguity about the source of suffering pervades the songs in the *Etliche Geseng* collection.

One way to read this ambiguity is that the songwriters are simply reflecting biblical texts that affirm God’s chastening or disciplining of those God loves, as confirmed, for example, in Hebrews 12:5–6. The development of this theme shows that the claims that God disciplines those God loves are a kind of shorthand for a more complex understanding of God’s agency and mission in the world. This more complex understanding emphasizes that God’s favor brings rejection to God’s chosen by the forces of worldly power. The mission of the faithful church will always be contested from without and from within. God’s favor therefore functions as a kind of first cause in a chain that includes the Cain-like persecution of the elect by God’s enemies. Whether God is said to permit or ordain such suffering, the immediate cause of suffering is the action of Satan and Satan’s servants. God will judge these persecuting actions, and the persecuted faithful will be rescued from their enemies and vindicated: “The godless will perish through their own misfortune because they have inflicted much pain on the righteous.”³⁷

Not only does faithful suffering signify God’s love and favor; it is also a condition of possibility for profound joy. Robert Riall, a translator and annotator of the Passau hymns, has remarked on this persistent motif throughout the *Etliche Geseng*: sharing in the suffering of Jesus Christ leads to resurrection joy.³⁸ Such joy signifies the presence and love of God poured out on the believer as part of the experience of overcoming the world amid suffering: “If we rightly hang on him (Jesus Christ), God will give us everything with him: first suffering, then joy, from which the devil cannot separate us.”³⁹ A version of this confident expectation—first suffering, then joy—is expressed persistently throughout the song collection.

Yet, this expectation of joy is not naïve or glib. Riall points out that while the songwriters describe joy amid and following suffering as a ground of cer-

35 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 105; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 410.

36 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 105; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 409.

37 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 114; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 433.

38 Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 37–38.

39 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 23; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 126.

tainty for their faith, they also acknowledge its absence at times.⁴⁰ For example, *Etliche Geseng* 27 by Hans Betz begins with the honest confession of this absence: “I would now like to sing and likewise be happy, but I shall not succeed, nor will my heart find expression. So I must give it up, accept sorrow, get hold of my soul with patience, until my Comforter comes.”⁴¹ The joy found in suffering is both a reality and a promise, in other words. The promise helps a believer to survive when the reality eludes, especially when those who suffer can express this expectation poetically as a ground of hope as well as a testimony of experience.

Sharing in the suffering of Christ along with the resurrection joy that follows is essential for the Passau songwriters on the path to becoming like Christ—to becoming divine. The mission to which Anabaptist converts, like the Philipites, were called through baptism was a mission of divinization through joyful suffering: “Christ was not given to us simply to believe on him but also to suffer with him.”⁴² This suffering is not a practice or experience of passivity; it results from the active public proclamation of the same call answered by the Passau prisoners and other Anabaptist converts: desist from your shedding of blood, leave behind your sins, and find the truth a joy.⁴³

It is important to distinguish this call to visible missional suffering from the harmful piety of quietly endured suffering. It has often been the case that those with power and privilege in the church or in society urge those who suffer to do so in silence or without protest as a sign of their pious virtue. Because such expectations for suffering are often invoked today in ways designed to hide the sins of the world—including a sinful church—rather than to confess and desist from sin, it is necessary to develop more fully the Anabaptist vision of divinization as an outcome of Anabaptist mission conceived by the Passau songwriters and singers.

Suffering and Christ-centered Divinization

In his study of the Anabaptist concept of grace, Alvin Beachy defines divinization as “God’s act of regeneration” through which humanity is “actually made a

40 This recognition of joy’s absence is more fully evaluated in Riall’s unpublished manuscript from which *Earliest Hymns* was abridged. See Robert Riall, “First Suffering, Then Joy: The Early Anabaptist Passau Martyr Songs, Translation and Commentary” (unpublished manuscript in Archives and Special Collections, Musselman Library at Bluffton University, 2003), 75.

