

## Minutes

### Winnipeg Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue, Meeting No. 33

Meeting held on 18 April 2011  
at St. Paul's College

**Present:** Paul Doerksen, Dora Dueck, Michelle Gallant, Helmut Harder, Victor Kliever, Richard Lebrun, Luis Melo, Ron Penner, Donna Peters-Small, Lynda Trenholm, and Nancy Wood.

Regrets: John Long

1. **Introductions**, for sake of the new member of our group. **Luis** (with Helmut, founder of the group, PT prof, ecumenical officer for the Archdiocese of St. Boniface), **Helmut** (co-founder of the group, offered a bit of background of the group since 1999), **Richard** (an original member of the group, retired history prof, St Paul's College, parishioner at St. Ignatius), **Lynda** (St. Bernadette Parish, Windsor Park, Pastoral Associate). **Paul** (new this year, teacher at Mennonite Collegiate), **Ron** (two years in the group, with his wife, interim pastors at Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church), **Michelle**, (new this year, law professor at University of Manitoba, attends various Catholic parishes). **Victor Kliever** (new, retired pastor, full-time student, joint-master's thesis nearing completion, with three grown children, three grandchildren), **Dora** (member, Jubilee Mennonite Church; with three grown children, five grandchildren, a writer), **Nancy** (Catholic, once a Mennonite, a member of Chemin Neuf), **Donna** (former Catholic, now a Mennonite, a guidance counsellor at Mennonite Collegiate).
2. **Prayers** – **Lynda** led a Lenten prayer, concluding with the sign of peace.
3. **Sharing of ecumenical experiences:**

**Helmut** – reported that two weeks ago he and his wife had returned from a trip to Turkey and Greece organized by the Paulist Fathers. There were 45 people in the group, (two Mennonites, one Lutheran, and 42 Catholics). There was Mass every day, with trips to various Pauline sites, chapels. And added plus for Helmut is that beginning in February he will be involved in two groups studying Paul's Epistle to Ephesians, after having visited to Ephesus.

**Richard** mentioned his meeting a couple of weeks previously with the "other" local Catholic-Mennonite Dialogue group made of faculty members from St. Paul's College and Canadian Mennonite University.

**Lynda** told us that she is going to Greece (and Ephesus) in October. She has been busy with lots of funerals, and more baptisms coming up. She and her husband made a trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

**Paul**, who has been teaching a course at CMU on theology of the Reformation, had Helmut come and talk to this class about contemporary Anabaptist – Roman Catholic dialogue.

**Ron** mentioned his ongoing ecumenical involvement with Lutherans in their joint parish. In two weeks he will be on his way to Taiwan to a Mennonite World Conference executive meeting, with conference leaders from around the world, which will display Mennonites as a global movement.

**Michelle**, in Manchester, UK, at a football match, was fascinated by what happened. Before every game one young player kneels and prays.

**Victor**, with wife, will be going on a Kentucky Holy Land tour, visiting monasteries, convents, a Shaker village, and the Mennonite seminary in Elkhart, Indiana.

**Dora**, two weeks ago, realizing this meeting was coming up, looked in the paper, but was not able to find any alternative service she was interested in attending. In August, she will be going on a Mennonite heritage tour, which will include Holland, Northern Germany, and Poland.

**Nancy** reported that their Chemin Neuf community has been given a house (the St. Charles Retreat Centre) by the Oblate sisters. They are planning to have a formation program for university students. They are hoping this will be an ecumenical group (with Catholics, Protestants, Native students, and International students).

**Donna** reported a two-week stay in Savannah, Georgia, where she attended a two-week long very eclectic music festival. She was particularly impressed with a group from England (Stile Antico) that performed in a Catholic cathedral. She also mentioned the *Free Press* story (Monday 18 April) about the woman from Sierra Leone reunited with her son with the assistance of Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship (her congregation) and another Muslim family that comes to their church.

