



Ex-Mennonite Near Mennonite: Liturgical, Non-denominational, Secular

An academic and community education
conference

Hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies,
University of Winnipeg
Sponsored by the Mennonite Historical
Society of Canada (DVCM Committee)

3 and 4 October 2014

FREE ATTENDANCE – REGISTER ON-SITE

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

8:40-10:15 a.m.

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 Schlabach, 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"

Donald Stoesz, Bowden Institution, Red Deer, "The
Attraction of Ecumenism, Liturgy, Priesthood
and Spatial Order"

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"

3:00-3:30 p.m. Coffee

3:30-5:15 p.m.

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"

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 Thiessen, University of Winnipeg Atheist Student
Association, Winnipeg

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

8:30-10:15 a.m.

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"

12:30-1:30 p.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 Gießen,
"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.

Back issues available at \$18 per issue: 2014, Mennonites,
Human Rights and State Power; 2013, Anti-Modern Pathways;
2012, Mennonites in Siberia; 2011, Mennonite/s Writing; 2010,
Mennonites, Melancholy and Mental Health; 2009, Mennonites
and Money; 2008, Family and Sexuality; 2007, War and the
Conscientious Objector; 2006, Refugee Newcomers; 2005,
North American Mennonite Historiography; 2004, Return of
the Kanadier; 2003, Mennonite Studies: A 25th Anniversary
Conference; 2002, Mennonites and the City; 2001, Mennonite-
Aboriginal Relations; 2000, 1874 Revisited; 1999, EnGendering
the Past; 1998, Mennonites and the Soviet Inferno; 1997,
Mennonites as a People Transformed; 1996-1983, Various.