41 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 51; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 222.

42 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 90; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 356.

43 A summary of stanzas 28–29 of *Etliche Geseng* 40. Ibid.

participant in the divine nature itself.⁴⁴ Such regeneration and participation in divinity enables the believer to strive against sin and to overcome it.⁴⁵ Beachy identifies divinization as the “ontological result of grace” in Anabaptist theology, and he attributes this conviction to the radical reformation as a whole—ranging from Caspar Schwenckfeld to Pilgram Marbeck to Menno Simons.⁴⁶

Theologian Thomas Finger qualifies Anabaptist divinization as “christomorphic”—shaped by the life and teachings of Jesus.⁴⁷ Finger is attentive to the particular South and Central German Anabaptist mysticism that stressed sharing with Jesus Christ in his suffering and therefore also in Christ’s resurrection. This process—as described by South German Anabaptist leaders like Hans Hut and Leonard Schiemer—involves yielding one’s life to God by giving up possessions and expecting conflict with the world while at the same time anticipating “the Spirit’s filling of comfort and joy.”⁴⁸

The Passau songs examined here reflect this mystical embrace of divinization, of “transformation by divine energies.”⁴⁹ For example, in *Etliche Geseng* 10, Hans Betz develops an explanation of “spiritual eating and drinking,” reflecting Anabaptist understandings of the Lord’s Supper. He writes that “whoever receives God’s word, whomever it begets anew, becomes God’s child. Word becomes flesh in him.”⁵⁰ Here it is assumed that the same incarnational event that took place in Jesus Christ according to John 1 is also constitutive of the new reality of the believer. This reality has an inner dimension of the Word in the heart and an outer dimension of being clothed in Christ’s righteousness, as explained in the first song of the collection, also by Betz. Betz writes that the righteousness of Jesus Christ “has clothed” the believer and through the “goodness of the Spirit” has written the divine Word in (the believer’s) heart.”

44 Alvin J. Beachy, *The Concept of Grace in the Radical Reformation* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1977), 174.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 175.

47 Thomas Finger, “Salvation: Contrasting Concepts and Church Conflict,” *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 29–30.

48 Thomas Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology: Biblical, Historical, Constructive* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 121.

49 Finger, “Salvation,” 29. Finger uses this definition of divinization from Gregory Palamas of the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

50 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 15; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 95.

This double outward clothing and inward writing “separates” the believer “from all sin now.”⁵¹

Such divine transformation through rebirth by the Word is described repeatedly in the songs of *Etliche Geseng* as writing or flowing or pouring of the divine into the human. The Holy Spirit “pours out into every heart” in order that the believer may “receive Christ” and “taste his ecstasy and goodness.”⁵² The divine power rushes “down to us so that its sap may help us.”⁵³ In *Etliche Geseng* 29, cited at the beginning of this essay, the substance of Christ flows from the Father, and “the entire fullness of divinity” that was in Christ “fills everything through him.”⁵⁴ In other song texts, the images of flow shift to metaphors of surroundedness—“we are encompassed by God as the seeds together in the apple.”⁵⁵ Like a mother, God is the one who gives birth to “every created thing,” to “whatever has life.”⁵⁶ God is a light of “bright radiance” that “drives away what sin and darkness there is” and “inscribes the light” in “human bodies.”⁵⁷ Christ has “poured out his blood” and “washed us clean” so that “we are of his flesh and bone and are of a divine nature (*Göttlicher arte*).”⁵⁸

These images bring to mind what feminist philosopher Grace Jantzen describes as an “imaginary of natality”—a symbolic picture shaped more by the bodily reality of birth and human flourishing than by the obsession of Western philosophy and theology with death and salvation.⁵⁹ To be sure, the Passau songs repeat much of the standard “masculinist philosophy of the West” with its concern for “death and other worlds” as well as its appropriation of the natural birth process by spiritualizing it.⁶⁰ For example, God certainly appears in some of the Passau songs as a distant figure of judgment and vengeance

51 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 7; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 53–54. Riall’s commentary on this stanza in *Earliest Hymns* explains that the righteous clothing Betz described is not the “imputed righteousness” proposed by Luther but rather an “infused righteousness” that transforms the believer’s life (53).