**Luis** provided a handout outlining his recent and upcoming ecumenical activities (speaking to some of the items). He reported that he had just moved, at probably the worst possible time, because of his planned trip to Rome in a week (for beatification of John Paul II and five days of meetings in PCPCU) and to London. He will also spend two weeks in Italy and one week in England on a proper holiday. He spoke briefly about the Week of prayer for Christian unity – the impressive opening service impressive at a packed Ukrainian Catholic Church, Ethiopian Vespers (with dancing, and drums), the Mennonite Brethren Service (with breaking ceramic tile to make a work of art) and the Northeast Winnipeg churches (now including Lutherans and Anglicans as well as Catholic and Mennonite congregations), who held a service in the Bronx Park Community Centre with some 350 people in attendance. He mentioned an event, “Rock the River.” Franklin Graham had asked for help for a youth event. It became controversial because of what Graham has said about the Muslim community and Obama. Luis also reported on issues that have surfaced in the planning for an Anglican Ordinariate. Luis is also assisting the local Ethiopian community, which is trying to establish worship space and a community centre.

4. **Study and discussion** of two documents describing Mennonite involvement in ecumenical dialogues: “The Historic Peace Church (Mennonite) in Bilateral Dialogue” (Chap. 5 of *The Peace Church and the Ecumenical Community: Ecclesiology and the Ethics of Nonviolence* by Fernando Enns, and “Sixty Years of Ecumenical Conversations: Mennonite Experiences, Perspectives, Guiding Principles,” by Helmut Harder and Larry Miller (forthcoming publication).

**Helmut** provided a presentation based on the second document. He proceeded by distributing a “Selected Bibliography: Reflecting Mennonites’ Ecumenical Influence and Initiatives,” and then offering a “show and tell” of the books listed (in more or less chronological order), highlighting and speaking about the most important individuals and published works.

**Dora** made the following presentation on Mennonite dialogue with Baptists based on “The Historic Peace Church (Mennonite) in Bilateral Dialogue”:

Of the bilateral dialogues that took place, the Baptist-Mennonite one seems to represent perhaps the shortest bridge to cross. As Harder and Miller note, the relationship between Baptists and Mennonites was “not marked by bitterness.” In fact, the two groups share roots historically, and both belong to the Believer’s Church tradition, practicing believers rather than infant baptism. Both understand church as a voluntary community of believers clearly separated from the state. Both are non-creedal.

There are differences though, as Enns’ analysis of the discussions held between 1989–1992 show. The two had discontinued theological discussions in 1630; each went its own way. Now, as they identified their important values, “community, discipleship, and global church” emerged on the Mennonite side, and “religious liberty, freedom of conscience, and believers’ baptism” emerged on the other. The MWC listing revealed moving from outward from the aspect of community. On the Baptist side, freedom of the individual was the starting place.

Baptists generally support the doctrine of just war, whereas Mennonites hold to peace and non-violence as fundamental aspects of what it means to be the church. Mennonites give priority to orthopraxis (“right practice as faithful discipleship”), Baptists to orthodoxy (“right belief as related to Scripture and confessions of faith”).

Baptists and Mennonites have *sola scriptura* in common with other churches of the Protestant tradition. But this doesn’t imply unified interpretation. The understanding of priesthood of all believers, common to both, is radically applied in the Mennonite tradition. It “relativizes the authority of every office.” Church discipline, so strongly practiced in the 16th and 17th centuries, has given way, however, to a stronger emphasis on discipleship.

Baptists, according to this report of the dialogue, interpret the death of Christ primarily as “vicarious substitutionary atonement for sin,” while Mennonites see a “demonstration” of the suffering love of God. Baptists are concerned about soul freedom and individual accountability before God; Mennonites about accountability to God through community. Mission is understood more strongly within Baptist identity as proclamation and evangelization, and with Mennonite identity as loving service.

