

Meeting Menno: An Introduction to the life, thought, and work of Menno Simons

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 December 2017

Preacher: Jeanette Jones

[0 : 00] Thank you. I'm glad to see so many people interested in hearing about Menno Simons. I'm not a scholar. I'm not bringing you a scholarly paper.

I did spend most, well, the first three quarters of my life in the Mennonite Church, and I did spend a little bit of time working with someone who actually is a Mennonite scholar, and I'll say a little more about that later.

But as you can see, we're going low-tech today in the interest of time, and that's actually a good thing, because when I think I could have had a picture of Menno up here, but, you know, nobody even knew what he looked like.

There were no pictures of Menno until about 100 years after he died, and they were only made from descriptions. The buildings he was in aren't there anymore. So in a sense, it's fitting, and it's also fitting, I think, that maybe we won't quite do justice to Menno today, but, you know, I think he's used to it.

So let's start with a word of prayer and then find out a little bit about him. Our Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you for the cloud of witnesses that has gone before us to show us the possibility of living a life of faith.

[1 : 21] And we pray that as we look at your servant Menno today, that we will be inspired not only to believe in you, but to live our lives according to your word.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Menno Simons was born in 1496, so he's roughly a contemporary of Luther.

He was born in Witmersum in East Friesland, and that's the part of Friesland that's in the northeast, sort of just next to Germany. He studied in a monastery.

He was not from a rich family, so basically he got a very basic education that priests in that time would have gotten. He learned some Latin, some Greek.

He read the Church Fathers. He knew the liturgy. And in 1524, he was ordained a priest. He worked for about seven years in a neighboring town of Pyngem.

[2 : 24] He was with two other priests, one of which was above him, one of which was below him, so he was sort of in the middle. And he said he lived a very easygoing life.

He was a typical priest of his time. Shortly after he began working as a priest, he began to doubt the doctrine of transubstantiation, which, as most of you know, is the doctrine that was prevalent in the Catholic Church, the doctrine that says that at the Eucharist, the bread and the wine actually become the body and blood of Christ, and that during the Mass, there is something called the sacrifice, which the priest actually sacrifices the body and blood of Christ to God.

After about two years of doubting, he began to read the Scriptures for the first time. And this was typical of many priests of the time.

They had training, but they weren't actually trained to read Scripture. And he read and he said, you know, I really can't find any evidence for this doctrine in the Bible. And he was encouraged by Luther's teaching, because he had heard of Luther and read some of his writings, that really Scripture must be primary.

If the Church's traditions are not consistent with Scripture, then it cannot lead to eternal death if you choose Scripture over tradition.

[4 : 13] But what Luther had said, and this was common to many of the Reformers, Swingley would have agreed with this. Priests at that time, he said, should say Mass in appearance.

And what he meant by that was that, well, at the time, church and state were very closely intertwined.

When you are looking at this doctrine of transubstantiation, and we all know that people are very much more upset when you change their worship than when you change their theology.

And this was true at that time, too. So what Luther said was that don't change the worship. You can say whatever you, well, almost whatever you want from the pulpit.

And the magistrates, who were actually the ones who decided what was permissible and what was not, agreed with this. You can say whatever you want from the pulpit, you can have a pretty Reformed preaching, but don't change the worship.

[5 : 27] So when Luther said, say Mass in appearance, what he meant was, go through the ritual of the Mass. But he said, leave out the part where you actually say the words that are supposed to turn the bread and the wine in front of you into the actual body and blood of Christ.

And he said, you can probably do this without offense, because after all the Mass is in Latin, most people won't even understand it. They won't even notice. And so this is actually what was happening in a lot of places, and this is what Menno did.

By 1531, he was transferred back to Whitmer soon as kind of the chief, the head priest in his very small village. And he was known as an evangelical preacher, which basically was a priest who preached the Reformed theology, but who basically continued with the actual worship of the Catholic Church.

About this time, though, he heard about that in a neighboring village, someone called Sikifr Sneder was actually being martyred because he had been re-baptized.

And this was the first Menno had heard of this, and he said, this sounded very strange to me. What on earth is going on here? So we need to take a step aside a little to find out what was going on.

[6 : 55] In 1525, the first Anabaptists were re-baptized in Zurich, and this was in the church of Swingley.

There were people in his church who got impatient with this idea that was advocated by both Luther and Swingley, you need to wait for the magistrates to get to the point where they can say, that you can have real Reformed worship.

