



REPORT/WORKBOOK

ASSEMBLY 2009

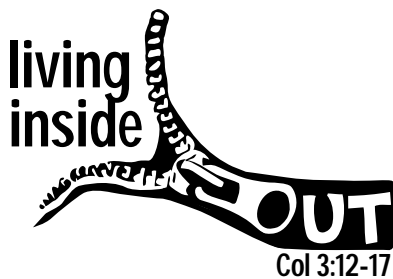
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, JUNE 5-7

living
inside



Col 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17



Colossians 3:12-17 encourages us to wear our inner convictions on the outside, visible to the world, like a piece of clothing. A zipper separates and connects the inside of a piece of clothing to the outside. Referencing the clothing symbolism of the scripture text, this also playfully illustrates our connectedness through our common faith. As a zipper binds together two pieces of fabric, love "binds everything together in perfect harmony".

Mennonite Church Canada REPORT 2009

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Our Priorities

To engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ, with God's help we will:

- ***Form a people of God***
- ***Become a global church***
- ***Grow leaders for the church***



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HOW TO USE THIS REPORT/WORKBOOK

This book contains the reporting materials reflecting our work of the past year. In the margins, you will find an “at-a-glance” roadmap. The roadmap attempts to mirror the way Mennonite Church Canada is organized. Highlighted areas indicate where you are on the roadmap.

Please read through these discernment topics carefully and come prepared to participate.

A basic schedule for the proceedings and an agenda can be found on the last several pages.

The reports and stories in this report book represent the people and ministries in the Mennonite Church Canada family. Together, they tell the larger story of God at work in the world as we align ourselves with God’s purpose.

We hope that you find this report book to be a helpful way of visualizing relationships and getting informed.

ASSEMBLY PURPOSES AND GOALS

The primary purposes of the Mennonite Church Canada Annual Delegate Assembly are to:

1. Provide opportunities for participants to build up and nurture the church by:
 - a. Forming faith and Christian identity from an Anabaptist Mennonite perspective, in children and adults.
 - b. Learning about and discerning MC Canada’s participation in God’s work.
 - c. Debating issues facing the church and issuing statements as appropriate.
 - d. Worshiping and building community with people from across the national church.
 - e. Learning through seminars, displays and special events, which highlight available resources.

2. Conduct the business of the organization as described in the MC Canada bylaws¹ by:
 - a. Reviewing the work and ministry of MC Canada.
 - b. Accepting or rejecting the budgets and financial statements of MC Canada.
 - c. Appointing an auditor.
 - d. Accepting, rejecting or removing area churches as members or as provisional members.
 - e. Electing its officers, Boards, Councils, and Committees.
 - f. Amending the bylaws of MC Canada as needed and monitoring adherence to those bylaws.

Approved by Support Services Council March 6, 2009

¹ These are summary statements. See Part III, Section 8 of the MC Canada bylaws for a full description of the duties and powers of voting delegates.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACOM.....	Area Church Only Membership
AMBS	Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
AMIGOS	Mennonite World Conference Youth Committee
CAMS	Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools
CCC.....	Canadian Council of Churches
CFC	Christian Formation Council
CMU	Canadian Mennonite University
COF	Confession of Faith
CPT	Christian Peacemaker Teams
CMM.....	Conference of Mennonites in Mexico
CWC	Christian Witness Council
CWM.....	Canadian Women in Mission
EFC	Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
FLC	Faith and Life Committee
FPAC	Financial Policy and Audit Committee
FYE.....	Fiscal Year End
GB	General Board
GMF.....	Global Mennonite Fellowship
IMPACT	International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together

JEC.....	Joint Executive Council
KPMG	Auditors for Mennonite Church Canada
M/S/C/.....	Moved/Seconded/Carried
MC	Mennonite Church
MC SASK	Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
MCA.....	Mennonite Church Alberta
MCA.....	Mennonite Camping Association
MCBC	Mennonite Church British Columbia
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MCCC.....	Mennonite Central Committee Canada
MCEC	Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
MCM.....	Mennonite Church Manitoba
MDS.....	Mennonite Disaster Service
MFC.....	Mennonite Foundation of Canada
MSAM.....	Moderators, Secretaries & Area Church Ministers
MPN.....	Mennonite Publishing Network
MWC.....	Mennonite World Conference
SSC	Support Services Council

WORDS FROM THE MODERATOR

Welcome to the 10th annual delegate sessions of Mennonite Church Canada. Thank you for the time and money you are generously contributing to come together as the national body to discern God's purposes for our times. The Church is a people gathered in the name of Christ. Our confession is that Jesus Christ is Lord. We gather for these days as part of a world-wide body of Christ.

In Utah there is a grove of Quaking Aspen trees. To us this looks like 47,000 separate trees, but this is one organism joined together in the root system. The trees that are rooted in good moisture or nutrient-rich soil share the moisture and nutrition with trees in other parts of the grove.

Mennonite Church Canada is 33,000 Anabaptist Christians rooted together in the name of Christ as one organism or one body. We gather as 221 congregations, 5 Area Churches, and more than 25 partner agencies together sharing what God has given parts of the body so that we can together discern God's mission in the world. We are mandated by Jesus as salt and light so that all things might be reconciled to God's purposes. As followers of Jesus, we pledge primary allegiance to God's Kingdom – to live now in ways that God intends for all creation to live. We demonstrate God's purposes, for example, by trusting in God, which enables us to love our enemies, thus extending the peace of Christ.

At these delegate sessions we gather to do what churches do – discern God's will for our time, to do this in the manner and spirit of Jesus and empowered by the resources of God's Spirit. All this so that we can be a blessing to the world. Another way to say this is that the church is focussed, with the eyes of Jesus, on discernment of three things: what God wants, how God wants it done, and finally, the gifts that God has given to accomplish his tasks.

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul speaks of the fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Firstly, these nine fruits seem to be the answer to what God wants. He wants us to love God and our neighbour as ourselves. Love is mentioned more than 500 times in the Bible, joy and peace are mentioned more than 200 times. The others are mentioned fewer times but still significant.

Secondly, these nine fruits of the Spirit appear to answer the question: What methods does God want us to use to accomplish his purpose? Again all nine mentioned apply. We are to engage our Christian community and the world with these fruits of God's Spirit. Thirdly, when we ask the question: What are the resources that God will provide to accomplish his purposes? – the same nine are relevant. God wants us to have an abundance of these as primary resources with which to engage the church and the world which God loves.

My prayer is that these fruits of the Spirit will guide and support us as we faithfully discern God's purposes and God's methods, and share God's resources for the journey.

–Andrew Reesor-McDowell, Moderator



Andrew Reesor-McDowell,
Moderator

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WORDS FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



Robert J. Suderman,
General Secretary

Staff:

Robert J. Suderman,
General Secretary;
Karen Peters, Executive
Assistant

Living inside out... (Colossians 3:12-17):

*And be thankful (v.15);
With thankfulness in your heart to God (v.16);
Giving thanks to God (v.17).*

The very rich theme text chosen for this assembly is bathed in a spirit of thankfulness and grace. Putting to death the old self (3:5) and putting on the new person (3:12) is not an exercise of reluctance or obligation. It is a possibility of grace overflowing in gratitude. In the Greek language, grace and thankfulness have the same root (*xaris*); to be thankful is a *eu-xaristic* possibility (meaning “good grace”). What we experience in Christ and in the Body of Christ is a signal of the good grace that God showers on us.

At times we may be discouraged; at other times we may be concerned. At times we may wish we were facing a more stable world with fewer uncertainties. But in the midst of all that, in “whatever you do” (v.17), we are *eu-charistic*, thankful for the special vocation given to the Body of Christ as a place where the “peace of Christ rules in your hearts” (v.15).

The Year in review:

The part of Christ’s Body known as Mennonite Church Canada has had another very good year of effective ministry. We are grateful. You are invited to look carefully at the reports in this book, and to celebrate with us the multiplying impact of the ministries we engage together.

We are very grateful to staff, mission workers, board and council members, volunteers, Area Churches, congregations, pastors, and related organizations. Gratitude does not mean that there are no significant challenges, or that everything has gone smoothly, as planned. We are grateful that in the midst of “all that we do” the presence of God is evident.

Leadership:

One of the persistent laments we hear is “where are the younger generations?” One of the answers is that they are now helping to lead the church.

- At a recent meeting, several of the Area Church moderators were remarking at how young their Leadership Boards are. “One of our board members comes to meetings with her baby in her arms,” said one.
- The core of pastors leading our congregations shows that the younger generations are in full gear. Almost 70% of respondents to our recent pastoral trends survey were under the age of 60. About 50% were under the age of 50.
- Almost 50% of Mennonite Church Canada staff are under 50 years of age.
- 30-40% of the program Council members of MC Canada are under 50 years of age.

Having said this, we cannot lower our guard on issues of leadership. The same pastoral trend survey shows that about 30% of pastors indicate that after 4 years, they will not be available as pastors (retirement, or shift in vocation). This is a substantial challenge, and we need to work hard at the implications of this for our church. We are very pleased with the substantive discussions with and among the 4 post-secondary schools, and with the Area Church ministers (both in Canada and the USA) as we together collaborate and work toward developing strong leadership for our church.

Cultural Diversity:

There are at least 40 congregations in Mennonite Church Canada whose ethnic make-up is other than what have been the dominant ethnic backgrounds of our church, i.e., European/Dutch/Russian/Swiss. This number will likely rise to 50 within the next 5 years, given that there are several more congregations that are in the process of affiliation. We are excited about the changing face of our church. But this reality, too, presents significant challenges in terms of leadership development, resources, and active participation in decision-making of the larger church.

Partnerships and church-to-church relationships:

Our relationships with other church partners are broad and significant. Within Canada/USA, we relate in ministry most closely to:

- The 21 other denominations that make up the Canadian Council of Churches;
- The 1,000 (or so) other churches and entities that make up the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada;
- The 5 other denominations that, like us, are members of both the CCC and the EFC;
- A more focused relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America;
- Mennonite Church USA via our joint ministries (Mennonite Publishing Network and AMBS), our partnership ministries, and the Joint Executive Committee;
- Other Anabaptist groups in Canada via the Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders.

Internationally, our relationships and partnerships, many of them through Witness ministries, are numerous. I will mention only a few:

- Mennonite World Conference: we have our full complement of representatives on the General Council of MWC. We also continue the MWC gift-sharing initiative (this year I taught a workshop to 50 or so pastors and leaders from the Integrated Mennonite Churches of the Philippines). Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary of MC Canada Witness is the chair of the newly formed Mission Commission of MWC.
- Our membership, with 60+ other national churches in the Global Mission Fellowship, chaired by Janet Plenert and administratively supported by Eric Olfert, another one of our staff members.
- Mennonite Partners in China;
- Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission;
- National churches in: Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Congo, Hong Kong, Chile, Ethiopia;
- Church development initiatives in Ukraine, Germany, S. Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Cuba, Macau;
- Anabaptist Peace and Resource Centres in: Colombia, S. Korea, England, S. Africa.

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MCC New Wines: New Wineskins:

An important initiative that has engaged us in significant ways this year is our participation in the MCC re-visioning exercise that is underway. This is very important, as denominational owners, partners, and other stake-holders are trying to re-shape MCC for its important ministry for the 21st century. Significant proposals are on the table. Your prayers and participation have been, and continue to be, welcome.

Finances:

Who could have anticipated the financial strains and stresses that have hit our world, our country, and our church in the latter third of 2008? We finished our last fiscal year and began this one with very high levels of confidence in the financial buoyancy of our budgets. The year ended on a different note. Especially, we were impacted by the elimination of expected investment income, a dramatic down-turn of individual/corporate giving, and the drop in investment assets that needed to be considered as expenditure in our financial statements. Fortunately, much of this was off-set with substantial under-spending of our proposed budgets.

Total budgeted donation income fell about 4% short of projections. This seems positive in light of the dramatic down-turn in the global economies. We are indeed grateful for the very strong support and commitment from the congregations and donors. However, because we have very little flexibility in our budgets, 4% does represent significant potential impact on program if it becomes a longer-term reality. We are grateful that we do have some reserve funds on hand that are specifically designed to even out some of these shorter-term bumps. We are projecting a cautious budget for this year, with substantial decreases (deferrals) in needed spending.

Canada Revenue Agency Regulations (CRA):

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the increasing legal complexities of engaging ministry beyond Canadian borders. As a staff we have spent much time trying to address the increasingly stringent requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency in terms of the "end-use control" of donated funds. CRA looks for accountability tools that document that every dollar sent beyond Canadian borders has been used for its intended purposes.

These tools are complex, both for the donor and for the partner. One result is that, in some cases, our preferred missiological approaches are in jeopardy. Another is that, in many cases, the preferences of donors and congregations for "direct" designated giving, in the sense of designating or sending funds to projects not within MC Canada's partnership agreements, are not viable (or at least not legal). We need to request much patience and understanding from our partners, and also of you, our constituents. Of course, we also need to request patience from our staff, who are heavily invested in being good partners.

We do have good legal and other counsel, and we are doing our very best to navigate these waters.

We also strongly urge congregations to be aware of the complexities of these regulations for your own processes. In the same way that we are instructed to know where the gas lines are before we dig in our yards, it's very important to understand the complexities of sharing charitable dollars across the Canadian border.

Discernment agenda:

This year our delegate discernment sessions will again focus on the life of our church as it engages our context with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Two critical themes will be processed.

1. Our theme text exhorts us to “teach and admonish one another in all wisdom” (Col.3:16). One of our themes is designed to do exactly that. We will seek to explore ways in which we can strengthen our capacity as a Body of Christ to read and interpret the Bible together for the sake of being a faithful people of the Word. Pastors, congregations, Area Churches, and our Faith and Life Committee have all pointed to the critical importance of this agenda for our church. The General Board has crafted a Statement for Affirmation to which delegates will be asked to respond. This will focus this discussion.
2. We also will take a closer look at the health of our church, especially related to its growth. There are exciting things happening among us, and we want to focus on what we can learn from these signs of life and growth.

Staff and Program:

More information about programming is available throughout this booklet. I wish to highlight only a very few items:

1. Pam Peters-Pries resigned from her position after almost 8 years as Executive Secretary of Support Services. Her contribution to our church is deep and lasting. She has committed her time, creativity, and energy to the nuts and bolts of making our church function better. We are deeply grateful to her for this contribution. The opportunity for part-time work, within easier commuting range has attracted her, given the family stage they are in. We thank her, bless her, and wish her much joy in her new tasks. Louie Sawatzky has agreed to an interim, part-time position in filling Pam’s role. Louie has a long history in corporate executive leadership along with ongoing and multiple roles of leadership within the congregation. He also served as chair of the Support Services Council, and thus is familiar with the agenda and processes. We welcome him to this position and he is already taking the agenda in stride.
2. Given the two vacancies in Support Services (Executive Director and Director of Resource Development), we are taking some time to review our structure and to see if any shifts would be advisable. We trust this process will be completed by the time of the Assembly.



Pam Peters-Pries, outgoing Executive Secretary, Support Services, at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

Other:

1. **G8 and World Religious Leaders Summit:** The 8 influential nations that make up the G8 are meeting in Canada in June 25-27, 2010. Through the Canadian Council of Churches, we are addressing them on their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals that they set a number of years ago. Related to this, there will be a parallel gathering of World Religious Leaders meeting in Winnipeg. This, too, is hosted by the CCC. We will be contributing to the dynamics of this gathering. Dan Dyck, our Director of Communications, is the inter-faith communications team-leader, and is also helping to plan a parallel inter-faith communicators event. It is believed to be the first of its kind in Canada.
2. **Lutheran Apology:** As indicated at our Assembly last year, the World Lutheran Federation has decided to issue an apology to Anabaptists at its 2010 Lutheran World Assembly. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada has invited us into a conversation about how this could be replicated as a parallel process with Mennonite Church Canada. This discussion will continue.
3. **Christian Reform Church in North America:** This denomination has requested an extended discussion about issues of War and Peace as understood by our respective denominations. They (and we) also wish to promote relationships on the ground

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between our two denominations. We are planning a small symposium for October/09 to address these interests.

4. **Common Word:** Our General Board has agreed to sign on to the “Common Word” initiative, begun by 138 Muslim theologians. This initiative is a way of bridging understanding and promoting peace between Islam and Christianity. We have submitted a brief explanatory document together with our signature.
5. **Peace in the Public Square resolution:** We have responded to the delegate resolution from Assembly/08. This proposal will be open for dialogue at this delegate assembly.
6. **Pastoral Care:** We reported last year that our leadership office (together with Area Church ministers) is preparing a tool designed to assist pastors who have occasion to give pastoral care to lesbian and gay persons and their families. We are working to have this ready for distribution at this Assembly.
7. **Conference of Mennonites in Mexico:** Tim Froese (International Ministries Executive Director) and I made a reciprocal visit to our Mennonite partners in Mexico in March/09.

They have been faithful in sending delegates to our Assemblies and are making substantial financial contributions to our Witness ministries. We are grateful to represent you in this partnership.

8. Mennonite Church USA: Our relationship continues in a very positive way through our meetings of the Joint Executive Committee. Given that MC USA is going through a significant organizational re-structuring process, we are in close conversation with them especially in terms of how this may, or not, impact what we do jointly, namely Mennonite Publishing Network and AMBS. We have prayed for and now celebrate Jim Schrag’s (Executive Director, MC USA) successful heart by-pass surgery. We are grateful that he is well and continuing in his leadership role until his projected retirement in November/09.



General Board members Jack Suderman, Andrew Reesor-McDowell, and Don Friesen at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

Conclusion:

I remember being present in a peace/safety “summit” in Colombia, where church, government, civic, and military leaders met for several days to assess how to nourish peace in the chronic violence of that society. Given the high level officials that were meeting, including the top policy advisor to the President of Colombia, the summit was held on a tiny island in the Caribbean for security and safety reasons. As they each shared their perspectives, one of the surprising revelations was that the church was the only organization that was present in every region of the country. Even the President, the military, police forces, guerrilla groups, and para-military faced too many restrictions and risks to be everywhere. Only the church was present everywhere, in every nook and cranny, with no exit strategy.

This realization boggled the minds there, including the minds of the church leaders. They had never before considered the potential of their pervasive presence in such a strategic way. This scenario, in part, points to the way things are meant to be. Communities disciplined in the ways of Christ... a people-hood providing a divine alternative to the assumptions of society.... present everywhere. The potential of that vision continues to affect me profoundly. We now have about 11,000 such Anabaptist communities around the world, 221 of them being Mennonite Church Canada. These 221 MC Canada congregations last year received about \$44,000,000 in revenues. While the power of the 11,000 must not be measured according to financial strength, perhaps it can be symbolic of the potential of the church for action and ministry... everywhere.

Our theme text exhorts us to “put on...” and “above all [to] put on love...” (3:12, 14), and to do so “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and to “give thanks.” May it be so.

—Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary

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Message from the Denominational Minister

The One who created us and fashioned each one of us in the womb (Psalm 139:13) is also the One who refashions us into a faith community that is holy and loved. And in this community Christ gives us his nature of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience to become the work wardrobe we need for being the church. When relationships fray this fabric, Christ's forgiveness and love are the enduring threads to mend the tears.

Can this coming year be a season in which we strengthen the chords of forgiveness and love, for the challenging work of discerning what it means to be a faithful church? Can the qualities of Christ's nature become the identifying marks of our relationships in the church and in the world?

Grow leaders for the Church

This is one of MC Canada's three broad priorities. The calling of leaders to equip the church for ministry is first of all God's initiative (Ephesians 4:11,12). So how are we listening for God's directive in our current context?

1. Where do leaders come from?

Results from the 2007 Pastoral Trends Survey suggest that about one third of our current pastors will leave pastoral ministry in the next 3 to 5 years. This need for pastors is raising the larger questions of "where do leaders come from" and "how do individuals hear the call to ministry"? Our Confession of Faith states that the church calls, trains, and appoints gifted men and women for ministry (Confession of Faith, p. 59). There is growing realization that the calling of leaders needs to be a collaborative effort that includes local congregations, Area Churches, schools, and Mennonite Church Canada, each owning its part in forming healthy leadership that contributes to healthy, vibrant congregational life and mission.

2. What kind of leaders do we need?

We have many pastors who would fit the descriptor of shepherd and pastoral care giver who have provided wise and caring leadership to our church members. Younger leaders are not necessarily interested in church models that rely on committee structures. So how are we broadening the vision for a diversity of pastoral models and leaders that equip our congregations to join God at work in the world?

3. What does it mean to have healthy, thriving pastors?

While all of us are called to ministry, pastors have been called to a leadership role that has some of its own unique joys and challenges. How do we work at thriving pastoral development to guide both the pastor and the congregation from the beginning question of "am I being called to ministry?" through the retirement years? Consider the following continuum for thriving pastoral formation:

- Equipping congregations to own and develop practices that **nurture a culture of call**.
- Opportunities for individuals to **test the call** through our schools, camps, local, area and national church.
- Connecting individuals with our schools for **training and education** and staying connected in their educational process.



*Karen Martens Zimmerly,
Denominational Minister*

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- Providing intentional support and training to help new pastors make the **transition into ministry** in the first few years.
- Nurturing healthy, **pastoral self-care**, including the necessary resources for maturing spiritual, emotional, relational, and vocational development.
- Finding ways to share the **rich wisdom and gifts from our seasoned, mature pastors** beyond the local congregation in equipping and encouraging other leaders and congregations.
- Preparing and affirming pastors for **retirement ministries**. Where on this continuum is your congregation contributing to healthy pastoral formation? Where do you need support?

4. Multi-cultural leadership training

Each Area Church has congregations or groups within a congregation where English is not the first language. The leaders of these groups are not always able to access the training supports that are provided for pastors and so, together with Area Church leaders, we are identifying the most critical leadership training needs to help move forward in equipping these leaders.

Through being at home in God's word, joining together in grateful worship, and in thankful living, may we find God's way to be the church and engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ!

–Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister

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Faith and Life Committee (FLC)

The Faith and Life Committee (FLC) was formed in 2005 to assist Mennonite Church Canada in discerning the will of God in matters of theology, ethics, polity, and practice. The work of the Committee is given focus by the basic question: What does it mean to be a faithful Mennonite Church in our Canadian context?

Each November, the FLC meets with a Reference Council, made up of representatives from our academic institutions, the Moderators, Secretaries, and Area Church Ministers, to discern which issues, out of the many that confront our denomination, should receive priority attention. After further discernment, the FLC then brings its recommendations for focusing the issue to the General Board for approval before developing a response.

Since 2005, the FLC has made presentations on unity in the body of Christ, on care of the creation as the will of God, and on confessing Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world. These presentations and documents are all available on the Resource Centre page of the MC Canada website (www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/263).

Before the FLC moves on to another issue, the General Board and the FLC seek to ensure that the appropriate follow-up will be lodged within the Mennonite Church Canada structure.

At the 2008 Assembly in Winnipeg, the FLC initiated a discussion on our call to confess Jesus in our complex, multi-cultural, religiously pluralistic world. We suggested that as we associate more and more with people of other or no religious faith, we need to renew our commitment and ability to confess Jesus, even while we listen to and walk respectfully with fellow citizens who live by a different faith. Since the summer of 2008, the major work of this committee has been to develop strategies to better enable us to do that. A printed series of stories and reflections on confessing Jesus in our social and work life is being planned.

Meanwhile, the FLC collaborated with the General Board to prepare a response to an open letter authored by Muslim scholars inviting Christians and Jews to affirm, as a step toward meaningful peace in the world, our common convictions of love for God and love for neighbour. (The General Board letter is also available at the above-mentioned web page.) In this vein of encouraging mutual respect, the FLC has offered its support and encouragement to the ongoing dialogue between Mennonites and Muslims as well as looking for ways and places to enter significant discussion with our Jewish neighbours.

At the annual March meeting, the FLC turned its attention to other pressing concerns, and work has begun on new activities. Whenever we gather, we commit our discernment to God's guidance. Theological discernment in our time is an exciting privilege but without God's help our efforts to respond will surely be in vain. May God's Spirit be our source of inspiration and give us direction.

–Submitted by Rudy Baergen, Chair



Rudy Baergen (Chair, Faith and Life Committee) and Sue Steiner (outgoing Chair, Christian Formation Council).

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Assembly 2008 Actions and Follow-up

Motion 5:

BE IT RESOLVED:

Our Nation is at war and we are becoming a more militaristic culture. The principles of redemptive violence are being aggressively promoted to justify the increase in military spending and the shedding of blood by Canadian soldiers. Christ's message of peace, reconciliation, and grace needs to be heard in our country.

Realizing that we are called to bear witness for Christ and his message, we request that the staff of MC Canada develop a proposal for promoting the peace message in the "public square", and that it is presented at the 2009 annual delegate assembly.

