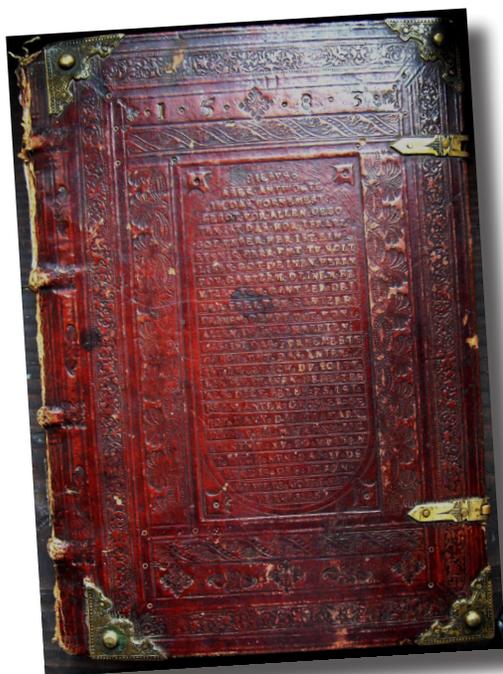


JDM 2021

May 29, June 4 and 5, 2021, 1:30 PM CST



The Hutterian Brethren were the most significant church denomination to emerge from the Upper German Anabaptist movements during the Reformation. In the 16th and early 17th centuries, the Hutterites planted about 60 community settlements in small country towns on the domains of tolerant nobles in south Moravia. A safe haven for persecuted Anabaptists from neighbouring countries, these Hutterite *Bruderhöfe* became a melting pot of Anabaptist traditions with an estimated 20,000 persons congregating by the end of the 16th century. The early Hutterites did not depend on farming for their livelihood, but on craft production and highly qualified services. They developed a unique way of life that combined the religious principles of strict pacifism and community-of-goods with elements of contemporary urban culture. The Hutterites achieved an exceptionally high level of literacy among their membership in an age when the majority of the Catholic and Protestant population could neither read nor write. Because they were not permitted to operate a printing press, Hutterites set in motion a highly effective system of manuscript multiplication in order to provide books for thousands of readers beginning around 1565.

Reading and Writing in the Church of God in Moravia: Hutterite Book Culture in the 16th and 17th Centuries

Dr. Martin Rothkegel

Martin Rothkegel studied Protestant theology (ThD, Charles University, Prague, 2001) and classical philology (PhD., University of Hamburg, 2005). He is professor of church history at the Theologische Hochschule Elstal, near Berlin, Germany. His research focuses on historical Anabaptism in eastern Central Europe as well as the history of scholarship and science in the early modern period. Rothkegel has done extensive research on the extant Hutterite manuscripts and served as an editor of the *Katalog der hutterischen Handschriften... [Catalogue of Hutterian Manuscripts]* (2011) and Hauprecht Zapff's *Johannes der Evangelist über alle Kapitel erklärt [John the Evangelist: An Explanation of all Chapters]* (2017), a Hutterite bible commentary from 1597.



For more information and to register, visit:

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The 2021 Jacob D. Maendel Lectures will be delivered via Zoom, which permits participation on various digital devices including an audio-only connection with analog phones. Participating in these lectures is free. However, in an attempt to defray the costs associated with organizing, promoting, and hosting such a venture, donations are gratefully accepted. When you register as an individual, please consider making a donation of at least \$10. The suggested donation for communities with more attendees is \$100.

The 2021 Jacob D. Maendel Lectures

LECTURE 1: Saturday, May 29, 2021

The Inner and the Outer Word: Living with the Bible

The Reformation made the Bible available in vernacular translations, but the Protestant territorial churches undertook no efforts to distribute copies of the Bible to lay believers. Access to a New Testament or a full Bible was the privilege of those who could afford one of the costly editions. The Hutterites, in contrast, provided each member with a copy of the New Testament and made copies of the full Bible accessible in shared spaces where members were encouraged to meet for Bible reading during leisure hours. In order to secure a sufficient number of copies, the Hutterites bought up large numbers of certain Bible editions—preferably early editions printed in Zurich and Worms during the 1520s and 1530s. Before being approved for use within the community, all incoming copies were manually annotated and rebound in characteristic leather bindings. Bible reading was at the centre of Hutterite piety. This seems to be in stark contrast with the verdict that the “outward letter” is dead and useless for salvation, which is often affirmed in Hutterite writings. How can we make sense of this?



LECTURE 2: Friday, June 4, 2021

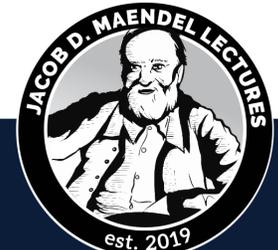
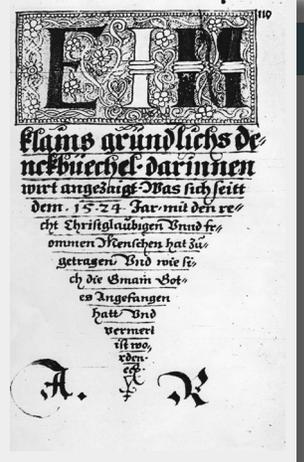
Books for the Church of God: Reading Materials and Manuscript Multiplication

Becoming Hutterite involved leaving one's home, severing social ties, giving up personal property, and detaching oneself from the pursuit of 'worldly' knowledge (with the exception of practical knowledge, e.g. technical or medical). Hutterite *Prediger* exercised strict control over reading materials circulating within the community. Religious texts by Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed authors, as well as fictional and recreational literature, were banned. On the other hand, writings by the non-sectarian Spiritualist Sebastian Franck, vernacular translations by Erasmus of Rotterdam, works of the Schwenckfeldian Adam Reissner, and Anabaptist devotional texts by Menno Simons and Pilgram Marpeck were appreciated by the Hutterites. Besides the Bible, the reading materials deemed most appropriate for rank-and-file members were the letters and confessions of faith composed by Hutterian martyrs and missionaries. All members were encouraged to copy pocket collections of martyr letters and confessions for personal use. Even school children participated in producing manuscript copies of devotional texts and songbooks. The result was a rich heritage of beautifully penned manuscript volumes, a small part of which is still preserved in European libraries and among the Hutterites in the U.S. and in Canada.

LECTURE 3: Saturday, June 5, 2021

History Written by Victims: The Hutterite Chronicles

The Hutterite church claimed to be the restituted primitive apostolic church of the last age. While Hutterites did not deny the possibility of achieving salvation outside the “Church of God in Moravia,” they asserted that the rise and development of their *Gemein* formed the concluding chapter of God's history with humanity from creation to their time. Besides the large *Chronicle*, *das große Geschichtsbuch*, which was compiled by Hauprecht Zapff in 1581 and continued by Hutterite church leadership to 1665, there were several minor historiographical works. Some of the minor chronicles antedate Zapff's large *Chronicle*. The Hutterite chronicles and martyr books are very valuable sources not only for the history of the Hutterite church and Anabaptism, but for the age of the Reformation in general. They belong to a small collection of Early Modern histories written by victims rather than victors. The chronicles were vigilantly kept out of reach of outsiders. Exclusively intended for a readership inside the Hutterite church, these fascinating texts were sharp and outspoken in their criticism of the dominant forms of Christianity and of the violent persecution exercised by the state churches. Long before religious liberty and the separation of church and state became generally accepted principles of modern societies, the Hutterite chronicles condemned sectarian violence, religious coercion, and all forms of state religion.



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