

Le Comité des femmes inter-églises, 1978-1998: A Compass for the Women of l'église des frères mennonites du Québec¹

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Recently, the Archives of *l'Association des églises des frères mennonites du Québec* (the Association of Mennonite Brethren churches of Quebec) acquired a small green binder preserving minutes outlining the activities of *le Comité des femmes inter-églises* (the inter-church women's committee) between its founding in 1978 and its folding in 1998. Many of the documents are hand written in exquisite penmanship. These papers suggest women's significant roles in establishing church communities during and after the revival that emerged in Quebec in the 1970s, especially as it played out in the early years of *les Frères Mennonites* (Mennonite Brethren) in the province.²

Le Comité des femmes appear to have provided a compass for female converts and their families. Although these women had been baptized Roman Catholic, they had reached maturity during the "religious crisis of the 1960s" when church attendance became optional in the minds of many in the western world, not least, Québec.³ In the return to faith through evangelical Protestantism, this

committee provided a space where women could redefine themselves as Christian wives and mothers. For twenty years, extending a decade and a half after the evangelical revival peaked in Québec in 1982, women from les églises des frères mennonites du Québec organized a *journée des femmes inter-églises* (inter-church women's day). The day was consistently well subscribed by female members of the seven larger congregations established during the period.

Some Context

To say that evangelical women in Québec have been understudied is an understatement. To this point the literature has been concerned primarily with the phenomenon and institutionalization of evangelicalism as it manifested itself during the nineteenth-century, and the short revival that emerged in the wake of the 1960s Quiet Revolution.⁴ The major exception is the Swiss born Henriette Feller who came to Quebec in 1835 with the Lausanne missionary society.⁵ Women's roles in the late nineteenth-century French-Canadian Missionary Society have also begun to be studied.⁶

On its part, Mennonite scholarship has focused on the English side of Canada's two solitudes.⁷ In *The Work of Their Hands*, Gloria Neufeld Redekop's study of Mennonite Women's Societies in Canada is largely focused on the Canadian west and stops abruptly at the Ontario – Québec border.⁸ Nor does Marlene Epp's history of *Mennonite Women in Canada* embrace *Québécoises* women.⁹ This is hardly surprising. Even in Québec it is difficult to bridge the gap between the two solitudes of the English and French Mennonite Churches. And yet, despite the challenges, as we write the history of Mennonites in Canada as a people of diversity, the movements that have created the history of the Rollands, the Taillefers, the Lavoies, the Landrys and the Robitailles must be incorporated into the complicated dance that since the 1970s has created Mennonite peoplehood as we know it today.

The papers in the green binder illustrate the dynamic and unique expression of le Comité des femmes inter-églises, Québécoises women who struggled with their identity amidst the sea of change brought about by Vatican II and the Quiet Revolution. In Catholic Quebec, the radical shift in the church's influence in the wake of the Vatican II reforms, which included Mass being celebrated in the language of the people, the celebrant facing the congregation instead of the altar and increased lay involvement,

saw regular church attendance become optional in the minds and practice of the majority. The Quiet Revolution further accelerated the decline in church influence with the role of the Catholic church in providing health, education and social welfare taken over by the state. Nowhere else in Canada was the decline in church attendance more dramatic.¹⁰

With the mass exodus from the churches by laity, clergy, and even women and men living consecrated lives, Québec plunged from being counted amongst “the highest rates of religious practice in North America to the lowest.”¹¹ This dramatically affected women’s lives. Compounded by a vibrant feminist movement, in a single generation Québec shifted from having the greatest number of weddings accompanied by the largest families in North America, to the highest proportion of couples cohabiting common law. The birth rate plummeted with easy access to contraceptives and the belief by an overwhelming majority that abortion is a woman’s choice. Bearing children out of wedlock quickly became normalized. No longer constrained by church authority, women sought to re-define who they were. They organized; they supported each other in groups, often holding their meetings in church basements.¹²

This was the context out of which the all female inter-church committee arose. In this paper I argue that *Le Comité des femmes inter-églises* provided a way for female members of the French Mennonite Brethren churches to support each other as women, as they were finding their way in a dramatically shifting world. Just as the secular women’s groups provided a safe place to explore new avenues, the women’s days provided a haven where women could explore with other women how to live as evangelical Christians; indeed, one might suggest that the committee was the container through which women formed their identity as members of *les églises des frères mennonites du Québec*.