Enns notes that the current form of the groups served as the point of reference. The disadvantage lies in generalizing on the basis of viewpoints of the dialogue participants. That would probably be the disadvantage of my commenting as well. I can note, however, that Mennonite Brethren had a fairly significant interaction with Baptist thought in the years of their founding, beginning in 1860. Baptism by immersion was one distinctive practice taken from the Baptists. According to GAMEO, there have been other Mennonite-Baptist interactions over the years as well. Baptists have apparently not always been sure whether they are historically more Anabaptist or Protestant.

In the present church culture, it seems to me that no matter what the origins broadly, there is

a great deal of informal shifting, a kind of ecumenism if you will, as we all borrow and read and think across the range, congregationally too. So from that perspective, maybe Mennonites are becoming more like the Baptists in living out of the personal/individual freedom paradigm, even as we continue to believe community identity as our foremost value.

In the discussion following Dora's presentation, **Richard** raised the example of the anecdote about events in a Mennonite community in southern Manitoba portrayed in the play, "The Shunning," which seemed to place orthodoxy above orthopraxis. **Michelle** wondered if a Baptist would say that right belief is enough. The reply was no, it is a question of identifying the emphasis. **Helmut** thought that what Enns implies is that when push comes to shove, Mennonites look at behaviour, while Baptists look at belief (about the atonement). **Victor** suggested that these are general statements, with lots of exceptions. At the moment, for example, Evangelical Mennonites are in the midst of a big discussion about the atonement. **Ron** agreed with the existence of variance. **Luis** observed the existence within the World Council of Churches of three wings with respect to mission. Again, it is a matter of emphasis. If you start with the individual, you will have a lot of variety. **Helmut** cited examples of how Baptist mentality is more fixed on the matter: they don't discuss the atonement. The Mennonite Brethren will discuss it. It is the same with respect to immersion baptism, even with respect to "born again" language. There has also been variation over time. Mennonite Brethren have shifted away from immersion. **Donna** suggested there are different branches of the Baptists. Enns was looking at the Baptist World Alliance (that does not include the American Southern Baptists). Many Baptists would have no interest in ecumenical discussion. **Luis** observed that this begs the question about the purpose of such alliances (without jurisdiction or authority).

**Paul** provided a presentation on **Mennonite-Catholic dialogue** based on "The Historic Peace Church (Mennonite) in Bilateral Dialogue" (pp. 218–220). The first official Catholic-Mennonite conversation took place in 1998, at the instigation of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. There was a memory of early Catholic persecution of Mennonites in the sixteenth century. Reference: Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*. The first Anabaptists were seen as subversive, threatening stability of society. They were seen as a semi-Pelagian sect, denying mediating grace through the sacraments. There was a history of 400-500 years of animosity. Paul had been taught that Catholics needed to be evangelized, and he has a brother who went to Italy for that purpose. The result of the official dialogue (1998–2003), was a great document, "Called Together to be Peacemakers." Its Table of Contents is significant. The structure of the study is interesting, looking at respective perspectives, and calling for future study. Then there is a section on considering theology together – with a focus on particular topics – the nature of church, sacraments, and commitments to peace. In each case convergences and divergences are named, with indications for future study. Third part of the document "towards a healing of memories" is different, with no areas of future study. One finds a wistful tone here. But it is not clear where it's going to go. Enns identifies evidence of grave differences – different evaluations of dogma and tradition, ecclesiology, and understanding of sacraments. He notes the difficulty of

conversation between a “top-down” church and a “bottom-up” organization. Paul wondered about the last sentence in a paragraph on p. 219: “The dialogue will be fruitful if its goal, which is to seek understanding and reconciliation, is pursued in a spirit of mutual respect.” His remaining question related to the nature of the enterprise which we call dialogue? He thought we must ask whether or not it’s western optimism at work here? Referring to the position of John Milbank, who talks about the ends of dialogue, the question arises of imposing something in an imperialist way. All this raises the question of authority – who has what authority? This is a tough one for Mennonites.