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

We are very concerned about the increased militaristic propaganda in the mass media, such as recruiting commercials and military presence at televised sports events, and we strongly feel that we must counter this by getting the peace message out to the general public. What we envision might include the use of mass media like newspaper, radio, T.V., and internet. Since we understand the cost involved in this, we suggest MC Canada may want to combine resources with other peace organizations (independent and those that are branches of other denominations). We feel a positive message, such as using the Golden Rule, would be most effective.

Follow Up:

Mennonite Church Canada staff has developed a proposal to promote peace in the public square for approval at Assembly 2009. This proposal with supporting information is in the delegate Report Book.

Motion 1:

The delegate assembly adopts the minutes of the 8th Annual Session of Mennonite Church Canada as recorded and published in the Minute Book 2007 issued by Mennonite Church Canada.

Motion 2:

The delegate assembly approves the actions taken by the General Board of Mennonite Church Canada in the past year.

Motion 3:

The delegate assembly accepts the financial statements as presented.

Motion 4:

The delegate assembly appoints KPMG as auditor for FYE 2009.

Motion 6:

The delegates approved the MC Canada budget for FYE 2008-2009.

Motion 7:

The delegates accepted the 2008-2009 slate of nominees as presented by the Nominations Committee.

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General Board Actions and Follow-up

February 29-March 1, 2008

Consensus #1: The General Board accepts the GB minutes of November 23-24, 2007.

Consensus #2: The General Board affirms the thinking of the conceptual paper on church-to-church relationships.

Consensus #3: The General Board affirms the next steps outlined in the report on interaction with UBACH (Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile).

Consensus #4: The General Board agreed that #11 of the Partnership Covenant be reworded to read: "We affirm that the national church is the preferred *vehicle* for *our common* international ministry. In keeping with the regulations of the Canada Revenue Agency, the national church is accountable for all of the ministries it engages. Therefore, the national church will evaluate *such* international ministry initiatives, and will only approve those that align with its priorities."

Consensus #5: The General Board agreed to the following transfer from the General Treasury to Internally Restricted Funds:

1. Witness Council

- a) \$6816 to an International Ministries Reserve (Lillian Haas Training)
- b) \$8224 to International Ministries (Medical Reserves)

2. Formation Council:

- a) \$25343 to a Youth Assembly Reserve (surplus)
- b) \$3000 to a Formation Reserve (pastoral trends survey)

3. Support Services:

- a) \$11250 to a Support Services Reserve (building)
- b) \$2000 to a Support Services Reserve (Tolemac)

Consensus #6: The General Board affirms the use of a 1.00 US\$ Exchange rate and a 2.2% CPI Salary adjustment. (FYE 2009)

Consensus #7: The General Board will recommend this budget to the delegate assembly in July 2008.

April 18-9, 2008

Consensus #1: The General Board accepts the GB minutes of February 29-March 1, 2008.

Consensus #2: The General Board supports the cover letter to Jack's paper, "Faith and the Public Square: The Church's Witness to Peace".

Consensus #3: The General Board will recommend the financial statement to the delegate body in July 2008.

Consensus #4: The General Board recommends that KPMG be our auditors for a third year.

Consensus #5: The General Board approves the "Pandemic Absence Policy".

Consensus #6: The General Board approves the "Personal Responsibility and Consideration of Risk" policy.

Consensus #7: The General Board approves the "Process to Accept New Groups (Christian) into the MC Canada Pension and RRSP Plans," with the understanding that all references to "interfaith" be replaced with "Christian".

Consensus #8: The General Board approves the "Leave – Special" policy.

Consensus #9: The General Board approves the "Staff Counselling Fund" policy.

Consensus #10: The General Board approves the "Workplace Safety and Health Policy".

Consensus #11: The General Board accepts the

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“Recommendations and Statement of Understanding regarding Youth and Delegate Assemblies”.

Consensus #12: The General Board approves the items pertaining specifically to its area of oversight, and further approves the entire list of Recommendations as Directional Statements guiding further conversation and planning. (This is in reference to the Road Markers Document; Conversations with Post-Secondary Schools.)

Consensus #13: The General Board supports the recommendation that MC Canada become a supporting organization of the Federal Department of Peace movement.

Consensus #14: The General Board agrees to continue to work on the documentation of operating agreements with each Area Church.

Consensus #15: The General Board affirms the reappointment of Hilda Hildebrand to the General Board, Helen Kasdorf to the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and Betty Pries to the Faith and Life Committee.

Consensus #16: The General Board supported the idea of a slightly expanded Executive Committee of the General Board meeting with the mymenno group, and that we will continue discussions about a long-term plan to address the second part of the 1986 resolution on human sexuality.

July 6-7 and 11, 2008

Consensus #1: The General Board accepts the GB Minutes of April 18-19, 2008.

Consensus #2: The General Board decided to request a recommendation for one appointment each from the Formation and Witness Councils respectively (to the Mennonite World Conference). Those recommendations should be brought to the GB in November for discernment and appointment.

Consensus #3: The General Board decided to send six people to the 2009 MWC Assembly and to budget accordingly.

Consensus #4: The General Board decided to appoint Marvin Thiessen, Scott Brubaker-Zehr, and Hilda Hildebrand to the Assembly Resolutions Committee; Randy Klaassen, Judith Doell, and Sue Shantz to the Assembly Listening Committee; John Sawatzky as the Parliamentarian; and Sam Steiner as the Assistant Secretary.

Consensus #5: The General Board appointed Betty Loewen and Donita Wiebe-Neufeld as GB Members at Large.

Consensus #6: The General Board encourages the Executive Committee and the General Secretary to provide their best thinking at the November GB meeting on a long-term plan to address the second part of the 1986 resolution on human sexuality.

November 14-15, 2008

CONSENSUS #1: The General Board (GB) accepts the GB minutes of July 6, 7, and 11, 2008.

CONSENSUS #2: The General Board agrees to overturn the transition decision which assigned the Native Ministry funds to the Asset Liability Committee for distribution.

CONSENSUS #3: To accept Support Services Council recommendation that it has reviewed the Pension Plan Annual Information Return and Form 3 return.

CONSENSUS #4: To accept the results of the September 2008 annual privacy audit.

CONSENSUS #5: To approve the changes to the Compassionate Leave Policy as noted in the docket (pages 44-46 of docket).

CONSENSUS #6: To approve the recommendation regarding the sale of the Thompson United Mennonite church.

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CONSENSUS #7: To approve the recommendation regarding the Pension Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.

CONSENSUS #8: The General Board approves the appointment of Gordon Baergen to the SSC till Assembly 2009.

CONSENSUS #9: The first part of the paper is critical for what we need as a national church right now. We need to do something with this paper at our June 2009 Assembly. (In regards to the paper Being a Faithful Church.)

CONSENSUS #10: The General Board approves the recommendation from FPAC the salary increase of 3.4% (July 2007 to July 2008 CPI, FYE 2010) and a Canadian to US exchange rate of 1.15 to 1.00.

CONSENSUS #11: The General Board approves the change in policy allowing any two of the authorized officers to sign cheques, rather than one finance staff person and one other person.

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Mennonite World Conference (MWC)

At a Glance...



MWC exists to:

- be a global community of faith in the Anabaptist tradition
- facilitate community among Anabaptist related churches worldwide
- relate to other Christian world communities and organizations.

Officers:

President: Nancy Heisey, USA

Vice President and

President Elect: Danisa Ndlovu, ZIMBABWE

General Secretary: Larry Miller, FRANCE

Treasurer: Paul Quiring, USA

MWC Canadian Office:

50 Kent Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
CANADA
Tel: (1) 519-571-0060
Fax: (1) 519-571-1980
Kitchener@mw-cmm.org
www.mw-cmm.org

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Mennonite World Conference is a communion (*koinonia*) of Anabaptist-related churches linked to one another in a worldwide community of faith for fellowship, worship, service, and witness.

Those links will be strengthened during MWC's 15th assembly in Asuncion, Paraguay this summer (July 14 -19). Much staff time and many resources are devoted to preparing for that "family gathering." The Centro Familiar de Adoracion is the venue for worship and fellowship, workshops, and sharing. The foundational text is Philippians 2:1-11 with the words, "Come together in the way of Jesus Christ" pointing us to the themes of unity and service. Each continent will be represented in Bible studies and sermons, prayers and presentations.

Numerous special interest groups will meet around Paraguay 2009, such as the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. The second Global Youth Summit, planned by MWC's 'AMIGOS' will explore the meaning of Christian service under the theme: "Service, Live the Difference." Kristina Toews is MC Canada's youth representative.

A highlight in 2008 was the formation of four commissions and the calling of their leaders. Cynthia Peacock of India will head the new Deacon Commission, Alfred Neufeld of Paraguay the Faith and Life Commission, Mulugeta Zewdie of Ethiopia the Peace Commission, and Janet Plenert of Canada the Mission Commission.

According to Larry Miller, General Secretary, through these commissions and their leaders, "the reality of the global church can be seen and felt and touched and savoured." While each commission will have its specific tasks, they will work to promote unity and the concept of a holistic gospel. The commissions will help God's people to put our beliefs into practice. They are not a new bureaucracy but the "place" where gifts and wisdom will be shared, needs, challenges and questions heard, and initiatives connected.

Other 2008 praise items are:

- Congolese Inter-Mennonite Forum for Conversation, administered by MWC, held its second annual gathering in November to reflect on the kinds of relationships they as churches would like to have with other Mennonites.
- In November, an MWC Koinonia Delegation attended the official organizing conference of the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Ho Chi Minh City, and symbolically welcomed the new denomination into MWC.
- Robert J. Suderman conducted two days of teaching for the Integrated Mennonite Church in the Philippines in August through MWC's Global Gift Sharing program.
- MWC participated in the Reconciliation Ceremony of Congo Mennonite Church pastors in late November – the culmination of much hard work and persistence in the past year.

MWC urges us to 1) be inspired and informed through MWC's website, News Service, *Courier*, the books in the Anabaptist Shelf of Literature and in the Global Mennonite History project (the Latin American, Asian and North American volumes are coming soon); 2) pray for our Anabaptist brothers and sisters around the world; 3) be generous in your financial gifts to the various funds that make MWC programs and networks possible.

—Submitted by Naomi Unger (on behalf of your three representatives to MWC's General Council: Laura Loewen, Andrew Reesor-McDowell and Naomi Unger)

Mennonite Church USA (MC USA)

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

Together with Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA shares this vision statement for our church to be a beacon of healing and hope in the world. As a church existing in North America in the 21st Century, we continue to seek meaningful and practical ways of joining the places God is at work.

In February 2008, the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board declared that "our vision and call to engage in God's purposes in the world is not adequately supported by our present relationships, behaviors, and organization." This statement was born of a desire for all parts of Mennonite Church USA to become a community of Christians who learn from each other and together find creative ways of joining God's work in our world.

The year since this statement has found the Executive Board and its Executive Leadership staff working alongside other parts of the denomination, including agencies, *The Mennonite*, area conferences and the Constituency Leaders Council and others to begin dreaming of new ways we can work together.

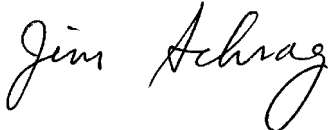
Some of the progress we have made includes:

- Regular team interaction among the executive directors of each churchwide agency and the executive and associate executive directors for Executive Leadership.
- A summit of communication and development staff from across the denomination to collaborate and create a vision for how they will work more closely together with people in the pew in mind.
- The Constituency Leaders Council has appointed a task group of conference ministers and moderators to help the CLC reexamine the role of area conferences and other parts of the church in our churchwide system.
- The hiring of a consultant on churchwide operations and alignment who will help Mennonite Church USA live within its means, eliminate duplication, simplify the churchwide system and identify ways of integrating churchwide priorities into all churchwide ministries.

Finally, I have announced my retirement as executive director of Mennonite Church USA, effective in November of this year. In January, the Executive Board named a search committee to find my replacement.

May God bless Mennonite Church Canada and its ministries, leaders, and congregations. You are a vital part of the global Anabaptist family, and we give thanks for the ways you serve God's Kingdom here on earth.

Together in Christ,



Jim Schrag, Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA



Jim Schrag, Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA.

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Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA)

At a Glance...

MC Canada

Representatives:

Walter Wiebe, Moderator of MCBC – General Board; Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, General Board Member-at-Large; Coreen Froese, Christian Formation Council; Irene Crosland, Christian Witness Council; Gordon Baergen, Support Services Council; Doreen Neufeld, Faith and Life Committee; Lorne Buhr, Nominating Committee

MC Canada Staff in Alberta:

Jim Shantz, Missional Formation and Partnership Facilitator (Alberta)

This past year Mennonite Church Alberta, through the efforts of its Executive and in particular the initiative of its moderator, has been embarking on a series of Congregational visits. The purpose of these visits has been to update our constituents on the ministries conducted by the Committees and the General Council of MCA and then to discern some hopes and dreams for the future.

Ministries include:

- A camp ministry (Camp Valaqua in the foothills of the Rockies) which saw 423 campers in attendance last year and trained 16 leaders. Valqua has two full time employees.
- Employment of a 3/4 time Area Minister who assists in all pastoral leadership matters, coordinates and resources the Pastors Council, assists congregations in various matters and works at leadership recruitment and development.
- A contract with Corrections Canada to provide a Protestant Chaplain for the Bowden Alberta Institution.
- Distributing financial assistance for student bursaries.
- Purchasing the *Canadian Mennonite* for every MCA church member.
- Providing financial assistance for Rosthern Junior College.
- Distribute financial assistance for various Alberta ministries such as Native Ministries in S. Alberta and radio broadcast support for the Mexican Mennonite population.
- Provide administrative oversight for the Edmonton Worship Center which currently houses Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite and Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Churches.
- Organizing and presiding over the MCA annual delegate assembly.

Some hopes and dreams we are naming:

1. See the development of new churches for an emerging generation.
2. Build a retreat centre at our camp property.
3. Develop intentional student communities in our urban centres close to the 3 major universities in Alberta.
4. Hire a provincial Youth Ministry co-ordinator.
5. Develop a long term plan for camp ministry.
6. Provide tuition for any Alberta student who wishes to attend one of our Bible Colleges or Seminary.
7. Promote unity by organizing new inter-church activities.
8. Update the MCA website.

A discernment process is being undertaken to determine which of these dreams are of greatest priority and for which there would be the most interest and support.

Mennonite Church Alberta is grateful to God for his sustaining Presence in the past and looks forward to the paths in which God will lead her in the future.

–Submitted by Walter Wiebe, Moderator, and Jim Shantz, Area Church Minister, Mennonite Church Alberta

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Mennonite Church British Columbia (MCBC)

A peek into the life of Granisle's Church of the Way

Matthew 9:35-38 is a disturbing, yet potentially hopeful gospel story. Picture this: Jesus has just spent some days tramping around the villages of Palestine, hanging out with locals and sharing the healing news of God's kingdom. Totally spent, he takes his closest buds to a roadside rest stop. They boil water for tea, and Jesus confides:

"Isn't it overwhelming? So many lost and confused folk out there; so many in need of God. The harvest is enormous. But there's hardly any of us to do the work. I could throw my hands up. What can we do?" Jesus sighs and looks to the sky. "One thing I know. We've got to pray. Come, God. Bring some workers. Without you, no hope."

It's a Jesus-tale that's familiar to many. Which congregation hasn't prayed these words? This text is especially fitting for my tiny church, Granisle's *Church of the Way*. Everywhere I go, be it the pews of our sanctuary, the paved streets of our village, or the dirt roads of Tachet – our neighboring First Nation's reserve – I can hear Christ's Spirit mumble these words: "Big harvest. . . amazing potential. . . but whence the workers?"

When I was called to Granisle a year or so ago, I was sent by MCBC with a special job: to build bridges of reconciliation between the primarily white church and the First Nations community. I knew right away that this would be challenging, but in my naivety, I still thought I could roll up my sleeves, preach "in-Christ unity of Red and White," and presto, such would be miraculously "accomplished."

Then reality set in. My beloved sisters and brothers at *Church of the Way* were in a much different place than me. As a young and zealous "Anabaptist," breaking down dividing walls is a gospel imperative for me. I felt – and still feel – compelled to put lots of energy into this. But my friends were somewhere else in their faith journey. Most of them were seniors and retirees. They had worked hard, lived good, long lives, and were now seeking a place to enjoy a time of well-deserved rest. Doing "reconciliation" sounded like time-consuming, tiring and uncomfortable work. I understand this. Perhaps, like the aged widow Anna in Luke's gospel, their calling is to spend the rest of their days in the "temple", serving God through prayer and worship, while young folk like me "work the streets."

After a year and a half, I long to give an amazing ministry report filled with "mighty deeds and works of power." But I can't. Yes, "the harvest is plentiful," but it's still waiting to be harvested.

That's not to say good things aren't happening in our midst. We have, for instance, a weekly Youth Group, where a group of 10 Native kids faithfully gather to explore life with the Creator and one another. These kids are terribly "harassed" by the chaotic forces of life, yet despite all that, they're still so deeply beautiful. We eat together, pray, goof off, talk about life and, every so often, set our eyes on that Sweet Jesus. There are times Annie Williams (my co-leader) and I face and share their difficult challenges. There are times we want to

At a Glance...

Activity/Program: An Area Church desiring to work together to achieve those things which we cannot do as easily alone.

Ministry goals and objectives: Mennonite Church British Columbia is a faith community of Christian churches with a passionate allegiance to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Our purpose is to enable congregations to individually and collectively engage most fully in the mission of Christ.

Average Annual Budget: \$472,850 MCBC;
Camp Squeah budget: \$749,000

Staff: Garry Janzen, Executive Minister; Janette Thiessen, Office Administrator; Rob Tiessen, Camp Squeah Executive Director; Tim Larson, Camp Squeah Program Director; Dan Friesen, Camp Squeah Site Manager; Dave Wismath, Camp Squeah Administrative Assistant/Facilities Rental Coordinator; Liz Flinn, Camp Squeah Food Services Manager; Miles Bissky, Camp Squeah Head Cook; Pam White, Camp Squeah Bookkeeper;

Leadership Board: Gerd Bartel, Moderator; Dan Rempel, Vice-Moderator; Linda Matties, Secretary; John Redekop, Finance Chair; Lee Dyck, Evangelism and Church Development (ECCD) Chair; Sue Kehler, Nominations Committee Coordinator; Laura Loewen, Church Health Committee Chair

MC Canada Representatives: Gerd Bartel, General Board; Veronica Dyck, Christian Formation Council; Betty Loewen, General Board Member-at-large; Ed Janzen, Support Services Council; Laura Loewen, Christian Witness Council; Waldo Neufeld, Christian Witness Council; Clare Neufeld, Nominations Committee; Dan Rempel, General Board Representative

MC Canada Staff in BC: Gerd Bartel, Western Director of Resource Development; Samson Lo, Director of Multicultural Ministries



Steve Heinrichs

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hug them to bits, having caught a glimpse of the Good in them. I don't know how many times I've come away from the reserve after Youth, and cried out, "O God, there is so much need here! So much potential good! But who can do it?"

That's where ministry is in Granisle. No lights, no glory. Lots of weakness and stumbling. We're not out there with Jesus, healing and converting the masses. We're trying to find that roadside rest stop so that we can nod our prayerful hearts in desperate solidarity: "Lord of the harvest. Please come."

—Submitted by Steve Heinrichs, Pastor



Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM)

At a Glance...

MC Canada

Representatives:

Hilda Hildebrand, General Board Executive, Member-at-Large; Hans Werner, Moderator of MCM; Van Hoa Chau, Christian Formation Council; Earl Reimer, Christian Formation Council; Lynell Bergen, Christian Witness Council; Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel, Support Services Council; Harry Wiens, Support Services Council; Rudy Baergen, Faith and Life Committee; Karl Koop, Faith and Life Committee; Justina Heese, Nominating Committee

The theme for 2008, introduced at the February Annual Delegate Sessions, was "Faith Grows". We reflected on the various stages of faith development that take place in our worship and discernment. The Emmaus Road experience found in Luke 24 set the stage for our reflection with verse 32 focusing our attention – "... *Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?*" This year's theme is the first part of a four-year theme based on Genesis 12:1; "Go ... *to the land that I will show you*".

This report highlights the work of MCM's ministries carried out during 2008 on behalf of MCM congregations.

Camping Ministry – Bob Wiebe

Camps with Meaning (CWM) experienced renewal through strategic planning in 2008. CWM also continued to bear fruit through established programs.

Two Strategic Planning retreats were conducted. The first session, in February, created a new statement of purpose, mission, vision, and values. It endorsed a detailed recommendation for facility upgrades and reviewed a survey of guest groups needs. The second retreat, in November, worked on three areas of ministry opportunity: faith and discipleship, creation care, and changing demographics. A renewed strategic plan incorporating these elements will be presented to the MCM Board early in 2009.

The Summer Program theme was "Shalom: Our Journey With God". Camp Moose Lake hosted a record 360 campers. Camp Assiniboia reached 672 campers, a five-year high. Camp Koinonia experienced a drop of 67 in enrolment of children and youth. Overall there were 20 fewer campers than last year. A Family Camp was initiated this year at Camp Moose Lake. All our campers had multiple opportunities to grow in faith.

We were pleased to see a growth in the number of guest groups using our camps. A milestone in the retreat program was reached when volunteer Director **Val Pankratz** 'retired' after 10 years of fruitful ministry.

Key personnel changes included the placement of **David and Katherine Hogue** at Assiniboia as Manager and Guest Group Coordinator respectively and the resignation of **Will and Alvi Martens** at Camp Moose Lake. The Martens will be replaced by **Art and Mary Anne Falk**.

Improvements included the completion of a timber frame Picnic Shelter at Camp Moose Lake. The Assiniboia Main Lodge and the Manager's Residence at Camp Assiniboia were renovated. Camp Koinonia improved lighting and purchased a kitchen steamer.

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CWM is blessed to have a number of faithful volunteers and a family of supportive congregations. Thank you.

Evangelism and Service Ministries – Norm Voth This year two exciting dreams emerged. One is a group forming to explore liturgical worship. While this is still in progress, several practices emerged as important for participants. These included the following

- worship rooted in church history,
- room for the mystical, ritual and contemplative,
- greater emphasis on communion,
- openness to learning from other traditions.

This group has just begun meeting on a monthly basis for worship and discernment for future development.

A new congregation, in partnership with Youth With A Mission, is emerging in Winnipeg's West End. The focus is on developing an intentional faith community that includes worship but also works for community transformation. This past fall a group of community residents began meeting every Sunday evening for supper and conversation about faith and life. Out of those meetings came a desire to develop a more formal worshipping community. This group is asking us for leaders to assist with the development work. How can we help provide leaders for starting new congregations?

This past year I worked with the Elim, Sargent Avenue, Sterling and Grace (Brandon) congregations at an intentional missional formation process that includes reflection, discernment, and development planning. Some congregations are engaging missional identity through partnerships with Aboriginal congregations. These partnerships allow for cross cultural learning and addressing issues like racism, peace and systemic injustice.

The past decade or two has seen a marked shift toward short term service projects. I continue to participate as a member of the leadership group for Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure but most volunteers currently come from Europe. It is increasingly difficult to recruit participants from our Canadian constituency. On the other hand, every summer a number of youth groups from MCM congregations help provide camp and DVBS programs in Aboriginal communities. These short term service projects continue to offer opportunities for service and building relationships.

Leadership Ministries – Henry Kliewer: During my first eight months as director of leadership ministries, I spent most of my time getting to know congregations and pastors. Nellie and I visited half of our 50 congregations. I attended the monthly pastor cluster meetings. A number of search committees solicited help in their pastor search processes. Twenty pastoral transitions took place or are in process during 2008.

I also became acquainted with our support structures, getting to know our MCM staff and board, as well as my reference group. Four additional resources have been put into place: the credentialing committee, pastor search resource people, pastoral evaluation resource people, and conflict advisors. I am grateful to my predecessors, Harold Peters-Fransen and John P. Klassen, for these groups and look forward to employing them even more effectively.

The credentialing committee was active, helping to process two pastor ordinations (Judith Froese Doell and Karen Schellenberg) and one license toward specific ministry (Arlyn Friesen Epp as MC Canada Resource Centre Manager). The reference group is emerging in potential, helping in the discernment of issues facing congregations and area church in the areas of leadership and congregational life.

My gifting lies in the area of pastoral care. I need to spend time alone with God in order to do that in the power of his Spirit. My prayer is that each of us may increase in love of God and neighbour, and that our congregations will reflect the light of Christ to our community across the street and around the world.

At a Glance...

Activity: A community of 50 congregations, together presenting Jesus Christ to the world.

Our Vision: To be a community of congregations unified in Jesus Christ, living a biblical Anabaptist faith, together presenting Jesus Christ to the world.