In the meantime, just go on preaching your Reformed sermons and keep on going through the accepted form of worship. They got impatient.

They said, why are we waiting for the magistrates? Why are we waiting? What authority do magistrates have to actually tell the church what to do?

And Swingley actually, agreed with them in his mind, but he was not willing to take that step. So these early Anabaptists, and they were mainly young men, students, said, well, we're going to do, we're going off on our own.

[8 : 14] So they did actually baptize each other. And they were very enthusiastic and excited about this. So they were off all over the surrounding countryside, talking to people, evangelizing, convincing them that this was what the true church should be.

By 1529, the Zurich Council found this very threatening. because, because, of course, when we talk about baptizing adults, we're not only talking about baptizing older people.

We're talking about baptizing people who have actually made a confession of faith. When we're talking about infant baptism, as it was practiced at that time, that meant the whole society.

So the whole society was Christian. If you are going to change that, that is a threat to society. And the Zurich Council instituted the death penalty for rebaptism and even for attending Anabaptist services.

So, of course, this meant that many of the people who had been living in Zurich left and the word spread everywhere. In a sense, it was almost like the diaspora from Jerusalem.

[9 : 36] at the Diet of Spire, which at which the Empire, the Holy Roman Empire at that time, was under threat from Muslims in the East.

And at that time, in order to gain the support of Lutherans, really, Charles V, who was the emperor, decided that he could tolerate Lutherans, but Lutherans had to agree that they would not tolerate the Anabaptists.

And basically, that agreement was made then. Now, Charles V was a very staunch Catholic. He was the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire at that time.

His territory included most of Western Europe and Central Europe, which was actually a very large territory, but of course, he was way up here. The actual government was happening down here. Now, it happened that he was particularly interested in what was then called the Low Countries, Holland, Belgium, because he had been born there, he had grown up there, and he was particularly interested in keeping those parts of his Empire Catholic.

[10:59] Catholic. So he actually, from 1521 on, issued a lot of placards to keep against all Protestants, really, because he was concerned to keep that territory Catholic.

Now, those placards were not always enforced at the local level, because the magistrates, well, there was the question of political power.

Most people at the local level are always fighting back against higher authorities to keep the power they have, and maybe even increase it, and this was, of course, a time when things were very much in chaos.

So, they were also often sympathetic to the Anabaptists and the other Protestants. So those placards were not always enforced, but certainly Charles V wished they could be.

He did actually have an inquisitor in place to do something like the Spanish Inquisition, but there was so little cooperation from anybody else that it never really got off the ground.

[12:12] Lutheran doctrines were fairly well known in the low countries at that time. but there were no actual Lutheran congregations because of the opposition of higher authorities.

But in 1530, Melchior Hoffman, who was an itinerant lay preacher, and had actually, at least at the beginning, got Luther's support, began to speak and preach and evangelize in what was in, well, what was Germany and what was Holland, in the north, north Germany and Holland area. He came to Friesland, which was the province that Menna was living in, and he found the sacramentarians. Now, the sacramentarians were a group that had started probably the early 1500s, and they rejected all the Roman Catholic sacraments, they accepted the authority of scripture, they were very strong against abuses of the clergy, and they were meeting in small groups called conventicles, which were basically Bible study groups to actually study the scriptures. And particularly in the low countries, they did emphasize that belief, true belief, results in a changed life.

By 1525, their leaders were being persecuted, but the movement still continued to grow, even though some of their leaders had been taken away.

[14:07] At this time, the whole reformed movement in the low countries didn't really have an organized, it wasn't very organized.

There were groups springing up all over the place, individual groups. And by 1525, there were a lot of groups without leaders.

So Hoffman came in, and these groups actually were very receptive to what Hoffman was preaching. By 1533, Hoffman had been imprisoned in Strasbourg.

Strasbourg at that time was a kind of center for reform. It was a fairly tolerant place politically. So a lot of reformers ended up in Strasbourg.

But he managed to alienate even those tolerant leaders, and he was imprisoned. Now, Hoffman, in a sense, was very extreme.

[15:21] He believed that Christ was going to return imminently, that it was the job of his church to eliminate wickedness, really, and get things ready for Christ.

And when he returned, they were going to be right at the forefront in establishing the kingdom and eliminating wickedness everywhere. he thought that was going to happen in Strasbourg, which was one of the things that got him into trouble.

