

Half a Century of Canadian Mennonite Bible College: A Brief Organizational History¹

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Since its inception, Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, has had a substantial direct and indirect influence on its constituency. In addition to educating and shaping the students who have attended the college, CMBC has served to unite, to provide vision for, and to develop leaders for its parent organization, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC). Given the breadth of its impact, and given the number of academics who have walked its hallowed halls, it is curious that so little has been written about the history of CMBC.

CMBC has undergone numerous changes ever since the need for such a college was discussed at a CMC annual meeting in 1941. This paper divides CMBC's history into four eras, each of which is characterized as having a unique combination of organizational purpose, structures and systems. Each era is ushered in by a period of transformational change. In describing these periods of transformation, the paper identifies some of the key factors which explain how and why the college changed from one era to another. The paper also highlights specific opportunities for change CMBC did not implement; reflecting on what the college chose not to become adds to one's understanding of what it in fact did become. In sum, the paper draws attention to critical events in CMBC's history, and emphasizes direction-setting decisions which served to usher in, or to shut out, new eras.²

The paper presents each of CMBC's four eras chronologically. Prefacing each era is a description of the period of transformation which preceded and bore it. These different eras and periods of transformation are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1:

Overview of eras and periods of transformation at CMBC

Period	Description
(Trans)formation (1941-47)	Finding a president and a campus
First era (1947-60)	Consolidating support and preparing full-time churchworkers
First period of Transformation (1961-64)	'De-professionalizing' CMBC's purpose, and professionalizing its operations
Second era (1964-76)	Providing university-accredited Anabaptist education for laypersons
Second period of Transformation (1977-80)	Time to get practical
Third era (1980-81 and ff)	Spin-offs associated with re-introducing Practical Theology
Third period of Transformation (1982-87)	Regaining control of fundraising
Fourth era (1988-present)	Implications of independent fundraising and Practical Theology and ...
Fourth period of Transformation ???	????

(Trans)formation (1941-1947): "Finding a president and a campus"³

A false start. Several factors contributed to the desire in the 1940s in CMC circles to establish an institution like CMBC. First, there was a feeling that

CMC youth were being "lost" to secular schools or interdenominational Bible schools flourishing in Canada at that time.⁴ There was a sense that CMC's most able youth were being attracted to secular public universities and not returning to take over leadership positions within the church,⁵ and a desire to allow aspiring churchworkers and others to prepare themselves within CMC circles. Second, there may have been a sense of wanting to keep up with the Mennonite Brethren, who opened a Bible College in Winnipeg in 1943, and recruited two of the better educated CMC people as faculty members.⁶ Third, one interviewee suggested that CMC was in danger of disintegrating if it did not have a new national project to rally around (i.e., something to work towards after retiring the "Reiseschuld"; the debt of Mennonites immigrating to Canada). And finally, a large influx of Russian Mennonites in the 1940s served to spur efforts to strengthen religious education opportunities.⁷

Thus, a five-man committee was struck at the 1941 CMC conference to explore establishing "an advanced Bible school"⁸ where graduates of the dozen regional CMC-related Bible schools could attend for one year to conclude their education. This committee was expanded to seven members by delegates at the 1942 CMC conference (ensuring representation from all member provinces), who charged it to appoint an instructor, recruit students, publish a program of studies, and start up the new school alongside the existing Bible school in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. However, due to the inability of the committee to recruit a credentialed English-German bilingual teacher (despite having searched in both Canada as well as the USA), and due to a lack of enrollment (one student), the following committee recommendations were accepted at the 1943 CMC conference: i) disband the existing committee; ii) see if an existing Bible school would be willing to implement such a program (which CMC could then support); and iii) encourage congregations to provide financial support for students wishing to attend Bethel College in Kansas.⁹

The formation of CMBC. On the Friday prior to the 1945 CMC conference, church representatives from various provinces met in a small group to discuss "a higher Bible school" ("eine hoehere Bibelschule"). Notes of this discussion shared at the conference elicited a lively discussion. Delegates favored such a higher Bible school, and again decided that Rosthern should be considered as the location. A new 12-man national committee was created and given direction regarding entrance requirements (grade 12) and scholarships, and told that graduates of such a school should find employment.¹⁰

At least four different communities were considered before Winnipeg was finally chosen as the location for CMBC. Rosthern was the first choice of CMC delegates in 1941, 1942, 1945 and 1946. Manitoba became a second option. Already in late 1942 committee-chairman J. J. Thiessen regretted not having attempted to locate it among the Mennonites in rural southern Manitoba.¹¹ Winkler or Altona were specifically suggested as possible sites in 1947.¹² Saskatoon became a third option in late 1945. Thiessen, on October 24, 1945, wrote to J. H. Langewalter: "I believe you are correct in suggesting that the

College should be located in Saskatoon. Dr. Penner also shares this opinion... It would be advantageous to have the College close to the University and other schools." Saskatoon was considered again in 1950 when CMBC had the opportunity to purchase the Lutheran College campus near the university there.¹³ Fourth, in 1948 a CMBC board member suggested that it would be desirable to investigate the "offer of a site in Ontario near Niagara Falls that has several buildings and seems well-suited for a Bible College campus."¹⁴ Finally, numerous sites were considered within Winnipeg, including locating near to the University of Manitoba and locating outside the city on the banks of the Assiniboine River.

The new school was named Canadian Mennonite Bible College, and the tentative decision was made to locate it in Winnipeg in September, 1946, at a meeting of the committee established by the CMC. Several reasons were cited for choosing Winnipeg over Rosthern. I. I. Friesen had discovered that Winnipeg's former Normal School on William Avenue might be obtained for a very reasonable price from the government. This was an excellent facility located near the General Hospital, which provided practical service and mission work opportunities. Also, Winnipeg had access to good library facilities and opportunities for students to find part-time employment.¹⁵

The decision to open CMBC in the basement of Bethel Mission Church, where Friesen was pastor, was made after it had become clear that the Normal School would not be available (May, 1947). Two other alternatives were considered at that time: i) purchasing a three-story building on River Avenue, two blocks away from the Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) in Winnipeg; and ii) purchasing the D. Toews home in Rosthern.¹⁶

Finding a president to lead CMBC proved to be no easier in the mid-1940s than it had been five years earlier. Thiessen again contacted leaders throughout Canada and the United States to find a suitable candidate. Numerous times Thiessen himself, then in his early fifties, was encouraged to assume the post. Even leaders at Bethel College wrote: "... would it be possible that you yourself could head [CMBC]? ... we would sanction your work and supervision and would accept the students on a same basis as if someone from the States were sent to head [CMBC]." ¹⁷ But Thiessen always refused; it was important to him that CMBC be headed by a properly-credentialed person.

The desperation to find a president is illustrated in the manner in which Arnold J. Regier, then aged 37, agreed to serve as CMBC's first president. Consider the letter from Thiessen to Regier dated June 12, 1947: "We had hoped to secure [a different individual] as president of the School and you as dean, but he has now definitely declined. This means that we expect you to take the lead, and are making an announcement in our papers to that effect!"

In sum, the formation of CMBC, which spanned half a decade, was characterized by difficulties in finding someone to lead the school and exploring several alternative sites.

First Era (1947-1960):

"Consolidating support and preparing full-time churchworkers"

It is somewhat misleading to suggest that clear purpose and way of organizing characterized CMBC throughout this era. As can be expected, especially the earliest years were filled with struggles to determine what CMBC was and was not, and to set precedents for its operation. This required establishing internal operations, as well as gaining external legitimacy and support. The description of this era is divided into the following aspects: CMBC's purpose, program of studies, presidents, student life, board, facilities, and public relations.

CMBC's Purpose. A central tension facing CMBC during its formative years, and one which has pervaded its entire history, centres on whether CMBC should be: i) a professional college training students for full-time churchwork; or ii) a Mennonite college offering laypersons a biblical and theological education as well as liberal arts courses. In the minds of the key board members who helped found CMBC, these two were probably seen as complementary. Thiessen, for one, had no difficulty in telling those who wanted to hear it that CMBC was a professional college, and others who wanted to hear it that it was a liberal arts college. This latter vision was probably closer to that of the Ontario Mennonites¹⁸ and to that of Regier and faculty member David Janzen.¹⁹ However, in those early years most faculty and board members (including Thiessen), as well as most of the CMC constituency, viewed CMBC primarily as a professional training college; "a short-cut to train ministers," as one interviewee put it.²⁰ Decisions made in the early 1950s provide further evidence that CMBC was primarily a professional college to train churchworkers (e.g., attractive opportunities to locate CMBC near to a university campus were bypassed). As one alumnus put it in a personal letter:

... CMBC was explicitly a school to prepare "full time workers" for at home and abroad. That was the stated purpose in its inception — the conference and the churches and we as students saw it that way. Gradually this changed (although not officially by conference action and definition) to preparation for life — prepare Christian young people for life whether they become career church workers or not. I feel that this is a valid change, at least up to a point. But in those early years we would have resisted such a shift in purpose, I think!

Underlying this discussion of the primary purpose of CMBC is the implicit, and sometimes explicit, recognition that a function of CMBC is to unify CMC. This is demonstrated by the fact that compromises were made in order to get all regions of the CMC constituency to support CMBC.²¹ One interviewee contended that this desire to unify CMC was consciously shared by the first students attending CMBC; they saw CMBC as a way to overcome the rivalries fostered by regionally-based schools. It provided a common ground where CMC young people from across Canada could come to learn and to live together.²²

Program of Studies. It is testimony to Regier's leadership that CMBC was able to offer a program of studies as early as September, 1947, because little had been

done in this regard prior to his appointment three months earlier.²³ In general, CMBC faculty members have always had considerable responsibility for designing and implementing its program of studies. However, during these start-up years faculty members faced considerable scrutiny regarding the appropriateness of textbooks and pedagogy.²⁴

In the early 1950s CMBC offered courses in four departments: i) Bible (78 credit hours offered), ii) Christian Education (41 credit hours offered), iii) Arts (33 credit hours offered), and iv) Social Sciences (25 credit hours offered) (see Figure 1). CMBC students could enter either a 4-year Bachelor of Theology (practically-oriented) program or a more popular 3-year Bachelor of Christian Education (academically-oriented) program. Graduates with either degree could obtain a Bachelor of Arts with an additional year of studies at Bethel College.

