

Canadian Mennonite Bible College

The Move from the Wellington Campus to Grant & Shaftesbury

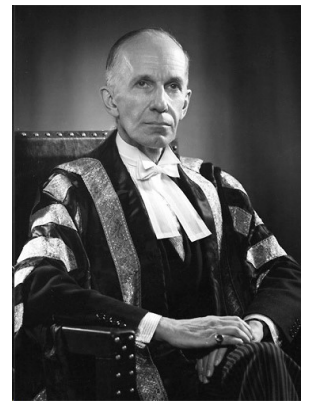
The year was 1956.

1956
Canada



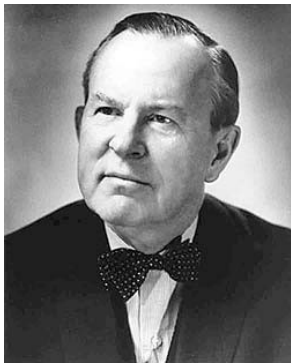
The head of state was
Queen Elizabeth II;

Canada's Governor General
was Vincent Massey;



And the Prime Minister at the time was
Louis Saint Laurent, Canada's 12th prime minister.
On May 8 of that year the controversial bill to create the
TransCanada pipeline was introduced in the House of
Commons. The bill caused an uproar after the government
invoked closure – a time limit on debate – for the first time in history.

1956 was not untouched by disaster. In May a CF-100 crashed into a Grey Nuns convent outside of Ottawa, killing fifteen nuns. In November the second Springhill Mining Disaster occurred, killing 39. Then a month later Trans-Canada Air Lines Flight 810 crashed on a mountain near Chilliwack in heavy weather. The plane was carrying the Saskatchewan Roughriders, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, and fans – 62 people in all – on their way home from a game in Vancouver. Bodies were not found until the following late summer due to severe terrain, high altitude, and the unknown location of the crash. This was one of the worst civilian air disasters in the world at the time. (Photo credit: Wikipedia User Jonhall, used in the article, “Trans-Canada Air Lines Flight 810”)

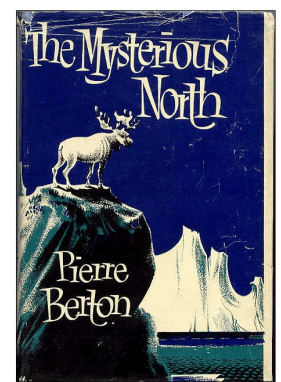


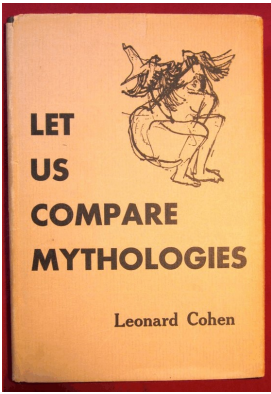
On the peace front Canadian scholar, statesman, soldier and diplomat Lester B. Pearson proposed a successful resolution to the Suez Canal crisis. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent had appointed Pearson Secretary of State for External Affairs in 1948. Pearson organized the United Nations Emergency Force to resolve the crisis. For this he won the Nobel Peace Prize (right). He would go on to become Canada’s 14th prime minister.



As the year was drawing to a close John G. Diefenbaker was elected leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. The following year he became Canada’s 13th prime minister.

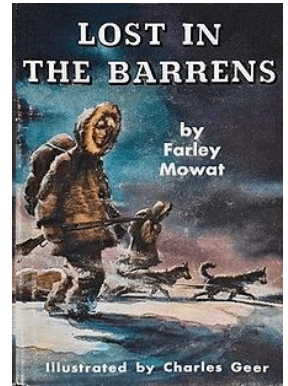
1956 was the year that Pierre Berton published *The Mysterious North*;





Leonard Cohen published
Let Us Compare Mythologies;

and Farley Mowat,
Lost in the Barrens;



1956 Statistics	
New house	\$11,700
Monthly Rent	\$88
Yearly wage	\$4,450
Gallon of gas	22c
New car	\$2,050
Ground coffee	85c/lb
Population: Canada	16,081,000

1956 yielded statistics much like any other year: The ...

