

The History of Mennonite Central Committee: Developing a Genre

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Introduction

A memo dated January 2005 and addressed to Mennonite churches in Canada is entitled “MCC Preparing \$4.2 million Canadian.” The article continues: “As Mennonite Central Committee [MCC] assessment teams begin their work this week in Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia, MCC is preparing a \$4.2 million Cdn./\$3.5 million U.S. response package for intermediate and long-term response to the Asia earthquake. The response includes ... airlifting canned meat and medical supplies.”¹ Known world-wide for its ability to provide immediate emergency aid, MCC has long been the vehicle through which North American Mennonites have reached out beyond themselves, providing aid to their neighbours around the world. Deemed by scholars as “the most important institution” among Mennonites, MCC has been a strong force in shaping the identity, history and theology of Mennonites on this continent.²

North American Mennonites established MCC in 1920 as a vehicle through which they could bring aid to their co-religionists who suffered the devastations of famine and revolution in Russia. With this beginning, MCC taught Mennonites of all persuasions to work together as they put their non-resistant beliefs into concrete action. MCC played a much larger role during World War II as relief workers in war-torn countries nurtured a mind to look beyond themselves. While conscientious objectors served on the home front in mental hospitals in the U.S. and in road building in Canada, young women sought and created opportunities to serve those who were hurting, creating a long-tradition of Voluntary Service.³ Stories from these and the generations who have since served around the world, have kept the vision of service alive.⁴ From the post-war era to the present, MCC has promoted a global consciousness of justice among its constituents. As theologian Ted Koontz has suggested, MCC has become the epitome of the Anabaptist Vision.⁵

During the years that I researched and wrote the history of MCC Ontario (see review in this issue), I heard many of these stories of service and the search for justice. My research associate and I sat

at the feet of women and men whose commitment helped make a successful organization, whose collective energy has created the Mennonite history of foreign aid.⁶ I have also been moved by the reaction of two young women who have helped me in a related project. Their response to Alice's Snyder's letters written home from reconstruction Germany, telling of her first experience overseas, inspired an edited collection of the same.⁷ The appeal of Alice Snyder's letters, with their weekly descriptions of how she served in post-war relief operations in Germany, illustrates the nature of much of the writing on MCC.⁸ These letters' ability to spark contemporary interest illustrates the power of MCC literature, most of which were simply stories.

While personal experience has provided much of the basis for our understandings of how MCC works, published materials bolster these stories. Consisting mainly of documents and personal narrative, the literature is punctuated by anniversary reflections, mostly by executives and historians committed to MCC and its vision. Only in the past decade have some observers attempted a more critical assessment, seeing the organization as a "socio-religious phenomenon."⁹ Yet even in this particular approach, the literature still illustrates the great gift that MCC has given North American Mennonites and Brethren in Christ. As the title of my book, *The Transforming Power of a Century* suggests, I concluded that "it is through" MCC reaching the "epitome of the Anabaptist vision that our Mennonite community has been transformed."¹⁰

It is time, however, to look more critically at the assumptions that have formed the Mennonite people. To move forward we must know where the Mennonites have been. In the last decade, some critics even have begun to question whether the so-called "Anabaptist vision" with its emphasis on peace, discipleship and community, has run its course.¹¹ In a similar vein, others are questioning whether MCC of today knows where it is going.¹² These questions suggest the need for an historian's eye, better enabling organizations such as MCC to move forward. That was my goal in my analysis of MCC Ontario's history.¹³ A survey of the published literature on MCC can identify questions that have begun to emerge both in my own thinking, and that of others.