Annual Budget:
\$1,822,781

Board of Directors:
Hans Werner, Moderator;
Directors: Don Bergen, Julie Derksen, Gordon Driedger, Tym Elias, Erin Morash, Dan Horne, Kathryn Reimer.

Staff: Edgar Rempel, Executive Director; Tom Seals, Treasurer; Beverley Sawatzky and Eva Loewen, Administrative Assistants; Henry Kliewer, Director of Leadership Ministries; Norm Voth, Director of Evangelism and Service Ministries; Bob Wiebe, Director of Camping Ministries; Darryl Neustaedter Barg, Associate Director Media Ministries; Dorothea Rempel Kampen, Frohe Botschaft Producer; Camp Managers and Staff.

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Church Community Building Ministry – Edgar Rempel: In the broader scope of MCM's work in 2008, we were called upon to rethink how we do the ministries that congregations do together. As a result of reduced giving from congregations in 2007 and prior years, the ministry budgets needed to be revised downward to bring them in line with giving. The board reduced program spending by \$100,000 for 2008 to align program spending with available resources from congregations. This left us with the challenge of continuing ministries at a reduced level. The challenge was met by carefully cutting expenditures and yet maintaining the core ministry. We thank congregations for their ongoing support and commitment to our joint ministries.

Addressing the financial challenge meant taking a close look at how we move into the future. The board initiated a process in the latter part of 2008 that engages the constituency in dialogue. This process will seek to redefine who MCM is and the ministries that we will do together as a community of congregations. We look forward to 2009 as we embark on this important time of discernment. May God grant wisdom and guidance as we seek to do God's will in MCM.

–Submitted by Edgar Rempel, Executive Director



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Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC)

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: Making Disciples

Discipleship has been a focus for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in 2008. Extending the peace of Jesus Christ by making disciples has informed our directions and guided our steps throughout the year. God has created disciples within the MCEC/Mennonite Church Canada community of congregations in many ways and through many different avenues.

Disciples . . .

- nurtured through two new congregations within MCEC who officially came into fellowship with the MCEC/Mennonite Church Canada community of congregations. Making faith relevant to the communities around them, The Church of the Living Word in Ottawa and the Markham Christian Worship Centre were welcomed at the 2009 MCEC Annual Church Gathering in April.



Andrea Yantzi (Hillcrest MC) and David Driedger (Hillcrest MC) test their communication skills during the MCEC communication event in 2008. Photo by Lisa Williams.

- extending the peace of Jesus Christ as they gathered for Jr. Youth Breakaway under the theme “Footprints in the Sand.” Two hundred and forty youth and their sponsors created a huge peace sign with their shoes – symbolizing that we can take peace with us wherever we go.
- impacted by the IMPaCT program – a Mennonite Church Canada international pastoral exchange program co-sponsored in 2008 with MCEC. Eight pastors from MCEC came together with pastors from Ukraine, United Kingdom, Burkina Faso, Congo and South Africa

for Bible study, worship and fellowship. Not only were the individuals in the program impacted, but also host congregations, lodging and meal providers, planners who made it possible, and many who provided financial and prayerful support.

- resourced through events like Intersect '08 – Bringing Effective Communication to Real People. Congregational and agency representatives gathered to begin the conversation about effective communication with the MCEC constituency.
- encouraged and stretched as 22 young adults and sponsors traveled to Israel/Palestine for the Yella learning trip, made possible through the support of the MCEC



IMPACT 2008. Photo by Lisa Williams.

community of congregations. Leadership skills and gifts were empowered and released as the group embarked on this life-changing experience together.

We are grateful for the faithfulness of God as the peace of Jesus Christ continues to be extended in Eastern Canada. May God be honoured.

—David Martin, MCEC Executive Minister

At a Glance...

Executive: Leroy Shantz (Chair), Myrna Miller Dyck, Helen Eby, Fred Kinsie, Robert Konrad, Jana Schmidt Lepp, Russ Snyder-Penner, Tim Wagler

MCEC Staff: David Martin (Executive Minister), Muriel Bechtel (Conference Minister), Jeff Steckley (Congregational Ministries Minister), Brian Bauman (Mission Minister), Ester Neufeldt (Operations Minister), Maurice Martin (Regional Minister), Al Rempel (Regional Minister), Marianne Mellinger (Coordinator of Leadership Formation), Lisa Williams (Director of Communication), Joan Schooley (Administrative Assistant), Bev Raimbault (Administrative Assistant), Margaret Oakey (Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant)

MC Canada Representatives in Ontario: Andrew Reesor McDowell, General Board (MC Canada Moderator); Don Friesen, General Board (Secretary); Leroy Shantz, General Board (Moderator of MCEC); Sue Steiner, Christian Formation Council (Chair); Lisa Carr-Pries, Christian Formation Council; Tom Yoder Neufeld, Christian Formation Council; Willard Metzger, Christian Witness Council (Chair); Hun Lee, Christian Witness Council; Noe Gonzalia, Christian Witness Council; Rudy Dirks, Christian Witness Council; Emily Dueck, Christian Witness Council, JD Penner, Christian Witness Council; Kaye Rempel, Support Services Council; Betty Pries, Faith and Life Committee; Gladys Bender, Nominating Committee

MC Canada Staff in Ontario: Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, Missional Formation and Partnership Facilitator (Eastern Canada)

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask)

At a Glance...

Moderator: Renata Klassen

Deputy Moderator: Henry Funk

Secretary: Grace Funk

Chair of Finance: Armin Krahn

Staff:

Anna Rehan, Area Church Youth Minister
Jerry Buhler, Area Church Minister
Charlotte Bueckert, Office Administrator

MC Canada

Representatives:

Garth Ewert Fisher, General Board (Asst. MC Canada Moderator); Gordon Peters, General Board (Treasurer); Renata Klassen, General Board (Moderator of MC Sask); Naomi Unger, Christian Formation Council; Pauline Steinmann, Christian Formation Council; Mark Wurtz, Support Services Council; Dave Feick, Nominating Committee

MC Canada staff in Saskatchewan

Eric Olfert, Missional formation and partnership facilitator for Saskatchewan
Anna Rehan, Youth Ministries facilitator

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Fifty years ago, in 1959, the first Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan session was convened in Rosthern with Paul Schroeder as moderator. In the intervening fifty years, some things have changed dramatically, such as who attends and provides leadership in our organization. But certainly the central focus has remained constant, and a number of the programs are ongoing. We continue to remind ourselves of our common purpose. In our delegate session in 2006 we accepted a vision statement that acknowledges that we are "Christ Centered and Sent". Our Vision for 2010 calls us toward a more Christ-like lifestyle and ministry in our changing times. This common purpose is reflected in the activities and programs led by various commissions. Here are a few examples.

An **Aboriginal Learning Tour** is being planned by the Ministries commission in conjunction with MC Canada's annual delegate sessions. We will give the opportunity for participants to learn and experience our Native brothers and sisters on their ground. This will take place over two days (June 8th & 9th) with the first day being planned away from city settings and the final day within Saskatoon

The **Pastoral Leadership Commission** continues to work diligently at providing opportunities for our pastors to improve our skills and give us tools to better ourselves. The highlight of the year for the PLC was sponsoring an Alban Institute workshop at Shekinah Retreat Centre. The topic was "A New Vision for the Long-Term Pastorate", led by Ed White, Alban Institute Consultant. In addition to our own pastors, we had a number of pastors from other denominations join us as well. It was a rich time of learning and sharing experiences with one another.

Last year we identified that another of our needs here in MC Sask is to equip and grow pastors who are skilled in intentional interim ministry. To that end we have begun planning for an Interim Ministry Course to be held in May 2009. Ken Bechtel and Harold Peters-Fransen, both seasoned intentional interim pastors are our resource persons.

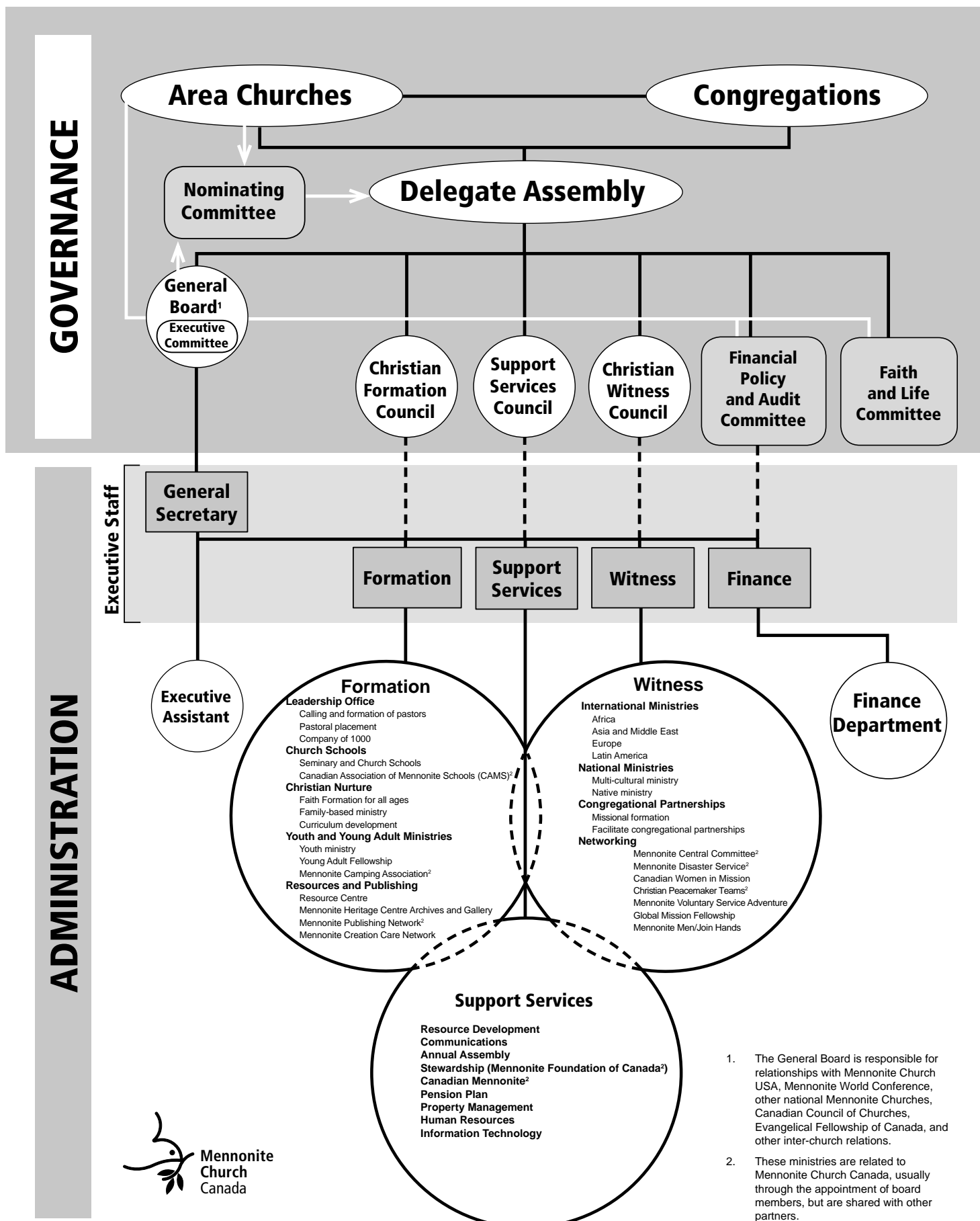
Collaborating programs such as P2P, Circles of Support and Community Chaplaincy under a newly organized Restorative Justice Ministries Saskatchewan committee is allowing for new conversations and new energy to be brought to the work of offering healing friendships to offenders in institutions and helping released offenders to be safe and healthy on the streets.

- We were able bring a **VBS Troupe** to six congregations last summer. The theme for the week was "Listen Up! Messages from God"
- June 4-7 we will host the MC Canada Assembly
- **Mennonite Church Canada Youth Assembly 2009** will happen in Caronport, SK on July 6-10. The theme is "Living Inside Out."
- **IMPACT** will happen in Saskatchewan in 2009
- The Rosthern Mennonite Nursing Home has hired a chaplain, Patty Friesen
- Camp Elim is planning a building project
- **The Congregational Life Resource Team** continues to assist congregations with evaluations and visioning.

—Submitted by Jerry Buhler



Mennonite Church Canada Organizational Chart



Christian Formation Council

At a Glance...

Christian Formation Council 2008-2009

Sue Steiner, Ontario (outgoing Chair); Erwin Tiessen, Saskatchewan; Tom Yoder Neufeld, Ontario; Naomi Unger, Saskatchewan; Lisa Carr-Pries (incoming Chair), Ontario; Pauline Steinmann, Saskatchewan; Earl Reimer, Manitoba; Van Hoa Chau, Manitoba; Coreen Froese, Alberta; Veronica Dyck, B.C.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. -Colossians 3:12ff

This year's Assembly theme, *Living Inside Out*, is a call to the church to make visible, in external behaviour, the transformation of character that God in Jesus Christ is achieving day by day within his sacred body. How do we become a more compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, loving people? By already acting in keeping with the goal toward which we must always strive – already showing kindness, displaying humility, exercising love and compassion – making it a habit to practice the Christian behaviours which we pray will one day be instinctive to all God's people. The best way the church becomes more like what we are called to be is to begin behaving today as if we are already that which we are becoming.



Arlyn Friesen Epp (Resource Centre Director), Naomi Unger (Formation Council) and Ron Rempel (MPN) at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

The purpose and passion of Christian Formation is to support and encourage the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, so that the body of Christ will display more completely the attributes of citizens of God's kingdom of healing, peace, hope, and love. To this end we are pleased to share highlights from the various areas of Christian Formation ministry.

Ministerial Leadership

In September 2008, we welcomed Karen Martens Zimmerly as *Denominational Minister and Director of Leadership Development*. This leadership role combines the important, core activities of a "minister to the denomination" with focused attention to the vital ministry

of developing leaders for the church, in collaboration with Area Churches, church schools, congregations, and other church partners with a specific interest in calling and forming pastoral and other church leaders. One area of special attention and challenge is the nurture of leaders in congregations whose first language is other than English.

The *2007 Pastoral Trends Survey* identified the importance to thriving pastors of providing ongoing support and opportunities for feedback and interaction with peers in ministry. MC Canada is a partner in "Clarifying the Call," an AMBS initiative focused on pastors in their first 3-5 years of ministry. During 2008, two new Canadian pastors participated in this program, and in March 2009 an additional seven Canadian pastors benefited from this opportunity to share learnings and seek additional resources for healthy ministry, from peers and veterans in church leadership ministry in Canada and the United States. Other continuing benefits of the survey are a renewed attention by Area Church Ministers and the Denominational Minister to the overall wellness and wholeness of our current pastors; work on developing an integrated culture of call that involves congregations, schools, and the denomination; and some exciting exploration of the wisdom potential that exists within the growing cohort of retired pastors, for those who are entering or continuing in pastoral ministry.

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Additional initiatives to strengthen the leadership of MC Canada pastors in 2008 included the publication, with MC USA, of *“Many Gifts: calling and growing congregational leaders,”* a gift discernment resource for congregations, and, together with Area Church Ministers, *“Pastoral Care for Homosexual Individuals and their Families,”* a resource for pastors who have occasion to give pastoral care to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons and their families. These resources will be released at the 2009 Annual Ministers’ Conference and are available through the MC Canada Resource Centre.

The past year saw 63 pastors placed in 54 congregations. This number included 18 lead pastors, 26 associate or youth pastors, 17 interim/transitional pastors and two Area Church Ministers.

Company of 1000 continues to provide valuable assistance to pastors in the form of forgivable loans to women and men preparing for pastoral and church-related ministries. During 2008, \$46,500 was disbursed to 22 individuals. In addition, \$4,000 was disbursed to International Ministries to assist 4 international Mennonite pastors in leadership training in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Paraguay, and Thailand. We encourage the members of our congregations to grow this fund by increasing their generosity to this important ministry, especially in these economically challenging times, so that our church will continue to benefit from the gifts of strong, Anabaptist leaders.

Church Schools

A positive spirit of cooperation and commitment to shared mission continues to characterize conversation within our schools and with MC Canada and its schools. In 2008, significant progress was made toward a national consensus on competencies for pastoral leadership. It is recognized that the list of core elements under discussion, which contribute to effective pastoral leadership formation, will only be partially met through formal education and training. Competencies that relate to pastoral experience and personal spiritual and character formation extend beyond the direct mandate of our schools, and include an important role for congregations and area churches as centres of leadership formation.

One outcome of current discussion is a *Leadership Education Task Force Proposal*, drafted by the presidents of Conrad Grebel University College, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Canadian Mennonite University, and Columbia Bible College. At its March 2009 meetings, the Christian Formation Council affirmed this document in principle. Although it is still in process, the proposal is expected to serve as an important catalyst to focus and strengthen the leadership development efforts of schools and church together.

We also value the positive and growing relationship of MC Canada with our K-12 schools across Canada that are a part of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS). While having diverse origins and unique contexts for educational ministry, each school diligently and faithfully strives to create an environment for learning and the formation of Christian character. The gifts of each combine to enrich the whole, as part of a vibrant Mennonite Church in Canada.

For more details, see the individual reports for the post secondary schools and CAMS elsewhere in this book.

Christian Formation staff team for 2008:

Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary; Lois Bergen, Executive Assistant; Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister and Director of Leadership Development; Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Nurture; Arlyn Friesen Epp, Resource Centre Director; Anita Neufeld, Administrative Assistant, Resource Centre; Alf Redekopp, Mennonite Heritage Centre Director; Conrad Stoesz, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archivist; Connie Wiebe, Administrative Assistant, Mennonite Heritage Centre; Ray Dirks, Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery Curator; Anna Rehan, Youth Ministries Facilitator.

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Resources

Resource Centre

The Resource Centre continues its valuable ministry of strengthening the life of the church. We offer a rich, up to date and diverse banquet of Anabaptist resources. In 2008 we were able to add 1000 new print, visual, and electronic titles for study, worship, and personal spiritual enrichment. We are pleased with the significant increases in material use. Circulation of materials was up again over the previous year: loans by 23%; number of individual borrowers 17%; electronic orders 35%; electronic downloads 88% (total: 51,000 for the year). Overall circulation outside Manitoba has also increased significantly. Inquiries suggest that the Resource Centre, through its online presence, is making an impact beyond our own denomination.

The Resource Centre continues to list all Mennonite Publishing Network titles, and offers an easy sales portal for MPN materials. We also have active partnerships with several other Anabaptist publishers (listed online) and, in 2009, anticipate the launch of a fully integrated 'resource consortium' in partnership with several peer Anabaptist resource centres in the east and west of our country. This will enhance the ability of our congregations to access a wider and deeper range of formational resources.



2009 Volunteer Resource Advocates (l-r) – Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Alissa Bender (Alberta), Heidi Epp (BC), Marion Bueckert (SK), Don Engbrecht (MB)

We also continue to seek out and promote our holdings of non-English materials. 2008 saw the cataloguing of 100 new Spanish language titles and we look forward to adding further materials in many of the diverse languages of MC Canada.

Promotion of the Resource Centre occurs in several ways. Our primary means of communication is the *Resource Update*. We currently have 700 individual, personal subscribers, in addition to congregations and individuals who receive the monthly *Equipping* resource. In addition, the Centre is visible through links in MC Canada news releases, church bulletins, the *Cheaper by the Dozen* bulk loan option, and the Canada-wide network of Area Church volunteer *Resource Advocates* (with MPN).

While much good is happening, we continue to strive to do better the things we are called to do. In 2008, about 60% of our congregations used the Centre, up from a low of 39% in 2004. Despite this increase in usage, we wonder how 100% of our congregations might be encouraged to take advantage of the rich fare available in *their* Resource Centre. We receive very positive responses to the worship and other materials generated by our own congregations, shared with others through the Centre. We dream about ways we can be more effective in locating and soliciting more quality 'home-grown' resources for the benefit of the whole church. And with the rapid, ongoing changes that occur in the use of technology in our church and culture, we value the wisdom of the church in guiding decisions on how best to employ the tools that are available, for the betterment of the church and the kingdom of God.

Resource Creation

The Christian Formation Council is committed to offer core Anabaptist teaching and formational resources to our congregations for their ongoing learning and growth. In keeping with this Formation priority, work was done on a family of "Mennonite identity" materials. The English "*What Makes a Mennonite?*" brochure, targeted to users who have some basic knowledge of the church, received a visual and textual update. It is also newly available in two Chinese language versions (traditional and simplified). A complementary English language video is on the task list. An additional brochure entitled "*Who are the Mennonites?*" telling a slightly more extensive version of the Mennonite story is being prepared for use by the Mennonite Heritage Centre and Gallery in English, French, and

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German. This piece will be used alongside the recently completed Anabaptist visual display at the Heritage Centre, and is focused on people who may be only minimally acquainted with the Mennonite Church.

In collaboration with the Multi-cultural Ministries department of Witness, efforts are underway to make *“What Makes a Mennonite?”* available in an increasing number of the languages of our church for use as a teaching and interpretive instrument in outreach ministries. In addition, we expect to make the MC Canada Vision, Identity and Purpose Statements available in the languages of the newly emerging worshipping groups in MCEC and MCBC.

A more substantial translation project currently underway is the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* into Laotian. We hope to have this completed in time to distribute printed copies to the summer gathering of the Lao Mennonite churches in North America.

The 2009 Season of Prayer material, *The Church at the Crossroads* based on Deuteronomy 4:1-9, was written by the staff team of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church in MCBC. This year, as a way of continuing supportive ministry with former subscribers to *Der Bote*, this resource was translated into German and sent to this older, German-speaking demographic in the church. And, in April 2009, a collection of 4 German sermons by Titus Guenther, entitled *“Als die neue Menschheit Gottes leben,”* was distributed to this group of constituents.

Worship

In April 2008, an ad-hoc meeting of Canadian and U.S. Mennonite leaders, initiated by MPN, met to discuss questions and issues surrounding a possible future hymnal resource for our denominations, and other matters related to the worship life of our churches. No specific plans are currently anticipated for a new denominational music collection, due in part to the strong success of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, and the two supplemental volumes, *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*. However, the meeting did result in the establishment of a “Bi-national Mennonite Worship Council” whose role will be to tend to the overall worship needs and trends of our two churches, including the creation of a potential new music resource or other larger worship initiatives.

Youth Ministry

The activities of 2008 revolved primarily around the planning of the Youth Assembly 2009. This year’s youth gathering will be held July 6-10 in Caronport, SK, on the campus of Briercrest Bible College and Seminary. While this biennial event is normally held together with the MC Canada Delegate Assembly, a separate location and date was necessary this year due to the early occurrence of the adult delegate gathering.

Youth Assembly 2009 shares its theme with the MC Canada Delegate Assembly: *Living Inside Out*, based on Colossians 3:12-17, which calls God’s chosen people to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience as they live according to the Word – characteristics that shape the “inside” and inform the “outside.” A Youth Assembly Planning Committee consisting of eight youth and youth pastors drawn from the Area Churches, together with Anna Rehan, worked diligently throughout the year to choose speakers and define the assembly schedule, worship, and activities. A unique feature of this year’s Youth Assembly service initiatives is a “School Kit Challenge” in which youth hope to set a Guinness World Record for the assembly of the most school kits in a single initiative. These kits are destined for distribution in Cuba where MC Canada has a long-standing ministry relationship. Exploration of a suitable location for Youth Assembly 2011 has already begun.

Christian Nurture

This part of the work of Christian Formation focuses on the promotion and nurture of Christians within MC Canada by setting vision, and leading in the development of ministries and resources for people across the age spectrum. In the last few years, a good deal of Elsie Rempel’s energy

At a Glance...

Partners in Christian Formation:

Christian Formation works collaboratively with a variety of partners who bring unique gifts and skills to the formational ministry of the church. These include: Mennonite Publishing Network; Mennonite Camping Association; Mennonite Creation Care Network; Mennonite Post-secondary schools: Canadian Mennonite University, Columbia Bible College, Conrad Grebel University College, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools and its MC Canada affiliated members: United Mennonite Educational Institute, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools, Rosthern Junior College, Menno Simons Christian School, Mennonite Educational Institute; North American Young Adult Fellowship

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has been directed to the development and launch of the Gather 'Round curriculum, and ongoing exploration of the place of children within the worship and spiritual life of our church. She continues to grow the online lectionary-based children's stories and has been involved in a number of presentations and discussions on the topic of children and communion. Other areas of ongoing activity are as editor of the Special Sunday worship resources offered to congregations through *Equipping*, writer of *KidsPak* materials encouraging children of the church to become involved in mission, and the annual at-home booklets for Advent and Lent. In addition, she brings an important voice to the table in helping to ensure that annual Assembly activities and worship are hospitable and suitable for young and old alike.

