When the faithful are forced to the caves, how will we respond?

By Elijah M. Brown

As we walked up the steep hill and crossed over the final wooded path, the Anabaptist cave came into full view. Almost five hundred years ago, early Anabaptist leaders from Zurich were chased out of the city and found refuge in the neighboring villages. Each Sunday they would climb into the hills to worship in seclusion and in conviction of their belief in Jesus Christ.

Gathering to worship in this sacred location marked the opening of the 2018 Baptist World Alliance Annual Gathering. It was a powerful moment as we prayed together and sang the Anabaptist favorite, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

Standing in that cave my thoughts returned to Judges 6 and the story of Gideon; a story rooted in the reality of oppressed people seeking refuge in caves. What must that have been like?

How does one express the fear of a village that never knows when the next attack will come? The trauma of being trapped in cycles of victimization. The reality of galloping horses suddenly cresting over the hill and men, women and children dropping their tools, abandoning their crops and rushing to the hills.

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By Brian Kaylor, Editor, Word & Way

As about 100 Baptists from around the world prepared for worship Sunday morning at the start of the Baptist World Alliance's 2018 annual gathering, they left behind the bustling city of Zurich, Switzerland, and hiked up a quiet hillside near the community of Bäretswil about a half-hour drive away. Once up in the cave hidden back in the woods off a dirt path, their words echoed through the chamber - the same words that have bounced off those dark walls for hundreds of years.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

In 1526, early Anabaptists found themselves persecuted in Zurich. Many fled the city after facing imprisonment and threats of death for refusing to practice infant baptism and for refusing to submit to the dictates of the city's intertwined religious and political leaders. These members of the "radical Reformation" instead insisted on following the teachings of the scriptures and on holding Jesus as the highest authority. Thus, they quickly found themselves at odds with the powerful Reformation leader in Zurich, Huldrych Zwingli.

Read the full Word & Way story here.

EthicsDaily.com Video Coverage
EthicsDaily.com produced three brief videos from the Anabaptist cave worship experience and interviews that followed.

Anabaptist Cave Tour: BWA Zurich

Karen Bullock: BWA Zurich

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The Baptist World Alliance, founded in 1905, is a fellowship of 238 conventions and unions in 124 countries and territories comprising 47 million members in 169,000 churches. Its priorities are nurturing the passion for mission and evangelism; promoting worship, fellowship and unity; responding to people in need; defending human rights and justice; and advancing relevant theological reflection.