52 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 6; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 52.

53 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 40; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 188.

54 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 60; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 252.

55 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 72; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 300.

56 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 59; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 248.

57 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 17; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 103.

58 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 80; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 323.

59 Grace Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 144–45.

60 *Ibid.*, 128–43.

who acts on the world rather than within it.⁶¹ And salvation is sometimes understood to be release from the boundaries and limits of this world through a faithful death.⁶² And yet, the dominant vision in the Passau songs is a picture of a “gentle divinity” flourishing here on earth in the lives and relationships of human beings who are becoming divine in both spirit and body—by their attachment with the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. The religious and political authorities of this world oppose this flourishing, just as they were opposed to the life of Jesus Christ. And yet, such flourishing survives even as it endures suffering, because it embraces the joy and energy of human life—and the divine life that births and heals it. The suffering described by the Passau songwriters is more like the pain of childbirth—a suffering toward new life—than it is like the pain of punishment or abuse.⁶³

Suffering and Loving Solidarity

The human and divine flourishing envisioned by the Passau songwriters is less a personal experience of assured salvation and more a communal practice of thriving and mutually yielded relationships.⁶⁴ At the center of this communal practice is brotherly and sisterly love—the giving up and sharing of possessions as an outcome of authentic baptism: “In baptism, therefore, one will be received into fellowship,” a fellowship (*gemeinschaft*) that is recognizable as the body

61 God is described for example as a “just warrior” who “threw all the wagons of the Pharaoh into the sea” and whose “right hand slew every enemy.” *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 88–89; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 343.

62 “If we persevere to the end, God wants to give us a glorious crown,” and “Whoever now works faithfully in the vineyard for this short time will receive the crown.” *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 93; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 366.

63 This connection between the Passau images of suffering toward divinization and the suffering of the natural birth process is a connection that Wanda Stopher—pastor at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio—pointed out to me during the weekly discussion of the Anabaptist Reading Group, which is a study group focused around Anabaptist source texts.

64 “There can be no doubt about the fact that the competing concepts of salvation (*seligkeit*)—the Lutheran vocation from God with its sanction in predestined justification and the Anabaptist imitation of Christ with its goal of suffering sanctification—led to different kinds of Christian behavior and very different styles of the Christian life in the sixteenth century” (George Hunston Williams, “German Mysticism and Anabaptist Communism,” in *Glaube, Geist, Geschichte: Festschrift für Ernst Benz*, eds. Gerhard Müller and Winfried Zeller [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967], 294).

of Jesus Christ because “there the members are together and take the same residence.”⁶⁵

Although the Philipites saw community of goods as a baptismal practice, they were moderate communalists; that is, they viewed community of goods as a voluntary Christian practice that emphasized mutuality in spiritual and material sharing.⁶⁶ The Passau songs make this spiritual and economic mutuality the central sign of yielding to the divine power and letting go of selfish compulsions that oppose mutuality.⁶⁷

The Philipite Anabaptist invitation to abandon self-centered concerns is made vivid in *Etliche Geseng* 48, stanzas 57–71, which declare that “there are two ways in this time: one is narrow the other wide.”⁶⁸ The extraordinary long-term influence of these eloquent stanzas is attested not only by their inclusion in current Amish lectionaries but also by their use as a common lullaby and children’s song in Amish family and school culture.⁶⁹ The author of these lines—who is anonymous—eloquently summarizes the primary motifs of the Philipite Anabaptist message and mission: the one who chooses the narrow way will be “despised by everyone” and can expect to “suffer great pain.”⁷⁰ On the other hand, those who choose this path are “born anew” and promised “peace and joy eternally” as opposed to those who walk the “broad way that is the path to hell.”⁷¹ Having laid out the options, the songwriter issues the defining invitation: “Let go, therefore, O world, of all your possessions and money and travel the narrow road so that you may obtain the eternal crown which God gives only to his Church.” This invitation is repeated for emphasis: “Let go, therefore, of all your possessions, greed, high pomp, and pride. Turn immediately from all sin. Then you will be counted as God’s child.”⁷²

65 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 64; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 267.