**Discussion:** **Donna** found this issue fascinating. **Dora** suggested that dialogue still beats burning at the stake. **Richard** referred to Leonard Swidler, who has spent decades in dialogues with other Christians, Jews, and Muslims: he argues that if we are to live together peacefully in the modern world, we have no choice but to dialogue to understand each other better. **Luis** argued that the issue is at the heart of what it means to be in God, in relationship with God. Dialogue is one means to an end – to prayer for unity. We seek a common experience of God and discipleship in Jesus Christ. We can’t put all our eggs in the basket of dialogue, if we do, we will fail. The goal is mutual conversion to the gospel – to a common witness. Ecumenical dialogue is not a debating society. **Paul** called attention to the impressive conclusion of “Called Together to be Peacemakers” which speaks of a spirit of repentance as part of the relationship. The document sees repentance and conversion as very important. It is a matter of trying to bring the right kind of tension to the table, developing friendships, and saying the truth in charity. **Luis** spoke about the Chemin Neuf monastery, Les Dombes, where the goal is the conversion of the churches. All of our churches must be converted to the gospel. If we don’t want to change, we shouldn’t be in dialogue. **Helmut** reflected on the case for the use of words, what is supposed to happen (especially with respect to the past). We once called the other “cursed” – if we are both confessing one Lord, we should be able to call each other “blessed.” **Paul** wondered about the terminology that is evoked by the language of dialogue. Historically, there had been a series of disputations (e.g., Zurich, 1525). **Helmut** observed that the methodology used in the five-year Catholic-Mennonite had been one of seeking convergences and divergences. In contrast, John Howard Yoder thought we should ask: what are the texts that really matter to us, check out our respective interpretations, and then go forward. **Victor** asked if this suggestion had ever been followed through? **Helmut** indicated it had not, because this would be more difficult. One would first have to choose the texts. **Luis** noted the ties with scriptural reasoning. He has been involved in Jewish-Catholic dialogue, where a whole year was spent on the sacrifice of Isaac. The Logos is the word of God in our lives, which is more than scripture. All this is interconnected. The first purpose, getting to know the other, is relatively easy and important after 450 years of no contact. Ecumenism has to develop in stages. **Helmut** wondered about discussion of the expulsion of Agar and Ishmael. **Nancy** picked up on the seventh principle in the article by Helmut and Larry Miller’s article: that interchurch dialogue leads to radical catholicity. This principle appeared to her very relevant to what had just been discussed.

**Victor’s presentation was on Mennonite dialogue with the Reformed Church** (based on pp. 198–207 of the text by Enns: “The Historic Peace Church (Mennonite) in Bilateral

Dialogue.” He spoke to an outline that he distributed (as follows, somewhat edited by RAL).

## 1. Introduction

- I grew up in Winnipeg, city of immigrants, went to school with Dutch-Canadian children, even had a first summer job with Dutch market gardeners, but with no church or other ties (“separate worlds”)
- Six years ago, when I was pastor at the Elmwood MB Church, I was invited to speak at an ARCIA (Association of Reformed Churches in America) banquet – I found out that the (Christian) Reformed Church first came to Winnipeg in 1908 (the first Mennonite congregation was started in North End Winnipeg in 1906); in 1953 the Mennonites sold the church to the Christian Reformed Church – but not much other contact
- In Leamington ON there was an active interdenominational ministerial association – very positive interactions on personal and church levels – changed atmosphere since World War Two
- My brother’s recent D.Min. program at Western Theological Seminary in Holland MI – good dialogue, especially on his study topic of “covenant” (much stronger emphasis in Reformed Church)

## 2. “Mennonite-Reformed Dialogue” (F. Enns, *The Peace Church and the Ecumenical Community*, v.2)

### **Context:**

- “Numerous official encounters between the Reformed and the Mennonites” (1)
- First meeting in Strasburg, 1984 between representatives of World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Mennonite World Conference
- Awareness of “wide-ranging convergences” (1): similar Reformation origins, *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, holy living, Christian community for support and discipline (rather than sacramentalism and ritual)
- Also awareness of divergent convictions within each denomination and changes from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present (within the churches and in the larger world)
- Conclusion: old rigid boundaries and hostilities no longer apply (3)
- Present question: how to be the Church in a secularized environment?