Early Writings

In 1929, Orie O. Miller, a major force behind the development of MCC, and P.C. Hiebert, a Mennonite Brethren leader who would serve as chair of the board during its first three and a half decades, documented the MCC story for the first time. In their hefty tome aptly entitled, *Feeding the Hungry: Russian Famine, 1919-1925*, they told the

story of how North American Mennonites had reached out generously to help their starving cousins in Russia, 120,000 in all, devastated by famine, revolution and disease.¹⁴

With World War I, foreign aid had become linked concretely with the Mennonite doctrine of nonresistance. Aware of the privilege implicit in their conscientious objection status, Canadian Mennonites joined those from the United States who participated in relief work initiated by the Quakers in Western Europe and the Near East. Through the (Old) Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers in the United States, Ontario's Non-Resistant Relief Organization, the Western Canadian Central Committee (re-named Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization in 1922), and the sewing circles on both sides of the border, folks at home contributed with generous donations to help not just in Russia, but also in China and India where these churches had begun mission projects in the latter part of the previous century.¹⁵

Miller and Hiebert's reports and stories in *Feeding the Hungry* brought to North Americans the experiences of Mennonites in Russia and their cousins who had gone over to help them. The North American Emergency Relief Committee that had materialized in 1920 to incorporate the various relief organizations in North America became an enduring and formative presence under the nondescript appellation Mennonite Central Committee.¹⁶ The post-war lull in which Miller and Hiebert put *Feeding the Hungry* together would last barely more than a decade. By the late 1930s, with the Spanish Civil War, Mennonites again focussed on needs abroad. Relief would become intimately connected with conscientious objection and alternative service. By the end of World War II, Mennonite Central Committee's relief work had become an institution among the larger Mennonite groups, as well as many of the smaller ones.¹⁷

Orie Miller had become MCC's Executive Secretary. In this capacity, he invited Irwin Horst to chronicle the World War II story. From his post in Amsterdam, Horst briefly outlined Mennonite aid from the outset of the war.¹⁸ Published in 1950, *A Ministry of Goodwill* laid the groundwork for a fuller history of Mennonite Central Committee's work from its inception, which would appear two years later. John D. Unruh had taken a year away from his position at Freeman Junior College, in the South Dakotan town for which the college was named, to serve with his wife from summer 1948 to 1949, also in the Netherlands. Unruh would decline "enticing bids from such colleges as Bethel [College in Kansas]," to devote his life to this rural evangelical school, but he continued his service to MCC by taking up the challenge to write the organization's story.¹⁹

In the Name of Christ appeared in 1952, putting World War II reconstruction aid in biblical and historical context. As Miller and

Hiebert had narrated the 1920s story of aid to their Russian cousins to make it accessible to Mennonites in North America, Horst brought the expansion of relief during World War II in intricate detail. Although any attempt at assessing the organization or impact of the developing MCC was lacking, Horst provided valuable data in his comprehensive lists of the hundreds of North American Mennonites who volunteered in post-construction Europe, the Middle East, the Far East and South America. Horst's descriptions of key personalities, programs and places, made the stories come alive, and have provided a rich account of MCC's work during World War II and the immediate reconstruction years. In short, although "Anabaptist Vision" was yet to become a by-word in Mennonite circles, in his history, Unruh confirmed the 1940s renewed vision of "love and non-resistance" articulated by Harold S. Bender in his address delivered at the 1943 meeting of the Society of American Church History. *In the Name of Christ* provided the data, showing how Mennonites acted out their faith in the post-war world.²⁰

Although Unruh's would be the last attempt to survey MCC's history for over thirty years, during the following decades several other books expanded on the story, still with no attempt to assess the organization's development and impact. For example, the year after *In the Name of Christ* came out, sociologist J. Winfield Fretz documented the role North American Mennonites played in the colonization of their co-religionists in Paraguay.²¹ Although MCC refused to support Mennonite resettlement in Western Canada, journalist Frank Epp's re-telling of that story is part of the larger MCC Canada story.²² The publication of freelance writer Urie Bender's history of the PAX program, established in 1951 to allow American conscientious objectors to bring relief to Germany, Greece and other countries, marked the first-half century of MCC's work.²³

