

# Mennonite / Amish Churches

# I. History Of Mennonites

## Origin: 16<sup>th</sup> Century

- General Baptists sprang from them, 1609
- Name: from Menno Simons
  - Formerly a Roman Catholic priest
  - Movement made him rethink his faith
  - His brother (an Anabaptist) was killed
  - 1536: age 40 – Simons left Catholicism
  - Became leader in Anabaptist movement
  - Greatly persecuted by Catholic and Protestant states

# Mennonite beliefs codified in Dordrecht

- Confession of faith: 1632
- Various groups do not hold common creed
- Rather than fight, most fled . . .
- 2015: about 2.1 million Anabaptists worldwide (including Amish, Mennonite, et al.)
- Mennonites found in 87 countries: most Canada, Congo, Ethiopia, India, and U.S.
- Include 'Plain People'
- Greatly fragmented / various issues
- Most groups are independent

I. History Of Mennonites

## II. Doctrines Of Mennonites

# 1. Salvation

“When we hear the good news of the love of God, the Holy Spirit moves us to accept the gift of salvation. Our response includes yielding to God’s grace, placing full trust in God alone, repenting of sin, turning from evil, joining the fellowship of the redeemed, and showing forth the obedience of faith in word and deed.”

- Hear: Ac.2:37; 4:4; 13:48; 19:5 – Ep.1:13
- Why doesn’t Spirit move all to accept...?
- They exclude baptism from plan of salvation

## 2. Baptism

“We believe that the baptism of believers with water is a sign of their cleansing from sin.”

It is a threefold act: <sup>1</sup>by the spirit (change of heart); <sup>2</sup>by water (public demonstration); <sup>3</sup>by blood (martyrdom and asceticism – self-denial).

- NT does not call baptism a ‘sign’
- Ac.2:38, if baptism, then repentance. Ep.4:5

### 3. Discipline

Based mainly on Mt.18:15-18

Some include *Meidung*, shunning

**14** And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. **15** Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother – 2 Th.3.



## 4. Worship

Varies, but differs little from Protestant churches

Some: singing, scripture reading, prayer, sermon

Others: hymns and choirs, mechanical music

**19** speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord – Eph.5

## 5. Believe Holy Spirit does in them what He did in apostles

“The Spirit teaches us, reminds us of Jesus’ word, guides us into all truth, and empowers us to speak the word of God with boldness (Jn.14:26; 16:13; Ac.4:24-31, et al.).”

- If they have what apostles had, can do what they did

I. History Of Mennonites

II. Doctrines Of Mennonites

**III. History Of Amish  
(also called Amish Mennonite)**

# 1693: Jakob Ammann tried to reform Mennonite Church...

- Switzerland and South Germany
- Wanted to include communion more often
- He separated from Swiss Mennonites
- “Amish” comes from Ammann

# Jakob Ammann's introductions

- Foot washing in services (Jn.13)
- Members must dress in uniform manner
- Beards not trimmed
  - Began immigrating to North America early in 18<sup>th</sup> Century, esp. Pennsylvania
  - After 1850: tensions / division over 'new order' Amish
  - Settlements are divided into church districts; autonomous; about 75 baptized members

I. History Of Mennonites

II. Doctrines Of Mennonites

III. History Of Amish

**IV. Doctrines Of Amish**

1. Each district has a bishop and elder
- Same denominational concept as others.

**1** Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishopsu and deaconsu:  
– Phil.1

## 2. Separation from world (Ja.1:27)

- Do not drive cars, have TV, wear makeup, use electricity / phones...
- Generators power their equipment...
  - Avoiding cars ... is NOT avoiding worldliness
  - Ja.1:27 – Rumspringa??
- We must not conform to world (Ro.12:1-2) ... but also must not leave world.



We must not leave the world . . .

**13** “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

**14** “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven – Mt.5.

We must not leave the world . . .

**19** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
**20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” – Mt.28.

We must not leave the world . . .

**6** “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world . . .

**14** I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15** I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one” – John 17.

# We must not leave the world . . .

**9** I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

**10** Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world – 1 Co.5.

## We must not leave the world . . .

**19** “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;  
**20** and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; **21** to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; **22** to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. **23** Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you” – 1 Co.9.

## 2. Separation from world (Ja.1:27)

- Avoiding cars is NOT avoiding worldliness.
- Ja.1:27 – Rumspringa??
- We must not conform to world (Ro.12:1-2) ... but also must not leave world.

- Mt.5:13-16
- Mt.28:19-20
- Jn.17:6, 14-15
- 1 Co.5:9-10
- 1 Co.9:19-23

They reject Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day...but observe XMAS, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day...

### 3. 'Communion' two times a year

<sup>7</sup> Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight – Acts 20.

## 4. Foot washing

- Ancient custom: Gn.18:4; 19:2
- Jn.13:...14-15
  - True greatness is humble (menial tasks).
  - Jesus set an example for disciples (15).
  - Ancient world despised humility.
  - 'Servant' (slave) v.16.
  - 'Do **AS**' = whatever humility calls for.
  - He did NOT wash one clean foot!
  - Instituted inner attitude, not outer ritual



## 5. Fate

- Whatever happens is because God meant it to happen.
- **Toothache:** do NOT go to dentist; pull tooth.

“His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk” – Gn.49:12.

“Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep  
Which have come up from the washing,  
Every one of which bears twins, And none is barren among them” – Song S. 4:2 (6:6).

## 6. Plain clothing

- Men/boys: broadbrimmed black hats, dark-colored suits, straight-cut coats without lapels, suspenders, solid-colored shirts, black socks / shoes.
- Men grow beards after marrying ['Bible tells them to'] but no mustache.
- Women/girls wear bonnets, long dresses with capes, shawls, black shoes.

## 7. Long list of do's and don'ts

- If they fail to keep the list they risk being shunned.
- Their list functions as a **creed**.

<sup>1</sup> Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. <sup>2</sup> For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.  
– Romans 14.

## 8. Practice works-based religion

- Their good works earn favor with God.
- If good outweighs bad, they go to heaven.

<sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ... <sup>4</sup> Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt – Romans 4.