

**Philip Jacob Spener's  
Contribution to the  
Protestant Doctrine of the Church**

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Philip Jacob Spener's  
Contribution to the Protestant Doctrine of the Church

## **Introduction**

In 1666 a young pastor was called to become the head Lutheran pastor in Frankfurt am Main. He was well educated, holding the Doctor of Theology from the University of Strassbourg, and he had some strong notions that would soon galvanize Europe into another surge of reforming zeal—eventually reaching millions in every corner of the globe. The pastor's name was Philip Jacob Spener.

Nine years into his first pastorate, Spener would set forth his call for reform in the Lutheran church in a forward to a collection of sermons by Johannes Arndt. The title of the introduction was *Pia Desideria*,

(Pious Desires) and within weeks this remarkable little tractate set off an astounding reaction throughout most of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Modern members of primitive New Testament-style churches will quickly recognize several important themes in this tract, which have stirred strong sentiments today, as they have throughout church history and still do. These ideas include the need for small meetings in the local church that will allow the re-introduction of the inter-active style of koinonia described in I Cor. 14, the need for the laity to learn the Bible and use it, the necessity of congregational review of the public teacher's positions, a vigorous critique of the institutional church and others.

It is the purpose of this paper to identify the key themes of Spener's theology, focusing in the area of ecclesiology. Then, a further attempt will be made to understand the connection between Spener's ecclesiological position and those streams that gave rise to it, as well as those that flowed out from it.

### ***Spener's background***

Born in 1635 in a practicing Christian home,<sup>2</sup> Spener grew up in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War.<sup>3</sup> It is hard to exaggerate the deadening effect that this international holocaust had on the view of the average person in Germany toward religion. Stoeffler says,

It is difficult to overestimate the catastrophic effect of the Thirty Years War upon the German people, the country being at the mercy of the (sic) Europe's soldiery, the destruction was such that whole villages and even towns simply disappeared.<sup>4</sup>

The thirty years war was only one manifestation of the unhealthy relationship between church and state at that time. In the sixteenth century the Reformers had turned to the German princes, as "the chief members of the church," to take a hand in the reform of the church in their lands. This move was necessary because, at that time, divergent religious movements were routinely exterminated by armies loyal to the Roman Catholic Church. The fact is that if the leaders of the Reformation had not had the armies of European nobles on their side (especially in Saxony), they probably would have gone the way of previous dissident religious movements like the Albigensians and the Waldensians--genocide.<sup>5</sup>

It is hard for the modern reader to appreciate what life would have been like in a time when religious toleration was unheard of. Yet it was this fact that originally made partnership with the state indispensable.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, while preserving the reformation church, this appeal for state assistance had led in time to a condition of permanent control. By the second half of the seventeenth century many of the rulers were members of the church only in a nominal sense, yet they held ecclesiastical legislation (rules for church discipline) firmly in their grasp. They also made the choice of who would hold offices in the church.

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<sup>1</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological introduction to Philip Jakob Spener's 'Pia Desideria': A Study in Early German Pietism with Appendix. Volume 2: Translation of the 'Pia Desideria'*, PhD. Dissertation, Princeton University, (Ann Arbor, Mi.: University Microfilms, Inc. 1963), p. 155 .

<sup>2</sup>Three of Spener's sisters married pastors, and one of his four brothers also became a pastor, certainly indicating a strong religious environment. Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction* p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>The thirty years war ended with the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. "There is no more striking example of the confusion of religious and political interests. . . when freedom of conscience and worship was proclaimed, it was . . . for the princes, not for their subjects." All the subjects within a given province had to be of one confession. Provinces throughout Europe were designated either Lutheran, Calvinist, or Roman Catholic. Other groups (such as Anabaptists, Quakers, and Mennonites) were outlawed everywhere. H. Daniel-Rops, *The Church in the Seventeenth Century*, J. J. Buckingham trans. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1963), pp. 136, 149.

<sup>4</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 181.

<sup>5</sup>For example, see Giorgio Tourn, *The Waldensians: The First 800 Years (1174-1974)*, Translated from the Italian by Camillo P. Merlino, Charles W. Arbutnot, Editor (Torino, Italy: Claudiana Editrice, 1980), p. 36, 46 52 63, 64, 65 88-91.

<sup>6</sup>Of course there was also a long tradition of church-state fusion, which led few to question this relationship. See Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church & State: 1050-1300*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1964), for clear commentary and source readings on this subject.

Church and state were united in such a way that the state controlled the church, and the ministers of the church became officials of the state.<sup>7</sup>

One example of state meddling in the church was the legal requirement that everyone attend church, and pay tithes.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, for most, this state of affairs tended to lead to a superficial involvement in the church. Another lamentable feature were the terrorizing heretic hunts and witch hunts which periodically engulfed and brutalized a given territory.<sup>9</sup>

The Christian state concept had also removed the perceived need to convert the lost in society. It was assumed that most if not all those in church were authentic Christians. Here, the modern reader has less problem identifying with Spener's world.

The unfortunate relationship between church and state was not the only factor leading to the growth of nominal Christianity. Lutheran theology and practice were both problematic at this time, as witnessed by many besides Spener.

In the seminaries, the students were trained to do theology in Latin, as they had been for hundreds of years. "Disputations" or debates with other schools of theology were the order of the day. These disputations were not only carried out against Reformed, Anabaptist, and Roman Catholic, but also against other Lutherans. They could be carried out in person, or in writing, and tended to become more and more vituperative.<sup>10</sup> The clergy who had been trained this way also tended to bring these disputes into the pulpit. Many sermons were scathing sarcastic attacks on rival views, detailed often with Latin quotations that the people did not understand or care about.<sup>11</sup> This form of teaching—arid, non-biblical, and unapplied—was compared by some to the *schul Theologie* (scholastic, or school theology) that the Reformation had claimed to replace.<sup>12</sup>

In church life, a rigid distinction between clergy and laity tends to be quite un motivating for the laity, especially when it is not felt that the lay person can do anything of importance. Yet, not only was this distinction maintained as tightly as ever, but other class distinctions were evident as well. Tappert explains,

... class distinctions were manifest in the churches, where elevated and upholstered places were reserved for the upper classes and only the common people sat on hard seats in the nave.<sup>13</sup>

Stoeffler adds,

Some of the noble families of Saxony... would not have their children baptized at church because this would involve baptism with the same water used for other children.<sup>14</sup>

There would have been little enthusiasm for spiritual growth, let alone ministry for the average lay person during this period. Stoeffler summarizes the situation,

The popular idea within the territorial churches was that a Christian is anyone who has been baptized and who maintains some formal connection with the Church by making use at least occasionally of the means

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<sup>7</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, Introduction to Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964) p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 7.

<sup>9</sup>... the jurist Carpzov boasted in 1666 that he alone had passed the death sentence upon 20,000 people, mostly witches." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 182.

<sup>10</sup>Stoeffler comments that, "The apologetical and homiletical thunder directed against Reformed and Philippist alike was such as should have been reserved for the devil." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 184.

<sup>11</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 7 He also comments that, "Independent exegesis of the Scriptures had little place in the curriculum at a time when it was assumed that the contents of the Scriptures were adequately expressed in the Confession." p. 6.

<sup>12</sup>"The preachers did a great deal of preaching, but sermons were so long winded and dry that in some places *Kirchenwecker* [church awakeners, who would crack or jab those who slept in church with a stick] were employed to keep people from sleeping." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 186.

<sup>13</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 4-5.

<sup>14</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 181.

of grace [communion, the Word, and baptism] and who believes in general the truths laid down in the doctrinal symbols of his communion and adheres to its cultic forms.<sup>15</sup>

Naturally, with the flame of the church burning dimly, people became interested in other things. It is not clear whether the drinking bouts and “rioting” that Spener complained about were worse than usual, but there is no good reason to doubt that they were, especially since this part of Spener’s thesis was not questioned by his critics.

The overall situation then, in Germany and much of the rest of Europe, was general apathy on the spiritual level. Bickering between theologians had lost the interest of the people, and Christianity itself was discredited by the violence of the religious wars.

Yet even though the people were tired of murderous fanaticism, the nominal formalistic religion that was prevalent was not satisfying either. This fact is attested to by scores of written lamentations about the sorry state of the church from this period. As Noll has stated,

In fact, German pietism was but one chord in a symphony of variations on a common theme—the need to move beyond sterile formulas about God to a more intimate experience with him.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the cries for spiritual reality were radical and even unbiblical such as those of Valentine Weigel and Jacob Boehme who were theosophical mystics. Other mystical authors were more moderate in their position.

Spener’s favorite book while growing up was by one such author. The book, which was in Spener’s father’s library, was John Arndt’s *True Christianity*, the echoes of which are evident in virtually all of Spener’s writings. *Pia Desideria* itself was written as an introduction to a collection of Arndt’s sermons. Spener was also deeply affected by the religious views of one countess Agathe. Her Christianity has been characterized as “world-fleeing, quietistic, even mystical.”<sup>17</sup> Spener also lists as a key influence, his parish pastor, Stoll, who was a strict Lutheran with a practical bent. Finally, there were several other devotional authors who influenced Spener during this period. Briefly, they are, Emmanuel Sothom’s *Golden Crown-Jewels of the Children of God*, (which was written that “those who are Christian in name might become Christian also in deeds and in truth,”) and Lewis Bayly’s *The Practice of Piety*.<sup>18</sup> Any student of Spener’s work will recognize the themes of these British quietists readily.

Spener was a sharp student, and by the age of just 16 he was urged to enter the University of . There he studied under well known Lutheran scholars, especially Dannhauer, who made him read the works of Luther. Spener was so taken by Luther that he would later claim that no other author since biblical times was as enlightened as he. It can fairly be said that Spener received his orthodox material (including his ecclesiology) from Luther through Dannhauer.<sup>19</sup> As he moved toward completion of his education “he became increasingly biblically oriented and the theological writing which he engaged in becomes increasingly exegetical and practical. Grunberg notes that despite the fact that Spener was a contemporary of “Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, and Leibniz . . . and Bacon, Herbert of Cherbury, and Descartes . . . [were] causing a philosophical revolution, Spener took almost no notice of their philosophical labors.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 17,18.

<sup>16</sup>M. A. Noll, “Pietism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Elwell, Walter A. ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984) p. 857.

<sup>17</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction*, p. 87. Spener himself maintains that this lady was a profound influence in his early life in his “Selbstbiographie” (Autobiography).

<sup>18</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction*, p. 89,90.

<sup>19</sup>Agreeing with Aland, Deeter says, “Dannhauer is important above all others in direct intellectual and theological influence on Spener.” Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological introduction*, p. 117. He also points out that one of Dannhauer’s pet projects which never came to realization was the founding of a seminary for teaching foreign languages to prepare missionaries for assignments. May this not have been in the background of Spener’s thinking during the founding of Halle with its missionary thrust?

<sup>20</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction*, p. 97. He did remain, however, a life-long friend of Leibniz, often corresponding with him.

After graduation from class work, Spener took the customary 2 years of travels. One interesting stop in his journeys was in Geneva, where he was exposed to the charismatic French mystic, Jean de Labadie.

Labadie later became a mystical extremist, and a separatist (i.e. revolutionary against the established church). His doctrinal influence on Spener will be considered later.

Spener was called to the pastorate in Frankfurt am Main in 1666. He immediately began to hold forth his views, which apparently remained relatively unchanged over the next 25 years. It was at Frankfurt that he began his *collegia pietatis* in 1670 and published the *Pia Desideria*.<sup>21</sup>

Within months, the *Pia Desideria* was known throughout the Lutheran church.

## The elements of spener's program

Spener was catapulted into fame, as already stated, by the publication of *Pia Desideria* in 1676. This little book has some very special qualities as described by Aland,

Spener stands altogether in the stream of a tradition, but with the means at our disposal it is not possible to demonstrate with certainty when he was actually dependent on it. This much is clear. But it is just as clear that he represents a unique phenomenon. Countless books were written on the same theme before and after Spener. None of them, however, even approaches the *Pia Desideria* in the conciseness and clarity of its thought and the grasp of its goal. . . All the ideas and all the proposals for a reform of existing conditions had been present again and again before him. . . Yet nobody but Spener was capable of putting them together in the way in which we find them in the *Pia Desideria*.<sup>22</sup>

The *Pia Desideria* contains the clearest summary of Spener's theology. Here the parts of the book are mentioned with short representative statements which give the feeling, or flavor of the work.

Spener begins with an introduction that cautions the clergy that they will not have to answer to God for how proficient they were at winning debates,

"Instead, we shall be asked how faithfully and with how childlike a heart we sought to further the kingdom of God; with how pure and godly a teaching and how worthy an example we tried to edify our hearers amid the scorn of the world..."<sup>23</sup>

Spener's pattern of looking past the external and unimportant to the spiritual realities underlying the situation is immediately apparent.

After the introduction, the first section contains a lengthy lamentation over the condition of all three estates in German-Lutheran society. Of the first estate, the nobility, Spener complains that they do not use their governmental authority in the interest of building a Christian society.

How many of them there are who do not concern themselves at all with what is spiritual, who hold with Gallio that they have nothing to do with anything but the temporal!<sup>24</sup>

As already mentioned, the relation between the church and the state was a close one in Spener's day, and he saw nothing wrong with this, except for the fact that the nobility were not holding up their end of the bargain.

Of the second estate, the clergy, his main critique is that they have replaced the simple and clear preaching of the gospel with a morbid interest in controversial nit-picking. One source of this is the one-sided impractical education that the clergy receive at seminary.

When men's minds are stuffed with such a theology which, while it preserves the foundation of faith from the Scriptures, builds on it with so much wood, hay, and stubble of human inquisitiveness that the gold can no longer be seen, it becomes exceedingly difficult to grasp and find pleasure in the real simplicity of

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<sup>21</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 229.

<sup>22</sup>Kurt Aland, *Spener Studien*, p. 57,58. Cited in Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 18.

<sup>23</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 36.

<sup>24</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 43.

Christ and his teaching. This is so because men's taste becomes accustomed to the more charming things of reason,<sup>25</sup> and after a while the simplicity of Christ and his teaching appears to be tasteless. Such knowledge, which remains without love, "puffs up" (I Cor. 8:1). It leaves man in his love of self; indeed, it fosters and strengthens such love more and more. Subtleties unknown to the Scriptures usually have their origin, in the case of those who introduce them, in a desire to exhibit their sagacity and their superiority over others, to have a great reputation, and to derive benefit therefrom in the world. . . They can hardly be kept from taking to market what gives them the most pleasure, and they generally concentrate on something that is not very edifying to their hearers who are seeking salvation."<sup>26</sup>

Finally, of the third estate, the peasants and the bourgeoisie, Spener deplors the lack of biblical morality. Examples that he focuses on include the presence of beggars and other poor who are ignored by the working Christians,<sup>27</sup> heavy drinking and "riot,"<sup>28</sup> and superficiality in the observance of church ordinances:

This leads many people to damnation and even strengthens a false and illusory conception of what constitutes true faith. There are many who think that this comprises all there is to christianity and thus they have done enough if they have been baptized, listen to the divine word in sermons, confessed, received the absolution, and gone to Holy Communion.<sup>29</sup>

It is confusing to hear Spener argue against doctrinal wrangling and superficiality in a way very fit unto the modern fundamentalist church, and then turn around and attack drinking! One wonders whether he would reject or embrace modern fundamentalist churches.

Spener's denunciation of all forms of sin is thorough. Yet he does not believe in perfectionism. In the next section of the *Pia Desideria*, he sets forward a vision of a reformed Lutheran church.

If one wants to seek perfection one must abandon this life for the next. There alone can one find perfection but prior to eternity we cannot hope to have it.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand,

Therefore he is never further away from the conceit of perfection than when he works the most zealously to achieve perfection.<sup>31</sup>

He summarizes what he would like to see,

We know full well that a wheat field can never be discovered which is so clean that not a single weed can be found in it. But rather we advance to the point that the church is nonetheless free of public scandal and no one expected with scandal is living is left in the church without grave misgivings and finally exclusion, and the true members of the church realize that the degree of perfection with much fruitfulness.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>It is relatively easy to demonstrate that Spener's use of the word "reason" should usually be taken in the sense of "autonomous reason." This is evident from the fact that at the same time that he resists reading the Scriptures with the use of reason, he prescribes standard hermeneutical rules for the proper interpretation of passages. For example, "Every person reading the Scriptures must first pay attention how the verses fit together and then pay attention to each individual word. Various parts of the Scripture must be compared with one another. . .not too much typological or allegorical understanding. . . One must be particularly careful not to allow reason to rule where faith ought to." Philip Jacob Spener, "On the Necessary and Useful Reading of the Holy Scriptures," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, (New York: Paulist Pres, 1983), p. 75.