### **Themes:**

- Church as sacrament (Reformed Church) – church as community of believers (Mennonite Church.)
- *Corpus christianum* (Reformed Church) – church as voluntary community (Mennonite Church)
- Scripture: OT and NT equally God's Word (Reformed Church.) – promise/fulfillment (Mennonite Church)
- Infant baptism (Reformed Church) – believers’ baptism (Mennonite Church)
- God’s grace (Reformed Church) – discipleship and Rule of Christ, Mt. 18 (Mennonite Church)
- Peace stance: for Mennonites “non-violence is a central ... axiom” (7, 8)
- Society (the “world”): Christians should aim for social justice for all (Reformed

Church) – Christians should not compromise with the “world,” Church as “alternative community” (Mennonite Church)

**Questions:**

- All of the themes are ideal positions: the practice may be quite different!
- Reformed Church presently aware of need to work at the integrity of the church – Mennonite Church aware of the need to be more involved in society – both see Christian identity as “dual citizenship” in both the Church and in secular society (8, §2)
- Is the significance of peace in the Mennonite Church analogous to grace in the Reformed Church? (8, §5)
- What is the relationship between Church as sacrament and community? (8, §6)
- Implication of a “trinitarian-based ecclesiology” for an understanding of Church? (8, §6)
- What is the significance for the Church of the changed social context from 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present? “Christian faith functions as a transformer of the dominant culture.” – True? (9, §1)
- Approach to biblical exegesis and the issue of the election of God's people (Israel or Christian community): significance of OT social ethics (9, §1); implications for Zionism?

**Discussion:** **Dora** wondered about the implications of a “trinitarian-based ecclesiology.” **Victor** said he was not sure what Enns is saying here. **Ron** suggested it related to one’s approach to biblical exegesis – etc. (last question). **Victor** said this takes you back to how you interpret scripture – do you use OT foundations or NT foundations? **Ron** notes where this come up in Enns – e.g., Zionism – the Jews as chosen people of God. **Luis** suggested this goes back to an early Christian difficulty. Marcion wanted to throw out most of OT. How do we deal with this? In work with Jewish community, it is clear that we (Catholics) are not talking about supersessionism. They continue to be the chosen people. Most Christians look at OT through light of Christ. Jews look at it from Talmud. Catholics read OT though lenses of Christ. **Ron** observed that if OT and NT on par, in discussion of the issue war, many Mennonite churches don’t even apply Christ’s teaching to OT on war. **Luis** thought it depends on the topic. **Richard** said he was surprised to read in the documents under discussion that Mennonites have difficulty considering the Church as sacrament, while Catholics are easy with this idea. **Helmut** indicated that some Mennonites push theologically for this idea of the church as mediator, but not in same strong sense in which Catholics say this. As the congregation discerns truth and its application we are speaking and expressing the mind of Christ, on behalf of Christ. This is different from the structural emphasis that characterizes the Catholic approach. **Ron** asked, what do Catholics mean by saying Church is a sacrament? **Donna** spoke of being Church to each other. **Luis** then went into a rather long explanation of Catholic thinking on this issue. God, invisible, becomes visible in Christ. Logos becomes flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus existed historically, through his Spirit, people have contact with this reality for all times. The result is that the Body of Christ is both a visible and an invisible reality. We recognize that the visible has limits. The reality is that through sin that the community prevents the sign value of visibility. A sacrament is a sign