Anniversary Retrospectives

In 1970, executives and others long-devoted to MCC devoted their annual meeting to reflecting on the organization's fifty year history. This retrospective continued in the genre of counting workers, quantities of aid, and types of programs that had emerged.²⁴ Reflecting back over his fifty years with MCC, Orie Miller put into words the common view that MCC had become "God's Miracle among us."²⁵ Despite "scant reference in Mennonite writings to a theology" behind their work, as Peter Dyck articulated it, Mennonites had developed a "philosophy of service" that took volunteers around the world, "in the name of Christ."²⁶

In a survey of its antecedents, historian Guy F. Hershberger also stressed the significance of Mennonite Central Committee, from its founding fifty years earlier. He had been a full participant in the discussions leading to the "Anabaptist Vision." Now thirty years later, looking back Hershberger deemed the establishment of MCC as "an important milestone," not just in the previous fifty years, but "in the total sweep of Mennonite history." Linking for the first time in the published literature at MCC's integral part in the "recovery of the Anabaptist vision of mission and service," he said: MCC "symbolizes the opening of the door to a greater world-wide Mennonite brotherhood (sic) united in mission and service to the modern world."²⁷

Other historians concurred. John Lapp and Robert Kreider focused respectively on MCC's "Peace Mission" and its "Impact."²⁸ Lapp showed how "The Peace Mission of the Mennonite Central Committee" had become since the mid-1940s an integral part of MCC's relief and development work. Kreider, in turn, raised significant questions that MCC had created for Mennonites: "to whom do we as Mennonites owe primary responsibility: our kinsmen or the stranger outside the gate?" he asked. Highlighting conflicts that would be voiced over and over in upcoming years, he identified tensions between word and deed, service and evangelism, relief and building the church, potential as prophetic voice and an increasing reliance on government funds; finally, he named the disquiet for some among this separate people, as others had begun to speak out.²⁹ Yet, few would have argued with his suggestion that with its myriad of programs, and opportunities for experience and adventure for the church's youth, "the MCC may someday be recorded as the most significant of our Mennonite educational institutions."³⁰

The connection between relief, service and peace-making had become integral to Mennonite self-understandings, as another anniversary history, this time of the Mennonite Economic Development Association, also would show. Sociologist J. Winfield Fretz's survey of the first twenty-five years of *The Meda Experiment*, from its inception in 1953 to 1978, expanded our understandings of MCC's history by illustrating a venture, established by several businessmen, which moved foreign aid towards development.³¹

Another milestone prompted the publication of a five-volume telling of the MCC story. This time the Canadian perspective would be included. In time for MCC's 60th anniversary, C. J. Dyck, Robert Kreider and John Lapp published three slim collections of documents, handpicked to tell *The Mennonite Central Committee Story*. Volume 1, entitled *From the Files of MCC*, included the "story of MCC Canada" for the first time.³² The fourth volume, which came out the following year, chose several "prestigious personages in 'important' roles," including

Canadians Elfrieda Klassen Dyck and J.J. Thiessen, to feature in brief biographies.³³ By 1988 when the fifth and final volume was completed, MCC Canada's advantages in tapping into their government's international development agency, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), were taken for granted. *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger: The MCC Experience* included the northern country's innovative Food Grains Bank established in 1975, to allow Canadian farmers to donate part of their wheat crops for emergency needs during famine conditions overseas.³⁴ Canadian Mennonites participated also in another novel approach highlighted by Robert Krieder and Rachel Waltner Goossen - the MCC Relief Sale.³⁵

As these volumes suggest, Canadian Mennonites had done their part in shaping the MCC story for some time. In 1967, in honour of their nation's centennial year, MCC Canada commissioned a history of Mennonites in Canada. Frank Epp took on this challenge. Although his premature death meant his telling of the bigger Canadian Mennonite story would end at 1940, he had encouraged his daughter Esther to do her master's thesis on "The Origins of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada)".³⁶ Esther Epp's thorough discussion of the various committees and the developments that led to the formation of the pan-Canadian organization provided an important, if unpublished, companion to the senior Epp's *Partners in service: the Story of Mennonite Central Committee Canada*.³⁷ If analysis was missing, the latter gave constituents an excellent overview of MCC Canada's programs and development including foreign aid and the organization's relationship with CIDA.

