



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in Canada**

# ***HEALING MEMORIES, RECONCILING IN CHRIST:***

***A LUTHERAN-MENNONITE STUDY GUIDE FOR CONGREGATIONS***

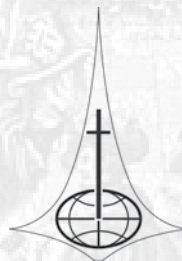


*Photos from Stutgard, Germany - July 2010*

**Commissioned by:  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
and Mennonite Church Canada**

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Design: Lisa Williams



Lutheran  
World  
Federation



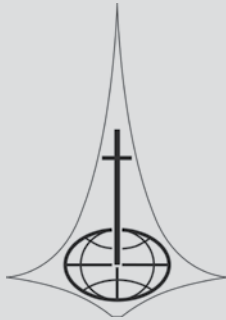
Mennonite  
World  
Conference

## HEALING MEMORIES, RECONCILING IN CHRIST: A LUTHERAN-MENNONITE STUDY GUIDE FOR CONGREGATIONS



Mennonite  
World  
Conference

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# Introduction

On July 22, 2010, The Lutheran World Federation assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, took the historic step of asking the Anabaptist-Mennonites for forgiveness for past persecutions. Delegates unanimously approved a statement calling Lutherans to express their regret and sorrow for past wrongdoings towards Anabaptists and asking for forgiveness (see Supplements 1 and 2). The statement grew out of a three-year dialogue undertaken by the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission, formed by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

In light of this historic action, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada asked Mennonite Church Canada to cooperate in preparing a study guide for congregations, based on the report of the Lutheran-Mennonite Study Commission (2010). This guide was prepared by Allen Jorgenson (Lutheran pastor and seminary professor) and Margaret Loewen Reimer (Mennonite editor and writer), both of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. While prepared in Canada, the guide is suitable for use by congregations in the wider church as well. This study guide draws on the report of the International Study Commission, as well as supplemental material. It outlines both churches' beginnings in the turmoil of Reformation Europe as a context for examining offending statements against Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Participants will look at how events and differing understandings of the Bible shaped the



*Stuttgart photos by Erick Coll  
of LWF, and Liesa Unger and  
Byron Rempel Burkholder of MWC.*

Lutheran and Anabaptist confessions of faith and their attitudes toward other Christians. This guide also explores the meaning of forgiveness and what significance it might have for both churches in the present time.

Why is this important for today? Facing the blight of separation and condemnation in our past in a spirit of repentance can help us celebrate more meaningfully the upcoming 500th anniversaries of our beginnings in the Reformation (1517 for Lutherans, 1525 for Anabaptist-Mennonites), and contribute to the ongoing reformation of the whole church. For the pain of separation between Lutherans and Mennonites “has been borne not only by us; it is a wound for the whole Body of Christ,” noted the Commission report. “Similarly, reconciliation between Lutherans and Anabaptist-Mennonites is healing for the entire Body.” This reconciliation begins with repentance and forgiveness on both sides, and continues with a commitment to transform our teaching and our relationship as members of one body under the lordship of Christ.



*Margaret Loewen Reimer*  
*Mennonite Church Canada*



*Allen G. Jorgenson*  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada*

### **The Sessions**

- This study guide is intended for groups that include both Lutherans and Mennonites. If that is not possible, the study can also be used by individual congregations, either Lutheran or Mennonite.
- The study guide consists of four sessions, each about an hour long. (Leaders can decide how much time to allot each presentation and discussion.)
- Each session includes input from the International Study Commission report, questions for discussion, Bible study and prayer. Session 2 includes hymn singing.
- Two sessions include the option of online video clips that will require a computer with internet access, a projector and a screen.
- Accompanying presentations and Bible passages can also be projected onto a screen or photocopied for participants to follow. Bible references are from the New Revised Standard Version.

## Supplement 1

### LUTHERANS TAKE HISTORIC STEP IN ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS FROM MENNONITES

#### Assembly Participates in Powerful Service of Repentance

STUTT GART, Germany, 22 July 2010 – In what Bishop Mark S. Hanson, President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), described as possibly “the most significant legacy this Assembly will leave,” the Eleventh Assembly of the LWF today took the historic step of asking the Mennonites for forgiveness for past persecutions. Delegates unanimously approved a statement calling Lutherans to express their regret and sorrow for past wrongdoings towards Anabaptists and asking for forgiveness.

Hanson described the act of repentance and reconciliation as “communion building and communion defining.” We will not just look back; we will also look towards together to God’s promised future, he said.

Through the adoption of the statement titled, “Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of Anabaptists,” Lutherans repented for violent persecution of Anabaptists and for the ways in which Lutheran reformers supported persecutions with theological arguments. The statement asks for forgiveness “from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers” for past wrongdoings and the ways in which Lutherans subsequently forgot or ignored this persecution and have continued to describe Anabaptists in misleading and damaging ways.

The statement was based on work done by the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission, 2005-2009, who produced the report, “Healing of Memories: Reconciling in Christ,” which was approved by the LWF Council in 2009. Several delegates spoke in favour of adopting the statement. Archbishop Nemuel Babba of The Lutheran Church of Christ of Nigeria told delegates he felt like crying as the full statement was read to the Assembly. “Forgiveness” is a difficult word for everyone to pronounce,” he said. “[But] today has marked a *milestone for two groups coming together because of the word ‘forgiveness’*.”

*In introducing the vote, Hanson called on Assembly delegates and others present in the plenary hall to indicate their endorsement of the statement by kneeling or standing in silence. In a watershed moment in the life of the LWF and Lutheran-Mennonite relations, the LWF President announced the statement unanimously endorsed “in a spirit of great humility.”*



For videos of the service of repentance in Stuttgart, see [www.lwf-assembly.org/resources/multimedia/lutheran-mennonitereconciliation/](http://www.lwf-assembly.org/resources/multimedia/lutheran-mennonitereconciliation/)

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## Mennonite World Conference Responds to Lutheran Repentance

“Today, in this place, we together – Lutherans and Anabaptist Mennonites – are fulfilling the rule of Christ,” said Rev. Dr Danisa Ndlovu, President of the Mennonite World Conference, in an emotion-filled address to the Assembly.

He confessed that Mennonites were painfully aware of their own inadequacy.

“We cannot bring ourselves to this table with heads held high. We can only come bowed down in great humility and in the fear of the Lord. We cannot come to this point and fail to see our own sinfulness. We cannot come to this point without recognizing our own need for God’s grace and forgiveness.”

In a symbolic act of reconciliation and servanthood, Ndlovu presented Hanson with a wooden footwashing tub, saying that it represented the Mennonites’ commitment to a future “when the distinguishing mark of Lutheran and Anabaptist-Mennonite relationships is boundless love and unfailing service.”

Ndlovu described how, in some Anabaptist and Mennonite churches, the practice of foot-washing has long been maintained. “It is in our vulnerability to one another that God’s miraculous, transforming and reconciling presence is made visible in the world.”

Accepting the gift, Hanson said, “In this and so many other ways, we will continue to follow [the Mennonite] example, and in this most significant day in our life there may be no more public example of reconciliation.”

### Remembering, Forgiveness and Envisioning the Future Together

In a solemn and powerful service of repentance, the LWF Eleventh Assembly, along with members of the Mennonite community, came together to reflect on the painful past that has caused divisions between Lutherans and Mennonites for hundreds of years. The order of service called worshippers to “remember how Anabaptist Christians knew suffering and persecution, and how some of the most honoured Reformation leaders defended this persecution in the name of faithfulness.”



*Bishop Mark Hanson, Lutheran World Federation president (left), received a foot-washing tub from Mennonite World Conference president Danisa Ndlovu on July 22 in Stuttgart, Germany. Noting that foot-washing is an important symbol in some Anabaptist-Mennonite churches, Ndlovu said the tub was “a sign of our commitment to a future when the distinguishing mark of Lutheran and Anabaptist-Mennonite relationships is boundless love and unfailing service.”*

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The service, which followed the unanimous approval by the Eleventh Assembly of the statement, “Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of Anabaptists,” included testimonies by Mennonites about the persecution and its legacies, including the impact on small communities, and the ways in which Lutheran leaders – sometimes against their own best insights – gave theological support to civil authorities who persecuted Anabaptists.

Also providing a testimony was Rev. Dr Larry Miller, General Secretary of the Mennonite World Conference and Co-Secretary of the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission. He spoke of the power and burdens of the martyrs’ stories within the Mennonite context as they continue to live in contemporary communities. “From the beginning of the movement, Anabaptists interpreted their persecution as a confirmation of faithful Christian discipleship,” said Miller. “Over the centuries and around the world, stories of faithful suffering became a vital shaper of Anabaptist-Mennonite identity.”

