From Bible College to University: Expanding the Scope of Mennonite Post-Secondary Education in Canada since 1970[1]

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Introduction

Mennonites in Canada presently operate a diverse range of post-secondary educational institutions including a university that is part of Universities Canada, five accredited Bible colleges, a liberal arts university-college, a seminary, and half a dozen Bible schools and "gap-year" discipleship programs. This picture differs substantially from fifty years ago when Mennonites operated nine campus-based Bible schools, two Bible colleges (both located in Winnipeg), and one liberal arts college, and when the cumulative enrolment in Mennonite Bible colleges was poised to supersede the declining cumulative enrolment of a long legacy of Mennonite Bible schools. The educational institutional profile in 1970 had already begun to reflect a general transition that was taking place as many Mennonites in Canada moved from their former rural, agrarian isolation towards greater integration into the mainstream of Canadian society.[2] According to historian T. D. Regehr, "this cultural accommodation was made easier by a variety of factors

that made Canadian society more friendly and tolerant of Mennonite values."[3] The institutional profile of 2018 is less a reflection of a changing relationship between Mennonites and Canadian society, and more a reflection of responses on the part of Mennonites who are at home as comfortable participants within Canadian society, and is due both to developments within post-secondary education in Canada as well as the challenges of life in a globalized, interconnected world.

This essay examines five developments in the history of Mennonite post-secondary education since 1970 that have been central to facilitating and strengthening this trajectory of cultural mainstreaming including transitions within existing Bible colleges, the establishment of liberal arts programs and institutions, a seminary and the first Mennonite university in Canada.[4] Many of these degree-granting educational institutions are fully integrated into the broader post-secondary landscape in Canada as they have successfully sought recognition for their degree programs, and comply with applicable governmental quality assurance and accreditation standards. Many of the more recent Mennonite post-secondary institutions were made possible by greater collaboration among several Mennonite, and other, denominations. The concluding section provides a range of preliminary observations that attempt, where possible, to relate the changes taking place within Mennonite post-secondary education to national and even global trends.

Bible Colleges and the Pursuit of Recognition

The first major shift in Mennonite post-secondary education after 1970 is the transition from a campus-based Bible school model to, at least for a time, a campus-based Bible college model. Bible colleges are differentiated from Bible schools by the former's authority to confer degrees and higher academic standards including more rigorous entrance requirements and curricular expectations. Most Bible colleges include some non-theological liberal arts and general education courses in their curriculum alongside Bible and theological studies. Generally, Bible colleges seek recognition for their degrees, which typically occurs through negotiated transfer-credit arrangements with public universities, and/or through accreditation with the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), formerly known as the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges.[5] In addition to the prominent role played by the two Mennonite Bible colleges in Winnipeg that were started during the 1940s, this shift involves at least six other schools. Four of these,

each located in a different province, had their origin as Bible schools during the pre-1970 period before successfully making the transition to becoming Bible colleges; the other two were started after 1970. The need to respond to changing educational choices on the part of Mennonite young people, along with the desire on the part of school leaders for greater recognition by other degree-granting institutions, precipitated the move toward Bible colleges.

A comparison of cumulative enrolment illustrates well the Bible school to Bible college transition. In 1960 the cumulative enrolment in Mennonite Bible schools reached just over 900 students, more than three times the cumulative enrolment of the two Mennonite Bible colleges in existence at the time. By 1980, the cumulative enrolment of the two educational sectors were almost equal, but by 1990 it was evident that a major reversal had taken place as the cumulative enrolment in Mennonite Bible colleges doubled that of the Mennonite Bible schools. The full extent of the eclipse was even more dramatic at the turn of the century when Mennonite Bible school enrolment almost disappeared before experiencing a small recovery due to the emergence of several new Bible schools. This demise coincided with an increase in cumulative annual enrolment in Mennonite Bible colleges, which peaked at the turn of the century at almost 1,600 students.[6]

By the late 1930s Mennonite leaders began noting a shortage of well-qualified, bilingual teachers for their numerous Bible schools.[7] The sense of urgency for Bible school teachers was heightened further by the frustration of seeing some of their best ministerial candidates attend American colleges and not return to Canada.[8] A few leaders argued that the pastors of the future, especially in the new urban churches, would need a more general and a higher level of education to keep up with lay people in such congregations. As a result two "higher Bible schools" were established in the metropolitan centre of Winnipeg: Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) in 1944 by the Mennonite Brethren, and Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) in 1947 by the Conference of Mennonites. Within three years MBBC became the largest Mennonite Brethren school in Canada, a status it continued to enjoy throughout the 1950s. By 1960, the enrolment at the college equaled almost fifty percent of the total enrolment in the four Mennonite Brethren Bible schools in existence at that time. At the outset, the general expectation within their respective constituencies was for the colleges to provide an advanced biblical and theological curriculum designed to train students for full-time church work at home and abroad.

The desire to have prospective ministers and missionary personnel graduate from these colleges was considered by some as essential for insuring a higher degree of relational and doctrinal "unity" within the denomination. According to Aaron Schmidt, "...as M.B. Conference we have no Cathechism [sic] or written church polity, which many other conferences employ to achieve unified teaching, a College education is vital for each worker, if we want to retain uniformity in our doctrine."[9] While the two colleges in Winnipeg did serve as important centres of influence within their respective denominations, the hyperbolic claims that denominational unity was at stake assisted the schools in recruiting students and soliciting funding.[10] For their part, some individuals within the Conference of Mennonites believed that their denomination was in danger of disintegrating if it did not find a new national project around which to rally. Some saw CMBC "as a way to overcome rivalries fostered by regionally-based schools."[11] Both schools faced opposition from within the denomination: some wanted the curriculum to include more courses taught in German, some were afraid that association with other colleges and universities would be a pathway towards "modernism," others were afraid that students would be exposed to non-Mennonite points of view as part of a college curriculum.

Along with the recognized need for well-prepared church workers, there were also voices expressing concern about the impact of a growing number of young people studying at universities in urban centres and the need to help a new generation adapt to a rapidly changing cultural environment in Canada following the end of the Second World War.[12] Whether as a direct response to the broader expectations of prospective students, or the desire to ensure a sustainable enrolment, it was not long before both colleges found themselves wrestling with a bifurcated sense of identity: should a Bible college really be only, or even primarily, about preparing persons for "professional" church workers at home and abroad, or should it also be about providing lay persons with a well-rounded Christian education that would prepare them for life? This question had significant implications for how programs were constructed, how faculty were selected, how students were recruited, and how the school was perceived within the constituency. From the outset, leaders in both schools tried to argue that the two objectives should be seen as complementary, taken together, they defined the unique *raison d'être* of a Bible college for Mennonites in Canada.[13] The two colleges in Winnipeg were, therefore, on the forefront of defining the role and identity of a Bible college for

those Mennonite Bible schools interested in making the transition to college status.

Both colleges quickly looked for ways to gain recognition for their academic programs. This began through their fraternal relationships with long-standing liberal arts colleges operated by their co-religionists in the United States, particularly Tabor College in Hillsboro, KS, and Bethel College in North Newton, KS. These schools provided curricular models that the new colleges could adapt to their own setting. MBBC tried unsuccessfully in the 1940s to negotiate a credit-transfer arrangement with the University of Manitoba. Instead of establishing a national accreditation body in Canada, provincial universities were, particularly in western Canada, deemed to be responsible for setting and maintaining academic standards in a province. This gave them control over post-secondary degree programs, something they were not willing to relinquish until provincial governments began to issue additional degree-granting charters. The reluctance on the part of the University of Manitoba prompted MBBC to pursue accreditation with ABHE in 1950. The school nevertheless continued to pursue transfer credit arrangements with newly chartered public universities, initially with the Waterloo Lutheran University in 1961, and with nearby University of Winnipeg after it was established in 1967.

It was not until 1956 that CMBC approached the University of Manitoba about the possibility of receiving recognition for some of the academic work done at the college. The request resulted in an understanding in 1957 that a limited degree of advanced standing could be granted, and over time the amount of transfer-credit gradually increased. As the number of credit recognition requests from faith-based colleges and junior colleges increased, the University of Manitoba adjusted its approach making it possible for schools that met certain standards to be approved as a "Teaching Centre" of the university, a status that was granted to CMBC in 1964. It proved to be a long-standing, mutually-beneficial arrangement that according to Fred Stambrook, Academic Vice-President during the early 1990s, enabled the University of Manitoba to recruit "students of exceptionally high caliber" who would otherwise have studied elsewhere in Canada.[14] The credit recognition arrangement with the University of Manitoba meant that CMBC never felt that it was necessary to pursue accreditation with ABHE.

