

**MENNONITE ARTICLES OF  
FAITH AS SET FORTH IN  
PUBLIC CONFESSION OF  
THE CHURCH**

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Mennonite Articles of Faith as Set Forth in Public Confession of the Church by Cornelis Ris

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**CORNELIS RIS**

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*MENNONITE*

**Articles of Faith**

*AS SET FORTH IN PUBLIC  
CONFESSION OF THE  
CHURCH.*

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*COMPILED AND STATED BY*

*CORNELIS RIS,*

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*PASTOR OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH AT*

*HOORN, HOLLAND.*

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*A TRANSLATION.*

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*MENNONITE BOOK CONCERN,  
BERNE, INDIANA,  
1904.*

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent and reliable data collection processes to ensure the validity of the results.

3. The third part of the document describes the different types of data that are collected and analyzed. It includes information on both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as the specific variables and metrics used in the analysis.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the various statistical methods and techniques used to analyze the data. It covers topics such as descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and regression analysis, among others.

5. The fifth part of the document presents the results of the analysis and discusses the implications of the findings. It highlights the key trends and patterns observed in the data and provides insights into the underlying causes and effects.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and the potential sources of error. It acknowledges the constraints of the data and the methods used and provides suggestions for future research to address these limitations.

7. The seventh part of the document provides a conclusion and summarizes the main findings of the study. It emphasizes the importance of the research and the need for continued monitoring and evaluation of the data.

8. The eighth part of the document includes a list of references and a bibliography, providing sources for the information used in the document.

9. The ninth part of the document includes a list of appendices and a glossary, providing additional information and definitions for the terms used in the document.

10. The tenth part of the document includes a list of figures and tables, providing visual representations of the data and the results of the analysis.

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## Preface,

The distinctive literature of the Mennonite church, limited though it is, includes a number of efforts at a complete statement of doctrines to be held and taught in the church. These were issued at different times and under various circumstances; sometimes perhaps in an apologetic spirit intended as a defense either before civil and ecclesiastical authorities or against those holding divergent views; but mostly with the laudable desire, not always achieved, of bringing about a closer union where differences of opinion and disputed questions of faith disturbed the harmony and threatened disruption.

The work that is here given in an English translation, owes its origin in the first place to the desire for a reunion, on an enduring basis, of once separated factions in a local Mennonite community. It was afterward developed into its present dimensions in order to widen its scope of usefulness in the same line.

Though the hope of the author for ultimate adoption of these Articles by Mennonites in general as the authoritative confession of faith of the church was not realized, and while neither they nor any other similar articles ever written and adopted in any portion of the Mennonite church carry with them the same weight of ecclesiastical authority as do the confessions of faith in some other churches, yet such a reverent and withal masterly effort in the way of a systematic statement of the essential teachings of the Bible is worthy of a careful study and will prove very helpful in the imparting of doctrinal instruction in the church.

Originating in the Netherlands, these articles were written in the language of that country. In order to make the work accessible to the Mennonites in Germany and in America the late Carl J. van der Smissen made a German translation in 1849. A similar motive prompted the present translation into English. There is great need in this country of more literature of this kind being offered to the constantly increasing English reading portion among our church members, to our children,

and to many others to whom a better knowledge of the teaching of our church will be no harm. The General Conference recognized the need, and at its triennial meeting in 1902 authorized this publication.

It may be well to say a word in reference to the translation. It is made, not from the original Dutch, but from the German version of van der Smissen. The difficulty of transmitting the exact shade of thought at every point is greatly increased by such a circuitous route. There has been no attempt at literalness in the translation but rather to give the thought in idiomatic English; and wherever the language in the German was taken from the Bible, the corresponding verses or parts of verses from the English Bible were incorporated in the translation. In doing this the Revised Version was mostly used, this version generally agreeing more nearly with the German of Luther than the King James version.

Some of the proof texts indicated in the German were found in the English to lack application and were therefore omitted. In a few instances others were substituted.

With these explanations we commend these Articles of Faith in their English dress to all to whom they are thus made accessible. We prize this work, with others of a similar character, for what they bring to us of the thought and teaching of the forefathers in our church, being moved with gratitude to God for the grace given them in such a deeply spiritual apprehension of revealed truth. We recognize in these works a blessed heritage come to us out of the past when men's faith was tried as in a crucible. As a guide in our own study and teaching we value them, not as an ultimate or conclusive statement of doctrines, but as an introduction simply to the devout study of the Scriptures, the inspired word of God, which is the one conclusive and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, the fountain-head of revealed truth to be believed and taught.