<sup>26</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 56.

<sup>27</sup>He even goes so far as to propose the solution of the book of Acts--a community of goods. Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 37.

<sup>28</sup>He considers this bad enough to cause loss of salvation in the perpetrator. "For Godly faith cannot exist without the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit cannot exist along side of premeditated and prevailing sins." Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 41.Pp

<sup>29</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 42.

<sup>30</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 58.

<sup>31</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 58.

<sup>32</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 59.

How was the Lutheran church to correct these deficiencies? In answer to this question, Spener supplied a series of proposals in the third section of the *Pia Desideria*.

First, there should be more focus on knowledge of the word not only for the clergy, but also for the laity. They should be taught to read it privately, and the clergy should read it and explain it publicly.

It is in this connection that Spener brought forward two of his most dramatic and far-reaching proposals—that the church renew Luther’s emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, and that they do so through the initiation of *collegia pietatis*. These were small interactive meetings of lay Christians focusing on doing exposition of the Bible, admonition, and prayer. The meeting format described in I Cor. 14 was cited as the model for these meetings, which would meet in member’s homes.

. . . perhaps it would even be useful if we again brought in to being the ancient apostolic way of gathering the church together, which leads to mature thinking. In addition to the customary sermons other gatherings would be held in the same way Paul in I Cor. 13 describes them. Instead of just one getting up to teach, with will still be done at other times, others who are blessed with talents and insight would also contribute. They would present their pious thoughts which might be instructive to the rest concerning the matters discussed without disorderliness or quarreling. . . What each one contributed would be examined by the rest especially by those whose calling was teaching, as to the conformity with the intent of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures and thus the whole group would be edified.<sup>33</sup>

Spener argued that this kind of structure was necessary because the people were not learning the Bible through the customary Sunday meetings.

Now if one gathers together all the texts which have been presented in many years one after another to one congregation there will be only a small part of the scripture which has been expounded. The congregation does not hear the rest at all, or they hear only a few sayings or directives which are mention in the sermon without being able to understand their whole significance even though there is something important in them. . . The people have little opportunity to grasp the understanding of the scripture in any other way than from the text that are interpreted to them. That they even have less opportunity to use the scriptures themselves as their edification requires.<sup>34</sup>

It was also needed in order to establish what Luther had called the “Spiritual Priesthood” as a reality rather than a dead letter. This must be done because,

. . . one of the foremost reasons why the minister cannot accomplish everything and carry out what should be easy, is that he is too weak without the help of the universal priesthood of all believers. One man is not enough among so many since to just one is usually entrusted the accomplishment of everything necessary for the edification of the people under his care.<sup>35</sup>

The fourth proposal had to do with the moral lives of the people. Here, Spener calls for clear teaching and admonition regarding loving God, and one’s neighbor.

. . . when we awaken a fervent love among Christians—first for each other, then toward all mankind—both of which (love of bothers and love of mankind) must follow one another (II Pet. 1:7) - and bring it into practice. . . then almost everything we desire is accomplished.<sup>36</sup>

Changes in behavior when carrying out disputations was the fifth part of Spener’s program. He agreed with Arndt that not all disputing is useful,<sup>37</sup> but felt that leaders should not abandon the practice of debate altogether because,

. . . the defense of the pure truth and thus also the disputation which are part of its defense, must be maintained within the church just as much as other functions ordained for the edification of the church. Christ, the apostles, and their followers stand out as blessed examples who also disputed, powerfully

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<sup>33</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 68.

<sup>34</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II pp. 66,67.

<sup>35</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 74.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II pp. 75,76.

<sup>37</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 80.

refuted the opposing errors and defended the truth. On the other hand those who want to take away and condemn this necessary use of the spiritual sword of the divine Word would plunge the Christian church into the greatest danger, in as much as it should be used against false teaching.<sup>38</sup>

However, they should use loving demeanor, should give no offense, whether it be from name calling, or an unloving lack of desire to win the disputant. He thought they should realize the limitations of disputations, and should accept those from other confessions who are close enough to be Christians. Finally, the disputer should practice love and good works to back up his argument.<sup>39</sup>

The fifth proposal dealt with correcting the deficiencies in the clergy. Spener argued that the seminaries should choose only qualified students, that is, morally qualified. An effort should be made to find out what their lives were like before they were admitted. Once there, the professors should supervise the lives of students, insisting on piety in addition to scholarship.<sup>40</sup> They should terminate partying, joking around and "rioting," and should even give certificates from the seminary stating that the graduate was qualified to minister because of his godly life.<sup>41</sup>

He felt that disputing should be the focus of only the few in seminary, and that the others focus on knowing how to teach Christianity in German to their people. Thus, the focus of seminary would be to produce practical preachers, not idle, picky intellectuals.<sup>42</sup>

In order to school the private walk of the students, Spener recommends late medieval mystical books like Tauler, *Theologica Deutsch* and Thomas a Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*. These books, along with the Bible, are what in Spener's mind probably made Luther who he was. Arndt's own book is also of the sort desired.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, the sixth proposal is that existing clergy should preach sermons planned to further faith and fruit in the hearers. Like the sermons in Arndt's Postille, for which *Pia Desideria* was an introduction, they should not be designed to show how knowledgeable the preacher was, but to edify. In other words, sermons should be practical, while focusing on inner change, as well as outer. No sermon should ever be devoid of application.<sup>44</sup>

At last, Spener gives a short literary and bibliographical introduction to the volume of Arndt's sermons. He comments that, "In these spiritually enriching writings . . . he [Arndt] has directed everything to the true center, to the inner person."<sup>45</sup>

### ***SPENER'S Ecclesiological distinctives***

When reading Spener one is confronted essentially with orthodox Lutheran ecclesiology, of the developed form then current. Spener manifests himself as a practical theologian first and foremost.<sup>46</sup> The differences present in Spener consist primarily of different emphases and more willingness to carry doctrine further into practice than were most other Lutheran theologians of his day—further even than Luther.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 79-80.

<sup>39</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 80. Quoting from John Arndt's *True Christianity*.

<sup>40</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 103,104.

<sup>41</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. pp. 107,108.

<sup>42</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 109,110.

<sup>43</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. pp. 110-112. He also warns that "such little books, to which something of the darkness of their age still clings, can and may easily be esteemed too highly. . ." p. 112.

<sup>44</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. pp. 115-117.

<sup>45</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 101.

<sup>46</sup> "In evaluating Spener and his work it has been customary to emphasize that he was primarily a reformer of Christian life, not a reformer of Christian thought, that his proper place is in the history of Christian piety rather than in the history of Christian doctrine." Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 24-25.

<sup>47</sup> ". . . with Spener the reform party within seventeenth century Lutheranism had moved from sincere but indiscriminate criticism to a plan of action." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 235.

In the first place, it would be important to remember that Luther taught the definition of the true church as invisible, and made up of only true believers. At the same time, he taught that a visible church is to be recognized. The visible church is manifest through the regular gathering of the elect, and the proper administration of the ordinances—the preaching of the Word, communion, and baptism.<sup>48</sup> At one moment Luther seems to stress the importance of the visible church over the invisible, and at another moment, the reverse.<sup>49</sup> In the same way, Luther taught the priesthood of all believers, while also retaining a fairly sharp distinction between clergy and laity. Luther taught salvation by faith apart from works, but he retained a very strong view of infant baptism.<sup>50</sup> Some would feel considerable contradiction is involved in these positions. Others would feel that the position reflects balance.

All of these same tensions and other kindred tensions are evident in Spener's writings as well. Spener was concerned with the inward reality of Christianity, a concern he shared with late-medieval mystics. As such, one would expect that he would incline toward the invisible and spiritual side of Lutheran ecclesiology, but this is not strictly the case. It is likely that precisely because Spener was under fire for extremism on the side of spiritualism he stressed the importance of the visible aspects of the church, while also hammering on his own spiritualistic inward oriented agenda. Examples can be cited in each of the major areas of ecclesiology.

### **THE DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH**

Regarding the definition of the church, Spener speaks of the preaching of the,

. . . precious and pure gospel...in which alone we must therefore recognize that the true church is visible. . .

Yet, he quickly goes on to contrast this point with his own emphasis, by pointing out that while the Lutheran church is the true visible church,

. . . we cannot turn our eyes upon it [the visible church] without having quickly to cast them down again in shame and distress. . .<sup>51</sup>

Even further, speaking of separatists who rejected the established visible church, and members of heretical churches—especially Roman Catholic—who were unwilling to join the Lutheran church because,

They consider ours to be no more the true church than any other but rather conclude all the churches are a Babylonian hodgepodge. These people conclude then, that, since no one church has any advantage over another, it would not be worth going to any one of them.

Now it is true that we cannot excuse such people. . .<sup>52</sup>

On the contrary, the idea of Babylon,

. . . could be no other than Rome, the great city which has the sovereignty over the kings of the earth and indeed now with its ecclesiastical power seeks such power again in the spiritual realm since it lost its worldly power over the secular sphere.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, he was not willing to say, as most of his contemporaries would, that such people were not Christian. He argues instead that,

. . . even in the Roman Churches, there are some who, incredible as it seems, actually recognized the Pope and his chair as the Antichrist proclaimed by God, and therefore at times let their hearts become downcast in melancholy lamentation.<sup>54</sup>  
and later that,

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<sup>48</sup>L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941) p. 560.

<sup>49</sup>L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 627. Also Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1950) p. 207.

<sup>50</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. find conflict between infant. baptism.

<sup>51</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 40.

<sup>52</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. BK. II p. 49.

<sup>53</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. BK. II p. 50. In this verdict, Spener was in agreement with Lutheran interpretation of the day.

<sup>54</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. BK. II p. 48.

This happens to those who hardly consider further that they would like to make a lot of Lutherans, but do not let themselves be reminded how also in other confessions there could be those who are essentially true Christians.<sup>55</sup>

Such pronouncements, harsh by today's standards, were at that time suspicious for exactly the opposite reason. The fact was that Spener was far more liberal in his attitude toward those outside of his own confession than other theologians and church leaders of his day. Later radical Pietists tended to turn increasingly to a focus on the invisible church as the only "true" church, but Spener never turned away from the existing Lutheran definition of the church.

### **Church order**

Probably the most radical departure in Spener's ecclesiology had to do with the emancipation of the laity to do real ministry in the church. Spener did not challenge the Lutheran doctrines in the area of church order. Regarding the stature of the clergy he said, "I gladly acknowledge the holiness of our divine calling. . .,"<sup>56</sup> and in *The Spiritual Priesthood*, which is written in the form of questions and answers, question 26 reads: Are they [lay people] then all Christian preachers and are they to exercise the preaching office?

No. To exercise the office publicly in the congregation before all and over all requires a special call. Hence, if anyone were to arrogate this to himself as a power over others, or were to encroach upon the office of the ministry, he would commit sin (Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4). For this reasons some are teachers and others hearers (I Cor.12:28-30), his respective duties towards each other are treated in the *Table of Duties* [in the catechism].<sup>57</sup>

In the same treatise, he explains who may administer the sacraments, As to Baptism,. . . in a case of necessity when no minister can be had, any pious Christian may perform the Baptism. . .but as to the Lord's Supper, no case of necessity can ordinarily arise. . .therefore this sacrament is not of the same necessity.<sup>58</sup>

Based on these statements one would think that Spener was of the old guard—intent on preserving the prerogatives of the clergy from any encroachment by the laity. But alongside these statements are the following.

As the [Old Testament] priests were occupied with the law of God (Mal. 2:7) so also it is the office of spiritual priests [i.e. all Christians] to let the word of God dwell richly among them (Col. 3:16). This is also called their prophetic office. . .

Is it proper for all christians to diligently to read the scriptures?

Yes. Since they are the letter of the heavenly father to *all* his children, no child of God can be excluded from them, but all have both the right and command to read them (John 5:38).

But would it be not better to simply believe what they hear from their preachers?

No. They also are to search the scriptures, so that they may test the teaching of their preacher, in order that their faith may not be founded upon the reputation and the faith of a man, but on divine truth (Acts 17:11).

Are not the scriptures too difficult for the uneducated to understand?

No. For already in the Old Testament the divine word was given to instruct the simple (Ps. 19:7, 119:130), and fathers were required to teach it to their children (Deut. 6:6,7).

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<sup>55</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. BK. II p. 82.

<sup>56</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 44.

<sup>57</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, "The Spiritual Priesthood," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, (New York: Paulist Pres, 1983) p.

54. Spener's citation of Heb. 5:4 seems especially strange, since he had just rejected the Old Testament concept of priest as applying to the church. See questions #24 and #5 where he affirms that new birth is the sole criteria for priesthood.

<sup>58</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, "The Spiritual Priesthood," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 63.

Now the New Testament is still more clear (Rom.13:12; I John 2:8). Christ thus did not direct his doctrine to the wise and intelligent of this world, but to the simple (Mt. 11:25,26). Indeed, he who would understand Jesus must put aside all worldly wisdom and become a child (Mt. 18:3; Luke 18:17). Paul likewise, and all other apostles went forward not with high words but with the power of God which is hidden from the wise but is revealed to babes according to the inscrutable wisdom of God, who through foolish preaching put to shame the wise of this world (I Cor. 1:18-24; 2:1-5; II Cor. 1:12; 10:4,5). So also the apostles wrote their epistles for the most part to uneducated and plain people who could not have understood them by heathen science and philosophy, but who by the grace of God understood them for their salvation without these (I Cor. 1:2, 2:6-10).<sup>59</sup>

Thus Spener argues that there are three bases for lay access to the Bible and ministry.

1. Direct biblical command.
2. The fact that the Bible is addressed to all.
3. The fact that all Christians have the Holy Spirit, who alone can interpret the Scriptures.<sup>60</sup>

The excuse that the laity are too ignorant is rejected because if "The learned are not deterred from searching . . . although they must confess that in many places they often miss the meaning," neither can the uneducated "be prohibited from the word," especially since "the principle points of doctrine and rules of life are given in the scriptures so clearly and according to the letter that each uneducated person can learn and comprehend them as well as the learned."<sup>61</sup>

These statements would have grated hard on the average clergyman of Spener's day. This is because such statements, along with the conventicles he started in order to actuate them, constituted a blueprint for later radical revolution. Yet, Spener was able to point out that,

Whoever wants to examine and read in detail the intent of our teacher [Luther] concerning this and what the priestly duties are should read his writing to the Bohemians on how one should choose and install the servants of the church. There one sees how splendidly it is shown that all spiritual functions are the duty of all Christians without distinction even though their usual and public performance is put into the care of those servants appointed for that purpose. In the case of need they might also be carried out by others. Those to whom the public functions do not belong always should especially be urged by all to carry out privately their priesthood at home and in the common life.<sup>62</sup>

This is one reason Spener's stand on lay ministry was militant. He felt that the revolution founded by Luther had been betrayed on this point. In another section of *Pia Desideria* he said,

Indeed a special bit of cunning of the accursed devil was that he brought into popedom the practice of giving all such spiritual functions to the clergy alone. . . just as if it were not obligatory for all diligently to study the Word of God, much less instruct, warn, discipline, console others beside themselves. . .<sup>63</sup>

But Spener was not so radical as to remove entirely the distinction between laity and clergy. To him, the dividing line was the public versus the semi-private forum. The laity were to,

. . .do those things privately which if done publicly belong to the ministry of the church [clergy]. But it is precisely on such pure and simple things that the office of the laity depends.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, "The Spiritual Priesthood," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 54,55.

<sup>60</sup>"Whence do simple pious Christians receive the understanding of the Scriptures? From the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. . .(2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:12)" Philip Jacob Spener, "The Spiritual Priesthood," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 56.

<sup>61</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, "The Spiritual Priesthood," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 56.

<sup>62</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 72.

<sup>63</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 72

<sup>64</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 72. See also, p. 73, "all christians are called to spiritual offices, even though *not to the public performance of the duties of these offices*, which belong to the ordained members of these same rightly ordered congregations," (emphasis mine).

We see here that Spener had the same aberration in his thinking that afflicted the rest of Lutheranism regarding the distinction between the assembled versus the scattered church. When scattered, different rules apply. This distinction does not square well with his attempt to introduce I Cor. 14 as the model for assembly of the church. In that passage there is no distinction between clergy and laity, but “each one” (vs. 26) or “anyone” (vs. 27) who wanted to contribute should do so. Thus, Spener’s ecclesiology was inconsistent on this point.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to remember that there were definite limits to how far one could go in this direction before incurring ecclesiastical or even civil prosecution.<sup>66</sup> His detractors saw too clearly that the door he had opened partially would be pushed open the rest of the way by radicals. The radicals saw that Spener had not gone far enough, and that his idea would be swallowed up by the established church unless a more realistic basis in the theology of the church under-girded the practice of lay ministry. The outcome of this dialectic will be covered later.