66 The exact details of Philipite community of goods are somewhat obscure; the sources suggest that their practice was less authoritarian and also less tidy than the emerging Hutterite model. See Friedmann, “Philipite Brethren,” 272–97. Friedmann’s account has been updated and qualified by Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 77–98.

67 For a discussion of the relationship between mystical strains of Anabaptism and communalist practices, see Williams, “German Mysticism and Anabaptist Communism,” 304–5.

68 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 112; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 425.

69 D. Rose Elder, *Why the Amish Sing: Songs of Solidarity and Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 24–25; 36–43.

70 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 112; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 425.

71 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 112; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 426.

72 *Ibid.*

For the prisoners at Passau, this choice to follow the narrow way—by yielding self and possessions to God and one another—led to an experience of God’s Word made visible in their communal life, which they remembered with urgency and longing. Recalling this experience of “fellowship (*gmeinschaft*) which your church (*Gemein*) maintained when they lived with one another,” Michael Schneider writes of a time when they “held all things in common” and when “no one said about his goods that they were his alone.”⁷³ Such a community of goods is a “treasure which you would give us in eternal life” and “for which we still strive” here on earth. Just as “your will happens in heaven,” so “whoever dwells with (the Lord) maintains the fellowship and has nothing of his own.”⁷⁴

In Schneider’s song about community of goods, he depicts Satan as opposing such “dwelling together” by chasing them away from their communities, by calling them heretics and fanatics, and by offering their lives in exchange for accepting back their possessions.⁷⁵ Community of goods in this song is the primary baptismal practice that brings opposition and suffering from the world. And it is also an essential part of the good news that the Philipite missionaries proclaimed and that “we understood well then, when we lived in Moravia and were with one another.”⁷⁶ This experience of dwelling together in brotherly and sisterly love was nothing less than the Word of God made visible: “It happened so that we could experience your Word in those years.”⁷⁷

Schneider draws on metaphors of nurture and mothering, likely from II Esdras 2:25–32, to describe the flourishing of this fellowship of love: “All who laid their treasures together would become strong with their nurses (*Ammen*),” who God nurtured along with the nurse’s children “while they were with her in the peaceful years which are now completely over.”⁷⁸ The loss of this flourishing fellowship with the experience of being “completely scattered” is the “greatest suffering of all.”⁷⁹ Yet, while this suffering of being scattered is the greatest of sufferings, Schneider expresses willingness to suffer with Jesus Christ, with the

73 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 28; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 144–45.

74 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 28–29; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 144–45.

75 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 29; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 145.

76 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 29; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 146.

77 *Ibid.*

78 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 29; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 146–47.

79 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 29; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 147.

hope of and prayer for a future restoration of their fellowship: “You have certainly promised us that you would again gather us together out of all lands.”⁸⁰

Standing “firm in distress” is a primary goal articulated in this and other songs of the Passau corpus.⁸¹ Such standing firm together is one way the Anabaptist prisoners at Passau were able to express a form of the solidarity they had experienced in community at Auspitz. This solidarity in suffering is beautifully displayed in a hymn written by fifteen of the Passau prisoners, with each of them composing a stanza. The song is introduced by the prolific Hans Betz, who, in the first stanza, expresses the central role of singing in the joy the Passau prisoners were able to experience amid their suffering: “Joyously we want to begin in peace and unity. It is our desire that the sacrifice be prepared for the Lord with singing.”⁸² In the third stanza, a different writer with the initials P. S.—probably Peter Stumpheter—makes clear the communal purpose of their singing: “All you Christians, therefore, who are devoted to God, press on with a rich shout that we all together may win the glory that is promised us.”⁸³ Most of the stanzas in the hymn reiterate this commitment to staying together in unity amid opposition by the “cruel Pharaoh,” who “lays such a great coercion on us at this time.”⁸⁴

