

1 **Mennonites and Progressivism**

2 **Throughout the 19th century, American Mennonites were strongly influenced by pietistic revivalism.**

- Leaders such as John Herr, founder of the Reformed Mennonites, and John Holdeman, founder of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, combined an emphasis on personal conversion experiences with very strict church discipline in the tradition of Dirk Philips.

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- Other Mennonites went even farther in welcoming progressive changes.
 - They saw more emotional expression as evidence of spiritual life.
 - They promoted mission work, Sunday schools, publishing, and revival meetings as ways of fulfilling the church's responsibility to spread the gospel.

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- They worked toward the higher degree of church organization typical of other American Protestant groups, such as structured church conferences and mission boards.
- They promoted higher standards of education.
- They hoped to correct what they saw as an overemphasis on traditional standards of dress and lifestyle.

5 **Important progressives included publisher John F. Funk and evangelist John S. Coffman.**

6 **Some Mennonites saw these changes as threats to true Christian values.**

- Many of the changes promoted by progressives seemed to work against humility.
- Progressive ideas elevated the individual above the church.
- Progressives were strongly influenced by non-Anabaptists who were wrong in some of their beliefs.

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- Progressives often seemed weakly committed to traditional Mennonite standards that symbolized humility and separation.
- Progressive ideas tended to separate conversion and salvation from Christian living.
- Serious divisions resulted, often because of harshness, inflexibility, and unloving attitudes on both sides.

8 **European Mennonites were more influenced by rationalism and religious liberalism.**