We see that Spener argued that he was teaching nothing new, and he was right. On the other hand, these were truths that were supposed to be talked about, not enacted. This set the stage for a vigorous reaction to this part of Spener’s agenda.

Spener, for his part argued that,

. . . where such teaching is unknown or not emphasized everyone is lulled into security and indolence. No one considers that this effects him, but rather everyone imagines that just as he is called to his office, trade, profession and the like, to which the minister is not called, and with which he does not occupy himself, so also the minister alone is called to the spiritual functions of handling the word of God.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, Spener was able to argue this part of his case practically, biblically, and from Luther’s teachings. Stoeffler claims that this part of the pietistic agenda stemmed directly from their biblicism,

It was this implicit, somewhat naive, trust in the Word, rather than in man’s words about the Word, which is also responsible for the fact that Pietists really trusted the religious opinions of theologically untrained laymen. The theory was, of course, that the Spirit of God is able to commend the truth of the Bible to men’s minds and hearts without the tortured interpretations of the professionals. Hence, to the consternation of the representatives of orthodoxy and ecclesiastical institutionalism, laymen were permitted to testify, to exhort, and even to preach. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was thus rescued once again from being a mere dogma and set free to exert its influence in the Church. The only requirement was that lay testimony must be Biblically based and supported in him who testifies by a life which exhibits the New Testament ethic.<sup>68</sup>

## CHURCH RITUAL

Spener was not anti-sacramental at all. Of baptism he says,

. . . I know how to praise Baptism and its power highly enough. I believe that it is the real “washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit” (Tit. 3:5), or as Luther says in the Catechism, “it effects

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<sup>65</sup>This distinction also arose in connection with the teaching activity of women. In Philip Jacob Spener, “The Spiritual Priesthood,” in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 62, we read, “But are women not forbidden to teach? Yes, namely in the *public congregation*. But that it is permitted to them outside of the public congregation is clear from the passages and apostolic examples cited (I Cor. 14:34; I Tim. 2:11,12).” This he could argue with more plausibility from the scriptures cited. However he makes no effort to harmonize I Cor. 14:34 with I Cor. 11:5 which must refer to public prayer and prophecy in context.

<sup>66</sup>Francke (Spener’s disciple) even more strongly rejected the distinction between clergy and laity “What horrid Mischief this wicked distinction is the cause of. . .” Both of these leaders, however, avoided a Quaker stance and maintained a functional distinction between clergy and laity.” Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 57.

<sup>67</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II pp. 73-74.

<sup>68</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, pp. 21-22.

forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants” (not merely promises) “eternal salvation.”<sup>69</sup>

and of communion,

Not less gladly do I acknowledge the glorious power in the sacramental, oral, and not merely spiritual eating and drinking of the body and blood of the Lord in the Holy Supper. On this account I heartily reject the position of the Reformed when they deny that we receive such a pledge of our salvation in, with, and under the bread and wine, when they weaken its power, and when they see in it no more than exists outside the holy sacrament in spiritual eating and drinking.<sup>70</sup>

These formulations are straight out of the standard Lutheran doctrinal literature. They constitute an assurance to Spener’s colleagues that he is an orthodox Lutheran. His point in bringing these rituals up, however, is not to affirm that they are means of grace (a position accepted by all Lutherans) but to deplore, “the shameful illusion of an *opus operatum*.”<sup>71</sup> Spener’s main concern was that the Lutheran’s strong view of the sacraments was leading many to think that they were Christians, when in fact they were not.

We cannot deny—on the contrary, daily experience convinces us—that there are not a few who think that all that Christianity requires of them . . . is that they be baptized, hear the preaching of God’s Word, confess and receive absolution, and go to the Lord’s Supper, no matter how their hearts are disposed at the time, whether or not there are fruits which follow, provided they at least live in such a way that the civil authorities do not find them liable to punishment.<sup>72</sup>

But when this is the case he warns,

It will be in vain that you comfort yourself in your Baptism and in its promise of grace and salvation if for your part you do not also remain in the covenant of faith and a good conscience or, having departed therefrom, return to it with sincere repentance. Accordingly if your Baptism is to benefit you, it must remain in constant use throughout your life.<sup>73</sup>

and,

This is also true of confession and absolution, which we hold to be an effective means of evangelical comfort and the forgiveness of sins. It is this, however, to none but believers. Why is it then, that so many, who do not have the slightest bit of that aforementioned true faith, confess and have themselves absolved even while they remain unrepentant, as if their confession and absolution would be of benefit to them simply because they have performed an act, spoken a confession, and received an absolution?<sup>74</sup>

Regarding taking communion without true faith,

. . . they hardly consider whether their spiritual life may be strengthened thereby, whether they proclaim the Lord’s death with their hearts, lips, and life, whether the Lord works in and rules over them or they have left the old Adam on his throne.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 63. Brown says, “Spener and Francke defended infant baptism with all of the traditional arguments, In this they held to the objective efficacy of the sacrament.” Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978) p. 48.

<sup>70</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 63.

<sup>71</sup>“*Opus Operatum* is a term used by Roman Catholics with reference to the sacraments to express their doctrine that the Sacraments confer grace by the ‘working of the worker’ (*opere operato*) that is, by the performance of the outward sacramental act, apart from the spiritual condition of the recipient (*opere operantis*). The Council of Trent states plainly: ‘If any one saith that by the said Sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed (*ex opere operato*), but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace, let him be accursed.’ (Sess. VII, can. 8.)” *The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, Erwin L. Leweker ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Press, 1954). pp. 762,763.

<sup>72</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 65.

<sup>73</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 66.

<sup>74</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 67.

<sup>75</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 67.

From these statements, it is already clear that Spener's complaint was not that people were denying the efficacious power of the sacraments. He rather felt that the sacraments were being looked to in a superstitious way, and that the need for personal faith in the worshiper either was not understood, or was not emphasized. As we shall see later, however, the pietistic movement later tended to move toward resolution of the tension between formalism and experientialism at the expense of the sacraments.

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Much of what Spener called for was connected to the idea of church discipline. His desire to see the church deal with the presence of gross sin in its membership implied that discipline would be necessary. However he felt that the church was not in a strong enough position to practice discipline, because certain prerequisites would have to first be met.

Primarily, it was the leadership of the church that needed to clean their own house, before trying to clean other's.<sup>76</sup> Even after the clergy were living right, it would be necessary to embark on a massive teaching offensive, to re-orient the people's thinking before any pressure would be appropriate. To accomplish this, he supplies his usual practical suggestions for strategy.

[We should]. . . begin by putting ourselves at the disposal especially of those who are still willing to accept what is done for their edification. If everybody in his own congregation makes provision for these above all others, they may little by little grow to such a measure of godliness that they will be shining examples to others. In time, then, by God's grace we may also gradually attract those who at present seem to be lost in order that they, too, may finally be won. All of my suggestions are aimed quite exclusively at first helping those who are tractable, at doing all that is needful for their edification. Once this is accomplished and made the foundation, sternness toward the disobedient may bear more fruit.<sup>77</sup>

Therefore, Spener does not advocate any action in the area of church discipline other than the positive appeal mentioned.

If problems were to arise in the *collegia pietatis*, the clergy would need to assert their disciplinary control;

And if meddling, quarrelsomeness, self glorification, and that sort of thing would creep in [to the small group meetings], they must be warded off and carefully cut out especially by the ministers who are the ones who retain the direction of these meetings.<sup>78</sup>

It is important to remember that Lutheranism did not have a clearly spelled out doctrine in the area of church discipline, and therefore, Spener's lack of clarity on this issue is within the tradition for which he wrote.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, Spener had matriculated at Strassbourg and Geneva, and scholars believe that he (and Francke after him) admired the reformed provision for church discipline.<sup>80</sup>

## CHURCH FINANCE

Spener had little to say on the subject of finance in the literature available in translation. He did wonder however, whether communal sharing might not be the answer to the presence of poor in society.

Although the community which the Christians established in the early Jerusalem church was not commanded, who considers that perhaps another kind of *Community of goods* may not be necessary? Since I must acknowledge that I have nothing which is my own, but that everything belongs to God, and I

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<sup>76</sup>He complains that since there are such problems in the nobility and the clergy, "which ought to govern the masses and lead them to godliness, it is easy to guess how things are in the third estate." Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 57, see also the crux of the argument in pp. 103-115.

<sup>77</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 37.

<sup>78</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. BK. II p. 69.

<sup>79</sup>So, Stoeffler, "Even if Lutheranism had developed a concept of church discipline such as Calvinism, which it did not, effective discipline would have been difficult under these conditions." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 185.

<sup>80</sup>"Francke shared with Spener the conviction that the elders of each congregation should join the pastor in disciplining the congregation, a practice which they admired in Calvinistic churches." Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 59.

am appointed to be a steward over it, I am not at all free to keep what is mine when and as long as I please. . .<sup>81</sup>

This suggestion takes on added importance when it is seen that the later radical pietists frequently formed *Gemeinde* or communities, that were communal. Spener did not however try to implement this idea.

#### Pre-reformation sources of pietistic ecclesiology

The question of the sources of Spener's theology has been disputed heavily, beginning in his own day. Spener himself tells us (jokingly) that anyone who tried to teach, "an earnest inner godliness would be called a secret papist, a Weigelian, and a Quaker."<sup>82</sup> For the most part, Spener considered himself in the mainstream of Lutheran theology. Yet most scholars see an added element in Spener's teaching. Stoeffler states,

Early Pietism was usually content to find its place within the territorial churches, but it was invariably critical of those churches. Whether this was in Britain, the Low Countries, Germany, or elsewhere the ecclesiasticism, theologism, and sacerdotalism, the moral and spiritual superficialities which are apt to find room in all churches were uniformly deplored by the Pietists. . . Always and everywhere these people set themselves resolutely against an easy accommodation of the Church to the world. . .<sup>83</sup>

What element set the Pietists apart from the rest of the state churches, and gave them their critical attitude? Already it is clear that Spener and the tradition that grew out of his work consistently focused on inward spiritual reality, and deplored external "going through the motions." This seems natural enough to any student of Scripture. However, it is important to realize that Spener learned this perspective from others.

The inward focus of Pietism, along with its insistence on recognizing authentic versus superficial practice of religion are part of the message of a school of Christianity that goes back hundreds of years before the time of Spener. It is important to understand this interpretive tradition, generally lumped together under the name "mysticism" in order to understand Spener. Spener stands for the confluence of late-medieval mysticism and orthodox Lutheran theology.<sup>84</sup>

Mysticism is usually defined as an outlook that believes in personal direct contact with God. It is generally known by its other-worldly values, and sometimes includes a negative view of the material world. It always is unwilling to settle for plain truth—it insists on experience as well.

Thus, Stoeffler is able to say,

From the days of the apostles we find running through the history of the Church what we might call an experiential tradition. During the Middle Ages it has expressed itself in a mystical approach to the Christian life, both as that approach was found in the monasteries and in the familiar protest movements of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the turbulent days of the Reformation this experiential tradition exerted itself with perfectly tremendous force.<sup>85</sup>

The thrust of mystical ideology is the idea of drawing closer to God through various devotional exercises and meditations, until a level of union with God is attained which renders the things of this world pointless and distasteful. According to Ozment,

Gerson said that "mystical theology draws its doctrine from experiences within the hearts of devout souls, just as the other two theologies [natural and scholastic] proceed from extrinsic effects.

and further that,

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<sup>81</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. pp. 60-61.

<sup>82</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Theodore G. Tappert, trans. p. 47. Valentine Weigel was a mystical author and Lutheran pastor who turned out to be a theosophist when his private works were published posthumously. He was therefore completely discredited in the minds of orthodox Lutherans, and his name was a synonym for mystical heresy.

Quakers were likewise a symbol of religious extremism in Germany at this time. They were widely believed to be guilty of "enthusiasm" which means that they thought God was speaking directly to them.

<sup>83</sup> Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> So, Harnack cited in Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction* p. 44.

<sup>85</sup> Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 6.

mystical theology, the way of love, is absolutely superior to scholastic theology, a way traversed only by those with university education. . . it is also a knowledge in which even young girls and simpletons can excel.<sup>86</sup>

Because of the emphasis on experience, the mystical writers were often expressly anti-intellectual. Thus Vincent of Auggsbach (d. 1460) writes,

“In the practice of mystical theology, to ascend in ignorance. . . is the unique and definitive foundation of this art.”<sup>87</sup>

The early Christian mystics included many in the Monastic movement. Indeed, the monastic movement has always been rich in its contribution to mystical theology. In this connection, it is important to realize that monasticism itself has usually been a form of protest against the worldliness of the established church. The early impetus to monasticism was the incorporation of Christianity into the Roman state. With 80% of the population of the empire “converting” within just a few years, it was easy to feel that the true practice of Christianity was impossible among such a sea of nominal so-called Christians.<sup>88</sup>

Toward the end of the medieval period, other protest groups began to appear with increased frequency. Peters describes these movements,

Valdes and Saint Francis at the end of the twelfth century are the archetypes of the Reform heretic and the Reform saint; the Waldenians, the Apostolics, the Lollards, the many other sects, bear the marks of Reform Dissidence, as of course do Luther and Zwingli. . .

Reformists from the eighth to the twelfth century shared certain common characteristics. First was their emphasis upon simplicity and purity and their desire to return to the virtuous life of the golden age of apostles and martyrs. With this went a belief that purity was a sign of authority. Authority derived from God, particularly from God the Holy Spirit, and the presence of the Holy Spirit was evidenced by the cleanliness of the temple [body] in which He dwelt. Sectaries who lead a pure life, therefore, much more clearly possessed authority than did the often corrupt hierarchy. The marks of such authority were poverty, simplicity, and purity. The authority of the Spirit was thus raised over visible authority. . .<sup>89</sup>

Protest has so frequently been associated with mysticism that one realizes there must be a reason within the genius of the idea itself that leads to protest and dissent. It is true that once the individual believes he/she has direct access to God, compliance with human authority can no longer be guaranteed. According to Ozment, the mystical writings, “set forth what can fairly be called the latent revolutionary possibilities of the Christian religion.” This is because mysticism “fed on the de facto possibility of the exceptional, on God’s freedom to communicate immediately with men. . .”<sup>90</sup> As a result, medieval mystical writings uniquely contain the raw material of dissent. . .<sup>91</sup>

Peters gives similar reasons:

Devotion to the Holy Spirit has often not occupied a central position among Catholics, perhaps for the very reason that the emphasis upon internal illumination which it involves is so dangerous to the church. With their emphasis upon the internal illumination of the Spirit, the Reformists were, ironically enough, moving away from the practice of the primitive Church, with its strong sense of community, and toward the Protestant ideal of the individual alone with his god (sic). Both the medieval dissidents, and later the Protestants frequently labored under the misconception that the earliest Church preferred individual to community worship.

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<sup>86</sup>Gerson, *De mystica theologia speculativa*, cited in Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century*, (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 4,8.

<sup>87</sup>Cited in Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 10.

<sup>88</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, *The History of Christianity, Vol. 1*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1984) p. 146.

<sup>89</sup>*Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe, Documents in Translation*. Edited, with an Introduction, by Edward Peters. (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1980) pp. 8,9.

<sup>90</sup>Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>91</sup>It is also possible that individuals who feel resistant to visible authority gravitate toward a mystical perspective. Of course, both of these possibilities could be true at once. Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 12. Ozment also comments that “. . . anti-intellectual and anti-institutional stances are more apparent features of German mysticism,” than of any other type. p. 11.

The individualism of the dissenters, however, together with the courage of their refusal to conform to the norms of society, led them in their simple way back in the direction of a true understanding of Pauline faith. As the Church had developed, it had confounded two concepts that originally had had different denotation, faith and belief. *Whereas to Paul faith was essentially an action, an affirmation of the whole being, and existential throwing of oneself upon God with abandon, to the Church it gradually became an unqualified affirmation of certain intellectual proposition.* Thus faith came to mean a degree of belief, of intellectual assent. Lack of sophistication is certainly not to be praised in itself, but the simple courage of the dissidents which enabled them to feel an “ultimate concern” put them close to a Pauline idea of faith which had been somewhat neglected.<sup>92</sup>

Anyone who has read Spener quickly recognizes some of these motifs. Indeed, Spener himself believed that the late medieval mystics needed to be re-introduced into the theology of the church.<sup>93</sup> It is the acknowledged added element present in Spener’s theology.

In his treatise “On Hindrances to Theological Studies,” he explains his view of the mystics.

