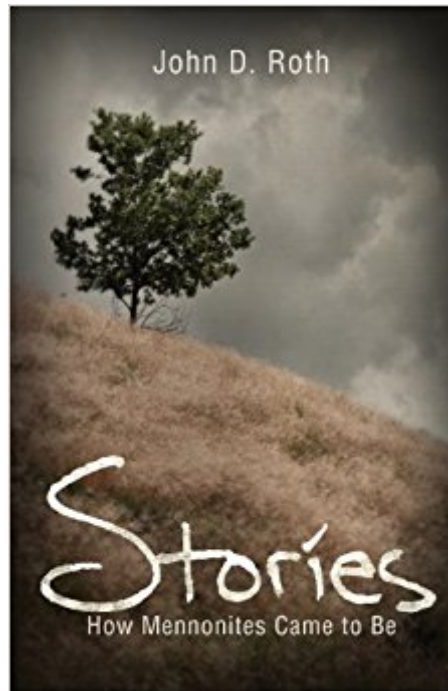




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# **Stories: How Mennonites Came To Be (John Roth Trilogy)**



## Synopsis

John D. Roth's straightforward, accessible narrative invigorates this contemporary introduction to the Mennonite story. Whether readers are new to the Mennonite community or just yearning for a fresh telling of Anabaptist origins, *Stories: How Mennonites Came to Be* will serve as a compact digest of the church's history for generations to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of the preeminent Mennonite historians of our time, Roth successfully weaves a complicated set of stories into a fascinating narrative that stretches from the early church to the present, and covers the globe. *Stories* is a remarkable achievement, a must-read for those who don't know the Anabaptist story, and for those who think they do.--William Vance Trollinger Jr., Bluffton University

Roth weaves together narrative, biography, and theology in an engaging, compelling, and sometimes provocative fashion. This book is an invitation to consider how what happened back then can illuminate the task of following Jesus now. It will encourage and challenge anyone seeking to be a faithful follower.--Jonathan Showalter, Rosedale Bible College

This work needs to be in print. It addresses contemporary issues, and linking the past and the present is a strength of this work.

--Karl Koop, Canadian Mennonite University

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John D. Roth is a professor of history at Goshen College, where he also serves as director of the Mennonite Historical Library and editor of *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*. He has edited and authored several books, including *Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice* (a companion title to this book) and *Engaging Anabaptism: Conversations with a Radical Tradition*.

This is one of the best church books I've ever read--it definitely deserves re-reading. In order to avoid the common mistake of telling the Anabaptist story by starting in the sixteenth century, Roth opens up by relating the story of Jesus and His first followers, and summarizes the first three centuries of the Christian faith. He then moves to the conversion of Constantine, the Roman emperor, and explains why that was a defining moment in the history of the church. Roth provides an overview of the next thousand years, then explains the events of the Protestant Reformation. Only then does he introduce the Anabaptist-Mennonite chapter of the story. Indeed, only against the background of the early church, the Catholic church, and the Reformation can we really understand Anabaptists as the reformers of the Reformation. Only in this context can we see the striking parallels between the early church and the sixteenth-century Anabaptist movement, and between the sixteenth-century movement and the position we find ourselves in today. (The parallels with today's Mennonite church can be seen in various periods all throughout the history of the Anabaptist movement.) As I continued reading, I was really appreciative of the scope Roth uses to tell the Anabaptist-Mennonite story. It really is unique! He gives us the how and why of Anabaptists' break with the Protestant reformers, gives a straightforward account of their persecution (neither exaggerated nor understated), and explains the scattering of the Anabaptist-Mennonite church across the globe and how this dispersion has affected the faith. Consistent with the insight and depth of the book, Roth brings us up to the present day and helps us understand what impact our past has on our present and our future. He explains the trademarks that distinguish Mennonites from other Christians and helps us to see them as the framework for understanding the future path of the church. This book is a very informative, well-written, sensibly organized, fascinating handling of the Mennonite story. It's an easy read, but thought-provoking as well. Several times I was struck by Roth's insight and had to put the book down to reflect on the powerful truths he illuminated. Whether

you're intimately familiar with the Anabaptist-Mennonite story or have never even heard of it, this book would be a great place to learn more about this amazing chapter in the story of God's dealings with people.

I have a friend who recently moved back to PA from the west coast and she was interested in the Mennonites. So I found this book to be interesting because it had several different stories. I did not read the book myself, as I said, it was a gift for someone else.

this is written in a simple and meaningful way. A respectful and intelligent book about an important religion and a significant American culture.

Very interesting for someone exploring who the Mennonites are. I enjoyed the stories and felt I knew who the Mennonites were better after reading this book.

This explains a lot of my background in a very interesting way. I enjoyed it immensely and have recommended it several times. I would have liked a little more about the Mennonite Brethren denomination since half of my background stems from that, but I've been quite excited to find this study. So well done.

THIS WAS A GIFT TO MY SON. IT IS EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTED AND IS VERY PLEASED. THE CONTENT TO HIS ESTIMATION IS FACTUAL AND TRUSTWORTHY

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