Beginning in 2009, in response to changing needs within the church, the Christian Nurture department will be refocusing its energy somewhat in the direction of ministry with seniors. With a third of Canada's population expected to reach age 65 in the next 10-15 years, this is an area of spiritual ministry that calls for critical attention. We expect to explore the potential of developing a range of workshop opportunities for congregations, and will draw on the personal gifts of individuals who are making this an area of vocational focus, along with existing and new print materials being published by the church at large and beyond. One expression of this is Elsie's participation on the editorial committee of the newly refocused *Purpose: Stories of Faith and Promise*, an MPN magazine for older readers filled with inspirational articles for daily Christian living.



Ray Dirks (Curator, MHC Gallery), Alf Redekopp (Director, MHC) and John J. Friesen (Professor Emeritus of History and Theology, CMU) in front of the new Anabaptist Display at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Mennonite Heritage Centre

Archives

The Archives continues to be a valuable ministry, as well as a repository and source of historical church and family information, available to researchers, students and interested individuals from the Mennonite constituency and beyond. We currently offer archival services to the congregations and Area Churches of MC Canada, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC), MCC Canada and Mennonite Church Manitoba. We also hold the records for Canadian Mennonite Bible College, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

Acquisitions to the collection arrive on a regular basis and keep archives' staff more than busy cataloguing and organizing material so that it is made accessible for future users. Noteworthy among the many records received in 2008 are the Dr. Harris J. Loewen papers, including his role as chair of the text committee for the 1992 *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, and the papers of EMMC founding bishop Wilhelm H. Falk. In addition, we receive, on a regular basis, the annual reports, weekly bulletins, and minutes of congregations across MC Canada.

The past year also celebrated the eight-panel permanently installed Anabaptist Display telling the 500 year Mennonite story for the benefit of the many people who visit the Archives and Gallery. About 75% of these are first-time visitors, and many have little real knowledge of the Anabaptist faith story. The exhibit, more than 10 years in the making, was dedicated on December 16, 2008. Content was researched and written by Dr. John J. Friesen (Professor Emeritus of History and Theology, CMU) with graphic design by Ray Dirks (Curator, MHC Gallery).

Also in 2008, Alf Redekopp, Director of MHC Archives, was able to spend a month in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, the ministry location of Witness workers Dan & Yvonne Snider Nighswander, as a consulting archivist to the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa facilitating the establishment of an institutional archives, in partnership with local leaders.

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Gallery

The Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery continues to thrive as a ministry that encourages the expression of faith through artistic media and engaging in dialogue within and across faith and cultural traditions. As a partnership ministry, the Gallery draws its support from a dedicated core of supporters and volunteers. Occasional financial grants from external organizations interested in supporting the multi-cultural, peace and justice focus of the Gallery help contribute to the success and impact of this ministry.

Ray Dirks, Gallery curator, prepared a number of exciting and engaging art exhibits in 2008. These included:

- Invisible Dignity Project student exhibition
- Footsteps: Symbols of Hope for the War Affected Child, by Stella Meades and others; and Girls of Stella Matutina: Photos of Hope for the War Affected Child, by Dean Peachey.
- Manitoba Hutterite Art
- Memories & Parachutes: contemporary art from Cuba
- Material Circumstances, by Deborah Danelley
- Connections: Fibre Art, by Pam Godderis Dangerfield, Bonny Voice, and Judy Morningstar
- Standing: A Journey of Resilience: juried exhibition sponsored by MCC Victim's Voices, and Through the Flowers, by Edith Krause, inspired by letters from the Soviet Union
- Faces of Courage III, by Betty Smith, portraits of people with breast cancer

Exhibits anticipated in 2009 include: an artistic celebration of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's 50th anniversary; art by prisoners, sponsored by MCC's Open Circle; and a possible exhibit from Sudan.

Challenges

We are distinctly aware of the impact of the current economic climate in Canada and around the world. At the same time, we are thankful for the dedication of gifted Formation staff who continue to give their best to help the ministries of our church thrive. The new budget is already marked by some reductions in operation, and we have identified contingencies which may be implemented if circumstances warrant further restraint. But we remain confident that with God's help and the financial generosity of God's people, these important ministries of MC Canada will continue to thrive, and even grow as we look beyond the current year.

We sense a growing need to give leadership to our church in the area of ministry with seniors. This year's plans include a shift in some staff time and resources in this direction, and we invite the prayers and counsel of our constituency as we both lead and respond to needs in this area.

The face of MC Canada continues to change. New churches being founded are most likely to have a cultural background rooted outside Canada. We pray for the wisdom and the resources to assist these new Anabaptist brothers and sisters in growing leaders and forming faithful communities that are true to their culture and the faith of the church.

Never far from our minds is the young adult demographic of our church. Across MC Canada, there are hopeful signs of renewal and re-rooting as the children and grandchildren of the church that has borne us begin to give visible shape and direction to a church that continues to be re-formed as it responds to our time and the calling of these next generations of God's people.

We depend on the prayers, counsel, and financial commitment of the whole church to bring to fruition the plans we have laid together toward building a strong, faithful people engaged in God's work of reconciliation, peace, and hope.

—Sue Steiner, Christian Formation Council Chair, and Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary, Christian Formation

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Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS)

At a Glance...

Mission: Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.



Reece Retzlaff

"I chose to come to AMBS because of its Anabaptist-Mennonite roots, its community and its biblical studies courses," Reece Retzlaff said. "Most especially, I chose to come to AMBS because this is where God was leading me to be. I am enjoying learning – in class and in community – more about God, others, myself and ministry. I am very grateful for the support of the church and the opportunity to study to bring these gifts back to the larger church."

Reece, from Calgary and Edmonton, Alb., is one of fourteen students from Canada studying at AMBS in the 2008-2009 year. She is working toward a Master of Divinity degree, anticipating graduation in May 2009.

AMBS serves in many ways

In addition to offering masters degree programs for ministry and church leadership, AMBS offers non-traditional programs and other resources:

- Learning and sabbatical opportunities through the AMBS Church Leadership Center for people already in ministry.
- Undergraduate ministry training with programs such as the conference-based Multicultural Leadership Education effort in Ontario and Manitoba.
- Books, journals, and publications from the Institute of Mennonite Studies, such as two volumes of *Take our Moments and our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book*, available from Herald Press, and *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology*, co-published with Canadian Mennonite University.
- !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth, encouraging them to listen for God's call and test theological studies.

AMBS relies on support from the church

AMBS is grateful for support from Mennonite Church Canada – friends, congregations, conferences, and the denomination – and for the opportunities to serve as the seminary for Mennonite Church Canada.

The AMBS budget for 2008-2009 was \$3,853,217. Canadian donors gave \$356,130 through Mennonite Church Canada or directly to the seminary. AMBS is recognized as a charity on Schedule VIII by Revenue Canada. (All amounts above are in Canadian dollars based on the exchange rate in July 2008.)

AMBS leadership changes

Nelson Kraybill concludes twelve and a half years as president of AMBS in July 2009. An interim president has been named by the board of directors (George R. Brunk III), and a search committee is working toward appointment of a president. Canadian representatives on the search committee are Ray Friesen, chair of the AMBS board, Kathy Koop, secretary of the board, and Sue Steiner. Board member Randall Jacobs chairs the search committee. Please pray that God will guide the decisions and prepare the next president of AMBS for this ministry with both the seminary and the church.

Three Canadians, in addition to the two named above, serve on the AMBS board: Bruce Baergen, Erika Friesen, and Jorge Hoajaca.

More information

See more about what's happening and who is studying at AMBS at www.ams.edu. Become a fan on the AMBS Facebook page and get notices of news and upcoming events.

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Canadian Mennonite University (CMU)

Greetings from CMU! Our theme verse for the year comes from John 17:21, where Jesus prays that those who believe in him “may be one, just as you are in me and I am in you.” At CMU, we seek to live out that verse as students from over 30 denominations – including 120 students from MC Canada – seek to become thoughtful Christian leaders in church and society through studies in the arts, music, music therapy, theology, and church ministries.

It has been a very good year for CMU; in January we reached a milestone when 506 students enrolled in undergraduate programs at our Shaftesbury campus. Altogether, 630 students are studying through that campus, including 32 graduate students and 92 students in the Outtatown adventure and discipleship program. Together with 1,060 students at Menno Simons College, our campus at the University of Winnipeg, a total of 1,690 students are taking courses at CMU.

In addition to the good student numbers, our strength and quality as a university was recognized last October when we became a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, or AUCC. This is a very significant step; by being made a member of the AUCC we have received, so to speak, the “Gold Seal of Approval.” This means, among other things, that CMU’s degrees are now recognized, and that students can more easily transfer credits to other schools.

A few other highlights:

- We added new programs in Business & Organizational Studies and Disaster Recovery Studies, the former with the support of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and the latter in partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service. We also added five new faculty in the areas of business, psychology, biology, communications, and music therapy.
- We received a gift of \$1 million for our library.
- In response to requests from Mennonite churches and conferences, we developed a new Masters of Arts in Christian Ministry program, designed for those who want to improve their ministry in the church or explore their calling to church ministry. It will be launched in fall, 2009.
- We offered resources to the church through our annual Church in Ministry Conference; through our annual lectures; through the journals Vision and Direction; and through workshops and other events.
- We appointed Terry Schellenberg, formerly principal at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, to be our new Vice President External.
- 135 students did practicum service assignments in Canada and around the world.
- Financially, we ended the 2007-08 budget year with a slight deficit, which we were able to cover from previous surpluses. For this we are thankful to God, and to you. But we know that the next year will be difficult for CMU, as it will be for many other organizations, ministries, and individuals. We hope you will continue to remember CMU as you consider where to donate this year.

Finally, 2008 marked the tenth anniversary of the founding of CMU. It was on November 18, 1998, that representatives of Concord College, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, and Menno Simons College signed a Memorandum to create the university. That date is significant because that is when the colleges and their owners – Mennonite Church Canada, the Manitoba Conference of Mennonite Brethren, and the Friends of Menno Simons College – agreed to take the risk of working together for the cause of Mennonite higher education in Canada. By every measure, I think I can say that their hopes for this venture have been realized – the risk has paid off. CMU today is a strong and vital part of the church’s mission in Canada, preparing leaders who are ready to give good answers for their faith, no matter where God calls them to serve.

–Gerald Gerbrandt, *President*

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Columbia Bible College (CBC)

At a Glance...

Our Mission: Preparing people for a life of discipleship, service and ministry” by offering schools of discipleship, ministry preparation, and continuing education; and resourcing evangelical churches of our region for their mission.

Number of Students (Approximate)

- Discipleship: 130
- Ministry preparation: 340 (Pastoral, Counseling, Early Childhood Education, Educational Assistant, Intercultural Studies, Outdoor leadership, Youth work, Worship Arts)
- Continuing education: Several hundreds in courses, seminars, and conferences.

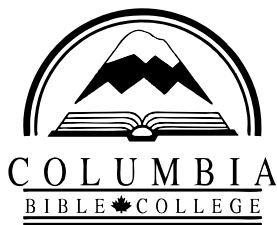
Key Initiatives

(Visit our website for more information: www.columbiabc.edu)

- Columbia on the Road – mini-courses offered in churches.
- Columbia Online – selection of courses and ministry certificates offered online.
- Church match bursary program
- Updated College Bylaws
- Added new Academic Dean (Virginia Hooper) and Business Administrator (Terry Christie)
- Working with sponsoring churches to plan future new programs.

Annual Budget: \$5.6M; Funded provincially.

Reporting to: Special Assembly comprised of delegates from BC Mennonite Brethren and MC British Columbia. Informally connecting with Mennonite Church Canada’s Christian Formation via David Bergen, Executive Secretary.



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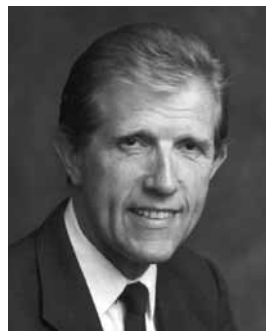
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George Schmidt

Giving Tribute to a Lifelong Educator: George Schmidt

A few months ago, George Schmidt finished his earthly journey after a brief battle with cancer. George is a trophy to the cause of Bible Colleges – first getting a start at Bethel Bible School as a student and then serving in a number of roles at Columbia over 34 years.

At his memorial, person after person described his gracious fairness, seemingly unending patience with and for people, and humble service to whatever God and His people asked of him.

He lived Micah 6:8 “To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”

Hundreds were influenced by this faithful, unassuming teacher and mentor. Our denomination was enriched by his service on various boards and the people he has mentored into various ministry roles.

Columbia continues to matter because it continues to prepare people for a life of faith, servanthood, and ministry. When we imagine how many people are touched by someone over a lifetime of 70 years, thousands can be touched and blessed, hundreds of churches enriched, and many communities influenced with the love and gospel of Christ.

We look forward to continuing our service to the church over the years ahead.

–Submitted by Ron Penner



Conrad Grebel Univeristy College (CGUC)

Challenging mind and spirit

“Conrad Grebel University College is a liberal arts college founded by the Mennonite Church and affiliated with the University of Waterloo. The mission and programs of the College are rooted in and inspired by its Christian identity and its Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage. The mission of Conrad Grebel University College is to seek wisdom, nurture faith, and pursue justice and peace in service to church and society.”

This opening to Conrad Grebel University College’s new mission statement illustrates how the College “lives inside out.” Beginning with our internal identity, we reach out to the world through our students, alumni, teaching, and academic research.

Each year Grebel welcomes over 100 “frosh” to our residence community of over 240 students from all 6 of the faculties in the University of Waterloo and almost every province in Canada. This vibrant community offers leadership opportunities in Student Council, donning, intramural sports, faculty engagement groups, mentoring, and committee involvement. Chaplain Ed Janzen works with an active Chapel Team to coordinate weekly worship and other ways to challenge the spirit.

Grebel’s academic program provides an intellectually challenging environment for young adults. Grebel professors teach 72 undergraduate classes, the majority of this teaching is in Music, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Religious studies (approximately 3,200 course enrollments).

The Master of Theological Studies program currently has 31 active students. This year we provided almost \$50,000 in scholarships to students in our graduate program. This includes a Full Tuition Scholarship for full-time students.

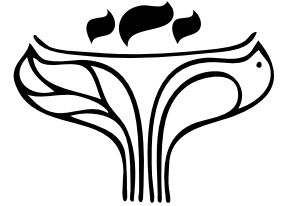
Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre continues to be an important academic community for doctoral students at the Toronto School of Theology. Graduates of this program include new faculty members, Jeremy Bergen and Derek Suderman.

Faculty publications like Nathan Funk’s “Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East” and Marlene Epp’s “Mennonite Women in Canada: A History,” illustrate the impact our professors have on the life of the Mennonite church and our world.

The 2008-09 budget of \$5.4 million included a grant from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada of over \$180,000. Donations account for 10% of our budget.

We are grateful to be an integral part of the mission of Mennonite Church Canada.

–Submitted by Ronald J.R. Mathies, Acting President



Alina Balzer Peters from Saskatoon is a Don in the residence at Grebel. She is enrolled in Music and Women’s Studies at the University of Waterloo. “I chose Grebel for the opportunity to live across Canada in a community that would allow me to make that transition. I found that even with a large leap across the country I still had a home.”

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Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS)

CAMS is an association of Canadian Anabaptist/Mennonite/Christian schools that seeks to provide mutual support of the common ministry that we share.

We have a variety of schools in our regular ranks: Mennonite Educational Institute (MEI) in B.C.; Menno Simons Christian School (MSCS) in Alberta; Rosthern Junior College (RJC) in Sask.; Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI), Steinbach Christian High School (SCHS), Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute (MBCI), Westgate Mennonite Collegiate (WMC), Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools (WMES) (in Manitoba); and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate (RMC) and United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) in Ont.

Some schools are elementary schools, some secondary, some both. These ten schools trace their lineage to a number of Mennonite conferences and groups. As well, the schools have a wide range of linkages to a variety of supporting conferences and associations.

Each school's circumstances are unique. And yet, as a group we communicate and gather regularly, and share insights and expertise freely. And, I might add, we appreciate very much the connection to the Church and its bodies, like Mennonite Church Canada. While the church schools sometimes feel like forgotten children, and CAMS schools together occasionally feel like a gathering of orphaned children from a variety of parents, we welcome a connection like the one we feel is growing and developing with MC Canada.

In the past year we have gathered on several occasions. In October, administrators met on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University to discuss a number of issues. At the end of January we met again, this time in Pittsburgh, on the occasion of an American MEA-sponsored Education Leaders Gathering. Finally, administrators and staffs met in Brandon, Man. in February on the occasion of a CAMS-sponsored Educators Gathering on the topic "The Power of Story". And we are already planning ahead for Spring 2010 for a choral/band music festival in Winnipeg where our choirs and bands will gather to make music and praise God together.

The text for our next CAMS gathering calls us to *"let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom."* Yes, that's what we're about in our CAMS schools, and it's what we want to pass on to a new generation of young people who may well be the leaders of the church tomorrow.

—Submitted by Victor J. Winter, Chair



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Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN)

Home of Faith & Life Resources and Herald Press

A ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA

WHAT WE PUBLISH

- **Books.** New titles for 2009 include books on mission, renewal, peacemaking, and theology – plus children’s books, novels, biographies, and two new titles in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series. The backlist includes 400 titles for all ages on a wide range of topics.
- **Curriculum.** *Gather 'Round* – a Bible-based curriculum for pre-school to youth, and for parents/caregivers. *Adult Bible Study*, with supplemental online materials. A new discipleship curriculum, in both English and Spanish, called *Via – On The Way With Christ*. The 2009 VBS materials feature the missional church theme, “Catch the Spirit – Join God’s Work in the World.” These materials can be adapted for mid-week programs.
- **Periodicals.** *Rejoice*, a devotional magazine. *Leader*, a magazine to equip the missional congregation; includes popular seasonal worship resources. *Purpose*, a magazine with columns on food, peace, humour, and resources for faithful living. *With*, a magazine for youth, to be discontinued in summer of 2009.
- **Church and leadership resources.** Hymnals and hymnal supplements. New instrumental CD from hymnal supplements to be released in summer 2009. *Close to Home* pamphlets on sensitive issues. Church bulletins. Bible reading record booklets for all ages. Certificates for membership, baptism, marriage, parent/child dedication, transfer of membership. And other essential resources for your church!



HOW TO FIND THE RESOURCES YOU NEED

- **From MPN.** Comprehensive 2009 catalogue sent to all congregations. Website (www.mpn.net) with web store. Updates through *Equipping*. Canadian toll free line: 800-631-6535. Browse & Buy program available for congregations.
- **From Mennonite Church Canada.** A helpful partnership agreement includes online access to most MPN resources through the Resource Centre website (www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre). Also, area church resource advocates, coordinated by the Resource Centre staff, provide visibility to MPN resources.
- **From other channels.** Herald Press books available through most bookstores and through online retailers such as Amazon and MennoLink.

Report by Ron Rempel, Executive Director, Mennonite Publishing Network, for Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, June 2009

At a Glance...

Financial snapshots

Income last year was \$3.2 million in sales and \$169,000 in donations with 14% of donations from Canada. Sales income 9% less than previous year. 2009 budget includes expense cuts.

Board of Directors

3 from Mennonite Church Canada and 5 from Mennonite Church USA. From Canada: Laverne Brubacher (ON), vice-chair; Dan Jack (AB), treasurer; Abe Bergen (MB). From USA: Phil Bontrager (OH), chair; Rachel Gerber (CO), secretary; Joe Lapp (VA); Melba Moore (CA); Curtis Berry (PA).



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Mennonite Camping Association (MCA)

Mennonite Camping Association, established in 1960, links Mennonite Camps with each other and with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. It promotes Christian camping from an Anabaptist perspective and strengthens outdoor ministries in our denomination in a variety of ways. Major Camping Association events are the semi annual bi-national and regional conventions. The 2008 Bi-National Convention took place March 17 - 20, 2008 at Spruce Lake Retreat, Pa., with the theme of "Breaking Through Walls". The next bi-national convention, in 2010, will take place at Hidden Acres, Ont.

The newly revised MCA web site includes a growing amount of information about MCA activities, individual camps, maps, newsletters, and downloadable resources from member camps. MCA newsletters aim to go out monthly and are available at www.mennonitecamping.org/mca/ for members and the general public.

Current Board Members are Ken Bontrager (Camp Deerpark, Westbrookville, N.Y.), Corbin Graber (Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Divide, Colo.), Lanny Millette (Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa), Lori Lichti (Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich.), Doc Johnson (Mennohaven, Tiskilwa, Ill.), Sarah Dougald (Glenbrook Day Camp, Stouffville, Ont.), Elsie Rempel (Mennonite Church Canada), Evon Castro (Mennonite Church USA), Linford King (Mennonite Church USA).

The denominational representatives on this board present the priorities and selected resources from our denomination, and our publisher, Mennonite Publishing Network, to the board and convention participants, and regularly affirm the camps for their contribution to the growth of leaders and to an awareness of being part of a global church and a people of God. We report back to our denomination about the way MCA camps seek God's face in creation, receive God's Love in Christ, and radiate God's love in Christ. The MCA board is exploring how they can help the larger MCA camps promote themselves to the Mennonite institutions so that their business stays within our communities. MCA is also willing and eager to present displays and workshops at National Assemblies/Conventions. In Canada, this role has been accepted by Bob Wiebe from Camps with Meaning, Man.

This past year, a flexible "Food & Farming" retreat outline and planning guide was developed by an MCA sub-committee, and several MCA camps are using this outline to host Food & Farming Retreats in March of 2009. In Canada this included MC Manitoba's Camps with Meaning and MC Sask's Camp Shekinah.

MCA and the camps it links with, as well as the broader church, form a vital part of calling, equipping and sending the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

—Submitted by Elsie Rempel

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North American Young Adult Fellowship

The North American Young Adult Fellowship (YAF), a shared ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, has been in existence since 2001. Its purposes are:

1. To assist young adults in becoming more active in congregational life and to assist congregations in reaching young adults.
2. To connect with colleges and seminaries in order to assist and be assisted in the wider purposes of young adult ministry.
3. To provide resources for both young adults and congregational leaders on issues and concerns important to young adults.
4. To assist regional denominational staff in building networks among young adults in their constituency.
5. To gather young adults together in an annual gathering for inspiration, nurture, encouragement, discussion, and action, and to encourage them to become more involved in church life and building bridges across the generations.
6. To be the body that helps church-wide agencies call and encourage young adults to serve as staff, board members, pastors, and in other leadership capacities and to continue the bi-national relationships that young adults feel are so important.
7. To aid in guiding national staff and programming designed for young adult ministry.

While we consider other avenues for carrying out these purposes, the majority of our efforts are focused on the annual Young Adult Fellowship retreat which takes place sometime between the end of September and the beginning of November. The location varies from year to year between Canada and the US and from east to west.

The 2008 Young Adult Fellowship retreat, "Rise Up," was held Oct. 31- Nov. 2 at Camp Overlook, near Harrisonburg, Virginia. The retreat used a participant-driven discussion format called Open Spaces to identify, discuss, and plan responses to the issues most important to American and Canadian Mennonite young adults today. The three issues given highest priority were church welcome (or lack thereof, at times), quarter-life crisis (more about this on the back cover of the December 2, 2008 issue of *The Mennonite*), and disagreeing well.

Here is some of the positive feedback we received from retreat participants:

- "...we were able to sort through what is really pressing for us and glean wisdom..."
- "[My highlight was] seeing that there is still a powerful value in our spirituality and church life amongst our generation, as well as energy to increase this."

Out of the 20 responses received from participants, 19 identified tackling young adult issues and/or connecting with other Mennonite young adults as the highlight of the retreat. We could not be more excited about that outcome.

However, the following response reflects another common refrain:

- "I feel like [this] was organized quite well. We just need to find a way to get the word out about it."

This response was not surprising. For years, advertising has been our biggest hurdle. We believe you, the delegates at our Assemblies, are one of our biggest allies in getting the good word out to the young adults of our church.

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Here are some ways you can help:

1. Every year we send an email with a retreat poster and registration form to each Canadian area church and U.S. area conference. Watch for information about the 2009 Young Adult Fellowship retreat coming your way this summer and help others in your region be aware of and engage in this event.
2. The YAF planning committee is convinced that we will not be fully meeting our mandate until we have representation from each area church/conference at the annual YAF retreat. When you receive the registration form, identify at least one young adult in your region or congregation who could go. Offer funds to assist your young adults to attend.
3. Since there's more than just regional diversity in our Church, consider the ethnic diversity in your region or congregation when you choose young adults to sponsor. As part of our mandate, we hope for more participation from our Latino, Chinese, Vietnamese, First Nations, Laotian, African-American, and other underrepresented young adults.
4. For YAF to have the most tangible impact on the Mennonite Church, it also needs to have a positive regional impact. Work with young adults in your region and congregation, especially those who have attended these retreats on your behalf, to establish a regional young adult council with regional young adult events.
5. Place the oversight of this council into the job description of a regional denominational staff member. Experience shows that young adult involvement in the church is only sustainable when it is made an area of priority for a staff member.