Miller confessed that Anabaptist-Mennonite communities are also “in need of healing and forgiveness. In this action between us there is, for Anabaptist-Mennonites also, the promise of release and renewal.” Following prayers of confession, led by Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, LWF General Secretary, the service moved into “envisioning the future together” and sowing the seeds of reconciliation and peace. Testimonies were shared on the witness of the promise of cooperation between Lutherans and Mennonites in Columbia, witness to Lutheran interpretation of the Augsburg Confession, which makes explicit the changed relations with Anabaptist Christians, and witness to the promise of new collaborations in Canada.

In their testimonies, Rev. Susan C. Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada, and Janet Plenert, vice-president of Mennonite World Conference, and Executive Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, spoke of how Canadian churches have worked



*During the service of forgiveness, Larry Miller of Mennonite World Conference presented an image of Anabaptist Dirk Willems rescuing his pursuer who had fallen through the ice. This image represents the Anabaptist ideal of loving the enemy, but Miller noted that such stories have sometimes led Mennonites to carry the martyr tradition as a “badge of superiority... blinding us to the frailties and failures that are also deeply rooted in our tradition.” Looking on is Theo Dieter, of the Institute of Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France.*

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together for years through ecumenical forums in the areas of advocacy, peace, and relief and development. “Now we feel a call to deepen this relationship,” said Johnson, who described how the two churches have begun to develop a joint congregational resource that will assist in learning more about the shared history between the churches and help to forge new ways of collaboration.

**Source:**

News release by Lutheran World Federation at [www.lwfassembly.org/experience/lwi-assembly-news/news-detail/article/461/8/](http://www.lwfassembly.org/experience/lwi-assembly-news/news-detail/article/461/8/)

Mennonite news release is found at [www.mwc-cmm.org/en15/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=458&Itemid=53](http://www.mwc-cmm.org/en15/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=458&Itemid=53)



*A gesture of reconciliation between Ishmael Noko (right), general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and Danisa Ndlovu, president of Mennonite World Conference.*

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## Supplement 2

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The following, written by Janet Plenert, vice-president of Mennonite World Conference, and Executive Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, and Susan C. Johnson, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, was part of the liturgy celebrated on July 22, 2010 in Stuttgart.

Janet: When I heard Reverend Dr. Ishmael Noko speak in front of 7,000 Mennonites at our global Assembly in Paraguay last summer, I knew this would be an important agenda for both our churches in the coming years.

Last year a \$3,000 surplus in a small rural Canadian Mennonite congregation resulted in an invitation to the local Lutheran congregation to plant a field of grain together. The project grew, and received matching funding, and \$130,000 Canadian dollars were donated collaboratively to help the hungry in the world, to share daily bread.

Susan: Our churches have worked together for many years through ecumenical forums in the areas of advocacy for peace and justice, and in relief and development. Now we feel a call to deepen this relationship.

In anticipation of this day, we have begun joint work on a congregational resource to be used by both our church families. This will help us learn about our shared history, this apology, and most importantly, begin to forge new ways of collaboration as a reconciled part of the body of Christ.

Janet: In Canada, we will host a series of regional events for joint study and worship. The first will be hosted [in Waterloo, Ontario] by Conrad Grebel University and Waterloo Lutheran Seminary this November. God is giving us a new heart and a new spirit.

Susan: We are confident that we will be blessed and we pray that we may be a blessing to others.

Thanks be to God!



*Susan C. Johnson, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (right), shared the podium with Mennonite World Conference vice-president Janet Plenert (left) for a prayer of blessing at the close of the repentance and healing service in Stuttgart 2010.*



# SESSION

# 1



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## *Why Do We Need To Talk?*

### PREPARATION

- Photocopy or project onto screen the Introduction (Supplement 1) for participants to follow as leader reads.
- Be prepared to present the videos.
- Photocopy Timeline (Supplement 2) and hand it out for Session 2.

### 1. Get Acquainted (10-15 minutes)

The Leader could pose these questions:

- Why did you decide to participate in this study?
- What did you know of the history between Lutherans and Mennonites?
- Why raise this painful past now?

### 2. Introduction

The Leader will read the Introduction to the group (*Supplement 1 on page 3*).



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## 3. Video clips (about 10 minutes each)

### Who are the Lutherans?

Watch the following online video:

- The Reformation - Martin Luther  
<http://tiny.cc/e2672>

### Who are the Mennonites?

Watch one of the following:

- Reformation Overview: The Anabaptists 5a  
<http://tiny.cc/ldym9>  
Watch only first 7 minutes (up to Michael Sattler part).

### The Anabaptists Vision

Theological summary of Anabaptism (go past ads)  
<http://tiny.cc/0wiwk>

### Question for discussion

How has being Lutheran shaped your view of Mennonites, or how has being Mennonite shaped your view of Lutherans?

## 4. Bible Study: Read Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-16

### Questions for discussion

1. Ephesians 4 speaks of the one body of Christ. Is it possible to have “unity” without “uniformity” and, if so, what conditions are needed for this to happen?
2. Paul speaks of different gifts as various parts of one body. What different gifts do Mennonites and Lutherans bring to the body of Christ?
3. According to Ephesians 4:13-16, how is Christian maturity measured?

## 5. Prayer at Closing

Gracious God, in Christ you give us new life, new hope and new horizons. We thank you that through the gift of confession and forgiveness you open possibilities for us that we never knew existed. Be with us now and fill us with your Spirit so that a vision of your Reign of Love will guide us in our lives together, in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Silent Prayer

Recite Lord's Prayer together.



### The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.  
Amen.*

*(This version of the prayer is found in both Lutheran and Mennonite hymnals.)*



1. Hand out Time Line for next session.
2. Encourage participants to bring Bibles.

*“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3).*

This call to unity and peace in the spirit of Christ heads the report of the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission, entitled “Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ.” The report is the result of a three-year dialogue between Lutherans and Mennonites which began in 2005. It “opens the way to a new climate of relations between Anabaptist-Mennonites and Lutherans,” according to the then general secretaries of The Lutheran World Federation (Ishmael Noko) and the Mennonite World Conference (Larry Miller), sponsors of the dialogue. And it can help “to renew the bonds of peace between our two traditions.”

*What is wrong with the relationship between Lutherans and Mennonites? Why was this study commission called? Why do we need healing and reconciliation?*

This conversation between Lutherans and Mennonites actually began in 1980, when the Lutheran Church commemorated the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, a foundational theological statement of the church. In Germany, Lutheran church leaders invited Mennonites to participate in the celebrations. “Mennonites were a bit bewildered at how to respond,” wrote John D. Roth, a Mennonite member of the study commission. “On the one hand, Mennonites and Lutherans have lived peacefully alongside each other for several centuries. They have joined together in local service projects, participated in community worship events, attended each other’s seminaries, and cooperated in providing aid to victims of natural disasters around the world. Nonetheless, the Augsburg Confession of 1530 ‘condemns’ the Anabaptist forebears of contemporary Mennonites in at least five different articles. And for Mennonites those condemnations are inevitably associated with historical memories of persecution, suffering, and martyrdom” (Lutheran Forum, Spring 2010).

### **The International Study Commission**

“Between Lutherans and Anabaptist-Mennonites, the parting of ways has a particularly painful history,” notes the Commission report. “For half a millennium’s time, we have been separated not only by theological disagreements from the sixteenth century but also by the legacies of violence from that formative period. On the Lutheran side, there had been *both persecution and theological justification for these violent actions. While Anabaptists did not return this persecution, they also have carried burdens from that era in their memories of what they had suffered. In recent years, it became clear that the time was right for initiatives of reconciliation.*” (5)



*The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the largest Lutheran denomination in Canada, has 152,500 baptized members in 607 congregations. It is a member of The Lutheran World Federation, the Canadian Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.*  
[www.elcic.ca](http://www.elcic.ca)



*Mennonite Church Canada, the second largest Mennonite body in Canada, has a membership of 33,000 baptized believers, plus over 24,000 children and youth, in 225 congregations. It is a member of the Mennonite World Conference, the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.*  
[www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca)

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In the course of their study, Commission members were surprised by mutual misconceptions about their respective traditions. They found that their theological differences could not be fruitfully addressed until “the legacy of the persecutions was faced directly.” Between 2005 and 2008, members of the international study commission gathered each summer for nearly a week in intensive conversations in Strasbourg, France, home to the Lutheran Institute for Ecumenical Research as well as the central offices of the Mennonite World Conference. The Commission report was issued in the Spring of 2010.

## **Lutheran Apology**

At its October 2009 meeting, the Lutheran World Federation Council adopted a statement asking for forgiveness from God and from Mennonites “for the harm that our forebears in the sixteenth century committed to Anabaptists, for forgetting or ignoring this persecution in the intervening centuries, and for all inappropriate, misleading and hurtful portraits of Anabaptists and Mennonites made by Lutheran authors, in both popular and scholarly forms, to the present day. We pray that God may grant to our communities a healing of our memories and reconciliation.” This “Action on the legacy of Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists” was adopted by the Lutheran World Federation’s 11th assembly in Stuttgart, Germany, on July 22, 2010.