Not only did these two Mennonite colleges in Winnipeg serve as models for other Mennonite schools, but they were also at the forefront of inaugurating the Bible college model in Canada, and the

first to succeed in formalizing transfer-credit arrangements with public universities. MBBC was the first Bible college in Canada to be accredited by ABHE, decades ahead of most other schools, and as such served as an example for many other Bible colleges. Interestingly, it was also the first Bible college in Canada to relinquish ABHE accreditation because of its recognition that such accreditation alone would not help Bible colleges in Canada gain recognition within the post-secondary educational landscape as it had done in the United States.[15] This occurred in 1971 at about the same time as many other Bible colleges in Canada were beginning to apply for ABHE accreditation.

In addition to the two Mennonite Bible colleges in Winnipeg, six other Mennonite schools scattered across Canada eventually made the transition from a campus-based Bible school model to a campus-based Bible college model. Following an earlier pattern among their American neighbours during the 1940s, in the 1960s many Bible school leaders in Canada became increasingly interested in improving the academic status of their schools.[16] This interest was closely related to the sweeping changes taking place simultaneously within the broader academic community in Canada as higher education became increasingly linked to the technological and economic growth of the country.[17] Students with high-school diplomas, along with their parents, began demanding more recognition in the form of degrees and transferable credit for the time and money spent at Bible schools. As some Bible schools moved closer to the post-secondary educational mainstream they gave up (or at least exchanged) their distinctive Bible school priorities for a related, but somewhat different, set of educational objectives. The impulse toward accreditation during the 1960s and 1970s was the first step towards the "universitizing" of Bible schools that led a number of Bible schools in Canada to become Bible colleges.[18]

In 1960 what became an annual forum called the Canadian Conference of Christian Educators (renamed the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges in 1968) was organized by Bible school leaders to discuss issues pertaining to the operation of their schools, including the merits of accreditation. A significant catalyst in the formation of this forum was S.A. Witmer, executive director of ABHE, who had a keen interest in Canada (his parents were Mennonite immigrants and his wife was born in Ontario). Witmer used the event as a platform to promote membership within ABHE to Canadian evangelical educators as a path towards a new level of academic respectability and recognition for their schools among universities in Canada.[19] Mennonite Bible schools were well-

represented at the annual Canadian Conference of Christian Educators events. Despite some ambivalence, Frank C. Peters, the first academic dean at MBBC, was a prominent voice in advocating for accreditation, helping generate momentum for accreditation.[20]

Not surprisingly, four Mennonite Bible schools applied for "applicant status" with ABHE during the 1970s including the two schools operated by the Evangelical Missionary Church, Mountain View Bible College in Didsbury, AB, and Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener, ON, the Mennonite Brethren school in Hepburn, SK, Bethany Bible Institute, and the inter-Mennonite Steinbach Bible Institute in southern Manitoba. By 1982 Emmanuel Bible College was approved for full accreditation, followed by Steinbach Bible College and the inter-Mennonite Columbia Bible College in 1991.[21] After several false starts, Bethany College received full accreditation a decade later in 2002. Ecole de Théologie Évangélique de Montréal, a Mennonite Brethren school founded in 1976 also made the transition to Bible college during the 1980s first through course recognition arrangement with Mennonite Brethren Bible College, and then with a unique arrangement in 1990 as the Protestant sector of the Faculty of Theology at the Université de Montréal. As noted Mountain View Bible College applied for applicant status, but in 1991 it merged with Hillcrest Christian College, which already had ABHE accreditation, to form Rocky Mountain College.[22]

While accreditation with ABHE did not immediately help Mennonite Bible colleges gain recognition on the broader post-secondary landscape in Canada, it did motivate them to meet higher academic standards and to give more attention to various aspects of college life including governance, organizational structure, student life, library, admissions and marketing. With some notable exceptions (particularly larger Bible colleges located in urban centres in close proximity to public universities), relationships between Bible colleges throughout Canada and public universities were often characterized by mutual suspicion (and sometimes open prejudice) with some Bible college leaders warning students about the corrosive influence of public universities on people of faith, while some university leaders were asserting that studies done at confessional institutions were simply about indoctrination. Over time, some of this suspicion has diminished, and most public universities now grant transfer credit for some courses completed at Bible colleges.[23]

Bible colleges have always been a unique educational genre; the steady decline in enrolment at Mennonite Bible colleges since 2000 is a reminder of their precarious place on the post-secondary educational landscape as they feel the squeeze from a growing number

of faith-based liberal arts university colleges and universities that offer a broader range of degree programs, from evangelical seminaries that emerged during the 1960s and 1970s which focused more specifically on preparing people for professional Christian service roles, and by the more recent appearance of creative (and cheaper) experiential discipleship schools that have significantly lower administrative and infrastructure costs. In 1991, Gerald Gerbrandt, then academic dean of CMBC, offered a prescient view of four major challenges that lay ahead. At the top of his list was the task of clarifying or redefining the nature and role of the education that is provided by a Bible college so that there is sufficient differentiation from both seminaries and liberal arts colleges. He anticipated that the relationship to denominational bodies would be tested, that arrangements with universities would need to be re-evaluated, and that financial pressure would drive a search for new streams of revenue.[24] For campus-based Bible colleges to survive they need to have astute, competent and trusted leaders, clarity of purpose and direction, a reasonable degree of programmatic diversity, responsible management of finances, a geographical location in beneficial proximity to prospective students, and careful attention to the student experience.[25]

Expanding Horizons: Liberal Arts Institutions

The emergence of Mennonite liberal arts institutions marks the second significant move since 1970. Despite the long-standing presence of several Mennonite liberal arts colleges in the United States at which many Canadian Mennonites studied, and the early inclusion of non-theological liberal arts courses within the curriculum of the two Winnipeg-based Bible colleges,[26] it was not until 1963 that Mennonites in Canada managed to launch their first liberal arts college, Conrad Grebel College (renamed Conrad Grebel University College in 2001) in Kitchener, ON.

In contrast to the relative ease with which faith-based groups in the United States were permitted to establish liberal arts post-secondary institutions, it was much more complicated for faith-based groups to do so in Canada. In the first half of the twentieth century, liberal arts education was the domain of a network of small institutions that held a virtual monopoly on university education in Canada.[27] This began to change after the Second World War as thousands of returning veterans, along with many other Canadians, wanted access to a university education. During the 1940s, university enrolment increased by almost 70 percent precipitating

a move towards the "massification" of higher education that took place in the decades following the war.[28] To expand capacity, government funding and university status was granted to what had previously been satellite colleges, to denominational institutions willing to secularize, and to proposals for the establishment of new institutions. According to Glen Jones, "by the 1970s, Canadian universities were generally characterized as public, secular institutions and governments viewed university degree granting as a public monopoly."[29] The secularized, government-controlled educational environment made it difficult for faith-based liberal arts institutions in Canada to gain access to degree-granting authority and program recognition without utilizing a combination of transfer-credit arrangements, affiliation agreements, and other incremental strategies.

From the outset the two Mennonite Bible colleges in Winnipeg stressed the importance of including some non-theological liberal arts courses in their programs. This was, according to Abe Dueck, initially "legitimized on the basis of their contributing function to the main professional-theological purpose of the [Bible] College,"[30] but many faculty also argued that exposure to some liberal arts was necessary "for active participation in the everyday matters of human life."[31] However, the inclusion of such courses was never without some controversy.

In 1960, the Canadian Mennonite Brethren organized a formal Study Commission to clarify the role of a liberal arts education within their denomination.[32] A strong case was made for the importance of the liberal arts for the "total development of the individual," which will "enable the individual to make wise decisions in the social, political and economic areas which are his responsibility as a true witness of Christ."[33] The Commission presented a proposal for the formation of a junior college attached to an existing high school, to MBBC, or to a residence built on a public university campus.

