

Preamble: Mennonites have experienced state power in different ways. As a pacifist, minority group in 16th-20th Century Europe, Mennonites sometimes faced hostile governments and vested powers. As a non-violent global people today they continue to relate to nation states and powerful groups in unique ways. In their history Mennonites have endured physical suffering, the contempt for human dignity, gross injustices and the squelching of dissent. But they have also envisaged ways to process and confront these human rights violations, advocating for the rights of others and for rights for themselves. This conference features research papers from a wide variety of disciplines, considering at every turn how Mennonites have been challenged by the question of human rights and state power, in ways such as:

VICTIMS – Mennonites have and continue to suffer torture, incarceration, exile and other forms of persecution at hands of abusive governments and powerful social groups.

BENEFICIARIES – Mennonites have gained from special privileges and in the process sometimes been complicit in the suffering of other groups, unknowingly or knowingly.

ADVOCATES – Mennonites have defended the weak and voiceless, calling for peace, inclusion and equality, sometimes in opposition to the state, sometimes in cooperation with the state.

Although Mennonites have not often used 'human rights' terminology, this conference asserts that the Mennonite experience can shed light on the issue of human rights, examining it from the perspective of a religious, non-violent and communitarian heritage.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18

3:00-4:30 p.m. Perimeter Tour and Introduction of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Assemble at 'Explore Manitoba Centre' building at the Forks. Host: Angela Cassie, Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Plan to arrive early, tour limited to 50 persons.

7:00-9:00 pm: Human Rights and State Power: Pitfalls and Opportunities

Welcome: Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies

Opening Reflections: Lloyd Axworthy, President, The University of Winnipeg

Music: Namwira Folk

Keynote: Virgil O. Wiebe, Faculty of Law, University of Minnesota, "Human Rights and State Power: Pitfalls and Opportunities"

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19

8:30-9:45 am: Sixteenth Century Anabaptists and the Nonconformists

Chair, John J. Friesen, Canadian Mennonite University
John Derksen, Menno Simons College, "Women's Voice and Power among Strasbourg's Religious Nonconformists, 1525-1570"

Andrew P. Klager, University of the Fraser Valley, "Inter-religious Peacebuilding and Human Rights in Anabaptist-Mennonite Origins"

9:45-10:15 am: Coffee

10:15 am-12:00 noon: Human Rights and State Power in Global Context, I

Chair: Willie Reimer, MCC Canada

L. Daniel Pantoja, PeaceBuilders Community, Davao City, Philippines, "Peace building and Human Rights Advocacy in Mindanao, Philippines"

Eliakim Sibanda, The University of Winnipeg, "Am I my Sibling's Keeper? BICC and State Relations in Zimbabwe and the Question on Human Rights"

Alain Epp Weaver, MCC USA, Akron, Pennsylvania, "Mennonites, Exile, and the Palestinian Right of Return"

12:00-1:00 pm: Noon Break

1:00-2:15 pm: Human Rights and State Power in Global Context, II

Chair, Wendy Kroeker, Canadian Mennonite University
Bonnie Klassen, Peter Stuckey and Adrienne Wiebe, MCC Latin America, "'Pan y Paz': Anabaptism Reinterpreted in the Colombian Context"

Patricia Harms, Brandon University, "Stumbling Toward Our Destination: Mennonites, Human Rights and the Mennonite Central Committee in Guatemala, 1976-1990"

2:15-3:30 pm: Mennonites and Citizenship in 19th Century Europe

Chair: Alf Redekopp, Mennonite Heritage Centre

Mark Jantzen, Bethel College, "Debates over the Rights and Duties of Citizens: Mennonites in Germany from 1848 to the 1870s"

Nataliya Venger, University of Dnepropetrovsk, "Nineteenth Century Russia Nationalism and Mennonite Civic Activity"

3:30-4:00 pm Coffee

4:00-5:15 pm: Human Rights and State Power: Visions and Debates

Chair: James Christie, The University of Winnipeg
Carl Friesen, Regent College, "Human Rights Theory and Visions for Justice"

Dean Peachey, The University of Winnipeg, "Uneasy Bedfellows: Mennonite Praxis and Human Rights"

5:15-7:30 pm Evening Break

7:30-9:30 pm: Human Rights and the Global Mennonite Community

(Keynote Session at Canadian Mennonite University, South Campus)