- average cost of a new house was \$11,700.
- the average monthly rent was \$88;
- an average yearly wage was \$4,450;
- the cost of a gallon of gas was 22 cents;
- the average cost of a new car was \$2,050;
- and ground coffee was 85 cents per pound.
- Canada's population stood at 16,081,000; by 2013 it had more than doubled (35.16 million)

One statistic that Statistics Canada did not record was the cost of CMBC's tuition and room and board in 1956 and in 1966. Tuition more than doubled in a decade!

CMBC Annual Costs		
	1956	1966
Tuition fees	\$105	\$300
Room and Board	409	450
Total costs (est)	560	850

CMBC Incidental Costs		
	1956	1966
Health Service	\$6.00	\$6.50
Breakage fee		15.00
Telephone		
Single students		4.00
Married students		6.75

There were, of course, incidental costs. Apparently the 1966 students broke more things than the 1956 students; and married students used the phone more than did single students.

And then there are the current costs.

CMBC Costs, 2016	
Full Board	\$4,098
Text books & equipment	900
Tuition	
Canadian students	5,824
Foreign students	7,862
Total costs	
Canadian students	13,000
Foreign students	15,000

1956 Manitoba

The population of Manitoba was 850,040 in 1956; in April of 2016 it stood over 1.3 million. 1956 was also the year the federal government relocated 250 members of Dene far away from the caribou – about 200 kilometres east, near Hudson Bay,

on barren arctic tundra, near the Churchill cemetery. The government promised them housing and jobs. Neither materialized. Instead, the stunned community built makeshift shacks with remnants they found from the nearby town dump which was also their source of food. They had no heat or electricity. Of the 250 people who were forced to relocate, 117 died as a result, most of them within 15 years, most of them violently. Only now, sixty years later, has our government acknowledged the wrongs committed in August, 1956. (Photo credit: CBC News article, “Manitoba’s Sayisi Dene: Forced relocation, racism, survival,” by Kelly Malone, August 16, 2016)



CMBC was a national school, which at that time meant a student body drawn from British Columbia-to-Ontario. The premiers of those provinces in 1956 were as follows:

- Manitoba: Douglas Campbell
- Saskatchewan: Tommy Douglas, who in June of that year won a fourth consecutive majority
- Alberta: Ernest Manning
- British Columbia: W.A.C. Bennett
- Ontario: Leslie Frost

1947-56 CMBC

Less than a decade earlier developments were afoot concerning a new Mennonite college. Discussions about the need and feasibility of an advanced-level Bible College for Canadian Mennonites had occupied the Conference of Mennonites in Canada from the late 1930s. In 1941 concrete plans were underway; however, staff could not be found, even for a single theology course to be taught at the Rosthern, SK Academy.

Finally, in October of 1947 a Bible College was opened and dedicated, established in Winnipeg in the basement rooms of the Bethel Mission Church on Furby Street. It had a three-year curriculum patterned after the Bible Department of Bethel College in Kansas. Its first president was Arnold Regier, an American Mennonite from Kansas. Four Canadians were hired to complete the faculty. [Photo credit: *Canadian Mennonite*]



A large group of people standing in front of Bethel Mission Church on the occasion of the official opening of CMBC.

The school grew rapidly and exceeded the capacity of the church within a few years. The college moved to 515 Wellington Crescent – the former Smith mansion – located on the banks of the Assiniboine River, and the college began the 1949-50 season with a staff of nine instructors and a student enrollment of 74.



Classes were conducted in this house until 1955, except for a brief period during the 1950 flood when the school relocated to Altona, Manitoba.

The front doors of CMBC's Wellington home.



A group of CMBC students and faculty standing by a bus in front of the school.



CMBC boasted a community choir; here the 48-member choir poses for a photo in the Wellington building. Conductor John Konrad is seated in the middle of the second row. Henry H. Neufeld is seated in the front row, far right.



Faculty member Henry Wall reading in the Wellington campus library.

A Wellington campus Bible study. The six young men – from left-to-right – are Henry Neufeld, Jake Deck (Dyck?), Aaron Klassen, John Friesen, Jake Fransen, and Henry Dueck.