## **Purpose of the Study Guide**

This study guide for congregations draws on the report of the International Study Commission, as well as supplemental material compiled within a Canadian context. It outlines both churches’ beginnings in the turmoil of Reformation Europe as a context for examining the offending statements in the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Participants will look at how events and differing understandings of the Bible shaped the Lutheran and Anabaptist confessions of faith and their attitudes toward other Christians. This guide also explores the meaning of forgiveness in the context of the Lutheran Apology to Mennonites issued by the Lutheran World Federation in 2010, and what significance it might have for both churches in the present time.

Why is this important for today? The blight of condemnation and separation that mars our past may not be visible in the church today, but it remains “like the poison which a scorpion carries in its tail,” said Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, to the Mennonite world assembly in Paraguay in 2009. “We have not struck out with this poison for some time—but we still carry it with us in our system. We are now on a path which will lead us to expel this poison from our body, to allow us to live together with you, our sisters and brothers in Christ, in new ways.” (7)

Facing the painful of separation and condemnation in our past in a spirit of repentance can help us celebrate more meaningfully the upcoming 500th anniversaries of our beginnings in the Reformation (1517 for Lutherans, 1525 for Anabaptist-Mennonites), and contribute to the ongoing reformation of the whole church. For the pain of separation between Lutherans and Mennonites “has been borne not only by us; it is a wound for the whole Body of Christ,” noted the Commission report. “Similarly, reconciliation between Lutherans and Anabaptist-Mennonites is healing for the entire Body.” This reconciliation begins with repentance and forgiveness on both sides, and continues with a commitment to transform our teaching and our relationship as members of one body under the lordship of Christ.

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**SUPPLEMENT 2:**  
**TIMELINE OF LUTHERAN/ANABAPTIST HISTORY (FOR SESSION 2)**

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- 1400s: Political and social upheaval in Europe, with rising protests against church corruption. Calls for church reform and a return to the Bible (e.g. Biblical Humanism movement in Italy, Bohemian Brethren, Brethren of the Common Life in Holland).
- 1517: Martin Luther, in what becomes known as “The 95 Theses”, challenges church authorities on the sale of “indulgences” (cancelling your punishment for sins committed) and the sacrament of penance.
- 1520: Luther calls the papacy the “anti-Christ” and calls on secular authorities to intervene in church affairs. Reform-minded leaders, such as Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, follow suit.
- 1524-25: Peasants revolt against feudal landlords in Germany, fuelled by Luther’s call for reform. Luther calls on princes and nobles to repress these revolts.
- 1525: First adult “re-baptisms” in Zurich, a symbol of emerging Anabaptist movements that call for radical reform and separation of church and state. Three main movements emerge: Swiss Brethren, Hutterites (Austria and Moravia) and Mennonites (the Netherlands).
- 1527: Swiss Brethren outline seven principles of Anabaptism in “Schleitheim Confession”.
- 1528: Imperial government declares that all rebaptizers (Anabaptists) be put to death. First generation of Anabaptist leaders wiped out by 1530. Luther pronounces Anabaptist teaching against infant baptism “blasphemous” and equates Anabaptist growth with the work of the Devil.
- 1530: Holy Roman Emperor calls Protestant princes to Augsburg to account for their faith. Luther and other theologians summarize that faith in the Augsburg Confession.
- 1534: Followers of Anabaptist Melchior Hoffman attempt violent takeover of Münster. Persecution of Anabaptists intensifies. Menno Simons emerges as leader, condemning all violence.
- 1536: Letter to Prince Philip of Hesse, written by Luther and Melanchthon and signed by Augsburg Confession signatories, defends capital punishment against Anabaptists.
- 1557: Debate between Lutherans and Anabaptists near Worms, Germany. Pamphlet by eight Lutheran theologians urges execution of Anabaptists for blasphemy and sedition. Civil mandate against Anabaptists in 1558, based on Lutheran document, decrees banishment and confiscation of possessions for Anabaptist heretics. Anabaptists imprisoned but few executed in Lutheran territory after this time.
- 1980: Lutheran-Mennonite dialogues begin.
- 2005: Lutheran-Mennonite Study Commission begins work. Report issued in 2010.
- 2010: Lutheran Apology for supporting the persecution of Anabaptists during the Reformation.

# SESSION

# 2

## HEALING MEMORIES, RECONCILING IN CHRIST: A LUTHERAN-MENNONITE STUDY GUIDE FOR CONGREGATIONS



# A Joint History

### PREPARATION

- Choose a few hymns for the opening and make them available.
- Make Timeline available for those who may not have received it.
- Photocopy *Telling the Sixteenth-Century Story Together* and *Condemnations and Confessions* for group.
- Closing prayer could be read or recited together (NRSV).



### 1. Opening: Singing Hymns Together

Mennonites and Lutherans share many hymns. Below are some well-known hymns from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and the Mennonite *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. Choose a few (or elicit other suggestions) to open the session. The first three hymns are in both hymnals.

Historic hymns:

- A mighty fortress is our God (Martin Luther, 1529)
- O God, thou faithful God (Johann Heermann, 1630)
- Now thank we all our God (Martin Rinckart, 1636)
- We are people of God's peace (Menno Simons, 1552, in Mennonite hymnal)

Popular contemporary hymns:

From Lutheran hymnal:

- All are welcome (Marty Haugen, 1994)
- God, when human bonds are broken (Fred Kaan, 1989)

From Mennonite hymnal:

- Will you let me be your servant (Richard Gillard, 1977)
- For we are strangers no more (Kenneth Morse, 1979)

Photos above:  
Martin Luther (left) and  
Menno Simons(right).

## 2. History and Timeline

- a) Leader present *Telling the Sixteenth-Century Story Together* (Supplement 1) by reading highlighted sections.
- b) Review the *Timeline of Lutheran/Anabaptist History* handed out last session.

### Questions for discussion:

1. Does this history help you understand your church better?
2. Luther and Melancthon accused the Anabaptists not only of blasphemy but of sedition and treason. In what ways might those claims be justified?

## 3. Condemnations

### a) Introduction (read by leader):

When German Lutherans asked Mennonites to join in their anniversary celebration of the Augsburg Confession in 1980, Lutherans had little awareness of the condemnation and persecution of Anabaptists, a history which remains very much alive in the memory of Mennonites today. Lutherans were surprised that Mennonites continue to identify themselves as Anabaptist (meaning “re-baptizer”) since that was a derogatory label imposed on the early movement. Lutheran leaders, moved by the Mennonite response, adopted a “Statement on the Confessio Augustana” at its meeting in Augsburg on July 11, 1980 that included the following words:

*It is with sorrow that we recognize the fact that the specific condemnations of the Confession against certain opinions that were held at the time of the Reformation have caused pain and suffering for some. We realize that some of these opinions are no longer held in the same way in those churches, and we express our hope that the remaining differences may be overcome.*

*We worship Jesus Christ who liberates and call on our member churches to celebrate our common Lutheran heritage with a spirit both of gratitude and penitence. (11)*

In the decades following that “awkward encounter” in 1980, Lutherans in various countries invited Mennonites into conversation regarding the Augsburg Confession:

- 1) France, 1981-84
- 2) Germany, 1989-92
- 3) United States, 2001-04.

### *Blasphemy*

profane or contemptuous speech, writing, or action concerning God or anything held as divine; any remark or action held to be irreverent or disrespectful

### *Sedition*

the stirring up of discontent, resistance, or rebellion against the government in power

### *Treason*

betrayal of trust or faith; treachery; violation of the allegiance owed to one’s sovereign or state; betrayal of one’s country

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These conversations explored the contemporary relevance of the sixteenth century condemnations and sought ways to heal the painful memories of the past. These dialogues, especially the call from American Lutherans for further study, provided the foundation of the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission, convened by The Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonite World Conference. Its task was to review the findings of the national dialogues and to “consider whether condemnations of Anabaptists articulated by the Augsburg Confession (1530) apply to Mennonite World Conference member churches.”

## b) Condemnations

Leader present *Condemnations and Confessions* (Supplement 2).

### Questions for discussion:

1. Why do you think reformers used such harsh language against each other?
2. In what ways did the Augsburg condemnations, or their misuse, contribute to the persecution of the Anabaptists?

## 4. Bible study: Read Matthew 5:38-48

### Questions for discussion:

1. What difference does it make to read this passage realizing that the word “perfect” in verse 48 can also legitimately be translated as “complete” or “whole”?
2. What word best describes people who aspire to fulfill what Jesus commands in these verses?

## 5. Prayer at Closing

Gracious and forgiving God, we confess that your church has often failed to live up to its holy calling. We have been divided by misunderstanding and intolerance, causing suffering and division in the Christian family. Help us to forgive each other and to learn from past sins, so that healing and reconciliation may transform the body of Christ. Amen.