pointing to something that we cannot see. We are given authority to do and say things in the name of God. **Luis** drew salvation history as a circle. Logos takes flesh in Jesus. Creation is not enough, it returns to God through Jesus – the Church becomes the New Creation; it is through the Spirit that this happens (Scripture and the sacraments), bringing all creation back to God through Jesus Christ. **Ron** said he wouldn't argue much with this notion of Church as sacrament. Rather action; the disagreement is with the action we take to become part of the Church. **Luis** said that Catholics wouldn't be as demanding with respect to initiation, to baptism. The Body of Christ must be fed with word and sacraments of healing. All this is highly symbolic. Sacrament is mystery, but we can understand something. Thus he is nervous about congregationalism (even such movements within the Catholic Church). He referenced John 16, where Jesus says He will send the Spirit. Does the Holy Spirit exist in the Church apart from each person? The Roman Catholic Church respects all that good and true in all religions. It sees the Holy Spirit there preparing the way for Christ. **Helmut** observed that here we touch on the implications of a "trinitarian-based ecclesiology." He also referred to two presentations that Enns made at CMU. Mennonites have fed people with a spirituality linked with Christ – on the idea you can walk with the disciples and move with the disciples through stages that they bound themselves to, as opposed to a different conceptual picture. **Luis** suggested that this means a much more radical Christianity; it means the community better be in touch with Jesus. It also puts lots of responsibility on the individual. The Catholic approach says it's more than the community, thus Catholics are more ritualistic in their piety. **Donna** said she has a friend who has trouble with liturgy. Anabaptist prepared prayers (as opposed to spontaneous prayer) make him uncomfortable. What is involved here is not just style of community.

**Donna** was to make a presentation on **Mennonite dialogue with the Lutheran Church** (to be based on "The Historic Peace Church (Mennonite) in Bilateral Dialogue" by Enns (pp. 207–217). After reporting that Ron had agreed to make this presentation, she indicated that for her as a counsellor, dialogue is not just about words, and that the key is the relationship, that meeting as human beings is critical. **Ron** began by stating that he thought dialogue has lot of merit, because we see each other as fellow believers. There are many similarities with other mainline churches, but that Anabaptists come with a unique perspective and practice. With Lutherans, the dialogue began with the grass-roots; people wanted to address this issue, recalling that the *Confessio Augustana* (Augsburg Confession) had included a condemnation of Anabaptists. Lutheran-Mennonite conversations began in France and Germany, where local Lutheran churches wanted to get together and reconcile with local Mennonites, and develop fraternal relations. The problem was that Anabaptists are congregational, while the Lutherans have a hierarchical church structure. So who would speak for the Mennonites? As the talks unfolded, they agreed to talk about three areas – the historical record, theological convergences and divergences, and co-existence today. These conversations climaxed this past summer, when they proclaimed their reconciliation. As the dialogue went forward, there were many points of agreement: opposition to the Catholic Church, *sola scriptura*, Christology – with the life, death and resurrection of Christ fundamental, and that faith and works belong together. There is a difference of emphasis given to orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Theologically, they looked at the nature of the church, described as the community of



believers where the word is proclaimed and sacraments rightly performed. Lutherans emphasize preaching the words and the sacraments. Mennonites put more emphasis on living out the Word in daily life. Who belongs to the Body of Christ? Mennonites stress the purity of the Church. Lutherans are more comfortable understanding the church as a mixed body of the sinners and saved. Lutherans do not see cooperation with the state as a problem. For Mennonites that is often seen as an unholy alliance. Thus there are distinct differences. With respect to Baptism – infant Baptism vs believers’ Baptism. The church provides context for faith of child to develop. It’s a question of what gets the emphasis – the Church or the individual? With respect to the Lord’s Supper, Lutherans speak of consubstantiation, with Christ somehow present in the elements. The traditional Mennonite understanding is of a symbolic presence. But as Enns observes, Mennonites appear to be moving to something beyond symbol. On peace and non-violence, both agree that the Body of Christ a peaceful body, but have different ways of working this out in society. Church-state cooperation has not been the Mennonite way. Lutherans may participate in the state and war (as obedient citizens). Mennonites, on the other hand, have moved away from two kingdom idea. Oaths – no for Mennonites, yes for Lutherans. **Ron** concluded that there are many convergences, but it depends on where the emphases lie.