1956 Tuxedo

In 1956 CMBC again relocated, this time to Tuxedo. Lawrence Klippenstein recalls: “...that (Heinrich Wall) had located a piece of land suitable ... for CMBC. Wall reported that a piece of land of 18 acres had been located in what became Assiniboine Forest ... and that it been decided to buy that tract for \$1,000 an acre!!!! A number of people were aghast that Mr.Wall would have had the daring to acquire such an expensive piece of land! ... In retrospect it was, of course, a fantastic buy and bargain!”

What was in Tuxedo? Not much. There was the Provincial Normal School campus across from the site chosen for CMBC, which much later would become CMU — Canadian Mennonite University.



A closer view of the Normal School.

The Normal School campus included dormitory houses.



An aerial view of the Normal School campus.

In 1956 the Mennonite Men, the official men's organization of the General Conference Mennonite Church, met at the Normal School for their banquet. There were 400 men in attendance.



Construction

Construction of the CMBC Shaftesbury campus began.

A crane and piles of lumber ready to go!



Stacks of boards waiting for construction to begin. The Normal School is in the background.

Beginning the foundation.



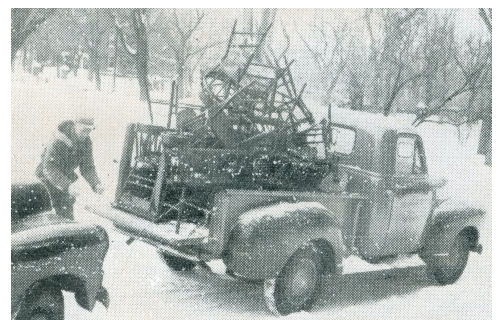
Foundation, walls & supports, with the Normal School in the background.

Supports and walls.

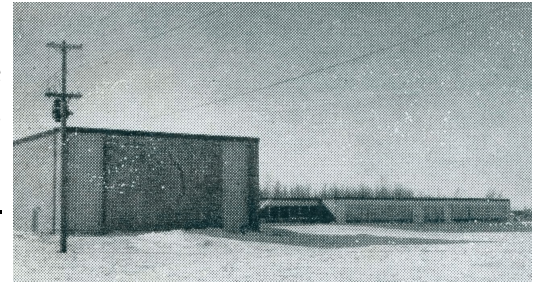


The building, nearly completed but not yet painted.

Finally ... the move itself – CMBC's third move in less than ten years.



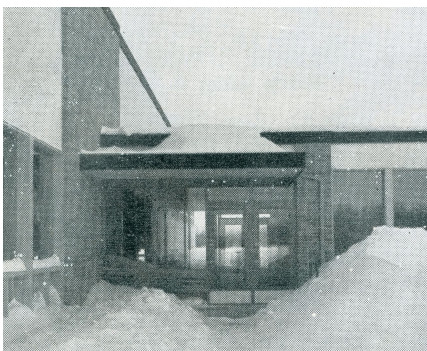
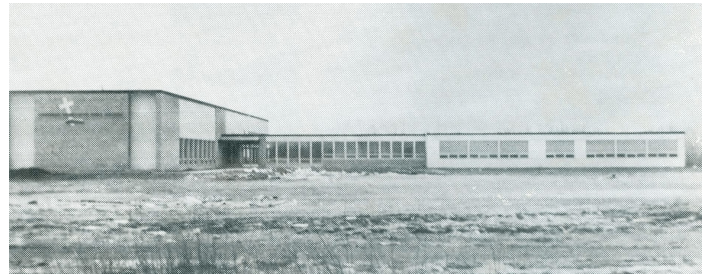
On January 8, 1956, the new classroom-administration building was dedicated to the service of God. The national character of the college was symbolized in the dedication service through the participation of board representatives from each province. The first choir song in the new chapel — “Wie heilig is dies Staette” — reflected the general feeling about the new campus.