> In the past, we have found it necessary to build schools to meet certain needs. We have built Bible schools, Christian high schools and the Bible college. These have been and still are a blessing to the brotherhood. Now, with the increasing emphasis on higher education, and in the light of the experience of the past, the time has come for us to extend our influence into the Liberal Arts field.[34]

Although consideration was given to a cooperative venture with other denominational groups, preference was clearly expressed for establishing their own liberal arts college. Despite the enthusiasm

on the part of those making the proposal for a new liberal arts college, the delegates decided otherwise and such a school never came to fruition. The discussion did, however, strengthen the resolve of those who advocated for the inclusion of more liberal arts within the Bible college curriculum as a strategy for attracting those who might otherwise be interested in attending a public university.[35]

The formation of a liberal arts department, and affiliation in 1961 with Waterloo Lutheran University (later renamed Wilfrid Laurier University), did embed a liberal arts program more deeply into the life of the college. This arrangement made it possible for MBBC students to transfer two years towards a degree granted either by Tabor College or Waterloo Lutheran University.[36] A more favourable arrangement was later negotiated with the University of Winnipeg during the early 1970s. The decision in 1975 by the Mennonite Brethren in both Canada and the United States to collaborate in a single seminary located in Fresno, California (more on this below) diminished the college's ability to develop its ministerial training programs, and helped to reinforce the necessity of liberal arts programs within MBBC in order to survive, but it also amplified the ambiguity around the college's identity and purpose.[37] Although the college continued to offer a ministerial training program for a time,[38] gradually the majority of students enrolled at MBBS were also simultaneously students at the University of Winnipeg. The school became a stepping stone into public universities. Exacerbating its diminishing status as a national Bible college was the loss of funding from the British Columbia Mennonite Brethren Conference, which opted to channel its financial resources towards its own school in Abbotsford. In 1992 MBBC changed its name to Concord College to signal a change in ownership as it moved from being a national Mennonite Brethren conference school to being more of a regional school owned initially by three provincial Mennonite Brethren conferences (Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta),[39] and in 1997 exclusively by the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba. The change in ownership coincided with a shift in curricular focus away from ministerial training towards liberal arts programs offered in collaboration with the University of Winnipeg.[40]

As early as 1958, inter-Mennonite discussions started taking place to assess whether the number of Mennonite students attending universities in Ontario might warrant a Mennonite-sponsored affiliated college in the province. The idea for such a school emerged as a response to the growing number of Mennonite young adults attending public universities for training in specialties not

available at Mennonite colleges or Bible schools, and an invitation from the recently founded University of Waterloo to various denominations to establish residential colleges that would be affiliated with the new university. By 1961, a committee comprised of representatives of four Mennonite groups had succeeded in obtaining a provincial charter for the establishment of Conrad Grebel College.[41] This was a significant achievement establishing a non-theological degree-granting educational institution in Canada required a charter from a provincial government, and often also approval from local public universities. The model of an affiliated college made it possible for Ontario Mennonites to enter the field of liberal arts post-secondary education with a relatively small financial investment.

The founding group initially envisioned a residential college for Mennonite students studying at the University of Waterloo with the Conrad Grebel College's teaching limited to religious courses and any liberal arts courses that could be incorporated into degree programs offered by the university. Over time some dissonance emerged between those who understood the primary vision of the school to be a residential student ministry, and those who wanted the College's academic teaching program expanded. During the 1970s, selected faculty from within the University of Waterloo, together with faculty from the affiliated colleges, began to function together as a Religious Studies department. This collaboration gave higher profile to the courses offered by Conrad Grebel College on the university campus. Mennonite students usually filled 50 percent of the spaces in the residence, but represented only ten percent of the enrolment in the academic courses offered by Conrad Grebel College, an indicator of the school's intersection with the diverse student body of the university.[42] By 2011-12 more than 4,200 undergraduate students enrolled in Conrad Grebel University College courses. In January 1977 the University of Waterloo Senate formally approved an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree program in Peace and Conflict Studies. This was a unique program within Canadian academia integrating both research and service aspects. A decade later, in 1987, the school launched its first graduate degree program (see below for more).

The high degree of integration with the academic life of the university created a perception of distance between the school and its supporting churches. To signal its interest in serving its denominational constituency and community the school hosts and promotes a wide variety of events, as well as community and affiliated programs (for example, Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir,

Project Ploughshares, School of Adult Studies, and the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario).

Unlike most other Mennonite post-secondary institutions, Conrad Grebel University College receives a substantial portion of its funding from residence fees, tuition-sharing arrangements with the University of Waterloo, and academic grants from the government of Ontario. In 2001, only seven percent of its income came from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

A University for the Church

The third significant, and potentially far-reaching, development in Mennonite post-secondary education was the inauguration of the inter-Mennonite Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in 2000. More than any other educational initiative, the formation of CMU marked Mennonite participation in the renaissance of Christian university education that has slowly been taking place among Protestants in Canada since the 1970s. Its role in this renaissance was reinforced by its acceptance in 2008 as a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (now known as Universities Canada).[43]

The emergence of CMU represents the culmination of a vision for liberal arts education and for institutional collaboration that had been percolating among Mennonite in Manitoba for at least two decades. In 1982 a group of Mennonites who called themselves the "Friends of Higher Learning," commissioned Frank Epp to prepare a detailed plan for establishing a new kind of inter-Mennonite college. The school would be shaped by an expanded vision for Mennonite higher education that is "driven by the need to learn everything there is to be known about God's world and God's word to do his will...[and] the need to supplement, sometimes to challenge, the value and truth systems of the secular universities."[44] The discussions and efforts by the Friends of Higher Learning did not prompt a merger of the Winnipeg-based Bible colleges, but did culminate in the successful petition in 1982 to the Manitoba legislature for a degree-charter for a new school, Menno Simons College. By 1988, the school had become known as the home of Conflict Resolution Studies and International Development Studies, and was affiliated with the University of Winnipeg.

Despite success in starting another university-affiliated institution in the city of Winnipeg, the sense that greater collaboration among existing Mennonite schools of higher learning was necessary continued to persist. Significant in these discussions were the

voices of business people, who were always called upon to help finance the various Mennonite schools, and who repeatedly expressed frustration over what they saw as considerable administrative and programmatic redundancy. In 1995, Art DeFehr distributed a paper entitled, "Mennonite University Vision/Concept Paper," which called existing Mennonite schools to mobilize their resources towards a common educational vision.[45] The time was ripe to implement a collaborative inter-Mennonite initiative with a broader educational vision than was present in the Bible schools and Bible colleges. The promise of financial support from the provincial government as well as the availability of a suitable property helped the dream to become a reality.

Never far from the surface in any discussions about establishing formal connections with external accreditation bodies and associations, governments or public universities, whether that be transfer-credit arrangements on the part of Bible colleges or affiliation agreements on the part of liberal arts colleges or the acceptance of government funding, was a latent fear on the part of some Mennonites that such arrangements would inevitably result in a loss of control (or even ownership) and a compromise of Christian identity and institutional mission. The story of higher education in Canada (and in the United States) is filled with twentieth-century examples of both theological and liberal arts institutions started by denominations that drifted towards theological liberalism or severed their denominational connections and secularized, or both.[46] The Mennonite denominations most prominently involved in post-secondary education benefitted significantly from the wealth of experience gained by its members who had participated as students, faculty and administrators in both faith-based and public institutions. This experience, and the innumerable relational networks that accompanied such involvement, assisted Mennonite schools in successfully building trust and constructing mutually beneficial agreements and partnerships.