Earnest and upright men complain that philosophical errors, particularly Platonic errors, have entered into mystical treatises and that these errors have contaminated a matter which in itself is praiseworthy. I am assured that in the dark ages of the papacy there was present in mysticism, however, more power and light than in the thorny polemic scholastic theology which spoke little to the heart. I doubt that Luther owed as much to any scholastic as he did to Tauler and similar writers.

. . . in their speculations, the mystics many times fell into a certain enthusiasm, that is, the fantasy of direct divine revelation. But, just as one does not cast aside gold, silver, or precious stones if they are covered with filth, but cleanses them and according to the proverb does not throw the baby out with the bath water, in a like manner according to this principle one ought not to move against mystical theology.

. . . Dogmatics is customarily directed to designate what is true and correct. . . Mysticism, on the other hand, is not satisfied with mere knowledge. It takes the whole mind and all the powers of the soul into its realm and, in these, wishes to establish once again the divine image. It stresses practical purification, illumination, and union with God. . . the teacher of dogmatics is preeminently and always concerned with the formation of understanding, whereas the mystic is concerned more with the formation of the will. . .

A pious reader will discover thoughts, counsels, and observations in the works of Tauler, Kempis, Gerson, the author of the *German Theology*, and other writers of this kind of book. Their style of writing, in spite of its simplicity and even if it is not especially learned and sophisticated, does move and grasp the heart. . .

Anything that is in these books which arises out of the the papal filth and the errors ascribed to Platonism can be noted and avoided without difficulty by anyone who understands our true doctrine.<sup>94</sup>

Here we see a very positive point of view toward even the pre-Lutheran mystics. This should not be surprising, since he says later, “The person who wishes to travel this path will find, among others, a preeminent guide in Johann Arndt.”<sup>95</sup>

Arndt represents the ideal that Spener consciously followed. Therefore Stoeffler is able to say, “The father of Lutheran Pietism is not Spener but John Arndt.”<sup>96</sup> It is likely that one person who would not argue with this verdict is Jacob Spener. Aland says Spener’s “entire *Pia Desideria* breathes the spirit of Arndt.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, p. 9.

<sup>93</sup>For instance he argues that Tauler Kempis and *German Theology* should be introduced into seminary to a greater degree in Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 93,94. Spener believed that he was following the lead of Luther in this position. On the strong impact of the mystics on Luther’s theology see Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 191,192. However, stoeffler reminds us that Luther “progressively grew away from mysticism. . .” p. 192.

<sup>94</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, “On Hindrances to Theological Studies,” in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, pp. 67,68.

<sup>95</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, “On Hindrances to Theological Studies,” in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 70.

<sup>96</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 202. Later he adds, “Arndt’s relation to Lutheran pietism is to be found in the fact that he initiated it. . . This is the light in which Spener always regarded him.” p. 211. He claims that the main reason Arndt is not recognized as the father of Lutheran pietism is the fact that he did not start conventicles. p. 203.

<sup>97</sup>Cited in Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological introduction*, p. 266.

Spener's effort to draw the best from mystical theology without the life-denying platonism can be seen in his "Meditation on the Suffering of Christ." He rejects the medieval notion of so empathizing with the suffering of Christ that, ". . . he must suffer and empathize with Christ in his great suffering or weep over him and his suffering."<sup>98</sup> Instead, he urges the hearer to consider the reason for the suffering of Christ (one's own sin) and feel sorrow for that. He says one should reflect on the sufferings of Christ through the Scriptures, baptism, and communion, while considering the meaning of each.<sup>99</sup> These suggestions would have been viewed as carnal and earthly by most of the radical mystics.

Here Spener demonstrates that he, like Arndt, stands on the reformation side of the issue. As Oberman explains,

The deep chasm between a medieval mysticism intent to mobilize all human resources for the ascent to God and Luther's discovery of the priority of the descent of God, overcoming man's highest aspirations and received by faith, is not to be denied. But the fascination with Johann Arndt and the lasting significance of his [book] *True Christianity* are due to the harvest of medieval spirituality so staunchly harnessed by the insights of the Reformation. . . .<sup>100</sup>

Instead of man attaining union with God through discipline, Arndt and Spener held that man's role was to appropriate the union that already existed. Stoeffler says, "The central theme of Arndt was not that of union. For that reason he ought not to be referred to as a mystic. [His emphasis] was that of the new life, an emphasis which is of the very essence of Pietism."<sup>101</sup> Yet he goes on to describe Arndt's contribution as, "the fusion of a dynamic kind of Christ mysticism with a profound moral concern within the Lutheran tradition."<sup>102</sup> Ensign disagrees,

Arndt's works are essentially mystical. His great indebtedness to Tauler, [Thomas a Kempis'] *The Imitation of Christ* and the *German Theology* is clearly evident. He strove, however, to remain ecclesiastically acceptable, and characterized himself as being content with the mediocre in the mystical realm.<sup>103</sup>

Another key distinction that should be kept in mind is the relation of the mystic to revelation. One watershed and litmus test for allowable mysticism according to Spener is the question of whether mystics were interested in *adding* mystical experience to Bible study as a means of knowing God, or whether they were trying to *replace* the Bible with experience as the final authority.<sup>104</sup> These latter, Spener would refer to as "enthusiasts" and would have rejected. So too would most (but not all) of the leaders in the later radical pietistic movement.

In Spener's case, it was not his intention to subsume the Scriptures under the higher standard of mystical religious experiences. Rather it was the Holy Spirit that he wanted to add to the study of the Scriptures. Citing Luther with approval he wrote,

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<sup>98</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, "Meditation on the Suffering of Christ," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 76-78

<sup>99</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, "Meditation on the Sufferings of Christ," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 78.

<sup>100</sup>Heiko A. Oberman, Introduction to Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, Peter C. Erb, trans., (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p. xvii.

<sup>101</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 209. Stoffer agrees that Arndt's emphasis is not on attaining union. He adds that Arndt's message was, "Christians are to grow, he insisted ever again, 'in faith and in a virtuous life' until they reach the stature of a perfect man in Christ." Dale R. Stoffer, "The Ecclesiology of Gottfried Arnold." in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 28, (Spring 1983) p. 138.

<sup>102</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 210.

<sup>103</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, PhD. Dissertation, Boston University Graduate School, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1955) p. 53. He also points out that "Ritschl scents a departure from Lutheranism in his [Arndt's] adoption of medieval mystical elements, but his contemporary opponents were more concerned with traces of 'enthusiasm.'" p. 54. Interestingly, Arndt could with some justification be called a Weigelian because one of the chapters in his *Vom wahren Christenthum* (section 34 of Book II) was seen to be from Valentin Weigel, when the latter's works were published in 1611. p. 54.

<sup>104</sup>For example, see Hans Denck's comment that, 'For one who is not in God's household, the letter [i.e. Scripture] is of no use; one who is in his household knows how trustworthy the Lord is without the letter.' Hans Denck, *Schriften*, (Gutersloh, 1956), cited in Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 27.

The Scripture. . . is a book which is not given over solely to reading, but also to the proper exegete and revealer, namely the Holy Spirit. Where the Spirit does not open the Scripture, the Scripture is not understood even though it is read.<sup>105</sup>

Thus the modern critic must admit that many of the most serious complaints raised against mystical theologians, including some of those who believed themselves to stand in Spener's tradition (like Schleiermacher) do not apply to Spener.

This still does not rule out the possibility that Spener was himself an enthusiast. Heyd explains what enthusiasts were:

. . . 'enthusiasm' was primarily a derogatory label, not a neutral designation of any homogeneous group in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was applied to a broad and diversified spectrum of movements and individuals: to radical sectors such as the German Anabaptists, the English Quakers or the Dutch collegiants, to Millenarian movements like the Fifth Monarchy Men in England to the French Huguenot Prophets who spread in Europe from Southern France after 1700, but also to more loosely defined movements like the Puritans in England or the Pietists in Germany.

. . . The most common connotation of 'enthusiasm' had to do with claims to direct divine inspiration, prophetic power or special revelations. Such claims, whose individualistic and private character was often stressed, were set against the values and verities passed down by sacred texts (Scripture), tradition and institutions (the Church).<sup>106</sup>

When Spener put the question of the presence of enthusiastic elements in mystical literature squarely, his response is indirect. At one point he calls it a "fantasy", as already noted. Later though, he does not respond directly to the question of enthusiasm, but rather says,

One must only note that our formula of concord rejects the enthusiastic doctrine. It states "ancient as well as modern enthusiasts have taught that God converts a person through his spirit and brings him to saving knowledge of Christ without any created means of instrument, that is, without external proclamation and hearing of the Word of God. . . Further, "enthusiasts are those who await a divine revelation of the Spirit and despise the preaching of the divine Word."

But, he adds,

[it is not wrong if one]". . . reads the mystical writings and according to their counsel he observes, . . . and endeavors to fulfill those actions which the divine Spirit brings forth in his heart through the Word. . . . An enthusiast is the person who wishes to uphold, out of his own inner revelation, this or that dogma which is not to be found in the Holy Scripture.<sup>107</sup>

Here Spener's definition of enthusiasm is much more narrow than that which would have been acceptable to most orthodox at that time. In the view of most, it would not be necessary for the enthusiast to try to establish a new *dogma*. It would also be considered enthusiasm if a Christian claimed to have been given a direct word regarding what he should do that day for instance. Here it seems likely that Spener did accept certain kinds of enthusiasms.

We note that he does not directly state his own position on the question in the quote cited above, he merely quotes the Formula of Concord.

Ensign points out that The practice of *Daumeln*, (Thumbing) became a favorite one in Pietist circles, Spener himself having determined God's will this way when he moved to Dresden.<sup>108</sup> In one of his letters, he counselled a friend not to make mention of his views about "the inner speaking of God with the soul,"

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<sup>105</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, "On the Necessary and Useful Reading of the Holy Scriptures," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 72.

<sup>106</sup> Heyd, Michael. "The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the 17th Century: From Antistructure to Structure." *Religion* Vol. 15 p. 279, 280.

<sup>107</sup> Philip] Jacob Spener, "On Hindrances to Theological Studies," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 69.

<sup>108</sup> Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 86. This was the practice of flipping the pages of the Bible and blindly dropping one's thumb on a passage for guidance.

for those pearls should “not be thrown before swine, which step on them and seek to tear us apart because of them.”<sup>109</sup>

Ensign affirms that Spener would not deny the possibility of “special revelations,” but only insisted that they must be conformable to scripture.<sup>110</sup> This, according to the use of the word then current, made Spener an enthusiast. Given such a position, it is not surprising that “enthusiastic” occurrences “became acute, if not epidemic, from 1691 on in the *collegia pietatis*.”<sup>111</sup>

This raises the very important question of German mystical sources that both Spener and Arndt refer to often and themselves depended on. We will survey the main pre-reformation sources acknowledged by them, and the post reformation mystical sources which may have been used to a greater or lesser degree.

## Pre-Reformation mystics:

### ***Thomas a Kempis--***

Kempis was born near Dusseldorf in 1379 or 1380. He may have been the author of the famous devotional book, *The Imitation of Christ*.<sup>112</sup> He was an Augustinian monk who was involved in developing what historians refer to as the ‘New Devotion’ in Germany during the fourteenth century.

Although he wrote on many subjects, all of his writings were “pervaded by the devotional spirit.”<sup>113</sup> Spener does not cite Kempis in the works in translation, but he does refer favorably to several times, as seen. Tauler, *Theologia Deutsch*, and Arndt definitely depend on the *Imitation* to varying extents.

### ***Meister Eckhard--***

He was a benedictine teacher who eventually went to pantheistic extremes in his speculations. Eckhard was born around 1260, and was friar preacher in Strassbourg from 1314 to 1320. It is clear that Tauler (see below) must have been influenced directly and indirectly by him. Eckhard was condemned after his death in 1329 by Pope John XXII in the *Bull In Agro Dominico*.<sup>114</sup> There is little evidence that Spener or Arndt depend directly on him to any great degree. However, they drew heavily on Tauler. In Eckhard’s writings one can find both the admirable and the bizarre.

For instance, his answer to the question of whether one who prefers living in isolation would not be better off in the church was,

No. . . Those who do well, do well wherever they are, and in whatever company, and those who do badly do badly wherever they are, and in whatever company. But if a man does well, God is really in him, and with him everywhere, on the streets and among people just as much as in church, or a desert place or a cell. . .

but, he adds,

The more he regards everything as divine—more divine than it is of itself—the more God will be pleased with him. . .<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 40.

<sup>110</sup>He also observes that most of the incidents involved women. Francke, he says, openly praised them. Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 91.

<sup>111</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 91.

<sup>112</sup>The authorship of the book is not certain. Some authorities attribute it to John Gerson. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity Volume I: to A.D. 1500*, (New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975), p. 649.

<sup>113</sup>*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, F. L. Cross, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 1373.

<sup>114</sup>James M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics: Eckhard, Tauler, and Suso*, (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1949), p. 13.

<sup>115</sup>Meister Eckhard, "On Solitude and the Attainment of God" in *The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. VII, Late Medieval Mysticism*, Ray C. Petry ed., (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 200, 202. Compare this to Meister Eckhard, "About the Body of Our Lord, How Often One Should Partake of It, With What Devotion and in What Manner," in *Late Medieval Mysticism*, pp. 203-206.

## **Johannus Tauler--**

Tauler seems at times to be second only to Luther in the thinking of both Arndt and Spener. He stands squarely in the center of the late medieval German mystical tradition. Tauler was a native of Strassbourg, born about 1300. He became a Dominican friar, and would have heard Eckhard lecture during his student days. He was a strong preacher who was usually in distress over the moral life of the people, including the clergy. He became so disillusioned by the 1350's that he said "If I had known what I now know I should have lived on my inheritance and not on alms."<sup>116</sup>

Erb points out that, "Long before scholars decreed the mutual exclusion between "Reformation" and "mysticism", Luther himself had ingested and incorporated into his own thinking the sermons of Bernard of Clairvaux, the biblical piety of his spiritual director Johannes Staupitz, and the meditations of Johannes Tauler. . ." -

Some examples of typical sentiments expressed by Tauler in his sermons are:

Man must do his part and rise from every thing that is not God, away from himself and all created things. And as he rises, the depth of his soul is seized by a powerful longing to be denuded and freed from everything that separates it from God. . . They have to abandon their presumptions and arrogant ways and begin the strenuous work of self-denial. . .<sup>117</sup>

They [The truly spiritual] are raised to a supernatural, a divine level, and none of their work is ever done without God. And if one may dare to utter it, they themselves no longer work, but God works in them. How blessed they are! They are the lofty pillars of the universe, on whom rests the weight of the whole world. To find oneself in such a state - what a glorious and joyful thing that would be.

External works are of no avail to them, of none whatsoever, Does not the word "surge" mean arise? That indeed is a work. It is the one work necessary, and they should perform it without ceasing as long as they live. A man can never reach perfection unless he wishes to arise, lift up his spirit to God, and free his innermost ground.<sup>118</sup>

But what it is that He does in those depths of the soul which have been touched by Him directly, no one can say. Nor can any man tell another, and even he who has experienced it must remain silent. For where God truly takes possession of the soul, all external activity ceases, but the interior perception of God mightily increases.<sup>119</sup>

The *imatio Christi* motif are evident, "And furthermore, since God, Our Sovereign Lord and Father, suffered such great indignities and so many torments, all those who would like to be counted among His friends should be glad to suffer with Him. . ."<sup>120</sup>

The theme of union, and the use of paradoxes are common, "No one can understand these distinctions better than those who have gone beyond distinctions and have attained unity. This state is called and indeed is an unfathomable darkness, and yet it is the essential light. It is and is said to be an incomprehensible and solitary wilderness, for no one can find his way there, for it is above all ways, above all modes and manners."<sup>121</sup>

### Theologia Germanica (German Theology)

This anonymous work dates from the fourteenth century. The treatise quotes Tauler, although some continued to believe that Tauler was actually the author. Certainly, the thinking is similar. The themes of the work are the same as all late medieval mysticism, "*Reinigung, Erleuchtung, Und Vereinigung*" (purification, illumination, and union). It calls for the removal of Adam's "ich und sein mich und sein

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<sup>116</sup>James M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics*, p. 39.

<sup>117</sup>Peter C. Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings*, preface by Heiko A. Oberman, p. xv.

<sup>118</sup>Johannes Tauler, *Sermons*, p. 46.

<sup>119</sup>Johannes Tauler, *Sermons*, p. 48.

<sup>120</sup>Johannes Tauler, *Sermons*, p. 49.

<sup>121</sup>Johannes Tauler, *Sermons*, p. 55.

<sup>122</sup>Johannes Tauler, *Sermons*, p. 59.

myr (sic) und sein mien” (Adam’s “I” his “myself” his “me” and his “mine.”).