Student President Dietrich Gerbrandt wrote, “In the final analysis, it is not the real estate, nor the architecture of the building that determines the value of a Bible College, but rather the quality of the students ... Our transference to a new building and environment simultaneously brings with it new demands and challenges.” (“Scroll,” Feb., 1956)

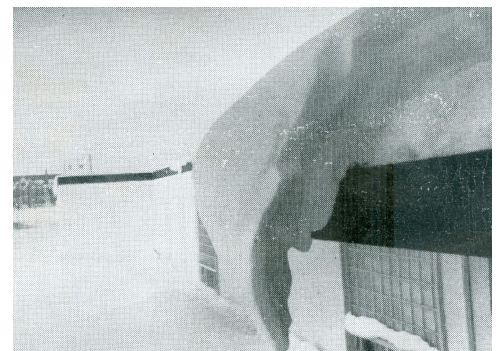
The student newspaper, “The Scroll,” cited some reactions to the new campus; for example:

- “We don’t actually need a new College . . .”
- “Why should we have two Colleges in one city?”
- “Too few students are coming back to help in our own churches.”
- And a more positive comment: “I like the way the students come back and indirectly influence our people to higher and better ways....”



The new campus featured snow ...

... and more snow ...



But ... it had lots of parking,

... and new classrooms!





1956

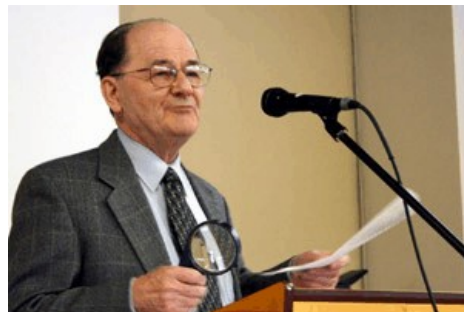
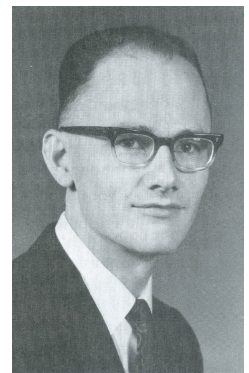
A new facility,
a new logo.

The CMBC board – a holy board,
since it was comprised entirely
of reverends!



The faculty ...

... which included Waldemar Janzen, who began his
career at CMBC that very year! Waldemar THEN ...



... and Waldemar
more recently.

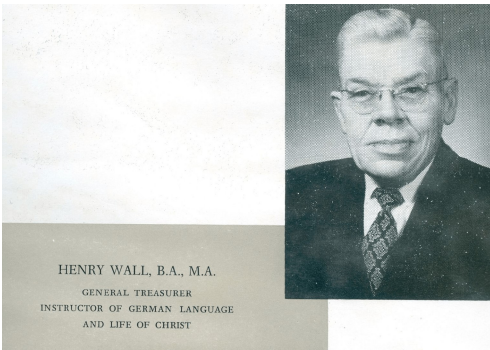


The President was I.I. Friesen

Other faculty included Gerhard Lohrenz;



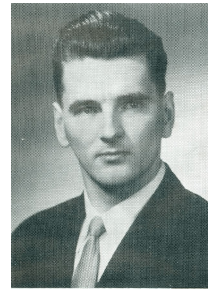
GERHARD LOHRENZ, B.A.
INSTRUCTOR IN PSYCHOLOGY
HISTORY
AND CHRISTIAN HERITAGE



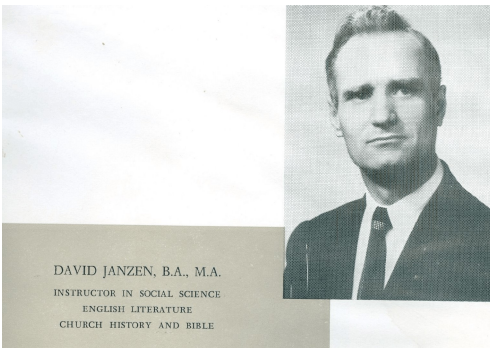
Henry Wall;

HENRY WALL, B.A., M.A.
GENERAL TREASURER
INSTRUCTOR OF GERMAN LANGUAGE
AND LIFE OF CHRIST

George Wiebe;



