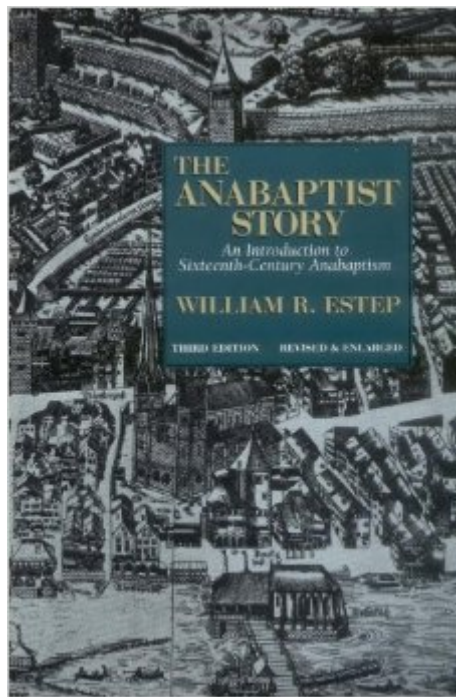


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# The Anabaptist Story



## Synopsis

Four hundred seventy years ago the Anabaptist movement was launched with the inauguration of believer's baptism and the formation of the first congregation of the Swiss Brethren in Zurich, Switzerland. This standard introduction to the history of Anabaptism by noted church historian William R. Estep offers a vivid chronicle of the rise and spread of teachings and heritage of this important stream in Christianity. This third edition of *The Anabaptist Story* has been substantially revised and enlarged to take into account the numerous Anabaptist sources that have come to light in the last half-century as well as the significant number of monographs and other scholarly works on Anabaptist themes that have recently appeared. Estep challenges a number of assumptions held by contemporary historians and offers fresh insights into the Anabaptist movement.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gives the historical background, foundation, and progress of the "re-baptizers" as their critics called them. The ministries of the early Anabaptist leaders are followed in detail in both Switzerland, Germany, and Holland. After a historical review of each leader's influence on the movement, the latter half of the book provides a detailed examination of these leaders' positions on matters of doctrine such as infant baptism, the trinity, pacifism, the swearing of oaths, the ban, and civil authority. Perhaps the most interesting sections of this book relates to the ongoing and violent persecutions which befell the early Anabaptists. Not only the dominant Catholic hierarch but their fellow Reformers made martyrs out of the early Anabaptists. The arguments and misrepresentations

made against the Anabaptists by their Catholic and Protestant tormentors helps to define what these people did, in fact, believe in. A great book for understanding where the Mennonites, Hutterites, and other Anabaptists came from.

This book helps to trace the remarkable strands of this brave movement. All of today's Christians owe a great deal to these pioneers in the demolition of sacralism. Today, if we choose to let our children decide for themselves whether or not to be baptised into the faith, we must credit the people described in this book with the opportunity to do so. As monumental as their thinking was, they are accurately portrayed in this book as the same sort of flawed human beings that we are. The writing is simultaneously sympathetic and honest - an excellent balance.

I read this book for an Anabaptist history class at a denominational school with direct lineage to the Anabaptist movement. I myself did not grow up in this tradition, but have grown to love many aspects of it. This book has surely contributed to this. Estep does a great job cutting out the fluff and writing a straight forward book on the movement. I particularly liked the last section of the book which focused on the probable Anabaptist connection to the Baptists. Since my theology leans more towards Baptist thinking, particularly the Reformed variety, this was most interesting to me. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to learn more about the Anabaptist movement and its contributions to modern Christianity.

This book gives the reader a thorough introduction to anabaptist history in the sixteenth-century. You do not need to be familiar with the anabaptist background in order to read this book, it gives you a complete introduction from scratch. The book covers the different anabaptist directions in Europe, it gives an informative portrait of the various anabaptist leaders and their theological viewpoints while it at the same time covers the prosecutions which the anabaptists suffered from the Catholic and to some extent the Lutheran churches. I strongly recommend this work of literature to those who want a short but informative introduction to anabaptism in the Middle Ages.

It's hard for us in the United States to believe that people were once attacked by so-called fellow Christians over their views on water baptism that they actually sought to back up their teachings on baptism with the Bible! However, while "death by burning" is not a choice many make today, many do attack those who seek to follow the Bible completely and who believe the Bible is the final Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21). In this work, Dr. Estep takes us through the history of

the Anabaptist tradition. Where did it start? What doctrines separated them from other movements? Historically, who has followed in their doctrines and practices? Dr. Estep traces these paths. The book is not easy reading however. It is a study of history and not theology. While Dr. Estep does touch on theological issues, the majority of the book is on the people involved. It is the story of the Anabaptist. Overall this is a solid work on the Anabaptist movement. You will see the faith of these baptism reformers who sought to take the Church back to the authority of Scripture and be baptised by immersion (Acts 2:38; 8:36-37) as a disciple of Jesus (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15-16).

In this book, Mr. Estep provides a very interesting overview of those who led the "radical reformation" in the 16th Century. The author does an excellent job of describing the various leaders, churches, communities, and doctrines which were formulated by the "re-baptizers" during this important time in the Church's history. I really learned a lot from this book about the Anabaptists, especially in terms of their doctrine. I did have two small problems with the book. First, the author is a little too sympathetic to the Anabaptists when defending the formation of their doctrines. Of course, that is his background so this did not come as a complete surprise. Second, the author does not describe the Munster incident in much detail, if at all. It is a little irresponsible as a historian to brush over this significant event in a book about 16th Century Anabaptism. Despite these two problems - it is a good book which I recommend to anyone interested in learning more about the radical reformation. If you do not know much about this period of Church history, like me, this is a great starting point.

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