Chair: Peter Rempel, MCC Manitoba

Cesar Garcia, Mennonite World Conference, Bogota, Colombia, "Human Rights, the State and the Global Mennonite Community"

Music: Canadian Mennonite University Singers
Ray Dirks, Mennonite Heritage Gallery, "Mennonite Mothers and the Journey from the Soviet Union," Art Exhibit Reception (compliments Canadian Mennonite University)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20

8:30-10:15 am: Mennonite Ideals and the Challenge of Engaging the State

Chair: Stephanie Stobbe, Menno Simons College
Paul Heidebrecht, MCC, Ottawa Office, "Looking for the Right Words: Human Rights and MCC's Advocacy Work"
Doug Hostetter, Director, MCC United Nations Office, New York, "Towards a Mennonite Understanding of Rejection of War in the Name of Human Rights."
Leo Driedger, Winnipeg, "Mennonites: From Separatist Privilege to Engaged Rights"

10:15-10:45 am Coffee

10:45-12:00 noon: Mennonites and State Abuse in 20th Century Europe

Chair: Hans Werner, The University of Winnipeg/Plett Foundation

Werner Toews, Winnipeg, "Sketches From Siberia: The Final Chapter of Jacob Sudermann"

Christiana M. Epp Duchinsky, Ottawa, "Mennonite Responses to Nazi Abuses: A Mennonite Family in Danzig/Prussia"

12:00-1:00 Noon Break

1:00-3:00 pm: Faith Perspectives, Human Rights and State Power

Chair: Judith Dueck, The University of Winnipeg Global College

Mae Louise Campbell, The University of Winnipeg/Red River College, "Aboriginal Spirituality"

Emma Alexander Mudaliar, The University of Winnipeg, "Buddhism"

Clint Curle, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, "Christianity"

Karen Soria, Temple Shalom, "Judaism"

Omar Siddiqui, Canadian Muslim Leadership Institute, "Islam"

3:00-3:30 pm: Coffee

3:30-5:15 pm: Extending Human Rights in New Directions

Chair: Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies

Jan Braun, Student Christian Movement, Toronto, "The State, Human Rights and Queer Mennonites"

Ricardo Esquivia, Sincelejo, Colombia, "Building Grassroots Commitment to the Quest for Human Dignity"

Lowell Ewert, Conrad Grebel University College, "Linking the 'Rights' of Human Rights Law and the 'Responsibilities' of Civil Society Organizations"

5:15-5:30 pm: Collecting the Voices, Thanking the Speakers

CONFERENCE DETAILS

Sponsor: Mennonite Historical Society of Canada/ Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM) Sub-Committee:
Committee Members: Leonard Doell (MCC Saskatchewan); Marlene Epp (Conrad Grebel University College); Royden Loewen (The University of Winnipeg); Lucille Marr (McGill University); Ken Reddig (Eden Mental Health Services)

Major Funder: Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Other Funding: The University of Winnipeg, D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation, Canadian Mennonite University

Planning Committee: Angela Cassie (Canadian Museum for Human Rights); Ray Dirks (Mennonite Heritage Gallery); Judith Dueck (The University of Winnipeg Global College); John J. Friesen (Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society/ Canadian Mennonite University); Wendy Kroeker (Canadian Mennonite University); Royden Loewen (Chair in Mennonite Studies, The University of Winnipeg); Dean Peachy (Global College, The University of Winnipeg); Alf Redekopp (Mennonite Historical Society of Canada); Peter Rempel (Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba); Eliakim Sibanda (The University of Winnipeg).

Suggested Lodging: Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, 360 Colony Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2P3. Located adjacent to the University. Hotel Front Desk: 1-204-7867011 Hotel Fax: 1-204-7721443 Ask for the The University of Winnipeg, Mennonite Studies Conference rate

Suggested Dining: The University of Winnipeg restaurants, as well as any one of a dozen restaurants within a block or two of the University.

Suggested Parking: any one of half a dozen parking lots around the University

Conference Proceedings: A selection of the conference papers will be published in the peer reviewed Journal of Mennonite Studies. To subscribe email r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca

For More Information: email r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca or call 786-9391.



Mennonites and Human Rights: Grappling with State Power in the Past and Present

**18-20 October 2012
Asper Centre for Theatre
The University of Winnipeg**

Hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies

Sponsored as the
8th Divergent Voices Canadian Mennonites (DVCM)
Conference by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada

FREE ATTENDANCE: REGISTER ON SITE