GEORGE D. WIEBE, B.Ch. Ed., A.M.M.
MUSIC AND VOICE INSTRUCTOR
CHOIR DIRECTOR



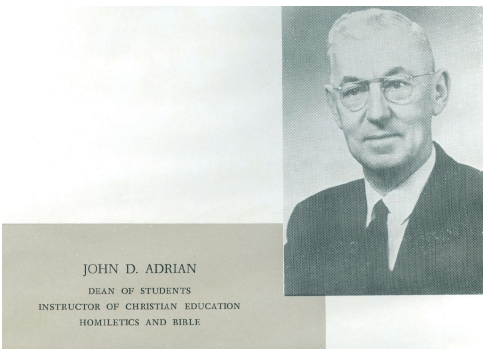
David Janzen;

DAVID JANZEN, B.A., M.A.
INSTRUCTOR IN SOCIAL SCIENCE
ENGLISH LITERATURE
CHURCH HISTORY AND BIBLE

Esther Wiebe;



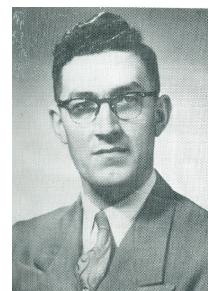
MRS. ESTHER A. WIEBE, A.R.T.C.,
A.M.M.
INSTRUCTOR IN PIANO, VIOLIN AND
MUSIC THEORY



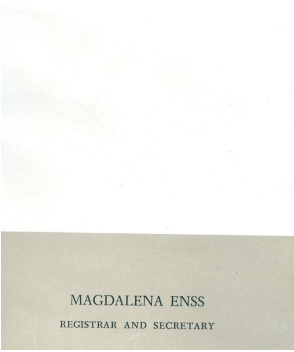
John Adrian;

JOHN D. ADRIAN
DEAN OF STUDENTS
INSTRUCTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
HOMILETICS AND BIBLE

Henry Poettcker, later to become the President of CMBC;



HENRY POETTCKER, B.A., B.D.
INSTRUCTOR OF BIBLE
MISSIONS
AND APOLOGETICS



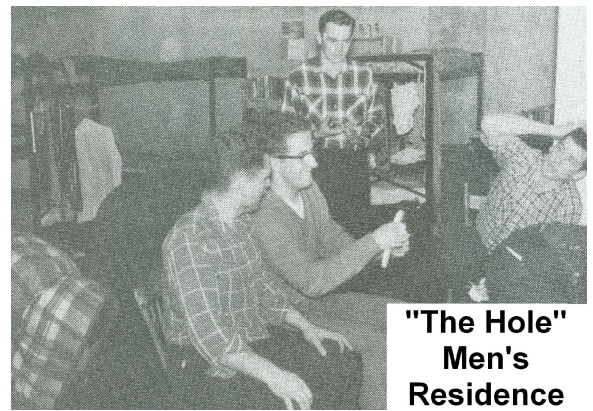
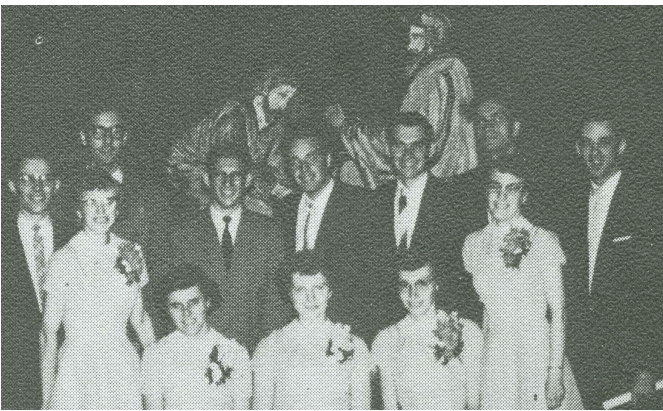
MAGDALENA ENSS
REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY

and Magdalena Enns;

