



BISHOP'S
Oct 16 POST Nov 16



What made them survive? Part 2

Where did the strength of the Waldensians lie?

In the previous Bishop's Post I invited you to give this question some thought. How did a movement within the Church, yet rejected and persecuted by it, survive for 300 years?

I believe that we can learn from them. That is why I ask the question. What gave them resilience? There are various reasons.

The first one is their insistence to work with the Bible directly, in their mother tongue.

In the 12th century the Bible was only copied and used in Latin. When Valdes had it translated into his mother tongue, it became accessible to lay people. Bible study became a core activity of him and his followers. Ordinary people learned to read and write, in order to be able to copy the Bible and, of course, read it.

Many learnt large portions of the Bible off by heart. This became a crucial life saver when the possession of Bibles was forbidden by the Church, and Bibles found were destroyed. What was learnt could not be taken!

More than three hundred years later Luther too recognised the importance of ordinary people having access to the Bible. When he was declared enemy of the Church and hid on the Wartburg Castle to save his life, the first thing that he did was to translate the New Testament into German, so that ordinary people would have access to it. Throughout his later life he kept on emphasising that it was infinitely more important for people to read the Bible than to study his own writings. Since he knew that his writings were based on his studying the Bible.

On 31 October 2016 the "Luther 2017" will be officially started. The danger is that we will be "unlutheran" and focus on what Luther wrote. The challenge is to listen to what he wrote - namely that we should take time to read, study, learn in and from the Bible.

For the Waldensians this was a most important life line throughout the centuries of persecution.

We have the Bible standing in our shelves. Let it become part of our knowledge, thinking and innermost being!

Your Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path! Ps 119,105

Hart Müller

News from the Church

1. Merger with Cape Church. At the combined Church Council meeting of ELCSA (N-T) and ELCSA (Cape) the following was agreed upon:

“1. After following up on the task assigned by the respective synods, councils came to the following conclusion:

We respect and appreciate each other’s uniqueness. After intensive discussions we concluded that the merger discussions will not be continued at this stage.

2. The Cape Church is busy working at the ecclesiology, to spell out their identity. This is a deep discernment process of listening to God’s Word and each other; this must also happen on congregational level.

- Who or whose are we?

- What are we called to do?

- How are we going to do it?

3. We affirm that we will continue to engage in close cooperation (let’s do together whatever we can do together) and also learn from and celebrate each other’s differences thereby enriching each other.”

We will thus continue as two independent Churches in close co-operation with each other.

2. The UELCSA Synod takes place from 22 to 23 October in Bonaero Park. An important topic will be the way forward with our theological training in co-operation with the University of Stellenbosch.

3. eQuip 2017 - Grace for you - eQuipped to reform. The next eQuip is planned for 2-7 January 2017 in Hermannsburg. In the reformation the fire of God’s grace came to the fore as life transforming power.

This power is still at work. The grace of God still transforms people, communities and nations.

Join us on a journey of discovery. Be exposed to this powerful grace!

This retreat is open for all age groups and an ideal opportunity for families to attend together. More information from your congregations office or the Church web page www.elcsant.org.za