

**Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies  
Fresno, California**

**General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches  
Board of Christian Literature  
An Inventory of Records**

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Creator: Mennonite Brethren Church. General Conference. Board of Christian Literature  
Title: Records of the Board of Christian Literature  
Inclusive dates: 1963-1990  
Quantity: 2.2 linear ft.  
Record Group No.: A240

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Board of Christian Literature was organized at the 1966 General Conference in Corn, Oklahoma to “promote and coordinate the production and distribution of Christian literature.” The Board served as the publishing agency for the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, producing books, periodicals and Christian education material. In 1984 the board adopted the name “Kindred Press” as the imprint name for all books published under its authority. That name was later changed to “Kindred Productions.” Records of Kindred Press/Productions may be found in Record Group A242.

To oversee the publication of books related to Mennonite Brethren Church history, a Historical Commission was established under the Board of Christian Literature in 1969. The Historical Commission remained a part of the board until 1984, when it became a subcommittee of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary Board of Directors. Records of the Historical Commission may be found in Record Group A245.

Prior to organization of the Board of Christian Literature in 1966, publishing concerns within the General Conference were handled by the Publications Committee, later known as the Board of Publications. Organized in 1884, this board was dissolved with the creation of the Board of Christian Literature. Very few records are known to have survived from the Board of Publications, other than those published in the General Conference Yearbooks. Those earlier records may be found in Record Group A241.

At the 1990 MB General Conference the Board of Christian Literature was dissolved. Its functions, along with those of the Board of Media Ministries and the Board of Christian Education, were taken over by the newly-established Board of Resource Ministries. The records of the Board of Resource Ministries may be found in Record Group A300.

**SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION**

This record group contains records of the Board of Christian Literature, both as an exploratory committee beginning in 1964 and a permanent board beginning in 1966 through 1990. These records include board minutes; files of Elmer A. Martens, who was a board member from 1966 to 1969 and chairman from 1969 to 1978; files of A. J. Klassen, who was a board member from 1966 to 1969, secretary from 1969 to 1975, and chairman from 1978 to 1981; other correspondence and subject files; and files relating to the Periodical Study Commission, an ad hoc committee established by the Board of Christian Literature.

**ORGANIZATION AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE COLLECTION**

This record group is arranged into five series: I. Minutes and reports of the board, 1964-1990. II. Files of Elmer A. Martens, 1964-1978. III. Files of A. J. Klassen, 1963-1980. IV. Other individual correspondence files,

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1978-1990. V. Other records, 1964-1981.

### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

#### Box 1

Series 1: Minutes and reports  
Board of Christian Literature, 1964-1990

Series 2: Elmer A. Martens files  
General correspondence, 1964-1968

#### Box 2

Series 2: Elmer A. Martens files (continued)  
General correspondence, 1968-1978  
Mennonite Brethren mission history project, 1972-1975  
*Bridge* magazine, 1970-1973  
Periodical Study Commission, 1974-1975

Series 3: A. J. Klassen files  
General correspondence, 1963-1980  
Bender, Urie A., 1969-1973  
Christian Writers Institute, 1967-1972  
Membership manual, 1966-1973  
Pamphlet series, 1971-1973  
Schellenberg, Katharina: biography, 1969-1971  
Trailblazer series, 1967-1973  
U.S. Mennonite Brethren centennial, 1973-1974  
*The Voice/Journal of Church & Society*, 1969-1970  
*With* magazine, 1967-1971  
*Worship Together/Rejoice!* magazine, 1965-1974  
Youth publication, 1969-1973

Series 4: Other correspondence files  
Martens, Phyllis, 1978-1983  
Hein, Marvin, 1989-1990

#### Box 3

Series 5: Other records  
MB Missions History Project, 1969-1976  
"The Church as Peace Witness:" evaluation, 1973  
Christian Writers Institute, 1968-1975  
Leaflets, undated  
News releases, 1964-1975  
Miscellaneous, 1966-1975  
*Worship Together/Rejoice!* magazine  
Minutes and reports, 1968-1981  
Evaluation, 1968  
Miscellaneous, undated  
*Bridge* magazine  
Minutes and reports, 1970-1972  
Correspondence, Phil Hofer, 1971-1974  
Survey, 1972

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Periodical Study Commission

Minutes and reports, 1974-1975

Correspondence, Loyal J. Martin, 1974-1975