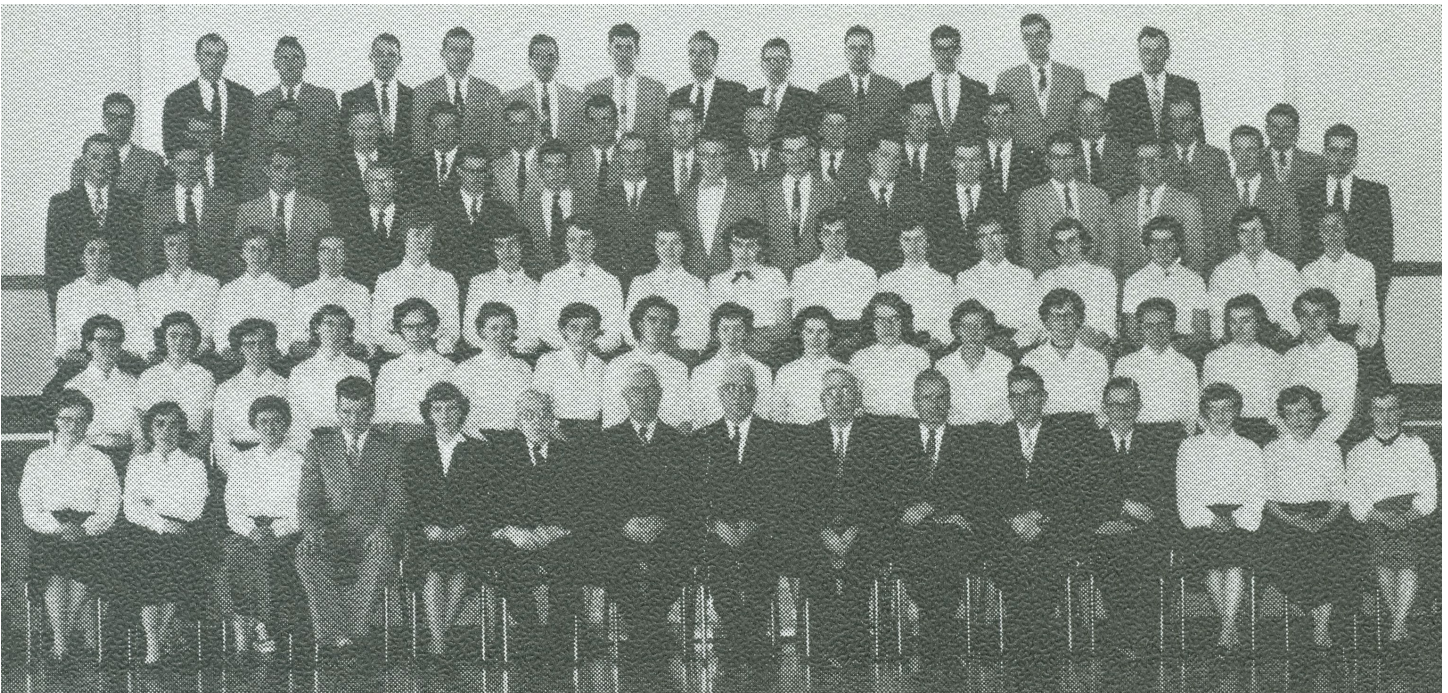
The cook was
Helen Dyck Hildebrand



Some campus life photographs, with various campus groups.



**"The Hole"
Men's
Residence**





A 1956 yearbook photograph,
with the caption,
“Don’t fall, Mr. Wiebe!”

The Graduates



**Dave
Braun**



**Diedrich
Neufeld**



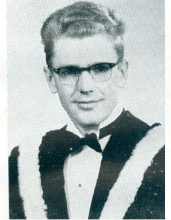
**Cornelia
Lehn**



**John H.
Neufeld**



**Bernice
Regier**



**Bernard
Retzlaff**



**Diedrich
Gerbrandt**



**Katie
Kehler**



**Mary
Rempel**



**Dick
Rempel**



**Margaret
Voght**



The Oratorio Choir on the steps of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Mennonite church while on a tour to churches in Ontario. George Wiebe says that these singers were selected – by ability and availability – from the roughly 80-member CMBC student body that year. Among other selections they sang Part I of Mendelssohn’s St. Paul oratorio.



Mary Rempel, one of the 1956 graduates, wrote, “On the whole, CMBC is working as a powerful and positive influence within the General Conference. As specialized training in almost every field becomes more and more a necessity, so CMBC will become more and more indispensable as an institution . . . “ (“Scroll” Oct. 1956)

The creation of Canadian Mennonite University is a fulfilment of her dream. (2016 Graduates pictured)



C R E D I T S

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Photographs: Mennonite Archival Database, including collections from:
• Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg;
• Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg; and,
• Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Waterloo

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