Silent Prayer

Recite Philippians 4:8-9: “Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.” (NRSV)



**Augsburg Confession**

*Be perfect,  
therefore,  
as your  
heavenly  
Father is  
perfect.*

Matthew 5:48



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## **SUPPLEMENT 1: TELLING THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY STORY TOGETHER: LUTHERAN REFORMERS AND THE CONDEMNATION OF ANABAPTISTS**

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*(Distribute this document to the group so they can follow along.  
To save time, the leader can read bold sections only.)*

Reviewing the early history of relations between Lutherans and Mennonites is an important step in understanding the condemnations of the Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession.

Luther's criticism of the pope's authority, beginning in 1520, and his appeal to secular authorities to do something about the corrupt practices of the church triggered similar movements in other parts of Europe. For example, Ulrich Zwingli, the city preacher of Zurich, began to press the civil authorities for changes in the church. And university teachers such as Philip Melanchthon at Wittenberg, began to teach this "evangelical" theology.

Among the attempts at religious and social reform was a grassroots movement that opponents labelled "Anabaptists" (re-baptizers). Whereas Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed churches baptized infants, the Anabaptists argued that true baptism assumed a recognition of one's sin, followed by a conscious decision to accept God's gift of forgiveness and become a follower of Jesus. Despite its negative overtones, the name "Anabaptist" has become an umbrella term for all Reformation groups who practised "believer's baptism," such as Mennonites, Amish and Hutterites.

The early Anabaptists considered themselves part of the broader reformation movement: they supported Luther's criticism of the Roman church and promoted the principle of sola Scriptura (scripture alone). The tensions that came to separate Lutherans and Anabaptists were related to baptism and the Christian's relation to the state. Theological differences took on urgency when the Anabaptists became associated with two traumatic events: the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 and the violent seizure of the German city of Münster a decade later. The vehemence behind Luther and Melanchthon's denunciation of the Anabaptists must acknowledge the importance of this context.

### **The Anabaptist Threat**

By calling on Christians to refrain from serving in civil offices, swearing oaths or participating in lethal violence, Anabaptists seemed to threaten the foundations of political stability. The Anabaptist model of economic sharing and social equality unsettled both theologians and civic authorities who viewed traditional societal structures as ordained by God. By defining the church as a voluntary community, separated from the "fallen world," Anabaptists raised doubts about whether Europe could legitimately call itself a "Christian" society.



*Burning of Anabaptists in the 1500s.  
Illustration from Martyrs Mirror.*

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Part of the animosity directed toward the Anabaptists was fueled by a confusion about their teachings. There were various Anabaptist groups with different beliefs. Moreover, most of the first generation of educated leaders were executed by 1530. That fact, combined with the threat of persecution, made communication among Anabaptist groups difficult and complicated their efforts to reach consensus in belief and practice. Thus, it is not surprising that Luther, Melanchthon and other reformers had only partial, or even contradictory, understandings of the Anabaptists and dismissed them as Schwärmer (fanatics).

Between 1525 and 1550 three Anabaptist groups emerged which shared a similar theological worldview: the Swiss Brethren in the southern German-speaking territories; the Hutterites in Moravia; and the Mennonites of the Netherlands and North Germany under the leadership of Menno Simons. In 1527, two years after the first “re-baptisms”, the Swiss Brethren formulated seven principles that would come to define the most distinctive features of Anabaptist doctrine. The Schleitheim Confession, as it was called, was not intended to be a summary statement of Christian faith (Anabaptists generally appealed to the Apostolic Creed), but it provided a useful expression of shared convictions.

### **Responses from Luther and his Allies**

To understand the responses by Luther and his allies, it is important to recognize that Luther continued to be under attack himself, even while some princes were heeding his call for reform. In a 1527 letter, Luther condemned the “blasphemous” Anabaptist writings on baptism. In 1528, both Luther and Melanchthon, chief drafter of the Augsburg Confession, wrote refutations of the Anabaptist movement. While criticizing those who killed Anabaptists for their faith, Luther allowed capital punishment for those convicted of sedition.

Not knowing much about Anabaptist beliefs, Luther attacked their presumed arguments, suspecting that they were the work of Satan (in open letter entitled Concerning Rebaptism). To the notion that baptisms had to be personally remembered to be valid, Luther argued that one only trusts Christ based upon the secondary testimony of the apostles. To the argument that faith must precede baptism because the word “believes” precedes “is baptized” in Mark 16:16, Luther saw only a recipe for works righteousness, for trusting in one’s own faith rather than in God’s promise. Baptism of “households” recounted in Scripture must have included babies. Even presuming that children do not yet have faith did not provide grounds for rebaptizing them, any more than a woman who marries a man she does not love would have to be remarried after she fell in love with him. Moreover, the history of the church proved that plenty of people baptized as infants showed all the signs of the Holy Spirit.

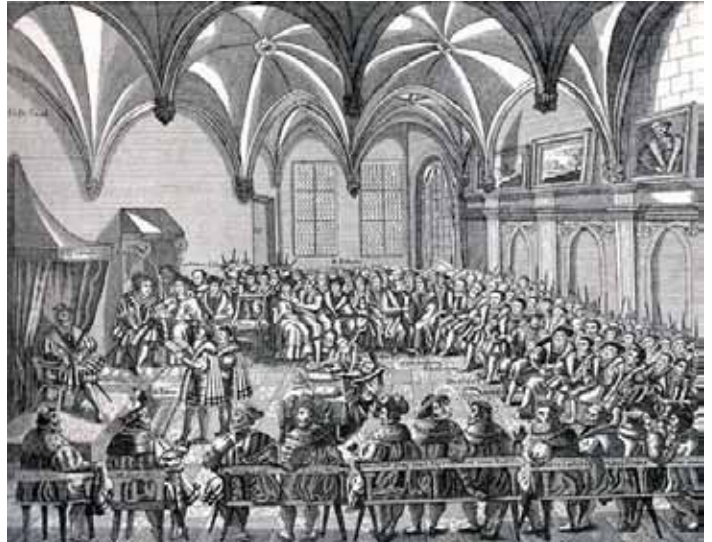


*Philip Melanchthon and Martin Luther collaborate on a theological treatise.*

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Melanchthon (in *A Judgement Against the Anabaptists*) argued that circumcision and Christ's blessing the children proved that the promise of grace applies to infants. Forgiveness occurs in the church by God's grace—through the Word and the sacraments which apply to children too. As for Anabaptist beliefs about government and communal property, Melanchthon calls these seditious and therefore punishable as a capital crime. Johannes Brenz, who worked with Melanchthon on the Augsburg Confession, rejected capital punishment for rebaptizers (*Whether the Magistrate Has Authority to Put to Death Anabaptists and Other Heretics*, 1528). As long as heretics or unbelievers lived peaceably, secular authorities had no business persecuting them. He later did allow for banishment of Anabaptist teachers and capital punishment for sedition.

Meanwhile, Lutheran reformers and princes had to defend themselves against the Emperor who would sometimes lump them together with rebaptizers. Thus, in 1530, when the Emperor surprised the Protestants by calling a meeting in Augsburg at which all would give an account of their faith, the issue of rebaptism was bound to find a place in their response.



*Diet of Augsburg 1530*

### **The Augsburg Confession and its Condemnations**

Sketched upon this background, the condemnations of the Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession take on new clarity. For one thing, these statements were meant to distance the reformers theologically and politically from a group whose behavior could be construed as worthy of capital punishment.

When the Emperor rejected the Augsburg Confession, the reformers in Wittenberg became more and more convinced that Lutheran princes had a role to play in protecting true doctrine and maintaining the peace. One thing that hardened their position was the 1534 uprising in Münster by people who rejected infant baptism. The violence and disorder unleashed by this kind of Anabaptism underscored Luther's tendency to equate rebaptizing with seditious and godless behavior. Not to punish these people, he argued, would leave the land vulnerable to rebellion and open to God's retribution.

At the same time, the Augsburg Confession was becoming a norm for teaching and theology in the lands of Protestant princes. Now the condemnations in the Confession, far from simply defining theological disputes, became the means for enforcing theological conformity and punishing dissenters. In 1536, an official letter to Prince Philip of Hesse (a signatory of the Augsburg Confession), written by Luther and Melanchthon and signed by the entire theological faculty at Wittenberg, defended the use of capital punishment against Anabaptists.

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## **Lutheran-Anabaptist Debate of 1557**

In 1557, the Lutheran Elector of the Palatinate called for a disputation between Lutherans and Anabaptists. The day-and-a-half exchange simply resulted in a restatement of five standard charges. Later, the Anabaptist spokesman complained bitterly that they were never given a chance to defend themselves.

This failed attempt to win over the Anabaptists must have been the context for a statement issued two months later by eight Lutheran theologians under the heading “Thoughts Regarding the Anabaptists.” The list of charges is familiar, restating the argument that authorities were justified in executing Anabaptists on the grounds of blasphemy as well as sedition.

Anabaptists were charged with the following seditious lies: 1) they considered the magisterial office to be sinful and refused to acknowledge magistrates as Christians; 2) they believed that all Christians were obligated to hold their possessions in common; 3) they held that settling suits in courts is sinful; 4) they refused to take oaths; and 5) they encouraged a convert to leave his or her spouse for the sake of faith. God-fearing people should recognize that these “gross errors are the mark of the devil...and that the Anabaptist sect is the devil’s ghost from which one should earnestly flee.”

