

Mennonites

WHO THEY ARE

— *and* —

WHAT THEY BELIEVE



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More than four centuries ago in Zurich, Switzerland, a new fellowship of Christian believers was formed. The Roman Catholic Church had become unspeakably corrupt. Martin Luther had separated himself from it but had continued the unscriptural practice of infant baptism. Ulrich Zwingli also had separated from Romanism, but continued to grant to the political rulers the right to decide the policies and practices of the church.

The new fellowship, led by Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, was formed to give men and women the opportunity to follow the Lord Jesus Christ according to the whole Word of God, the Bible. The group, hunted and tortured and persecuted at first, was mockingly called "Anabaptist" because of their rejection of infant baptism and the practice of believers' baptism. Later they were called "Mennonite" because of the spiritual leadership of Menno Simons, who left the Catholic priesthood to follow Christ.

Many Mennonites, because of the fierce intensity of persecution, migrated to Russia. When their religious freedom was threatened there, they joined others in North America who had come from Germany, Switzerland, and Holland. Today, Mennonites worldwide number well over a million.

Faithful Mennonites believe that no person can be accepted by God except through confessing His Son, Jesus Christ, as Master, and trusting Him as Saviour from sin. This continued trust in Christ brings from Him power over sin in the present and confident hope of heaven in the future.

Faithful Mennonites believe that the only spiritually successful life, the life acceptable to God, is that lived by the power of God in obedience to the Holy Scriptures. Such a life is possible only through a continuing fellowship in Christ.

WHAT THEY BELIEVE

1. That the Godhead is composed of three divine Persons, the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, 20; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 2:13-18; 1 John 5:1-13).

2. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, sent from God to be the Saviour of mankind, conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin (Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:1, 20-25).
3. That the Holy Spirit is personal and divine (Acts 1:8; 5:3, 4).
4. That the Bible in its original form was wholly inspired by God (2 Samuel 23:3; Psalm 119:160; 2 Timothy 3:16).
5. That God created all things, and by His power preserves His Creation (Colossians 1:16, 17).
6. That the first man and woman were created pure and without sin (Genesis 1:27.)
7. That man, through unbelief and disobedience, fell (Genesis 2:17; 3:16-23).
8. That sin, sorrow, and death, both natural and spiritual, are results of the Fall (Romans 5:12).
9. That the blood of Jesus Christ shed at Calvary is the only means of salvation from sin (John 3:16; Hebrews 9:14-26).
10. That children in their innocency are covered by the redemptive work of Christ (Mark 10:14).
11. That to be saved, all accountable persons

must believe in Christ, repent of their sins, be “born again,” and walk in newness of life (John 3:3, 5; Romans 6:1-7).

12. That all those who are born again and who are obedient to God constitute the true church of which Christ is the Head (Romans 6:17; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 5:9).
13. That self-denial and humility are essential to Christian discipleship (Luke 9:23; 1 Peter 5:5, 6).
14. That God provides the church with necessary leaders such as bishops, ministers, evangelists, and deacons (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-13).
15. That Christian baptism is commanded, and that the mode of pouring symbolizes the pouring out of God’s Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:5; 2:2, 16-18, 41; 10:44-48).
16. That the bread and cup in Communion are symbols of the body and blood of Christ, and when received, show a common union of believers with Christ and with one another (1 Corinthians 10:16-21; 11:23-26).

17. That Christ taught both by example and by commandment that feetwashing is a religious ceremony and should be observed literally (John 13:1-17).
18. That Christian women should wear a veiling to signify their acceptance of God's order of leadership in society (1 Corinthians 11:1-16).
19. That the "kiss of charity" should be practiced among believers (Romans 16:16; 1 Peter 5:14).
20. That anointing with oil, accompanied by faithful prayer, is a symbol which God honors in the restoration of physical health (James 5:14, 15).
21. That marriage of a believer with an unbeliever constitutes an unequal yoke and is forbidden by God; that the marriage of divorced persons who have former companions living constitutes adultery (Nehemiah 13:23-27; Mark 10:2-12; 2 Corinthians 6:14).
22. That the personal appearance of Christian men and women should be simple and modest, free from worldly fashion and adornment (2 Corinthians 6:17; 1

Timothy 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:14, 15; 3:3, 4).

23. That as pilgrims and strangers in the world, Christians will seek to maintain simplicity in all areas of life (Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 11:13).
24. That the way of Christian love requires that believers should not take part in any destruction of human life, nor in any acts of personal retaliation or revenge (Matthew 5:38-48; 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4).
25. That church and government are both ordained of God but are separate entities in His plan (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17).
26. That obstinate sinners within the church should be excommunicated (1 Corinthians 5:13).
27. That the church is commanded to evangelize the world; that her primary mission is to deal with that which is spiritual and eternal (Matthew 28:19, 20).
28. That Christian disciples are concerned also with human needs which are physical, emotional, mental, and social (James 2:15, 16).

29. That the personal and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is the blessed hope of believers (Acts 1:11; John 14:2, 3; Matthew 24:44; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
30. That Christ will raise the righteous to eternal rewards in heaven and the unrighteous to eternal damnation in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:46; Luke 14:14; John 5:28, 29; Revelation 20:13, 14).

About the cover: This dramatic scene shows Anabaptist Dirk Willems rescuing a drowning enemy. Under arrest for his faith, Willems fled across the ice to escape capture, but his pursuer broke through. Willems obeyed Jesus' command to love our enemies and turned back to help.

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