

THE HUTTERITES AND THE RADIO CHURCH OF GOD

Old but Interesting History

by Keith Hunt (December 2007)

Come back with me to about the middle 1960s on the Prairies of Canada, actually to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Most of you reading from this Website, this will be new to you, and as the years go by, the few who do go back to the middle 1960s with the organization that was renamed as The Worldwide Church of God, will be few indeed, time and death, has a way of obliterating some things. So I thought I would write this for the record of Church of God history, and the next generations to come (if this age keeps going for a number of decades yet).

Back in the 1960s it was still very much a "radio" world. People just listened a mighty lot to the radio. Herbert W. Armstrong and his son Garner Ted Armstrong were very powerful speakers for the "World Tomorrow" radio broadcast. By the middle 1960s that broadcast was the largest "religious" broadcast in the entire world; being on more radio stations than any other religious broadcast.

Around Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, there was a Hutterite communal settlement. Now the Hutterites are an Anabaptist sect living in rural communal settlements. They hold all property in common. All monies from their farming and selling of produce etc. goes into one local communal bank. The sect goes back to Europe and the man called Jacob Hutter, a Moravian Anabaptist about 1536 A.D.

They tend to have little modern things, shunning a lot, like TV and cars. Not sure today what they accept or not, but back then they shunned most modern gadgets. They still dress in black clothes. But some it would seem did have radios in the 1960s. For this Hutterite settlement near Winnipeg, well some of them, were listening to Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong on the radio each night. Soon many of them started to question their "religious" teachings under the Hutterite theology. Soon they were agreeing that the 7th day (Saturday) was the Christian Sabbath, and should be observed. They soon agreed that the popular Christian holidays came from paganism, and were not the Festivals that should be observed. They came to see that God's Festivals are in Leviticus 23. They came to see the fact that the Bible does not teach that humans have an immortal soul that either goes off to heaven or hell at death, depending on how you've lived.

They came to see a lot of popular Christian theology is off

the tracks and indeed false teachings.

When I say "they" I mean about HALF the Hutterite community in that particular settlement, began to see things differently than they had before.

So much so, that finally this half of the settlement wanted OUT of the settlement. They claimed that as they had worked as a family of settlers for a generation or two, they should be able to leave the settlement with half the bank account! Of course the other half of that settlement did not want to give over one single dime!

Glen White, from the USA, was at that time Pastor of the Radio Church of God that was I believe by this time named the Worldwide Church of God. Do not make the mistake of thinking these withdrawn from society, modest, dressed in black, people are always "nicety-nice" people. When the rubber hits the road, when push comes to pull, they can be anything but nice, and are in fact another CULT, but dressed in black, and away from the daily converse with the world at large.

It finally got to the point that lawyers were brought in. And then by the time it came to Court, some of the "elite" religious leaders of Winnipeg had seen how they could make this into a "religious battle." They actually wanted to get in the fray of things so they could openly denounce and prove that this Worldwide Church of God of way off base with its "theology" especially concerning the weekly Sabbath and which Festivals to observe.

So the "court day" came. Herbert Armstrong sent up Herman Hoeh to represent the Worldwide Church of God. The opposing Hutterites, who did not want to part with a dime, had some of these "elite" clergy-men of Winnipeg on their side, in the Court House. Some of these "elite" church men were introduced with having PhDs.

One of them gets up and addresses everyone in the Court, and reads 1 Corinthians 5, verse 7, "...Christ is our Passover sacrificed for us" to prove we no longer need observe the Festivals of Leviticus 23. He sits down.

Herman Hoeh is then introduced, as also having his PhD. Apparently faces (especially from the elite clergymen) fell through their pants to their shoes.

Hoeh then says to all present that Jesus truly is our Passover sacrificed for us, BUT he continued, do not stop with verse 7, read on...."Therefor let us KEEP THE FEAST, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of

sincerity and truth."

On hearing that verse the elite Winnipeg clergymen ROSE UP AND QUICKLY LEFT THE COURT-ROOM!

The judge sided with the Hutterites that did not want to hand over one dime to the ones wanting to leave the settlement.

When the news was given to us, the members of every Worldwide Church of God in Canada, that our new brethren would leave with only the clothes on their back, we immediately took up collecting all foods, clothes, money, and whatever was needed to assist our new brethren, the now "ex" Hutterites. The response for physical help was truly amazing, even to being able to provide them with automobiles and of course rental housing.

Some of those new brethren did come to the town in Saskatchewan where I lived, and I had personal friendship with them in our local congregation.

I have no idea if any of them today are holding fast to the basic truths of the Bible. I hope they are. If some are, maybe down the road they will find this Website and email me.

A little bit of history from the yesterday in the Church of God.

December 2007