Despite serving as MC Canada and MC USA's young adult arm for close to 10 years, YAF is still introducing itself to many. If you want to know more about who we are, what we do, and how we do it, please contact us. Dave Bergen at the MC Canada office (1.866.888.6785; dbergen@mennonitechurch.ca) and Scott Hartman at the MC USA office (1.866.866.2872; scotth@mennoniteusa.org) are two great people to start with.

Our most recent retreat was filled with passion and hope. It was a welcome reminder that in a time when many express anxiety over declining church membership numbers, the young adults of our church hold the potential of a bright future for the Mennonite Church in Canada and the United States. With your help, and the Holy Spirit's guidance, this bright future can be realized.

- *Young Adult Fellowship Committee*: Peter Epp (Oregon), Alissa Bender (Alberta), Dave Maurer (Ohio), Jill Swiers Baker (Oregon/Minnesota), Jessica Dyck (Manitoba/Ontario), Scott Hartman (Indiana/MC USA staff representative), Dave Bergen (Manitoba/MC Canada staff representative)

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Christian Witness Council

We join the Apostle Paul in saying “*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.*” (Romans 1:8) Some of you may remember Chilean Baptist Raquel Contreras from the 2008 MC Canada Assembly, and how she ‘blamed’ us as Canadian Mennonites for causing her to change her ways and activities because of our witness to the gospel of peace. *Your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.* An elder in a Muslim community in Southern Mindanao, Philippines said to us this year, that ‘I am like a Mennonite Muslim, because I now know about making peace.’ As a Muslim, he has been profoundly touched and transformed because *your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.* A pastor in Cuba, with emotion in his voice, said that if he and his brother (in the faith) were the only two Mennonites in Cuba, they would still stand firm and witness as radical, faithful Christians. *This because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.* A Lao pastor in Ontario has come asking us to help him spread the gospel through a Mennonite understanding in his home country. *This because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.*

And so we thank you – the delegates, pastors, constituents, volunteers, leaders – for the way that people around you are hearing of your faith, and are being encouraged and transformed as a result. We have tremendous opportunities to be faithful and to witness to a gospel that is truly good news for all people, today and forever.

Witness Highlights

- *Maskipiton* and the *Sacred Tree*, two books commissioned by Native Ministries, are being translated into French and Spanish and will be taken to the Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Paraguay in July.
- 10 Indigenous people from Canada will travel to Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and join together with a group from the USA on a Learning Tour. They will be hosted by Indigenous Mennonite groups from Paraguay, and together will visit the Chaco region of Paraguay and Argentina.
- The Native Ministry resource box *Reaching up to God our Creator* has been well received by congregations. In fact, it was the most downloaded resource from the Resource Centre in 2008 (1469 downloads)!
- Barb Daniels, from the Riverton Fellowship Circle (Manitoba), was commissioned for leadership in that congregation. She was called from within the congregation.
- A web site has been created to guide congregations through Pandemic Preparedness. A volunteer task force did significant work at preparing this resource. Check out www.churchpandemicresources.ca. This site is gaining broad recognition, and had 6,500 hits in February alone, and 37% of visitors stayed on the site for over 30 minutes,
- Working with Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure (MVSA) to strengthen our relationship and encourage more voluntary service opportunities for young adults within Canada.
- Radical Journey – we now have an 11 month team internship program for service internationally. This is run in partnership with Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA.
- Our first ever Canadian Native Ministries Learning Tour takes place right after Assembly!
- Ten of sixteen congregations in Alberta have congregational partnerships with

At a Glance...

Council Members

Willard Metzger, chair
Hun Lee
Emily Dueck
Waldimar Neufeld
Lynell Bergen
John David Penner
Irene Crosland
Rudy Dirks
Noe Gonzalia
*Laura Loewen
(completing her term)



Barb Daniels at her commissioning service in February 2009, Riverton Fellowship Circle, Manitoba.

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At a Glance...

Christian Witness Staff:

In 2008 the Christian Witness team included: **Janet Plenert**, Executive Secretary; **Val Pankratz**, Executive Assistant; **Jennifer Rempel**, Executive Assistant (on leave); **Ingrid Miller**, Administrative Assistant; **Tim Froese**, Executive Director for International Ministries and Mission Facilitator for Latin America; **Hippolyto Tshimanga**, Mission Partnership Facilitator for Africa & Europe; **Gordon Janzen**, Mission Partnership Facilitator for Asia; **Edith and Neill von Gunten**, Co-Directors of Native Ministry; **Norm Dyck**, Director of Congregational Partnerships; **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld**, Missional Formation & Partnerships Facilitator for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada; **Eric Olfert**, Missional Formation & Partnerships Facilitator for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan; **Jim Shantz**, Interim Missional Formation & Partnerships Facilitator for Mennonite Church Alberta; **Samson Lo**, Director of Multi-Cultural Ministry.

international Witness workers and ministries.

- CERCAPAZ, a Centre for Christian Peace Resources, was launched in Chile, providing resources and leadership training for congregations throughout the country that are part of UBACH (Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile), our ministry partner, and other churches inspired by the gospel of shalom.
- Numerous short term Special Assignments have given international service opportunities to experienced members from our church with placements in Ethiopia, Mexico, Palestine, South Africa, and Thailand.
- A second Peace and Reconciliation team was commissioned by Peacebuilders Community with which Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja work in a conflicted region of Mindanao, Philippines. This team of 15 includes both Christians and Muslims.
- Hinke Loewen-Rudgers is preparing for bridge-building ministry in Palestine-Israel by learning the Arabic language.
- Church partners in Sichuan, China, received support and distributed relief aid in the areas affected by the earthquake of May 2008.
- The Vietnam Mennonite Church (VMC) celebrated and formalized its legal status in a government-approved General Assembly held November 15-17, 2008. The VMC represents over 6,000 members in 24 provinces. Mennonites from Canada worked with MC Canada staff to advocate for the VMC during a time of restriction.
- Christina and Darnell Barkman, our first Witness interns in Philippines, concluded a 10-month internship with Peacebuilders Community in Davao City.
- Together with other North American and French Mennonites, we help to fund theological studies for Burkinabe church leaders in neighbouring countries, and for rural Congolese pastors.
- Witness provides scholarships for the theological studies of the two first women theology students of the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Congo.
- Together with MCC colleagues, Witness workers in South Africa are working together at developing an Anabaptist Network/Centre.

New Staff – in this past year **Norm Dyck** joined Witness staff as Director of Congregational Partnerships. Norm has brought a pastor's heart to his role, along with a very collaborative working style, good humour, joy, and energy. His love for the church and vision for a healthy, connected, faithful church has made him fit right in. Norm would love to explore with you ways of deepening your congregational life through a congregational partnership. Look for Norm and stop him for a conversation!

IMPACT – (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together) Along with Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, we are busy planning a fall IMPACT event. Six lucky MC Saskatchewan congregations will host six pastors from other countries for two weeks in October 2009. This bilingual Spanish-English event will allow our pastors and congregations to talk in depth about being a faithful church in the world today. This will be the fourth annual IMPACT, and history has now proven that it is a transformational experience for all involved! Mennonite Church British Columbia has already indicated their desire to host IMPACT 2010. We ask for prayers for the planners, that visas will be granted, and that God will be working in the hearts of all those who will participate.

Who cares about a potential Pandemic? – Mennonite Church Canada does! Because we believe that in crisis and emergency situations the church has a critical role to play in society as a faithful witness of God's love and compassion, we have worked hard to help congregations prepare themselves to respond. The web site www.churchpandemicresources.ca is your first stop in thinking about the church living out its vocation in times of crisis. This site is attracting significant interest from a wide range of church, government, and health care professionals. And here at the Assembly we are proud to launch, together with Mennonite Publishing Network and Mennonite Disaster Service, two resources for congregational use that we have commissioned:

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Don't Be Afraid: Stories of Christians in Times of Trouble by Rebecca Seiling and Cindy Snider. A book of four stories for middler children, based on true accounts of times of crisis in the global church, both contemporary and historical (Bishop Cyprian in the early church, SARS in Toronto, Katrina in the USA and AIDS in Zimbabwe). Includes suggestions for thought and action.

Beyond our Fears: Following Jesus in Times of Crisis by Pamela Driedger. This four part biblical study guides small groups, Sunday School classes, or individuals in thinking about the calling of the church in difficult times. Includes biblical commentary, true stories of crises from history and our own day, and questions for reflection. *Don't Be Afraid* can be used as a companion book or for children's time.

Beyond our Fears: Guide for Leaders. This book includes materials that will help congregations mount a coordinated and creative education and worship series on crisis preparedness. Includes study guides for youth and adult groups, children's activities and worship resources.

We are grateful to the volunteer Pandemic Task Force that helped with the planning, research, and review of the materials, and the many others who consulted and contributed in a variety of ways in the preparation of all these materials!

Discernment: Church Planting

Mennonite Church Canada area churches have asked MC Canada in a variety of ways to help network, encourage, and resource questions of church health, growth and planting.

Towards this end, we have pulled together an ad hoc Church Growth networking body from the area churches. This group meets approximately monthly to share challenges and issues from their area church, and learn from each other. We are hoping to have a good MC Canada representation this fall at the Church Planting Canada conference in Calgary, and plan to use that time to think together about the future growth of our church.



Hun Lee, Noe Gonzalia, Laura Loewen and Rudy Dirks – all members of the Witness Council, at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

With the impetus of the General Board to have church growth/health/planting as one of the Assembly 2009 discernment topics, we have asked the Church Growth networking body to be a resource in planning and shaping the Delegate Discernment session.

Peace in the Public Square – 1,000 Mennonites for Peace

As a part of Mennonite Church Canada's emphasis on peace in the public square, Witness has launched a *1000 Mennonites for Peace* campaign this spring. By sending information to every congregation and a column in the *Canadian Mennonite*, we encouraged MC Canada members to file a Peace Tax Return together with their income taxes. This return gave the opportunity to witness to our government that we oppose the use of our taxes to pay for war.

God is a god of peace, and as followers of Jesus we seek to promote peace in all aspects of our lives – including our finances and our payment of taxes. At the time of writing we are in the midst of tax season, and don't know how broad a participation this effort will have. We encourage people to look beyond this tax year and continue to add to the 1,000 Mennonites for Peace initiative in future tax years. This is one more small effort to be a visible witness in the public square.

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Compliance with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

While other MC Canada ministry areas may also mention this topic, we feel it important to note in the Witness report. As a charity operating within Canada, CRA requires that we pay close attention to proving 'end use control' of the funds we send outside of Canada. MC Canada has always sought to be in compliance with CRA regulations. However, the interpretation and application of CRA regulations continue to become more stringent, requiring us to exercise increasing levels of control. We operate with a clear paradigm of ministry in partnership: we want to be good partners, empowering national churches and partners in other countries to discern and act on the ministry to which God is calling them. The tightening of CRA requirements can be in conflict with our missiology and our ecclesiology. Our commitment to continue working to be in compliance with CRA regulations has caused rigorous, healthy debate concerning our responsibility as a people of God. Will it become necessary to challenge CRA compliance in order to remain aligned with our missiological calling? Witness Council and the General Board have grappled with these implications as we keep seeking compliance with CRA. Staff have been directed to give urgent attention to CRA compliance questions in this year.



Janet Plenert (Executive Secretary, Christian Witness) at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly

Participating in the Global Church

Mennonite Church Canada is a charter member of the Global Mission Fellowship. This network was formed in 2003 to encourage Anabaptist churches and mission agencies from around the world to share, collaborate, vision, and dream together for more effective global mission. There are 65 members from 40 countries in the GMF. Support from MC Canada allows delegates from Africa, Latin America, and Asia to come to Paraguay this summer for a 3 day gathering prior to the MWC Assembly.

Mennonite World Conference – While not structurally an official program relationship of Witness, MWC is an important partner body of MC Canada, and one of the key vehicles for working towards our priority of becoming a global church. With the MWC Assembly in the final stage of preparations before the July event, we want to note the important contributions Witness staff are making, often over and above their Witness roles:

- **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld** – is the overall translation coordinator – a task of monumental proportions.
- **Tim Froese** – will be co-leading a Learning Tour prior to Assembly.
- **Neill and Edith von Gunten** – are keenly involved in networking and coordinating the first of its kind Indigenous peoples gathering and Learning Tour, which will include Indigenous people from 6 countries.
- **Janet Plenert** – North American representative to the Global Mission Fellowship (2003-09), chair of the Global Mission Fellowship (2006-09) and chair of MWC's new Mission Commission (2008-09).
- **Eric Olfert** – Planning Assistant for the GMF, and the Mission Commission, Eric works with Janet in attending to the details of planning an international gathering, and conceptualizing MWC's new Mission Commission.

–Submitted by Willard Metzger, Chair, Christian Witness Council, and Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada Witness

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Canadian Women in Mission (CWM)

"As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10

Our CWM **Executive** includes Ruth Jantzi, Secretary-Treasurer, 4 regional Presidents, Evelyn Buhr, AB, Ruby Harder, SK, Betty Ann Hildebrand, MB, Shirley Redekop, WMCEC, and myself. In addition, I have the pleasure of introducing Trudy Gortzen who is joining our executive as the Chair of Women's Ministries for Mennonite Church British Columbia (MC BC). We are delighted to have Trudy participating in our meetings.

Updates on Regular Activities

1. Bible Study Guide (BSG)

We continue sharing the production of an annual Bible Study Guide with our USA Mennonite sisters. The 2009 Guide, ***For the Beauty of the Earth: Women, Faith and Creation Care***, has been written by Patty Friesen, Saskatoon, SK.

2. Spiritual Growth Assistance Fund

It is of special interest to us when we hear of women pursuing theological education. This year we are pleased to provide financial assistance to 3 women for the 2008/09 school year: Carrie Martens, Winnipeg, MB, Kara Carter, Milverton, ON, and Virginia Gerbrandt, Leamington, ON.

A recent recipient said, "I wish to express my deepest thanks for your financial support. I so appreciate your commitment to support the training of pastors, especially women, for congregations of Mennonite Church Canada through such tangible and practical means. I accept your gift with gratitude and commit myself to be a good steward of it as I study and prepare for further pastoral ministry."

3. Pennies and Prayer Inheritance Fund (PIF)

The PPIF provides opportunity for honouring, recognizing, and remembering women by way of a donation. For example, this past year women from Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines made a donation in honour of Lydia Willms, recognizing the many hours of work she has put into gardening at their church and senior's residence. Other women's groups have also made contributions. In 2008/09, \$868 was donated.

In 2003, PPIF started with \$70,341. In the past 3 years we have distributed \$15,000 in support of women in ministry with MC Canada. Currently the Fund stands at \$75,104.

4. Connecting Through the Internet

While changes in women's lifestyles are making it more difficult to attend face-to-face meetings, connecting through the Internet is very convenient. Our first venture into this area is a blog at mennowomencanada.blogspot.com/.

—Respectfully submitted by Erna Neufeldt, President



CWM, left to right: Shirley Redekop, Ruth Jantzi, Betty Ann Hildebrand, Ev Buhr, Trudy Gortzen, Erna Neufeldt and Ruby Harder. Far right: Leona Dueck Penner.

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Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)



"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Luke 4:18 -19 NRSV

The Spirit of the Lord has surely been with members of Christian Peacemaker Teams as we have engaged in the past year's initiatives:

- Hiring of an Undoing Racism Coordinator, using Mennonite Central Committee's anti-racism program to increase awareness within Christian Peacemaker Teams. Undoing Racism and Strategic Planning workshops, and an ongoing Undoing Racism Working Group declare that CPT will have an anti-racism identity.
- Locating a CPT team in Iraqi Kurdistan, along the border where villages are regularly bombed and shelled, forcing farmers, shepherds, and their families to flee and live in deplorable conditions in camps.
- The Aboriginal Justice Team which has maintained relationships with the Grassy Narrows First Nations community in Northwestern Ontario, and with the Algonquins in Eastern Ontario, who oppose uranium exploration on their unceded land. CPT has also stood in solidarity with additional First Nations communities in Quebec and Ontario in the quest for Federal and Provincial governments to respect Aboriginal land rights.
- An ongoing presence in Colombia in Barranca and in the Narina province. Violence, disappearances, killings, human rights violations, and internal displacement of 3.8 million citizens persist in spite of assurances from the Uribe government that the situation is improving. The inclusion in the North American Free Trade Agreement has increased the hardships of the people.
- December 6, 2008 marked the beginning of a three month CPT project in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo city of Goma, where they joined the Groupe Martin Luther King in promoting non-violence and conflict resolution, monitoring human rights, and providing a peaceful presence.
- After a refocusing effort, the former Tuwani and Hebron teams have been consolidated into the Palestine Team in order to be more effective in working with West Bank villages and supporting Palestinian-led non-violent resistance to the occupation. A presence will be maintained in Tuwani, Hebron, and in a project office.
- Summer and winter training sessions in Chicago continue. This coming year marks two additional sessions, in Colombia and the United Kingdom. CPT is becoming more international, multicultural, and ecumenical in nature, although there is still a strong Mennonite component.
- Delegations to the USA/Mexico Borderlands, Iraq, Colombia, Israel/Palestine, and Aboriginal communities continue with participants gaining experience of active peacemaking grounded in the transforming power of the gospel of non-violence.

In retrospect, the members of Christian Peacemaker Teams have been busy, "living inside out", in faithful obedience to Christ's call to radical peacemaking. This has been made possible through the generous prayer and financial support of Mennonite Church Canada and constituents. For this we are truly grateful!

—Respectfully submitted by Esther Kern, Administrative Coordinator, CPT Canada

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Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC)

In his book *The End of the River*, Canadian scientist and author Brian Harvey focuses on a proposed massive diversion project on the Rio São Francisco in Brazil. Over the past decade the project has affected elections and led to demonstrations, hunger strikes and endless debate over both the potential and lunacy of the mega-project. Supporters claim it will allow people in the dry, northeastern part of the country to irrigate their crops and grow more food. Detractors claim it will be the end of one of South America's signature rivers. Who is right? And how will the issue be resolved?

Harvey is struck by the hopelessness of the debate and wonders if there isn't a reasonable alternative to the diversion. One day he meets Beth Szilassy, an MCC worker. Beth travels to communities in the region on her motorcycle, helping people build cisterns that will hold rainwater. These cisterns change lives. Families no longer have to spend hours each day hauling heavy containers of water. People are healthier because the rainwater is safe to drink.

'By her actions Beth was saying to me, 'Let the technocrats and the zealots and the saints fight this one out to its – probably foregone – conclusion. I'm going to pour some concrete of my own,' says Harvey, adding that the cisterns are a graphic demonstration of how a simple technology can profoundly affect lives. Because of the steadfast support of congregations and individuals, more than 100,000 cisterns have been built over the years.

Beth, who is from Ontario, has worked with MCC in Brazil since 1983. Her faith and dedication have helped transform the lives of thousands of people. It is but one example of how MCC workers around the world seek to reflect Christ's compassion and respond to His call.

MCC Highlights:

* This past year MCC embarked on a process – along with MCC stakeholders – to explore questions of vision and structure for MCC. More information can be found at www.mcc.org/newwineskins. This discernment process is scheduled for completion by the end of 2009.

* MCC has been affected by the global economic turbulence. The sudden, steep drop in the value of the Canadian dollar in the fall of 2008 meant there was less money available for international programs, which are funded in U.S. dollars. To help meet MCC's commitments, MCC in Canada is dipping into its reserves, reducing expenses and encouraging people to give generously to those who have less.

* MCC Canada is part of a fledgling consortium that is exploring ways to work together in Cuba. Other Canadian members of the consortium are Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University.

* Peace is at the heart of MCC's identity and ministry. Yet many people find themselves struggling to understand what this means. MCC is updating *Pursuing Peace*, a booklet written by staff, that offers some answers and aims to stimulate people's thinking about peace. The booklet is available from your nearest MCC office.

* MCC is launching a 10-year, multimillion-dollar campaign to help people in southern Sudan recover from years of conflict. The campaign, "Coming Home: Sudan," is focused on building schools, supporting education, assisting farmers, and promoting peace in southern Sudan.

–Respectfully submitted by Donald Peters, Executive Director, MCC Canada



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Mennonite Disaster Service Region V Inc. (MDS)



**Co-Directors of Region V
(Canada):** Ron and Elaine
Enns

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The work of MDS gets hands dirty and eyes opened as seeds of service are sown and people are helped to come back home. The summer of 2008 brought floods to the Interlake region of Manitoba and widespread flooding across the U.S. Midwest where some places reached 100-year levels. During late summer of 2008 one of the most active Atlantic hurricane seasons in recorded history saw 6 consecutive named storms making U.S. landfall. In California, wildfires occurred once again. The winter months brought ice storms across the U.S. Midwest and flooding to the Chilliwack area in British Columbia.

MDS 2008 blessings include:

- 4,817 volunteers serving at 13 bi-national project sites equaling 26,316 volunteer days approximating \$4.1 million value
- 900+ of the above were from Canada with 50% of project leadership from Canada
- 52 cleanups, 35 houses built, 17 major home repairs, 92 minor home repairs
- 61 volunteers participated in the RV (recreational vehicle) program
- 540 volunteers participated in the summer youth program
- 113 volunteers cleaned up for 65 families after flooding in Chilliwack, BC
- 27 farmers donated 25 semi loads of hay & straw to 18 farm families in Manitoba's Interlake (as of end of Jan/09)
- 3 churches each built a house for one family (providing materials, funding & volunteers) under the new Partnership Home Program
- 13 students in the Disaster Management Program at Hesston College
- 23 students taking the first Disaster Recovery Studies class at Canadian Mennonite University
- 4,414 different individuals, churches, and businesses donated funds

View from an MDS client:

"It's very, very exciting. And honey, I thank God for the Mennonites" exclaims Teria Samuel. "Every time I walk through these doors, I will never ever forget them. Never. They will always be in my heart and in my mind. Always." Teria and her husband and children live in Newton, Texas, 100 miles from the Gulf coast. Hurricane Rita swept through in 2005 ripping off roofs and damaging homes. MDS continues to repair and rebuild in this overlooked community deep in east Texas.

View from an MDS volunteer:

When the youngest volunteer for the week met the homeowner of the house she was working on, she said, "I was so encouraged to actually meet the client. After meeting her, the work was more real to me. I saw the difference I was making with only one week of volunteering."

"For every little nail pounded in her house a little more hope and healing were brought into her life. For me, as a volunteer, to be part of that healing process was priceless."

"We knew that communication would be a challenge for us and we do not have special knowledge or ability concerning house building – all this made us anxious. Rapidly all my fears went away because everybody made us feel welcome and a true part of the team. Sharing work and meals, prayers and devotions, laughter and play all contributed to transform unknown people to friends, individuals into a team." (new MDSers from Quebec on an RV project site)

–Submitted by Lois Nickel, Director Region Relations & Programs

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Mennonite Men (MM)

Twenty-five years ago Mennonite Men caught the vision for assisting the Mennonite Church in being a missional church. Goals had been set by the denomination to plant many new churches, often in urban areas where the cost of real estate was often prohibitive. Mennonite Men decided to raise money to assist these young churches to acquire their first church building. Now 25 years later, Mennonite Men has provided more than \$1.5 million to assist 54 congregations in Canada, USA, and overseas acquire their first church building.

Both in Canada and the US, the first grants were received by Chinese congregations. San Francisco Chinese, San Francisco, Calif. was the recipient of the first JoinHands grant to be given in fulfillment of the missional vision of Mennonite Men. The first two Canadian grants were received by Calgary Chinese, Calgary, Alta. and Saskatoon Chinese, Saskatoon, Sask. With the increased denominational growth in MC Canada among multi-cultural congregations and in Mennonite Church USA among racial/ethnic congregations, these groups are becoming primary recipients of JoinHands grants.

Ten years ago, Mennonite Men began tithing grant monies available for helping to build churches internationally. Now 10 years later, Mennonite Men has assisted churches to acquire their first church building in Ukraine, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, India, Thailand, and Ivory Coast. In 1999, Evangelica in Zaporozhye, Ukraine was the first international church to receive a tithe grant. A more recent recipient was Living Water, Borabu, Thailand. The Living Water Church in Borabu, Thailand realized its dream of building a new meeting place with the help of JoinHands. Pat and Rad Houmphan, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in Borabur, have helped Living Water Church achieve its dream of worshipping in its own Christian temple.

Mennonite Men, with annual receipts in excess of \$150,000, relates to Mennonite Church Canada Witness and in Mennonite Church USA is a Constituency Group relating to the Constituency Leaders Council.