The Players: Some History of the Québec Churches

An Old Mennonite presence had been established in Québec in 1956 when the Mennonite Mission Board of Ontario and the United States-based Mennonite Board of Mission sent two young couples, Tilman and Janet Martin and Harold and Pauline Reesor as missionaries.¹³ Despite the challenges encountered in attempts to establish Protestant churches in Québec, by 1960 the Martins and Reesors had established two small congregations, one in the working class community of Montréal Nord, the other just north of the city in the more middle-class town of Joliette.¹⁴ Although concrete

evidence of the influence of earlier Protestant mission is scarce, it is worth noting that this area had been evangelized a century earlier by the French Protestant Missionary Society, and may have left the area more open to Mennonite mission.¹⁵

The Mennonite Brethren soon followed. With encouragement from the Martins, Ernie Dyck, whom the Mennonite Brethren had sent to Québec when their missionaries were forced to exit the Congo with the upheaval caused by the revolution there, established a worshipping community in St. Jérôme, just under one hundred kilometres south of Joliette. Under Dyck's leadership, by fall 1961 several anglophone teachers, Portuguese immigrants and a francophone family had formed a congregation. The following year Clyde and Elizabeth Shannon, the latter from french-speaking Belgium, also arrived from their stint in the Congo and started a church in nearby St. Thérèse, just under twenty-four kilometres south of St Jérôme, and with a similar profile.¹⁶

Unexpected were the "large evangelistic campaigns and youth rallies" that emerged in the wake of Vatican II, the Quiet Revolution and other movements of the sixties, including "sympathy for Algerian nationalism, ...opposition to the Vietnam War, ...civil rights for blacks,"¹⁷ and the feminist revolution.¹⁸ By the mid-seventies, six daughter churches had rapidly grown out of the Mennonite Brethren congregation at St Jérôme, with an estimated four hundred persons attending the congregations established in proximity of the mother church. By 1984, approximately a thousand converts made up ten congregations, most from mid-sized towns and suburbia just north of Montréal. Although the majority were single students, with some young couples, it was common for entire families to convert, mothers and small children often following their young adult offspring into the churches.¹⁹

In contrast to the low key approach of Swiss Mennonite mission, evangelistic methods similar to those used by the other two major denominations in French evangelical circles, the Fellowship Baptist and Baptist Union churches, allowed the Mennonite Brethren to capitalize on the spiritual hunger that emerged in the wake of these changes.²⁰ As Lougheed has put it, the evangelical churches were able to provide "community," "music closer to their tastes," "a sense of freedom," and a space where attendees could explore whether "God truly existed." Converts evangelized "their friends and family; ...through the sermons, Bible studies and readings they rapidly formed a new world view."²¹

Although there seems to be a correlation between the destabilization of Quebec society with Vatican II and the Quiet Revolution, and the evangelical revival, answers to why the mo-

mentum stalled after 1982 are still unclear. Scholars believe it may have been related to the economic downturn that resulted in a general strike in Quebec in January 1983.²² Whatever the case, as Lougheed has put it, “[r]ealism quickly replaced discredited idealism.”²³

Creating and Maintaining a Comité des femmes

Le Comité des femmes inter-églises played a key role in maintaining the fledgling church communities that emerged in the two decades between the 1961 founding of *l’Eglise chrétienne St Jérôme*, as the Frère Mennonite congregation identified itself, and the revival’s decline.²⁴ Created in January 1978 when the evangelical revival was in full swing, the recently revealed notes in the green binder suggest that, from the outset, le Comité des femmes inter-églises played an essential part in the maturation of the French Mennonite Brethren churches. Within months of the revival’s peak, even as the enthusiasm for Mennonite women’s groups waned in the rest of Canada, Thérèse Rolland brought together four women from the church in St. Jérôme.²⁵ That wintry evening of January 22, 1978, Mme Rolland, Yolande Ouellette, Suzette Denault and Viola Wiens established themselves as the executive of the new Comité des femmes inter-églises.²⁶