The Hutterites refuted these condemnations with three points: 1) the Lutherans are misinformed about what it is that Anabaptists actually teach; 2) Lutherans have misinterpreted Scripture, especially the role and teachings of Jesus; and 3) if governments really want to be Christian, they should follow the teachings of Jesus, which means, among other things, that they should not use the sword against other Christians.

The record suggests that the magistrates refused to implement the recommendations by Lutheran theologians for capital punishment. Many Anabaptists were captured and imprisoned in Lutheran territories after 1557, but those arrests resulted in few executions.

## **Summary**

By placing the Augsburg Confession within its historical context, one can see that the condemnations of Anabaptists were framed in the midst of political struggle and entailed severe consequences for Anabaptists. While initial Lutheran responses to “rebaptism” were framed as theological debates, they quickly began to discuss punishment for what the reformers perceived as political crimes (sedition) and blasphemy.

In telling the joint story of Lutherans and Mennonites, these dire results of the Augsburg Confession must be acknowledged and dealt with. For Mennonites, the history of persecution has remained an integral part of their identity; for Lutherans, it is essential to rediscover the history of their complicity in such persecution in order to face it honestly today.

*The above is excerpted from Part 2 of the Lutheran-Mennonite Study  
Commission report, Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ.*

## **Lutheran Condemnations in Augsburg Confession**

(Translated from the German in *The Book of Concord*, Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.)

### **Article IX: Baptism**

Concerning baptism it is taught that it is necessary, that grace is offered through it, and that one should also baptize children, who through such baptism are entrusted to God and become pleasing to him. Rejected, therefore, are the Anabaptists who teach that the baptism of children is not right. [The Latin text says “They condemn the Anabaptists.”]

### **Article XVI: Civil Affairs**

Concerning public order and secular government it is taught that all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and that Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers with the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married; etc. Condemned here are the Anabaptists who teach that none of the things indicated above is Christian.

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### **Schleitheim Confession of 1527**

(See *The Schleitheim Confession*, trans. by John H. Yoder. Herald Press, 1977.)

#### **Article I. Baptism**

Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.... This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the Pope.

#### **Article IV. Separation from the world**

A separation shall be made from the evil and from the wickedness which the devil planted in the world.... By this is meant all Catholic and Protestant works and church services, meetings and church attendance, drinking houses, civic affairs, the oaths sworn in unbelief and other things of that kind...for they are nothing but an abomination, and they are the cause of our being hated before our Christ Jesus....



*Confessio Augustana, a window in the Memorial Church in Speyer, Germany.*



Menno Simons,  
father of the Mennonites

Therefore there will also unquestionably fall from us the unchristian, devilish weapons of force — such as sword, armor and the like, and all their use either for friends or against one’s enemies — by virtue of the Word of Christ. Resist not him that is evil.

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### Condemnations from Menno Simons

(From The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, Herald Press, 1956)

#### Infant baptism:

“Since infant baptism is such a harmful superstition that destroys the Lord’s baptism completely, and since the poor, blind world suffers itself to be misled and consoled therewith, and since besides there is connected with it such fearful blasphemy, hypocrisy...therefore it is that we so strenuously oppose infant baptism and openly confess that it is not of God or of His Word but of Antichrist and of the bottomless pit.” (514)

#### Salvation by faith alone:

“The Lutherans teach and believe that faith alone saves, without any assistance by works. They emphasize this doctrine so as to make it appear as though works were not even necessary.... What bold folly!... For with this same doctrine they have led the reckless and ignorant people...into such a fruitless, unregenerate life, and have given them such a free rein, that we would scarcely find such an ungodly and abominable life among Turks and Tartars as among these people.... [though] some of them write much of faith and babble a great deal about the Scriptures.... We shall have to say with Christ and John, that they are, barring a few exceptions, of the devil and not of God.” (333, 39)

#### The sword:

“For it is the custom of all the sects who are outside of Christ and His Word to make valid their positions, faith, and conduct with the sword. The Roman Catholics ...the Lutherans, the Zwinglians, and the Münsterites are our witnesses. But Christ, and those who are His, bear and suffer.” (175)

### Hymn bemoans persecution

*From Hymn 46 in the Auburn (Anabaptist hymnal still used by the Amish). It was written in response to the 1557 statement by Lutheran theologians justifying the execution of Anabaptists.*

*A more perilous time  
was never heard of  
Since God created heaven and earth...  
All pride themselves  
on being God’s community,  
Turk, Jew and pagan,  
Papist, Lutheran,  
and many other sects...  
Each party wants to be right....*

*Papists, sects, and godless mobs  
Have resolved with one accord  
To crucify the godly man,  
According to what I have read.  
An edict has gone out from Worms  
Where there were gathered,*

*In the year fifty seven, High priests and  
scribes  
Whose final decision was  
That whoever teaches anything against them  
Shall be judged with the sword  
And his blood spilled...*

*Who has ever heard the like,  
That with the sword people shall be  
Converted into God’s kingdom.*

**SESSION**

**3**



# *The Meaning Of Forgiveness*

## **PREPARATION**

- Hand out or show on screen the “Statement” from the Lutheran World Federation (Supplement 1).
- Be prepared to show video clip from internet.
- Make Prayer of St. Francis accessible for reading together.

### **1. Present Lutheran Statement and Excerpt from Mennonite Response (Supplement 1)**

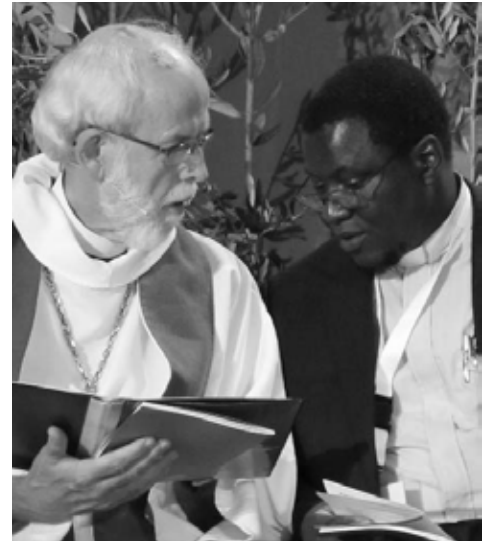
#### **Questions for discussion:**

- When is it appropriate for people to apologize for the sins of their forebears?
- Can Mennonites grant forgiveness for something their spiritual forebears had to suffer hundreds of years ago?

### **2. Read “The Gift of Forgiveness” (Supplement 2)**

#### **Questions for discussion:**

- What “spiritual prejudices” have you inherited?
- How can we be faithful to our convictions while realizing we don’t have the full truth?



*Mark Hanson of the Lutheran World Federation and Danisa Ndlovu of Mennonite World Conference consult at the service of forgiveness and reconciliation in Stuttgart.*

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## HEALING MEMORIES, RECONCILING IN CHRIST: A LUTHERAN-MENNONITE STUDY GUIDE FOR CONGREGATIONS

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### 3. Video clip (optional)

Show video as an example of an injustice and apology close to home. The clip is of the Canadian Government responding to abuse at Indian Residential Schools. See <http://tiny.cc/ficyx8sizy>

### 4. Bible study

Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-19: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us."

#### Questions for discussion:

1. Paul says "we regard no one from a human point of view" in verse 16. What is that human point of view and the new view that replaces it?
2. What characteristics are evident in people who excel in reconciliation?

### Prayer at Closing

Gracious God, we thank you that you have given us the ministry of reconciliation. Give us courage, now, to follow in the paths you lead us, so that we might bear witness to the power of forgiveness given with the new creation.

Amen.

Silent Prayer Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (recite together)



#### **Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi** (Recite Together)

*Lord, make me an instrument  
of your peace. Where there is  
hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master, grant that  
I may not so much seek to be  
consoled as to console; to be  
understood  
as to understand; to be loved as  
to love. For it is in giving that  
we receive; it is in pardoning  
that we are pardoned; and it  
is in dying that we are born to  
eternal life. Amen*



When Lutherans today realize the history of Lutheran - Anabaptist relationships in the sixteenth century and beyond as it is presented in the report of the Lutheran - Mennonite International Study Commission, they are filled with a deep sense of regret and pain over the persecution of Anabaptists by Lutheran authorities and especially over the fact that Lutheran reformers theologically supported this persecution. Thus, The Lutheran World Federation, A Communion of Churches wishes to express publicly its deep regret and sorrow.

Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, we ask for forgiveness—from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brother—for the harm that our forbears in the sixteenth century committed to Anabaptists, for forgetting or ignoring this persecution in the intervening centuries, and for all inappropriate, misleading and hurtful portraits of Anabaptists and Mennonites made by Lutheran authors, in both popular and scholarly forms, to the present day.

We pray that God may grant to our communities a healing of our memories and reconciliation.

