

## From the Editor

Last month my wife and I had the rare opportunity of visiting Europe on an Anabaptist Heritage tour, doing research and filming for future historical projects. What a blessing this was! To be there at the very church in Pingjum where Menno Simons wrestled through his fight with worldliness and compromise ... and to stand on the bank of the stream where Dirk Willems turned and saved his captors ... and stand on the spot where Michael Sattler was burned alive after his flaming court testimony was all very soul searching.

In Zurich, on the banks of the Limmat, I looked into the river where Felix Manz was drowned (see cover photo). Pondering the noncompromising stand these martyrs took, a brother pointed out a good point to me. He said it is profound to think that these martyrs were not being killed for refusing to deny the existence of Christ. No, they were being killed merely for refusing to *compromise* some aspect of truth. That noncompromising stance greatly challenged me.

Deriving its source from the melting snow of the Swiss Alps, I found the Limmat River distressingly clear as glass.

Standing on the bank at the place of Felix Manz's execution, I thought of that final scene where Heinrich Bullinger, the zealous Protestant reformer, walked along chiding Felix Manz right up until his time of death, begging him to recant. I imagined Felix Manz's mother, the converted mistress of a Catholic priest, shouting from the shore, "Be faithful unto death!" I imagined how Felix Manz, not even flinching, ignored the pleas of Bullinger to recant, looked to heaven, and cried, "Into thy hands, O God, I commend my spirit!" Following that, Manz was ordered to be pulled into the water backwards, to be drowned to death. The Reformers called this "death by baptism." (See picture this page.)

Searching reflectively into the hearts of these men, I wondered, "Did Heinrich Bullinger dare to look into this crystal clear river as the last bit of life left the body of Felix Manz? It's times like those that I'm sure muddy water would have been preferred. Looking reflectively at myself, I wondered if I am really a lot different.

The last night, we stayed along the banks of the Rhine River in Germany. Looking across the Rhine that night, I pondered the scene from a few centuries earlier. At this very spot

a motley crew of makeshift barges—cram-packed with scant supplies and desperate people—had floated downstream to Holland. In the early 1700s, the Mennonites and Amish had suffered a forced massive exile from Switzerland. They were gathered together in Berne, Switzerland, where they were loaded onto their floating shanties, grasping their babies, possessions, and faith. But again I asked, "Why were they exiled?"

It was because they refused to compromise the truth.

After our nice dinner that last night, I stood on the banks contemplating this mass exodus. One brother, Benuel Lapp, looked at me and said, "Do you think our ancestors would have recognized us if we had been here when they floated past?"

Good question. If they did, I wonder what they would say to us today.

I left Europe looking for a reality in my life as clear as the waters of the Limmat River, and as faithful as the martyrs who died there. Admittedly, I've got a long way to go.

In this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*, we take

a look at faithfully taking up the cross and letting it leave its *stigma* in our daily life. And about just being faithful "ice makers," like showing up at work bees or being consistently in the kitchen at a fellowship meal.

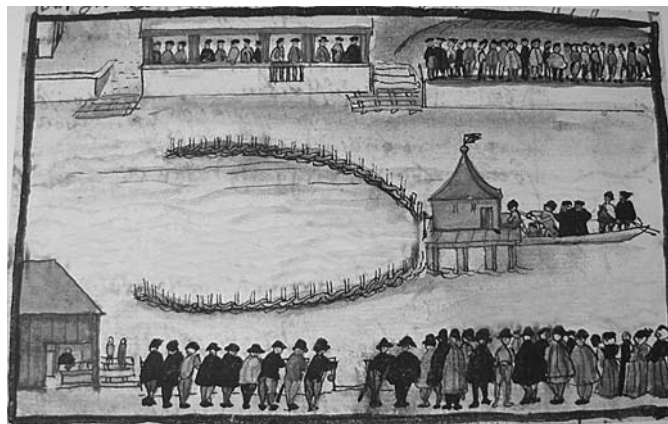
Cyprian exhorts the young sisters, while John Mark Weaver exhorts us to not go beyond the Bible, into the jungles of self-deception.

We have a nice article that challenges our stock definition of "worship," and one for the sisters that challenges the world's idea of a career for women. All of this, of course, has to come from having our minds renewed, as Stephen Geise explains it in his article.

Then we turn back to take an inside look at what made Felix Manz and other Anabaptist martyrs so distinct from the Reformers that pulled them bound into the Limmat River. It was a distinct view of what Christianity was all about. To explain this distinction, we review Robert Friedmann's little known book on Anabaptist theology.

May this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* stir you to be faithful unto death!

~Bro. Dean



The drowning of Felix Manz in the Limmat River.