

The Reformed Mennonites

The Reformed Mennonites are a small body of people who adhere to 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. They are not a part or branch of any other organization. They believe that Menno Simons, from whom they derive their name, and with whose teachings they are in full agreement, was **not** a founder of the original Church of Christ. Likewise, John Herr, who in 1812 helped to organize the group now known as Reformed Mennonites, did **not** establish a new church. It was under his leadership that a number of persons, who could not at that time find an organization which they felt sincerely carried out the teachings of the New Testament, were drawn together to worship, and subsequently organized into church fellowship.

The Reformed Mennonites believe the church is the effect of the power of the Holy Spirit, that there could be no true Christian organization without it, and that the continuity and succession of the church is dependent on the presence and guidance of God's Holy Spirit. They do not believe outward forms of religion can save anyone, but that the Divine power or principle begotten within the soul by the combined influence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will result in repentance, regeneration, and a hope of salvation, bringing about love, unity, and peace among believers. Without love and unity in the church, the Reformed Mennonites feel it would be impossible to keep the commandments and observe the ordinances given by Christ. They practice adult baptism upon faith and the evidences of a consistent life, believing that baptism is an outward symbol of the spiritual baptism within the heart. Their communion, too, is closed, for to them communion signifies not only fellowship between God and the believer, but also with one another.

They carry out the plain commandment of labouring with an erring one as explained in Matthew 18: 15-17, even to the extent of applying the ban when there is evidence that the spiritual life has been lost, so that the church may be kept pure, and with the hope that such a one may become sensible of his situation, and penitently return to the Lord. The Reformed Mennonites believe that labour is a duty devolving not alone upon the ministry, but also upon each individual member of the church. This labour of love, as well as the original washing of regeneration and the daily need of forgiveness by the Lord, is exemplified for them by the ordinance of feet washing, which is participated in by all the members of the church. The laity, as well as the ministry, also greet one another with the kiss of charity (men/men and women/women).

The Reformed Mennonites are entirely non-resistant and do not sue at law. They ask to be excused from military service; for this reason they do not vote or hold any office in government. They believe Christians are called out from the worldly kingdom into Christ's kingdom in non-conformity to the world. They try to live in simplicity, abhor strife, contention and worldliness. Their manner of dress is plain, and the women wear a head covering at all times as commanded in I Corinthians 11: 1-14. This head covering, as well as their clothing, is of generally uniform design throughout the church, both in the United States and Canada, where their congregations are located.

They feel they cannot consistently and conscientiously participate in the worship of those who do not live in harmony with the doctrines of Christ, for in so doing, they would be bidding them Godspeed, as taught in II John 10 and 11. Because of love for the souls of all mankind, they would not want to encourage anyone in a course at variance with Christ's teachings, but by withdrawal from all divided religious services, quietly but earnestly and firmly testify to their beliefs that the power of God's Spirit will lead regenerated persons in unity and love and away from the saying of "Lo here is Christ," and "Lo, there," manifest by the many professions of Christianity. They believe that Scriptures clearly indicate that there can be but one true church of Christ in any one place because Christian love draws Christ's followers together into one, as was the case on the day of Pentecost. "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 4:4-6)

(Excerpt from the Mennonite Encyclopedia. Edited in 1958 by Jacob L. Kreider and J. Henry Fisher)