In more recent years as Canadian culture has increasingly become more post-Christian, fears have been expressed about the possibility that Mennonite (and other Christian) schools might face skirmishes over academic freedom, ideologically driven means tests for inclusion, funding or recognition, or Human Rights Code or Charter of Rights and Freedom challenges as has been the case for some faith-based post-secondary schools in Canada.[47]

Canadian Mennonites have not ignored the fears and questions around engagement with external bodies and public universities. For example, as discussions about a federation of three existing Mennonite colleges was underway in 1997, a Consultation on Men-

nonite Education was organized in Winnipeg. The shift in Mennonite education towards liberal arts and university prompted a group of leaders to examine questions of institutional identity and whether the shift towards liberal arts/university education would better enable Mennonite schools to "educate for the church."[48] Accreditation, affiliation agreements, and recognition by governmental bodies and public universities have been seen not as an end, but as a means for serving not only their own denominations but a broader Christian constituency. The challenge "of Christian educators is to envision and embody institutions that will attract students, educate them, and thereby build the church and God's reign."[49]

In August 1998, the government of Manitoba approved a degree-granting charter for the creation of a university-level, federation of Mennonite colleges made up of Concord College, CMBC, and Menno Simons College.[50] The Mennonite College Federation began offering its new, jointly sponsored academic programs in September 1999. CMBC and Concord College joined together on a common campus while Menno Simons College remained in downtown Winnipeg near the University of Winnipeg. In 2000, the Federation was renamed Canadian Mennonite University even though it continued to exist as a federation of three colleges, each with their own board elected by the individual college's ownership groups, and with the three presidents forming a "Presidents' Committee." The success of the new venture prompted the three schools to move in 2003 from a federated model to a single integrated institutional model with one Board of Governors and with Gerald Gerbrandt as its sole president. It has continued to maintain two campus locations, each with their programmatic distinctives. The school's tagline as a "university of the church" signals the school's desire to maintain close connections to its two sponsoring denominations (Mennonite Church Canada and the Manitoba Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches).[51] The school exemplifies well the trend among Mennonite educational institutions towards inter-institutional and inter-Mennonite collaboration.

CMU currently offers five undergraduate degree programs including a Bachelor of Arts with eighteen different majors, as well as three graduate degree programs.[52] More than 1,000 students were enrolled during the 2017-18 academic year (37 percent identified themselves as coming from Mennonite or Anabaptist denominations; 44 percent came from a broad range of other denominations). Its enrolment growth and program diversification makes it the largest Mennonite school in Canada, its annual operating budget of $14.5 million exceeds the cumulative annual budgets

of the five Mennonite Bible colleges in Canada, and represents 35 percent of the total amount spent annually by Mennonites on post-secondary education. Like Conrad Grebel University College, CMU receives significant financial support from the provincial government, which makes up approximately 30 percent of its operating budget.[53]

To Another Level: Graduate Degree Programs

Given the pioneering leadership role that Mennonites historically played in the development of both Bible schools and Bible colleges during the twentieth century, it is surprising to see how long it took before graduate programs appeared as part of Mennonite school offerings in Canada. The fourth significant, and most recent, development in Mennonite post-secondary education has to do with the emergence of graduate degree programs at Mennonite schools. A particularly noteworthy feature in the emergence of graduate degrees offered by Mennonite schools is the high level of inter-institutional and inter-denominational collaboration that was necessary to implement such degree programs.

The first Mennonite school in Canada to consider offering a graduate degree was MBBC. In 1957 the Board of Higher Education of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches acknowledged that it had not entertained seriously the question about establishing a seminary in Canada despite efforts on the part of the American Mennonite Brethren in starting a seminary in 1955.[54] The emerging trend towards the professionalization of ministry meant that the question of graduate theological education would persist, and as Abe Dueck notes, the seminary question proved to be the most controversial question surrounding the college for two decades.[55] At their national convention in 1958, the Canadian Mennonite Brethren discussed the development of a seminary department at MBBC and offering a post-graduate Bachelor of Divinity degree.[56] Although MBBC was given permission to begin planning for such a degree, inaugurating the initiative was complicated by an earlier request on the part of the Board of Reference and Counsel of the bi-national General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches that neither conference expand its programs in the area of higher education until it had completed a comprehensive review of the theological training needs of the two conferences and how best to meet them in a unified, collaborative way.[57] Unable to reach an agreement about a single seminary campus, the Board of Reference and Counsel recommended in 1960

that the "present needs for higher theological training should be met by operating a coordinated training program at two campuses, Fresno, CA and Winnipeg, MB."[58] This stalemate, and numerous inquiries from prospective students about the proposed program, prompted MBBC to ask the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference in 1961 to review its earlier decision and allow the Bachelor of Divinity program to begin. For several years the program attracted close to ten students per year; however, by 1972, enrolment in the program had dwindled, and the program was discontinued. Its lack of success was at least in part attributable to the festering ambiguity around the "seminary question," particularly as it became clear that Winnipeg would not be the site for a bi-national seminary.[59] The seminary issue was not resolved until 1975 when the two Mennonite Brethren conferences decided to consolidate their resources in the Fresno campus as a bi-national project.[60] Although MBBS continued to offer a ministerial training program, the seminary decision had permanent implications for MBBC, making it more difficult to function as a national school.

The second Mennonite school in Canada to launch a graduate degree in theological studies was Conrad Grebel University College. After years of discussions about the possibility of a graduate degree program in the school, it launched a Master of Theological Studies degree in 1987, which had a more scholarly rather than an applied focus, which was consistent with its institutional identity as a university-like church-related school. A ministry stream was, however, added in 1998 to mark a closer working relationship with the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada's Pastoral Leadership Training office. A decade later, in 2007 Conrad Grebel University College partnered with University of Waterloo to form a joint Graduate Theological Studies program. This arrangement enabled an expansion of graduate theological course offerings, and greater participation in consortia arrangements with other theological schools in southern Ontario. It also came with Ontario government funding for full-time students, which helped build a more substantial graduate student community. In 2017-18 enrollment reached an all-time high with forty-five students from a diverse range of denominational backgrounds.

Twenty years later, in 1995, the "seminary question" resurfaced for the Mennonite Brethren in Canada as the number of students from Canada relocating to study in Fresno steadily decreased despite the ongoing financial obligation on the part of the Canadian denomination for the Fresno campus. This prompted the bi-national Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary to embark on a strategy of decentralized program delivery by opening a satellite

centre in Abbotsford, BC in 1995 from which to offer seminary courses on the campus of Columbia Bible College. After extensive discussions with pastors and Mennonite Brethren conference leaders in British Columbia, in 1999 the Fresno-based seminary joined four evangelical denominational institutions as part of a consortium called the Associated Canadian Theological Schools located on the campus of Trinity Western University in Langley, BC.[61] This consortial arrangement gave the Mennonite Brethren seminary immediate access to a shared campus, a substantial library, and a broad range of degree programs, all of which are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools. Participating in a consortium model, a common strategy among theological schools in urban centres in Canada,[62] rather than establishing an independent Mennonite Brethren seminary avoided creating competition with other seminaries, and proved to be an affordable way to organize a school for serving a denominational constituency scattered across the country.

As another component of its strategy for decentralizing seminary program delivery in major Canadian urban centres, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary sent one of its faculty members to Concord College in Winnipeg in 1999 with the goal of organizing a collaborative inter-Mennonite partnership for coordinating the offering of Mennonite seminary courses in the region. The partnership, which eventually included Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Steinbach Bible College and five Mennonite denominations, became known as the Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies. The courses offered comprised one year of a Master of Divinity program and could be transferred to any seminary for the completion of a degree. After the inception of Canadian Mennonite University, both the office of the Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies and the graduate courses it organized were hosted on the university campus. Given the faculty strength in Bible and theology at Canadian Mennonite University, and the inter-Mennonite foundation laid by the work of the Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies, in 2012 Canadian Mennonite University launched two graduate degree programs as part of its Graduate School of Theology and Ministry, which continued to use the Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies group as an advisory body. The new Graduate School was a natural extension of its vision for being a "university for the church."

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary remained a vital part of the new Graduate School through an affiliation agreement with CMU that includes the presence of several seminary faculty as part of the Graduate School who are funded, in part, by the semi-

nary and the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Conference. In 2011, the Canadian components of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in British Columbia and Manitoba reorganized to become a Canadian seminary independent of the Fresno campus. In 2013 the new seminary received its own degree-granting charter from the Government of British Columbia. This seminary is a unique institutional model in that it does not own its own campus, and all of its degree programs are offered in partnership with other institutions. It has continued its strategy of de-centralized delivery for serving a national denominational constituency by negotiating partnership agreements with Tyndale Seminary in Toronto and Horizon College and Seminary in Saskatoon. The model facilitates considerable inter-denominational interaction for both its faculty and students. For decades, Canadian Mennonites interested in seminary studies attended either one of the Mennonite seminary options in the United States, or one of growing number of non-Mennonite seminaries across Canada. In Canada, evangelical Protestant denominations started at least four new seminaries during the 1970s and five more during the 1980s, which represented significant competition for any Mennonite group that might have been interested in doing the same.