Once he was imprisoned, they said, well, maybe not. But there were people in a city called Münster in northern Germany who said, maybe it could happen here.

In Münster, the Anabaptists had actually, in an election, won power over the local council. they took over the city government and, of course, because Anabaptists in other places were being persecuted, they looked toward Münster as a kind of refuge.

So a lot of Anabaptists moved there, even though they may not have agreed with all the theology of some of the people running it.

[16:37] But initially, it was a fairly peaceful movement. They wanted to establish a Christian town, according to Anabaptists principles. By the time a lot of Anabaptists had moved there, the authorities began to get a little concerned.

The bishop and his army ended up trying to besiege the city. And the people in the city had determined that Christ was going to return at Easter 1534.

When that didn't happen, the leader of the Anabaptists in Münster sort of led a sortie, and people said maybe this was actual kind of military suicide, against the bishop, and he was killed.

The new leader, whose name was Jan van Lijden, was very extreme. King. He set himself up as the third David, king over all, he said.

He built himself a throne in the middle of the city, had all kinds of feasts, and said we're just waiting for the time when we can go out and basically conquer the world and get it ready, help Christ establish his kingdom.

[18 : 04] The city was besieged, things got worse and worse, Jan van Lijden got more and more extreme, polygamy was practiced, community of goods was practiced, things really got bad.

By 1535, they got so bad that I think someone within the city actually opened the gates and let the bishops' troops in. They were massacred, everybody who was there was massacred, the leaders were tortured and killed, and their bodies were put in cages and hung from the tower of the church, and I understand that if you go to Münster today, you can still see those cages hanging from the tower.

Now, after Münster fell, Dutch Anabaptists became very scattered and disillusioned. Obviously, nobody wanted to be known as an Anabaptist.

What's going to happen to us? They said, many of their leaders had been killed, many of the people had been killed, persecution obviously increased, and they weren't sure what to do.

So, back to Münster. What was he doing during this time? Well, he was continuing to function as a priest and evangelical preacher in Whitmarsum.

[19 : 40] By this time, he said, I can't find any evidence for infant baptism in scripture either. He talked to his pastor, he looked up at the church fathers, he looked at what other reformers like Luther and Bucer and Strasbourg and others were saying, and he was not convinced by any of their arguments.

So, he said, this is also a problem. At this time, he saw conversion as a kind of individual matter between the individual and God, and he was still hoping, like many reformers, that the church could be reformed from within, and that the civic authorities could be converted so that they would do their job and support the church.

At the beginning, he was somewhat sympathetic to the people in Münster, because at the beginning they were fairly peaceful. They were trying to establish a Christian town, and he called them our dear brothers and sisters who only erred a little.

And what he meant by that was that the thing he really objected to in Münster, and he did write against this, although the writing wasn't published until much later because Münster fell before he could get it published.

What he was really objecting to was the use of force and violence to establish the kingdom of God. What really brought Menno to a crisis was something else that happened in 1535, and this happened about three or four months before the city of Münster fell.

[21 : 25] In a place called Olde Closter, which basically is Old Cloister, there was an abandoned monastery, and some of the people from the area, some of his own parishioners were involved in this, under the leadership of someone associated with Münster, had moved into this monastery, and were going to use it as basically a headquarters from which they would go out and eliminate evil.

They didn't last very long. Within about a week or two, the authorities had come in and massacred them as well.

But one of the people who was involved in this was actually thought to be Menno's own brother. So this was hitting quite close to home. Not only his parishioners, but even his brother was involved with this.

And Menno said, you know, these people are not right. They are making mistakes, but they've got the courage of their convictions.

And writing later, this is what he said about that time. The blood of these people, although misled, fell so hot upon my heart that I could not stand it, nor find rest in my soul.

[22 : 54] I saw that these zealous children, although in error, willingly gave their lives for their doctrine and their faith. And I was one of those who had disclosed to some of them the abominations of the papal system.

This was in his preaching. But I continued in my comfortable life and acknowledged abominations simply in order that I might enjoy physical comfort and escape the cross of Christ.