In addition to the JoinHands Mennonite Church Building Program, Mennonite Men provides resources for men's groups in local congregations, encourages formation of men's groups and develops men's study resources. A recent resource, *Wrestling with God: Devotions for Men*, provides 52 devotions for men written by Mennonite men for men who are seeking greater spiritual depth in their lives. As a result of our involvement in Denominational Men's Ministry Network of North America, the ecumenical organization of men's ministry leaders, we were able to assist Mennonite Publishing Network in marketing 6,500 copies of *Wrestling with God* to United Methodist Men.

Three major challenges that face Mennonite Men as we attempt to help our denomination in its effort to be missional are: 1) In creative and innovative new ways to resource and minister to men, particularly younger men.

2) A real challenge is to provide grants to young Mennonite congregations needing help in acquiring their first church building. Grant commitments in excess of \$300,000 have been made to 10 congregations with 5 additional applications being processed. 3) Develop networks across Canada and the US to maintain the grassroots nature of Mennonite Men.

—Submitted by Jim Gingerich

(Canadian Coordinator: Marv Baergen)



Living Water Church in Borabu, Thailand



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Conference of Mennonites in Mexico (CMM)

The “**Conferencia Menonita de México**” (CMM) was founded in 1990, and is now formed by four local churches, Blumenau 351, Burwalde 245, Steinreich 60, and La Salada, Ascencion, 30 members. The first three churches have grown out of the ministry of the missionaries from the former General Conference (GC), beginning in 1963, after the Hoffnungsauer Mennoniten Gemeinde in Cuauhtémoc was dissolved.

CMM Activity Program: Formal Education, annual budget US \$450,000; Bible School annual budget US \$130,000 (together with EMC and EMMC), and for Mission among the Mexican people, our annual budget is US \$95,000.

Ministry goals and objectives:

1. Education: Since the very beginning in 1963, our newly formed congregations, together with the GC Mission workers, were very much concerned about Christian Instruction and formal Education for their children, and they always tried to offer just that to their own congregation and to the Mennonites in the larger Mennonite area.

One highlight last year was that our incorporated bilingual (Spanish and German) Mennonite private school, from Nursery, through Primary, Secondary and Bachillerato-Prepa (Grade 12), after having made many efforts with help from the German Goethe Institute and DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch-Dienst), through special German language classes for our Mennonite teachers for several years, has become recognized as “Deutsche Auslandsschule” by Germany.

And another very important point has been reached, that from now on, teachers from the “Universidad Pedagógica Nacional” (UPN) will come to our school one day a week, to teach and instruct several of our presently uncertified teachers, so that in four years from now, 21 of our own plus two other school teachers in the Colonies will be able to become certified teachers, so that with the help of UPN our school indirectly is becoming a teachers’ college.

2: Bible School. The former CMM Steinreich Bible School has been operated together with EMC and EMMC for more than six years, with studies during Jan., Feb., and March every year. Most of the 12 teachers come from EMC and EMMC, but we are happy to have at least one teacher (Mrs. Helen Dueck) from MC Canada this year and we are thankful for that. There are 95 full time students and around 180 more study selective subjects. The new two story residence for girls and some married couples has been finished this year. Three men from the Winkler, Man. area came and did voluntary carpenter work for a couple of weeks.

3. Mission: The mission church in Colonia Reforma in Cuauhtémoc City pastored by Missionaries Isaac and Maria Bergen is growing fast, with many children attending. There are two kitchens, one in Samachique in the mountains where 60 Tarahumara children have their meal before they go to school, and another in Col. Reforma where 115 children receive a hot meal every day. Twenty handicapped people are working every weekday in the workshop, and 12 persons are studying in the Spanish Bible School preparing themselves to work in the Church. Many people are seeking Isaac and Maria Bergen for spiritual counselling and conflict resolution.

- Peter Rempel, Chairman of the “Conferencia Menonita de México”

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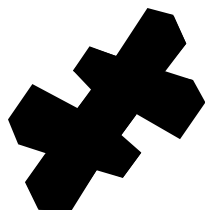
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Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure (MVSA)



Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure, or MVSA, is the Christian Voluntary Services program of four congregations within Mennonite Church Canada membership with similar outreach programs, cooperating and supporting each other to offer a consistent Christian Voluntary Services program for young adults in Canada.

It is a real privilege to report another very good year of Christian Voluntary Service experiences for the 15 young adults participating in the program in Canada this year. (These included 5 participants in Lethbridge, 6 participants in Winnipeg, 3 in Toronto, and 1 in Montreal.) It is a pleasure to participate in this program and experience the dedication and excitement of the volunteers. For some this is a first time opportunity to live in an intentional community away from family. It is an opportunity for young adults to experience new ideas, new situations, and new understandings with their peers, in a safe environment, while dedicating their time and expressing their faith in action and service to those in need. For many young men from Germany, the time of service is also an alternative to military service.

During the past several years we have seen a drop in applicants from our own Canadian congregations, and an increase in the number of applicants from Germany. MVSA works with three German organizations: Christliche Dienste, Eirene, and LOGOS, who have strong mission programs and provide opportunities for young adults to serve in various countries.

How can you truly evaluate the success of this program? We see the value being multifold:

- value to the individual volunteers (now and possibly for a lifetime)
- value to the life in the sponsoring congregation
- value to the agencies of placement
- value to the many people they touch in their everyday work
- value to the home congregations when the volunteers complete their terms

Some of the value mentioned above can be determined immediately, in the faces of those who are in contact with the volunteers or who benefit from the services provided, or in the congregations where the volunteers participate. Some values will not be evident until much later, when the influences of the Christian Service experience in future life choices or shifts in personal values become clear.

—Submitted by the MVSA Management Committee.

At a Glance...

Structure of MVSA: MVSA is not incorporated as an organization. Each congregation's MVSA program operates independently, adhering to a common purpose statement and guided by a common Operating Handbook and a Lifestyle Expectations statement. A Management Committee consisting of representatives from each Unit, as well as a representative from Mennonite Church Canada, from Mennonite Church Manitoba, and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, meets periodically via conference call, to share information, for support, and to make decisions ensuring the consistent operation of the programs. Funding is provided through a stipend paid monthly by the agency of employment, to the individual Support Committee. A common Sharing Fund to which Units contribute as they are able, provides assistance as needed and funds activities such as advertising and promotion, that benefit the whole.

If your congregation would like more information, or would like to consider opening an MVSA Unit, please contact any of the above mentioned congregations via the MVSA web site at www.mvsa.net

For more information, see www.mvsa.net

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Support Services Council

At a Glance...

Support Services Council Members for 2008-09:

Ed Janzen, (chair); Abbotsford, BC; Bill Janzen, Calgary, AB; Harry Wiens, Altona, MB; Mark Wurtz, Rosthern, SK; Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel, Morden, MB; Kaye Rempel, Waterloo, ON

The Pension Advisory Committee

includes the members of the Support Services Council, plus appointees Loren Brown, Winnipeg, MB, and Glen Siemens, Plum Coulee, MB plus the Executive Secretary of Support Services, and the Director of Human Resources.

The mandate of Support Services is to support all of Mennonite Church Canada programs – with particular emphasis on Formation and Witness – with administration services to enable the programs of the church to do their work effectively and efficiently.

This support task includes the very practical aspects such as: looking after the property and assets of MC Canada, providing communication support, and providing human resource support. It also includes areas of broader support, such as pension plan administration for employees and pastors, and resource development. But more than a listing of activities, this is a supportive ministry to Mennonite Church Canada. At the time of this writing, we are in the midst of an economic slowdown, also referred to as a recession, and we hear many dire predictions of what is to come. We are reminded that, though our financial wellbeing is important, it is not the purpose of our existence, nor does it affect our faith, or our commitment to be a faithful church.

Communications

If a piece of communication from MC Canada was graphically designed, has a photo, is on the internet, or comprises audio or video media, it likely passed through MC Canada's Communications team. The goal of this team is to invite, inform, inspire, and involve all of the church in God's great mission in the world as expressed through the programs and ministries of MC Canada Formation and Witness.

You may ask, "How many people visit the Mennonite Church Canada web site?" A few facts and figures at the time of writing:

Videos on MC Canada's YouTube channel have been viewed 11,400 times since inception (www.youtube.com/mennonitechurch.ca). The channel hosts over 25 titles about the work of MC Canada at home and around the world.

The Communications team has developed and oversees four web sites (stats for Feb., 2009):

- www.mennonitechurch.ca (600,000 hits; 21,000 unique visitors)
- www.alternativeservice.ca (24,000 hits; 800 unique visitors)
- www.churchpandemicresources.ca (6,500 hits; 235 unique visitors)
- www.healingandhope.ca (3,300 hits, 276 unique visitors)

In some cases, web site visitors to www.mennonitechurch.ca can be traced to a home country. During Feb., 2009, the top five nations represented were:

1. Canada
2. Mexico
3. United Kingdom
4. Netherlands
5. Germany

At the time of writing, 28 episodes of our radio program and podcast, **Church Matters**, have been produced (available from www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/206 and via free subscription on iTunes and other podcast providers). Approximately 20,000 listeners in

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Southern Manitoba tune in to this program on every 3rd Sunday of the month at 8:45 am. Since inception, 3,000 downloads have been retrieved from our online Resource Centre, plus an unknown number downloaded via multiple podcast providers. The most popular episode was on the topic of militarization in Canada.

We continue to produce a bi-weekly news service to keep the Canada-wide body informed about the latest happenings in MC Canada ministries. In 2008, we released 102 news stories about the work of the church in the world. *Canadian Mennonite* published 58 of these stories. Approximately 100 individuals are subscribers to the MC Canada News Service.

We produced numerous print resources in 2008:

- A refreshed version of the brochure, **What makes a Mennonite?** There are also traditional and simplified Chinese language versions available.
- A wall calendar for congregations.
- 10 times yearly editions of *Equipping*.
- Numerous displays and presentation resources.
- Numerous promotional items for our web sites and *Church Matters*
- ... and more.

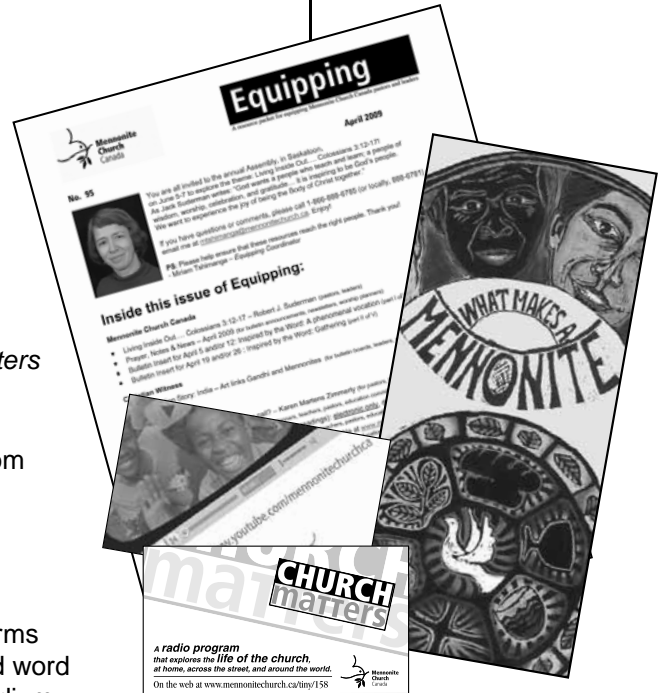
You will learn about other Communications activities in reports from Witness and Formation elsewhere in this Workbook.

Information Technology

Communicating effectively is an ongoing challenge, not only in terms of what is said but also how the message is delivered. The printed word continues to be an essential medium. However, the electronic medium continues to evolve and gain in importance, particularly with the younger generation. New terms describe the many ways we communicate. Facebook, YouTube, blogging, text messaging, Skype with or without web cams, Twitter, pod casting, and more are used to describe how people communicate. Each seems to have a place. Searching for information has become easy by “googling”. If we want to reach a particular audience, we need to be aware of how best to reach them. Moreover, these virtual forums evolve and change rapidly, often taking their audiences to new places in cyberspace. These are some of the challenges that new information technologies pose for us.

Resource Development

The mandate of the Resource Development department is to form relationships, and plan activities with the area churches, congregations, and individuals, to gain financial and other support for Mennonite Church Canada programs, ministries, and mission. In the absence of a full time Director of Resource Development (the position became vacant in June 2008), Gerd Bartel, who is a part time Western representative, has expanded his role to take on responsibilities for the whole region. This is a daunting task. We appreciate his dedication to building relationships and representing the vision and ministry of MC Canada and to cultivate, nurture, and relate to donors. In thinking more broadly for the future, we hope to develop a network of volunteers to plan and lead fundraising and other events across the country. This is a vital ministry, which enables the work of the church to continue and expand. This is only possible through the generosity and support of the many congregations and individuals who believe in working together to build God’s Kingdom. We invite your special consideration, particularly during the times of financial uncertainty.



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At a Glance...

The Support Services Council also appoints representatives to the Mennonite Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service, which publishes the Canadian Mennonite

MC Canada members of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service 2008-09 were:

Aiden Enns, Winnipeg, MB; John Goosen, Vancouver, BC; Ed Janzen, Abbotsford, BC; Paul Krahn, Altona, MB

MC Canada members of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada 2008-09:

Rudy Friesen, Winnipeg, MB; Karin Krahn, Calgary AB; Tony Huynh, Winnipeg, MB; Clayton Loewen, Fort Langley, BC; Anita Tiessen, Mississauga, ON

Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources, Kirsten Schroeder, looks after the various HR needs of the organization including the administration of the Human Resource policy, administering the Group Insurance plan and the Mutual Aid Sharing Plan for the international workers, and guided by a Pension Advisory Committee, administers the pension plan for employees and pastors.

There were a number of staffing changes within Support Services this year. A very visible and significant change is the absence of Pam Peters-Pries, Executive Secretary for Support Services. This position is now filled on an interim basis by Louie Sawatzky.

We have also said goodbye to several other valued long-term staff – Al Rempel, Director, Resource Development, and Lynette Wiebe, Communications Coordinator. We are grateful to Al and Lynette for all of their fine work over the years, and wish them well as they continue to engage with God and the church in new ways. We were also very fortunate to have worked with our volunteers Irmgard Reimer and Hyo Sook Yun, who served in terms at reception and in communications respectively.

In November we said goodbye to Alice Pound, Interim Receptionist and welcomed back Miriam Tshimanga to this position, from a maternity leave. In April, Lois Bergen took on a part time role in Support Services.

Although these changes are very significant, we are grateful and amazed at the resourcefulness, and talent of people willing to step in to fill the positions as required. We again express our appreciation and gratitude for the contributions of those who have left and those who have stepped in to take their place.

The human resources office continues to work at screening and placing international mission workers in assignments. We are pleased to see increased interest by pastors who are considering an overseas term as part of their sabbatical experience. The Group Insurance policy renewal negotiated this November led to a slight increase in premiums. Our Bereavement and Compassionate Care Policy for staff was expanded to include a section on caring for others during a critical illness.

MC Canada Pandemic Taskforce: In the past few years we have all become more aware of the effects of significant weather or health events outside of our control; events that disrupt lives and activities. It is prudent to do some planning in the event of a major health event often referred to as a pandemic. Led by Witness, significant work has been done by communications and HR staff as posted on the website at www.churchpandemicresources.ca

Pension Plan

This has been a year of tremendous financial volatility and many people are concerned about their financial security particularly as they near retirement. The Pension plan for pastors and staff of MC Canada offers 28 different investment options. However, the majority of funds (78%) are invested in the core option known as the Socially Responsible Asset Allocation Fund. This fund aligns with our stated values of investing in socially responsible funds with a more moderate to conservatively balanced approach. This fund stood up very well during the financial downturn relative to other types of investments, but even at that, showed a return of -7.2%.

The Pension Advisory Committee continues to see education of plan members as an important and ongoing duty. In January and February of this year member education meetings were offered to plan members across the country. These information sessions provided information about the investment choices available and the opportunity for members to align pension funds with faith values and risk tolerance. They also emphasized the opportunity for private consultations with our plan advisors, the Ardent Retirement Group (1-866-943-5658). This type of service is of particular importance to those with an eye to retirement in the next five years.

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Property Management

We continue to work in the spirit of “greening” our work environment. A helpful resource with ideas of how we (and you) can work at this is found at www.faitn-commongood.net/gss. However, in order to be financially responsible, this is also a time of restraint, and progress has been limited to what can be done with fewer resources. Small improvements have been made to the office building and the Heritage Centre. However, we are committed to environmental stewardship in our lifestyles and in our work place.

During this past year we have also been working toward the sale of the now vacant Mennonite church building in Thompson, Manitoba belonging to MC Canada. This congregation is no longer active and the building has been used by various groups on a rental basis. When the building is sold, the proceeds will be split and applied to the General Reserve funds, the Capital Reserves, and to the New Initiatives Reserve fund.

Assembly Planning

Assembly planning, hosting and running is not a light task. It requires many willing and capable hands. Our thanks go out to the many volunteers and staff persons who every year are willing to take on this task. As printed elsewhere in this report book, the Purpose and Goals of the annual Assembly are two-fold:

1. Provide opportunities for participants to build up and nurture the church, and
2. To conduct the business of the organization as described in the MC Canada bylaws.

It is with this in mind that every effort is made to create an atmosphere of worship throughout this Assembly, where all participants feel the presence of God in worship as well as in deliberations.

We are grateful to Elsie Rempel, Director Christian Education and Nurture, Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister, and Karen Peters, Executive Assistant, for giving direction to this year’s Assembly planning committees.

Over the past several years, there has been discussion regarding the merits of annual versus biennial Assemblies. You will note this topic elsewhere on the agenda, looking for your participation and input into this discernment. We hope to condense the discussion into a recommendation for the delegate body to consider at the 2010 Assembly.

Due to the Mennonite World Conference taking place in Asuncion this year, several changes in time were made to accommodate that event, including the date changes for this Assembly, as well as the Youth Assembly taking place at the Briercreech Bible College in Caronport, July 6-10. Plans are underway for the Assembly 2010 to be held in Alberta. As per a decision made two years ago, that the Assemblies be guided by the same text for two consecutive years, the theme for the 2010 Assembly will be based on our guiding text for this year (Colossians 3: 12-17).

—Submitted by Louie Sawatzky, Interim Executive Secretary, Support Services, and Ed Janzen, Chair, Support Services Council

At a Glance...

Support Services staff in 2008:

Gerd Bartel, Western Director of Resource Development; **Lois Bergen**, Receptionist/ Administrative Assistant; **Dan Dyck**, Director of Communications; **Deborah Froese**, Director of News Services; **Grant Klassen**, Web Servant; **Karen Peters**, Executive Assistant; **Katharina Nuss**, Communications Coordinator/Graphic Designer; **Pam Peters-Pries**, Executive Secretary; **Alice Pound**, Receptionist/ Administrative Assistant; **Louie Sawatzky**, Interim Executive Secretary; **Kirsten Schroeder**, Director of Human Resources; **Miriam Tshimanga**, Receptionist/ Administrative Assistant



Support Services Council members Kaye Rempel and Mark Wurtz at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC)



In a year when disheartening financial news made the headlines far too often, we are pleased to report that God's people are still striving to lead lives of faithful, joyful generosity. Mennonite Foundation of Canada is thankful for the relationship we have with Mennonite Church Canada – the receptiveness your pastors and church leaders show to our consultants in working on stewardship education; the openness with which your members have welcomed our consultants in counseling sessions, both for estate planning and for gift planning; and the good relations between your denominational leaders and our administrative staff.

- Our objective of breaking through the \$100 million ceiling in assets under management was achieved early in the year. Donors and clients have been confident in our ability to invest and distribute charitable dollars. Despite a brief downturn in the midst of the market turmoil, we ended 2008 with an asset base of over \$106 million. The market volatility has had a limited effect on our fixed income pool payout rates. Only accounts specifically invested in equity investments will see the negative impact of the current market conditions in the immediate term. Moreover, we have built up reserve funds, and our operations are not jeopardized as a result of the general fiscal chaos. We are continuing to stand on solid ground!
- Since we are a donor-advised charitable foundation, most of the monies which we pay out every year are grants based on the advice received from our donors. We do, however, have a limited grant program which is independent of our donors, and which some of your churches have accessed for a variety of projects. We are in the process of revising the criteria for these grants. In the future, we will seek to support your initiatives that highlight and enhance financial stewardship. Stay tuned to find out how you can access some of these funds.
- We were shocked and saddened on October 23 at the death of Edwin Friesen, our stewardship consultant in Winnipeg serving churches in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. We recognize the important contributions he made, particularly in writing on stewardship themes. In early 2009, Harold Penner, MFC accountant for 10 years, was appointed to this consultant position in Winnipeg. Gerald Barkman is the new consultant working in MFC's Abbotsford office. Kevin Davidson has been hired as a second consultant to serve our churches in Alberta, along with Gary Sawatzky. Our consultants are here to serve Mennonite Church Canada, its churches and its members across Canada. Don't be shy about contacting them.
- Consultants presently serving MC Canada churches are Darren Pries-Klassen, Sherri Grosz, and Mike Strathdee in Ontario and East; Dori Zerbe Cornelsen in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; Gary Sawatzky and Kevin Davidson in Alberta; and Gerald Barkman in British Columbia. MC Canada representatives on the MFC Board are Rudy Friesen, Tony Huynh, Karin Krahn, Clayton Loewen, and Anita Tiessen.

—Respectfully submitted, Erwin Warkentin, General Manager

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Canadian Mennonite (CM)

Dear Mennonite Church Canada delegates:

God is with us! At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus assures his disciples, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." In the first chapter of the same book, Joseph learns from an angel that his wife-to-be will soon give birth to Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." In between those two promises are the reports of what Jesus did and said that have inspired so many for so long.

The stories of God with us – then and now – are a strength and a gift to us. It's the privilege of our church magazine, *Canadian Mennonite*, to have an important part in that ministry. Not that the magazine is Scripture by any means, but we, along with Matthew, want to tell the profound and moving accounts of God working in human lives. This past year, about 30,000 people in MC Canada households had the chance to read about 1,100 articles in *Canadian Mennonite* about just this, and how Canadian Mennonites responded to God's love by loving the people around them in return.

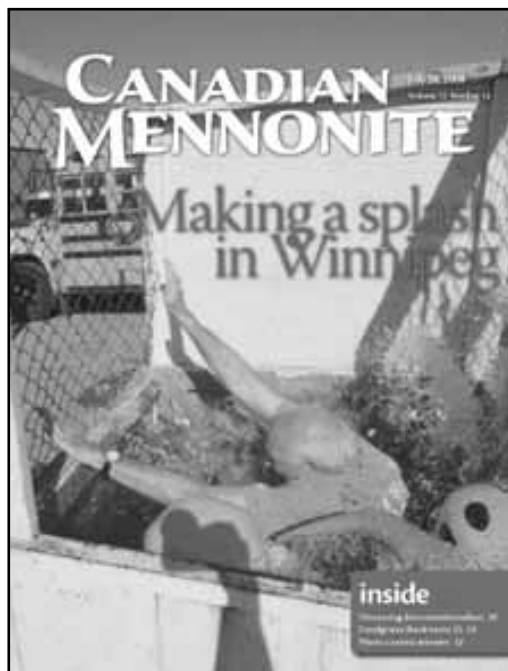
Perhaps you saw God at work in the October 2008 reports from three teenagers writing about their experiences in the desert, alone with God. "It's very rare that anyone can find time like that in their busy lives to talk to God or even acknowledge him in any way. As I was sitting there I started to notice every little bug, cactus, and living thing around me, and I remembered that God made everything there," wrote Lise Pearce in her report, after discovering God being with her in an unexpected way.

Or perhaps you saw God with us in the stories of five people who discovered God present in the Mennonite Church not through growing up in it but in coming to it as adults, or in our reports on emerging church plants in several parts of our church published throughout 2008.

Each issue of *Canadian Mennonite* is full of stories, news, letters, and other writing about our faith (now including obituaries and our blog, both new initiatives launched last fall). *Canadian Mennonite* is a way for all of us, through our Every Home subscription plan, to experience God with us. Thank you for MC Canada's financial support that allows us to provide church subscriptions to every home at much below cost. Through your vision, *Canadian Mennonite* continues to be the church ministry that all Canadian Mennonites can share.

God's grace and peace to you all.

–Tim Miller Dyck, outgoing Editor/
Publisher and Dick Benner, incoming
Editor/Publisher



At a Glance...

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Activity/Program: Publishing a national magazine primarily for those attending MC Canada churches

Mission Statement: *Canadian Mennonite* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/ Mennonite periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (guided by Hebrews 10:23-25, which calls on us to be concerned for one another, encourage each other and help one another do good). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, news and analysis of issues facing the church.

