

An Introduction to Mennonite History: A Popular History of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites

C J Dyck



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An Introduction to Mennonite History is a history of Mennonites from the sixteenth century to the present. Though simply written, it reflects fine scholarship and deep Christian concern.

The early Anabaptists advocated voluntary church membership (a believers church), refusing to baptize infants. They rejected the sacramental system as a way of salvation, and the authority of state over church. The Anabaptists found guidance through direct Bible study by individuals and small groups. They accepted the words of Jesus as final authority. Called *Sermon on the Mount Christians* by friend and foe alike, they believed that word and deed belong together in Christian living.

Because their beliefs threatened the existing order, the Anabaptists were persecuted; this eventually diminished their missionary zeal. Various groups of Mennonites migrated across Europe, then to North America, Russia, or later Latin America.

Mennonite faith has often seemed strongest in areas of repression. Persecution makes Mennonites more conscious of who they are as Jesus' followers. The fastest-growing Mennonite churches today are in Asia and Africa. Congregations from around the world are joined through the Mennonite World Conference.

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