The book was published with an introduction by none other than Martin Luther in 1515 and again in 1518. It will be seen that two years before the 95 theses were posted, as well as after, Luther was deeply affected by this tractate.<sup>123</sup> It was used and praised by Karlstadt, Hanz Denck, Sebastian Castillio, and Valentin Weigel, all important players in the sixteenth century. It was a basic and widely used document for Anabaptist theology and ethics.<sup>124</sup> John Calvin condemned it as the poison of the Devil, and Pope Paul V placed it on the Index of Forbidden Books, where it remains today.<sup>125</sup> Spener and Arndt both mention it often, as do Francke and later pietists.

Luther said in his 1515 edition of the *German Theology* that the work, “does not drift on the surface like foam on water but is issued forth from the depths of the Jordan. . .” He also speculates that the author could be none other than Tauler himself.<sup>126</sup> Spener quotes Luther’s comment that “. . .neither in Latin nor in German have I found theology purer and more beneficial, which also agrees with the gospel.”<sup>127</sup>

In a typical passage the author prays, “that we may thus deny and renounce ourselves, and forsake all things through God, and die to our own self-will, and live unto God alone and to his Will. . .”<sup>128</sup>

One can see some of the problems with this kind of work from the section on what the ultimate goal for the believer is;

“But what is that one thing? I answer: It is the Good—or that which has become good—and yet neither this good nor that, which we can name, or know, or show; but it is all good, and above all good. Moreover, it need not to enter the soul, for it is there already, only it is unperceived. When we say we should come to it, we mean that we should seek it, feel it, and taste it. And now since it is One, unity and singleness is better than manifoldness. For blessedness lies not in much and manifoldness, but in One and oneness.”<sup>129</sup>

### **Heinrich Suso--**

Heinrich Suso illustrates some of the difficulties that a mystical outlook can lead to. He was born around 1300 and entered the Dominican monastery at the age of 13. During a ten year period of strict seclusion in the Dominican friary, Suso practiced severe bodily discipline. “He wore a hair shirt and an iron chain. His under-garment had leather straps and iron nails with sharp points. He had a girdle round his neck to which his hands were fastened so that he could not scratch his sores at night. He put on leather gloves studded with spikes. He fixed a wooden cross to his back with iron nails in it. An old disused wooden door served as his bed and he had no bed-clothes except in winter when he threw an old coat over himself. For a long time he ate only once a day; he abstained from wine and at times drank nothing all day, suffering tortures of hunger and thirst.”<sup>130</sup>

His first work, *The Book of Truth*, was a defense of Eckhard’s teachings, which he knew well. He

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<sup>123</sup>The posting of the 95 theses occurred on October 31, 1517. Keller affirmed that Luther turned against the treatise by the early 1520’s, calling it a source of *Schwärmerei*. Ludwig Keller, *Die Reformation und die alteren Reformparteien* (liepzig, 1885) cited in Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 16.

<sup>124</sup>Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 15

<sup>125</sup>Index liborum prohibitorum Vatikan (Rome, 1948), p. 462.

<sup>126</sup>Cited in Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 19.

<sup>127</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 93. This citation dates from 1516, before Luther’s theology was well-developed. Spener omits any mention of Luther’s later deprecation of *German Theology*. This sort of omission is what leads Deeter to cite with approval Grunberg’s opinion that “Spener was not in agreement with Luther to nearly as large an extent as Spener thought.” Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction* p. 71.

<sup>128</sup>Anon, “Theologia Germanica,” in *Late Medieval Mysticism*, p. 351.

<sup>129</sup>Anon, “Theologia Germanica,” in *The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. VII, Late Medieval Mysticism*, Ray C. Petry ed. pp. 327-351. This section is from p. 330.

<sup>130</sup>James M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics*, pp. 56,57.

was prior of the Dominicans in Constance for many years. At the age of 40, he gave up asceticism for good, and entered the state of *Gelassenheit* (resignation).<sup>131</sup> Selections of his material can be read in translation in *The Library of Christian Classics*.<sup>132</sup>

The villain in the sixth chapter of his *The Little Book of Truth*, reminiscent of so much of Spener and Arndt's criticism, is the "wildman" who is "skilled in words, but unpracticed in works, puffed up with pride and vanity."<sup>133</sup>

#### Post Reformation Sources of Pietistic Ecclesiology

We are not as sure about the post reformation sources on the mystical side. Luther, through Dannhauer and Arndt have already been mentioned as influences for Spener. On the mystical side, there are several others who may have contributed to Spener's thought.

#### **Jacob Boehme--**

Boehme was an unlearned, but intelligent cobbler. In his youth he often fell into trances, sometimes for days, in the manner strikingly similar to shamans in oral societies. Then as a young man, he had a decisive vision in which he was enlightened once and for all.

During his enlightening vision His own personal spirit united, "with the innermost Birth in God and stood in the Light." He discovered that "God goes clean another way to work" than by the way of reasoning or of sense experience - "instead of waiting for man to climb up to Him, He climbs up into man's soul."<sup>134</sup>

Jones says of Boehme, "His Way of Salvation [focused] . . . upon the native divine possibilities of the soul, . . . and upon the necessity of personal and inward experience as the key to every gate of life. . . Christianity, [is]. . . not "history" . . . it is an experience in which the soul finds itself "at the top of Jacob's ladder," and feels its life in God and God's Life in it in an ineffable Love-union. . ."<sup>135</sup>

According to Ensign, Boehme conceives God, in Himself, as being the *Ungrund* (non-reason). Faith is not a mere assent to certain "opinions" (*Meinungen*) much less accepting an "imputed" righteousness, while remaining a "brute." Boehme "never tires of insisting that the restoration can come only by a *process of Life*, not by a 'scheme' of theology. . . Heaven and hell are present everywhere."<sup>136</sup> A man, he says, must die wholly to self-hood, forsake it and enter again into the original Nothing, - the eternal Unity in which nothing is willed in particular, - before God can have His way with him; only then, "Christ is born and lives in our Nothingness."<sup>137</sup>

Regarding ecclesiology, Stoffer explains that, "Boehme was dissatisfied with Lutheran Orthodoxy and its bias toward *ex opere operato* interpretations of the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments. He felt that such traditional theological formulations were actually obscuring the Christian message.

Jones says, "He dislikes, as much as did the English Quaker, George Fox, the custom of Calling "stone houses" churches. . . His attitude toward outward sacraments consistently fits in with all his central teachings. The outward, for Boehme, . . . can always be used as a parable or symbol of something inner and eternal. But the outward is

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<sup>131</sup>James M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics*, p. 59. Compare with Spener's resignation sermon, Philip Jacob Spener, "Resignation: Lord, if you will make me pure, Mt. 12:2," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 84. "resignation" for Spener seems to be exactly parallel to the notion of "surrender" so familiar to modern evangelicals, as well as late medieval mystics. The disturbing implication of passivity need not be a problem, because Spener qualifies himself completely.

<sup>132</sup>Henry Suso (c. 1295-1366) in *The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. VII, Late Medieval Mysticism*, pp. 252-258.

<sup>133</sup>Henry Suso (c. 1295-1366) in *Late Medieval Mysticism*, p. 61.

<sup>134</sup>Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1914) p. 190, 201, 202, 204.

<sup>135</sup>Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 190, 201.

<sup>136</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 37, 43, 44.

<sup>137</sup>Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 204.

at best only temporal, only symbolic, and it becomes a hindrance if it is taken for the real substance of which it is only the outward 'signature'"<sup>138</sup>

Stoffer adds that "It was this critical attitude toward the external church that supplied Boehme and those influenced by him with the motivation for ecclesiastical separatism."<sup>139</sup>

Interestingly, Jones points out that Boehme wrote some portions using automatic handwriting. ". . .the portions of his voluminous writings which bear the mark of having been written as automatic script - by "this hand," as he often says - are the chaotic and confused portions, full of monotonous repetitions, of undigested and indigestible phrases and the dreary re-shufflings of sub-conscious wreckage."<sup>140</sup>

Most scholars feel that the Pietistic movement was influenced by Boehme (1575-1624), especially the later radical pietists. This is surprising, because Boehme went beyond mysticism to theosophy.<sup>141</sup> We do know that Spener vigorously defended the right of some pietist preachers not to sign a denunciation against "False philosophers anti-scripturals, lax-theologians and other fanatics, namely Jacob Boehme. . . etc." that was issued by Mayer, an anti-pietistic theologian.<sup>142</sup> He also refused to condemn Boehme's material with the excuse that he had neither read him enough nor understood him sufficiently to give an opinion.<sup>143</sup> This excuse seems implausible for one who took as much interest as Spener in what was happening in Christianity.<sup>144</sup>

Some scholars argue that the radical pietists had Boehme as their primary influence, and even even some of the churchly pietists were heavily influenced by Boehme. Although no scholars surveyed seriously resist this thesis, the actual evidence for the belief was not presented in translation, other than coincidental views on the church, and certain other mystical-spiritualistic themes.

Indeed, there seems to be a likely connection between Boehme's critique of the established church and the views of the radical pietists. But even here, unless a direct literary dependence is demonstrated, it seems possible that they may have arrived at the same position without much help from Boehme. There were certainly many others holding similar views to Boehme who did not depend on him at all.<sup>145</sup> This goes as well for the mystical elements in Boehme's soteriology. In the first place, few of the *distinctively* Boehmistic elements were demonstrated by Ensign in the writings of the radical pietists. The elements mentioned are also held in common with other sources. In fact, nature mysticism was a major undercurrent in Europe, in which Boehm stood just like the others.<sup>146</sup> Some of his speculations seem even further from that of most of the radical pietists.

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<sup>138</sup>Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 200.

<sup>139</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Ecclesiology of Gottfried Arnold." in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 28, (Spring 1983) p. 137.

<sup>140</sup>Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 207.

<sup>141</sup>Theosophy is, "a system that claims to embrace the essential truth underlying all systems of religion, science, and philosophy. . .teaching the existence of an omnipotent, infinite, eternal, and immutable principle transcending the power of human conception, and the identity of all souls. . ." *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of the English Language, International Edition, Vol. II*, (New York, Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1959), p. 1302. Stated differently, "In nature mysticism the boundaries between the Self and Nature are obliterated; the Self blends with all natural objects within its vision." Wayne E. Oates, *The Psychology of Religion* (Waco TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1973) p. 112.

<sup>142</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 90.

<sup>143</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 94,95.

<sup>144</sup>Indeed, Deeter cites evidence that Spener had read "as much of Boehme as of other mystics whom he rejected outright." Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction* p. 46.

<sup>145</sup>With regard to ecclesiology, the anabaptist movement had many who argued in a similar vein.

<sup>146</sup>Ensign is the author who argues this case most strongly. Yet he is not entirely convincing. The elements he mentions as belonging to Boehmism include;

"The Christian is to have no sect. . ." (19) This could also have come from an idealistic reading of many passages in the Bible (Eph. 4:3ff). There are certainly many modern theologians who have this view without reference to Boehme.

Denck, Schwenckfeld, Franck and Weigel

Stoeffler refers to these radical mystics of the sixteenth and seventeenth century as "proponents of the inner life." They are sometimes referred to as anabaptists, but this is incorrect according to both Stoeffler and Ozment. They all drew part of their inspiration from the same sources as Arndt—late medieval mysticism.<sup>147</sup>

However, they all have in common the nature mysticism of their more influential colleague Boehme. Jones states that the sources for the nature mysticism of Weigel and Boehme are;

1. The newly available translations of Plato and the neo-platonic philosophers brought to the fifteenth century first by Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), and to Germany by Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522).
2. The Cabala, a Jewish collection of mystical speculations which became popular in the thirteenth century, although its followers claim it is much older. It contains notions of a transcendent God who is not imminent, and has no contact with matter, but issues emanations from himself to those who do have such contact. It took much interest in magic and the occult as well.
3. The renewed interest in nature and man that was the product of renaissance humanism.

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"Predestination to damnation was a blasphemous idea," (20) but Spener and many others (such as the Quakers) thought the same thing. "One must 'put on Christ' and experience the 'process' of the incarnation within one's self," (20) but it is sometimes a fine line between this language and Pauline notions of identification with Christ (II Cor. 4:7-18). The process idea is also typical of other German mystics. Lordship theology was typical of all pietists.

"Sophia mysticism," Ensign admits is "a variation on the typical medieval love-phantasy theme, based on the Song of Solomon." (20,21) Indeed this theme was very common in the medieval period, as well as after the reformation (see "Other Arndtians" below). Besides, Ensign admits, "some [radical pietists] abstained from either of these sentimental cults," (21).

"Celibacy as a spiritually more desirable state than marriage," (21) but this was hardly new with Boehme. One need never have heard of Boehme to have this view, which had dominated the middle ages, and is clearly evident in the earliest monastic writers.

"Religion should not be controlled in any way by the state," (21) but this was the automatic cry of all those who were being persecuted by the state for religion.

Finally, Ensign not only admits, "Other origins may be found for many, if not most, of these ideas. . .Boehme himself was a part of the mystical-spiritualist tradition." p. 21, but also "They [the radical pietists] did not consider themselves Boehmists as such in most instances," and "Writers presenting Boehme's ideas rarely acknowledged their dependence on him." p. 21.

One must ask at this point whether sufficient value is left of the theory when it is so qualified that virtually nothing remains? Unless there is other material that was not produced, this author remains unconvinced that Boehme is the main source of the radical's theology.

This is not to say that he was not an influence at all. We know that Gichtel was a Boehmist. He said, ". . .I must acknowledge that [Boehme's] writings gave been to me of more service for the understanding of the Bible than all my University learning." cited in Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 153. And we can place Gichtel in direct influence of Gottfried Arnold, and probably Hochman. However, does this mean that Arnold's teachings are simply Boehmist? The fact must be reckoned with that virtually all of these ideas were rife in the intellectual climate of Germany at this time, leading this author to feel that Ensign is over-simplifying the issue. Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 21.

It should be noted that Stoeffler also mentions, ". . .the mystical wing of the Pietistic movement which had a tendency to shade off into Boehmist and Gichtelian theosophy." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 10. Stoffer includes Boehme as one among several strains. Dale R. Stoffer, "The Ecclesiology of Gottfried Arnold." in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 28, (Spring 1983) pp. 144, 148.

<sup>147</sup>Sebastian Franck ranks the *Theologia Deutsch* just above Thomas a Kempis and Johannes Tauler, and just possibly below the Bible. Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 27. For an excellent short coverage of the life and thought of Hans Denck (c.1495-1527) and Sebastian Franck (1499-1542) see pp. 116-167. For a clear but favorably biased treatment see Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, pp. 17-30; 46-63.

#### 4. The powerful message of the German mystics.<sup>148</sup>

Weigel was a particularly interesting case. He lived as an apparently orthodox Lutheran pastor for his entire career, dishonestly signing the confessions of the church, although he did not believe them. Only after his death were his works published revealing that he was a theosophist!

Denck, Schwenckfeld, Franck and Weigel are important because Arndt and Spener were regularly accused of being disciples of these men. Indeed, Arndt included some of Weigel's material in his *True Christianity*. Orthodox pastors must have wondered whether Spener would also reveal his theosophical views after his death.<sup>149</sup> Jean de Labadie--

Another controversial figure who may have influenced Spener is Jean de Labadie. Labadie was a French Jesuit trained scholar who defected to the Reformed church after studying the *Institutes* of Calvin. He was accepted into the reformed pastorate in 1650, and after two problematic appointments, eventually settled down in Geneva. There his fiery preaching, and his zealous call for reform in religion and morals resulted in substantial fame and notoriety.<sup>150</sup>

Later, he moved to a reformed pastorate in Holland, first at Orange, and later at Middleberg. His reputation and his writings on asceticism, meditation, and contemplation were spread throughout Holland during this period. While pastor at Middleberg he published his *Ecrit sur la prophetie* (Amsterdam, 1668) [*Concerning the Practice of Free Prophecy*]. This was a book on the priesthood of all believers, and on the "spiritual" principle of interpretation of the Scriptures.

However, more problems arose as Labadie grew increasingly radical. He refused to follow the reformed liturgy, preferring extemporaneous prayers. His ardent circle of followers eventually became a separatistic sect. He was described as capricious and self-willed. Theologians in Utrecht called him "an irresponsible visionary"<sup>151</sup>

He set about planting underground conventicles or communes devoted to pure worship of God. "Thus," says Stoeffler, "he became the father of separatistic Pietism on the Continent."<sup>152</sup>

These groups became known as Labadists. We can place Labadists in many of the cities where later radical pietist movements sprang up.<sup>153</sup>

It is also interesting to note that beginning in 1659 Spener spent 2 years traveling in Basil, Bern, Lausanne, Geneva, Freiburg, and Tübingen. While at Geneva, he sat under Labadie. He "often went to hear him," met him personally, and later had one of his French tracts published in German.<sup>154</sup>

Scholars debate how much influence Labadie had on Spener. Even during Spener's life his critics charged that the idea of house meetings had come from Labadie. This was an embarrassment by that time, because Labadie was already teaching radical separatism. Spener denied that Labadie had had much influence, and Kurt Aland has argued effectively that the extent of influence wielded by Labadie has been exaggerated.<sup>155</sup> This is certainly the case when those like Schmidt, who believed that

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<sup>148</sup>Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, p. 134-139.