2008 Expenses: \$636,000 (net income was \$158,000 from MC Canada, \$127,000 from the five area churches and \$351,000 raised by the magazine through other means)

Reporting to: Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board, a twelve-member board that includes four Mennonite Church Canada-appointed board members (as of Dec., 2008, these were Aiden Enns, John W. Goossen, Ed Janzen and Paul Krahn). The board chair is Larry Cornies.

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Treasurer's Report



Gordon Peters, Treasurer

If our fiscal year ended in October, we would have had a completely different year end situation. The financial reports till then were very positive and we were anticipating a great year, financially speaking.

Then the economic world changed. As a result, we enter our current year with very little history or experience to navigate what's ahead. We, of course, are not unique in this situation, but we have some unique resources available to us that the rest of the world doesn't.

As a group of believers sharing a common purpose and mission, we can find guidance in other places. The work of the church can and will – in fact must – continue in spite of the economic uncertainty around us. Throughout history, the church has never stopped being the church. No amount of persecution, economic or natural disasters have been able to stop the church from fulfilling its mission. Our faith in God and his love and forgiveness is the reason we believe we will find ways to continue the work of the church.

The work of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee usually revolves around the finances of Mennonite Church Canada. We meet regularly throughout the year to review financial reports, review budget projections and deal with questions about the way we handle, use, and report on the money you have entrusted to us. Our goal is to be open and transparent so that no one ever wonders, "What happened to our money?"

We look for input from all of you to remind us of where we might have fallen short of that goal. We hire an independent auditor to review our financial operations and procedures to verify that what we report to you is accurate and correct.

A report from your Treasurer would not be complete without saying "Thank you!" to each and every one of you. Mennonite Church Canada is the beneficiary of many prayers, much goodwill, faithful volunteers at many levels, and cheerful givers. We are indeed grateful to God for each and every one of you.

I trust that as we continue working at this part of the church called Mennonite Church Canada, we will find the resources needed to enable the work we do together. Martin Luther said, "There are three conversions a person needs to experience: The conversion of the head, the conversion of the heart, and the conversion of the pocketbook."

In worship, through scripture study – in many ways we remind ourselves regularly that we need to experience a renewed conversion of the head and heart. We are grateful for these opportunities to renew our commitments. At this time, we also pray for renewed conversions of the pocketbook wherever those transformational opportunities exist.

Thanks be to God.

—Gordon Peters, Treasurer

Note: A management report from Randy Wiebe, Director of Finance, as well as Audited Financial Statements, were not available at the time of printing. These documents will be distributed on-site at Assembly 2009.

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Financial Operating Statement Summary

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Mennonite Church Canada					
2	General Fund Statement of Operations					
3	February 1, 2009 to January 31, 2010					
4						
5		Gross - Actual	Net - Actual	Net - Budget		Net - Budget
6		2009	2009	2009	Variance	2010
7	REVENUE					
8						
9	MC Canada Programs					
10	Donations	3,549,310	3,549,310	3,700,800	(151,490)	3,549,310
11	General Bequest	24,717	24,717	0	24,717	0
12	Recognized Deferred Contributions	66,841	0	0	-	0
13	Other Income	426,092	0	0	-	0
14	Partner Programs	861,938	861,938	546,300	-	754,720
15	Related Organizations	374,867	374,867	390,000	-	332,500
16						
17	Total Revenue	<u>5,303,765</u>	<u>4,810,832</u>	<u>4,637,100</u>	<u>(126,773)</u>	<u>4,636,530</u>
18						
19	EXPENSES					
20						
21	Christian Witness Council Program	2,184,631	1,917,089	1,873,635	(43,454)	1,836,543
22	Christian Formation Council Program	388,828	381,628	396,179	14,551	405,646
23	Support Services Council Program	861,551	681,779	753,097	71,318	718,507
24	General Board	401,921	363,501	398,167	34,666	408,246
25	CMU	346,249	346,250	335,580	(10,670)	335,580
26	Partner Programs	900,870	900,870	561,450	-	757,420
27	Related Organizations	374,868	374,868	390,000	-	332,500
28	(-) less Deferred Expenses					(153,835)
29						
30	Total Expenses	<u>5,458,918</u>	<u>4,965,985</u>	<u>4,708,108</u>	<u>66,411</u>	<u>4,640,607</u>
31						
32	Operating Surplus(Deficit)	<u>(155,153)</u>	<u>(155,153)</u>	<u>(71,008)</u>	<u>(84,145)</u>	<u>(4,077)</u>
33						
34	Inter Fund transfers	<u>155,153</u>	<u>155,153</u>	<u>71,008</u>	<u>84,145</u>	<u>4,077</u>
35						
36		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
37						
38	Note:					
39	1. This schedule has not been audited.					
40	2. The columns titled "Net" have deferred contributions and other income deducted from councils' expenditures.					
41	3. Partner Programs and Related Organizations are not included in the variance calculation.					

Budget

Mennonite Church
Canada

2008-09 GROSS &
NET Program Budget
with Comparatives

For the Twelve Months
Ending January 31,
2010

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	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Mennonite Church Canada					
2	2008-09 GROSS & NET Program Budget with Comparatives					
3	For the Twelve Months Ending January 31, 2010					
4						
5						
6		FYE Jan-10 GROSS	FYE Jan-10 NET	FYE Jan-09 NET	FYE Jan-09 NET	
7		Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Actual	Annual Budget	
8	REVENUE					
9						
10	MC Canada Programs					
11	Individual & Corporate Donations	704,752	704,752	704,752	872,800	
12	Church Donations	2,844,558	2,844,558	2,844,558	2,828,000	
13	General Bequest	0	0	24,717	0	
14	Recognized Deferred Contributions	63,510	0	0	0	
15	Other Income	587,608	0	0	0	
16	Partner Programs	754,720	754,720	861,938	546,300	
17	Related Organizations	332,500	332,500	374,867	390,000	
18	TOTAL INCOME	5,287,648	4,636,530	4,810,832	4,637,100	
19	EXPENSES					
20	Christian Witness Council Program					
21	Executive Office	140,735	120,022	144,402	113,949	
22	Congregational Partnerships	151,898	151,898	129,527	169,797	
23	National Ministries Admin.	11,296	11,296	8,890	8,516	
24	Multi-Cultural Ministry	42,817	42,817	42,495	41,801	
25	Native Ministries	148,129	124,993	68,566	99,995	
26	International Ministries	1,624,862	1,385,517	1,523,209	1,439,577	
27	Total Witness Council Expenses	2,119,737	1,836,543	1,917,089	1,873,635	
28	Christian Formation Council Program					
29	Executive Office	162,200	160,350	158,840	154,014	
30	Resource Centre	83,996	78,996	73,116	71,270	
31	Min. & Cong. Leadership	93,700	88,200	68,054	94,090	
32	Youth Ministry	28,100	28,100	26,705	27,655	
33	Youth Assembly	156,625	0	6,984	0	
34	Education & Nurture Ministries	50,000	50,000	47,929	49,150	
35	Total Formation Council Expenses	574,621	405,646	381,628	396,179	
36	Support Services Council Program					
37	Administration	348,928	248,029	253,705	254,282	
38	Annual Assembly	59,120	(430)	10,997	(5,386)	
39	Communications	166,176	165,576	170,292	195,371	
40	Development	131,171	131,171	72,623	134,669	
41	Canadian Mennonite	174,161	174,161	174,162	174,161	
42	Total Support Services Council Expenses	879,556	718,507	681,779	753,997	
43	General Board					
44	GBD Administration	181,043	173,043	149,202	161,490	
45	Finance	227,103	197,203	175,549	198,677	
46	CMU Grants	335,580	335,580	346,250	335,580	
47	Mennonite World Conference Grants	38,000	38,000	38,750	38,000	
48	Total General Board Expenses	781,726	743,826	709,751	733,747	
49	Partner Programs					
50	Misc. New Initiatives	105,000	105,000	56,402	50,000	
51	Christian Peacemaker Teams	200,000	200,000	346,708	200,000	
52	Company of 1000	50,000	50,000	42,750	13,400	
53	NAVMF	35,000	35,000	31,778	25,000	
54	Phillipine Partnership	134,813	134,813	55,357	80,000	
55	MVSA	11,000	11,000	11,582	2,000	
56	Kherson Partnership	8,400	8,400	8,400	5,000	
57	Learning Tours	0	0	74,018	20,000	
58	Canadian Women in Mission	39,000	39,000	34,153	30,000	
59	Der Bote	0	0	26,524	12,150	
60	MHC Archives	71,707	71,707	66,296	46,500	
61	MHC Gallery	69,000	69,000	85,088	43,900	
62	Legesse Ethiopia Partnership	33,500	33,500	35,817	33,500	
63	IM short-term assignments	0	0	25,997	0	
64	Total Partner Programs Expenses	757,420	757,420	900,870	561,450	
65	Related Organizations					
66	Mennonite Mission Network	55,000	55,000	56,556	55,000	
67	Mennonite Church USA	5,000	5,000	26,884	50,000	
68	AMBS	85,000	85,000	84,390	85,000	
69	Canadian Mennonite University	0	0	88,522	0	
70	Mennonite Publishing Network	25,000	25,000	21,705	25,000	
71	Messeritos Kristos College	157,500	157,500	96,811	120,000	
72	Eastern Mennonite Missions	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	
73	Mennonite World Conference	0	0	0	50,000	
74	Total Related Organization Expenses	332,500	332,500	374,868	390,000	
75						
76	(-) less Deferred Expenses	(153,835)	(153,835)			
77	TOTAL EXPENSES	5,291,725	4,640,607	4,965,985	4,708,108	
78	Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(4,077)	(4,077)	(155,153)	(71,008)	
79	Transfer To Reserves	(106,556)	(106,556)	(125,358)	(40,860)	
80	Transfer from Reserves	136,771	136,771	301,649	132,678	
81	Transfer To Capital Reserves	(26,138)	(26,138)	(21,138)	(20,810)	
82	Net Transfers (to)/from Reserves	4,077	4,077	155,153	71,008	
83	ENDING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	0	0	0	0	
84	Note:					
85	1. This schedule has not been audited.					
86	2. The columns titled "Net" have deferred contributions and other income deducted from councils' expenditures.					

	A	B	C	D
1	Mennonite Church Canada			
2	2008-09 GROSS Program Budget with Comparatives			
3	For the Twelve Months Ending January 31, 2010			
4				
5				
6		FYE Jan-10 GROSS	FYE Jan-09 GROSS	FYE Jan-09 GROSS
7		Annual Budget	Actual	Annual Budget
8	REVENUE			
9				
10	MC Canada Programs			
11	Individual & Corporate Donations	704,752	704,752	872,800
12	Church Donations	2,844,558	2,844,558	2,828,000
13	General Bequest	0	24,717	0
14	Recognized Deferred Contributions	63,510	66,841	67,253
15	Other Income	587,608	426,092	570,304
16	Partner Programs	754,720	861,938	674,849
17	Related Organizations	332,500	374,867	390,000
18	TOTAL INCOME	5,287,648	5,303,765	5,403,206
19	EXPENSES			
20	Christian Witness Council Program			
21	Executive Office	140,735	144,560	139,248
22	Congregational Partnerships	151,898	129,527	169,797
23	National Ministries Admin.	11,296	8,890	8,516
24	Multi-Cultural Ministry	42,817	42,494	41,801
25	Native Ministries	148,129	100,382	115,183
26	International Ministries	1,624,862	1,758,778	1,727,366
27	Total Witness Council Expenses	2,119,737	2,184,631	2,201,911
28	Christian Formation Council Program			
29	Executive Office	162,200	160,030	157,108
30	Resource Centre	83,996	78,536	81,770
31	Min. & Cong. Leadership	93,700	68,644	98,590
32	Youth Ministry	28,100	26,705	27,655
33	Youth Assembly	156,625	6,984	0
34	Education & Nurture Ministries	50,000	47,929	49,150
35	Total Formation Council Expenses	574,621	388,828	414,273
36	Support Services Council Program			
37	Administration	348,928	319,541	351,180
38	Annual Assembly	59,120	124,703	156,403
39	Communications	166,176	170,522	195,971
40	Development	131,171	72,623	134,669
41	Canadian Mennonite	174,161	174,162	174,161
42	Total Support Services Council Expenses	879,556	861,551	1,012,384
43	General Board			
44	GBD Administration	181,043	149,203	169,344
45	Finance	227,103	213,967	222,723
46	CMU Grants	335,580	346,250	335,580
47	Mennonite World Conference Grants	38,000	38,750	38,000
48	Total General Board Expenses	781,726	748,170	765,647
49	Partner Programs			
50	Misc. New Initiatives	105,000	56,402	50,000
51	Christian Peacemaker Teams	200,000	346,708	200,000
52	Company of 1000	50,000	42,750	50,000
53	NAVMF	35,000	31,778	35,000
54	Phillipine Partnership	134,813	55,357	65,000
55	MVSA	11,000	11,582	3,000
56	Kherson Partnership	8,400	8,400	8,400
57	Learning Tours	0	74,018	50,000
58	Canadian Women in Mission	39,000	34,153	30,000
59	Der Bote	0	26,524	24,150
60	MHC Archives	71,707	66,296	75,949
61	MHC Gallery	69,000	85,088	65,000
62	Legesse Ethiopia Partnership	33,500	35,817	33,500
63	IM short-term assignments	0	25,997	0
64	Total Partner Programs Expenses	757,420	900,870	689,999
65	Related Organizations			
66	Mennonite Mission Network	55,000	56,556	55,000
67	Mennonite Church USA	5,000	26,884	50,000
68	AMBS	85,000	84,390	85,000
69	Canadian Mennonite University	0	88,522	0
70	Mennonite Publishing Network	25,000	21,705	25,000
71	Messeritos Kristos College	157,500	96,811	120,000
72	Eastern Mennonite Missions	5,000	0	5,000
73	Mennonite World Conference	0	0	50,000
74	Total Related Organization Expenses	332,500	374,868	390,000
75				
76	(-) less Deferred Expenses	(153,835)		
77	TOTAL EXPENSES	5,291,725	5,458,918	5,474,214
78	Operating Surplus/(Deficit) before extraordinary items	(4,077)	(155,153)	(71,008)
79	Other items	0	0	0
80	Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(4,077)	(155,153)	(71,008)
81	Transfer To Reserves	(106,556)	(125,358)	(40,860)
82	Transfer from Reserves	136,771	301,649	132,678
83	Transfer To Capital Reserves	(26,138)	(21,138)	(20,810)
84	Transfer from Reserves for extraordinary items	0	0	0
85	Net Transfers (to)/from Reserves	4,077	155,153	71,008
86	ENDING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	0	0	0
87	Note:			
88	1. This schedule has not been audited.			

Budget

Mennonite Church
Canada

2008-09 GROSS
Program Budget with
Comparatives

For the Twelve
Months Ending
January 31, 2010

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Discernment Guide

The work of the church is best described as discussion and discernment, rather than as debate and decision. We want to provide the best possible atmosphere for discussion and discernment in these delegate sessions.

We have much work to do in a short period of time, while at the same time conducting ourselves in a manner that allows for maximum discussion. We need to use procedures that are fair and open, but not complex and cumbersome. The size of our delegate body makes it difficult to make decisions through a process of simple consensus. A brief introduction to some basic rules may help us. As usual, we will have a parliamentarian to assist us in our work.

About Motions

During a delegate session, you may wish to introduce a motion, raise a question, or extend discussion. Please follow these basic principles:

- A motion or resolution of new or substantive business must first be taken to the Resolutions Committee by the mover and seconder. The purpose of this committee is to help us complete our business on time by reviewing new motions for clarity and appropriateness before they are brought to the Assembly.
- The Resolutions Committee has the prerogative to combine resolutions with others or modify them for presentation, to refer a resolution to the General Board or other body as an alternative to delegate action, or to rule a motion out of order. If the delegates disagree with a decision of the Resolutions Committee they can bring a motion to the floor. In that case, the moderator will call for a vote on whether to debate the motion. This vote will require support of a simple majority of the delegates.
- To amend a motion, limit or extend debate on a motion, or lay a motion on the table, you will need to make a motion to that effect while the main motion is still under consideration. To do that, seek recognition from the moderator and then make the motion.
- To object to consideration of a motion, call for a more precise vote, ask a question of parliamentary procedure, or offer information on a question, seek recognition of the moderator and make your comment or motion. This includes a call for a recess, or adjournment.
- In order to facilitate a good process, amendments to resolutions that appear on the agenda should be presented in advance in writing to the Resolutions Committee before they can be offered to delegates.
- Any delegate may speak to points of order and other motions of parliamentary procedure, such as a motion on the table.
- Only registered delegates can make or move motions as well as vote.

- Most motions require a second – that someone else also indicates a desire to consider the motion. When the moderator asks for a second to a motion, please raise your hand and seek acknowledgement.
- The MC Canada General Board Executive Committee may offer an amendment or a new resolution without processing it through the Resolutions Committee (for the purpose of efficient process).
- If you think that it is time to end discussion you can “call for the question.” However, if there is any objection to ending discussion, then the delegate body will need to take a vote on your proposal to end discussion.

Basic Guidelines

- Our overarching interest in a delegate assembly is to make sure that we hear from as many persons as possible.
- If you wish to speak, please approach a microphone and be recognized by the moderator.
- We ask delegates to treat each other with respect in Christian love.
- Make sure you identify yourself and your area church or congregation before making your remarks.
- Please direct your remarks to the moderator and speak for yourself only, unless specifically commissioned to speak for a group. If so, name the group. We urge delegates to listen carefully to the flow of the meeting.
- Allow everyone who wants to speak an opportunity to do so before speaking a second time to the same motion.
- Speaking not more than twice to any motion in one day will help to ensure speaking opportunities for more delegates.
- Make it clear whether you support a motion on the floor or have a different view.
- Keep your remarks brief to allow others to speak after you.

Additional Items

Many of the proposals being brought for delegate action have been developed through an extensive process of feedback from congregations, area churches, as well as committees and boards.

- We encourage vigorous debate on proposals.
- We ask you not to show your approval or disapproval (for instance by clapping) of any speaker on the floor.

2009 Assembly Discernment

1 **Being a Faithful Church:**

2 **Testing the Spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment**

4 **Delegate Assembly process:**

6 We will devote 3 hours to this process with the delegates.

8 **Objectives of the delegate session:**

- 10 1) Participate in the church's task of interpreting the Bible and of discerning what
11 God is saying in our time by examining all things in the light of Scripture (from
12 the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*: Article 4, p. 22).
- 13 2) Test the insights and understandings which we bring to the interpretation of the
14 Scripture in the faith community (from the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite*
15 *Perspective*: Article 4, p.22).
- 16 3) Engage in deliberate processes that help us face the challenges in the life of the
17 church.

19 **Key Resource:**

21 Paper reviewed and approved by the General Board:

22 **Being a Faithful Church:**

23 **Testing the Spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment**

25 **Delegates will be asked to respond to the following statement of affirmation:**

27 We affirm the direction of this paper and encourage the Boards, Committees, and
28 Councils of MC Canada to use it as a tool to assist the church in addressing
29 themes such as: unity and diversity in the life of the church; being a peace church;
30 confessing and witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord in a religiously pluralistic
31 context; human sexuality in the life of the church; ecological concerns from a
32 perspective of faith.

GENERAL

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1 Mennonite Church Canada Assembly
2 June 5-7, 2009

3

4 **Being a Faithful Church:** 5 **Testing the Spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment**

6

7

8 **Background**

9

10 The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada monitors the spiritual health of our
11 church. This is not an easy task, because it is not easy to be the church, in Canada, in the
12 21st century. Some writers have, in fact, suggested that Canada is a country with “very
13 hard soil” for the gospel of Jesus Christ: one of the hardest anywhere in the world. We
14 face challenges, and each one is worth facing with the integrity of being the church.

15

16 The General Board understands that the ongoing health of our church requires that we
17 continue to strengthen our overall capacity to discern¹ the mind of God as the church
18 engages the critical agenda of our time. This need/capacity to discern is important in all
19 aspects of our life together. It is important in how we worship, and in how we organize. It
20 is also important in how we respond to questions of faithfulness that are within and
21 among us. The General Board, along with other circles of counsel, tries to discern what
22 the important themes are that require ongoing attention. Themes that have been identified
23 in the last years are:

24

- 25 a) Unity and Diversity in the life of the Church;
- 26 b) Being a Peace church;
- 27 c) Confessing and witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord in a religiously pluralistic
28 context;
- 29 d) Human sexuality in the life of the church;
- 30 e) Ecological concerns from a perspective of faith.

31

32 The need to be a biblically-grounded people is not new, but it is important to re-ignite our
33 commitment and our capacity to be a people of God’s Word. Specifically, this means
34 that:

35

- 36 1) We covenant with each other to study the Bible together and explore the biblical
37 teachings.
- 38 2) We covenant with each other to mutually bear the burden of remaining in loving
39 dialogue with each other in the body of Christ. We are all sinners in need of God's
40 grace and we know that the Holy Spirit can lead us to further truth and to
41 repentance where needed.
- 42 3) We covenant compassion and prayer for each other.

¹ The words “discern” and “discernment” come from the Latin *discernere*. *Cernere* means to separate, distinguish, or sift. *Dis* means to take off. It is a good word to talk about the need to sift, and to test what is among us. The Greek New Testament word most often translated as “discern” is *dokimazo* (used 31 times). This word, too, refers to testing, examining, and interpreting. It is a continuous process of faith in God and faithfulness to God.

- 1 4) We covenant to take part in the ongoing search for discernment and for openness
2 to each other.
3 5) We covenant with God that as we discern his will for our lives and our fellowship
4 we will seek to obey it, through his grace and strength.
5
6

7 **Purpose:**

8 This paper is a resource to help us think together how spiritual discernment may nourish
9 our faithfulness to God's will for the church in our world.
10

11 **Why now?**

12
13 As a national church we are facing the complex reality that while different parts of our
14 Body (Priesthood of Believers) are reflecting on the **same** foundational scripture, guided
15 by the **same** Holy Spirit, revealing the mind/will of the **same** God, we are discerning
16 what appear, at times, to be contradictory and irreconcilable directions in understanding
17 Christian faithfulness.
18

19 Hermeneutical² diversity is not new, neither in Christian ecumenical nor Mennonite
20 experience. Such diversity has been/is present in understanding God's will in:
21 circumcision, slavery, the role of women in ministry, pacifism, economic models, relation
22 to creation, church structure, ecclesial authority and autonomy, and so on. It is important,
23 therefore, to ask why we need to pay special attention to our capacity to discern within
24 our denomination *now*. The answer, by necessity, is more related to the *art* of being the
25 church than to the *science* of hermeneutical process. Basically, we believe that churchly
26 faithfulness to scripture comes to life within an Anabaptist community through our
27 common commitment to "sift," and to seek clarity in our desire to be God's obedient
28 people.
29

- 30 1) As Mennonites, we believe that the church needs to be scripturally grounded, and
31 that hermeneutics are ecclesially³-based. Both of these elements signal to us that
32 we need to take a close look at what is happening among us.
33 2) We are committed to being the church amid the spiritual unrest and ferment that is
34 among us.
35

36 What follows is an attempt to think organically and organizationally about the
37 ingredients/components that the task of careful discernment places before us. The Book
38 of Proverbs says that:
39

40 *Without counsel, plans go wrong, but with a multitude of counselors they succeed*
41 *(Prov. 15:22).*
42

43 This is wise counsel for us in our time too. We are not, of course, starting at point zero.
44 Very much discernment and many processes are already a part of our experience as a

² Hermeneutics comes from the Greek language, *hermeneutikos*, and refers to the skill of interpretation, the capacity to make something clear.

³ *Ecclesial* comes from the Greek New Testament word *ekklesia* which means "church."

1 denomination. None of what is stated here is meant to negate the efforts that have gone
2 before. Indeed, quite the opposite. What is stated here is building on these efforts and is
3 made possible only because of these many other encounters and processes that are
4 already part of our communal experience. We acknowledge each of these with gratitude.
5

6 **The Ongoing Task: Is Discernment Necessary?**

7
8 Seeking clarity in faithfulness in Christian life is the never-ending, non-optional vocation
9 of God's people. Such discernment is a critical component of the ongoing learning
10 needed for faithfulness in the world. Several biblical texts remind us of this ongoing task:
11

12 **Luke 12:54-56:**

13 Jesus teaches that "interpreting the times" (literally: the *kairos* of God) must be as
14 constant a discipline of the church as understanding weather patterns that shape
15 our life. He laments the lack of capacity to do that. The inability or the
16 unwillingness to discern the times is either due to hypocrisy, creates hypocrisy, or
17 both.