This emphasis on unity is so strong that Riall speculates there may have been a simmering schism within the Passau congregation about how firm a doctrinal stance the prisoners should take in face of persecution.⁸⁵ It is noteworthy that the prolific Passau songwriter Michael Schneider did not contribute a stanza to this hymn, raising the question of whether Schneider’s more deeply mystical version of Anabaptist piety as expressed in his song texts was perhaps somewhat less dogmatic about outward forms than the piety conveyed by the circle of fourteen identified with *Etliche Geseng* 22. In any event, it is clear that even in prison the Philipite understanding of mission as chosen suffering is articulated as a collective experience of profound attachment to one another, of brotherly and sisterly love, rather than as an individualistic display of heroic suffering.

80 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 29-30; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 147.

81 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 30; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 147.

82 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 38; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 180.

83 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 39; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 180.

84 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 39; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 181.

85 *Earliest Hymns*, 184, n.7. The final stanza of this hymn identifies the authors of the song as “the fourteen brothers who have decided” that “no one shall move us from this altar,” implying that others perhaps are less decided. *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 40; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 183.

Suffering and Social Critique

Like many Anabaptists, the Passau singers regarded suffering as intrinsic to genuine discipleship; at the same time, they were vocal in criticizing the corruptions of power and authority that caused their pain. As noted before, the Passau songwriters explained their suffering as both permitted by God and caused by Satanic forces. These Satanic forces—described in personal terms as the adversary or the opponent (*widerspiel*)—oppose and despise the pious at every hand, calling them Anabaptists (*Widertäufer*), and shouting them down.⁸⁶ For their part, the Passau writers are bold in calling out the iniquities of the world around them—greed, pomp, pride, and possessions: “The world pursues money alone” rather than “what pleases God.”⁸⁷ Such critique is part of the church’s mission and discipleship; just as a “light” that “shines in the night,” so it is that “whoever follows Christ everywhere will be quickly recognized publicly and certainly.”⁸⁸ At the same time, the God who rescued Israel from Pharaoh will also rescue the suffering remnant from the clutches of Satan’s servants and bring judgment against those who abuse the pious.⁸⁹

It’s worth noting that this persistent antagonism between the pious and the Satanic is understood as a struggle within Christendom. The Anabaptist light shines on the corruption within the church; the Philipite mission is to Christians who have not yet accepted the gospel call to take up the cross of Jesus Christ and follow after him amid rejection and suffering. “Because the godless cannot believe, they think everyone is like them,” a Passau songwriter points out, critiquing the comfort in numbers associated with compromised Christianity; “Because their hands are polluted, no truth or love can be found in them,” and yet such people want to be known as “good Christians.”⁹⁰ In fact, the “false Satan”—the established church authorities—insists “there is no one on earth who can be pious and clean from sin” and mocks the discipleship of pious people.⁹¹ This “false Satan” presumes to be the source of pardon and penance: “He sells pardon in the place of God,” and “whoever does not bow or give him honor, he brings to anguish and suffering.”⁹²

86 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 108; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 418.

87 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 108–09; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 419.

88 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 108; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 418.

89 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 85; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 342.

90 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 109; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 420.

91 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 110; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 422.

92 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 110; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 423.