Analytical Perspectives

In his 1993 review of the five-volume "Mennonite Central Committee Story," Calvin Redekop asserted that "MCC has received all too little analytic (sic) attention as a socio-religious phenomenon."³⁸ Indeed, in the mid-1990s scholars were just beginning to ask sociological, historical and theological questions. Among the most challenging critiques emerged from the perspective of feminist history. In a ground-breaking article devoted to "uncovering" women's part in the making of Mennonite history, Marlene Epp made a case for becoming intentional about understanding the history of women's relief work. Basing her hypothesis on histories sponsored by the Women's Missionary and Service Auxiliary, she proposed that women's contributions might even be "the foundation for the larger and more bureaucratized relief activities of the Mennonite Church."³⁹ Later publications including Lorraine Roth's *Willing Service* and my own research have confirmed, in Roth's words, that women "were almost entirely responsible for the

collection, sewing and processing of the clothing and bedding” shipped to Europe during World War II.”⁴⁰

In my own research, I discovered that the relationship between the Women’s Sewing Circles and MCC and its predecessors was complex. Initially, it appears, there was a mutual dependency. MCC Ontario’s parent body, the Non-Resistant Relief Organization, looked to the Circles to sew for relief, and the women turned to the men for financial support to keep their ministry going. When the Sewing Circles established a Cutting Room, however, the balance of power shifted. In a business-like way, women employed an operator to cut garments and to sell them to women in local Circles, who, in turn, donated them back to Mennonite Central Committee’s relief program. The Circles eventually became financially autonomous, and the Ontario Mennonite relief agencies came to depend on women’s superior sewing skills in their efforts to aid European refugees during World War II and other victims of wars and famine at least until 1970.⁴¹

Theologians have added their voices to feminist historians, asking questions about how we have developed our theology of service. Gerald Schlabach has pointed out that our Mennonite theology of service “interwoven into practices of mutual aid, into alternatives to military service, into ways of hospitality,” has yet to be written down; it is still assumed.⁴² We need to be intentional about recognizing “the traditions that have nurtured us,” he insisted.⁴³ Other theologians have gone further, charging that we need to re-think how we understand service. Lydia Harder, for one, has urged Mennonites to consider “a new theology of service,” one that will “upset the hierarchies of servitude in the church.”⁴⁴ In her view, “Mennonite women have learned to sing a song of service that affirms subservience and submission or else duty and guilt.”⁴⁵

Others have applied the model of liberation theology to their assessment of the assumptions from which MCC works. With its challenge to Christians to be “engaged in society at all levels,” Mennonite complicity in colonialism, too, comes under scrutiny. With his definition of “a faithful church,” for example, theologian Denny Weaver has insisted that valuing “ethnic and cultural diversity in a world of increasing racial and ethnic strife,” is essential.⁴⁶ The leap from discipleship to “seeing Jesus siding with the poor and oppressed,” as Judy Zimmerman Herr and Robert Herr put it in their reflections on “Living Rightly in the Land,” is a short one with its implicit challenge of “the legacy of colonialism.”⁴⁷