<sup>149</sup>See above p. 38, Note #103.

<sup>150</sup>*The New Shaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV p. 391.

<sup>151</sup>William George Widdowson, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 391.

<sup>152</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 169.

<sup>153</sup>For instance, they were in Krefeld by 1676, which later played an important role in the radical Pietistic movement. Stoeffler also points out that some Labadist nuclei, "succumbed to some jumping, embracing, and kissing in order to give vent to their most ecstatic emotions." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 168.

<sup>154</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 229.

<sup>155</sup>Goeters Goebel and K. D. Smidt argue that Labadie was an important influence, Heppel, Ritschl, Aland and Grunberg argue that he was not. Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 85.

Spener “had [his book] at hand as he wrote *Pia Desideria*.” Spener admitted that he talked to Labadie a number of times and that he, “found much that was good and edifying” in Labadie’s early works. Even Deeter reluctantly admits that “it is certainly possible that Spener had imbibed some of his ideas from Labadie.”<sup>156</sup> He points out that Spener had not read any of the later separatistic Labadist literature (dating later than the time Labadie left France) but this is somewhat beside the point. More importantly, Spener stated that Labadie was not holding any home meetings during the time he knew him in Geneva.<sup>157</sup>

### **The Quakers**

The quietistic groups current in Europe and England bore a remarkable similarity to Pietism in most areas, except for their anti-sacramentalism. Spener knew about the Quakers and George Fox, although he was apparently not influenced by them at all.<sup>158</sup> Later in his life, he adopted a more favorable view toward the Quakers because of their quietistic attitude and good works.

On the other hand, critics of Spener’s own time, such as pastor Roth of Leipzig wrote that the Pietists, “. . .opposed the authority of the church and that their zealous conventicles turned people away from the public worship of the church so that they even despised the preachers. This amounted to descending to the level of Quaker sectarianism.”<sup>159</sup> Spener seemed to resent these accusations of Quakerism more than most accusations.

It seems clear that Spener did not understand Quakerism in his early days, because he thought they believed that one should follow every impulse, even if it led to sin. He also thought they had no use for the Scriptures.<sup>160</sup>

Later, he came to have a more or less favorable view of the Quakers, but this was well after his own views were fully developed and published. Nevertheless, both his critics, and the Quakers gleefully claimed that he was one of theirs.<sup>161</sup>

### **Other Arndtians**

Stoeffler comments that the writings of successors to Arndt such as Stegmann and Lassenius “exhibit an excessive sweetness, a religious eroticism which tends to nauseate the modern reader.” These amorous motifs, he feels, go back to the worst elements of medieval mysticism, which drew its inspiration from an allegorical reading of *Song of Solomon*.

He thus identifies the later followers of these thinkers as “erotic Pietism,” which can be differentiated from normal Pietism because it, “had as its major aim pleasant feeling states rather than a reformed life. . .”<sup>162</sup>

They issued in a whole tradition of eighteenth century erotic Pietists writing treatises and hymns “whose dominant theme was erotic love for Christ.”<sup>163</sup>

There is no evidence that Spener followed this strain exactly, although it would have been hard for him not to have been influenced by it at all. Some of the radical pietists may have been more influenced by this school of thought.

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<sup>156</sup>See these arguments explained and documented in Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological introduction*, pp. 260-264.

<sup>157</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological introduction*, pp. 260-262.

<sup>158</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction*, p. 65.

<sup>159</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological introduction*, p. 66. He liked, according to Deeter, Barclay's works, and several individual Quakers whom he came to know. p. 82 note 1.

<sup>160</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction*, p. 66.

<sup>161</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p.

<sup>162</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 213,214.

<sup>163</sup>Some of the titles are Wessel's *Sancta Amatora, Spiritual Loving Thoughts of Such as have Fallen in Love with their Savior Alone*, Hyller's *Jesus my Love Crucified*, and Quirsfeld's *The Beautiful, Heavenly, Royal Bride Chamber*. Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 214. Stoeffler seems attracted neither to this application nor to the evangelistic direction that Francke went with the Pietistic ideas. Instead, he prefers a somewhat legalistic inner holiness application. See his comments on John Gerhard, and Lutkemann pp. 219-221.

## ***The Waldensians***

While at Geneva, Spener befriended the Waldensian minister Antonius Legerus, who persuaded him to study Waldensian history and teaching. This may have added to the toleration theme that Spener later evinced.

Leger's version of Waldensian history is inaccurate, claiming that they can be traced back to the time of Pope Sylvester.<sup>164</sup> This may have confirmed Spener's view that value could be found in the period before Luther.

By considering the available evidence—connections that Spener had while growing up, his own statements, and circumstantial evidence—we find that he was a moderate mystic-Lutheran theologian, more aware than most of other theological options then current, with all that implies. The pietistic movement that grew up around him universally bears the marks of this origin, but interpreted it differently.

Arndt and Spener stood for the confluence of the two streams of reformation theology and late-medieval mysticism. Their followers and spin-offs would tend to see those streams weighted differently—sometimes with one in ascendancy, sometimes the other. However, in most cases, little new was added.

While noting the similarities with the earlier medieval mysticism, it is essential to note the differences as well. Stoeffler notes correctly,

While in its experientialism and religious idealism it bore a certain affinity to medieval mysticism it differed sharply from that movement in its Biblicism.<sup>165</sup>

And somewhat less accurately,

What early evangelical Pietism actually endeavored to do was to preserve the experiential element in Protestantism which was so obvious in Luther as well as in Calvin. Its theology was wholly centered in the written Word, that Word having to be inwardly appropriated through the Spirit in the fellowship of the Church. Thus the tension between the subjective and the objective was resolved very much as it was in the theology of the reformers.<sup>166</sup>

Actually, it is likely that the Pietists were substantially more subjective than the reformers were. Although Luther may have started out in a highly subjective tradition, not unlike that of Spener, he tended to grow away from that background to a greater extent than Spener. It is doubtful that Spener would have approved of Luther's life-style. Luther was guilty of fun-loving ribaldry and sometimes ate and drank to excess in a way Spener would have found difficult to justify. In short, the difference was not one of doctrine, but rather in the fact that Arndt, Spener, Francke and their followers were more restrictive than Luther was.<sup>167</sup>

One thing Spener never had in common with Luther was the actual experience of a life of ascetic self-discipline such as that lived by Suso. Luther had also indulged in considerable self flagellation and kindred disciplines. These probably would have enabled him to develop a more thorough critique of those thought systems than Spener.

the effect of mysticism on ecclesiology

Although the moderate form of mysticism that Spener infused into the mainstream of Lutheran theology was not revolutionary, it contained premises which lead to revolution. The effect of mystical theology generally is to foster a more "spiritual" or subjective understanding of the nature of Christian soteriology, especially sanctification. These were the main applications that Spener drew from his fusion of mysticism and biblically oriented Lutheranism. However, it would be naive to think that these same premises would not also, in time, lead to a more "spiritual" or subjective understanding of the church.

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<sup>164</sup>See the position effectively refuted in Pius Melia, *The Origin, Persecutions, and Doctrines of the Waldenses*, (London: James Toovey, 1870), pp. 1-60.

<sup>165</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 20.

<sup>166</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 10.

<sup>167</sup>"That legalism quickly became and always remained the greatest temptation of Pietists, should be acknowledged." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 22.

Brown points out that from the earliest time, the terms “pietistic” and “individualistic” have been used synonymously in theological parlance.<sup>168</sup> Likewise, the mystic is alone with his God when most of the deep things happen. The mystical gospel calls for individual growth or attainment, and does not excuse the individual for carnality, even if he/she does go to church. Mystical theology tends to ask not “How is your community doing?” but “How is your personal walk with God doing?” This is why Alfred Hegler is plausible when he argued that “the basic source for . . . the ‘radical reform movements,’ the ‘radical tributaries,’ or the ‘left wing’ of the Reformation was medieval mysticism.”<sup>169</sup>

Heyd observes,

True, individual judgment had always been a constituent element of the Protestant tradition, but it is often forgotten that in the period of the Reformation and of Protestant Orthodoxy, the role ascribed to the individual was counterbalanced by the central position of the Church and public authorities in determining issues of doctrine and discipline.<sup>170</sup>

This individualistic outlook would have been given added impulse by Spener’s insistence that the individual study his Bible, and develop ministry.<sup>171</sup> Once again, history teaches that the individual with the Bible in his hand is a force for spiritual revolution. It is not without cause that the established church has sometimes tended to avoid too many laymen with too many Bibles—such individuals might reach new conclusions: perhaps heretical conclusions, perhaps critiques of the existing church. Stoeffler feels that the biblicism of the Pietists, which was not a factor in mystical theology, accounts for the change in view regarding roles in the church.

It was this implicit, somewhat naive, trust in the Word, rather than in man’s words about the Word, which is also responsible for the fact that Pietists really trusted the religious opinions of theologically untrained laymen. The theory was, of course, that the Spirit of God is able to commend the truth of the Bible to men’s minds and hearts without the tortured interpretations of the professionals. Hence, to the consternation of the representatives of orthodoxy and ecclesiastical institutionalism, laymen were permitted to testify, to exhort, and even to preach. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was thus rescued once again from being a mere dogma and set free to exert its influence in the Church.<sup>172</sup>

As some Pietists went into separatism, Spener tried to stem the tide that he had unleashed, with limited success. Brown explains;

[Spener] attempted to persuade all to return to the church. This was the purpose of his tract, *The Use and the Misuse of the Laments Over Corrupted Christendom*, which appeared in 1684 and was reprinted in 1687 and 1696. In this tract Spener stated that even though the church was corrupt, it was the true church from which no one should turn away. . . .

He repeatedly deplored separation, “claiming that it acted like a medicine which was more dangerous than the disease it was supposed to cure. . . .

Nevertheless, the extreme expression of self-assertion against external church authority which more and more emancipated itself from the restraints of tradition was the work of later Pietism.<sup>173</sup>

Spener’s and Francke’s individualism also tended to move them toward more democratic control in the churches. Brown says,

Spener and Francke were consistently Lutheran; nevertheless, they and their followers often stretched Luther’s definitions in their appeal for a more democratic church polity and in the mystical tendencies inherent in the style of the conventicles. . . .

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<sup>168</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 35.

<sup>169</sup>Cited in Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent*, p. 16.

<sup>170</sup>Heyd, Michael. “The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the 17th Century: From Antistructure to Structure.” *Religion* Vol. 15 p. 283.

<sup>171</sup>“Specifically not only should every christian continue to pray, give thanks, do good deeds, give alms, and sacrifice himself and what he has, but also he should study diligently the Word of God to teach others. . . .” Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 73.

<sup>172</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, pp. 21,22

<sup>173</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 62.

Spener was criticized for the egalitarianism of his pastoral service and his small group meetings, in which servants were allowed to sit at the same tables as their masters.<sup>174</sup>

Naturally, the view of the individual before his God tended to render class and ecclesiastic distinctions meaningless.<sup>175</sup>

Another ecclesiological by-product of the fusion of Reformation and Mystical theology was the alteration of Lutheran sacramentalism. The platonism of the medieval mystics sometimes led to an anti-sacramental attitude. An example of this can be seen in the *Theologia Deutsch*, which, after quoting Tauler as declaring, "There be some men at the present time who take leave of imagery [sacraments] too soon. . ." goes on to argue that only,

. . . as a man has thus broken loose from and overleaped all temporal things and creatures he may afterward come to perfection in a life of contemplation. For he who will have the one must let the other go. There is no other way.<sup>176</sup>

The argument here is not that one should avoid leaving sacraments behind, but rather that this should not be attempted by the immature. Likewise, Arndt did not usually speak of baptismal regeneration, as did his orthodox contemporaries.

He thus linked himself definitely with many of the later Lutheran Pietists to whom the Lutheran doctrine of baptismal regeneration as popularly held was always an occasion of regret or at least of embarrassment. . . [although] Arndt held the historic Lutheran view of baptism. In point of fact, however, he said little about it and put the emphasis on conversion, oneness with Christ, and a holy life."<sup>177</sup>

It is not surprising then that Spener's and Francke's critics,

. . . accused them of adopting a mystical and spiritualistic interpretation of the sacraments. Spener, as customary, desired to walk the middle ground: "as in all things, two extremes are possible, it is a deviation to place your trust outwardly in the mere custom of the sacrament and be concerned little with the inward. But it is also a deviation when one chooses to despise and set aside the outward because of the inward."<sup>178</sup>

The tension between adult conversion and infant baptism became acute for Spener and Francke. This should be especially clear when one realizes that they did not accept the doctrine of unconditional election.<sup>179</sup>

Likewise, Spener's stress on the possibility of losing the new birth following baptism and on the new obedience which baptism requires significantly altered traditional baptism.

The Pietists' need for subjective appropriation made it possible for some of the followers of Spener and Francke to minimize infant baptism in favor of the later conversion experience and to circumvent the objective efficacy of the sacrament. Francke and Spener, however, attempted to avoid this tendency.<sup>180</sup>

The churchly pietists were careful to not openly question the orthodox interpretation of the sacraments.

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<sup>174</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 58. Brown goes further, pointing out that in spite of their alleged agreement with the Lutheran definition of the church, Pietism tended to shift its stress from the visible to the invisible church. Although, as we have seen, Spener spoke of the Lutheran church as the true church, he did "approach a spiritualistic view of the church in his distinction between true heart religion and Lutheran formalism, as did Francke in his differentiation between the converted and unconverted. p. 46.

<sup>175</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 46.

<sup>176</sup>Anon, "Theologia Germanica," in *Late Medieval Mysticism*, p. 336.

<sup>177</sup>Stoeffler adds, "The difficulty here is that Luther by insisting on salvation *sola fide* and, at the same time, on a rigidly objective interpretation of baptism bequeathed to posterity what comes close to a logical contradiction. The attempt to deal with this contradiction has perennially exercised and often agitated the minds of Lutheran theologians." Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 208.

<sup>178</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 48.

<sup>179</sup>"The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, especially as it was framed at the Synod of Dort (1618), was attacked by him as a 'horrible teaching.'" Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 26.

<sup>180</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 49,50.

However, Brown credits Spener with a major role in undermining the *Beischtuhl* (confessional) permanently in Lutheranism. This in spite of the fact that Francke himself confessed to a neighboring minister four times each year before partaking of the Lord's supper.

The Beischtuhl . . . figured prominently in Pietist controversies. Although it was practically considered a sacrament by many of the orthodox, Spener and Francke felt freer to attack it than the two traditional Protestant sacraments. . . . its is very likely that Pietism, with its critical stance and opposition to compulsion, abetted the demise of the confessional.<sup>181</sup>

As we shall see, many of the later radical Pietists openly rejected or deprecated sacraments.

the churchly pietistic movement

### ***Pietistic Conventicles***

Spener held the first of his private meetings in his own home in Frankfurt am Main in 1670. With the popularity of the *Pia Desideria*, there were soon conventicles meeting all over Europe. Tappert affirms that,

Spener himself soon ascribed more and more importance to the *collegia pietatis*, which were given only passing attention in his *Pia Desideria*. If the church was to be renewed, he felt, a beginning would have to be made with the remnant of true Christians in every congregation.<sup>182</sup>

The responses to the advent of the *collegia pietatis* were two-fold—bitter attacks from the church,<sup>183</sup> and terrific excitement from lay people. Two questions that must be answered are, “Why did such an enthusiastic reception greet the *collegia*?” and, “Why were they opposed so bitterly by the church?”

Regarding the first question, before a proper understanding of pietism can be gained, one must realize that there was a vigorous ferment of pietistic, spiritualistic and mystical strains already present in Europe at this time, independent of Spener's movement. This can be seen, for instance, when one considers how many tens of thousands of Anabaptists were killed from the time of the Reformation until the time of Spener.<sup>184</sup> For Anabaptism to have still been a vital force in Europe despite this many casualties gives an idea of the profound thirst for religious authenticity and freedom that must have given rise to such endurance.

