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Main content

Article Preview :

Abstract: In the summer of 1995 the General Conference Mennonite Church and the (Old) Mennonite Church adopted the new Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. While this action included all Canadian congregations holding General Conference membership and also the two Mennonite Church area conferences in Canada, the following summer the Conference of Mennonites in Canada followed up with its own decision to endorse the confession. With this, the stage was set for the new statement of faith to play a major role in the formation of Mennonite Church Canada, one of the church bodies that resulted when the General Conference-Mennonite Church integration came to fruition in 1999. This paper reports on how the confession was received by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada constituency and by its successor, Mennonite Church Canada, and how it contributed to the formation of Mennonite Church Canada and its programs after 1999.

THE ROLE OF CONFESSIONS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES IN CANADA

From the time of its origin in 1902-1903, the Konferenz der Mennoniten in mittleren Canada (Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada), as it was originally named, (1) seems to have taken its confessions of faith in stride, without much deliberation. A five-member Constitution Committee, appointed at the first annual sessions (1903), assumed responsibility for recommending a confession of faith for the new church. At the annual sessions a year later the Constitution Committee came to the delegate body with its proposal. While the committee made use of the constitutional model of the General Conference Mennonite Church, (2) they did not choose the General Conference's brief "Common Confession" of 1896. (3) Rather, the committee recommended the Glaubensbekenntnis der Mennoniten in Preussen und Russland (4) (Articles of Faith of the Mennonites in Prussia and Russia). This statement, brought to Canada by Mennonite immigrants from Prussia and from Russia in the latter years of the nineteenth century, seemed appropriate for the new organization, as it linked them with their German-speaking "mother church" in the "old country." The Glaubensbekenntnis had already been widely used for catechetical instruction among Mennonites in Canada before 1903.

There is no evidence of debate over the decision to adopt a confession of faith from the "old country." Indeed, there is little evidence of debate over confessions as such or particular articles of faith in the early decades of Conference of Mennonites in Canada (C.M.C.) history. The ministers and preachers (Altester and Prediger) of Conference of Mennonites in Canada congregations assumed responsibility for the church's beliefs and practices. Until well into the 1950s, this ministerial group composed the bulk of the delegate body at annual sessions, where matters of faith and practice were typically discussed at a meeting of ministers the day preceding the conference business sessions. These pre-conference ministers' meetings dealt with theological and ethical issues of the time. But in the early decades little if any consideration was given to the question of revising the accepted confession of faith or formulating a new one. (5)...

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Canadian Attitudes Towards Religion. Canadians are a measurably religious people. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (the Canadian Government's most recent effort to document religiosity in Canada), about 76 per cent of Canadians either claim some sort of religious identity or consider themselves members of a specific church or denomination. A 2017 Angus Reid poll similarly found solid majorities of Canadians claiming to believe in fundamental religious concepts like the existence of God, divine intervention, and heaven. What follows is a brief overview of some of the major branches of Christianity present in Canada. Papal Visits. Only one pope has ever visited Canada, John Paul II (1920-2005), who came to the country in 1984, 1987, and 2002. Excellent explanation of the Mennonite faith. Short, to the point, and well explained! Read more. I was given this book after I was converted in a Mennonite church in Maine as a part of a short discipleship class. This book is excellent in its clear and concise descriptions of what Mennonites believe on most important subjects in theology. The book contains ample endnotes when needed to further explain a concept from the basic statements given in the chapters. Anyone in the Anabaptist movement could also use this resource as a good discipleship tool or group study guide. I have found myself going back to this book at times when considering my own doctrinal position to glean from the truths Adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church at Wichita, Kansas, July 1995. The 24 articles and summary statement were accepted by both groups as their statement of faith for teaching and nurture in the life of the church. ...read more. Format. ebook. Author. General Board Of The General Conference Mennonite Church. Publisher.