At present, three Mennonite schools including Canadian Mennonite University offer graduate degrees in theological and ministry studies. In addition, Canadian Mennonite University recently began offering a Master of Arts in Peacebuilding and Collaborative Development, as well as a collaborative Master of Business Administration that is offered jointly with three Mennonite colleges and universities in the United States. These degree programs reflect both the institutional maturation that has taken place in Mennonite schools, and the expertise that is present among their faculty who have earned doctoral degrees from universities around the world.

Ancillary Initiatives

A fifth trend has to do with the emergence of a broad range of ancillary initiatives that support Mennonite post-secondary institutions and students. Many of these initiatives came into being because of the significant increase in Mennonite students choosing to attend public universities. The frequent expressions of concern by Mennonite leaders throughout the second half of the twentieth century about young people attending non-Mennonite schools, particularly public universities, suggests that the number was

significant. While comprehensive data identifying the exact number of Canadian Mennonites choosing to attend public universities is not available, occasional statistical snapshots do exist. For example, a statistical report compiled in 1969 by the Mennonite Brethren revealed that 599 Mennonite Brethren students were attending universities, which represented 58 percent of those attending post-secondary institutions.[63] Two decades later, the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference sponsored a detailed analysis of higher education within their conference, which reported that the number of young adults in Mennonite Brethren churches choosing to attend universities had increased to nearly 900 students, representing 61 percent of those attending post-secondary institutions.[64] A study compiled by Abe Bergen for the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in 1982 estimated that 25 percent of its high school graduates who pursued post-secondary education opted for universities.[65]

An indicator of the concern about the presence of Mennonite students at public universities is the growing interest in organizing ministries and "student enrichment" initiatives specifically for Mennonite students at public universities (rather than focusing only on alternative institutions). As noted, this was in part the concern that prompted the inauguration of Conrad Grebel College during the 1960s as a residential college on a university campus. Both MBBC and CMBC similarly housed Mennonite students who were enrolled at public universities in Winnipeg. During the early 1960s, a group of Mennonite students on the campus of the University of Manitoba organized the Association of Mennonite University Students.[66] In Vancouver, the Pacific Centre for Discipleship Association purchased a former Roman Catholic convent and opened the Menno Simons Centre near the University of British Columbia in 1986 as a place for social fellowship, spiritual nurture and academic dialogue.

In addition to residences, part-time chaplains or youth workers were appointed to connect with Mennonite students in various regions. During the late 1950s, the Mennonite Brethren churches in British Columbia appointed Henry Regehr as a full-time youth worker in Vancouver. Later, they attempted to organize conferences for post-secondary students in their congregations. In Ontario, the Inter-Mennonite Student Services, hired a person to coordinate a variety of student services and part-time chaplains during the 1980s. More recently, Mennonite congregations located near university campuses that have significant connections to Christian faculty and students have organized events designed to attract and engage university students.

A unique inter-Mennonite initiative emerged in Toronto in 1990 as the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre, which focuses on supporting graduate students particularly those pursuing theological education at the doctoral level. The Centre networks Mennonite scholars and graduate students in order to promote inter-Mennonite and ecumenical teaching and research. Its activities include hosting courses, organizing conferences, public lectures and forums. Largely through the connection of James Reimer, the Centre became a part of Conrad Grebel University College"s Graduate Theological Studies program in 2000, and has been affiliated with the broader ecumenical environment of the Toronto School of Theology. It is one of the few places in Canada where a Mennonite institution is involved in doctoral level education.

A significant ancillary feature of the Mennonite post-secondary educational landscape that is often overlooked is the establishment of endowed professorial chairs at non-Mennonite institutions. The first such chair, the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, was made possible in 1978 with the financial support of the David Friesen Foundation and the Canadian Government's Multiculturalism Secretariat. The creativity and indefatigable efforts on the part of Harry Loewen, the first person to occupy the Chair (1978-1996), and Royden Loewen, have enabled hundreds of students to take courses in Mennonite studies, and many to complete graduate theses on subjects pertaining to the Mennonite experience. The Chair has facilitated numerous scholarly collaborations including multi-disciplinary annual conferences and the publication of *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, which has published more than 500 articles since its inception in 1983. The intentional effort to make these annual conferences accessible to individuals beyond the academic community has meant that thousands of people have enjoyed and benefitted from these events, and the dissemination of research that has resulted has immeasurably enhanced an understanding of the Mennonite experience in Canada and beyond. The independence of the Chair from the internal politics and administrative demands of Mennonite institutions enabled it to focus more directly on supporting the research of faculty, and the projects of the various Mennonite historical societies across Canada.

The influence that the Chair in Mennonite Studies in Winnipeg has exercised over time has served as the inspiration and motivation for several other attempts at establishing professorial chairs in non-Mennonite institutions. In 1993 an Anabaptist Chair was created at Regent College in Vancouver. For several decades this was filled by John B. Toews, a semi-retired historian who had pre-

viously taught at the University of Calgary for twenty-seven years. In 2009, a group of Mennonites in the lower mainland organized to form the Mennonite Faith and Learning Society with the goal of establishing support centres for Mennonite studies in local universities. Currently its programs are located at the Humanitas Anabaptist-Mennonite Centre at Trinity Western University (led by Myron Penner), and at University of the Fraser Valley through its Peace and Conflict Studies program (led by Stephen Schroeder). Both host institutions enrol hundreds of Mennonite students each year.

Other ancillary initiatives in Canada include endowments bequeathed to institutions and foundations that generate income for student scholarships, organizations that organize conferences/events and sponsor research by Mennonite scholars, and the publication of Mennonite research in books and journals (for example, the *Journal of Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel Review*, *Direction*, and *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology*).

Concluding Observations

The preceding overview describes in some detail five major shifts that have taken place in Mennonite post-secondary education in Canada during the past fifty years. This final section presents a variety of concluding observations that offer additional commentary on the significance of the changes that have taken place in Mennonite post-secondary education.

First, Mennonites in Canada are currently involved in a much broader range of post-secondary educational initiatives than ever. In part, this is driven by an enlarged vision for the scope of Mennonite education, which is exemplified particularly well in the steadily diversifying programs of study that has taken place in less than two decades at CMU. But the enlarged educational scope is evident in other degree-granting Mennonite schools as well, thus blurring former distinctions between Bible colleges, liberal arts universities and seminaries. Mennonite post-secondary schools see themselves not only as places for the study of the Bible and theology, or the training of people for professional service in Mennonite congregations and denominational ministries, but also as places for the preparation of students as faithful disciples where Mennonite theological perspectives are applied to all areas of learning and modern life. Further, this expanded educational vision welcomes the inclusion of non-Mennonite participants as reflected in the significant percentage of non-Mennonite students.

Second, notable is the substantially greater level of openness to inter-Mennonite, inter-denominational and inter-institutional collaboration and partnership on the part of Mennonite post-secondary schools. It is now the rule rather than the exception for degree-granting Mennonite educational institutions to be involved in significant partnership arrangements. In part, the shift towards greater collaboration reflects the preference for integration and recognition within the broader post-secondary educational landscape in Canada. Despite the risks and added complexity that partnerships require, combining resources to achieve mutually beneficial objectives strengthened Mennonite schools and better positioned them to face changing economic realities, and to obtain recognition for their degree programs. In part, this shift reflects the dilution of denominational loyalties, diminishing prejudices, and the decreased perception that the primary purpose of Mennonite schools is to promote and protect denominational interests and identity. While there is still the expectation that Mennonite schools exist for the purpose of training people for service and leadership within specific denominational constituencies, there is also a greater sense that Mennonite schools exist, as noted above, for the purpose of equipping students for effective participation in Canadian society. The challenges created by the rapid secularization of Canadian society helped energize ecumenical collaboration as Mennonites recognized what they had in common with other Christians along with what they could offer to ecumenical ventures.[67]

Third, without minimizing the significance of the variety of Mennonite educational endeavours that have taken place across Canada, it is worth noting that more Mennonite post-secondary educational activity has happened in and around the complicated Mennonite vortex of the city of Winnipeg than any other location in Canada.[68] This is understandable given the historic significance of the city for many Mennonite immigrants (and others) as the gateway to the west, the large number of Mennonites living in and around the city, the city's location near the geographical centre of Canada, the general strength and diversity of Mennonite institutions located in the region, a prominent and generous Mennonite business community, the close proximity of Mennonite institutions to a provincial university, and the frequently sympathetic provincial governments who are familiar with the Mennonite community. Although there are strong pockets of Mennonite population in other parts of the country, and Mennonite post-secondary institutions are distributed across the country, it is not coincidental that the first Mennonite Bible colleges and university were located in Winnipeg.