Initially CMBC gained academic legitimacy thanks to the relationship Thiessen had forged with Bethel, which also served as a model for its program of studies. However, there were factors which led to the suppression of this link. Bishops of CMC congregations in southern Manitoba, whose support was necessary in order for CMBC to be viable, withheld their support because they felt threatened by its American connection for two reasons. First, Mennonites in southern Manitoba were afraid of the “modernism” they believed was being taught in places like Bethel College and thus wanted to ensure CMBC students would not be exposed to such non-Mennonite viewpoints. Second, they did not want the role of the German language in worship to be diminished as had been the case in the United States.²⁵ Other board members (e.g., those not from southern Manitoba) seemed to recognize the transition from German as inevitable and may have seen CMBC as a vehicle to control this process to some extent.

Beginning in the early years CMBC students were able to receive some credit from the University of Manitoba (UM) for their course work. Even so, it was happy news when in 1957 the UM agreed to allow CMBC students to transfer at least one year of academic credits.²⁶ This short-lived recognition temporarily boosted the prestige of CMBC and promised to increase student enrollment.

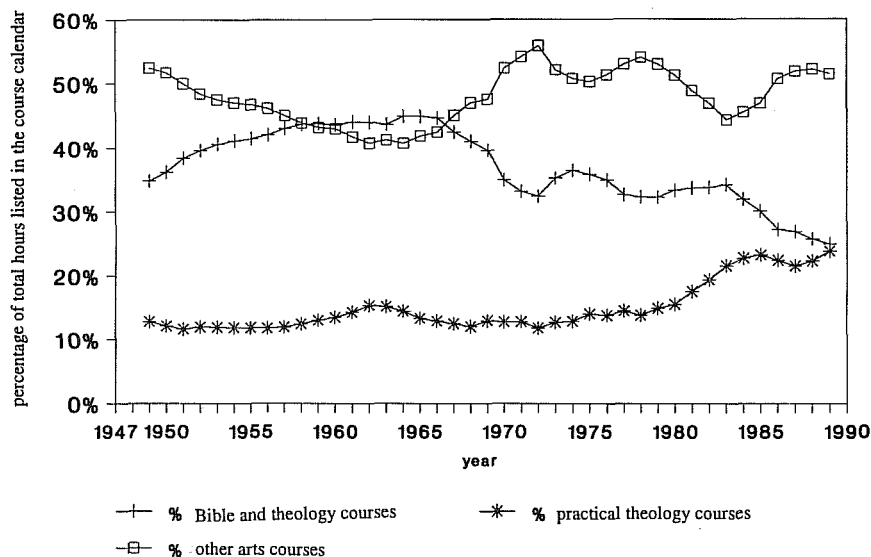
Presidency. Regier’s days as president of CMBC were numbered for several reasons.²⁷ First, a number of Mennonites in southern Manitoba were upset because he was not completely proficient in the German language.²⁸ Second, there was some reluctance to support Regier and CMBC because they were perceived as being too “American.”²⁹ Third, Regier’s vision was that CMBC be more than simply a place for training full-time church workers, but he “was not successful in reconciling Canadian Mennonites who felt the need of a liberal arts college with those who emphasized evangelistic Bible school training.”³⁰ Finally, Regier himself saw his presidency as temporary, waiting for a qualified Canadian willing to take over the reigns of leadership.

The interim nature of Regier’s appointment is reflected in the board’s annual decision-making process for staffing the College, where the question of who should lead CMBC in the upcoming year was regularly discussed. For example, in 1949 board members unanimously agreed Thiessen should become president and Regier continue as dean, but Thiessen refused. The following year Regier tendered

his resignation as president after the board invited a surprised Paul Schaefer to become CMBC president for the upcoming school year.³¹ Regier's resignation seemed to placate the bishops from southern Manitoba and increase their support for CMBC.

FIGURE 1:

Average hours of instruction by academic area as a percentage of the total hours of instruction listed in CMBC's catalogue: 1949-1989*



*Note: For all figures presented here "average" values were calculated for any given year "n" by the formula "average" = $[(n-1)+(n)+(n+1)]/3$.

Note also the simplified nature of these data (e.g., including music under "other arts", identifying the courses "listed" in calendars rather than the courses actually offered). Also, weighing courses by the number of students enrolled would likely increase the percentage in Bible and Theology and decrease the percentage in Practical Theology.

When after a time of contemplation Schaefer refused the presidency, the CMBC board offered it to I. I. Friesen, and suggested that he request a year's leave of absence as pastor of the Bethel Mission Church in order to devote his full attention to CMBC.³² Apparently Friesen did not accept this invitation, because two weeks later the board requested Henry Wall to serve as acting president for the coming year. Wall accepted with considerable hesitation and reluctance.³³ At a board meeting on February 14, 1951, Wall urgently requested to be relieved from the presidency, and after lengthy discussion I. I. Friesen was again asked to serve as president. This time he accepted the invitation.³⁴

Perhaps with long-term presidential plans in mind, in 1952 Thiessen wrote to board members asking them to consider paying \$2,000 a year for three years to allow Henry Poettcker to earn his doctorate degree at Princeton.³⁵ Thiessen suggested using the mission model whereby Poettcker could pay back his loan in installments during his conference work. Poettcker was appointed president in 1959, at which time Friesen was asked to fill a newly created position of vice-president.³⁶

Student life. Along with his leadership in instituting the academic program at CMBC, Regier played an important role in ushering in the unique sense of “community” which still characterizes the College. Unlike other similar schools of the day, and to the bewilderment of faculty members who had taught in schools like MBBC, Regier ensured that regulations governing student life at CMBC were largely created and enforced by students rather than by faculty members. Students took this responsibility of community discernment and disciplining very seriously.³⁷ One alumnus, reflecting on those early years, wrote in a personal letter:

... I recall one young fellow student who was on the carpet, however, before the CMBC Student Council for excessive dating! We disciplined one another — perhaps very much according to the rule of Christ (Matt. 18), although we were unaware that we were doing so (applying the Rule of Christ, that is!) at the time.

Board. The CMBC board members, and especially its chairman, Thiessen, had much power during this era. This was partly because board members were all elders of the church and therefore their authority went largely unquestioned by the constituency, at least until the mid-1950s. Board members made all hiring/firing decisions on a yearly basis, and were responsible for, and largely very successful in, raising and spending funds.³⁸

Facilities. CMBC moved several times during this period. For its first two years (1947-49) it was located in the basement of Bethel Mission Church. For the ensuing six and a half years (1949-55), its campus was a prestigious three-story 16-room house on a well-kept three acre Assiniboine River lot at 515 Wellington Crescent. In 1952 the decision was made to purchase the 20 acre property on the outskirts of Tuxedo, where CMBC moved in January, 1956, and where it has remained to this day.

Public relations. In addition to the positive public relations resulting from high profile and hardworking board members, two key student-based factors helped CMBC win support from the CMC constituency. The first was the choral octet which toured different parts of the country as ambassadors for the College.³⁹ Indeed, the CMBC choral music program was developed for its utility in public relations as much as to reflect the Mennonite heritage of choral music. The second was the fact that, especially during the early years, CMBC graduates met the fondest expectations of constituency members (see Figures 2 and 3).⁴⁰ As one alumnus recalls in a personal letter:

All of us had come out of the depression time or war-years. A good number of us had been in CO programs and/or Bible Schools since graduating from high school. Our average age was near the 25 year mark at first. Our background was mostly rural. We

FIGURE 2:

Average percentage of CMBC graduates entering full-time churchwork some time after graduation (by year of graduation): 1950-1987*

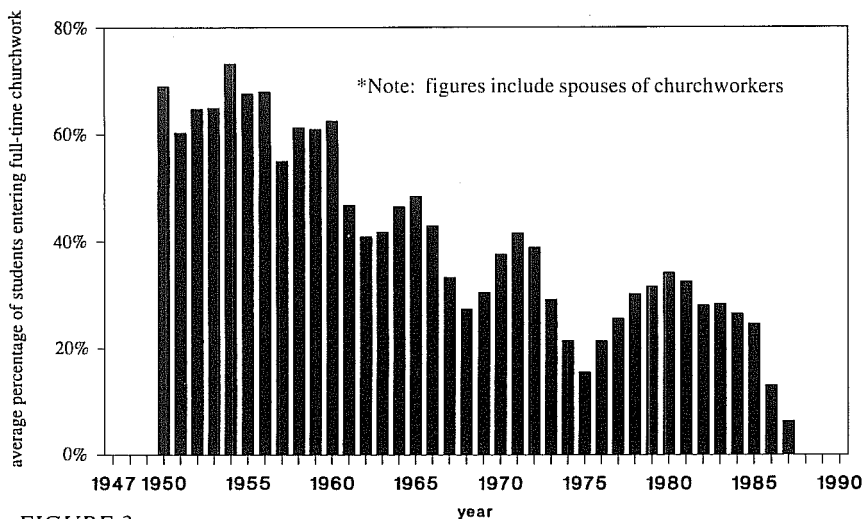
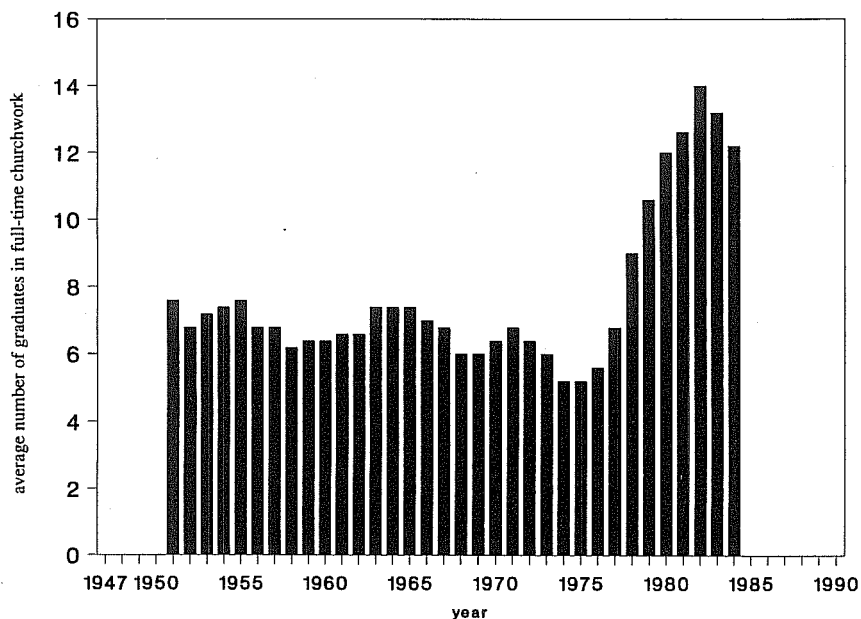


FIGURE 3:

Average* number of CMBC graduates entering full-time churchwork some time after graduation (by year of graduation): 1951-1984



*Note: For this figure only "average" was calculated for any given year "n" using the formula "average" = $[(n-2)+(n-1)+(n)+(n+1)+(n+2)]/5$.

came from sheltered Mennonite communities. We had grown up behind ethnic shelters such as the German language, etc. The other, outer world of the non-Mennonite was out there somewhere! Religiously we were very orthodox and evangelical though not aggressively evangelistic. We were quite conservative in every way—even ethically as far as life-style was concerned. We were quite legalistic. We were on the whole deeply committed Christians which is probably reflected in the fact that 8 of ten grads of the first class went into ‘full time Christian service’ as we called it in those days. The other two grads have been ordained self-supporting lay ministers all their lives.

First period of transformation (1961-1964):
“‘De-professionalizing’ CMBC’s purpose,
and professionalizing its operations”

A series of crises in the late 1950s, taken together, served as a catalyst and basis to usher in and develop the new era which would serve CMBC through the 1960s and most of the 1970s. At least half a dozen events helped to trigger this transformation.

First, in 1959 CMC implemented a new constitution and with it a new organizational model which had already been implemented in 1956. This new organizational structure was designed to embrace “the modern bureaucratic model” and to permit CMC to operate more efficiently and effectively.⁴¹ This had a dramatic impact on CMC (and CMBC). Before these changes, it was normal for CMC-related programs to be run by a powerful “ecclesiastical elite” of bishops who had no limit in the number of offices they could hold nor in how many consecutive terms they could serve.⁴² The new model was designed to “reduce the concentration of authority and increase member representation” by limiting CMC’s officers to three consecutive one-year terms and allowing holding only one office at a time.⁴³ However, as Jacob Peters notes, the influence of the salaried General Secretary in the new model in many ways paralleled that of previous CMC chairman, recently even with ordination!⁴⁴

A second factor contributing to the need for change was related to CMBC’s ability to raise funds. At three successive CMC conferences (1955-1957) delegates failed to sufficiently support adding a residence building to the College’s new campus. When the CMBC board agreed to become a fifth Board of CMC in 1961,⁴⁵ the College’s fundraising became the responsibility of the CMC Finance Board.⁴⁶ This was consistent with the principle of “community discernment.” The implications for CMBC have been that since 1963⁴⁷ fundraising has been administered centrally by the CMC Finance Committee via a “sacrosanct” unified budget. This allowed CMBC to focus more on program and not worry about collecting funds, but it meant that CMBC was no longer permitted to raise funds independently.

Another factor pointing to the need for transformation was the shift in the vocational interests of CMBC students away from full-time churchwork (see

Figures 2 and 3), which had implications on CMBC's purpose as a professional college.

Fourth, the process of renewing faculty members' contracts was problematic. The specific event focusing these concerns centred on the dismissal of David Janzen, ostensibly because of his alleged liberal theology. His dismissal had been drawn out over several years, and its dramatic close came at a CMBC board meeting on January 14, 1958. After the board had voted in favour of retaining Janzen (7 votes "for re-appointment"; 6 "against"; 2 "abstentions"), President Friesen announced that he would not be able to continue to work under these circumstances. Chairman Thiessen then asked whether any board members had changed their opinions regarding the re-appointment of Janzen. Several members said they now believed that it would be better not to re-appoint Janzen, and a second vote by secret ballot led to Janzen's dismissal (3 votes "for re-appointment"; 11 "against"; 1 "abstention").⁴⁸

Outrage followed when other faculty members and students were informed about Janzen's dismissal. Petitions by students and letters from CMBC alumni inundated the board. One argued that by dismissing Janzen, the CMBC board was jeopardizing its relationship with the UM and the recent accreditation of CMBC courses. A faculty member suggested Janzen should have been given the opportunity to defend accusations made against him. Another asked the board to consider how its decision would affect the morale and commitment to CMBC of the remaining faculty members whose contracts were also renewed on a yearly basis. Several faculty members stated that if Janzen was dismissed for theological reasons, as had been announced, then they too should be dismissed, for they shared Janzen's theology. A bishop board member responded by asking: "Doesn't the board have the right to place and remove faculty without needing to justify itself to the faculty?"⁴⁹ The board persisted with its decision to dismiss Janzen (Janzen refused to let them save face by resigning).

Although short-term change was not forthcoming, the need for change had certainly been demonstrated. In 1958, in response to the Janzen dismissal, the first of several special board-faculty meetings took place⁵⁰. This meeting served to help legitimize the following: i) that CMBC should expose students to non-Mennonite worldviews; ii) that the constituency should trust the faculty and not judge the performance of the College based on the maturity/quality of its graduates as had been earlier practised; and iii) that a higher level of bureaucratization should be implemented at CMBC specifically for dealing with faculty members' contracts. By 1960, the board discussed appointing faculty members for three year trial periods and at that point decide on tenure.⁵¹

A fifth event pointing to the need for change occurred in 1959, when CMBC lost its UM accreditation as a result of a reorganization within the UM and its affiliated colleges. Apparently, the major reason for this policy shift was because CMBC was perceived to be a "professional school for theological training" at the undergraduate level.⁵²

Finally, the impact of CMBC losing accreditation with the UM was further

exacerbated by the founding of Ontario's Conrad Grebel College (CGC), a CMC-affiliated residence college offering university-accredited liberal arts courses.

To respond to these factors CMBC board members considered at least three alternatives. First, already in 1959 the CMBC board explored and requested that a presentation be prepared regarding the possibilities of working towards establishing a residence college in Winnipeg similar to CGC.⁵³ This was further discussed at a board meeting on January 9, 1961, where a strong argument was presented that CMBC need not feel threatened by CGC because the two schools were different and should not be seen to be competing (e.g., CGC did not offer religious instruction like CMBC, and CGC's "dorm life experience" would be no more attractive than CMBC's).⁵⁴ However, despite and perhaps because of these differences, the following sobering recognition was recorded:

It was also expressed that should Conrad Grebel [College] prove successful in both academic and spiritual aspects, and be adopted by the various provinces, then we may need to find our place in this re: the Manitoba context, or else have the grace to close our doors.⁵⁵

A second alternative involved expanding the program of studies offered at CMBC by offering more liberal arts courses. Proponents argued that such an expansion was timely and, assuming that more students would be attracted to the college if they were able to cross-register courses at universities, would increase student enrollment at CMBC. Increased enrollment would in turn increase income from tuition fees at CMBC and foster more relationships with CMC congregations. However, others argued that such a change might erode the religious character of CMBC, threaten CMC members opposed to higher education, and prove to be unaffordable.⁵⁶ The pressure for CMBC to move towards becoming a liberal arts college is mentioned again at board-faculty meeting on January 22, 1964, but the discussion concluded that, at the time, a private liberal arts college "seems to be out for the present Canadian situation."

A third possibility, and the alternative eventually implemented, was to forge a new relationship with UM. This required a large investment of effort on the part of the faculty members directly involved. This option had relatively minor implications for re-arranging resources⁵⁷ and it offered the following benefits:⁵⁸ i) CMBC could attract a higher calibre of students by offering up to one year of credit at UM; ii) faculty members could "get higher standing" and CMBC could shed its inferiority complex; and iii) appreciation for academic standards and regulations would improve. Dangers associated with this strategy which were identified included: i) parents may push students to attend CMBC who would not otherwise have chosen to go there, thus decreasing overall motivation; and ii) attracting more critically-thinking students might negatively affect the atmosphere at CMBC.

In any case, on October 24, 1964, the UM Senate approved CMBC as a teaching centre empowered to offer specific courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science.⁵⁹ This approval was attributable in part to UM's recognition of the inconsistency of refusing to accredit CMBC while accepting credits from institutions like CMBC in other provinces which had been accredited by other universi-

ties.⁶⁰ At the celebration marking the 25 year anniversary of this decision,⁶¹ the relationship between CMBC and the UM was tongue-in-cheek likened to that of David and Goliath by Waldemar Janzen, an Old Testament scholar and CMBC faculty member who served as a key architect in establishing this relationship.

CMBC's purpose changed along with this accreditation from the UM, as noted at a board-faculty meeting:

The aim [of CMBC] is somewhat different than formerly when it was more specifically to prepare ministers. Today there is more of a tendency to go on to Seminary training. The public image that we prepare ministers at college keeps some people away. The opposite would also hold.⁶²

Two changes took place in CMBC's program of studies during this period (both related to fitting in better with the UM). First, in the 1962 Calendar the courses and structure of academic departments at CMBC were re-arranged to more closely parallel the UM.⁶³ And second, when CMBC officially became an approved teaching center of the UM in 1964, it changed to the semester system (versus trimester), a change that again paralleled the system in place at the UM.

In sum, the result of this transformational change was to move CMBC away from seeking to prepare ministers and towards providing an explicitly non-professional religious education for lay church members.

Second era (1965-1976): "Providing university-accredited Anabaptist education for laypersons"

The purpose and structure with which CMBC emerged from the crises and changes associated with the late 1950s and early 1960s remained in place for a relatively long time. The rationale guiding CMBC during this era was captured in a booklet entitled "A basic educational philosophy for Canadian Mennonite Bible College: An essay in private education."⁶⁴

Note that not all of CMBC's constituency was supportive or aware of the changes at CMBC. For example, even in the late 1960s it was necessary, at a special meeting with the Bergthaler Concerns Committee, to point out that the purpose of CMBC was no longer that which it had been two decades earlier (i.e., "to prepare people for our mission field and our pulpits") but rather CMBC now sought "to serve young people... whether Christian or non-Christian" in their quest for a meaningful life.⁶⁵

This new vision was reflected in the purpose as published in CMBC calendars. Whereas earlier calendars had stated that CMBC sought to prepare for church-related Christian service (e.g., as ministers, missionaries, youth workers, and so on), in 1964 this was expanded to include Christian service more generally (e.g., as parents, farmers, teachers, businessmen, and so on), and starting in 1968 the

calendar described CMBC as offering non-professional theological education. In keeping with these changes an attempt was made to also change the name of CMBC so that it would "more accurately reflect the [greater-than-Bible-courses] image of the College." A similar change had already been made by the Mennonite Brethren Conference which was now "calling their College [MBBC] at least in part a College of Arts."⁶⁶

During this era the board was much less involved in the day-to-day operation of the college. It seemed appropriate for faculty members to have more say in running the college; after all, they were the CMC members who were most informed about post-secondary biblical education. The relative influence of faculty members may have been further enhanced when the founding chairman of CMBC, J. J. Thiessen, resigned in 1966, stated that CMBC's "strong position" could be attributed largely to its "well qualified and dedicated faculty,"⁶⁷ and was replaced by Paul Peters who at that time had only two years experience on the CMBC board. This shift in control away from board members is reflected in the preamble of a document discussed by faculty members in the late 1980s.

As a faculty council we are very deeply involved in the operation of CMBC. We are expected to deal with long-range questions of policy and direction as well as details of daily operation. In the U.S.A. it is said 'When E. F. Hutton speaks, the world listens.' In our situation we would say, 'When the faculty speaks the Board listens.' And we like it that way. We have a strong sense of ownership.⁶⁸

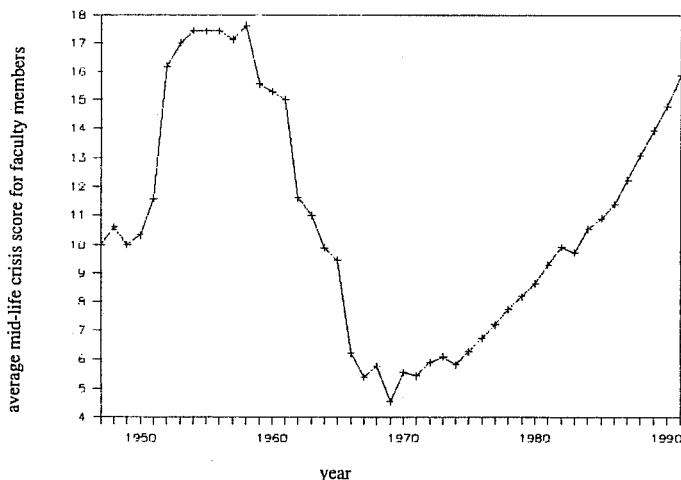
President Poettcker skillfully ushered in the increased bureaucratization associated with this era.⁶⁹ These years were characterized by consensus decision-making and by more harmonious faculty relations than in previous years. The emphasis on team-building was consistent with Poettcker's participative leadership style which was also, according to one interviewee, consistent with the understanding of powerlessness characterizing Anabaptist theology during those years (i.e., followers of Christ should lay down their power as Christ did on the cross).

The transformation which took place in the early 1960s was fine-tuned and elaborated at the end of that decade in a "white paper" prepared by faculty members after a year-long self-study.⁷⁰ Perhaps the sense of introspection characterizing this process was in part attributable to the times, and perhaps it was in part attributable to the fact that 1969 was the year in which the average age of faculty members was closer to mid-life crisis (40) than any other year in CMBC's history (see Figure 4).

Working on the white paper had several outcomes.⁷¹ First, it helped faculty members to sort out the role played by liberal arts courses at CMBC and to interpret the results of an 'experiment' conducted several years earlier. This experiment, which involved adding a sociologist to CMBC's faculty (after having 'called' him and helped fund his doctoral studies), demonstrated that adding only one specialist in a 'secular' liberal arts area did not seem workable (due to considerations of critical mass). Second, the white paper helped existing faculty members to work out what specialized training CMBC faculty members should have, and how individual faculty members themselves met those requirements. The resulting

FIGURE 4:

Average mid-life crisis scores* of CMBC faculty: 1947-1991



*Note: Mid-life crisis scores were calculated via a three step process. For each faculty member (who was at CMBC for five or more years): i) determine the age at hiring; ii) calculate the difference between that age and forty (mid-life crisis); and iii) use this difference to begin a count-down to zero (mid-life crisis) and then back up again.

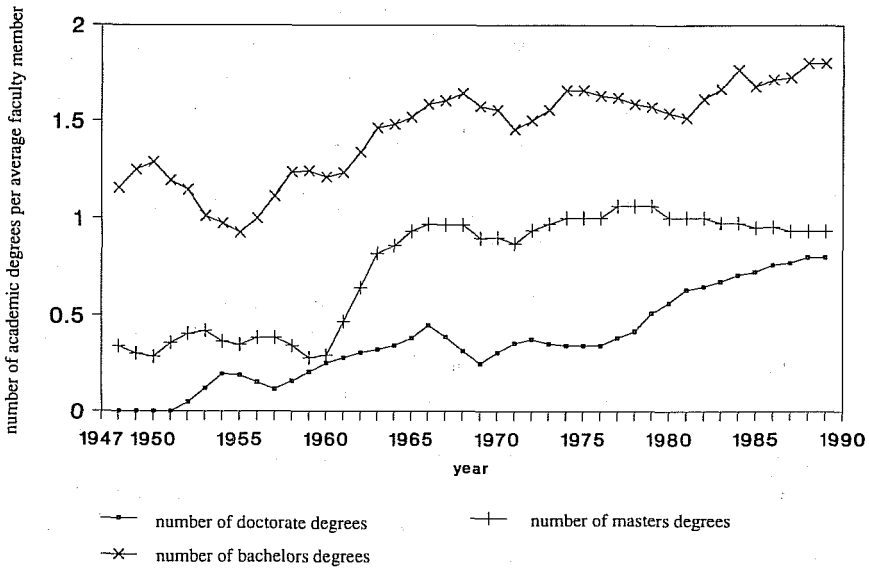
For example, a faculty member hired at age 30 in 1970 would have a score of "10" in that year (subtracting 30 from 40), a score of "9" in 1971, "8" in 1972, and so on until it reached "0" in 1980, and then go up again to be "1" in 1981, "2" in 1982, and "12" in 1992. Note that for faculty members who were already over forty years of age when they joined CMBC, there was no count-down to zero (only an increase from the difference between their age and forty).

heightened self-understanding may have contributed to the increase several years later in the number of doctorate degrees held by CMBC faculty members (see Figure 5).

Beginning in the late 1960s there were at least four occurrences which threatened to terminate this era. First, CMBC was not immune to the student unrest and anti-establishmentarianism characterizing post-secondary institutions during those years. Indeed, faculty felt considerable pressure to clamp down on student behaviour deemed undesirable by CMC constituency members (e.g., smoking, cut-offs, unkempt hair, bare feet, rock music). However, faculty members, as a group, chose to remain true to the College's original vision by calling students to remain responsible for their actions. For faculty members this was an issue which lay at the root of the sense of "community" they wished to foster at CMBC. As put by David Schroeder, the Dean of Students during those years: "We want to be concerned with persons rather than with institutions."⁷² In 1970 the board chairman noted that "we have reached a crisis in our constituency dialogue." It was noted that, "rightly or wrongly CMBC has a tarnished image in a large portion of its constituency. Rightly or wrongly an apparent growing number of not irresponsible people, are uneasy

FIGURE 5:

Degree of academic specialization of the average CMBC faculty members: 1948 to 1989



about what they sense to be the priorities and the direction at CMBC.⁷³ That summer's substantial deficit in CMBC's financial report was attributed to these strained constituency relations.⁷⁴

Second, some constituency members questioned whether the board was shirking its responsibilities, accusing it of doing little more than rubber stamping faculty decisions, specifically regarding the hiring and firing of faculty members.⁷⁵ Third, several possible institutional changes were discussed. These included: i) having a local Mennonite high-school (Westgate) share CMBC's campus;⁷⁶ ii) closing CMBC's campus in Tuxedo and establishing a residential college on the campus of the University of Manitoba;⁷⁷ and iii) co-operating more closely with MBBC.⁷⁸

Of these possibilities, the first seemed to receive the most serious consideration. This was not the first time CMBC had considered offering high-school instruction. Indeed, in its earliest years CMBC had even provided some high-school instruction for students who had not completed their high-school diploma. When what eventually became Westgate Mennonite Collegiate first was being formed in the mid-1950s, serious consideration had been given by the CMBC board to reintroduce high school instruction on its campus.⁷⁹ When representatives from Westgate again contacted CMBC in 1967 to obtain five acres of land for development as a high-school campus,⁸⁰ the CMBC board requested a formal

proposal from Westgate. After such a proposal had been developed and submitted in 1969, the special CMBC board committee which studied it concluded: "If CMBC has any land for sale Westgate Collegiate should be permitted to purchase a parcel of this land."⁸¹ At this point, however, the board chose to respond to Westgate's original 1967 inquiry and decided that it did not have any land for sale, making the development of the requested formal proposal unnecessary!

Fearful of the repercussions which this apparent about-face might engender, the board instructed its chairman to bring its decision to the general session of all the CMC boards "in such a way that it will not become a matter of confidence, i.e. a matter in which the Conference membership would have to vote non-confidence in the board in order to change this decision or reject the recommendation of the board."⁸² Later during their meeting the board added a paragraph to its letter to Westgate explaining that the decision should not necessarily be looked upon as final. However, a 1976 proposal by Westgate was also rejected in part because: "Selling the land now would likely exclude possibilities for any possible future association with institutions similar to ours."⁸³

Finally, several times during this period of equilibrium the need for CMBC to establish a clearer relationship to CMC-related Bible schools was raised. In 1968 the question was raised as to whether CMBC should allow students from Bible schools to transfer credits to the College, as MBBC had recently permitted. While the board recognized that this might serve to strengthen Bible schools, it might simultaneously serve to undermine CMBC as a result of the undue proliferation caused by establishing what virtually would be a half a dozen little Bible colleges.⁸⁴

Between 1975 and 1977 there were several discussions as to whether Elim Bible Institute might relocate its campus from Altona, Manitoba, to the CMBC campus in Winnipeg.⁸⁵ However, such a move threatened to lower CMBC's academic standards and undermine its status as a national college. In hindsight, it may not have been unwise to allow this relocation, given CMBC's impending emphasis on practical theology and the traditionally practical emphasis associated with Bible schools,⁸⁶ and given that Elim closed five years after having invested large sums of money in a new campus (beginning around 1983) due to lack of student enrollment.

Second period of transformation (1977-1980): "Time to get practical"

It seems surprising that CMBC underwent a transformational change in the mid-1970s because, compared with the late 1960s, there was little pressure for CMBC to do so.⁸⁷ Perhaps, as one interviewee posited, CMBC was ready for change in the mid-1970s precisely because board and faculty members had withstood the crises of the late 1960s and now no longer felt the need to be defensive. Such an interpretation would be consistent with studies which demon-

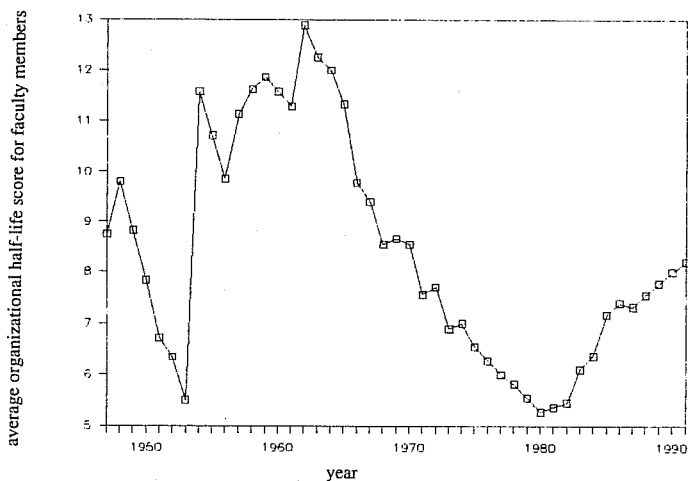


FIGURE 6:

Average organizational half-life scores of CMBC faculty: 1947-1991*

*Note. Organizational half-life scores were calculated via a four step process. For each faculty member (who was at CMBC for five or more years):

- i) determine the age at hiring;
- ii) calculate the difference between that age and sixty-five (expected age of retirement);
- iii) halve this difference; and iv) use this halved-difference to begin a count-down to zero (organizational half-life) and then back up again.

For example, a faculty member hired at age 30 in 1970 would have a score of "18" in that year (i.e., half the difference of subtracting 30 from 65), a score of "17" in 1971, "16" in 1972, and so on until it reached "0" in 1988, and then go up again to be "1" in 1989, "2" in 1990, and "4" in 1992.

strate that people are less receptive to change if they feel threatened.⁸⁸ Alternatively, perhaps CMBC faculty members were open to change because, on average, they were reaching their organizational mid-life (i.e., the point in time halfway between their age at hiring and the expected age of retirement at 65) (see Figure 6). This is not inconsistent with those interviewees who suggested that the readiness for change characterizing the mid-1970s was attributable to an eagerness to try something new and re-energizing. Third, knowing that CMBC would soon choose a new president⁸⁹ coupled with the recent passing of founding chairman J. J. Thiessen, served as an opportunity to seek "a clear interpretation and goals for the future."⁹⁰

The CMBC board and faculty embarked on an intensive self-study in the mid-1970s, asking whether teaching at CMBC neglected "the practical and affective aspect" in favour of "the more intellectual, cognitive approach," and whether the College's "emphasis on accreditation and academic excellence [was] a threat to effective learning." These discussions culminated in a watershed four-day board-

faculty workshop in the summer of 1977. A dominant theme at these discussions was for CMBC to increase its emphasis on what has come to be known as “practical theology.” This emphasis on needing to become more ‘practical’ was not new; it had been expressed regularly virtually throughout the second era.⁹¹

Participants at the 1977 board-faculty workshop were quite conscious that their discussion would serve as a basis for selecting a new president. As the Presidential Search Committee noted to the board:

We reminded ourselves that the appointment of a new President was crucial at this time. Our College has considerable momentum already, yet we feel that we are on the edge of a new era, as it were. We have begun to redefine our goals and set priorities for the future development of the program and campus. We see the President as offering us considerable guidance and leadership in meeting the needs of our students and congregations.⁹²

The workshop identified five areas which needed improvement: enrollment, practical theology, counselling, constituency relations, and fundraising.⁹³ In early 1978, George K. Epp accepted the offer to become CMBC president beginning in the 1978-79 school year.

At first, practical theology courses were not particularly well-attended by students. As the Academic Dean explained: “By and large, students come to college to gain knowledge more than skill; to reflect on their faith rather than to ‘put it to use’ (other than in the private sphere); and to acquire a general education, rather than vocational preparation.”⁹⁴ Perhaps students’ attitudes were partly a reflection of faculty members in general, some of whom even now are unsure of exactly what “practical theology” means and have been ambivalent towards it.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, by late 1979 the David Friesen Foundation had committed five yearly \$50,000 installments for CMBC to develop a Practical Theology program,⁹⁶ and a document entitled “A Design for Practical Theology at CMBC” had been prepared.⁹⁷ According to this document: “Practical theology includes three integrated dimensions within its scope: ministries within the congregation, personal growth, and discipleship in the community.”

Third era (1980-81 to the present):

“Spin-offs associated with re-introducing Practical Theology”

The directions set during special board-faculty meetings of 1977 served to focus CMBC in the ensuing years. Enrollment increased (see Figure 7), practical theology was emphasized (see Figure 1), the number of CMBC graduates entering churchwork increased (see Figure 3), and a full-time residence director was hired (1984). However, nested within this era is a transformational change to fundraising at CMBC (see the third period of transformation, discussed below).

Increasing its emphasis on practical theology helped open the way for CMBC to join other Winnipeg educational institutions begin to offer seminary-level courses.⁹⁸ It also opened the way for CMBC to “invite MCC Canada to call a

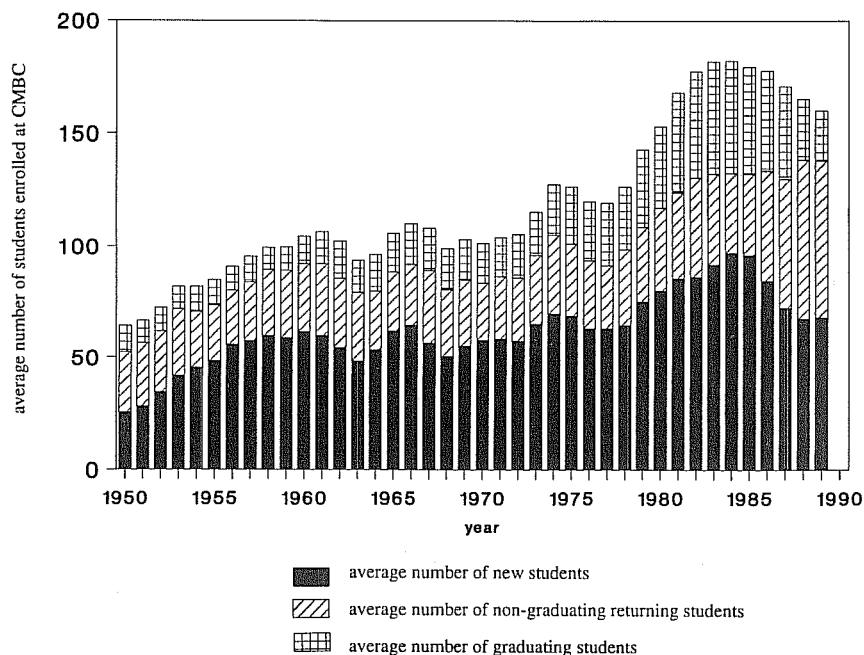


FIGURE 7:

Average total enrollment and composition of full-time student body at CMBC: 1949 to 1988

meeting of inter-Mennonite organizations for the purpose of working co-operatively on the development of a proposal for an 'Institute of Peace and Service',⁹⁹ and to offer degrees parenthetically specializing in service education (1987) and in youth ministry (1990).

However, changes associated with this era brought with them certain tensions. For example, the 150% increase in student enrollment during this era versus the previous one strained the decision-making process at CMBC.¹⁰⁰ Rather than continue to have all decisions made at weekly faculty council meetings (which often lasted more than three hours), there was a move to separate administrative decisions from academic decisions, and to establish sub-committees to work out details and make proposals to the faculty council. These changes created some tension because faculty members were reluctant to give up some of their decision-making power to administrators and sub-committees. According to several interviewees, conflicts often resulted more from the process by which a decision was made than from the content of the decision itself.

Probably the most noteworthy perturbation during this era was related to a proposal initiated by the Friends of Higher Learning (FHL), an ad hoc group interested in contributing "significant sums of money [according to interviewees, ranging from \$12 to \$15 to \$18 million] to the establishment of a university-level educational enterprise,"¹⁰¹ perhaps not unlike the Mennonite liberal arts colleges in

the USA. The first recorded meeting of this group was on January 7, 1980. Later that year the group invited representatives from the CMBC and MBBC boards to a meeting because "they did not wish to explore their vision without knowledge and input and support of the respective College Boards and Conferences."¹⁰²

After preliminary discussions, the CMBC board decided that it was interested in the venture, but needed some time to do research and to tell the constituency.¹⁰³ Some of the research that went into this proposal by the FHL is found in Frank H. Epp (1982) and in a task force report commissioned by the CMC.¹⁰⁴ As evidenced in these reports, significant efforts were made to develop and test the FHL vision with the constituency, and considerable interest and support was found. For example, of the CMC-related high-school students surveyed, "Slightly more than half, 156, said that they would attend a Mennonite liberal arts college if one were available in Canada" (whereas only 25 indicated that they planned to attend an existing Mennonite-related college). Further, the greatest need of CMC-affiliated students currently in post-secondary education "seems to be that their institutions are not combining or integrating spiritual, academic and vocational programs."¹⁰⁵

The recommendations of the CMC task force encompassed two general areas. First, to provide co-ordination of and support and affirmation for existing CMC-related educational institutions and efforts. Second, to seize the opportunity provided by the FHL: "Our objective should be high quality education in 'secular' disciplines and professions from the perspective of biblical-Anabaptist theology." The task force recommended that at least two CMC representatives be appointed to cooperate with the FHL in designing the specific form of the envisioned college(s), mindful of developing an academic thrust which would reflect Anabaptist Mennonite emphases and strengths, and avoiding redundancies and excessive concentration of educational institutions in Winnipeg.

Numerous visions were explored, including purchasing land adjacent to the CMBC campus and together with a relocated MBBC establish a liberal arts college not unlike that of Goshen College in Indiana. Another option included opening a chain of federated Mennonite institutes/colleges on university campuses servicing students in other Canadian centres.

In the end, perhaps partly due to the economic recession of the time, or because the FHL became frustrated with the foot-dragging of conference structures, or due to worries that the proposed changes would weaken the Bible/theology program or erode the sense of "community" at CMBC, these discussions resulted in the formation of a scaled-down Menno Simons College (MSC) which received a provincial charter in 1982 and opened its doors in 1988, offering programs in Social and Economic Development Studies and in Conflict Resolution Studies (related to the University of Winnipeg).

CMBC board members explained that they abandoned the liberal arts option because of the "response of the constituency" which "would like CMBC to remain a Bible College" and because "The board has always been advised not to go in that direction."¹⁰⁶ Contrast these comments with the discussion several months later about whether or not CMBC should develop a new area of studies focussing on

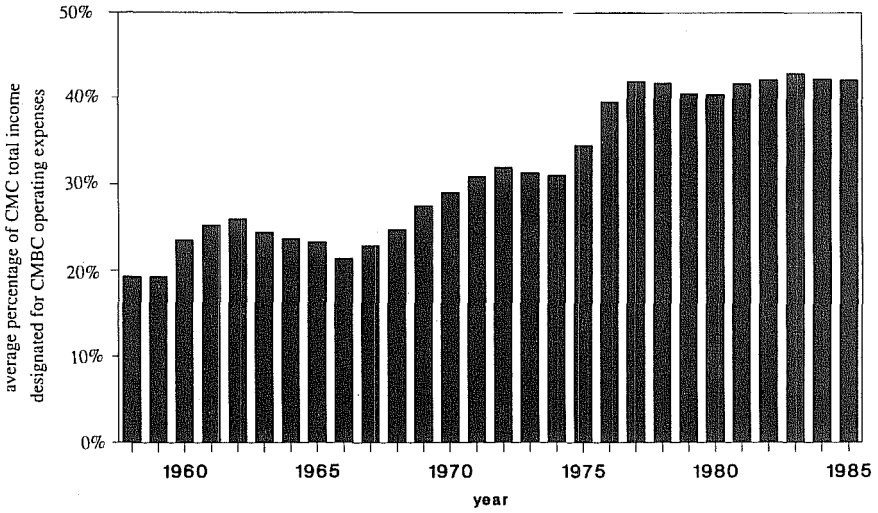


FIGURE 8:
Average percentage of Conference of Mennonites in Canada annual revenue allocated to CMBC operating expenses: 1958 to 1985

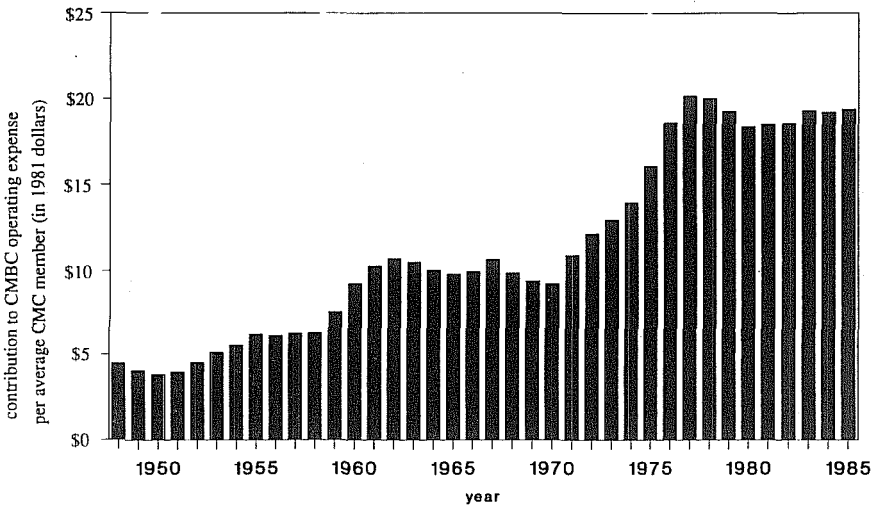


FIGURE 9:
Average contribution (in 1981 dollars) per Conference of Mennonites in Canada member to CMBC operating expenses: 1948-1985

peace, justice and service. At that time, after having received only 65 of 240 questionnaires distributed to determine interest in this direction, the discussion sounded different:

Are we looking to CMBC to fill a perceived need in the constituency? or do *we* see the need and want CMBC to meet that need? Usually an institution sets up the program and invites students to it. Consensus is that *we* take ownership of *this* thrust, and move ahead.¹⁰⁷

The protracted FHL-initiated discussions exacted a toll on many people, not least of which was George K. Epp, who shocked the board when he announced his resignation in 1983, shortly after having had his presidential appointment extended to a second five-year term.¹⁰⁸ Epp was replaced by John H. Neufeld, a previous CMBC board chairman and a long-time church pastor.

Third period of transformation (1982-1987): "Regaining control of fund raising"

It is generally accepted that having control over organizational finances provides control over the organization. Recall the implications associated with having CMBC funding administered centrally by the CMC Finance Board. As long as funding increased, the central administration of funding by the CMC may have served to simplify running CMBC. However, when funding failed to increase, problems arose (see Figures 8 and 9). Thus, in the mid-1980s board members noted "a shift in the area of decision making. The Board may make decision on program, but actual implementation of such decisions rests on finances."¹⁰⁹

The lack of control over fundraising had also been problematic in earlier years. For example, in 1967 board members were frustrated by their lack of control over faculty salaries. In 1970, amidst a difficult financial situation, the board discussed the possibility of requesting permission to raise additional operational funds on its own. In the following year the board passed a motion that it "accept the [centrally-administered] budget with this proviso that the College board through the students and through its faculty be permitted to raise an extra \$8,145."¹¹⁰ In 1974 the board discussed arrangements to have persons in several provinces solicit funds for CMBC. Displeasure with the centrally-administered system were also evident in 1976, and in 1979 President Epp described how difficult it was "to negotiate with donors [regarding CMBC Practical Theology program and new student residence] when we always have to caution that 'we do not know what the response of the Conference will be'."¹¹¹ In 1982 faculty members voiced their displeasure with the current system, specifically noting that it is not "fair to align the professors' salaries with that of other conference workers."¹¹² A motion passed at that meeting essentially blamed the CMC Finance Board for failing to carry out its mandate in teaching stewardship and thus "we [the CMBC board members] regret that the shortfall of conference funding has to be carried by the [underpaid] conference

staff.”

A documented concerted attempt to gain permission for CMBC to supplement centrally administered funds was discussed in April and October, 1982: “The Board may have to look for new ways of funding CMBC. Funds available to us at present are inadequate for a strong program.”¹¹³

Does CMBC have the right to individual solicitation for funds? The General Board feels that this could jeopardize the relationship with other Boards. ... CMBC as an institution has ongoing expenses and salaries, staff, programs, buildings, maintenance and campus development. DO WE CUT PROGRAM OR GO OUT TO SOLICIT FUNDS?¹¹⁴

Similar frustrations and sentiments were discussed in 1983 (July and November). In 1984 the board met with the CMC General Board in order to discuss how “... present [CMC] structures lead to adversity; [there is a] need to take steps to avoid confrontation.”¹¹⁵ By October of that year the board passed a motion that its members are “to forward a list of possible good donors to [President] John H. Neufeld, to whom the president may write letters to solicit funds for CMBC projects.”¹¹⁶

In November, 1987, CMBC faculty members discussed the need for CMBC to be governed by a different funding formula than that used for other boards of the CMC. They suggested that “Funding from corporate and individual donors should be sought more actively” via a designated fund-raiser.¹¹⁷ In a report by President Neufeld on the matter, he suggested: “The only way to live within the financial guidelines of the CMC, and to maintain the present program (as a minimum) is to accept the challenge of seeking actively, and aggressively for designated funds in order to meet our operational needs.”¹¹⁸

In November of 1988 permission was granted to allow President Neufeld to raise funds for CMBC to supplement those administered centrally by the CMC Finance Committee.

Fourth era (1988-present): “Implications of independent fundraising and Practical Theology and ...”

Recognizing that control over financing also implied control over program, it followed that potential new power holders (e.g., individual funders, and/or the fundraisers) were introduced when CMBC received permission to raise funds outside those administered centrally via CMC. The implications of this, in a context of “community discernment,” are being worked out.

Further, as President Neufeld observed in a paper discussed by faculty members in the summer and fall of 1988: “CMBC’s decision to engage in fund-raising for operations has evoked systems questions — what should the other [CMC] Boards do now that CMBC is doing this? What about our unified budget, which was considered sacrosanct for some time?” A follow-up response to this

discussion noted that other boards within CMC “believe that CMBC’s high costs are not allowing them to develop like they might. Now that CMBC has demonstrated that it is able to raise funds independently, the push will be on to decrease the CMBC portion of the CMC budget.”¹¹⁹

President Neufeld’s document also poses other questions which, taken together, help set the agenda for CMBC for the coming years. How will CMBC be affected by CMC’s evolving relationship with dual membership congregations in Ontario? What if CMC were to become a conference of conferences? Will/should CMBC become regionalized? How should CMBC relate to other CMC-related institutions (Conrad Grebel College, Swift Current Bible Institute, Columbia Bible College, Menno Simons College)? Is a Council on Higher Education desirable? What about CMBC’s involvement in seminary education?

Conclusion

It is awkward to “conclude” a study such as this because the story of CMBC seems far from over. However, at least one conclusion seems in order: CMBC has served CMC well. The College has remained dynamic and responsive. It has overcome numerous crises, and also forgone numerous opportunities which may or may not have resulted in a more desirable college today. For example, what if CMBC had opened in Rosthern, or in downtown Winnipeg or in the Niagara peninsula of Ontario? Would a rural-Saskatchewan-based college today offer degrees in agriculture (e.g., presenting an Anabaptist vision of how to be better stewards of the land)? Would an inner-city college place a greater emphasis on social work programs (e.g., perhaps its cafeteria would double as a soup kitchen)? If CMBC had opened in Ontario, would Conrad Grebel College have opened in Winnipeg? The objective here was not to second-guess previous decisions, but rather to document them in order to better understand the present and perhaps be wiser in making decisions affecting the future.

This is only a thumbnail sketch of CMBC’s history. Volumes could be written about how the lives have been influenced and shaped of those who directly or indirectly participated in its “community.”

Notes

¹The author is grateful to the following for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper: Leo Driedger, Paul Dyck, George K. Epp, John Epp, John Friesen, Gerald Gerbrandt, Waldemar Janzen, Larry Kehler, Lawrence Klippenstein, Jacob Peters, Arnold Regier, Don Reimer, Mary Reimer, Rod Sawatsky, and reviewers of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada is also owed thanks for funding part of the research on which this paper

is based. Finally, the paper would not have been possible without the cooperation of interviewees and the access to archival resources drawn principally from the Canadian Mennonite Bible College files of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

²This study is based on extensive archival and interview data. The almost 14,000 pages of archival material reviewed included: CMC annual yearbooks, CMBC board meeting minutes, faculty meeting minutes, calendars, yearbooks and other reports. Over fifty interviews were held with faculty and board members, with a special emphasis on persons associated with CMBC's formative years.

This paper presents an organizational analyst's overview of the history of CMBC, and adopts a punctuated equilibrium perspective. CMBC's history is depicted as a series of periods of equilibrium, during which a dominant "deep structure" (or "way of doing things") is elaborated upon and fine-tuned, punctuated by relatively short periods of transformation, during which an existing deep structure is replaced by an alternative deep structure. A deep structure is captured by the underlying "fit" between CMBC's ends (goals, mission, purpose) and its means (structures and systems). It encompasses the fundamental aims of an organization, and how these are coupled with the essence of its structure and systems (e.g., levels of formalization, specialization, centralization). For a more detailed description of the punctuated equilibrium model, please see: Connie J. G. Gersick (1991) "Revolutionary change theories: A multilevel exploration of the punctuated equilibrium paradigm." *Academy of Management Review*, 16: 10-36; and Michael L. Tushman and Elaine Romanelli (1985) "Organizational evolution: A metamorphic model of inertia and reorientation." In B. M. Staw and L. L. Cummings (Eds.) *Research in Organizational Behavior*. Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press(pp. 171-222).

³A large portion of the discussion presented here focuses on CMBC's earliest years, because of the nature of how institutions such as CMBC form. For more information on the importance of the founding years for understanding an organization, see John R. Kimberly (1987) "The study of organization: Toward a biographical perspective." In J. W. Lorsch (Ed.), *Handbook of Organizational Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall (pp. 223-237).

⁴See page 108 in Rudy A. Regehr (1972) "A century of private schools." In H. Poettcker and R. A. Regehr (Eds.) *Call to faithfulness: Essays in Canadian Mennonite Studies*. Winnipeg: Canadian Mennonite Bible College (pp. 103-115).

⁵CMC Yearbook, 1945.

⁶Regehr (1972).

⁷Jacob Peters (1986) *Organizational change within a religious denomination: A case study of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 1903-1978*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Waterloo, Canada.

⁸"eine erweiterte Bibelschule" CMC Yearbook, 1941:22.

⁹A liberal arts college operated by an American counterpart of CMC.

¹⁰"Absolventen solcher Bibelschulen sollen Anstellung finden"; CMC Yearbook, 1945: 18-20.

¹¹Letter from Thiessen to Rev. N. Bahnmann in Sardis, B.C., dated October 28, 1942.

¹²Correspondence sent to CMC congregations by P. A. Rempel, P. J. Schaefer, and J. N. Hoepfner, dated December 3, 1947.

¹³Faculty meeting minutes, June 24, 1950, as noted by Regier in personal correspondence.

¹⁴Board meeting minutes, January 12, 1948.

¹⁵Correspondence from Friesen to Thiessen, dated June 15, 1946; board meeting minutes, September 26, 1946.

¹⁶Correspondence from Friesen to Thiessen, May 15, 1947; correspondence from Gerbrandt to Friesen, May 22, 1947.

¹⁷Letter from Dean Goertz to Thiessen, dated August 21, 1946.

¹⁸Conrad Grebel College was opened in Waterloo in the early 1960s.

¹⁹Regier and Janzen eventually left CMBC earlier than may have been expected; cf faculty meeting minutes, February, 1950.

²⁰For example, see CMBC report in 1949 CMC Yearbook.

²¹For example, in order to appease Mennonites in southern Manitoba, German was used as the language of instruction in over half the courses in CMBC's first year, and CMBC's relationship to Bethel College in Kansas was down-played.

²²CMBC was also a place where young people came to grow in their faith. It was a spiritual center. It was in this mandate where CMBC most closely resembled CMC-affiliated Bible schools, where spiritual growth and nurture were emphasized more than academic rigor. Thus, while spiritual growth of students was an important and omnipresent goal for CMBC, it was not its distinctive attribute vis a vis other CMC-affiliated educational institutions.

²³For example, see letter dated August 4, 1947, from Thiessen to Friesen.

²⁴For example, at least one student had been sent to "spy" on faculty on behalf of a leader in southern Manitoba.

²⁵American Mennonites did not experience the addition of new German-speaking immigrants in the 1920s, and so, unlike Canadians, by the late 1940s most American congregations did not use German as their primary language of worship. Mennonite leaders in southern Manitoba did not believe that a transition to English was inevitable and wanted to ensure that CMBC would nurture German rather than hasten its demise. Retaining German was perceived to facilitate avoidance of conforming to the patterns of this world (Romans 12).

²⁶This applied to courses in English, German, Hellenic Greek, Sociology and Psychology.

²⁷Cf CMBC report in 1948 CMC Yearbook, pages 116-117.

²⁸Regier chose to attend Goettingen University during his leave in 1951 in part to improve his mastery of German; cf letter to Regier from Thiessen and Gerbrandt, dated February 25, 1952.

²⁹Regier was originally from Kansas, although his wife Helen was Canadian, and she had been baptized in Thiessen's church in Saskatoon.

³⁰Personal correspondence.

³¹Schaefer was the principal at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, Manitoba; board meeting minutes, February 10, 1950; Regier's letter dated February 15, 1950.

³²Board meeting minutes, April 20, 1950.

³³Board meeting minutes, May 3, 1950.

³⁴Board meeting minutes, February 14, 1951; note that Thiessen abroad when this decision was made.

³⁵In a letter dated April 24, 1952.

³⁶Board meeting minutes, January 10, 1959.

³⁷One student described how, due to peer pressure, there was no more freedom to experiment at CMBC than there had been at home with parents. See also "Exhibit A" in February 26, 1949, board meeting minutes which list "general principle of conduct" as drawn up by the Student Council; cf. Faculty meeting minutes, January 31, 1949.

³⁸For example, deciding whether or not to purchase an electric clock for the CMBC office; board meeting minutes, February 14, 1952.

³⁹Regier travelled over 10,000 miles with such a student group one summer; Arnold J. Regier (1987) "A Canadian Mennonite College Fellowship." *The Mennonite*, May 26, pp 220-221.

⁴⁰For example, at one point students requested and were granted extended library hours on Saturdays and quietened dorms by 11:00 p.m. ("the students had generally felt that late hours should be minimized"); faculty meeting minutes, February 18, 1952.

⁴¹Peters (1986: 271).

⁴²For example, Peters (1986:266) notes that six individuals held 76% of CMC executive positions between 1903 and 1954.

⁴³Peters (1986:155).

⁴⁴Helmut Harder, the present CMC Executive Secretary, was ordained in 1992, partly in response to efforts initiated by the CMC Executive Committee.

⁴⁵Board meeting minutes, January 10, 1961.

⁴⁶Board meeting minutes, January, 1963.

⁴⁷Board meeting minutes, January, 1963.

⁴⁸Friesen later claimed that he had not threatened to resign should Janzen not be dismissed.

⁴⁹Board meeting minutes, January 14, 1958.

⁵⁰September 25, 1958.

⁵¹Board meeting minutes, July 1, 1960.

⁵²Fredrick G. Stambrook "A Sensible Resolution: The Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the University of Manitoba." Presented at the 25 year celebration of CMBC as an Approved Teaching Centre (February 3, 1990).

⁵³Board meeting minutes, October 17, 1959.

⁵⁴It was noted that this might change in the future if CMBC were perceived to be more academically rigorous.

⁵⁵Board meeting minutes, January 9, 1963.

⁵⁶Board meeting minutes, January 11, 1960.

⁵⁷For example, board meeting minutes, November 15, 1963.

⁵⁸Board-faculty meeting minutes, January 22, 1964.

⁵⁹Stambrook, 1990.

⁶⁰Stambrook, 1990.

⁶¹February 3, 1990.

⁶²Board meeting minutes, January 22, 1964. Note that "The expectation that most pastors in Canada would receive their training in AMBS [Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary] did not materialize" (faculty-board meeting minutes, November, 1983).

⁶³These changes created a Department of Religion (essentially a combination of the previous Departments of Bible, Theology, and Christian Education), a Department of Music (from courses in the former Arts Department), and retained a Department of Arts.

⁶⁴Waldemar Janzen (1966) *A basic educational philosophy for Canadian Mennonite Bible College: An essay in private education*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Canadian Mennonite Bible College.

This apology for CMBC was initially written in response to constituency members who might think that the creation of CGC rendered the mandate of CMBC obsolete.

⁶⁵March 17, 1969.

⁶⁶Board meeting minutes, September 20, 1969. Note that MBBC no longer exists in name; it has become Concord College.

⁶⁷Board meeting minutes, January 22, 1966.

⁶⁸"Choice in a Time of Change," document for faculty discussion, August, 1988.

⁶⁹Note that this increased bureaucratization coincides with a similar trend in CMC, as well as more closely coupled the College to the UM.

⁷⁰See also Gerald Gerbrandt (1987) "Review of board actions and developments re: faculty

positions and new programs at CMBC.”

⁷¹Board meeting minutes, September 20, 1969.

⁷²Board meeting minutes, January 30, 1969.

⁷³Board meeting minutes, January 29, 1970.

⁷⁴Board meeting minutes, July 6, 1970; July 7, 1970 CMBC board with CMC Finance Committee.

⁷⁵For example, July, 1968 board meeting minutes; meeting March 17, 1969 with Berghthaler “Concerns Committee.”

⁷⁶Board meeting minutes: January 1967; July, 1967; July 4, 1969; January, 1970.

⁷⁷Board meeting minutes, January, 1970.

⁷⁸Board meeting minutes, January, 1971.

⁷⁹See board meeting minutes: October 15, 1956; January 14, 1957; January 14, 1958.

⁸⁰Board meeting minutes, January 28, 1957.

⁸¹Board meeting minutes, January 29, 1970.

⁸²Board meeting minutes, January, 1970.

⁸³Board meeting minutes, July 5, 1976.

⁸⁴Board meeting minutes, July, 1968.

⁸⁵For example, CMM Executive meetings, October 28, November 18, 1977.

⁸⁶For example, board meeting minutes, September, 1985.

⁸⁷For example, see President Poettcker’s report to the 1975 CMC Conference.

⁸⁸B. M. Staw, L. E. Sandelands and J. E. Dutton (1981) “Threat-rigidity effects in organizational behavior: A multilevel analysis.” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26: 501-524.

⁸⁹Poettcker had resigned effective summer 1978 in order to accept the leadership of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana.

⁹⁰Board-faculty meeting minutes, August, 1977.

⁹¹In 1964, a need for vocational training was discussed; in 1965, CMBC was called to offer more practical training and become a source for future ministers and missionaries; in 1966, the request was made to give practical courses more consideration; in 1969, discussion suggested that CMBC’s non-vocational emphasis should be re-evaluated; and in 1970 and 1973, board members discussed the need to emphasize evangelism to complement theology and music. Indeed, a course in practical theology was already required for CMBC theology students in the 1976-77 academic year (Report of the Academic Dean to the CMBC Board, February, 1978).

⁹²Report of the Presidential Search Committee to the CMBC board, December 17, 1977.

⁹³Five general goals which emerged from the workshop helped CMBC to select its new President: i) increase enrollment to 160 or 200 students by 1981 by broadening the recruitment base and providing better recreational facilities); ii) develop a fuller program in practical theology by offering practical programs similar to a community college, increasing the emphasis on evangelism, and strengthening the fine arts program; iii) increase emphasis on counselling by hiring a residence director); iv) achieve higher profile in CMC and related constituencies; and v) raise funds for endowed chairs and lectureships (board meeting minutes, December 17, 1977).

⁹⁴Report of the Academic Dean to the CMBC Board, February, 1978.

⁹⁵For example, the decision as to whether a specific course should be categorized as Practical Theology versus Theology was described as “superficial” (board meeting minutes, November, 1978).

The College’s purpose vis a vis its offering “professional” training evolved throughout the 1980s. In April, 1982, Academic Dean Gerald Gerbrandt argued that CMBC’s primary aim was still

“non-professional” with secondary emphases on things like congregational education and seminary. The following year “non-professional” was deleted from CMBC’s purpose as stated in Article III section 2 of the constitution (July 1983), whereupon Gerbrandt described CMBC as “pre-professional” in March, 1984. In July of 1985 the board discussed how “... we need to acknowledge that CMBC is the appropriate place to receive ‘professional’ training for church ministers” (board meeting minutes, July, 1985). However, in August, 1988, a discussion paper for faculty members reverts back to an earlier understanding: “Up to this point in our development we have been quite explicit and self-conscious — we are an undergraduate and non-professional school” (“Choice in a Time of Change,” discussed by faculty in August, 1988).

⁹⁶Board meeting minutes, October, 1979.

⁹⁷Helmut Harder (1979) *A design for practical theology at Canadian Mennonite Bible College*. Coordinator of Development for the Practical Theology Program, December.

⁹⁸See Harder (1979).

⁹⁹Board meeting minutes, January, 1985.

¹⁰⁰For example, board meeting minutes, October, 1984.

¹⁰¹See page 28 in Helen Kruger, John Klassen, and George Richert (1983) *The church’s task in education: An approach for the 1980s*. The report and recommendations of the task force on education of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (printed in April, for discussion and July CMC conference).

¹⁰²Letter from CMBC board chairman to other board members re: meeting on December 12, 1980.

¹⁰³Board meeting minutes, January 30, 1981.

¹⁰⁴Kruger, Klassen, and Richert, 1983; Frank H. Epp (1982) *A new college for a new century: The wisdom of the ages for the crises of our times*. A brief examination of the needs for a new Mennonite college in Canada and a general outline of its shape prepared for the Friends of Higher Learning, June 1982.

¹⁰⁵Kruger, Klassen and Richert (1983).

¹⁰⁶In response to questions at CMC conference in July, 1984.

¹⁰⁷Emphasis added here: board meeting minutes, October, 1984.

¹⁰⁸Board meeting minutes, February, 1983; G. K. Epp eventually went to serve as the founding president of Menno Simons College.

¹⁰⁹Board meeting minutes, February, 1985.

¹¹⁰Board meeting minutes, January, 1971.

¹¹¹Board meeting minutes, June, 1979.

¹¹²Board meeting minutes, January, 1982.

¹¹³Document entitled, “CMBC and Funding,” prepared by George K. Epp and Vic Epp, April, 1982.

¹¹⁴Board meeting minutes, October, 1982.

¹¹⁵February, 1984.

¹¹⁶Board meeting minutes, October, 1984.

¹¹⁷Faculty meeting minutes, November 29, 1987.

¹¹⁸First draft by John H. Neufeld on “CMBC’s Response to the Current Financial Situation,” dated November 23, 1987.

¹¹⁹Undated and unsigned “Response to Ad hoc Committee Report,” ca. Fall, 1988.