## Mennonite Articles of Faith.

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### I. Of the Knowledge of God from Nature.

We believe that there necessarily must be and actually is a supremely perfect Being, exalted above all other beings; a Being possessing in Himself infinite wisdom, power and glory, by whom all things were made and are continually sustained and governed;—this we believe not only because of the testimony of the holy scriptures, but because we may also clearly gather it from the things created.

Leaving our own being out of consideration, we see the heavens (Ps. 19: 1; 8: 3), the earth (Ps. 24: 1; Job 26: 7), the seas (Ps. 89: 9; Jer. 5: 22) and all that in them is (Job 12: 7—9; Ps. 107: 23, 24; Ps. 104) proclaim that such a greatness (Ps. 104: 24) and glory (Ps. 8: 9; 19: 5; 104: 1—3), skill and mastery (Ps. 104; 139: 1—18), fixed order (Ps. 148: 6; Is. 40: 26; Jer. 31: 35, 36), innumerable benefits (Acts 14: 17; Ps. 119: 64) and much besides, must of necessity have an author who himself is infinitely great, glorious, wise, powerful and good, just as the perfectness of a work of art gives evidence of the ability and insight of the artist.

Considering ourselves also, we find that this is no less verified when we thoughtfully observe the ingenious mechanism of our body (Job 10: 11, 12), the marvellous qualities and capabilities of the soul, as well as the union and reciprocal relation of both, all of which

points to a supreme author or creator and teaches us our exalted duties toward the same (Mal. 1: 6; Acts 17: 27). In this we are also especially confirmed by the consciousness of peace or fear, accordingly as we obey or disobey the voice of the law as it is written in our hearts (Rom. 2: 15).

All this, together with the concurring testimony of all thinking people in all ages, leads us to the conclusion that the thought that all things are eternal and self-existent or have been brought into existence by chance, and work independent of the control of a higher being, is so irrational that only presumptuous fools (Ps. 14: 1; Is. 29: 15, 16) or the stubbornly hardened (Jer. 5: 1—5) can entertain it, and that they do violence to their better convictions in order that, continuing in such unbelief, they may sin the more unhindered.

## II. Of the Holy Scriptures.

Although, as has been said, we conceive from the things that are created that there must be a God, who in His own being possesses infinite perfections, nevertheless, without a further revelation concerning the nature of His being, His perfection, His ways and His works, His holy will, and (since we have sinned) especially concerning the way and means of being reconciled with God, we would be much in the dark, as has been generally true of all the heathen.

Therefore we conceive it an incalculable boon that God has spoken at sundry times and in divers manners in times past to the fathers and prophets and in the fulness of time through His only begotten Son, as also through His holy apostles (Heb. 1: 1, 2), and that in His gracious pleasure He has had as much of it recorded as is necessary for us as a rule of faith and conduct (Rom. 15: 4; 2 Tim. 3: 15—17).

Under the term Holy Scriptures we include all those books known as regular or canonical, from the Pentateuch to Revelation. These Scriptures we call holy, because they are inspired by God and written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1: 21). We accept them therefore not as the word of man but of God; as the only infallible and sufficient rule of faith and conduct to which we owe supreme reverence and obedience.

There are many and weighty arguments upon which this our faith rests. Of these we give the following: (a) The teaching contained in these holy books transcends the laws or the light of nature, but in no wise contradicts them. (b) The contents thereof are altogether worthy of God and invite reverence for Him. (c) All that is contained therein serves to the attainment of holy ends; as the glory of God, the good of one's neighbor, and one's own happiness. (d) The holy writers were persons of distinguished piety and uprightness, who neither evidenced credulity nor sought their own glory, justification or temporal advantage in this work, much less could they obtain such; but their sole object was the glory of God and the salvation and peace of their fellowmen. (e) By means of supernatural miracles, fulfillment of prophecies, and many other things, God convinced them, and us through them, of their divine mission. Moreover, everyone who yields himself in honest obedience and submission to the Word of God, finds peace of heart and obtains for himself the assurance of the truth.

### III. Of God's Being and Perfections.

In accordance with these Holy Scriptures and as taught by them we believe there is an only God (Deut. 6: 4; 1 Cor. 8: 4—6), a Being wholly perfect (Matt. 5: