PREAMBLE
This conference considers the process by which Mennonites have become non-Mennonites, either as individuals or as church groups. It addresses the fact that church boundaries and religious identities are never static, but evolve, sometimes flourishing in unexpected ways but at other times giving way to other faith or cultural expressions, sometimes in syncretic form with competing identities.

It also recognizes that historians tend more often to emphasize moments of ‘becoming’ Anabaptist or Mennonite, than of ceasing to identify as Mennonite. Yet in past decades, even centuries, many Mennonites switched religious affiliations, either by choice or involuntarily. Sometimes they joined non-denominational evangelical bodies, mainline liturgical groups or non-Christian religions. Or they left religion entirely to embrace a secular cosmology in which any linkage to a Mennonite past was expressed in terms of a symbolic ethnicity.

The conference also considers how those leaving the Mennonite fold may cultivate a ‘near-Mennonite’ identity, for example, embracing a theology or cosmology that respects so-called Anabaptist values – nonviolence, community, humility, service. Such values may have been maintained, perhaps reinvented or even reinvigorated, even as the nomenclature ‘Mennonite’ is exchanged for another.

The conference is not a lament, nor is it focused on the ‘fate’ of the Mennonite community. Rather it facilitates the analysis of a social and cultural phenomenon. As such it seeks neither to endorse nor critique changing religious affiliation but to be frank and honest in its historical analysis of the changing ecclesiastical landscape among Mennonites.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2
7:00 p.m. Reception for Paper Presenters and Chairs, University of Winnipeg

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3
8:30-8:40 a.m.
Welcome and Introducing the Conference
Royden Loewen, Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg

Catholics, Anglicans and High Church Mennonites
Chair: Helmut Harder, Canadian Mennonite University
Peter Erb, Wilfrid Laurier University, “Lesser Presumption, No Despair: ‘Fellow-believers’ in a Catholic World”
Susie Fisher, University of Manitoba, “‘High Church Mennonites?’: Religion and Ethnicity in an Anglican Church”
Gerald Schlabaech, University of St. Thomas, “Capitalizing Church: On Finding Catholicism Unavoidable”

10:15-10:45 a.m. Coffee
10:45 a.m. -12:20 p.m.
A ‘Near Mennonite’ Theological Space
Chair: Terry Hiebert, Steinbach Bible College
Paul Doerksen, Canadian Mennonite University, “A Methodist ‘Near Mennonite’: The Theological Influence of Stanley Hauerwas”
Paul Martens, Baylor University, “How Mennonite Theology Became Superfluous in Three Easy Steps: Bender, Yoder and Weaver”

12:20-1:20 p.m. Lunch
1:20-3:00 p.m.
Protestant Pathways into the ‘City’
Chair: Carlos Colorado, University of Winnipeg
Kate Bowler, Duke University, “Harvest Time at Springs Church: A Prosperity Gospel for Winnipeg Mennonites”
Philipp Gollner, University of Notre Dame, “How Mennonites Became ‘White’: A Chicago Case Study”
Conrad Stoesz, Centre for MB Studies/Mennonite Heritage Centre, “‘Mennonite’ Soldiers and the Founding of the Altona United Church”
8:30-10:15 a.m. Coffee

Changing Names or ‘Leaving Anabaptism’?
Chair: Bruce Guenther, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
Tim Erdel, Missionary Archives, Mishawaka: “From Egly Amish to Defenceless Mennonite to Evangelical Mennonite to Fellowship of Evangelical Churches”
Jon Isaak, Centre for MB Studies, Winnipeg, “From Mennonite Brethren to Community Church to Life Centre and Gathering Place.”
Sam Steiner, Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Waterloo, “From Mennonite Brethren in Christ to Evangelical Missionary Church”

10:15-10:45 a.m. Coffee

10:45 a.m. -12:30 p.m.
Ex-Converts in the ‘Mission Field’
Chair: Arley Loewen, Operation Mobilization
Daryl Climenhaga, Providence Theological Seminary and Bekitemba Dube, Mtshabezi Mission, “Into the BIC in Zimbabwe and ‘out the back door’”
Richard Lougheed, Société d’histoire mennonite du Québec, Montreal, “From French Catholic to Frères Mennonites to Secular Québécois”
Jim Pankratz, Conrad Grebel University College, “The Twice Marginalized: Mennonites in India”

5:15-7:30 p.m. Dinner

7:30-9:30 p.m.
Featured Evening: Leaders in ‘Other’ Places
Greetings: Glen Moulaison, Dean of Humanities, University of Winnipeg
Chair: Royden Loewen, University of Winnipeg
Elma Harder, Muslim Educational Foundation, Edmonton
Abe Funk, Baptist General Conference of Canada, Saskatoon
Lukas Tiessen, University of Winnipeg Atheist Student Association, Winnipeg

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5
8:30-10:15 a.m. Coffee

Intentionally Menno-Not in the Wider World
Chair: Julia Thiessen, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate
Candace Froebe, Winnipeg Holistic Expressive Arts Therapy, “A Menno-Not Intentional Community: The Story of McMillan House”
Elizabeth Plett, Adult Education Centres, Winnipeg, “Stories of being Ex-Holdeman in Canada and the US.”
Wolf-Dietrich Sahr, Universidade Federal do Paraná, and Cicilian Löwen Sahr, Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa, “Mennonites and Translocal Identities in Brazil and Mexico”

10:45 a.m. Lunch

1:30-2:45 p.m.
Gender Non-Conforming Mennonites
Chair: Aiden Enns, Geez Magazine
Alicia Dueck, University of Winnipeg, "Breaking the Binary: Queering Mennonite Identity”
Julia Michael, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gieße, “Dis-identification as Narrative Practice in Queer Mennonite Text”

2:45-3:15 p.m. Faspa

3:15-4:30 p.m.
‘Low German Russian Baptists: Siberia, Germany and Manitoba
Chair: Hans Werner, University of Winnipeg
Aileen Friesen, University of Illinois, “Unraveling the Russian Mennonite Baptist Identity in Western Siberia”
Christina Barwich, Technische Universität Darmstadt, “Bist du Gläubig?': ‘Belief’ among the Aussiedler in Germany and Manitoba”

4:30-4:45p.m.
Collecting the Voices and Whither To?

TBA

Conference Details:
Divergent Voices of Canadian Mennonites (DVCM), a subcommittee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada: Leonard Doell, Marlene Epp, Royden Loewen, Lucille Marr, Ken Reddig

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

Parking:
Park at any one of a dozen Impark parking lots around the University, at the ANX parkade off of Colony, or the Hudson’s Bay Parkade. Street parking on both Friday evening and on Saturday 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: Stellas, Garbonzos, Elements, Riddel Hall Cafeteria, Starbucks, etc.

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

Proceedings:
Selected papers, refereed through a peer-review process, will be published in the Journal of Mennonite Studies 2015. Current subscription cost: $28/year. To subscribe email r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca.