

The Reformed Mennonites - Who They Are and What They Believe

The Reformed Mennonites are a body of people who believe and try to follow the doctrines and principles of love taught in the New Testament, and practiced by true Christians in all ages since the Church was established on the day of Pentecost.

Menno Simon, from whom the Reformed Mennonites derive their name, withdrew from his original religious affiliation, and united with the Waldenses in the year 1536. Due to his devotion and ability, he became a prominent leader in that faith, and the believers gradually became known as Mennonites. In 1683 some of them emigrated to Germantown, PA and about 1710 a few settled in Lancaster County, PA.

The Reformed Mennonites now have congregations in a number of the United States and in some areas of Canada. They are not a part nor branch of any other organization. They have not “reformed”, nor changed any of the doctrines followed by the early Christians as advocated by Menno Simons. They are in full agreement with the

understanding of the Holy Scriptures which he, as well as true believers in all ages, had.

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever.” Hebrews 13:8

The Reformed Mennonites believe that the Church is the effect of the power of the Holy Spirit, that there can be no true Christian organization without It, and that the continuity and succession of the Church is dependent alone upon the presence and guidance of God’s Spirit.

The principle of love begotten within the soul by the combined influence of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost will result in r e p e n t a n c e and regeneration, and will bring about unity and peace among believers, together with a hope of salvation based upon the grace of God.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8

Without this love and unity in the Church, they believe

it is impossible to keep Christ’s commandments and observe the ordinances in spirit and in truth.

The Reformed Mennonites practice adult baptism upon confession of faith and the evidence of a consistent Christian life, considering baptism an outward symbol of the spiritual baptism which has already taken place within the heart.

They regard baptism, communion of the Lord’s Supper, washing one another’s feet and greeting with the kiss of peace as ordinances for edification and not as a means of salvation. They are impressed that the exact forms of practice of the ordinances are not specifically defined in the Scriptures so that believers may regard the spirit of them, and not be given to mere legal worship.

The Reformed Mennonites are non-resistant. They do not sue at law, hold office in government, nor vote to fill governmental offices, and they ask to be excused from military service.

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”
John 18: 36

In accordance with the Apostle Paul’s injunction, they try to live in simplicity, withdrawing from strife and contention and other evidences of worldly-mindedness.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”
Romans 12: 2

Moderation in all things including modest apparel is taught in the Scriptures. By long usage the Reformed Mennonites have become accustomed to wear a uniform garb that they may avoid the snare of pride and the extremes of fashion. In acknowledgment of their place in the order of God’s creation, the women wear a head covering as the Apostle Paul directs in I Corinthians 11: 1 - 14.

The Reformed Mennonites believe that true Christians cannot consistently participate in worship with those who do not live in harmony with the doctrines of Christ.

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” II John 10, 11

Because of their love for the souls of all mankind, they do not want to encourage anyone in a course at variance with Christ’s teachings. By withdrawal from all divided religious services, they testify to their belief that the power of God’s Spirit will lead all sincere and seeking souls to regeneration, unity and away from the saying of, “Lo, here is Christ, or there,” manifested by the many divergent professions of Christianity.

In order to preserve true unity, peace and purity in the Church, Reformed Mennonites carry out, when necessary, the plain direction to labor with an erring one as explained in Matthew.

“Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

This is done in humility and love with the hope that such an one may become sensible of his situation and penitently return to the Lord. It is a duty devolving not alone upon the ministry, but upon each member of the Church. This labor of love and the daily need of the forgiveness of the Lord, as well as of one another, is exemplified in the ordinance of feet-washing, which is participated in by all members of the Church.
John 13: 1 - 17

The Reformed Mennonites believe the Scriptures clearly indicate that there can be but one true Church of Christ, because Christian love draws His followers into unity and fellowship.

They also believe that there may be many individuals throughout the world, who are united in spirit with them, but who do not have knowledge of the Church. Such persons, however, would not be found joined in worship with those who obviously do not carry out all scriptural teachings, but would, of necessity, stand alone.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4: 4 - 16