Before the evening was adjourned the four women, who demonstrated vision and expertise in organizing, had formed what they accurately projected would become a yearly meeting of women from the seven larger Mennonite Brethren congregations. With their clearly stated goal, to learn to know the “*soeurs chrétiennes venant de différents églises*” (Christian sisters coming from different churches), they invited the women from the Frères Mennonites churches at Ste. Thérèse, Ste. Agathe, St. Laurent, St. Eustache, Ste. Rose, and St. Donat to join them at l’Eglise St. Jérôme on April 8 for what would become their first annual *journée des femmes*.²⁷

St. Jérôme women had explored the possibilities in holding more frequent meetings for their own group. They brainstormed a variety of activities that held potential for building relationships among the congregation’s women: suppers with their husbands, literature exchanges, picnics, recreation, restaurant meals with unbelievers, Bible studies, even cleaning for Camp Peniel that the Mennonite Brethren had purchased from the Anglicans in 1974.²⁸ In the end, the committee invested itself most energetically in their vision for an annual inter-church *journée des femmes*.²⁹

Their organization of the first annual day became key to the long-term success of les journées des femmes. No less than 112 women responded to the letter that Thérèse Rolland wrote in her beautiful hand and sent to each pastor of St. Jérôme's six sister congregations. This century of women represented some twenty-five per cent of the congregants including men, youth and children, who attended Québec Mennonite Brethren congregations in the mid-seventies. With only the occasional dip, this precedent was maintained over the twenty-year history of annual women's days.³⁰

Confidence in the potential for women taking leadership inspired by this inter-church event saw Rolland, by the second year, by-pass the pastors. In her spring 1979 letter inviting women to a second annual women's day, she encouraged a woman from each church to take responsibility for informing the St. Jérôme committee how many would be attending.³¹ Meanwhile, the local planning committee expanded from four to seven.³² Similar to Mennonite women's societies in the rest of the country, these days provided a context where "women could be full participants in every aspect of worship."³³ The format that included singing, prayer, testimonies, and major inspirational talks would continue each spring for the next two decades. Unlike the majority of Mennonite women's meetings, the Québec women organized and prepared the meal only once. By year two, the committee decided on take-out food from the well-loved Québec icon *St. Hubert Bar-be-que*. Relieved from major responsibilities in the kitchen, they were able to focus more fully on the social and spiritual intent of the day.³⁴

The inaugural meeting's success inspired further organization. Reflecting the Mennonite Brethren evangelistic strategy of bringing relatively new converts quickly into the churches, the St. Jérôme committee reached out to the women of the other Eglises Frères Mennonites; they also invited the women at the old Mennonite congregation in Joliette to come on board as sister organizers.³⁵ At Ste. Rose, for instance, Denise Nantel, "*qui a l'expérience de la parole de Dieu*" (who had experience of the Word of God) for just under three years, and Denise Précourt, who had come to faith only four years earlier, joined the committee.³⁶ By fall 1980, le Comité des femmes inter-églises expanded to thirteen members.³⁷ By spring 1982, a pattern was set where each year the annual women's day would rotate, giving each congregation the opportunity to host.³⁸

Suddenly, the momentum fell off. In spring 1983, the number attending la journée des femmes dropped; the women from the Old Mennonite congregation at Joliette pulled out; and President Thérèse Rolland resigned. In retrospect, as scholars have revealed,

this was precisely when the revival's momentum had begun to slow down.³⁹ The lengthy discussion on that October evening by the remaining members of le Comité des femmes inter-églises documents a clear consensus that the women's days should continue. Immediately on Mme Rolland's resignation, the committee unanimously elected Danielle Nadeau as President, thus bringing her home congregation, L'Eglise St. Laurent fully on board.⁴⁰

Four years later in spring 1987 when interest again seemed to flag, Micheline Beauchamp opened the planning meeting in her St. Eustache home with Proverbs 3: 5-6: "*Mets ta confiance en l'Eternel de tout ton cœur, et ne te repose pas sur ta propre intelligence. Tiens compte de lui pour tout ce que tu entreprends, et il te conduira sur le droit chemin.*" (Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths).⁴¹ Encouraging the five stalwarts who had come out to assess the potential in further women's days, Mme Beauchamp recalled God's faithfulness in the decade of women's days they had experienced. Her encouraging words appear to have regenerated them. To a woman, this faithful five responded enthusiastically to the most recent journée des femmes held a fortnight earlier at St. Eustache church. Their vigour renewed, the group entered its second decade, and slated another women's day for 1988.⁴²