Thus, reflecting upon these things, my soul was so grieved that I could no longer endure it. I thought to myself, I, miserable man, what am I doing? If I continue in this way and do not follow the word of the Lord, if I, to the best of my limited ability, do not rebuke the hypocrisy of the theologians, the impenitent carnal life and perverted baptism, Lord's Supper, and false worship of God, if I, through fear of the flesh, do not set forth the true principles of the truth, neither do what is in my power to direct the wandering sheep, who so gladly would do the right if they had the knowledge, to the true pasture of Christ, oh, how shall their shed blood rise against me at the judgment of the almighty, and pronounce sentence against my poor soul, so he is actually in real anguish over what he should do, he continued as a priest for about nine months after this, he preached his beliefs more openly, then in

January 1536, he left his church, he left his home, probably under the cover of night, and as he said, that was when he felt he had truly been converted, his conversion was complete, so he spent about a year in Kroningen, which is the next province over, studying and writing, things were a little easier for him there, there was a little less persecution in the estate that he found, he kept coming back into East Friesland, meeting with some Anabaptists there, about a year later in 1537, a delegation of Anabaptists approached him and said, you know, Anabaptists here are really in trouble, they need some leadership, would you be what would have been, I guess, equivalent to an elder or a bishop over these people?

And he was reluctant to consent because he was always afraid that if push came to shove and he was actually arrested and had to face persecution, would he deny Christ?

[25 : 29] this was always a real fear for him. He did not see himself as a great leader and in many respects he wasn't. He wasn't a leader of the same caliber as Luther.

But he consented because he felt that this was what God was calling him to do. And from this time on he spent a lot of time traveling around because of course the authorities were always after him. there's a story which is probably apocryphal but that he was on a coach traveling from one place to another and he was sitting up on top with a coachman.

There were other people inside the coach and they stopped at one of the checkpoints and the person at the checkpoint said is Menno in the coach?

So he looked down to the people sitting inside and said he wants to know if Menno's on the coach. Is Menno in there? They said no. Now that story is probably apocryphal but it's probably not it's probably typical of some of the things that happened.

[26 : 43] He never was arrested. Although some of the people who helped him were and some of them were even put to death. Some of the people who gave him shelter overnight.

One person was even put to death at least one person just for attending a meeting at which he was speaking. He was known as a very good speaker, a good debater in public and of course at that time public debates were very popular.

He was known as quite an effective debater. He was not a theologian. He preached and evangelized and pastored and wrote.

By 1540 though he began to realize that it wasn't enough just to have scattered individuals everywhere. There needed to be some sort of at least common beliefs or common doctrine. So he published what was called the foundation of Christian doctrine and this is probably his most well-known work and probably had the greatest influence.

[27 : 53] And this is not a systematic theology. What he wants to do is lay the foundations on which a true doctrine could be built. As we said he's an evangelist and a pastor rather than a theologian.

He emphasized the centrality of Jesus Christ and his favorite verse was 1 Corinthians 3.11 for no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid which is Jesus Christ.

At this time he was beginning to distance himself from the people of Munster. He was calling them false prophets who went out from among us. What he wanted to do is restore the true church of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament church. He agreed that salvation comes through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ but he says this transforms and renews one's entire life by recreating the sinful human being into a new one marked by obedience and peacefulness in Christ.

True believers are united into one body by love for God and for each other. He still envisions a Christian society where Christian people live under the leadership and protection of a Christian government.

[29 : 07] and in this he differed from the Swiss Anabaptists who basically said there are two kingdoms and they're completely separate. Participation in the civic government is necessary but it's outside the perfection of Christ and Christians should not be involved.

Menno, and this is somewhat controversial, but the person I referred to who was a Mennonite scholar has actually read everything Menno has ever written in the original 16th century Dutch in all of its many editions and compared them and these are his conclusions and I think he has a pretty good argument.

He envisions a Christian society then and he said the sword, I think he was somewhat willing to accept the use of violence against outsiders if it was in defense of the Christian faith but within the community he said there should be no violence so even capital punishment in this Christian society would not be acceptable.

He said the church looks forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ and lives by his life teaching death and resurrection and for Menno all those things were important.

It's not just Christ is central not just because of his death and resurrection although that is very very important and really the beginning of everything but it's not enough.

[30 : 42] Sola fide he said is not enough if you stop there you have to go on and look at Christ's teaching you have to look at his life and you have to live a life that is renewed and he was so strong on this I think because he looked around and saw that in many respects Luther's reform had only gotten to the clergy.