Fourth, not as visible in this overview is the dramatic change in how Mennonites have financed post-secondary education. Most notable is the virtual collapse of financial support from denominational budgets. Mennonite educational institutions are much more reliant now on tuition fees, donations from individuals, revenue from ancillary activities, endowment earnings, and in several instances, on government funding than they are on denominational support. This transition changes the nature of a school's relationship with its denominational constituency: instead of seeing a school as one means by which a denominational community achieves its mission (or at least some of its objectives) and for which the denomination therefore has a collective responsibility for the school's well-being, the responsibility for the school's well-being is transferred to individuals whose interest and generosity is directed towards supporting an educational cause. The operational independence that is created by the absence of denominational support can easily put a school at odds with denominational leaders who may be interested in exercising influence without financial involvement. The inability to rely on the financial backing of a denomination demands a more careful attentiveness on the part of school leaders for managing financial resources and risks.

The withdrawal of denominational support is ironic in multiple ways: given the frequent and urgent expressions of concern about the need for well-trained leaders capable of understanding and responding to an increasingly individualistic, technological, secularistic, consumeristic, and at times openly hostile, culture, and given the correlation between well-trained leaders and church health,[69] the reluctance to invest in Christian higher education as part of a proactive long-term future-oriented strategy seems inexplicably short-sighted.[70] This stands in contrast to Mennonite leaders in the past who were much more aggressive in promoting and financing the Christian education of young people as a sacred trust. Ironic also is the fact that withdrawal of denominational support from Mennonite schools occurs at a time when Mennonites in Canada have never been more affluent, when the charitable giving by Mennonites has never been greater, and when theological education is burgeoning in the southern hemisphere often in countries with very limited financial resources, 138 new Christian universities have been started in the last twenty years, 46 in Africa alone.[71] If budgets are the footprint of priorities, evidently the priorities of Mennonite denominations have shifted.

Fifth, the nature of student recruitment has changed. Historically, denominational schools informed young people about 'our' school, one that would help them understand more fully who they

are as Mennonite Christians.[72] It was generally assumed that most students would give preference to schools owned by their denomination unless there was a very good reason to do otherwise. However, as a greater range of educational options became accessible (and permissible), students began to compare the merits of different schools, prompting schools to use strategies akin to advertising in order to showcase the specific qualities or programs that their school had to offer. Education became more of a marketplace with institutions actively selling the strengths of their school in order to attract as many students as possible. More recently, recruitment (and education as a whole) has become still more student-centric as schools cater more intentionally to the consumeristic expectations of students (and parents). Recruitment strategies began giving more careful attention to the "student experience" in order to ensure the satisfaction of its student "customers."

Sixth, one is struck by the internal tension created by two coexisting and sometimes opposing impulses within post-secondary schools. Despite advances in transportation and communications technologies, theological education has become increasingly regionalized in the last three decades. The majority of students in Canada, including those in Mennonite educational institutions, choose to attend a school that is nearby. The centripetal force created by such a student enrolment pattern drives institutional regionalization, but often conflicts with the centrifugal impulse on the part of institutions that, for a range of reasons, seek to extend their student recruitment efforts as far as possible geographically even if there is not always a clear sense of alignment with the institution's mission. It remains to be seen how the contemporary emphasis on distance and online delivery of education will impact the dynamic of these two impulses.[73]

Seventh, many historians have noted the longstanding propensity of Mennonites to organize all manner of institutions including schools.[74] The use of institutions as a means for furthering communal ends fits well with a longstanding feature of Canadian culture. Comparative sociologists such as Seymour Martin Lipset have noted the general importance and influence of institutions in Canadian culture, and contend that this is derived from Canada's traditional Loyalist orientation and its heritage of social evolution, which provided, until recently, a more communal society than the more individualistic ethos of the United States.[75] According to Lipset, this helps to explain why institutions exercise more lasting influence within Canadian culture than individuals.[76] This is a helpful insight when considering the value and potential influence

of Mennonite institutions in general, and educational institutions in particular, especially now that student enrolment in Mennonite schools includes such a significant proportion of non-Mennonite students.[77]

It is a truism to say that change is inevitable. As this overview demonstrates, Mennonite post-secondary educational endeavours have not been immune from the influences driving the unprecedented changes that have taken place during the last century. One of the most prominent themes in the study of higher education has to do with the impact of the avalanche of changes that have confronted, and the pending changes that will continue to confront, educational institutions.[78] Given the accelerated pace of change, Mennonite schools will need to be even more adept in the future at balancing adaptability and stability as they face the challenge of living out their mission within a post-Christian, liberal democracy that, on the one hand, has welcomed faith-based institutions as an integral part of a pluralistic society, but that, on the other hand, sometimes makes demands that run counter to the Christian convictions espoused by faith-based institutions.[79]

Notes

[1] I am grateful for the helpful comments provided by the journal's reviewers, as well as Cheryl Pauls and Abe J. Dueck, all of whom helped to improve the article. Special thanks also to Royden Loewen who assisted in excerpting this article from a longer manuscript.

[2] In 1993 John Stackhouse used a series of institutional histories including four trans-denominational post-secondary schools to explore a similar cultural transition taking place more generally among Canadian evangelical Protestants. John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to Its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

[3] T.D Regehr, *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970: A People Transformed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 2-3.

[4] This article is an extension of my previous research on the emergence of a Bible school movement in Canada during the first half of the twentieth century, and the transition of some of these schools to becoming accredited Bible colleges. See Bruce L. Guenther, "Training for Service: The Bible School Movement in Western Canada, 1909-1960" (Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill University, 2001); and "Wrenching Our Youth Away from Frivolous Pursuits: Mennonite Brethren Involvement in Bible Schools in Western Canada, 1913-1960," *Crux* 38, No. 4 (December 2002): 32-41.

[5] During the latter part of the twentieth century some Bible schools adopted the nomenclature "college" without necessarily obtaining degree-granting

authority, and accreditation or course-transfer agreements with public universities.

[6] This comparative enrolment data is derived from information I have gathered for almost thirty years from schools and archives and compiled in a database of theological schools in Canada.

[7] J.A. Toews, Sr. cited in Abe J. Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College: Competing Visions for Mennonite Brethren Education in Canada," *Direction* 46, No. 1 (2017): 41.

[8] See *Twenty-fifth Anniversary Publication of Mennonite Brethren Bible College, 1944-1969* (Winnipeg: Mennonite Brethren Bible College, 1969), 13-14; and "Schulbestrebungen in unseren Kreisen," in *Verhandlungen der 30. Nördlichen Distrikt-Konferenz der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde, 1939*, 24-27.

[9] Aaron Schmidt, "The Value of a College Education as a Unifying Influence in our Conference," *Konferenz-Jugendblatt* (Sept 1953-February 1954), 53.

[10] Making a direct correlation between attendance at these Bible colleges and denominational unity is ironic given the diverse range of schools from which faculty had earned their graduate degrees!

[11] Bruno Dyck, "Half a Century of Canadian Mennonite Bible College: A Brief Organizational History," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 11 (1993): 196, 198.

[12] See for example the discussion generated by a report presented in 1955 by the *Fürsorgekomitee der Kanadischen M.B. Konferenz* at the annual national conference of Mennonite Brethren in Canada (*CCMBC Yearbook* [1955], 130-133).

[13] Henry G. Krahn and Abe J. Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College: Reflections on Its Philosophy of Education," *Direction* 6, No. 1 (January 1977): 29-31; Abe J. Dueck, "Toward a Philosophy of Education at Mennonite Brethren Bible College," *Direction* 7, No. 4 (October 1978): 36-43; Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College," 42; and Dyck, "Half a Century of Canadian Mennonite Bible College," 198-199.

[14] Fred Stambrook, "A Sensible Resolution: The Canadian Mennonite Bible College and The University of Manitoba," *CMBC Alumni Bulletin* (Spring 1990): 5-10.