Many authors have insisted that the Thirty Years War, with its hundreds of thousands of deaths on all sides, had rendered institutional religion disgusting in the view of much of the public. Then there were the many thousands of cells or nuclei of various other groups who took a more inner view of Christianity.<sup>185</sup> This spiritualistic underground was the well-spring that was uncapped by Spener.

When the *Pia Desideria*, with its concise and persuasive arrangement, not to mention its friendly and benign tone, was published by one with the prestige of the scholarly Spener, thousands rallied to it as a

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<sup>181</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, pp. 51,52.

<sup>182</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 19. Ensign disagrees. He claims that the *collegia* were not as important to Spener's thinking as historians claim. However, no evidence is given. Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 82.

<sup>183</sup>Ensign says that even before the *Pia Desideria* was published, the *collegia* were very popular and "they were subjected to vicious attacks." Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 82.

<sup>184</sup>According to Gonzalez, the persecution of the anabaptists involved more fatalities in 50 years than the entire persecution of the early church during the two centuries before Constantine. Yet, while the early persecution of the church is known to everyone, this persecution of the Anabaptists, carried out by both Protestants and Catholics, is virtually unknown to laymen today. Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity Vol.2*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984) p. 56.

<sup>185</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, Ozment Jeffrey B. Russell ed., *Religious Dissent in the Middle Ages*, Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation*, (New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1966), Giorgio Tourn, *The Waldensians*, Justo L. Gonzalez, *The History of Christianity, Vol. 1*, and Rufus M. Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, all detail scores of dissident movements that were afoot before and after the reformation outside of the established churches.

standard. It is very unlikely that all of these were persuaded for the first time by the book. They were probably already inclined to a more personal form of religious expression.<sup>186</sup>

Speaking of such an underground that had been a part of the European scene for several hundred years, Peters shows that the themes had always been the same;

In particular terms, the Reformists attacked the immorality of the clergy, the hierarchy, and the authority of the church; usually they also attacked the sacraments as unnecessary to salvation and as supposing the necessity of a mediating clergy between a man and his God.<sup>187</sup>

Regarding the second question, the attacks by the existing clergy were severe. "The charge of the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg that pietists were guilty of at least 284 heresies suggests something of its bitterness. . . Spener was called a Quaker, a Rosicrucian, a chiliast, and a fanatic."<sup>188</sup> The main reason the church attacked the collegia so vigorously seems to have been worry about their ability to control the situation. Brown observes,

Engendering the most criticism and accusations of subjectivism were the small group meetings known variously as *Collegia pietatis*, conventicles, *ecclesiolae*, or *collegia philobiblica*.<sup>189</sup>

Very soon after the first one was started in Spener's home, it became the occasion for separatist activity.<sup>190</sup> As mentioned earlier, Spener tried to tie the meetings to the church by forbidding the Lord's Supper in the private gatherings. In spite of this and other safeguards, however, the conventicles continued to foster movements toward separation. Deeter comments,

The major problem of the colleges of piety was that they stimulated certain participants to a radical Christianity which could not be generally spread throughout the larger body of the Church. Then after repeated frustrations at the slowness of many fellow church goers to accept more radical Christian living, the unsatisfied converts often became separatistic. . . Moreover, they were often openly antagonistic to the compromisers within the larger Church who saw something of their vision but refused to break with its 'half-way Christianity.'<sup>191</sup>

## **Francke**

August Hermann Francke was born in 1663, and studied theology at Leipzig. He started home Bible studies while there called *collegium philobiblicum*. Yet he suffered from doubt regarding inspiration of Scripture and even the existence of God. He was influenced by followers of Spener while in Leipzig.<sup>192</sup> Then in 1687 he experienced a decisive conversion which left him sure of his relationship with Christ.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>186</sup>"The call had sounded forth, and all over Lutheran Germany those discontented with the state of the church began forming themselves behind Spener." Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 85,86.

<sup>187</sup>Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, p. 10.

<sup>188</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 23

<sup>189</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 60. Spener explains how these meetings operated, "I either repeated in summary fashion the sermon held the previous Sunday or repeated from the New Testament a few verses. . .and then the men present discussed these things without contention or disquiet. . . All the people had free access to these exercises, often as many as the place would hold, nevertheless the women were separated from the men so that the latter could not see them. The subject was at all times the text at hand... Until 1682 the exercises were established in this way in my house but on advice of the city council and a special conference called by the rulers they were moved to the church, although to be truthful, not without detriment. . ." From Spener's *Selbstbiography*, (Autobiography), cited in Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 61.

<sup>190</sup>The leader of the faction that began to skip communion and church was Spener's own friend Johann Jakob Schutz. Spener tried to talk them into returning, while keeping the division quiet, but he was unable. Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 82.

<sup>191</sup>Allen C. Deeter, *An Historical and Theological Introduction*, p. 150, 151.

<sup>192</sup>G. Thomas Halbrooks ed. *Pietism*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), p. 154.

<sup>193</sup>He continued to view this experience as normative. As Willoghby affirms, "'Franke put much emphasis on `conversion.' He considered it the normal way of salvation. Franke believed that conversion included a conviction of sin and a dating of the experience at a precise moment." William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 88.

He visited Spener for several months afterward and returned to operate his home studies in the Pietistic fashion. An investigation, initiated by a suspicious clergyman, led to the suppression of the home studies.<sup>194</sup> After being ousted from a pastorate in Erfurt because of Pietistic activities, Spener was able to get him a professorship of Greek and oriental languages at the newly-founded university at Halle, along with a pastorate in a local church.<sup>195</sup>

Francke was different than Spener. He was much more decisive and active. He shared in common with Spener however, a practical bent, and the desire to avoid open separation from the Lutheran church.<sup>196</sup> Francke exerted great influence at Halle, eventually unleashing a new phase in the history of Pietism.

Under the influence of Francke, Pietistic spirituality was increasingly interpreted in an *outward*, in addition to an *inward* way. This had the effect of providing an outlet for Pietistic zeal other than perfectionism, and may have had more impact on the course of church history than any other part of the Pietistic movement.

He founded numerous social relief institutions at Halle, including a school for poor children, a very large orphanage, an institute for training of teachers, and later a publishing house, medical clinic, and others businesses where the indigent could work and pay their way.

In addition, Francke had a "lifelong concern for evangelism and missions."<sup>197</sup> He eventually turned Halle into a training center for missionaries who went all over the world. This was important because neither the Lutheran nor the Reformed churches had the slightest interest in missions at that time. Glover explains,

The roots of modern missions reach back to the Reformation . . . Yet, as already remarked, the Reform leaders, and the Reformation church as a whole, were for at least a full century almost completely devoid of missionary spirit or effort. . . As Dr. George Smith expresses it, the seeds of controversy sown by Lutheran orthodoxy began to bear a harvest which would have been fatal to the spirituality of the Church but for the Pietist Movement, which by example and preaching gradually aroused the Church to a deeper spiritual life and, as a natural consequence, to renewed missionary zeal and action.<sup>198</sup>

Francke was not the first to see the evangelistic implications of the Pietistic message. Spener had stated in the *Spiritual Priesthood*,

Is there anything else that we should offer to God?

Yes; namely the doctrine of the gospel and thereby our fellow man who by it is converted and sanctified (Malachi 1:11; Rom. 15:16; Is. 60:7; Phil. 2:17,18. . .).<sup>199</sup>

However, this was problematic when the entire society was already considered Christian. The only groups who were considered "unsaved" were the Jews and the Roman Catholics. These were the groups that Spener had suggested should be won.<sup>200</sup>

By moving in the direction of foreign missions, Francke was the first to put effective action to the concept of outreach as a fruit of spiritual growth.

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<sup>194</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 98.

<sup>195</sup>G. Thomas Halbrooks ed. *Pietism*, p. 155.

<sup>196</sup>"The Halle school admired the early church's alleged moral level, but considered [the juristic formlessness of the Apostolic church] to be the exception rather than the rule." Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 103.

<sup>197</sup>M. A. Noll "Pietism" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Elwell, Walter A. ed. p. 857.

<sup>198</sup>Glover, R.H., *The Progress of World Missions*, 1924, p. 74, cited in Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 4. So too, Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 100.

<sup>199</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, "The Spiritual Priesthood," in Peter C. Erb, ed. *Pietists: Selected Writings*, p. 53. Stoeffler thinks that the missionary zeal of the Pietists was related to their idealism. "Related to this religious idealism of the Pietist was also his profound interest in the evangelistic and missionary outreach, which had been largely left out of account by other representatives of the major communions during the seventeenth century."

<sup>200</sup>Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, Allen C. Deeter, trans. Bk. II p. 54. Spener believed that the Jews would eventually become Christians, based on Rom. 11. This is significant because it shows that he rejected the view that the church had supplanted Israel entirely with regard to the Abrahamic covenant.

A careful study of the biography of Francke is outside the scope of this paper, but the main points along with source material can be read in *Pietists: Selected Writings*, Peter C. Erb Ed.

## **Zinzendorf**

Zinzendorf was Francke's student at Halle, and Spener's godson. He underwent an awakening while studying, and proceeded to organize a group of refugees from Moravia into collegia pietatis within the Lutheran church. Later, they formed the basis of the re-vitalized Moravian Brethren church.<sup>201</sup> This group exerted global influence, and are perhaps the main river flowing out of the churchly Pietistic movement.

Properly speaking, William Carey should not be called the father of the modern missionary movement. Sixty years before Carey went out, and 150 years before Hudson Taylor went out, the Moravian Brethren began sending out their first missionaries. Their first outreach was to St. Thomas Island in the West Indies in 1732.<sup>202</sup> They reached out to twelve more areas of the world within the next twenty years, and eventually sent out 2,158 missionaries within the next 150 years! The well known English social reformer, William Wilberforce wrote of the Moravians, "They are a body who have perhaps excelled all mankind in solid and unequivocal proofs of the love of Christ and ardent, active zeal in His service."<sup>203</sup>

## **Wesley**

Most reading evangelical Christians are aware that Wesley was impressed by the Moravian Brethren missionaries he met while he was still an unconverted priest on his way to Georgia. Later, Wesley attended a Moravian meeting at Aldersgate St. where, while hearing Luther's introduction to Romans, he had an experience in which he said "I felt my heart strangely warmed. . ."

However, many do not realize that within two weeks of this experience, Wesley decided to go to Germany and spend time studying under the Pietists at Halle. He recounts the reasons for the decision,

"I hoped that conversing with those holy men who were themselves living witnesses of the full power of faith, and yet able to bear with those that are weak, would be a means, under God, of so establishing my soul, that I might go on from faith to faith. . ." <sup>204</sup>

Wesley then spent the next four months with the Pietists at Halle. Subsequently, we find many elements of the Pietistic agenda present in Wesley's ministry.

He began to include a distinct call for conversion in his sermons. He organized conventicles, which were called "classes," "societies," or "bands," depending on their size makeup, and purpose. Attendance at a band required that the member bring his or her penny for the poor (recalling the practical relief concerns of the Halle group). His theological outlook reflects that of Francke and Spener very much. Finally, he sought to do all of this within the bounds of his own confession (Anglican).

For these reasons, the Methodist movement is considered by historians and theologians to be in the mainstream of the churchly Pietistic movement.

### the radical pietistic revolt

As mentioned earlier, just at the effect of mystical theology is to impart a more "spiritualized" view of the nature of sanctification, in time, it would also tend to lead to a more "spiritual" or subjective understanding of the church.

Indeed, as already seen, even Spener was well on the way to a re-introduction of the primitive church forms that would unavoidably undercut the foundations of institutional Lutheranism. His dual calls for the individual believers to divide the Scriptures, while not infringing on the prerogatives of the clergy were

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<sup>201</sup>M. A. Noll "Pietism" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Elwell, Walter A. ed. p. 857.

<sup>202</sup>Colin A. Grant, "Europe's Moravians: A pioneer Missionary Church," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, Ralph D. Winter ed. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), p. 206.

<sup>203</sup>Colin A. Grant, "Europe's Moravians," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, p. 206, 207.

<sup>204</sup>John Wesley, *The Heart of John Wesley's Journal*, (New Canaan, Conn: Keats Publishing Co., 1979) p. 45.

probably self-contradictory in practice. At least the clergy would make these calls mutually exclusive. Tappert says,

It is hardly surprising that the initial enthusiasm for the *Pia Desideria* cooled somewhat when the implications of one or another of these planks in Spener's platform became clearer. Clergymen felt threatened in their status by the rise of the laity, professors of theology resented the brash incursion of outsiders into their academic preserve, and the complacent were disturbed by appeals or change and for departure from what was familiar, customary, and comfortable.<sup>205</sup>

In spite of his determination to abide within the confines of his own confession, Spener tended to resist the structural strongholds of the status quo. When his critics pushed the idea that the collegiate clergy alone had the authority to interpret sufficiently in the symbols, Spener observed that, ". . .one pope would be better than many popes."<sup>206</sup>

Viewed this way, separatism, and the Radical Pietistic revolt were the logical outgrowth of Spener's theology—not confused distortions of it. Spener's own cries against separatism and anti-clericalism have a hollow ring when heard in the light of his call for a return to more radically biblical principles.

Spener, unlike many of his contemporaries, said the Symbolical Books<sup>207</sup> are of human origin, and while God has provided so that they would not contain errors in basic doctrines which are necessary for salvation, He did permit errors in secondary matters to remind us of the distinction between the Symbolical Books and the Holy Scriptures.<sup>208</sup>

These chippings at the foundations of the established orthodoxy proved to be a door which, once opened even a little, could not be closed again. The followers who took the Pietistic teachings to an extreme, both in soteriology and in ecclesiology tended to become very perfectionistic and hard to please. Some of them felt that separation from the world was the only to reach the ideal of inward perfection implied in some of the mystical thought used by Pietists. When separating one's self from the wicked world, what could be more wicked than the control hungry established denominations? Surely one must separate himself from man's church as well as from man's society.

## **Arnold**

An example par excellence of the kind of hyper-idealistic individualism that grew out of this "inward" view of Christianity can be seen in the ecclesiology of Gottfried Arnold.

Arnold had experienced a religious awakening while studying law at Wittemberg, apparently as a result of Spener's ministry.<sup>209</sup> He was discipled by Spener for about two years while a tutor at Dresden. Later, Spener got him a posting to teach at Quedlinburg, which happened to be a hot-bed of separatism at that time.<sup>210</sup> There he produced his first major work on early church history—*Wahre Abbildung*. As a result of this book, he was given the professorship of church history at Giessen in 1697. There he had extensive contact with Gichtel and Hochman (see below). Gichtel was a Boehmist, although this is not as clear in the case of Hochman.

Arnold's study of church history and the early church led him to feel that there was no church or sect in which a truly God-seeking person could retain his devotion to Christ without severe hindrances.

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<sup>205</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, "Introduction to *Pia Desideria*", p. 19.

<sup>206</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 39.

<sup>207</sup>"These were the catechisms and creeds established by the theologians of the sixteenth century." Donald F. Durnmaugh, *The European Origins of the Brethren*, p. 28.

<sup>208</sup>Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 89, 90.

<sup>209</sup>"In the preface to a collection of works by Thomas a Kempis which Arnold edited in 1712, he does indicate that Spener had an indirect connection to his Wittemberg awakening." Dale R. Stoffer, "The Ecclesiology of Gottfried Arnold." in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 28, (Spring 1983) p. 139.

<sup>210</sup>Ensign says, "several ecstatic women were active in the town. One, Anna Eva Jacob, sweated blood. Another was in Spregel's household. . .the leader of the separatist party. . .to which Arnold soon attached himself." Chauncey David Ensign, *Radical German Pietism (c.1675 -- 1760)*, p. 125.

Eventually, "Arnold comes to doubt that the requisite inwardness of the true church can ever be exhibited by a community again."<sup>211</sup>

Not surprisingly, he eventually came to depreciate the value of all forms of outwardness including the sacraments. He sees the Kingdom of God as preeminently inward.<sup>212</sup> Arnold's super-spiritual critical view eventually leads him to render a negative verdict on every expression of the church that he considered in his other major work on church history, the *Ketzerhistorie*.<sup>213</sup>

Stoffer says, "Arnold's trademark is clearly discernible: the necessity of looking to the early church as the norm for Christian life."<sup>214</sup> The subjugation of ecclesiology to the doctrines of personal piety is denied by Stoffer. However, he admits that

. . . the renewal of the individual and the work of the Holy Spirit. . . are given added force in the *Ketzerhistorie*. . . for the life of the regenerate man becomes the standard for judging all aspects of church history.<sup>215</sup>

## **Hochman**

Another renowned Pietistic dissenter was Ernst Christoph Hochman. His *Glaubensbekenntniss* (published in 1743) is considered, "a reliable credenda of the Schwarzenau movement," which included the early German Baptist Brethren.<sup>216</sup> Hochman tends to agree with many of Arnold's views in *Ketzerhistorie*.