We commit ourselves:

to interpret the Lutheran Confessions in light of the jointly described history between Lutherans and Anabaptists;

to take care that this action of the LWF will bear fruit in the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions in the seminaries and other educational activities of our member churches;

to continue the exploration of unresolved issues between our two traditions, in particular baptism and relations of Christians and of the Church to the state, in an atmosphere of mutual openness and the willingness to learn from each other;

to affirm the present consensus, gained by the experience of our churches over the centuries, in repudiating the use of the state's power either to exclude or enforce particular religious beliefs; and to work towards upholding and maintaining freedom of religion and conscience in political orders and societies, and to urge our international bodies, member churches, and in particular our congregations, to seek ways to continue and deepen relations with the Mennonite World Conference and with local Mennonite communities through common prayer and Bible study, shared humanitarian engagement, and common work for peace.

*“Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, we ask for forgiveness—from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers—for the harm that our forbears in the sixteenth century committed to Anabaptists, for forgetting or ignoring this persecution in the intervening centuries, and for all inappropriate, misleading and hurtful portraits of Anabaptists and Mennonites made by Lutheran authors . . . to the present day.”*

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## From Mennonite Response

*(Full text available in Supplement 3 for those who wish to use it.)*

Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not only have you sought forgiveness for past acts, you have demonstrated the integrity of your initiative by making specific commitments to new action. We gratefully acknowledge these commitments.

In response:

We commit ourselves to promote interpretations of the Lutheran-Anabaptist story which take seriously the jointly described history found in the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission Report;

We commit ourselves to take care that your initiative for reconciliation is known and honoured in Anabaptist- Mennonite teaching about Lutherans;

We commit ourselves to continue with you deliberation on the unresolved issues between our two traditions, in a spirit of mutual vulnerability and openness to the movement of the Spirit;

We commit ourselves to encourage our member churches, their local congregations, and their institutions to seek fuller relations and greater cooperation with Lutherans in service to the world.

To God be the glory!

*Presented in Stuttgart, Germany on July 22, 2010*



Lutheran  
World  
Federation



Mennonite  
World  
Conference

“You have your grandpa’s hands.” My mom says this to me from time to time, and she is right. I remember well how his hands looked, and I see something of him in myself. But when I think about who I am I realize that I have inherited more than my grandpa’s hands. Many of my physical and character traits, for good and for ill, are rooted both in my DNA as well as in the rituals and behavior of my family of origin. I live with both the biology and the decisions of my forefathers and mothers. The fact that I live in North America, in peace and prosperity, is due in whole to decisions my ancestors made before I was ever born. We are all products of our ancestors. This does not mean that we have no say in whom we become. But we do begin in a place that is given to us, a place we have not chosen.

This truth also applies to our spiritual lives. That I confess Christ is due, in no small part, to my parents’ decision to make faith a part of our family life. Some people will be able to point to significant friends, rather than family, as the source of their spiritual DNA. God, in grace, uses family and friends alike to bring us to and keep us in faith. Family and friends both are sources of tremendous good. Yet, I also recognize that I do not only inherit positive spiritual attributes from my family or friends. Sometimes I discover that I have inherited spiritual prejudices, many of which are unexamined.

This truth that applies to me as an individual also applies to us as churches. The recent request by the Lutheran World Federation for forgiveness for harms inflicted upon Anabaptist-Mennonite brothers and sisters is a case in point. When Lutherans re-evaluate confessional documents, as well as pastoral literature, it sometimes becomes apparent that certain sins have been passed down from generation to generation.

It is for good reason, then, that Lutherans ask for forgiveness from their Mennonite brothers and sisters in Christ for discriminatory and harmful thoughts, words and deeds today. But can the Lutheran church ask for forgiveness for the harm that our forbears in the sixteenth century committed against Anabaptists? Many would say “No, our forbears meant what they said, for good or for ill and we cannot rewrite history.” Is this true?

At one level, this response is manifestly correct. Luther and his fellows really did mean what they wrote. However, an important qualification needs to append this affirmation. They wrote in response to the truth as they understood it. Yet in their best moments, they also understood and declared that no-one ever has a faultless grasp of the truth. This is especially the case when we consider historical developments. Both sides in the theological acrimony between Lutherans and Anabaptists (and others as well) struggled to articulate what they thought to be faithful in their context (complete with rhetorical flourish) and failed from time to time. It is in light of this patent



*In a service following the Lutheran apology, Anabaptist-Mennonite leader Danisa Ndlovu (centre) anointed the hands of Lutheran leader Ishmael Noko (left). Ndlovu received the oil from Lutheran bishop Mark Hanson (right)*

*Photo by Liesa Unger*

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failure that the Lutheran World Federation today revisits comments from Luther and others on the question of Anabaptist theology and practice and asserts that the Lutheran reformers at critical points misunderstood key Anabaptist teachings. Moreover, the assumption is that were they here today, with the hindsight that history affords, they would concur with the decision of the LWF to request forgiveness.

Yet beyond the “were they here” argument lies a more profound spiritual truth. Because we confess that the dead in Christ rest in the heart of God, we also claim that they now see Jesus, who is the Truth that leads them into truth, with a clarity unlike any they experienced in their sojourn on earth. Yet, from the other side of the grave, these saints in light have no voice other than ours. It is given to us to speak on their behalf, and in so doing to articulate here on earth what is surely said in heaven as Martin Luther and company meet Menno Simons and friends: “We are sorry. Please forgive us.”

At the end of the day, then, the Lutheran World Federation request for forgiveness is grounded in God’s promise for peace to sojourners on earth and saints in glory. The apology is an echo of the sure and certain reconciliation of the saints in glory. Forgiveness on earth mirrors the communion of saints in heaven. But what is the nature of this gift of forgiveness we seek and bestow in our time and place?

In the first instance, it is important to recognize that in the word “forgiveness” is the little word “give”. Words sometimes speak truths that we too easily forget, and this is especially the case with forgiveness. The gospel, the good news of what God in Christ does for us in his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension, reminds us that forgiveness comes as a gift, a giving. The narrative of Jesus’ ministry is a story of his setting aside power and glory (Philippians 2:5-11) so that we can be drawn into the love of God. God in Christ suffers death at the hands of sinners so that we might be born anew into the reign of God. This newness comes about by God’s self-giving. The Holy Spirit is God’s self-giving gift to us that accompanies forgiveness. What does God give when God forgives sin? God gives the divine self. Human forgiveness, in a sense, mirrors this.

When I forgive others, I give something of myself to others. I make myself vulnerable to them by entering into a new kind of relationship with them, a relationship of intimacy that was not previously a part of our life together. This personal truth also applies in a corporate sense. The request for forgiveness by the Lutherans and its bestowal by the Mennonites usher these two communities of faith into a new relationship as we give ourselves to one another. As we do so, we are also given the task of determining what we will do with this new relationship that shatters our comfortable prejudices and self-satisfied identities. Entering into a new way of being together is the task before us, as communities of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-19).

- Allen G. Jorgenson

*What does God give when God forgives sin? God gives the divine self. Human forgiveness, in a sense, mirrors this. When I forgive others, I give something of myself to others.*

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## **SUPPLEMENT 3: COMPLETE RESPONSE OF THE MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE TO THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION ACTION ON THE LEGACY OF LUTHERAN PERSECUTION OF ANABAPTISTS**

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Both Martin Luther and the Anabaptists referred to an important practice of the early Christians as the “rule of Christ.” We find this practice described in Matthew 18, one of only two places in the New Testament where Jesus uses the word *ecclesia* - “church.” Both times his subject is “binding and loosing.” More specifically, in this instance, Jesus teaches about granting forgiveness while reestablishing communion in the community of disciples.

Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:18-22 NRSV).

Today in this place, we together—Lutherans and Anabaptist-Mennonites—are fulfilling the “rule of Christ.”

Today in this place, we together—Lutherans, Anabaptist-Mennonites, and other Christians—are living out a basic and essential meaning of church: binding and loosing; seeking and granting forgiveness; restoring and healing relationships in the body of Christ.

*To God be the glory!*

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Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, you have taken this action on the legacy of the persecution of Anabaptists in which you ask for forgiveness from God and from Anabaptist-Mennonite sisters and brothers. You seek forgiveness:

- for the harm that your forbears in the sixteenth century committed to Anabaptists;
- for forgetting or ignoring this persecution in the intervening centuries; and
- for all inappropriate, misleading and hurtful portraits of Anabaptists and Mennonites made by Lutheran authors to the present day.

Are we worthy to receive your request? We are painfully aware of our own inadequacy. We cannot bring ourselves to this table with heads held high. We can only come bowed down in great humility and in the fear of the Lord. We cannot come to this point and fail to see our own sinfulness. We cannot come to this point without recognizing our own need for God’s grace and forgiveness.