[15] See Bruce L. Guenther, "Slithering Down the Plank of Intellectualism? The Canadian Conference of Christian Educators and the Impulse Towards Accreditation Among Canadian Bible Schools During the 1960s," *Historical Studies in Education* 16, No. 2 (2004): 197-228.

[16] By 1960 approximately half of the Bible schools in the United States identified themselves as colleges. William C. Ringenberg, *The Christian College: A History of Protestant Higher Education in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 157-173.

[17] Paul Axelrod, *Scholars and Dollars: Politics, Economics and the Universities of Ontario, 1945-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 36-37; and "Service or Captivity? Business-University Relations in the Twentieth Century," in *Universities in Crisis: A Medieval Institution in the Twenty-first Century*, eds. William A.W. Neilson and Chad Gaffield (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1986), 45-68.

[18] Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, 191-192; and Robert K. Burkinshaw, "Evangelical Bible Colleges in Twentieth-Century Canada," in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed.

George A. Rawlyk (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 373. Although not all Bible schools experienced an institutional "identity crisis" during the 1960s, eventually all Bible schools had to decide whether to pursue accreditation and become degree-granting "colleges," or whether their mandate (or resources) dictated remaining a Bible school.

[19] Moreover, ABHE personnel encouraged faculty members in Canadian Bible schools and colleges to enroll in graduate programs at certain evangelical schools in the United States. The regular presence of ABHE personnel as speakers at the annual Canadian Conference of Christian Educators events created a direct conduit of American evangelical influence into the developing world of evangelical theological education in Canada.

[20] See Frank C. Peters, "Problems of Accreditation in Canada," Conference of Christian Educators Report, 1960, Appendix II.

[21] The accreditation of Columbia Bible College helped to increase the cumulative Bible college enrolment among the Mennonite Brethren, but it also represented a controversial decision on the part of the British Columbia Mennonite Brethren Conference, which constituted about one-half of the MB membership in Canada, to withdraw its financial support from MBBC. This had a detrimental impact on MBBC's historical status as the only Mennonite Brethren Bible college in Canada (Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College," 44).

[22] The decision to merge two schools to create a new school, Rocky Mountain College located in Calgary, AB, anticipated the merger of the denominations that owned the two schools. Mountain View Bible College was operated by the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada, which has its roots in a branch of Swiss Mennonites in southern Ontario who had been influenced by Methodism. In 1993 the denomination merged with the Evangelical Church in Canada (formerly known as the Evangelical United Brethren Church), which was the result of Methodist influence among early North American German-speaking immigrants.

[23] See Al Hiebert for a discussion of strategies and arguments that have been used by Bible college leaders to convince public university administrators to recognize Bible college courses (*Character with Competence Education: The Bible College Movement in Canada* [Steinbach, MB: Association of Canadian Bible Colleges, 2005], 50-58).

[24] Gerald Gerbrandt, "Canadian Mennonite Bible College: An Example of a Bible College," in *Proceedings of the Conference, 'Educating for the Kingdom?' Church-Related Colleges in English-Speaking Canada*" (Waterloo, ON: University of St. Jerome's College and Conrad Grebel College, 1991), 81-86.

[25] Douglas Berg, "Can Bible Colleges Thrive? A Case Study of Columbia Bible College," Paper presented at Christian Higher Education Canada Symposium, Toronto, ON, October 26-27, 2018.

[26] See for example Herbert Giesbrecht, "Teaching the Liberal Arts," *The Voice* 14 (September - October 1965), 4-8.

[27] H. Blair Neatby, "The Historical Perspective," in *Governments and Higher Education: The Legitimacy of Intervention*, ed., Cecily Watson (Toronto: Ontario Institute for the Study of Education, 1987), 34; and Glen Jones, "An Introduction to Higher Education in Canada," in *Higher Education Across*

Nations, eds., Mahendra Kishore Joshi and Saeed Paivandi (Delhi: B.R. Publishing, 2014). In western Canada the creation of a single university in each province with a monopoly over the authority to grant degrees was an attempt to avoid the acrimonious disputes among religious and political leaders that characterized the nineteenth century.

[28] David M. Cameron, *More Than An Academic Question: Universities, Government, and Public Policy in Canada* (Halifax: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1991).

[29] Jones, "An Introduction to Higher Education in Canada."

[30] Dueck, "Toward a Philosophy of Education at Mennonite Brethren Bible College," 37.

[31] Peters, "Problems of Accreditation," Appendix II.

[32] See "Liberal Arts Study Commission – 1960," Folder 30, Vol. 72, CCMBC Board of Higher Education Series (1942-1994), Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies Archives, Winnipeg, MB.

[33] *CCMBC Yearbook* (1960), 166.

[34] Ibid., 168.

[35] After having lost a bid to obtain the campus of the defunct Vancouver Bible Institute, in 1962 the Evangelical Free Church of Canada opted instead to open a junior college named Trinity Western College in Langley, BC (Calvin B. Hanson, *On the Raw Edge of Faith: The Miracle of Trinity Western College* [N.p., n.d.]). It did not take long before a significant number of Mennonites in British Columbia began attending this college, at least 66 Mennonite Brethren students in 1981 (*CCMBC Yearbook* [1982], 110).

[36] As part of its affiliation agreement, the college was for a time renamed the Mennonite Brethren Biblical College and College of Arts (1961-1983).

[37] Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College," 48-51.

[38] In 1985, MBBC formalized an agreement with Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary to offer some seminary level courses in Winnipeg.

[39] The transition was necessitated in part by a decision by the Mennonite Brethren in British Columbia to withdraw its financial support for the school (Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College," 53).

[40] Complicating the decision about the ownership of Concord College was the simultaneous discussion among Mennonite Brethren in Manitoba around the closure of Winkler Bible Institute, which had been struggling with low enrolment for some time, and the exploratory discussions by the Mennonite College Federation Committee. Both schools had its own group of loyal supporters hoping for conference assistance, creating the potential for serious internal division. A press release issued by the Manitoba Conference of Reference and Counsel on January 22, 1997 noted that despite any ongoing differences there was "near unanimity" about "the need for a biblically-based post-secondary institution of Christian education in which discipleship training is a high priority." The resolution to accept responsibility for Concord College succeeded because it was part of a vision for "creating a single, multi-track school on one campus in which discipleship training would be the foundational core," and not because of broad support for the idea of a liberal arts college.

[41] Frank H. Epp, *Small College Set on a Hill* (n.p., n.d. [c. 1976]), 152-157. The Mennonite Brethren withdrew from these discussions in order to pursue their own proposal for a junior college (*CCMBC Yearbook* [1960], 168).

[42] Steiner, *In Search of Promised Lands,* 535.

[43] Harry Fernhout, "Quest for Identity and Place: Christian University Education in Canada," in *Christian Higher Education: A Global Reconnaissance*, eds. Joel Carpenter, Perry L. Glanzer, Nicholas S. Lantinga (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 233-238. CMU is one of a handful of faith-based institutions that are now members of Universities Canada (alongside Trinity Western University, Redeemer University College, and King's University). Several Christian schools with university or university college status have not been accepted (Providence University College, Booth University College, Crandall University, Tyndale University College, St. Stephen's University, Burman University, and Ambrose University).

[44] Frank Epp, "A New College for a New Century: The Wisdom of the Ages for the Crises of our Time," unpublished paper, 1982, 33-44. The proposal outlined by Epp was preceded by an earlier idea of creating a federation of Mennonite theological schools in Winnipeg that would share a common pool of liberal arts courses but retain intact their own theological curriculum and ministry training programs (see "A Survey of Costs," Folder 30: Liberal Arts Study Commission, 1960, Vol. 72 of the CCMBC Board of Higher Education Series, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies Archives, Winnipeg, MB).

[45] Art DeFehr, "Mennonite University Vision /Concept Paper," 1995, Folder 8, Vol. 254, Concord College Fonds, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies Archives, Winnipeg, MB.

