

Peace Churches

Contact

“Historic Peace Churches” are free churches who declare nonviolence to be a feature of their religious identity. They are committed to developing just relationships, nonviolent conflict transformation, as well as consistent adherence to human rights on local, regional, and international levels. The “Historic Peace Churches” include:

- **Mennonites**, the oldest Free Church of the Reformation, emerged from the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century; they are among the first conscientious objectors.
- **Society of Friends** (“Quakers”), arose amid English Puritanism in the seventeenth century; they were early advocates of abolishing slavery.
- **Church of the Brethren** emerged in Germany from the Anabaptist and Pietist movements of the eighteenth century, and soon emigrated to the USA en masse; they are now engaged globally in interreligious peace and development projects.



The Anabaptist Dirk Willems saves his persecutor from drowning, is then captured and burned at the stake in 1569.



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Institute of Peace Church Theology

University of Hamburg, Germany

Organization

The Institute of Peace Church Theology was founded in 2006 in the Department of Protestant Theology at the University of Hamburg. It is supported primarily by private donations (via the AMG-Foundation).

It focuses on researching, developing and propagating peace theology and ethics by engaging contexts of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. In this way its efforts contribute to the current, socio-politically relevant discussion of peace ethics and security policies, thereby aiming to deepen the commitments to peace among religions. In addition to research and teaching at the university, these efforts impact international projects and dialogues.



Research

Nonviolence is an essential element of theological ethics for peace churches, being nothing less than a “regulative principle” for their theological reflection. This results in ongoing exploration and redefinition of theological issues and doctrines, especially concerning: humanity as created in God’s image, Christology, ecclesiology. Theology and ethics as such are thus intertwined and impact both the church’s self-image and its efforts for seeking “just peace” (the current focal theme of the World Council of Churches).

This field of research is not limited to Historic Peace Churches, but is extended to interdisciplinary research projects in broader European, ecumenical and international contexts.

Collaborative partners include:

- European Academy of Arts and Sciences
- Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Toronto Mennonite Theological Center, Canada
- Ecumenical Research Forum
- Academy of World Religions, University of Hamburg
- Institute of Missions, Ecumenism and Religious Studies, University of Hamburg
- Missions Academy, University of Hamburg
- World Council of Churches, Geneva (Commission of Ecumenical Education and Formation)
- Mennonite World Conference
- National Council of Churches in Germany (ACK)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany (Institute of Ecumenism, Human Rights, Refugee and Peace Education)
- Bienenberg Seminary, Switzerland
- Paris Mennonite Center

Teaching



The course offerings of the Institute are integrated into the curriculum at the Department of Theology. Courses are offered as modules in the disciplines of Systematic Theology, Ethics, Mission, Ecumenism, Religious Studies and Historical Theology, in addition to extra-curricular courses and events for continuing education students. Either jointly with partners or independently the Institute offers:

- lecture series
- summer schools (on the topics of peacebuilding, reconciliation, trauma healing)
- one-year curriculum specialization in Peacebuilding (University of Hamburg)
- one-year Master’s program *Peace, Trauma & Religion* (Free University of Amsterdam)
- *Formatio Mennonitica* (continuing education intensive seminars)
- mennoFORUM – www.mennoforum-hamburg.de
- Menno-Simons Sermon prize, valued at 2.000 €
- inter-European peace church theology student conferences