### **Online Resources**

*Lutheran apology to Mennonites, on The Lutheran World Federation site:*  
<http://www.lwf-assembly.org/experience/lwi-assembly-news/news-detail/article/461/8/>

*Mennonite response found at*  
[www.mwc-cmm.org/en15/files/MWC%20Response%20to%20LWF.pdf](http://www.mwc-cmm.org/en15/files/MWC%20Response%20to%20LWF.pdf)

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At the same time, we are profoundly moved by your spirit of repentance and by your act of seeking forgiveness. And we remember the prayer of George Blaurock, the first Anabaptist—baptized on January 21, 1525, in Zurich (Switzerland); burned at the stake on September 6, 1529, in Klausen (Austria).

While in prison Blaurock wrote these words:

*I sincerely pray for all my enemies, O Lord, however many there may be. Do not lay their sins to their charge. Lord, I entreat this according to your will.*

We believe that God has already heard and granted this Anabaptist prayer. We believe that today God has heard your confession and is granting your appeal for forgiveness. We joyfully and humbly join with God in giving forgiveness. In the spirit of the “rule of Christ,” we believe that what we are doing together here today on earth, God is doing also in heaven.

To God be the glory!

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Trusting in God who in Jesus Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not only have you sought forgiveness for past acts, you have demonstrated the integrity of your initiative by making specific commitments to new action. We gratefully acknowledge these commitments. In response:

- We commit ourselves to promote interpretations of the Lutheran-Anabaptist story which take seriously the jointly described history found in the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission Report;
- We commit ourselves to take care that your initiative for reconciliation is known and honoured in Anabaptist-Mennonite teaching about Lutherans;
- We commit ourselves to continue with you deliberation on the unresolved issues between our two traditions, in a spirit of mutual vulnerability and openness to the movement of the Spirit;
- We commit ourselves to encourage our member churches, their local congregations, and their institutions to seek fuller relations and greater cooperation with Lutherans in service to the world.

To God be the glory!

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During the Last Supper, Jesus said to his disciples:

*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35).*

He also gave them a physical, embodied demonstration of this new commandment:

*Jesus (...) got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him.*

Some Anabaptist-Mennonite churches have maintained the practice of foot washing. This wooden foot washing tub comes from one of them. We offer it to you as a sign of our commitment to a future when the distinguishing mark of Lutheran and Anabaptist-Mennonite relationships is boundless love and unending service. We will learn to seek one another's good from a posture of voluntary and mutual submission. For it is in our vulnerability to one another that God's miraculous, transforming, reconciling presence is made visible in the world.

To God be the glory!

*Mennonite World Conference 2010 July 22, Stuttgart, Germany*

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## SESSION

# 4

### HEALING MEMORIES, RECONCILING IN CHRIST: A LUTHERAN-MENNONITE STUDY GUIDE FOR CONGREGATIONS



## Where Do We Go From Here?

### PREPARATION

- a) Appoint two people, along with the leader, to present the Lutheran and Mennonite readings in the Bible Study section.
- b) Photocopy or project onto screen Supplements 1 and 3.

### 1. Recall the reasons for this study

1. The Lutheran-Mennonite study commission concluded in its 2010 report that Lutherans need to confront the “condemnations” of Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession of 1530.
2. On July 22, 2010, the Lutheran World Federation issued an apology to Anabaptist-Mennonites for the role Lutheran theologians played in the persecution of their forebears in the sixteenth century. Mennonite World Conference leaders responded.
3. Canadian church leaders initiated this study guide so that congregations can learn about the sixteenth-century context, confront differences, and explore what forgiveness might mean for Lutheran-Mennonite relations today.



*Photo Above:*  
Lutheran bishop Mark Hanson (left) receives a footwashing tub from Danisa Ndlovu, Mennonite leader. Noting that footwashing is an important symbol in some Mennonite churches, Ndlovu said this tub signifies “the commitment to a future when the distinguishing mark of Lutheran and Mennonite relationships is boundless love and unending service.”

## **2. Read the ‘Three Major Findings of the Study Commission’**

1. The Anabaptist identity is still important for Mennonites today. Anabaptism functions as an umbrella term to describe theological convictions of the Radical Reformation and groups which have their roots in that Reformation.
2. Most of the condemnations in the Augsburg Confession applied neither to the Anabaptists nor to Mennonites today.
3. Significant theological differences remain between Lutherans and Mennonites, particularly on Baptism and the relation of Christians to civil authorities. An ongoing conversation must include a discussion of changes in societies and churches since the Reformation, and provide a theological framework in which Lutheran and Mennonite convictions can be expressed and understood. (From pages 15-16 of report)

### **Question for discussion:**

1. What do you think is the most significant result of the Study Commission?

## **3. Present the ‘Differences that Remain’ (Supplement 1)**

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. What do you think is the most significant difference between Lutherans and Mennonites today?
2. Why is it that Christians often tolerate disagreements within their denominations that are, in fact, more contentious than those between denominations? Can you think of examples?

## **4. Bible study**

Present “**Different Readings of the Bible**” (Supplement 2)

## **5. Present ‘Steps to Reconciliation Today’ (Supplement 3)**

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Can you think of additional steps to reconciliation between Lutherans and Mennonites?
2. How can Lutherans and Mennonites demonstrate a renewed relationship?

### **Augsburg Confession XVI**

*“It is taught that all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and that Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice...punish evil doers with the sword; wage just wars...”*

### **Schleitheim Confession**

*“It is not appropriate for a Christian to serve as a magistrate.... The government magistracy is according to the flesh, but the Christian’s is according to the Spirit...their citizenship is in this world, but the Christian’s citizenship is in heaven; the weapons of their conflict and war are carnal and against the flesh only, but the Christian’s weapons are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil.”*



### **Prayer at Closing**

Gracious and loving God, we are grateful for the opportunity we have had to recognize past wrongs, repent of our sins and commit ourselves to a new relationship with our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. May we go forward with renewed faith and energy to bring God's reconciliation and peace to our world, a peace that transcends all our differences. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Silent prayer

Recite Lord's Prayer together.

### *The Lord's Prayer*

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today  
our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.  
Amen.*

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## SUPPLEMENT 3

### STATEMENT FROM THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

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## Differences That Remain

At least three “condemnations” of Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession (Articles V, XII, XVII) were based on erroneous judgments about what they actually believed. But two articles highlight real differences between Anabaptists and Lutherans.

### 1. Baptism (Augsburg Confession Article IX)

*Concerning baptism it is taught that it is necessary, that grace is offered through it, and that one should also baptize children, who through such baptism are entrusted to God and become pleasing to him. Rejected, therefore, are the Anabaptists who teach that the baptism of children is not right. [The Latin text says “They condemn the Anabaptists”.]*

According to Lutheran understanding, baptism is an act of God performed through human actions and words. It is a promise that God forgives one’s sins and accepts a person into communion with him. While baptism is performed at a certain moment, receiving it through faith and living in it is the lifelong task of the Christian. Infants should be baptized since the Great Commission speaks of “all” people, and Jesus said children can participate in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mark 10:14-16). Children grow in the faith through the nurture of parents and godparents, the proclamation of the gospel and catechesis, and Christian life in community.

The Schleithem Confession of the Anabaptists states: *Baptism shall be given to all those who have been taught repentance and the amendment of life and [who] believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ....hereby is excluded all infant baptism, the greatest and first abomination of the Pope.*

For the Anabaptists, the foremost biblical texts on baptism were Matthew 28:19: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you;” and Mark 16:16: “The one who believes and is baptized will be saved.” Preaching and repentance must precede baptism, and only those who can make a conscious commitment to follow Christ should be baptized. Baptism is thus an outward sign that the believer has repented and been transformed by God’s grace, and has voluntarily chosen to join the community of Christ’s disciples.

*We are aware of the difficulty of the task. We are dealing with holy histories, yours and ours. We are dealing with our most basic self-understandings, yours and ours. For you [Lutherans], the witness of the Augsburg Confession is foundational and authoritative, an essential shaper of your identity. For us, the witness of the Anabaptist martyr is a living and vital story, retold in our global community of churches to build group identity.*

*How can you distance yourself from the condemnations and their consequences while still honoring your history and strengthening your identity? How can we distance ourselves from use of the martyr tradition which perpetuates a sense of victimization and marginalization... while still honoring our history and strengthening our identity?*

*Surely, these things will happen best if we continue to walk together in the way of Jesus Christ, our Reconciler and the Source of common history and identity.*

Larry Miller  
Mennonite World Conference

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Today, Lutherans recognize baptisms performed in Mennonite churches. Mennonite churches may require newcomers to be baptized according to Mennonite practice or simply require a confession of faith as a completion of infant baptism.

## **2. Civil Affairs** (Augsburg Confession Article XVI)

*Concerning public order and secular government it is taught that all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and that Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers with the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married; etc. Condemned here are the Anabaptists who teach that none of the things indicated above is Christian.*

Most Anabaptists shared resources within the community but they did not reject private property (except for Hutterites). Nor did most reject marriage. The greatest disagreements between Lutheran reformers and Anabaptists concerned oaths, public office and serving as soldiers.

