

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

An Academic and Community Education Conference
Hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies
University of Winnipeg

18-20 October 2012

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.

Plan to attend and hear research papers from a wide variety of disciplines. Papers will consider 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.

Mennonites have not often used 'human rights' terminology. Indeed they have debated whether its language is too individualistic and coercive for an Anabaptist people. 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.

Free Admittance. Register On-site.

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

The 2013 Issue of
The Journal of Mennonite Studies
 will include papers from:

Anti-Modern Pathways:

'Horse and Buggy' Mennonites in Canada and Latin America

Hosted by: The Chair in Mennonite Studies and the D.F. Plett
 Historical Research Foundation

Location: Convocation Hall, University of Winnipeg

Dates: Friday and Saturday: 21-22 October 2011

Papers May Include

ONTARIO: Andrew Martin, Elmira (Old Orders Spirituality)
 Lisette Hijinks, Ubbergen, Netherlands (Waterloo County Quilters)
 Peter Rempel, Winnipeg (Gladstone, Manitoba Old Orders)
 Levi Frey, Waterloo (Gelassenheit and Brotherhood)

MEXICO: Tina Fehr Kehler, Winkler (Campeche Old Colonists)
 Arlette Kouwenhoven, Amsterdam (The Sabinal Fehrs)

BELIZE: Anne Kok, Amsterdam (Shipyard Old Colonists)
 Tanja Pasil, Amsterdam (Shipyard Old Colonists)
 Lobke Lentjes, Amsterdam (Barton Creek Traditionalists)

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Donald B. Kraybill, Elizabethtown, PA (Young Centre)

BOLIVIA: Karen Warkentin, Winnipeg (New Colonies of Santa Cruz)
 Anna Sofia Hedberg, Falun, Sweden (Neuvo Durango Old Colonists)
 Christopher Cox, Edmonton (Resilient Old Colony Plautdietsch)
 Kerry Fast, Toronto (Riva Palacios Colony Women)
 Jack Heppner, Steinbach, (Visiting the Old Colonists)
 Martha Hiebert Steinbach (Old Colony Women)
 Dick Braun, Saskatoon (Mennonite Genius).

ARGENTINA/ PARAGUAY:
 Lorenzo Canas Bottes, Estonia (Argentina Social Boundaries)
 Jakob Huttner, Berlin, (East Paraguay Old Colonists)

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