



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Witness

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Mennonite Church Canada Ministry Highlights for 2008

STATEMENT OF IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

*God calls, equips and sends the church
to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.
We are a community of disciples of Jesus,
A part of the Body of Christ,
covenanted together
as congregations,
area churches*, and
a national church body.
Gratefully responding to God's initiatives
and empowered by the Holy Spirit,
we commit ourselves and our resources to
calling, equipping and sending the church
to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Our *Statement of Identity and Purpose* acknowledges that “God calls, equips and sends the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ” and that “we commit ourselves and our resources” to a common purpose. This purpose springs vividly to life through the partnership we share with congregations and Area Churches.

With each *Equipping*, we send Ministry Notes and Prayer Requests to each congregation, asking you to re-print these in your church bulletins. This is one way in which we seek your support through prayer and finances for various MC Canada ministries. We are grateful that you have shared your precious bulletin space with us this past year. The summary that follows is a collection of updated highlights from some of the ways that your prayers and awareness-building has been at work. We urge you share this information with your congregation via church newsletters, mailboxes, bulletin boards, email, and more.

1. MC Canada Learning Tours explored Korea and Cuba this year. Canadian participants connected with the church in local communities for reflection, fellowship and worship to gain a broader understanding of the challenges these countries face and how God is at work among them.
2. Invaluable ministry experience was provided through internships for seven Canadian Mennonite young people in three countries in 2008:
 - Christina & Darnell Barkman in the Philippines
 - Claire Bergen in South Africa
 - Leah Buermeyer in Thailand
 - Dorothea Toews, Rebecca Willms, and Scott Bergen in Paraguay through a MC Canada Witness short term young adult program in partnership with Radical Journey, a ministry of our partner Mennonite Mission Network.
3. In its second season, MC Canada's radio broadcast and podcast “Church Matters” produced another 12 episodes covering topics that concern God's message of healing and hope for the church and the world. Current and past episodes can be heard online at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/158 or on iTunes.

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11

4. Your support has enabled MC Canada to encourage a growing interest in Anabaptism that is sweeping through Latin America.
 - In Chile, MC Canada has joined with Mennonite Mission Network and Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile (UBACH) to create the Anabaptist Christian Resource Centre for Peace (CERCAPAZ).
 - In Cuba, MC Canada presents semi-annual leadership workshops and partners with the Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba which has recently resulted in the formation of a new Mennonite Church in Cuba – with the blessing of Evangelical Missionary Church of Cuba.
 - In Brazil, our partner JMMI (the Brazilian Mennonite Mission board) celebrated ten years of ministry which has grown to include mission in Albania, Mozambique, Brazil, and possibly England.
5. To foster respect and understanding among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, MC Canada Native Ministry developed *Reaching up to God our Creator*, a collection of resources highlighting the common ground between Aboriginal Sacred Teachings and the wisdom tradition of the Bible. Check out the curriculum at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/554
6. To learn how to inspire and facilitate the growth of church leadership, MC Canada held a Pastoral Trends Survey Colloquium in the spring. This discussion between pastors, area and national church ministers, representatives of Mennonite educational facilities and MC Canada staff was based upon a survey conducted in 2007 and led to a discernment session at the 2008 Assembly/Summit in July. For more information see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/833
7. For the third year, IMPaCT – International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together – brought international pastors and Mennonite Church Canada pastors together to build relationships and share perspectives about being the church in the world. This year seven international pastors from five countries met with eight Mennonite Church Eastern Canada pastors.
8. In response to a Mennonite World Conference's (MWC) request, MC Canada released Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider-Nighswander, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in South Africa, to serve as deacons of the MWC community during a tense political period in Zimbabwe. During a run-off election in June 2008, the Nighswanders offered pastoral support to church leaders, pastors and others under stress.
9. Upon the invitation of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC), Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, presented a paper on living the gospel of peace to the Annual Spring Meeting of the CCC. His commentary evoked thoughtful responses – and prompted another discussion on being a peace church during the CCC's fall meeting. Read the document at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/779
10. With the help of Hyo Sook Yun, a volunteer through Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP), Mennonite Church Canada launched 18+ video titles on YouTube this year, promoting the MC Canada ministries and Anabaptist values. (See www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca).
11. Each Sunday, MC Canada congregations worship in 13 different languages. With your support, MC Canada was able to continue developing resources in languages other than English – such as current project translating the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* into Laotian.
12. Working with your support through Mennonite Partners in China, Mennonite Church Canada Witness Workers in China, Todd and Jeanette Hanson and Phil and Julie Bender were able to assist in relief efforts after earthquakes in the Sichuan province.
13. The People's Summit for Faithful Living, a joint effort of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, inspired an examination of living as God's people in Winnipeg on July 8-10. A special curriculum for children, *Getting' on Track with God's People*, was developed for the coinciding Children's Assembly. Thank you for your support and attendance! For information on the Summit, see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/696

14. MC Canada Native Ministry Co-directors, Neill and Edith von Gunten travelled to Clinton, Oklahoma with 30 other Canadians this summer to participate in Native Assembly where they explored the theme, "Unity and Service, in the Name of Christ". Your support helped MC Canada Native Ministries co-sponsor this event with Native Mennonite Ministries (USA).
15. We are called to remember God's faithfulness and love, which we are then to share with others. With your support, the Mennonite Heritage Centre continued to offer material and personnel to catalogue and share the historic work and witness of God's people to today's generations.
16. In August, the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery celebrated its tenth anniversary as a fulltime exhibition space. We thank God for 10 good and growing years of ministering to people from many and no faith backgrounds!
17. Your continued support of the Resource Centre has allowed us to make Anabaptist materials more accessible across Canada through an online catalogue (www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre), free shipping with book orders, and the Cheaper by the Dozen bulk-loan option (www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/644). Circulation of Resource Centre materials has increased dramatically over the last few years – as of November 30, 2008, it is up 21% over 2007 and 84% over 2004. In addition, many more people are downloading our free materials online.
18. Your support of MC Canada has made it possible for the Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC) to grow its ministry since 2001. On November 2nd, KAC celebrated its 7th Anniversary. With a now primarily Korean staff, KAC facilitates networking among Korean Anabaptists, publishes Anabaptist resources, and provides peace education and Anabaptist teaching for churches and seminaries. Find Korean language study materials here: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/272

–Compiled by Deborah Froese, PrayerNet Coordinator