[46] Despite a significant body of literature on the development of higher education in Canada (see for example A. Gregor and K. Wilson, *Higher Education in Canada: Historical Perspectives* [Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1979]; Charles M. Beach, Robin W. Boadway, and R. Marvin McInnis, eds. *Higher Education in Canada* [Kingston, ON: John Deutsch Institute, 2005]; and Glen A. Jones, ed., *Higher Education in Canada: Different Systems, Different Perspectives* [New York: Garland, 1997]), a dearth remains with respect to the history of Christian higher education as more than fifty years have passed since Donald Master's effort at providing a synthetic account (*Protestant Church Colleges in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966). Fortunately, several articles offer some general updates: see N. Keith Clifford, "The History of Protestant Theological Education in Canada," *SCHEC Sessions d'étude* 56 (1989): 85-95; George A. Rawlyk, "Protestant Church Colleges in Canada: Past and Future," in *The Secularization of the Academy*, eds. George M. Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 278-302; Robert Handy, "Trends in Canadian and American Theological Education, 1880-1980," *Theological Education* 18, No. 2 (Spring 1982): 175-218. Handy's article is followed by a series of responses from Lloyd Gesner, John Webster Grant, William E. Hordern, George A. Rawlyk, and Lawrence K. Shook. Helpful overviews of the transitions that have taken place in the history of Christian higher education in America have been provided by Ringenberg, *The Christian College;* James Tunstead Burtshaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); and George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the*

American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Disbelief (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

47 See for example the Human Rights Code complaint launched against Steinbach Bible College (1998), and the extended legal battles experienced by Trinity Western University, first with the British Columbia College of Teachers in 2001, and with law societies in Nova Scotia, Ontario and British Columbia that culminated in a Supreme Court of Canada decision in 2018.

48 Harry Huebner, ed., *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World: Essays Presented at the Consultation on Higher Education, June 1997* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1998).

49 Huebner, "Introduction," in *Mennonite Education in a Post-Christian World*, vii.

50 Steinbach Bible College withdrew from discussions in 1996.

51 Harry J. Huebner, "A University of the Church for the World," in *A University of the Church for the World: Essays in Honour of Gerald Gerbrandt*, eds. Paul Dyck and Harry J. Huebner (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2016), 9-16.

52 CMU's degree offerings include a Bachelor of Science, which was launched in 2018. It is the only post-secondary Mennonite school to offer a degree in science and illustrates well the school's expanded vision of higher education.

53 The level of per-student support received by CMU from the provincial government is less than half the amount received by public universities. The way in which these two Mennonite schools receive governmental money varies: most of government money received by CMU comes in the form of a per-student grant, whereas the majority of government money received by Conrad Grebel University College comes via the University of Waterloo.

54 *CCMBC Yearbook* (1957), 89-90. The need for a seminary was first discussed at a General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Church convention in 1948 (Paul Toews and Abe Dueck, "Embodying the Vision: Higher Education," in *For Everything A Season: Mennonite Brethren in North America, 1874-2002*, eds. Paul Toews and Kevin Enns-Rempel [Fresno, CA: Historical Commission, 2002], 104). See also "College Accreditation / the Seminary Question," Folder 31, Vol. 72, CCMBC Board of Higher Education Series, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies Archives, Winnipeg, MB.

55 Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College," 46.

56 *CCMBC Yearbook* (1958), 87.

57 *General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Yearbook* (1957), 12-13.

58 *CCMBC Yearbook* (1961),168; *General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Yearbook* (1960), 151-152; and Dueck, "Mennonite Brethren Bible College," 46.

59 During the late 1960s the Board of Reference and Counsel recommended, as a compromise, locating a single Mennonite Brethren seminary in Vancouver, BC (See *General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches Yearbook* [1969], 33-38; and *CCMBC Yearbook* [1968], 38-39).

60 *CCMBC Yearbook* (1975), 18-34. The discontinuation of the Bachelor of Divinity program at MBBC was required as part of the bi-national agreement.

61 See Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary Board Minutes, April 23-25, 1998; Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary Board Minutes, September 23-

25, 998; and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary Board Minutes, April 22-23, 1999.

62 See for example Vancouver School of Theology, Atlantic School of Theology, Toronto School of Theology, along with consortial arrangements among theological schools in Saskatoon, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Montreal.

63 "1969 Statistical Report," in *CCMBC Yearbook (*1970), 132. In addition to the 599 attending universities, 74 were enroled at MBBC, 295 attended Mennonite Brethren Bible schools, and 66 attended non-Mennonite Brethren Bible schools. A similar report completed a decade later offered slightly more detail, and showed that 44 percent (525 individuals) were attending public universities, with an additional 7.6 percent (90 individuals) attending non-Mennonite Christian universities or colleges ("1978 Statistical Report," in *CCMBC Yearbook* [1980], 60). The overall number of Mennonite Brethren attending post-secondary institutions increased from 1034 in 1969 to 1184. Subsequent reports stopped tabulating the number of students in public universities and were limited only to those attending Christian institutions. In addition to the outcomes explicitly stated by denominational leaders, the choices made by Mennonite students functioned as a powerful, albeit more invisible force, creating pressure on Mennonite educational institutions (see for example, Harold Jantz, "The Schools Students Choose," *Direction* 8, No. 3 [July 1979]: 33-40).

64 "An Analysis of Canadian M.B. Higher Education," Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, ca. 1989. In addition to the 893 attending universities, 83 were enroled at MBBC, 232 attended Mennonite Brethren Bible schools, and 258 attended non-Mennonite Brethren Bible colleges or schools.

65 Frank Epp, "A New College for a New Century," 44. John Friesen offers anecdotal evidence indicating that there were more than two hundred Mennonite students at the University of British Columbia in the late 1960s (John D. Friesen, "Ministry to Mennonite University Students in British Columbia, 1950-2006," *Direction* 37, No. 1 [Spring 2008]: 122-131).

66 Leo Driedger, "Developments in Higher Education Among Mennonites in Manitoba," in *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Conference on Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems* (Hesston: Hesston College, 1967), 71.

67 For more on the process and impact of secularization on Christianity in Canada, see Mark A. Noll, "What Happened to Christian Canada?" *Church History* 75, No. 2 (June 2006): 245-273; and John G. Stackhouse, Jr., "What Has Happened to Post-Christian Canada?" *Church History* 87, No. 4 (December 2018): 1-19.

68 The disproportionate significance of a single geographical urban centre is one of several features that sets the Canadian Mennonite post-secondary educational story apart from the American story.

69 Interestingly, few, if any, of the Mennonite denominations involved in post-secondary education in Canada are currently growing.

70 Harold Jantz writes, "A farsighted vision for the brotherhood means we will do our utmost to strengthen and support our schools. They are a key part of our mission," *Direction* 9, No. 3 (July 1980): 23.

71 Joel Carpenter, "Christian Universities and the Global Expansion of Higher Education," in *Christian Higher Education*,16.

[72] Gerald Gerbrandt, "Canadian Mennonite Bible College: An Example of a Bible College," in *Proceedings of the Conference, "Educating for the Kingdom? Church-Related Colleges in English-Speaking Canada"* (Waterloo, ON: University of St. Jerome's College and Conrad Grebel College, 1991), 83.

[73] For more on the trend towards treating students as customers see Joanna Williams, *Consuming Higher Education: Why Learning Can't Be Bought* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[74] This propensity was already evident in Russia where Mennonites established hundreds of institutions during the so-called "golden age" (1880-1914). See James Urry, *None but Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989).

[75] Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1990).

[76] Despite bi-national variations, American sociologist James Davison Hunter recently argued that American individualism has obscured the central role of institutions in embodying ideas and transmitting culture. This is a significant theme in *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[77] A recent study conducted by five Christian ministries including the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada on the relationship between "emerging adulthood" and Christian higher education reports that attendance at a Christian post-secondary institution is one of the most significant influences in faith retention among young adults. See Rick Hiemstra, *Competition for Character Education: What Emerging Adulthood Means for Christian Higher Education in Canada* (Toronto: Faith Today Publications, 2018), 39-41.

[78] For example, James Cote and Anton L. Allahar, *Ivory Tower Blues: A University System in Crisis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Ian D. Clark, Greg Moran, Michael Skolnik and David Trick, *Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education in Ontario* (Kingston: Queen's School of Policy Studies, 2009); and Derek Bok, *Higher Education in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

[79] See for example Michael L. Budde and John Wright, eds., *Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-based University in a Liberal Democratic Society* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004); and John G. Stackhouse, "The Renaissance of Christian University Education in Canada," Keynote address at Christian Higher Education Canada Symposium, Toronto, ON, October 26-27, 2018.