In another song, Michael Schneider develops the Anabaptist criticism of the pardon and penance offered by the “false Satan” with respect to celibacy and marriage: “Marriage pleases God,” but the adversary (*widerspan*) “will not have it.”⁹³ Referring to clerical celibacy, Schneider calls out this adversary who insists that “one should not be married here on earth” and “forbids a part of how God established the world in the beginning, which God grants to all.”⁹⁴ The same song develops a lengthy critique of liturgical practice that proscribes certain food, “alters time,” and requires fasting and festivals.⁹⁵ Such routines are related to the sacramental system of the “Antichrist”—who presumes to contain Christ in the food of the Eucharist—that has “prepared a little house, a monstrance inlaid with gold, and has put his god in there.”⁹⁶ The same system presumes to save a child, “even though it does not believe,” by smearing “the chrism on the child in the bath water.”⁹⁷

This critique of the economy of salvation and the “mission” of the established churches—those protected and corrupted by the sword—makes clear that the “new birth” and the “Word of the Lord” proclaimed by the Passau community is offered freely as a gift of God’s grace outside the institutional economy of Christendom that sells pardon in exchange for honor.⁹⁸ Instead, as the Passau Anabaptists understood the gospel, the believer receives everything from God (life, joy, eternal life) just as the believer gives everything to God (possessions, pride, comfort). The Passau singers persist in their invitation to their adversaries—to the whole world—to give up their possessions and the persecuting society that protected them.⁹⁹

But the Passau singers also proclaim judgment against their persecutors: “Whoever now imprisons and sheds innocent blood will have to be in eternal pain (*ewiger pein*)” and “whoever kills with the sword will also be killed by it.”¹⁰⁰ The singers pose a choice between curse and blessing: “God forces or compels no one into his kingdom. Whoever does right will live. To the evil servant who does wrong, his reward will also be given to him.”¹⁰¹

93 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 43; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 195–96.

94 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 43; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 196.

95 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 43 ; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 195.

96 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 44; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 198.

97 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 45; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 200–201.

98 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 110; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 422–23.

99 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 112; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 426.

100 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 111; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 424–25.

101 *Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng*, 46; Riall, *Earliest Hymns*, 203.

The specific critique of Christendom that is developed in the message of the Passau songs explains and justifies the active protest against European Christianity displayed in both the larger mission of the Philipite communities and the broader Moravian Anabaptist communitarian network. These communities were not withdrawn conventicles but public witnesses to the Christian establishment of their time, calling out the violence of the church's corrupted bargain with magisterial authorities and criticizing the persecution of religious dissenters and refugees. This public witness included practices of confrontation and protest such as street corner preaching and interrupting or boycotting establishment church services.¹⁰² Anabaptist suffering, as expressed in the Passau songs of the *Ausbund*, supports a mission of active conflict with and criticism of the prisoners' Christian adversaries. While they expected to suffer, they refused to justify the abusive and violent actions of their persecutors.

Suffering and Costly Reconciliation

It may seem that Anabaptists' appeals for their adversaries to repent from their violence were simply defensive and emotional displays rather than genuine efforts to evangelize or engage with their persecutors. There are certainly many stories of Anabaptist arguments and discussions with various hostile interlocutors that ended in execution and death for the Anabaptists—leading to the sense that Anabaptist appeals to adversaries generally served to escalate the conflict rather than defuse or transform it. And yet, in the case of the Passau prisoners, we seem to have a genuine instance of conflict transformation, at least as displayed in the relationship between two of the Anabaptist prisoners and the Passau cathedral dean Rupert Mosham.

Mosham's approach to Anabaptist dissent was to secure recantations not through threats of violence and torture but through cordial conversation and improved prison conditions. In the case of the Anabaptists at Passau, Mosham invited the leaders, including Michael Schneider and his associate Hans Beck, to friendly discussions about their faith and beliefs. Apparently, in at least one instance, he invited Schneider to his house for a meal and conversation.¹⁰³

¹⁰² A key Anabaptist leader who helped shape the South and Central German Anabaptist communities from the beginning was George Blaurock, who was notorious for his disruption of church services and claiming official pulpits for his own dissenting message. See his biography in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* for more details: Christian Neff, "George Blaurock (ca. 1492–1529)," *Mennonite Encyclopedia I* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1955), 354.

¹⁰³ Oyer, "Michael Schneider," 263.

