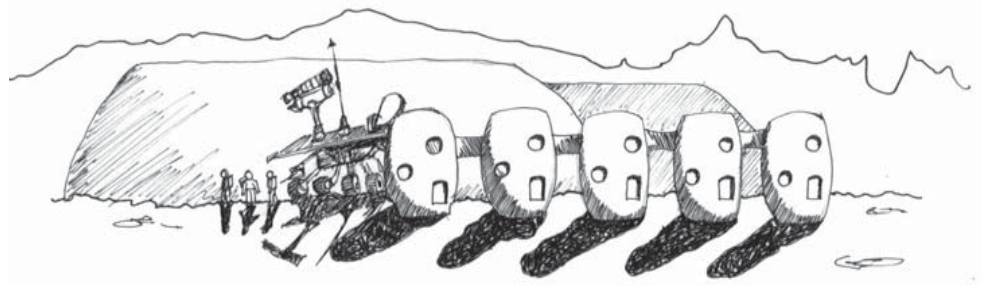


From the Editor



The Mars Colony, Or the Kingdom of God?

A few weeks ago I came across an interesting news article. A group of scientists and engineers in Holland are starting to take applications for people who are interested in a very dangerous project that, once they start, will never be able to go back home. This project will give these brave volunteers a one-way ticket. They must be willing to give their life for the cause. The project is to start a human colony on Mars.

The company is being really honest with the hardships of the mission. They say that the flight to Mars will take approximately eight months. During that time people will lose muscle mass and face many health challenges. But the biggest challenge about the whole trip is that the company is coming right out and saying that it will be a one-way ticket! Put in simple terms, this means that everyone who joins the project will die on Mars (if they don't die on the way).

That's pretty committed! Think about it; imagine modern Americans and Europeans giving up family, friends, entertainment, sunshine, grass, lakes, parks, vacations, etc. and etc., for the rest of their life ... all just to be a part of the first human colony on Mars. Do you think they had any takers? Well, within a few weeks the Dutch company claims that they have received over 40,000 applications!

I did some research on this project and found that the training for this project will be very challenging. When I heard what they are planning, I was amazed, so I did some further research to understand how they are planning to pull this off. The company says that they have a 20-year plan. Here is an outline of what they are planning:

- 2013: a replica of the settlement will be built for training purposes.
- 2014: The first communication satellite will be produced.
- July 2015: The astronaut selection process will be completed; six teams of four.
- 2016: A supply mission will be launched during January (arriving October) with 2,500 kilograms (5,500 lb) of food.

- 2018: An exploration vehicle will launch to pick the location of the settlement.
- 2021: Six additional Dragon capsules and another rover will launch with two living-quarters units, two life-support units, and two supply units.
- 2022: A SpaceX Falcon Heavy will launch with the first group of four colonists.
- 2023: The first colonists will arrive on Mars in a modified Dragon capsule.
- 2025: A second group of four colonists will arrive.
- 2033: The colony will reach 20 settlers.

Wow, think about it ... a 20-year plan to accomplish the goal of putting a colony of people on a cold, empty planet. I don't know about you, but this makes me ask how dedicated the church is to accomplishing goals for the kingdom of God. When I think about this Mars colony dedication, I feel challenged. Jesus said, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

By earthly standards, this is radical. But lately I've been hearing about small groups of radical Christians that are beginning to dream about accomplishing radical things by heavenly standards. The more I hear, the more encouraged I get.

While I was actually working on this article I received an e-mail from All-Nations Bible Translation. This is a group of young radical Anabaptists who have a vision for ministering to unreached tribes and translating the Bible into their own language. They also have a vision for church planting and want to provide radical discipleship without the Evangelical baggage that often comes along with some groups. I know many of these young men; they are currently studying years of Hebrew and Greek to accomplish this vision. Like the mission to Mars, these brothers have a 20-year plan. The e-mail that I received from this ministry was advertising that they were taking applications for their "Kingdom Warriors

Training Camp.” Amen! Imagining little colonies of radical Bible translators taking the gospel to unreached areas of the earth thrills me much more than the thought of a colony on Mars.

Then I thought about another exciting thing happening this month. Three of my good friends are starting a radical, inner-city church ministry south of Boston. A former skinhead, a Harvard graduate, and a nice “normal” guy are teaming up to live with their families in the city of Boston. They have a desire to live and experience daily discipleship with the people to whom they are called to minister. Amen!

Also, a few days ago I received an e-mail from a converted kickboxer from Thailand. He has a wonderful testimony. Instead of fighting in the flesh, now that he is converted he fights spiritual warfare. He is now a powerful street preacher and desires to take the gospel of the kingdom to his people in Thailand. He has a vision to reach the Thai people with a real kingdom message, and he even desires to live among them and experience daily fellowship and discipleship. Wow! We have been sending great e-mails back and forth, and he really blesses me.

Also this month I heard of a group of young men and women living close together in an inner-city work in downtown Winnipeg. They have an inner-city school aimed at reaching the unchurched children and young people of the city. They have been having great responses and are now asking great questions about how to take the whole thing to the next level. Living by faith for their support, these young people are experiencing New Testament living at a new level. Amen!

In a few months I will be going on a mini mission trip to minister to several first-generation Anabaptist Christians peppered throughout Eastern Europe. As I prepare to go, I have been reading their stories and testimonies ... and again I am blessed. Who are they? A group of Russian Mennonites living in Germany who desire a more radical everyday life together; believers in Switzerland, Serbia, and Croatia; a little community in Romania struggling to keep the faith in a pagan world. There is also a little settlement of Anabaptists living in the Czech Republic in a historical Anabaptist city. They want to preach the light of the gospel in their town, which has been dormant for almost 300 years. I’m looking forward to meeting these new believers.

Beauty from ashes

Many of us have been through tough times lately. I have caught a lot of tears the last few years and I’ve shed a lot myself. But I praise God because every day it seems I hear of more exciting things happening. I rejoice to hear of more examples like these mentioned, of precious fruit rising from the ashes of the last few years.

I firmly believe that Christ has us go through tough times to take us to a greater level of vision and dedication. There is no doubt about it: through the years I have witnessed incredible things that God has done among the “Remnant” people. But I believe that now He wants to take us even further. Jesus said, “And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”¹ Pruning hurts; but the new fruit that blossoms from the wounds is a testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord.

The Dutch space company can boast of their plans for a colony on Mars. However, the saints that I have spoken of here are planting a kingdom that will never go away. Both ways require years of vision and dedication. However, only one will bear fruit into eternity. These saints and many more like them are doing it for Christ and His kingdom. That encourages me.

Readers, have you been discouraged? Take courage. The pain has not been in vain. God’s pruning work will bear its precious fruit. Let’s keep going! “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”²

In this issue we take a look at the rudiments of the Anabaptist movement, how the goal was to establish Christ’s rule on earth by forming a brotherhood of men and women who live in antithesis to the natural course of humanity. We also take a look at how the historical and biblical record can so easily get distorted by agendas. If you have heard or read about “The Romans Road to Salvation,” be sure to check out “The Matthew Road.” “The Law of Kindness” was written for the sisters, but we men could use a dose of kindness as well. And finally, we take a look at the swearing of oaths.

May this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* find you encouraged to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, despite the scoffing of Sanballet. ~Dean Taylor

Christ has us
go through tough
times to take us
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1 John 15:2

2 Gal 6:9