

Policy Governing the Organization of a Mennonite Colored Organization

At a joint meeting of the Executive Committee of the Virginia Mennonite Conference and the Executive Committee of the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities held at the home of Etter F. Heatwole, November 11, 1940, Bishop S. H. Rhodes presented the matter of fixing definite policies to govern relationships between the colored and white in Mennonite church fellowship. A motion was passed adopting the following recommendations as an official statement of our policy:

In view of the general attitude of society in the South toward the intermingling of the two races and inasmuch as we desire to adopt a practical working policy with the view of promoting the best interests for both colored and white, and since as a matter of expediency we must

make some distinction to meet existing conditions, we propose the following course of procedure in establishing a Mennonite colored congregation.

1. *Aim*—It is our aim to build up a colored congregation under a separate but auxiliary organization of the Virginia Mennonite Conference.
2. *Baptism*—We recommend that the bishop in charge proceed with the administration of the ordinance of baptism in the usual manner and after extending the right hand of fellowship, the applicant should be greeted by a colored brother or colored sister.
3. *Salutation and Feetwashing*—Keeping in line with our present practice of making a distinction between the sexes in the observance of feetwashing and of the kiss of charity, we do not recommend the practice of these two ordinances between white and colored.
4. *Communion*—We recommend that provision be made for the use of individual cups at the communion table and that participation in the communion be restricted to the colored and those who are regular workers among them.

(Minutes, Executive Committee, Virginia Mennonite Mission Board, 1931-1947).