**Oaths:** Promissory oaths and sworn assertions were the glue that held sixteenth-century society together, so to refuse to swear an oath, as the Anabaptists did, was considered by the Lutherans to undermine the foundation of political authority and communal life. Today, many countries guarantee the freedom of religion and conscience, and provide alternatives to swearing oaths. Many Mennonites still choose to “affirm” to tell the truth in court rather than swear on the Bible.

**Public office and lethal force:** Lutherans and Anabaptists shared the challenge of how to interpret Christ’s teaching in Matthew 5 on nonresistant love (“Do not resist an evildoer”) in light of Paul’s affirmation that the sword of government “is God’s servant for your good” (Romans 13:4). In interpreting these texts, Anabaptists and Lutherans come to different conclusions.

*Anabaptists:* In the Schleithem Confession of 1527, Swiss Anabaptists stated: “The sword is an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ. It punishes and kills the wicked, and guards and protects the good.... But within the perfection of Christ only the ban is used for the admonition and exclusion of the one who has sinned....” Anabaptists obeyed government authority, as long as obedience was not inconsistent with the commands of Christ. However, because Christians are called to follow Christ in every aspect of life, they cannot hold public office.

*Lutheran reformers:* Lutheran reformers understood God as reigning over the world in two ways. With the left hand, God preserves the world from falling into chaos by using temporal authorities to maintain order and restrain sin. With the right hand, God reigns over the world through the gospel, through preaching and the sacraments. The believer lives under God in both realms simultaneously. God also uses people as office bearers to act on behalf of others. So as an individual the Christian forgives the evil-doer, but as a public official the Christian must care for the community and punish the evil-doer. Love takes different shapes in different situations.

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*Today:* Both Anabaptist-Mennonite and Lutheran teachings on civil authority have changed in the light of changing circumstances and modern democracies. Many Mennonites have moved from a separatist understanding of witness to an active engagement in peacemaking and conflict resolution. Most assume that Christians should make an impact on the societies in which they live, through their professions, their church and even by holding political office.

Nevertheless, Mennonites continue in principle to reject lethal force, whether within states (policing and capital punishment) or in conflicts between states (war). While most refuse to participate in the military, some support the right of the state to defend itself. (In World War II, only half of eligible Mennonite men claimed conscientious objector status.) Overall, however, Mennonites believe that taking the life of a human being, in whatever circumstances, is contrary to the will of God.

Lutherans have recognized that Luther's "doctrine of the two kingdoms" was often misunderstood, as if the spheres of life could be separated, so that Lutheran churches too easily adapted to the political and social world in which they lived. Many Lutherans now wonder whether a modern war can ever be "just" and whether Christians can serve in these wars. Nevertheless, most Lutherans would question the ethical consequences of refusing to use lethal violence in emergencies. If we don't come to the defense of innocent peoples or save people from being killed, are we not guilty of refusing to help others?

Today, Lutherans and Mennonites have much in common. But differences in emphasis, theological reasoning and reference to Jesus as an example still persist.

- *Compiled by Margaret Loewen Reimer*

Select three people to read Leader, Lutheran and Mennonite parts.

## **I. Baptism**

**Leader:** Mathew 28:19 is a fundamental text on baptism for both Lutherans and Mennonites: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

**Lutheran:** Lutherans believe that children are implied in the call to baptize all people.

**Mennonite:** Mennonites believe that the call to obedience implies that adults only should be baptized.

**Lutheran:** Two basic texts implying that infants should be baptized are:

- Mark 10:13-16: “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.... whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”
- Acts 16:33: “he and his entire family were baptized.”

**Mennonite:** Two basic texts implying that adults should be baptized are:

- Mark 16:16: “The one who believes and is baptized will be saved.”
- Luke 3:3: “He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”



### **Question for discussion:**

1. Is it fair to say that Luther and the Anabaptists emphasized different aspects of baptism: God's act of grace (Luther), the human response to God's grace (Anabaptists)?

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## II. Civil Authority

Leader: Romans 13:1 is foundational for both Lutherans and Mennonites: “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.”

Lutheran: Lutherans believe that Christians are part of both worldly (outward) and spiritual (inward) kingdoms. As earthly citizens they have a responsibility to participate in government and society.

Mennonite: Anabaptist-Mennonites believe that Christians should obey authorities but their primary allegiance is to God’s kingdom (embodied in the church) which is beyond earthly authority. Some Mennonites have advocated strict separation from society, citing 2 Corinthians 6:17-18: “Come out from them, and be separate from them...and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, says the Lord Almighty.”



### Question for discussion (optional, if time allows):

1. How do Lutheran and Anabaptist understandings of the “two kingdoms” differ?

## III. Use of Force or Violence

Leader: Romans 13:4 is important for both Mennonites and Lutherans: “If you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.”

Lutheran: Lutherans believe that participation in punishment and in war is sometimes justified in order to enforce justice and protect the innocent.

Mennonite: Mennonites believe that violence and killing are never justified, citing Matthew 5:44: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven.”

### Question for discussion:

1. Is it possible to live without violence in our world? Are certain forms of coercion more acceptable than others?

## IV. Conclusion

Leader,  
Lutheran, and  
Mennonite  
together

I Corinthians 12:12-13: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews, Greeks, slaves or free [Mennonites or Lutherans]—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

- Compiled by Margaret Loewen Reimer

“The past cannot be changed, but we can change the way the past is remembered in the present,” says the Commission report. “Reconciliation does not only look back into the past; rather it looks into a common future.” May both sides “become increasingly aware of the special gifts that God has bestowed on both churches.” (108-09)

The report suggests the following as steps to reconciliation:

- Lutherans must look at “doctrine” in a new light, to “negotiate these condemnations without undermining the authority of the confessions themselves.” (92)
- Mennonites can work at “healing” their memories of persecution. “Mennonites have sometimes claimed the martyr tradition as a badge of Christian superiority and have sometimes nurtured an identity rooted in victimization that has fostered a sense of self-righteousness and arrogance and has blinded us to the frailties and failures that are also deeply woven into our tradition.” (107)
- Lutherans can continue to thank reformers such as Luther and Melancthon for their great contributions while acknowledging that they shared some convictions of their contemporaries that “contradict the gospel”. In a work often cited by Anabaptists, Luther outlined the limits of temporal authority, stating that governments have no business encroaching on God’s kingdom. “For faith is a free act, to which no one can be forced.” (94-95)
- Mennonites can recognize that Anabaptists “caricatured their opponents in extreme language” and even denounced them as anti-Christ. (107-08) Mennonites owe a great deal to Martin Luther: Anabaptists built on Luther’s work; Menno Simons often quotes Luther.
- After acknowledging the harm done in the past, Lutherans and Mennonites can appreciate each other in a new way and learn from each other. Lutheran-Mennonite dialogues over the past decades have shown “how much Mennonites and Lutherans have in common. This has often been realized and put into practice through common service projects, shared worship and even eucharistic fellowship. In these encounters, Mennonites and Lutherans offer the witness of their lives and give witness to their faith.” (109)



## FURTHER READING



*Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ.* Report of the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission. Geneva and Strasbourg: The Lutheran World Federation and The Mennonite World Conference, 2010.

Günther Gassman and Scott Hendrix, *Fortress Introduction to The Lutheran Confessions.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.

Harry Loewen and Steve M. Nolt, *Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History.* Waterloo: Herald Press, 2010.

Martin Marty, *Martin Luther.* New York: Viking Books, 2004.

C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: Revised Student Edition.* Kitchener: Pandora Press, 1997.

C. Arnold Snyder, *From Anabaptist Seed: The Historic Core of Anabaptist-Related Identity.* Kitchener: Mennonite World Conference and Pandora Press, 1999.

Timothy Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Lutheran apology to Mennonites, July 22, 2010 on The Lutheran World Federation site	<a href="http://www.lwf-assembly.org/experience/lwi-assembly-news/news-detail/article/461/8/">http://www.lwf-assembly.org/experience/lwi-assembly-news/news-detail/article/461/8/</a>
“Lutherans and Mennonites make peace” videos containing footage from the 2010 Stuttgart assembly	<a href="http://www.lwf-assembly.org/resources/multimedia/lutheran-mennonite-reconciliation/">http://www.lwf-assembly.org/resources/multimedia/lutheran-mennonite-reconciliation/</a>
Mennonite World Conference site and Courier magazine	<a href="http://www.mwc-cmm.org">www.mwc-cmm.org</a>
“Declaration of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Condemnations of the Anabaptists” (adopted Nov. 2006)	<a href="http://tiny.cc/ofap92n5xf">http://tiny.cc/ofap92n5xf</a>
Response by Mennonite Church USA, “Right Re- membering in Anabaptist-Lutheran Relations” (2007)	<a href="http://www.mennoniteusa.org/linkclick.aspx?fileticket=9ptCMKotmQQ%3d&amp;tabid=1336">www.mennoniteusa.org/linkclick.aspx?fileticket=9ptCMKotmQQ%3d&amp;tabid=1336</a>