These days were a time when women were surrounded by women with a succession of dynamic female speakers, women worshipping together in song, listening to their sisters' testimonies, supporting one another in female-led discussion groups.⁴³ The minutes tell us that although the organizing committee sometimes reached out into the anglophone community for speakers, reflecting the indigenization of the Frères Mennonites, francophone women from the local congregations consistently organized the meetings, volunteered as discussion leaders, gave their testimonies and provided music.⁴⁴

Shaping the Evangelical Christian Woman

At the outset, the organizers relied on women more established in the faith as they began to explore what it meant to live as evangelical Christian women. Seeking edification for themselves, and for their newly converted sisters, they turned to Viola Wiens, whose husband Herb had been brought out from western Canada to teach at the new Mennonite Brethren Bible institute in Laval. Taking her suggestion, "*Comment manifester notre amour envers*

Dieu en tant que femme” (How to express our love towards God as women), they engaged Connie Wight, an inspirational speaker well known in Québec evangelical circles.⁴⁵ That first women’s day, St. Paul’s testimony to the church at Corinth: “*Je me suis fait tous à tous*” (I have become all things to all people, I Corinthians 9:22b) became the basis for exploring how they might put their new found faith into daily practice in their context in family and work.⁴⁶

Women revelled in these spaces that evangelicalism allowed, where women could come together to study the Bible without a priest, or even a male minister, and discern what the Bible said to them.⁴⁷ Indeed, the success of the first journée des femmes inspired a repeat. With the decision to hire francophone professors at the Mennonite Brethren Bible School precipitating Viola and Herb Wiens’ return west, the executive, now made up solely of new converts, again approached Connie Wight, inviting her to return to speak at a second women’s day.⁴⁸ Apologizing for the group’s lack of clarity, secretary Suzette Denault asked Wight if she would come up with a topic that would speak to their longing to follow God’s guidance as they continued on their path as Christian women.⁴⁹ Wight accepted the invitation. Taking 2 Corinthians 5: 14-21 as her text, she taught on the theme “*Moi, une nouvelle création?*” (Me, a new creation?).

Under Wight’s leadership, and other female speakers known in evangelical circles, women explored with women what was a critical identity crisis for francophone Quebecers.⁵⁰ As the secular feminist movement emphasized women’s autonomy including full access to birth control, control over their bodies through the right to abortion, and bearing children out of wedlock, the women in these churches set out to explore their concerns on the proper conduct of married women. What was the appropriate perspective on sexuality? How should women dress? How should married women behave?⁵¹ For instance, late in 1979 secretary Suzanne Denault again wrote to Connie Wight. Would she address “*La femme chrétienne mariée et ses problèmes*” (The married Christian woman and her problems)?⁵² Family concerns including the relations of parents with their children and teens,⁵³ how parents can keep their children faithful⁵⁴ and societal influences ranging from pornography to television, came up again and again.⁵⁵

In their rapidly changing context, and with their new identity as evangelical Christian women, women among les Frères Mennonites, longed for answers. “*Qui suis-je?*” (Who am I?) they asked. As middle-class women, stylish dress, make-up and dancing were the norm. Were these worldly attractions?⁵⁶ Can the ordinary woman live out the gospel? How do we react in time of testing? Am I faith-

ful to my tasks? How do I love those around me? How can I serve others? Is our happiness found through serving others or is it in communion with God?⁵⁷ How can we unmask our illusions, which challenge the spiritual life?⁵⁸ Throughout the decades, they continued to plan their women's days with prayerful thought and care, with the intention that these times would be foundational in their edification and encouragement, when women could anticipate that they would meet sisters from other churches in "*une bonne conférence pratique pour t'aider dans ta marche chrétienne*" (a good practical conference to help women in their Christian walk.)⁵⁹