These findings have yet to be integrated fully into our understandings of how MCC has impacted Mennonite history. Nor do we fully comprehend how the organization itself developed. Ted Regehr’s and Paul Toews’ recent analyses of Mennonite history respectively north and south of the border both emphasize the integral part MCC has

played in Mennonite institutional development and self-understandings.⁴⁸ They confirm in duet how “practising nonresistance” became, in the words of the updated Mennonite *Confession of Faith* published the same year, “doing justice” and “bringing reconciliation.”⁴⁹ But neither has attempted to analyze how the organization developed. For instance, Regehr described MCC Canada as “essentially an enlargement of the old, Ontario-based CHPC (Conference of Historic Peace Churches) to include the Mennonites of western Canada.” Emphasizing MCC Canada as the certain solution to the plethora of relief and peace committees among Canadian Mennonites, he noted: “There were *obviously* far too many committees, boards, and agencies A means had to be found to cut through the bureaucratic proliferation and confusion. A single, centralized inter-Mennonite agency was the *obvious* solution.” (*italics mine*)⁵⁰ Contrary to Regehr’s assumption, my research suggests that while it may have been the obvious solution for some, it was not for all. Indeed, the anxiety in Ontario during those years was palpable.⁵¹

Some Suggestions for Further Reflection

MCC’s deliberate and progressive assessment in each new era has helped shape Mennonite identity in a global community.⁵² Anniversary reflections have helped develop an awareness of how MCC has shaped Mennonites as a people, in connection with each other, and in global relationships in a post-modern world. Yet, at the 1997 planning consultation for this Global History project, historians John Lapp and Wilbert Shenk admonished that “not all forms of remembering, as biblical history reminds us, result in healthy and redemptive identity.”⁵³ Lapp would later expand: “Critical to our self-awareness as a global people, is writing a new history from the underside,” one that will go “beyond a past dominated by major leaders and powerful forces.”⁵⁴

Questions being raised by sociologists, feminist historians and theologians suggest that the time has arrived to commission a full-blown history of Mennonite Central Committee. If MCC is to move ahead, we need to look at how it got where it is. We need to write the stories of the visionaries and volunteers; we need to look at their successes and conflicts, both inter-personal and national; and we need to balance those perspectives with voices from the underside. Sociological theory will help illuminate how the organization itself developed. Theories of gender and colonialism must be applied if the way MCC has done foreign aid is to be understood. We must ask questions about whose voices have been heard, where male entitlement and white privilege have been built into the organization.⁵⁵ We need to ask how MCC itself

may have contributed to structural evils of sexism, classism, racism, and colonialism.

In conclusion, MCC is much more than a vehicle to provide foreign aid or foster peacemaking. The identity of North American Mennonites is integrally tied to its evolution. It has provided the institutional basis for an inter-Mennonite response to the threat of war, but it has also become the forum for defining the Mennonites in the post-modern world. Through MCC Mennonites are able to ask questions about their own identity, and big, global questions about complicity in structural evil. To thoroughly address these questions we need to look back with an eye to historical analysis. Few would argue the premise that MCC provides the context for the Mennonites' best face in a post-modern world. To best address these issues, we need to know our history, the part MCC has played in our global identity as Mennonites.

Notes

- ¹ MCC Quebec to Montreal Fellowship of Montreal, e-mail, 6 January 2005.
- ² Calvin Redekop, "The Mennonite Central Committee Story: A Review Essay," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 67 (1993), 84, n2. See also Ted Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada, vol. 3, 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 24; Ted Koontz, "Commitments and Complications in Doing Good," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 70 (January 1996), 60.
- ³ The author, *The Transforming Power of a Century: Mennonite Central Committee and its Evolution in Ontario* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003), 99.
- ⁴ The importance of story is foundational to the ethos of MCC. In the words of Robert Kreider and Rachel Waltner Goossen, "[t]he MCC story is told orally, in print, and in photograph. The most authentic way in which information is shared is through MCC workers, who return to describe their experience, show their slides, and answer questions. There are few Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations that do not have members who have served with MCC. These MCC alumni are among the best sources of MCC information." *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger: The MCC Experience* (Scottsdale, PA and Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1988), 195. See also Judy Zimmerman Herr and Robert Herr, "'Living Rightly in the Land': Reflection on MCC Service in a Postmodern Era," *Conrad Grebel Review* (Fall 2001), 72.
- ⁵ Koontz, "Commitments and Complications," 71.
- ⁶ While researching this history, Linda Huebert Hecht and I interviewed about 30 individuals. Interview tapes are housed in the Mennonite Archives of Ontario (MAO). See also, Marr, *The Transforming Power of a Century*.
- ⁷ Research assistants Elisha Sorensen and Dora-Marie Marr Goulet were quite taken by Alice Snyder's letters written home to her mother from Germany during her volunteer stint between February 1948 and May 1950. These letters will be soon forthcoming from Pandora Press in *I Can't Write Everything I See: Alice's Letters Home*.
- ⁸ Recently, Robert Kreider published a record of his MCC experience during the same period in *My Early Years: An Autobiography* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2002).
- ⁹ In "The Mennonite Central Committee Story," for instance, Redekop asserted that "MCC has received all too little analytic (sic) attention as a socio-religious phenomenon," 84.