It hadn't actually reached the common people enough to make them live changed lives. One of the things probably one of the things everybody knows about Mennonites even though at this point it only affects a small number of them is that he did advocate the use of the ban or excommunication. He was very concerned that the church be pure without spot or wrinkle. If he said people are not living a changed life they should not be in the church and he was confident that really most people wouldn't even want to be in the church if they weren't living a changed life.

The purpose of this ban or excommunication was of course to restore the people and there was quite a long process involving Matthew 18 etc. whereby the church was actually to seek to bring these people back, people who were sinning, seriously sinning, back to the true way.

Menno was always very convinced that his way was the true way, by the way, as was Luther of course and many of the other reformers. But if that didn't work, if after all of these efforts had been made the sinners still refused to repent, they should be banned.

[32 : 39] And in its extreme form the ban could include really refusing to eat or have any contact at all with that person, even if they were a member of your own family.

In his final decade, which would be the late, say the late 1540s to 1561, Menno became crippled so that, as a result of an accident, so that he walked with a crutch and it wasn't as easy for him anymore to travel, so he wasn't able to do the same amount of visiting of Anabaptist communities that he had been able to.

He always acknowledged that the cross was a part of the Christian life, but he accepted it pretty reluctantly and he never stopped complaining about it. He said, yes, this is how the church is being treated, but it's not right.

he looked around, he said, my followers are being slandered by all these preachers and theologians and scholars, because of course, even at that time, people were still identifying all the Anabaptists with those at Minster, and it was at this time that the name Mennonite became popular because nobody wanted to be called an Anabaptist at this time.

And he defended his followers against charges of political rebellion, polygamy, communism, but he said, you know, our greatest enemies are the preachers, and we're being persecuted by our own Christian magistrates.

[34 : 19] In 1550, Charles V issued an extreme placard which intensified the persecution of Protestants everywhere in the Holy Roman Empire, but particularly in the Low Countries.

and this was enough that even the magistrates thought they had to pay some attention to it, and persecution did increase. Menno comes to the conclusion that really a Christian society should be possible, it really should be possible, but when I look around, I see that the true church will continue

to suffer because preachers and magistrates are not yet really Christian.

So by the end of his life, the use of the ban became quite a controversial issue, and there was a lot of disagreement among Mennonites about how firmly this should be enforced.

Menno started off as being fairly moderate, but as he became more and more disillusioned with the possibility of a real Christian society, he became more and more hardline.

at this time he is completely disassociating himself and his followers from anything that happened at Minster. He's not making subtle distinctions anymore.

[35 : 46] He says, we are not nor ever have been nor ever will be Minsterites. So even though at the beginning he was somewhat sympathetic, not to their means but to their goals, at this point he says, we're not there.

The last few years of his life were spent at an estate in northern Germany, sort of just below Denmark, and it was actually at that time being administered by Denmark, where he had a fair bit of security and relative peace.

He died in 1561, so he almost made his three score years in ten. 1580, and by 1580 it is considered that probably a quarter of the population of Friesland were considered to be Mennonites.

So what did he contribute? As an evangelist, a pastor, an organizer, and an apologist, he was maybe not single-handedly but very, very important in ensuring that Anabaptism actually survived in the Low Countries.

He emphasized on the authority of the Bible, the centrality of Jesus Christ, his life teaching, death, and resurrection. He emphasized freedom of conscience, voluntary church membership, holy living, and the Christian peace witness.

[37 : 15] His more extreme ideas, you could talk for a while about his Christology, which was quite strange, and not only his, he didn't originate it, are not accepted by Mennonites today, and the severe use of the ban is not really practiced.

I won't say it's not practiced anywhere, but it's very rare. I'd like to close with a quote from the Global Anabaptist and Mennonite Encyclopedia Online.

It says, Menno's significance lies in the fact that he prevented the collapse of the northern wing of the Anabaptist movement in the days of its greatest trial and built it up on the right biblical foundation.

He did this as its leader, speaker, and defender through his preaching as he journeyed from place to place and through his simple and searching writings. Particularly the foundation book, that's the foundation of the one we referred to, did much to restore the original Anabaptist concepts and principles which were in grave danger of being lost.

His writings were effective not so much because of their superior and logical qualities as a theological system, but because behind them stood a man formed according to the scriptures, who sincerely and honestly wanted to give all for the Christian church and the glory of God.

[38 : 37] Through Menno's courageous and devoted life, a distinctive witness in the Reformation movement, representing a Christian community and a Christian way of life, was preserved.