Forging an Identity as Sisters among the Brethren

In December 1984, a pair of articles appeared in the three-year old *Lien des Frères Mennonites* (Mennonite Brethren Connection) affirming women using their gifts in the church. Editor Claudette Leblanc summed up Robert Dagenais's series of talks in the Mennonite Brethren circle where he both explored ways that Jesus had elevated women, and attempted to interpret the difficult passages for women in Paul's writings. Dagenais's conclusion came down to highlighting what has become a mantra for feminist theologians, Galatians 3: 28, with its promise of equality for all.⁶⁰ The popularity of the women's days suggest that the sisters among the Frères Mennonites sought more than affirmation by male leaders, however. They embraced a place where they could explore their own faith questions and form their identity as Christians with other women in their denomination, as well as broader evangelical circles as a report on a retreat organized by *L'Association des femmes chrétiennes évangéliques du Québec* suggests.⁶¹

It was clear from the outset that these journées des femmes were for women, and only women. At an early point it was timidly suggested that they might be opened up to husbands; a resounding no was the response. Not once was there a male speaker or workshop leader. Men were welcomed only to deliver and serve the restaurant meals, to set up, and to provide technical support. For instance, in her June 1989 report to readers of *Le Lien*, Yolande Morel Bourdages playfully addressed male readers, emphasizing what they were missing and encouraging them to organize a parallel men's day. The photo accompanying the article showed men from the St. Laurent congregation whose women hosted the day, serving the noon meal.⁶²

In the wave of feminism that saw women's groups explode in Québec, Frère Mennonite women sought sisterhood, in their jour-

ney as evangelical Christian women. Jeannine Lambert's brief report to *Le Lien* on the spring 1988 meeting illustrates: "*il est vraiment agréable de rencontrer ces 'vieux' visages des autre assemblées, de même que les nouveaux. Il est bon d'échanger sur tout et rien entre soeurs dans le foi.*" (it is truly pleasant to see familiar faces from other meetings, even as it is the newer ones. It is good to exchange thoughts and ideas among sisters in the faith.)⁶³ Indeed, a decade later as the era of *les journées des femmes* was coming to an end, the theme underscored the identity that these women had forged as sisters. "*L'amie aime en tout temps et dans le malheur elle se montre une soeur.*" (A friend loves at all times, and kinsfolk are born to share adversity. Proverbs 17: 17).

With its context, both geographically and in time, there was never a question of supporting mission outside of women supporting one another on their spiritual journey.⁶⁴ The budgets illustrate that the goal was simply to break even.⁶⁵ Nor did they raise questions around women's ministry.⁶⁶ As did women's groups in the rest of MB Canada, *les journées des femmes* provided a place where women could come together for edification and encouragement as they studied and worshipped together.⁶⁷ The *Comité des femmes inter-églises* remained a constant throughout its twenty year duration, as women sought to create a space where they could explore the Scriptures with other women, where they could develop sisterhood in their *Frères Mennonites* community.

In conclusion, the notes in the green binder show that the twenty year history of *le Comité des femmes inter-églises*, in putting on annual *Journées des femmes*, is significant in our understanding of Mennonites in Québec, as it is to the history of Mennonites in Canada.⁶⁸ Not only do these days illustrate leadership and commitment to a new found faith, as women borrowed from an evangelical denomination with its own ethnic distinctives; without this intentional shaping of identity as sisters among the brothers, it is questionable whether *les Frères Mennonites* would ever have survived as a denomination in Québec's dramatically shifting post-Quiet Revolution world.

Notes

¹ I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Zacharie Leclair, Ginette Bastien, and the anonymous readers for their comments on earlier drafts of the manuscript.

