

## Why I Am Not... Amish or Mennonite

A “two for one” lesson!

### I. History

A. Both the Amish and the Mennonites trace their heritage back to European Anabaptists.

#### B. Mennonites

1. Grew out of the German Anabaptists during the 1500's.
2. Menno Simons (1496-1561)
  - a) Was a Catholic priest until 1536, after years of studying the Bible and subjects like infant baptism and transubstantiation.
  - b) His brother Pieter had become a radical Anabaptist earlier, and was killed in reprisals after some Anabaptists forcibly took a Catholic monastery near Bolsward, Friesland.
  - c) Menno became a very influential Anabaptist leader, with strong emphases on pacifism, personal holiness, and church discipline.
3. In 2009, there were 387,103 Mennonites in the U.S.

#### C. Amish

1. Began as a sect of Mennonites in Switzerland
  2. Their name comes from one of their early leaders, Jakob Amman (1656-1730)
    - a) Amman was probably an illiterate tailor who converted to Anabaptism in the 1670s.
    - b) Very little is known of his teachings and life, except for his positions on personal holiness and church discipline
  3. There are an estimated 290,000 Amish in the U.S.
- D. Because of the way of life these groups adhere to, they are often called “Plain People”
- E. Baptists today share a common heritage with many of the Anabaptist groups.

### II. Some Issues

#### A. Extreme Separation

1. These groups take verses like James 1:27 as a command to not only be separate from the evils of the world but from corrupt society itself.
  - a) For example, many do not use electricity or automobiles
2. There is also little interaction between their own communities based on even the slightest of difference.
3. John 17:14-15

#### B. Extreme Pacifism

1. Traditionally, these groups obtain from violence and even self-defense
2. They will refuse to join the military, and have often been granted exemption from drafts.
3. Their pacifism can go so far as to doing nothing that would prevent “God’s will” from happening, including use of health care.

4. Luke 3:14 (spoken to soldiers), Romans 13:3-4

#### C. Legalism

1. The Amish live by an unwritten code called the *Ordnung*.
  - a) How to dress, how to act, how to behave, how to worship, etc.
2. Mennonites have a much broader spectrum, with some as conservative as the Amish (the “Old Order”) and others accepting the most liberal church positions (Progressive Mennonites)
3. When a member of these groups fails to adhere to the standards that have been set, they are in danger of being shunned or excommunicated.
4. Much of this regulation is decided by the local leader (bishop for the Amish)
5. Romans 14:1, Colossians 2:20-23

#### D. Works Salvation

1. It can be difficult to nail down exactly what these groups believe in regards to salvation. They often profess “Salvation by Faith” but personal holiness and lifestyle gets mixed in. To some, there is no salvation outside of their churches.
2. Many do not believe you can know for sure you are saved (it’s too prideful)
3. Ephesians 2:8-9

#### E. Extreme Separation of Church and State

1. These groups often take this traditional Baptist position to extremes, rejecting government aid and refusing to vote.
2. The Amish often will self-govern their communities
3. Romans 13