While Mennonites in Colonial America were enjoying considerable religious freedom, their counterparts in Europe were in the same situation they always had been. Their well-being was dependent on the will of the ruling monarch, who would often extend an invitation only when there was poor soil that no one else could farm. In 1693 Jacob Amman led an effort to reform the Mennonite church in Switzerland and South Germany to include shunning, to hold communion more often, and other differences. When the discussions fell through, Jacob and his followers split from the other Mennonite congregations. Amman's followers became known as the Amish Mennonites. Dirk Willems (picture) saves his pursuer. This act of mercy led to his recapture, after which he was burned at the stake near Asperen (etching from Jan Luyken in the 1685 edition of Martyrs Mirror). Christianity portal. v. t. e. The Mennonites are members of certain Christian groups belonging to the church communities of Anabaptist denominations named after Menno Simons (1496–1561) of Friesland. Through his writings, Simons articulated and formalized the teachings of earlier Swiss founders, with the Some Old Order Mennonites drive horses and buggies. Others use cars for transportation. -Conservative Mennonite groups vary a great deal, but in general espouse strong faith and family life and believe that how they live should distinguish them from the larger society around them. An Introduction to the Mennonites The name Mennonite often evokes an image of somberly dressed rural folks who travel about with horses and buggies and refuse to take part in the military. In reality most Mennonites dress in fashionable clothing, drive modern cars, and live very much like their neighbors in urban and suburban North America. At first Mennonites were called Anabaptists because they rebaptized those who had been christened as infants.