These conversations were fruitful in the sense that they led to Schneider's acceptance of a six-point recantation of his Anabaptist beliefs, a decision also taken by several others in the Passau group, including Beck. These decisions to recant took place during a time of vulnerability for the Passau congregation, following the death of minister and songwriter Hans Betz, one of the fourteen authors of the jointly composed song *Etliche Geseng* 22 that expressed their decision to "press through" together despite great opposition.

Although he never left the Catholic Church, Mosham was himself a bit of an eccentric dissenter who shared some Anabaptist criticisms of the institutional church, especially the abuses by the clergy. These anti-clerical views were included in the recantation, which may have made it easier for Schneider and his fellow prisoners to agree. Despite their recantations, Schneider, Beck, and the others who relented to Mosham's appeals were not released from prison. Meanwhile, the local cathedral canons expressed great offense to Duke Ernst of Bavaria regarding Mosham's apparent sympathy for the Anabaptists.¹⁰⁴ Sensing that Ernst, who had originally supported Mosham's approach, was turning against him, Mosham fled from Passau in fall of 1539.

Meanwhile, Schneider and Beck broke out of prison and joined Mosham in Nuremberg to help him present his case to the Lutheran authorities there for ecumenical unity among various reform parties, including a more irenic response to Anabaptist dissent.¹⁰⁵ The Nuremberg authorities had a more favorable response to the Anabaptist recanters than to Mosham, and in October of 1539, Mosham, Schneider, and Beck moved on to Dinkensbühl.¹⁰⁶ In the coming year, Mosham traveled throughout Germany and Switzerland to advance his vision for the reunification of Christendom, but his esoteric and ecumenical views were not well received. He eventually ended up being imprisoned at the same Passau castle where the Anabaptists had been held—apparently committing suicide in the spring of 1543.¹⁰⁷ Schneider and Beck disappeared from the record after their involvement with Mosham at Nuremberg and Dinkensbühl, but Packull speculates that they may have ended up rejoining the Anabaptist movement as Swiss Brethren, given that Schneider's songs were included in the *Ausbund* and were thus claimed by the Swiss Anabaptists who published this song collection.¹⁰⁸

104 Ibid., 270.

105 Ibid., 265–70.

106 Ibid., 268.

107 Ibid., 270–71.

108 Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 95.

In any event, the apparent bond that developed between two Anabaptist prisoners and a Catholic cleric suggests something more than a story of Anabaptist recantation. In this case, a powerful religious authority—a cathedral dean—responded to Anabaptist dissent with the hand of friendship and fellowship rather than with instruments of torture and execution. This radical act of friendship, along with the larger vision of reconciliation and unity that it displayed, turned out to be quite costly for the dean, who ended up in prison while the Anabaptists went free.

Thus, the suffering mission of the Philipite Anabaptist songwriters and singers can be said to have born much fruit, including the costly witness of a Catholic dreamer who yearned for unity, even with Anabaptists, and who suffered in prison, although without the spiritual benefit of communal solidarity as experienced and expressed by the Philipite prisoners through their gift of beautiful songs. That invitation to Christian communal solidarity and to sharing together in the suffering of Jesus Christ echoes through the centuries both as a protest against the violence-grounded comforts of this world and as a visible display of joyful and peaceable human fellowship. The invitation continues to be offered today in the singing and reading and discussing of the Passau prison songs as well as in the flourishing of Christian communities who have accepted this invitation and the divine mission to which it calls believers. The mission displayed by the Passau singers and songwriters assumes conflict and suffering to be intrinsic to the life-giving mission of the church and proclaims that faithful suffering, rather than being quietly endured might, for the sake of divine and human reconciliation, be freely chosen and joyfully shared.¹⁰⁹

109 For a fine discussion of the important distinction between an abusive vision of redemptive suffering and an empowering picture of solidarity with those who suffer, see Susanne Guenther Loewen, “Can the Cross Be ‘Good News’ for Women? Mennonite Peace Theology and the Suffering of Women,” *Anabaptist Witness* 3, no. 2 (December 2016): 109–21.