

## A CHILDREN'S STORY ABOUT BAPTISTS . . .

A long time ago, many families loved Jesus. They wanted to read the Bible and sing to God. They wanted to tell other people about Jesus. They wanted to be a church that followed Jesus. They wanted to be in a safe place. But they could not do any of these things. They were very sad.

One day, the brave families sailed away from England in a big ship to find a place to be free. They landed in Amsterdam and found some new friends . . . the Mennonites. The friends gave them houses to live in. The friends gave them work to do. The friends helped them to find a place for a new church.

All of the people read the Bible together with the pastors, John Smythe and Thomas Helwys. The Bible says that Jesus is Lord. The people wanted to follow Jesus and make Him their Lord too. They were baptized so that everyone would know that they belonged to Jesus now. Then they formed a big family called "Baptists."

The new Baptist family studied the Bible together. They worshipped God together. They told other people about Jesus together. They loved each other. They went to a new church and were safe with their new friends.

The Baptists learned how to live in their new country. They spoke in Dutch like their new friends. They said, "Ja" [Ya] instead of "Yes." They said "Brood" instead of "bread." They wore wooden shoes and lived in tall houses by the water. They loved their Mennonite friends and the Mennonites loved the Baptists.

Pastor Thomas and some of the Baptist families decided to sail back to England to see their brothers and sisters, fathers, mothers, and grandparents they had left behind. But when they arrived, they found that they still could not be safe at home. They could not worship God in the new ways. It was hard to live their new church life.

Some of the Baptists went to jail for preaching. Some went to jail for being baptized. So they told other people about Jesus quietly. They read their Bibles and worshipped God inside their houses. These Baptist were very brave.

They wrote little books about how Jesus said to worship God. They asked the King to make them free. They loved each other and helped other people. They followed Jesus even when it was dangerous! They told other people about Jesus - in Haiti, in Africa, in India, in China, and in the Americas.

Many other people followed Jesus and were baptized too. They wanted to be part of the big Baptist family. Soon there were many, many Baptists!

Today, there are millions of people who follow Jesus. They read and study the Bible. They join together to worship and sing. They want to be with other people who love Jesus too. They want to tell other people about Him and help them to be safe. They are part of the big Baptist family all around the world. And YOU are a part of this family too!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BAPTISTS!!!