- ¹⁰ Marr, *The Transforming Power of a Century*, 301.
- ¹¹ Koontz, "Commitments and Complications," 71-72.
- ¹² Dave Worth, interview by author, 31 October 1998, Edmonton, Alberta; cited in Marr, *Transforming Power of a Century*, 298.
- ¹³ In addition to *Transforming Power of a Century*, I have published the following articles documenting various aspects of MCC Ontario's history: "Ailsa Craig Boys' Farm: A 'pioneering institution,' 1954-1970," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* (1999): 1-18; "'Breaking Down Barriers': Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and Ontario Native Communities," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (2000): 78-91; "A Brief Survey of Organized Relief in Ontario: The Non-Resistant Relief Organization, the Sewing Circles and the Mennonite Central Committee, 1917-1963," *Ontario Mennonite History: The Newsletter of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario* (October 1999): 9-12. "Ontario's Conference of Historic Peace Church Families and the 'Joy of Service'," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (April 2001): 257-72; "Spirituality and a Heart for Justice: Mennonite Central Committee and the Ontario Aboriginal Community," *Brethren in Christ History and Life* (August 2003); "'The Time for the Distaff and Spindle': The Ontario Mennonite Women's Sewing Circles and the Mennonite Central Committee," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (1999); "'The Pressure of the West': Conflict, Resolution, and the Formation of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, 1958-1965," presented at the "From Down Home to Up Town: The Mennonite Experience in Ontario" Conrad Grebel College conference, held at the University of Waterloo on 2 December 2000, unpublished.
- ¹⁴ *Feeding the Hungry* (Scottsdale, Pa: MCC, 1929).
- ¹⁵ Guy F. Hershberger, "Historical Background to the Formation of the Mennonite Central Committee," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (July 1970): 231, 242-43; *The Transforming Power of a Century*, 29-36; Frank Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*, vol. 1, 1786-1920: *History of a Separate People* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974), 376-77.
- ¹⁶ Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*, vol. 2, 1920-1940: *A People's Struggle for Survival* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982), 37; Cornelius J. Dyck, ed., *An Introduction to Mennonite History* (Scottsdale, Pa. and Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1981), 408.
- ¹⁷ For a later re-telling of the story see, for instance, John D. Unruh, *In the Name of Christ: A History of the Mennonite Central Committee and its Service, 1920-1951* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1952) 14-15; Hershberger, "Historical background to the formation of the Mennonite Central Committee," 236-37; 241; Kreider, "The Impact of MCC Service on American Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 44 (1970): 247.
- ¹⁸ *A Ministry of Goodwill: A Short Account of Mennonite Relief, 1939-1949* (Akron: MCC, 1950), v; Unruh, *In the Name of Christ*, 122, 284.
- ¹⁹ Kreider, *My Early Years*, 548.
- ²⁰ Paul Toews has noted that World War II and alternative service contributed to an "intellectual redefinition of Mennonitism," reaching "its apogee in 1944 with the simultaneous publication of Harold S. Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" and Guy F. Hershberger's *War, Peace, and Nonresistance*." The former was published in *Church History* in 1944, the latter by Herald Press in 1953; See Toews, "The Impact of Alternative Service on the American Mennonite World: A Critical Evaluation," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66 (October 1992): 618. See also, Unruh, *In the Name of Christ*, v; and Regehr, *A People Transformed*, 13.
- ²¹ J. Winfield Fretz, *Pilgrims in Paraguay: The Story of Mennonite Colonization in South America* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953).
- ²² Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites since the Communist Revolution* (Altona, Manitoba: D.W. Friesen and Sons, Ltd., 1962).
- ²³ Urie A. Bender, *Soldiers of Compassion* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1969).