- ² For a clear outline of the developments of evangelicalism in Quebec during these years, see Richard Lougheed, "The Evangelical Revivals of the 1960s – 1980s," in *French-Speaking Protestants in Canada: Historical Essays, 191-206*, edited by Jason Zuidema (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011).
- ³ Brian Clarke and Stuart Macdonald, *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945* (Kingston & Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2017), 17.
- ⁴ See for instance Lougheed, "Evangelical Revivals;" Lougheed, Wesley Peach and Glenn Smith, *Historie du Protestantisme au Québec depuis 1960* (Québec, QC: Editions la Clarière, 1999); Glen G. Scorgie, "The French-Canadian Missionary Society: A Study in Evangelistic Zeal and Civic Ambition," 79-98, in Zuidema; Jean-Louis Lalonde, "French Protestant Missionary Activity in Quebec from the 1850s to the 1950s," 163-190, in Zuidema; Sébastien Fath, "The Other American Dream: French Baptists and Canada in the 19th and 20th Centuries," 243-264, in Zuidema; Michael Di Giacomo, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Canada: Its Origins, Development, and Distinct Culture," 15-38, in *Canadian Pentecostalism: Transition and Transformation*, edited by Michael Wilkinson (Kingston, ON and Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009).
- ⁵ See for example Randall Balmer and Catharine Randall, "Henriette Feller, the Spirit and Mission to Canada," 30-33, in Zuidema; Lougheed et al, *Histoire du Protestantisme au Québec*, 23; Fath, "The Other American Dream," 248.
- ⁶ Lucille Marr, "The College and Missions: Jane Drummond Redpath," in *Still Voices, Still Heard: Sermons, Letters, Addresses and Reports, The Presbyterian College, Montreal, 1865 – 2015*, 44-62, edited by Jim Armour et al (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015).
- ⁷ The apt metaphor of *Two Solitudes* was used by author Hugh MacLennan in his novel by the same name published in 1945. See review by Marine Leland, *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 5 (May, 1945), 424-425 (Wiley on behalf of the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/318183>; Accessed: 12-12-2018 20:34 UTC.
- ⁸ *The Work of their Hands: Mennonite Women's Societies in Canada* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 150, 157-58.
- ⁹ *Mennonite Women in Canada: a History* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2008).
- ¹⁰ Clarke and Macdonald, *Leaving Christianity*, 122, 160; Solange Lefebvre, "The Francophone Roman Catholic Church," 118, 122-23, in *Christianity and Ethnicity in Canada* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2008), edited by Paul Bramadat and David Seljak; Callum G. Brown, *Religion and the Demographic Revolution: Women and Secularisation in Canada, Ireland, UK and USA since the 1960s* (Woodbridge, UK and New York, NY: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2012), 58; Michael Gauvreau, "'Without making a noise': The Dumont Commission and the Drama of Quebec's Dechristianization, 1968-1971," 197-202, in *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization in North America and Western Europe, 1945-2000*, ed. Nancy Christie and Gauvreau (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

- ¹¹ Judy Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2005), 228; see also Lougheed, "Evangelical Revivals," 193.
- ¹² Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 47-58, 228; Brown, *Religion and the Demographic Revolution*, 58, 161, 191; Gauvreau, "'Without making a noise,'" 186; in "Francophone Roman Catholic Church," 125-27, Lefebvre outlines the effect of the Quiet Revolution and the feminism movement on women in Catholicism.
- ¹³ Richard Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois descendants: A History of the mission of Anabaptist groups in Quebec, 1956-2017* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, forthcoming), 26.
- ¹⁴ Lougheed tells that story in *Menno's Quebecois descendants*, 22-29, 36-44, 47-48; see also Lefebvre, "Francophone Roman Catholic Church," 109, 115.
- ¹⁵ For further history on the French Canadian Protestant Mission, see Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois descendants*, 9-25 and Jean-Louis Lalonde, "French Protestant missionary activity in Quebec from the 1850s to the 1950s," 163-90, in Zuidema, *French-Speaking Protestants in Canada*.
- ¹⁶ Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois descendants*, 48-50, 54-56, 75.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.
- ¹⁸ Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses*, 48; Lefebvre, "Francophone Roman Catholic Church," 125-27.
- ¹⁹ Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois descendants*, 58, 62, 74-75, 78, 89-90; Lougheed, "Evangelical Revivals," 199.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 195, n. 14, 197.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 200.
- ²² In *Ibid.*, 197-98, 200-04, Lougheed has noted that the revival began about 1970, peaking in 1977, and remaining strong until 1982 when rapid growth halted.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 203.
- ²⁴ Locally, Quebecers identified themselves as Christians rather than by the denominational name. Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois descendants*, 58.
- ²⁵ Redekop, *Work of their Hands*, 65.
- ²⁶ "La première réunion du Comité des femmes," 22 January 1978, green binder, Archives of l'Association des églises des frères mennonites du Québec, (AEFMQ).
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ "Réunion du Comité des femmes," 24 February 1978, Archives AEFMQ; Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois Descendants*, 126.
- ²⁹ "La première réunion du Comité des femmes," 22 January 1978.
- ³⁰ "Lettre circulaire à afficher dans les différentes églises," n.d., green binder, Archives AEFMQ; "Comité des femmes, revenus et dépenses," 15 April 1986, 29 April 1989, 28 April 1990, 21 October 1991.
- ³¹ Rolland, "Lettre adressé aux églises" to announce May 1979 meeting, green binder, Archives AEFMQ.
- ³² "Réunion des femmes de l'église," 20 November 1979.
- ³³ Redekop, *Work of their Hands*, 74.
- ³⁴ "Réunion des femmes de l'église," 20 November 1979.
- ³⁵ "Les femmes du comité de l'église de St. Jérôme to l'épouse de pasteur ou personne resource," June 1980; A.A. Bérubé to les femmes de St. Jérôme, 3