Now we have some time for questions and I just want to say at the beginning that we will not be going to the 10 o'clock service so we will be around after 10 o'clock if people want to continue to discuss.

But we're open for questions now and comments. Yes? Could you say something about the pacifism? Because that is sort of the big deal.

Those of us that know about Mennonites in Canada, I mean full disclosure, my method was a Mennonite. There are bunches of Mennonites across the country who actually do not have figured out what portion of their taxation would go to the military in Canada and they hold that back.

Now they've never been thrown in jail for that or anything because it's considered a freedom of religious right but they've been kicked out of other countries for civil actions and I'm just curious about whether that was part of because he decried violence but then you said he kind of didn't.

[39 : 54] So I'm just wondering where the roots of that are in the original in Mennonite. Okay, they are in Mennonite and they are also in the Swiss Anabaptist movement. And as you said, he did reject violence and it's not even clear if he would have accepted it at all but it's ambiguous.

Now I should say that for Mennonite, and I think this is still true of Mennonites today, we said Jesus Christ is central and that means that when you read the Bible, the most important part of the Bible is the Gospels.

If you go, if you spend any time in a Mennonite church, you will notice that they spend a lot more time on Jesus and a lot less on Paul. I'm not saying they ignore Paul, but the balance is different. And when you look at Jesus, you look at not only what he did on the cross and his resurrection, but you look at his teaching, you look at his life.

So they said when you look at Jesus, what did he teach? Don't resist evil. What did he do? When Peter cut off the high priest's ear, or the servant of the high priest's ear, Jesus put it back and said, put up your sword.

[41 : 25] For them, it was fundamental that a Christian could not engage in violence. And when Mennonite said, in a Christian state, not even capital punishment is permitted.

Because, he said, if this is a Christian state, and someone has committed this grave offense, if you kill him, and he is not repentant, you are cutting short his opportunity to repent.

If he has repented, you're killing your Christian brother. You can't do it. mennonites seem to be remarkably influential in Canada.

I'm not quite sure what influence is in other countries. But when I came to Canada, I became more aware of mennonites than I had ever been previously.

I can't speak for other countries. And if any of you have any insight into that question. Yes? Africa, there's about four times the number of mennonites than in the rest of the world combined.

[42 : 41] Yeah. And would you say that they are influential in the civic life of Africa? They're influential in every span of life now. Yeah. And there's a lot.

I mean, that difference between mennonites who say there are two kingdoms and there's no contact between them, others who are more like menno, who said there is a possibility of a Christian state, and everything in between, that whole spectrum is still there.

And I should also say that in Canada, especially in Western Canada, most of the mennonites do not come from the Swiss mennonite group.

There are people from that group, especially in southern Ontario. But in Western Canada, most of them come from the, are descended from the Dutch, the Dutch group. So that's probably more influential there.

Yes? What about the papyrites, similar to mennonites? They are often grouped together. They are related, but as we said, there were people all over Europe coming up.

[43 : 58] And because Anabaptism was sort of at one extreme end of the Reformation, they often got all grouped together. So they believe many of the same things. they believe in the community of goods, which most mennonites do not practice at this point.

But they share many of the same beliefs, so they're more like cousins. Yeah? I was surprised by how many mennonites there are. I was talking to somebody who's the people of the historical sects of the Edna Fraser Valley, a mennonite cousin of my mother's.

And I thought there were, you know, old border mennonites that run around with their buggies and their black bonnets, and then there were four mennonites, and, you know, there's brethren, which are more conservative.

I thought there were three or four. There's 116 sects of mennonites around there. Mennonites have traditionally been very schismatic, and it's interesting, most of the time the groups have separated has not been over questions of doctrine, it's been over questions of practice.

So my brother-in-law belonged to a church that split over whether or not you could have a TV.

Okay, now I'm going to say it is now 10 to 10, so if any of you want to go.

[45 : 15] Do you want me to thank you and I just keep talking? Okay. Well, I just, I couldn't go without saying thank you for an amazingly, the first clap of the mouth of such an interesting insight into church history.

I mean, you tell it in such an engaging way. I don't know about you, but I want to go out and read more about the mennonites. I just... I should say there's a really pretty inclusive website called mennonsimons.net.

It will have all kinds of pictures of what people thought mennon looked like and a lot of information about his life, teaching and... Yeah. Well, it was just fascinating and so interesting.

Thank you. Thank you very, very much. Thank you.