

Church Bells Ring in Zurich

Remarkable and *memorable* are two words I have been using to describe the Reformed-Anabaptist Reconciliation conference in Zurich Switzerland, June 26. It was my privilege to represent MC USA at this historic event. Though it takes more than an event to effect reconciliation and to build relationships, this was a major step in the conversation between Reformed and Mennonites.

- The first of several highlights was the preaching of Larry Miller, executive secretary of Mennonite World Conference delivered from the lofty pulpit of the Grossmunster. (He would want it to be known that he used that pulpit at the insistence of the Reformed church.)
- A second highpoint was the ringing of the church bells of Zurich at the dedication of the historical marker by the Limmat River.
- A third moving event was the statement of confession offered by Ruedi Reich, president of the Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich.
- A fourth profound moment was the storytelling of Lawrence Hart in the Grossmunster, recounting his role in a Southern Cheyenne peacemaking ceremony in Cheyenne, Oklahoma, in 1968.

The statement of confession said in part: “We acknowledge this historic sin and, from today’s point of view, consider it a betrayal of the gospel. Before God . . . we point to this dark side eof the Reformation, and we ask God and you, dear brothers and sisters of the Mennonite faith, to forgive us.”

In response, Thomas Gyger, president of the Swiss Mennonite Conference, said, “In the name of my Mennonite brothers and sisters coming from different horizons, I would like to express my gratitude to the authorities of the city of Zurich, as well as to those of the Reformed church of the canton of Zurich. For some of us, this plaque represents a way of perpetrating the memory of our past and, we hope, the dialogue; others see in it the strong sign of an important event that tomorrow will be over, but that we will refer to in order to testify of our reconciliation.”

Read more about the Zurich conference, including the full texts of all the statements, and photos in *The Mennonite* and the upcoming October issue of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

John E. Sharp, Director
Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee

July 2004