- ²⁴ Paul Classen provided "Statistics on Mennonite Central Committee Personnel," 324-29, while John Hostetler gave a full listing of "Mennonite Central Committee Material Aid, 1941-1969," 318-23; Larry Kehler outlined "The Many Activities of the Mennonite Central Committee," 298-315. The proceeds of the conference were published in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (1970).
- ²⁵ "The Mennonite Central Committee: God's Miracle Among Us: The Meaning of the Past Fifty Years," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (1970): 316-18;
- ²⁶ "A Theology of Service," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (1970): 262-63.
- ²⁷ "Historical background to the formation of the Mennonite Central Committee," 213.
- ²⁸ Kreider, "Impact of MCC Service," 247; Lapp, "The Peace Mission of the Mennonite Central Committee," 281-97.
- ²⁹ Kreider, "The Impact of MCC Service," 255.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 247.
- ³¹ J. Winfield Fretz, *The MEDA Experiment, 1953-1978: Twenty-five Years of Experience in Helping "little people" to Get Established in their own Businesses in over Twenty Countries around the World*. Waterloo, Ontario: Conrad Press, 1978.
- ³² *The Mennonite Story*, Vol. 1: *From the Files of MCC* (Scottsdale, Pa., and Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1980). Volumes 2 and 3 were entitled respectively *Responding to World wide Needs and Witness and Service in North America*. Unruh had mentioned the Canadian office of MCC in his *In the Name of Christ*, but only briefly; see p. 330. In *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, editor C.J. Dyck included only a brief look at Canadian contributions to MCC; see p. 408.
- ³³ Cornelius J. Dyck, ed., *Something Meaningful for God: The Stories of Some Who Served with MCC* (Scottsdale, Pa and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1981). See also Redekop's comment in "The Mennonite Central Committee Story," 93.
- ³⁴ Kreider and Waltner Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger*, 370ff; for a history of CIDA see David R. Morrison, *Aid and the Ebb Tide: A History of CIDA and Canadian Development Assistance* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press and the North-South Institute, 1998).
- ³⁵ Kreider and Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger*, 361ff. J. Winfield Fretz has noted that by the late eighties the Ontario Relief Sale alone drew between 30,000 to 40,000 people. See *The Waterloo County Mennonites: A Community in Paradox* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989), 246. I put the relief sale in context in *The Transforming Power of a Century*, 205ff.
- ³⁶ Esther Epp, "The Origins of Mennonite Central Committee (Canada)" (Master of Arts thesis, University of Manitoba, 1980); Frank Epp, *Mennonites in Canada*, vol. 2, 1920-1940: *A People's Struggle for Survival*.
- ³⁷ Frank Epp, *Partners in Service: The Story of Mennonite Central Committee Canada* (Winnipeg, Man.: MCC, 1982).
- ³⁸ Redekop, "The Mennonite Central Committee Story: A Review Essay," 84, n2.
- ³⁹ "Women in Canadian Mennonite History: Uncovering the 'Underside,'" *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 5 (1987), 104; for earlier histories please see W.M.S.A. 1895-1967, compiled by Mrs. L. Koch, Mrs. E. Brubacher and Mrs. D. Bergey, 2, 5 (Women's Missionary and Service Association papers, Mennonite Historical Archives of Ontario, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.; Elaine Sommers Rich, *Mennonite Women: A Story of God's Faithfulness, 1683-1983* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983), 199-200, 202-03. See also Gladys Goering, *Women in Search of Mission* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1980); and MarryLou Cummings, ed., *Full Circle: Stories of Mennonite Women* (Newton, Kan.: Faith and Life Press, 1978).
- ⁴⁰ *Willing Service: Stories of Ontario Mennonite Women* (Waterloo, Ont.: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario, 1992), xi. For women's role in relief, see also Dorothy Sauder, "Mennonite Central Committee: Early Days at the Kitchener, Ontario Office," *Mennogesprach* (March 1989), 1-3; Lorna Bergey, "Changes in Cultural Symbols for Ontario Mennonite Women of the Swiss Tradition during the 1950s