Hochman was a travelling evangelist, more or less in the tradition of the mendicant (beggar) preachers of earlier times. He eventually settles for some time in the province of Wittgenstein. This province, under the rule of a Count Henry, needed more citizens for tax purpose. It therefore began welcoming religious dissenters and separatists of every stripe from as far away as Switzerland. These included Mennonites, Labadists, Lutheran Pietists, and Quakers.<sup>217</sup>

That Hochman's influence on the German Brethren movement was a lasting one, is demonstrated by the fact that his *Glaubensbekenntniss* was brought to America by the Brethren, and was published by the Germantown press of Christopher Sauer in 1743.<sup>218</sup>

It is interesting to note that Hochman, like Spener may have been influenced by Labadie. We know he visited Labadist cells in Krefeld Holland, which also became the later home of some of the German Baptist Brethren.<sup>219</sup> Krefeld was at that time (between 1683 and 1720) a key rallying point for Separatists. Even before Hochman preached there, the inclination for 'separation' had been planted.<sup>220</sup>

*The European Origins of the Brethren*, by Donald F. Durnmaugh is the most complete collection of early German Baptist Brethren and radical pietistic documents available in translation. It contains many fascinating authentic letters and records of interrogations, etc. which portray the reactions and outlooks of the people involved in the clearest, and most reliable way.

A feel for the poignance of a life of free-form revolutionary agitation can be gained by reading an exchange of letters between a Palatine official at Mannheim and the Elector Palatine regarding the town's response to an incident where several adults had been baptized by Hochman and Mack.

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<sup>211</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Life and Thought of Gottfried Arnold," in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 26, No. 3 p. 97.

<sup>212</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Life and Thought of Gottfried Arnold," in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 26, No. 3 p. 97. Note that there is a provable quietistic influence in Arnold at about this time.

<sup>213</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Life and Thought of Gottfried Arnold," in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 26, No. 3 p. 98.

<sup>214</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Ecclesiology of Gottfried Arnold," in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 28, (Spring 1983) p. 135.

<sup>215</sup>Dale R. Stoffer, "The Life and Thought of Gottfried Arnold," in *Brethren Life and Thought*. Vol. 26, No. 3 p. 98.

<sup>216</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 25.

<sup>217</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 32.

<sup>218</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 96.

<sup>219</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 105.

<sup>220</sup>Renkewitz, ECH, 202 quoted in William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 98.

When the official at Mannheim reported that several citizens had been baptized as adults, and asked for guidance, the Elector published an edict that read in part,

[those]...who profess this error and hold secret conventicles in homes or elsewhere, [shall be] carefully watched, especially the leaders. Those who commit this evil and who do not respond either to kindly or severe warnings to abandon these wicked intentions and maintain this especially stubbornly are to be arrested at once without special authorization. They are to be put in prison, and as many of them as there are must be locked to wheelbarrows and kept on public work on the fortifications or at other common labor. They are to be separated from one another in various places, and put on a bread-and-water diet. September 14, 1706.

In response to this the local official arrested a few Taufgesinnten [baptism factionaries] and reported the result,

On the basis of this, they were sentenced to public labor on the Neckar River in the hope that others of their ilk would be intimidated. However, it is impossible to describe what a great sympathy all of the Reformed subjects have shown for them. They have defended the Pietists' teachings, and said that nothing could be found deserving punishment in such pious Christians as far as they could see or hear. They have unashamedly proclaimed and made this their own cause. In addition, they immediately began going in processions to the prisoners outside of the city, not out of curiosity, but to spend all day listening to them. The prisoners preached continually instead of doing the assigned labor. They have also sent them plenty to eat and drink despite the published prohibition.

The civil guard appointed to watch them was powerless to prevent this, and was no longer sure of his own safety because of the open threats against him. I was finally forced to request a military guard and ordered him to go there. The latter gave the leader, the so-called Hochmann, a few harmless blows, because the latter would neither stop his continual preaching nor accommodate himself to working.

This caused such compassion, tumult, and exaggeration from the Reformed party as if these "innocent" people were being treated barbarously, so that an open rebellion was to be feared. This was even though I had released the two local citizens among the prisoners upon their declaration that they would again profess the Reformed faith. The Reformed party demonstrated such an unusual hatred for me because of this that one can obviously see that most of the Reformed have fallen prey to this Pietistic error and conspire with them."

"It is my humble opinion that a still harsher edict should be drawn up against this Pietistic sect and their defenders."

Instead, the elector answered,

...As the prisoners have obediently appealed again for merciful amelioration by the enclosed submissive petition, we have thereupon graciously resolved to dismiss the same at this time. They are to be expelled with the stern warning that they must never set foot in Mannheim or any other place in the territory. . .<sup>221</sup>

Life in a society where no churches were permitted other than the three already recognized was a constant adventure for separatistic agitators like Hochman.

Hochman's views on baptism can be detected in the following response to Christian Liebe,

### Hochmann von Hochenau to Christian Liebe

Concerning the matter of the baptism, it is my impartial opinion that baptism by fire and spirit must take place in every Christian. Where this does not occur in the soul, the outward water baptism alone without the inward one can make a Christian of no one. Before God in Christ, only the new creature has value. In faith working through love is found the entire essence of Christianity. Indeed, I believe that where one is

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<sup>221</sup>Donald F. Durnmaugh, *The European Origins of the Brethren*, (Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press, 1958), p. 48-51.

outwardly baptized, even as an adult, that cannot possibly help one to salvation, if the person has not been inwardly sanctified in the body, soul, and spirit of Jesus.<sup>222</sup>

Likewise with communion,

When this is held by living members of Christ in truly united love, then I will not oppose it. To the contrary, in as far as they wish to ally themselves with me in life and death for the sake of the name of Jesus, I will take communion with them. However, without the inward alliance with the spirit of Jesus, the outward will avail little or nothing at all.<sup>223</sup>

Here we see in Hochman an example of complete inward focus, usually only found among quietists such as Quakers.

When the official tried to enlist the aid of the reformed pastor in an inquisitorial fashion, he found that the pastor was a moderate, uninterested in being a Taufjager [baptist hunter].

### Inspector Konig to Count Charles August

If there is anything wrong with this type of baptismal act, it is that their baptism is commonly not a sacrament of unity and brotherly fellowship with all believers and God-fearing people but rather a sacrament of separation and partisan spirit.<sup>224</sup>

Of course in Hochman's view, no one could have been less partisan than he, since he did not recognize the validity of any confessional distinctions.

### **Mack**

Alexander Mack wrote three tracts that we know of, but only two survive. Also one letter remains. The titles are a little hard to remember. One is,

*A Short and Simple Presentation of the Outward, yet Sacred Rights and Ordinances of the House of God, as Commanded by the True Steward Jesus Christ, and Left on Record in His Last Will and Testament. Arranged in a Conversation between Father and Son through Questions and Answers.*<sup>225</sup>

For obvious reasons historians refer to this work as *Rechte und Ordnungen*, [Rites and Ordinances].

The other work that has survived has a similarly long title, but is usually called *Ground Searching Questions* [*Grundforschende Fragen*].<sup>226</sup>

The other main source matter comes from Alexander Mack Jr.'s Introduction to the 1774 edition of *Rites and Ordinances* which gives a short history of the formation of the movement using some verbal and written materials he got from his father and Elder Peter Becker, long time leader of the Germantown Brethren.<sup>227</sup>

Mack traveled and preached with Hochman for at least two years. He considered himself Hochman's disciple until he decided to form a new church community that followed the New Testament pattern more faithfully. In a letter to a critic, he explains his view of the established churches:

The Baptist seed is still far better than the seed of L[uther], C[alvin], and also that of the C[atholics]. These have had a completely wild, yes, bestial outcome, which is self-evident. The Jews and the Turks are scandalized by the horrible wickedness of these three religions. Not even with gallows and torture can they keep them, who are of one faith, from murdering one another in their homes, which happens often enough.

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<sup>222</sup>Donald F. Durnmaugh, *The European Origins of the Brethren*, p. 127.

<sup>223</sup>Donald F. Durnmaugh, *The European Origins of the Brethren*, p. 127.

<sup>224</sup>Donald F. Durnmaugh, *The European Origins of the Brethren*, p. 173

<sup>225</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 21.

<sup>226</sup>See Homer A. Kent, Sr. *250 Years. . . Conquering Frontiers: A History of the Brethren Church*, (Winona Lake, IN: The Brethren Missionary Herald Company, 1958) p. 13

<sup>227</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 24.

What is still more horrible, they go publicly to war, and slaughter one another by the thousands. All this is the fruit of infant baptism.<sup>228</sup>

Their story begins in one of the most popular refuges for separatists in Germany—Schwarzenau. Here Mack and his new wife came between 1700 and 1708. It was in 1708 that eight adults formed a *Gemeinde*, (parish or community) by having themselves baptized three times forward in the name of the Father the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>229</sup> Hochman, who was opposed to all sects and all ecclesiastical organization, was disappointed in his followers for forming a new sect.”<sup>230</sup>

Krefeld in northern Holland later became the center of the movement because of even greater religious toleration there. Earlier, in 1678, Stephen Crisp, an English Quaker, had established the first Quaker meeting at Krefeld. Two years later they were driven out of town, and in 1683 most of them went to America. As already seen the Labadists had founded separatist cells there as well.<sup>231</sup>

Mack's group were “taufgesinnten” which means baptism sectaries, baptism variants, or baptism dissenters. The word is usually translated “baptists.” They were also christened “Tunkers” [from *tunkel-* to dip] and “Dunkards.”<sup>232</sup> Brethren historians refer to the movement as the German Baptist Brethren.

Mack Jr. explains that “Here and there private meetings (*Versammlungen*) were established next to the organized churches, in which newly awakened souls sought their edification. . . the [presence of] the spiritual priest [see above “Church Order”] embittered the hearts of the rulers, and . . . persecutions were started. . .”<sup>233</sup> They were persecuted because they baptized adults, causing the nobility to think that they were *Wiedertaufern* (Anabaptists). Civil authorities were terrified of Anabaptism, for, “it was essentially a lower class movement.”

They eventually followed the Quakers to Penn's colony in America, where religious toleration was practiced. Three books popular with the early Brethren were: Johann Arndt, *Wahres Christendom*; Gottfried Arnold, *Abbildung der ersten Christen*; and Jeremias Feldbinger, *Christliches Hand-Buchen*.<sup>234</sup>

Today the Brethren movement in America goes on under several denominational labels. These include the Ashland Brethren, the Brethren in America, and the Grace Brethren.<sup>235</sup>

the legacy of pietism in history

The final impact of Pietism is so far reaching in history that it is impossible to analyze it here. The mere existence of the Wesleyan, Brethren and Moravian churches indicate terrific impact. Then there is the effect on the Lutheran church. This has been discussed in works by Stoeffler, Harnack, and Ritschl to name a few.<sup>236</sup>

Pietism is usually admitted to have influenced numerous other churches including the Mennonites, the Puritans, the Quakers, and Dutch Reformed in early America. We know that the New England Puritan Cotton Mather corresponded with Francke for instance.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>228</sup>Donald F. Durnmaugh, *The European Origins of the Brethren*, p. 343.

<sup>229</sup>Other distinctives of their church ritual included "pedolavivm" (foot washing) "the greeting" (kissing each other on the cheek when meeting) and the celebration of the Lord's supper as a dinner. See Donald F. Durnmaugh, *The European Origins of the Brethren*, p. and William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 33, 34.

<sup>230</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 100. Later, after years of separation, when Mack crossed paths with Hochman around 1710 in Switzerland, Mack called him a hypocrite and an *Irrgeist* (errant Spirit) William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 101.

<sup>231</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 41.

<sup>232</sup>The other name for Brethren was "Dompelars," or "Dumplers" which the current author could not find an explanation for.

<sup>233</sup>Mack Jr., Introduction to *Rechte und Ordnungen*, p. 21 trans. Cited in William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 83.

<sup>234</sup>William George Willoghby, *The Beliefs of the Early Brethren*, p. 41, 42, 50, footnote #2.

<sup>235</sup>They should not be confused with the Evangelical United Brethren, or the Plymouth Brethren.

<sup>236</sup>Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>237</sup>M. A. Noll "Pietism" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Elwell, Walter A. ed. p. 858.

In society outside of the church, Pietism is credited with contributing to the impetus for a spirit of tolerance and religious freedom.<sup>238</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and Immanuel Kant are examples of important secular thinkers who were heavily exposed to Pietism in their youth. Noll even goes as far as seeing Pietistic influence in Jansenism and the visions of the Jewish mystic Baal Shem Tov!<sup>239</sup>

Some of the evaluations of Pietism's impact are quite negative.<sup>240</sup> It is hard to deny that hyper-individualism is a danger inherent in the movement. Today, much of American fundamentalism draws its primarily inward devotional ethic from Pietistic sources. In a different vein, Noll, speaking from an apparently sentimental rather than a biblical perspective, worries that Pietism "can underrate the value of Christian traditions."<sup>241</sup> Others would say that this is the main value of the movement.

Regarding Ecclesiology, the great themes that Spener brought to light in the area of lay-ministry are arguably the most revolutionary and positive truths uncovered by the Reformation. The outburst of excitement for Christianity that resulted (even though temporary in many cases) was enough to impact most of the world before it had spent its force.

Heyd points out that we need to consider not only the moves made by the Pietists and related "inner life" groups, but also to study the reaction of the established churches.

The reactions of the establishment itself, or of 'structure' to the challenges of the radicals has usually received less attention, although such a reaction may be no less interesting . . . than the thought and action of the radicals.<sup>242</sup>

He points out that "the 'anti-structural' character of enthusiasm was stressed above all by its contemporary critics." As a result, It was, ". . . important to emphasize the time-bound character of scripture and to supplement it by a reliance on the Church as the embodiment of the religious order and as the only legitimate interpreter of the scriptural message."<sup>243</sup> Thus, like the Quakers, the "latitude men" and the Anabaptists, the Pietists may have had the unintended effect in some confessions of stiffening institutional criteria for authority.

By far more significant however, are two central emphases reintroduced by the Pietists, that have remained as key elements of much of conservative Christianity especially in America. These are the emphasis on a personal relationship with God (usually attended by the belief in the need for a defined conversion experience) and the emphasis on evangelism and missions. Both of these have a bearing on ecclesiology.

The distinction between true (i.e. converted) Christians and nominal Christians relates to the definition of the true, or invisible, church. As already seen, this tendency lead in part to the separatism of the radicals, and has led to various attempts at founding "believers only" churches.<sup>244</sup> This development has tended to fade in importance because of the difficulties inherent in the view. However, the distinction has continued

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<sup>238</sup>Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, p. 42.

<sup>239</sup>M. A. Noll "Pietism" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Elwell, Walter A. ed. p. 857, 858. Noll thinks that Pietism was "in one sense the Christian answer to . . . the discovery of the individual' by providing a Christian form to the individualism and practical-mindedness of a Europe in transition to modern times. . . Both the Enlightenment and Pietism asserted the rights of individuals, opposed the protestant hierarchy, and were concerned about practice more than theory. The question remains as to whether Pietism paved the way for a similar secular expression of these themes." p. 858. This observation deserves consideration, but may be superficial. The points of contact could be coincidental, and do not necessarily stem from the same basis. On the other hand, once individualism took root, it would not be impossible for it to become a habit, even though the reason changes.

<sup>240</sup>These include Karl Barth, Ernst Troeltsch, Paul Tillich, Rienhold Niebuhr, and Emil Brunner. All argue that Pietism tended to lead to individualistic subjectivism, and lack of concern for social conditions because the inner life was focused on exclusive of the outer life. See Ernst Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, p. 1.

<sup>241</sup>M. A. Noll "Pietism" in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Elwell, Walter A. ed. p. 858.

<sup>242</sup>Heyd, Michael. "The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the 17th Century: From Antistructure to Structure." *Religion* Vol. 15 p. 282.

<sup>243</sup>Heyd, Michael. "The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the 17th Century: From Antistructure to Structure." *Religion* Vol. 15 p. 281, 282-83.

<sup>244</sup>This was also a regular result of Anabaptist ecclesiology as well.

to carry weight with fundamentalist groups, many of which have set out to convert the nominal Christians in existing churches.

The emphasis on missions has had a resounding impact in redefining the nature of the church's mission. Views that the church is simply intended to worship rightly, and to season society have tended to be considered incomplete by Pietistically oriented churches and parachurch groups. This has had the effect of birthing the modern missionary movement. The role of Halle in initiating this movement, (not to mention the work of the Methodists) should not be underrated.

Finally, there are several likely points of contact between secular intellectual history in Europe and Pietism, all of which lie outside the scope of this paper.

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