- November 1980; green binder, Archives AEFMQ; Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois descendants*, 65, 79.
- 36 Edwige Bélanger to T. Rolland, 21 August 1980, green binder, Archives AEFMQ. The school system was divided between Catholic and Protestant school boards until the mid-1970s. See Lefebvre, "Francophone Roman Catholic Church," 117.
- 37 Members of the Comité des femmes inter-églises; "réunion du Comité des femmes," 3 June 1980.
- 38 "Réunion du Comité des femmes," 7 October 1981, 27 October 1982.
- 39 Lougheed, "Evangelical Revivals," 198, 202-04.
- 40 "Réunion du Comité des femmes," 27 October 1982; 25 October 1983; 31 October 1983.
- 41 Bible Gateway, <https://www.biblegateway.com>, accessed 15 February 2019.
- 42 "Réunion du Comité des femmes," 24 March 1987; Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois descendants*, 89.
- 43 "Réunion du Comité des femmes," 3 April 1978).
- 44 Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois Descendants*, 89.
- 45 "La première réunion du Comité des femmes," 22 January 1978; Lougheed, *Menno's Quebecois Descendants*, 85.
- 46 "La première réunion des femmes de l'église de St. Jérôme," 24 February 1978.
- 47 A conversation with Elaine Goulet, an evangelical woman who converted from Catholicism, has helped me to see this more clearly. Montréal, Québec, 16 February 2019.
- 48 S. Denault, letter to Connie Wight, November 1978; summer 1979, green binder, Archives AEFMQ.
- 49 Denault, letter to Wight, November 1978.
- 50 Program, "Journée de rencontre pour les femmes chrétiennes," 5 May 1979, green binder, Archives AEFMQ.
- 51 "Réunion Comité des femmes," 30 November 1979.
- 52 Denault, letter to Wight, 11 December 1979.
- 53 "Réunion Comité des femmes," 21 October 1980.
- 54 "Réunion Comité des femmes," 27 February 1982.
- 55 "Réunion Comité des femmes," 6 November 1984.
- 56 "Réunion Comité des femmes," 31 October 1983.
- 57 "Réunion Comité des femmes," 27 October 1982.
- 58 "Proces-verbal du Comité des femmes," 17 November 1992.
- 59 "Réunion Comité des femmes," 7 March 1987, 30 March 1989.
- 60 "La femme et le christianisme" and "Paul et les femmes", *Le Lien des Frères Mennonites*, vol. 3, no. 12 (6 Dec. 1984): 1-3. See also, for instance, Mary T. Malone, *Women and Christianity, Vol. I: The First Thousand Years* (Ottawa, ON: Novalis Press, 2000), 26 and Rebecca Moore, *Women in Christian Traditions* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 49.
- 61 Claudette Leblanc, "Les femmes se retrouvent," *Le Lien* vol. 4, no. 6 (June 1985): 5.
- 62 "Une journée pour les femmes," *Le Lien*, vol. 8, no. 1 (June 1989): 7.
- 63 "L'amitié entre femmes," *Le Lien*, vol. 6, no. 10 (April 1988): 5.
- 64 Redekop, *Work of their Hands*, 74.

- ⁶⁵ “Comité des femmes, revenus et dépenses,” 15 April 1986, 29 April 1989, 28 April 1990, 21 October 1991.
- ⁶⁶ By 1987 MB churches had been encouraged to affirm women in various ministries. Redekop, *Work of their Hands*, 83.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 66-68; 70-71.
- ⁶⁸ Program, “Journée des femmes inter-églises,” 4 April 1998, green binder, Archives AEFMQ.