

**Call for Papers**

# **Departing Canada, Encountering Latin America:**

**Reflections on the Centenary of Mennonite  
Emigration from Canada to Mexico and Paraguay**

**October 21-22, 2022**

**A CTMS Conference  
at  
The University of Winnipeg**

The year 1922 marks the beginning of the largest group emigration in Canadian history when several thousand Low German-speaking Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan began to establish their first colonies in northern Mexico. Their emigration was accompanied by plans for a major settlement of Mennonites in the contested Paraguayan Gran Chaco that would begin later that decade. Both were products of conflict with provincial authorities over English-language education but also reflected internal tensions over acculturation and technology use. Since these seminal migrations of the 1920s, internal growth and sub-migration have resulted in the establishment of Low German Mennonite communities throughout Mexico and Paraguay as well as in Belize, Bolivia, Argentina, Colombia, and Peru. The majority of the roughly 250,000 Low German-speaking Mennonites now living in Latin America are descendants of that initial migration to post-revolutionary Mexico a century ago.

This centenary conference invites papers from a variety of disciplines that explore the development of Mennonite life on the Canadian prairies, the factors that drove emigration from Canada in 1922, the establishment and evolution of Mennonite communities in Mexico and Paraguay, and the subsequent migration of Mennonites from Mexico to other regions of Latin America. We also welcome submissions that offer comparative examples and/or situate Low German Mennonites within national and regional contexts.

Proposals might consider:

- Mennonite-government negotiations
- Education policies, religious freedoms, and minority rights
- Settler colonialism, internal colonialism and state formation
- Citizenship and belonging
- Intercultural relationships with Latin Americans (Indigenous and non-Indigenous)
- Old Colony Mennonite theology and lived religion of the Old Colony
- Transplanted foodways, culture, language
- Gender relations
- Agricultural innovations, new crops and animal breeds
- Technological restrictions and adaptations
- Environmental change and landscape alteration
- Contested frontiers and borderlands
- Media representation of Mennonites
- Sub-migrations, return migrations, and transnational connections

The conference will be hosted by the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg and will also be live-streamed.

Proposal submission: December 1, 2021. Email a 100-word proposal and short CV (or questions) to Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg. Email: [b.nobbs-thiessen@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:b.nobbs-thiessen@uwinnipeg.ca).