**Discussion.** **Helmut** observed that things have happened since Enns wrote, and it is the same with Catholic dialogue. Enns did not imply that Mennonites will not cooperate at all with the state. **Victor** said Mennonites do not disobey the government, but on the other hand, it is a question of following your conscience. **Donna** wondered about the statement in Enns (p. 214) to the effect that at least some Lutherans do not interpret infant baptism as the only valid form. **Victor** pointed out in the last 30 some years, child dedication has become so significant in the Mennonite Church that that parents may not make clear distinctions. **Ron** said he was more comfortable emphasizing parent dedication. **Donna** said that her mother saw the “child dedication” of her children as equivalent to being “baptized.” **Victor** told the story on an old Mennonite pastor who did baptize an infant – for the sake of the parents. **Helmut** observed that in many Mennonite communities, people who have been baptized as infants are not required to be baptized as adults. But in his congregation he sees child dedication treated much more casually than baptism.

##### 5. **Group Exercise involving all members of the dialogue:**

– With reference to paragraph 15 of “Called Together To be Peacemakers,” the idea was to “take the pulse” to determine the extent to which our dialogue group thinks the goals of the Mennonite-Catholic dialogue have been advanced and are being achieved. These goals were: to learn to know each other better, to promote better understanding of our positions on the Christian faith, and to contribute to overcoming the historic prejudices that have long existed between us.

Working with a chart on the overhead, each participant was asked to rate accomplishments (on a scale of 1 to 10) in the following areas: PURIFICATION OF MEMORIES (Appreciating each other’s past), SHARING THE FAITH (Discovering a

common theology), SEEKING FORGIVENESS (Willing to forgive and move on), and FOSTERING NEW RELATIONSHIPS (Relating constructively)

This was done, with most trying to rate by numbers, as requested. When **Helmut** analyzed the results, he said it seems that we were all over the map, but mostly between 5 and 10. The problem of ecumenical reception was clearly identified. The results of structured dialogue are not as wide-spread as we may have hoped, and the importance of continuing local and regional dialogue indicated. This is important here in Winnipeg, where we are neighbours. In the context of spreading the dialogue, he read to us an “open letter” from Melanie Kampen, a CMU student. Her letter described her reaction to reading “Called Together to be Peacemakers,” and her wish to become involved in activities of this kind, which she thought important for keeping young people interested and involved in the church.

This letter raised the question of a role for young people in our dialogue since this student sees involvement in dialogue as a key to keeping young people in church. Does give us impetus for broadening the dialogue? Perhaps it might take the form of organizing new Mennonite-Catholic dialogue groups to look at “Call Together to be Peacemakers.” **Victor** said he understood her as not wanting a youth dialogue, but as wanting to be involved in the general dialogue. **Nancy** saw room for both. **Luis** reported that there is a network of young adult and youth ministers that meets monthly in the city. Perhaps this is something we could offer them. **Helmut** thought they might like to be involved in what we do. **Donna** observed that when she was involved in our congregation to congregation dialogue, people asked how to become involved. Perhaps we should do it again, getting young people involved as well. But how? **Helmut** noted a fly in the ointment – Mennonites would be upset if it was only dialogue with Catholics. **Luis** saw interesting themes raised in the letter. **Victor** asked if our group was a closed group? **Richard** said that early on we had agreed that about a dozen participants was the most practical number. **Helmut** said he would write to this student and ask for her ideas. **Nancy** wondered if this student would be interested in the ecumenical student community being created by Chemin Neuf.

6. **Date and for next meeting.** After some discussion, there appeared to be agreement on the 26th, 27th, or 28th September. Helmut and Luis will work on an Agenda and provide feedback. **Ron** offered to host the dialogue at his church.