- and 60s: Stories We Need to Hear," *Mennogesprach* (Spring 1990), 10; and Le Anne Zook, "Daughters of Philip: Single Mennonite Women Service with Mennonite Central Committee during the 1950s," unpublished paper, Eastern Mennonite University, 1995.
- ⁴¹ "The Time for the Distaff and Spindle': The Ontario Mennonite Women's Sewing Circles and the Mennonite Central Committee." The article was published simultaneously as "Zeit für Spinnrocken und Spindel. Die Nähzirkel Mennonitischer Frauen in Ontario und das Mennonitische Zentral Komitee." *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 56 (Jahrgang 1999): 71-102. These findings have provided the core for my gendered analysis of the history of MCC and its forerunners in Ontario as developed in *The Transforming Power of a Century*.
- ⁴² "In the Belly of a Paradox: Reflections on the Dubious Service of Reflecting on Service," *Conrad Grebel Review* (Fall 2001): 42.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 48.
- ⁴⁴ "Singing a Subversive Song of Hope," *Conrad Grebel Review* (Fall 2001): 25.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ⁴⁶ *Anabaptist Theology in Face of Postmodernity: A Proposal for the Third Millennium* (Telford, PA: Pandora Press US, 2000), 135.
- ⁴⁷ "Living Rightly in the Land," 57, 63; see also Weaver, *Anabaptist Theology in Face of Postmodernity*, 139-40.
- ⁴⁸ Toews, "The Impact of Alternative Service," 618. The publication of his *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1996); and Regehr's, *A People Transformed* were celebrated in the notable, "One People, Many Stories" conference held in Abbotsford, May 1998. Although histories of the Brethren in Christ and the Mennonite Brethren had also highlighted the impact of MCC in these denominations, Carlton Wittlinger, Morris Sider and J.A. Toews showed that in their respective denominations' emphasis on missions and evangelism took precedence over relief and the move towards social action. See Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience: The Story of the Brethren in Christ* (Nappanee, Indiana: Evangel Press, 1978), 96; Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada: Two Hundred Years of Tradition and Change* (Nappanee, Ind.: Canadian Conference, Brethren in Christ Church, 1988), 254-56; Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature, 1975), 390-92.
- ⁴⁹ General Conference Mennonite Church, *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (Waterloo, Ont.: Herald Press, 1995), 81. Leo Driedger and Donald Kraybill point this out. See their *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1994), 214.
- ⁵⁰ Regehr, *A People Transformed*, 392-93.
- ⁵¹ I have identified some of these conflicts in *The Transforming Power of a Century*. See also Marr, "The Pressure of the West."
- ⁵² See, for instance, Leo Driedger, *Mennonites in the Global Village* (University of Toronto Press, 2000), 20.
- ⁵³ "Preface," *Conrad Grebel Review* (Winter/Spring 1997): 1.
- ⁵⁴ "The Global Mennonite/Brethren in Christ History Project: The Task, the Problem, the Imperative," *Conrad Grebel Review* (Fall 1997): 283.
- ⁵⁵ Arli Klassen to author, 25 August 2000.