

An Academic & Community Outreach Conference

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MCC IN CANADA: A 50th Anniversary History Conference

Hosted by: The Chair in Mennonite Studies
Sponsored by: The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada



Convocation Hall, 2nd Floor Wesley Hall
13–14 December 2013

Introduction

This conference asks you to remember the history of MCC Canada. You may have helped assemble Christmas bundles for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to share with needy children in a distant war-torn country. You may remember mealtime discussions about MCC and Vietnam, the Middle East, and a simmering Cold War. You may remember serving overseas somewhere as a young adult. These are Esther Epp-Tiessen's memories and those that guided her thinking as she set out to write the history of MCC Canada.

Her account is that of an insider/outsider observer: insider, as long term worker for MCC Canada; outsider, as author working under the auspices of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. It is an insider book in its reliance on MCC Canada documents, interviews with MCC workers, and Mennonite periodicals. But it is an outsider account in its independent and critical analysis of the organization and movement.

This conference begins with the launching of Esther's book, *Mennonite Central Committee in Canada: A History*. It then proceeds to responses to this book, analyzing it, and pondering how it relates to a wider story of faith and charity in Canada, and MCC as a global movement.

The story of MCC in Canada is one of people coming together because of a shared history, identity and mission. That history, rooted in the Anabaptist movement, emphasizes a commitment to the way of Christ, to nonviolence, to service to the poor, and to justice. But is also a story of people debating what this challenge means. MCC Canada reflects the varied church groups that own this organization, as well as the diversity of volunteers and vocations seeking to address suffering wherever it is found.

This conference celebrates MCC Canada's fiftieth anniversary in 2013, but the story begins well before December 13, 1963, certainly as far back as 1920. It is also more than just an account of MCC Canada for this story includes provincial MCCs, the binational (U.S. and Canada) level of MCC, and the global ministry of MCC. It is thus the story of both "MCC Canada" and "MCC in Canada."

And it is a story that unfolds over time. It is a story of a shifting foci of service over the decades, of vibrant personalities, of changing vocabularies, of new ways of seeing the world's social needs. It is a decade-by-decade story, one reflecting distinct phases: birth, growth, maturation, decline, and then, rebirth or re-invention.

At this conference we ponder, critique and celebrate a story of caring for one another and for others, for communities worldwide, and for our earth. It is a story inspired by faith and commitment.

The Program

Friday, December 13, 2013
7:30 p.m. (Evening Session)

MCC IN CANADA: A BOOK LAUNCH

Chair and Conference Introduction:
Royden Loewen, University of Winnipeg
Esther Epp-Tiessen, Winnipeg, keynote address,
"Writing the Story of MCC in Canada"
Book Signing and Reception to follow

Saturday, December 14, 2013
(Morning Session)

MCC CANADA IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.:

Part I: Dynamics at the Centre

Chair: Korey Dyck, Mennonite Heritage Centre
Lucille Marr, McGill University,
"Gender and Generation in the MCC Story"
T.D. Regehr, University of Calgary,
"Canadian Mennonite Identity and MCC"

9:45-10:15 Coffee

10:15-12:00 p.m._

Part II: Broadening the Story

Chair: Jane Barter Moulaison, University of
Winnipeg
Alain Epp Weaver, Mennonite Central Committee,
Akron,
"MCC Canada and the Global Community"
Paul Bramadat, Centre for Studies in Religion and
Society, University of Victoria,
"Religion and the 'Common Good' in Canada"

12:00-1:00 LUNCH

Saturday, December 14, 2013 (Afternoon Session)

STORIES: SURPRISES, SETBACKS AND SUCCESSES

1:00-2:30

Part I: People

Chair: Peter Epp, Mennonite Collegiate Institute,
Gretna
Indigenous people – Rick Cober Bauman,
Shakespeare, ON
Women – Eileen Klassen Hamm, Saskatoon
Refugees – Marijke Olson, Abbotsford
Low German Mennonites – Mary Friesen, Winnipeg

2:30-3:00 Coffee

3:00-4:30

Part II: Programs

Chair: Jennifer Duerksen, Steinbach Christian
High School
Restorative Justice – Wayne Northey, Agassiz, BC
Canadian Foodgrains Bank – John Wieler,
Winnipeg
Voluntary Service – Hardy Groening, Winnipeg
MCC Ottawa Office – William Janzen, Ottawa

PONDERING THE FUTURE AND COLLECTING THE VOICES

4:30 – 5 p.m.

Chair: Dora Dueck, Winnipeg
Stefan Epp-Koop, Winnipeg,
"Envisioning MCC in Canada in 2038"
Acknowledgements – the Committee

Conference Details:

Special Recognition:

The conference organizing committee gratefully recognizes Ken Reddig, former executive director of MCC Manitoba, who first proposed the idea of a 50th anniversary history of MCC Canada and offered leadership to the Steering Committee that conceptualized the book.

History Book Steering Committee:

Arthur Driedger, Eleanor Martens,
Royden Loewen, Ken Reddig, Marg Rempel,
Conrad Stoesz, Reg Toews, John Wieler.

History Book Readers Committee:

Stefan Epp-Koop, Lucille Marr, Royden Loewen,
Ken Reddig, Ted Regehr.

History Conference Planning Committee:

Stefan Epp-Koop, Esther Epp-Tiessen, Royden
Loewen, Pamela Peters-Pries.

Lodging:

Suggested lodging is at Holiday Inn, Colony
Street, Winnipeg. Phone 204-786-7011 and ask for
special Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg
rates.

Parking:

Park at any one of a dozen Impac parking lots
around the University, at the ANX parkade off
of Colony, or the Hudson's Bay Parkade. Street
parking on both Friday night and on Saturdays is
possible as well.

Food:

Eat at any one of a dozen restaurants within a
block or two of the University or at one of the
University's five restaurants: Stella's, Elements,
Riddell Hall Cafeteria, Starbucks, etc.

Funding:

Funding for the conference was made possible
with a grant given to the Mennonite Historical
Society of Canada's DVCM committee by MCC
Canada. We also acknowledge free space offered
by University of Winnipeg.

The Book:

by Esther Epp-Tiessen, *Mennonite Central
Committee in Canada: A History*
published by Canadian Mennonite University
Press.