18 **Matthew 18:1-35 (see also John 20:22-23):**

19 One of the amazing, and in its context, heretical tasks given to the church is to
20 deal with sin: to discern it, to forgive it, or to retain it. That this task is given to
21 the "two or three" as they gather together in the name of Christ is a very large
22 and, heretofore, inconceivable responsibility. The assumptions till then had been
23 that this was the sole responsibility of God. The first step in dealing with sin is to
24 discover it and to name it. The criteria for doing so are not provided in this text.
25 This must be the ongoing vocation of the gathered church.

26 **I John 4, 5:**

27 The potential for false teaching within the church is significant. The church's
28 discipleship/faithfulness antennae must always be on high alert. The church is
29 given the task of "testing the spirits, to see if they are of God" (I John 4:1). The
30 reason for this is because the spiritual sources of common wisdom and practice
31 may not always be readily evident, i.e. it is not always immediately clear which
32 "spirits" are nurturing common assumptions.

33 **John 16:1-15:**

34 Jesus promises his disciples that when he leaves he will send the Spirit, the
35 Paraclete, to accompany them. One of the key functions of this Spirit in the midst
36 of the community is the ongoing task of teaching them what truth is, where it is to
37 be found, and how it needs to be practiced. The hermeneutical community under
38 the guidance of the Holy Spirit thus becomes the locus of authoritative
39 discernment of God's will revealed in Holy Scripture and in contextual practice.
40

41 The common element in all of these passages is the assumption that discerning the mind
42 of God in order to be a faithful people of God is an ongoing task. Indeed, this is more
43 than a mere task: it is a foundational vocation of what it means to be God's people,
44 incarnate in the world, in order to save it from its destructive potential.
45

46 For Anabaptists, the authority of scripture is understood to be unleashed only when God's
47 people carefully and prayerfully discern the will of God through the presence of the Holy
48 Spirit guiding the church into an understanding of scripture that reflects God's will for

1 the world. Scripture, according to this understanding, loses its functional authority for our
2 world when the community becomes hermeneutically unfaithful or dysfunctional.
3 Scripture and experience both point to two important ingredients as we engage the
4 ongoing task of discernment:

- 5
- 6 a) God has been with us. We can be confident in what has been. There is enough life
7 lived, truth revealed, and wisdom absorbed that provide a sufficient platform for
8 faithful living.
 - 9 b) God will be with us. We must be open to spiritual surprises. It is not that there is
10 new spiritual truth invented, but the Spirit can uncover old truths for us in
11 surprising ways. It is the ongoing, often vulnerable, responsibility of the church to
12 remain open to the surprises that God may have in store for us.
- 13

14 These two ingredients may appear to be in tension. And they may generate
15 misunderstanding, conflict, threat, and impatience. But both ingredients come from the
16 same source, God, and we need not fear. It is the vocation of the church to walk in this
17 tension.

18

19 Yet, even as the church engages the process of discernment, we confess that, at best, we
20 will only understand “through a glass darkly [or in a mirror dimly]” (I Cor. 13:12). Our
21 definitions and pronouncements are never the last word. Our discernment, too, comes
22 under the judgment of the Spirit of Truth and the wisdom of God revealed in God’s
23 *kairos* (time) and in our *chronos* (time). Doctrine, theology, and confession do not
24 replace the living Word of God, that continually brings us into fuller truth and
25 understanding that reflects the eternal will of God for his world.

26

27 **Practical Options**

28

29 The practical implication of such ongoing discernment is that the church will always
30 speak, and then it must always speak again. And when it speaks again, it will have three
31 options, each of which can potentially be a faithful or an unfaithful option. Many
32 examples could be given. We will limit ourselves to only a few:

33

- 34 a) The church can repeat again what it has said before:
 - 35 **Example from the Bible:** Jesus’ reference to part of the *shema* as the
 - 36 greatest commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with
 - 37 all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbour as yourself.”
 - 38 **Example from church history:** Mennonites reaffirming their
 - 39 understanding of pacifism in spite of the persecution against them from
 - 40 without, and the pressures from within in the 16th century and during
 - 41 World War I and II.
- 42 b) The church can modify what it has said before, given some new spiritual
- 43 understandings. This would normally mean that it can move further but in the
- 44 same direction that it has moved before.
 - 45 **Example from the Bible:** Jesus’ desire to fulfil and not to abolish the law
 - 46 with his six references to: “You have heard that it was said ... But I say to
 - 47 you...”

1 **Example from church history:** Mennonites slowly moving from an
2 understanding of “non-resistance” to “non-violent resistance.”
3 c) The church can change what it has said before because new perspectives have
4 become apparent and compelling, and shifting the relative authority of canonical
5 voices has been discerned to be necessary.

6 **Example from the Bible:** The understanding of the “chosen people” to
7 include the Gentiles in a new way, which in turn changed the
8 understanding of circumcision and food laws in affirming what “seemed
9 good to the Holy Spirit and to us.”

10 **Example from church history:** The church’s defence of slavery not being
11 justifiable, and the equal role of women in the ministry of the church to be
12 good.

13
14 There is always tension between *sufficient wisdom* and *spiritual surprise* as the church is
15 intentional about discernment. Therefore, the church will not (cannot) know which of the
16 three outcomes it will experience. Spiritual/biblical discernment ultimately is an exercise
17 of faith in and submission to the work of the Holy Spirit in the midst of God’s
18 community. The church always engages discernment on the foundation of what it has
19 discerned before. Discernment does not mean that we are adrift or that there is no anchor.
20 We are confident in the past presence of God with us, and the sufficiency of the wisdom
21 that has been discerned. Discernment does not presuppose change, but it is open to
22 surprises engineered by the Holy Spirit. This means that while the foundation is solid,
23 where discernment will end up is not predetermined. It is open to the inherent tension of
24 sufficiency and surprise. The church need not, however, fear. A discerning community
25 will come to the point where it can say “it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to
26 us...” (Acts 15:28). And this is the trust and faith that allows the church to be the church,
27 engaging its God-given vocation of confronting sin and engaging obedience. Conversely,
28 a church that avoids, refuses, or cannot engage its vocation of ongoing discernment
29 cannot be the church.

30

31 **Being a Faithful Church**

32

33 Spiritual discernment engages us in deliberate processes that help us face the challenges
34 in the life of the church. What is at stake, fundamentally, is not whether a previous
35 position will be re-stated (spiritual sufficiency) or whether a new road will be forged
36 (spiritual surprise). What is at stake is our capacity to be the church in fulfilling our
37 ongoing vocation of discerning the *kairos* of God for our time. In other words, the
38 primary issue is not what exactly we will decide about the challenges that face us; the
39 primary issue is whether we can be the church in doing so. It is very important not to lose
40 sight of this fundamental focus.

41

42 This, however, begs an all important question. What are the ingredients that make the
43 church the church as it engages tough and potentially divisive conversations? Let us
44 suggest a few key ingredients that are foundational:

45

46 1) Understand that we are engaging a spiritual exercise. Spiritual discernment is not
47 focused on personal preferences, peer pressure, social niceties, political
48 correctness, scientific debate, or institutional power. While all these undoubtedly

- 1 shape and influence us, we must understand our process to be focussed on
2 discerning the mind of God for our lives for our time. We have the full assurance
3 that God’s Spirit will be present, and that we need not fear the outcomes. And we
4 can be grateful that God is God and we are not.
- 5 2) Understand that as a spiritual exercise, we will engage seriously the spiritual
6 disciplines as taught to us by our Lord. Such a process needs to be bathed in
7 prayer for each other, meeting together with each other, studying scripture
8 together, fasting, worship, listening, celebration, discernment, conversation, and a
9 commitment to learn.
- 10 3) Understand that we are engaging an ecclesial (churchly) exercise. We believe that
11 in God’s wisdom, the church has been called to be the primary vehicle for
12 teaching and living out the good news of God’s Kingdom present in the world.
13 We are, therefore, confident that an ecclesial process is necessary, sufficient, and
14 good for us at this time – and in fact at any time. In doing so, we are engaging
15 conversations about the life of the church. It makes sense that those who
16 participate would do so from the basis of a commitment to make the church strong
17 and faithful.
- 18 4) Understand that God’s Spirit and therefore God’s wisdom are not confined to the
19 church. Because this is a spiritual exercise, the domain for understanding the
20 Spirit’s work in the world is the world itself. This suggests that we should not be
21 surprised to discover and learn spiritual truth from individuals, groups, society,
22 science, politics, and institutions. “Interpreting the signs of the times” means to
23 interpret what God is doing within and beyond the church in order to bring about
24 his Kingdom.
- 25 5) Understand that by engaging an ecclesial process, internal to the church, we
26 believe the church to be a priesthood of all believers. This suggests that all
27 “priests” of the church are welcome to participate and each of these voices needs
28 to be heard with integrity and sincerity. It does not mean that each priest stands
29 before God in a way unaccountable to the priesthood. The priesthood of all
30 believers does not mean full agreement of all priests with the priesthood. It does
31 mean taking seriously the voice of the priesthood, even when our personal
32 opinions or preferences may differ. It means being confident that God’s Spirit will
33 work through the church as a community of discernment as is promised in
34 scripture.
- 35 6) Understand that our commitment to be the church as a priesthood of believers will
36 mean that there will be those who want to advocate for the sufficiency of what has
37 been discerned till now, and those who will advocate for change based on their
38 view of the surprises of the Spirit through a re-reading of experience and
39 scripture. It would be normal to have advocates in such a process, but we would
40 understand that advocacy is done to strengthen the Body of Christ in faithfulness
41 to God, not for the purpose of winning. Because advocates are needed in such a
42 process, the process itself must not be polarized, much less adversarial.
- 43 7) Understand that such a process would, naturally, desire to come to a point of the
44 church speaking again. As indicated, this might mean saying the same thing,
45 modifying previous speech, or change direction from previous discernment. In
46 other words, while the process may be long, it is not entirely open-ended.
- 47 8) Understand that this process is designed to energize, not drain, the missional
48 capacities of the church. When we understand discernment as fulfilling the

1 vocation of the church, we will be able to see this as an opportunity and not as a
2 problem. This will energize our identity as a church.
3
4

5 **Summary**

6
7 A missional/Anabaptist church is committed to its vocation of relevant presence and
8 ministry in the place and time into which God has placed us. God wants us to see the
9 potential for ecclesial renewal within our circumstances. Spiritual discernment is an
10 opportunity for spiritual renewal and growth.

11
12 Strengthening our capacity to discern together is a way of taking seriously our vocation
13 as God's people in this time and place. It is a way of engaging God's *kairos* (time) within
14 our *chronos* (time). This is a vocation to which the church has been permanently called.
15 This is one opportunity (among many) for our generation to demonstrate that the church
16 can "be worthy of the calling to which we have been called" (Eph. 4:1). It is our vocation
17 to be the church, and when we face this vocation squarely, God's Spirit will guide us and
18 "make peace" among us (Eph. 2:14). We cannot predict *how* God will do this work
19 among us, but we can be confident that he *will* do this work among us.
20

21 The heart and soul of facing the need for discernment is our conviction that the church is
22 worth the effort. In a sense, being more deliberate in strengthening this part of our
23 vocation may represent an opportunity of our generation to demonstrate the solid mettle
24 that is at the heart of our commitment to be a faithful Mennonite church in our time and
25 place.

26
27 This document was commissioned and approved for discussion by the General Board of
28 Mennonite Church Canada.
29

30 Robert J. Suderman
31 General Secretary
32 Mennonite Church Canada
33 March, 2009
34

2009 Assembly Discernment

A proposal for promoting peace in the public square

1 Peace in the Public Square
2 Proposal for Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2009, Saskatoon

3

4 **A proposal for promoting the peace message in the public square:**

5

6 Given what is (and is not) viable, what is already being done, and what is needed, we make a
7 simple proposal:

8

• We propose:

9

• that *each* part of the Body within Mennonite Church Canada commit to publicly engage
10 *one* local (regional, national, international) issue per year for the next 4 years;

11

• that *each* part of the Body commit to provide the education and resourcing needed
12 (within and beyond the Body) to articulate and explain the public engagement from a
13 Peace Church perspective;

14

• that *each* part of the Body commit to provide a written report to Mennonite Church
15 Canada, outlining its engagement and reflecting on the impact of its work;

16

• that Mennonite Church Canada staff commit to resource the educational needs of these
17 initiatives;

18

• that Mennonite Church Canada commit to compile these engagements into an annual
19 summary report, providing perspective and analysis as needed and helpful;

20

21 Framework:

22 *Being a witness for peace in the public square is the vocation of the entire Body of Christ, that*
23 *includes the congregations and its members, Area Churches, related institutions and*
24 *denominational ministries. Each part of Mennonite Church Canada is strongly urged to seek*
25 *out and act on opportunities to be a peace witness in the public square on an ongoing basis.*
26 *These opportunities include but are not limited to: an ongoing commitment to educating,*
27 *nurturing, and living a spirit of non-violent peacemaking, and public peace advocacy in our*
28 *own congregations.*

29

30 **Background**

31 At the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2008, a resolution on Peace in the Public Square was
32 brought by the Osler Mennonite Church (Sask.) and passed by the delegates. The resolution was
33 in response to increasing militarization of Canadian society as evidenced by efforts of military
34 recruitment in Canada, and Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan.

53 July, 2008: A Resolution from the Mennonite Church Canada Delegate Body

54 **BE IT RESOLVED:**

55 Our nation is at war and we are becoming a more militaristic culture. The principles of
56 “redemptive violence” are being aggressively promoted to justify the increase in military
57 spending and the shedding of blood by and of Canadian soldiers. Christ’s message of peace,
58 reconciliation, and grace needs to be heard in our country.

59
60 Realizing that we are called to bear witness for Christ and his message, we request that the staff
61 of MC Canada develop a proposal for promoting the peace message in the “public square”, and
62 that it is presented at the 2009 annual delegate assembly.

63
64 **EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

65 We are very concerned about the increased militaristic propaganda in the mass media, such as
66 recruiting commercials and military presence at televised sports events, and we strongly feel that
67 we must counter this by getting the peace message out to the general public. What we envision
68 might include the use of mass media like newspaper, radio, T.V., and internet. Since we
69 understand the cost involved in this, we suggest MC Canada may want to combine resources with
70 other peace organizations (independent and those that are branches of other denominations). We
71 feel a positive message, such as using the Golden Rule, would be most effective.

72
73 **MC Canada staff response:**

74 We affirm the intent of this resolution in that it underscores the conviction that the vocation of the
75 church, in all its expressions, is that of being an active agent for peace in our world. This
76 includes, but is not limited to, the life and witness of congregations. In order to do together what,
77 in this case, each congregation also does alone, we are organized into Congregations, Area
78 Churches, a national church, and Mennonite World Conference.

79
80 The basis for the gospel of peace is found in scripture (cf: Article 22 *Confession of Faith in a*
81 *Mennonite Perspective*). Other resources enrich our understanding, some of which are our Vision:
82 Healing and Hope, our Statement of Identity and Purpose, as well as the work of many authors.

83
84 Tasks can be divided, but the vocation of peace is for all. One constituent summarized it this way:
85 “MC Canada was encouraged to make the voice of peace be heard in Ottawa as well [by] making
86 the local faithful church the primary peace agency for both proclamation and practice” (Edna
87 Peters, *The Grapevine*, Summer, 2008, newsletter of Charleswood MC, Wpg.).

88
89 We believe that we, as one part of the ecumenical Body of Christ, need to witness more overtly
90 and effectively to peace as being at the core of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that
91 Mennonite Church Canada (members, congregations, and others) can do far more than we
92 sometimes think we can.

93
94 **Possibilities for Action**

95 The Assembly 2008 resolutions calls for “a proposal for promoting the peace message in the
96 “public square.” What are some options?

- 97 - A full-page advertisement in the Toronto Globe and Mail costs \$70,000;
- 98 - A 30 second commercial on Hockey Night in Canada costs \$30,000 (plus production
99 costs);
- 100 - A bill-board campaign is also very costly; For \$250,000, an organization could launch a
101 two-month billboard campaign covering Canada’s five or six biggest markets;
- 102 - Advertising on bus benches in cities: In the Winnipeg market, a bus bench ad costs about
103 \$275 for 12 months.

- 104 - When the “Support our Troops” decals appeared on public vehicles in Southern Ontario,
105 Pastor Don Penner wrote a sensitive letter of concern to the editor of the *Kitchener-*
106 *Waterloo Record*. Thousands read it.
- 107 - When the Dept. of Defence send out recruitment postcards directly to homes, Sargent
108 MC responded by re-purposing the recruitment message into protest postcards that
109 members could send to political leaders. These were shared at the Assembly in
110 Abbotsford (2007) where delegates and congregations were also invited to participate.
- 111 - When the town of Winkler, Manitoba, prepared a welcome home parade for a soldier
112 who had served in Afghanistan, Pastor John Klassen wondered why a church member
113 serving five terms in the Middle East with Christian Peacemaker Teams had not received
114 similar recognition. Klassen wrote a column in the *Winkler Times* that was read by
115 thousands.
- 116 - In 2007, when a Southwestern Ontario School Board approved a military co-op program
117 designed to enhance recruitment, a group of Mennonite pastors from five congregations
118 in the area expressed their opposition at a public meeting. This ignited debate in the
119 public media. Many heard and read about their action, which later generated a story in
120 *Canadian Mennonite*.
- 121 - A mother wrote a column in the *Winnipeg Free Press* about how the military had
122 recruited her 12 year old daughter into Cadets – all expenses paid, and how good that
123 was. An MC Canada staff member wrote a response letter to the editor challenging the
124 idea that children should be militarized; it was published as the “Letter of the Day.”
- 125 - The Fraser Valley Peace and Arts Festival began in 1992 as an alternative to the
126 Abbotsford Air Show. It has since evolved into a multi-day event scheduled around
127 Remembrance Day and is now sponsored by a collaborative group of partners. Over the
128 years, tens of thousands have been exposed to this event and its message.
- 129 - Mennonite Church Canada, with the expertise of constituent lawyer Jake Harms, drafted
130 a Private Members Bill C-460 proposing that legal provision be made for Conscientious
131 Objection to the payment of income taxes for military purposes. This draft was approved
132 by Conscience Canada and was introduced into Parliament by MP Bill Siksay of British
133 Columbia. Individuals can follow up with action via www.consciencecanada.ca where
134 they can find letter templates, talking points for visits with political leaders, and other
135 tools for advocacy on this issue.
- 136 - Mennonite Church Canada was asked to provide input into the Canadian Council of
137 Churches conversation about all Canadian churches becoming peace churches. This
138 generated much debate and an invitation for a full conference to look at this issue.
- 139 - Mennonite Church Canada representatives have participated in the ongoing meetings
140 with President Ahmadinijad of Iran and his diplomatic corps. These conversations have
141 generated significant amounts of attention in the public square.
- 142 - The ongoing theological educators interchange that has included our post-secondary
143 schools has generated much public attention and press.

144
145 These initiatives are ways in which ordinary people, congregations, pastors, and leaders are
146 agents of peace in the public square. More ideas are possible when we engage our God-given
147 imaginations.

148
149 .
150 **Appendix I:**
151 **Some more ideas:**

- 152 • A renewed and ongoing emphasis on peace education among ourselves. Create a peace
153 trainee program in your congregation: ex. six weeks for Peace – a unified time for
154 congregations to work specifically at creating/developing/strengthening a culture of
155 peace in their churches/communities timed with Peace Sunday/Remembrance Day;

- 156 Access the many resources available through Mennonite Church Canada’s Resource
 157 Centre and our publisher, Mennonite Publishing Network.
- 158 • Elected leaders say there are few things more effective than personal visits. Make
 159 ongoing and repetitive visits to your local MP and state a position for non-violent peace
 160 building in the world.
 - 161 • Continuously promote Conscience Canada in your church. Using existing Conscience
 162 Canada forms, encourage church members to withhold military taxes and/or declare
 163 yourselves/themselves as Conscientious Objectors to military taxation.
 - 164 • Congregational clusters could partner together to host an annual “Peace Media Blitz.”
 - 165 • Local TV/radio stations often give a platform for community leaders. Encourage access
 166 of those opportunities at any time, and repetitively.
 - 167 • Spread the Peace Church Movement: Engage actively with other Christian traditions to
 168 be the conscience of the church in matters related to peace. Commit to establish a
 169 relationship with another non-Mennonite congregation or other faith group in your
 170 community. Relate to a local mosque or synagogue. Collaborate on peace initiatives.
 171 Have a plan to keep these relationships alive over time.
 - 172 • Challenge youth to produce YouTube videos on what you as a church or individuals
 173 within your congregation are doing for peace. Post the videos and alert MC Canada so
 174 these videos can be “favoriteed” on www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca. Or create a
 175 short viral video promoting a message of peace and see how far it can ‘infect’ others.
 - 176 • Each Remembrance Day, host an alternative memorial service that also remembers and
 177 honours those who have died by acting for peace in non-violent ways (e.g. Tom Fox, who
 178 was killed in Iraq while working with CPT). At your discretion, invite local media to this
 179 service. Film it for YouTube or other video sharing sites.
 - 180 • Join the Facebook page “Coffee for Peace” created by Witness worker Dann Pantoja, or
 181 join another of several peace pages on Facebook – or create your own page for peace.
 182 Engage other social media with peace movements. See how many ‘fans’ you can collect.
 183 Invite the merger of other peace pages into one giant peace page.
 - 184 • Create events that are attractive to media as a very cost-effective way of getting a
 185 message into the public square. Create an annual Peace Festival in your own community.
 - 186 • Engage Sunday School children in sending peace letters and drawings to the Prime
 187 Minister and your local MP once a year.
 - 188 • Promote www.alternativeservice.ca to local elementary and middle schools and school
 189 divisions to help create awareness among teachers and students that not everyone fought
 190 and that conscientious objection is a legitimate position. This web site has been designed
 191 to complement the history studies curriculum in many schools.
 - 192 • Help raise awareness of the 2010 G8 meeting in Canada and its leaders’ commitment to
 193 the UN’s Millennium Development Goals.
 - 194 • Check out resources at the World Conference of Religions for Peace (www.wcrp.org).

197 **Appendix II:**

198 **What is already being done through Mennonite Church Canada**

- 199 • Working with the Canadian Council of Churches in promoting an understanding of what
 200 it means to be a Peace Church to its member denominations. This is an important
 201 initiative when many denominations subscribe to just war theology, making Christian
 202 unity on peace a difficult issue to overcome. See a paper presented to the CCC at
 203 www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/960. The National Council of Churches in the USA has
 204 asked to use this paper for its 100th anniversary in 2010.
- 205 • The Christian Reformed Church has asked MC Canada to resource a Peace Day in their
 206 denomination.

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- Witness workers in places like the Philippines and Israel/Gaza are engaged in direct peace ministries. International Witness workers in 30 countries model peace to their ministry partners and communities.
 - Sponsoring and/or supporting partners in the peace ministries of CPT, MCC, Project Ploughshares, KAIROS, Conscience Canada, Project Peacemakers, and MCC.
 - MC Canada’s Speakers Bureau is available to any congregation seeking input and guidance on peace issues.
 - MC Canada Resource Centre has one of the most unique collections of books, videos, and other resources on peace building in Canada: www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources.
 - Our post-secondary Mennonite Schools offer numerous peace studies options.
 - A web site (www.alternativeservice.ca) offers resources on Conscientious Objection during World War II that is designed to complement elementary and middle school history curriculums.
 - *Church Matters*, a radio program and free podcast produced by Mennonite Church Canada has released 5 episodes (out of 28) focused on peace.
 - Selected videos from the Mennonite Church Canada YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca.
 - Mennonite Media will provide, free of charge, professionally produced Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for churches who wish to urge their local radio broadcasters to air these short promos. Preview these at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/900.

- Prepared by Dan Dyck at the request of MC Canada Executive Staff

2009 Assembly Discernment

“Church Health and Growth – Where are we at?”

At the 2008 Delegate session, one person came to the microphone and asked, “So are we growing as a church, or not? I don’t see that information in the workbook.” This is an important question. While we don’t measure church health in numbers, neither can we ignore the trends to which numbers point. This discernment session will invite delegates to consider together questions of healthy church growth.

Proposed Outcome of Discernment time

- Inspire delegates with stories of faithful church health/growth within MC Canada.
- Reflect biblically/theologically on our vocation for church planting and growth.
- Give national visibility and support to newer congregations within MC Canada.
- Provide some helpful information in terms of the profile of our church today.
- Identify strengths and resources needed for congregations to reach beyond themselves.
- Discern together how congregations, area churches, and the national church can best help each other to engage a more intentional strategy of church health/growth.

What to Expect

Based on the above outcomes, this session is designed to be informative and inspirational. It will challenge delegates to listen carefully and with grateful hearts to what God is doing among us through the formation of new congregations. It will also challenge us to consider our context, and ask each other how we can be most encouraging and active in being a healthy church that grows. There will be some time of presentation, story telling, and conversation at round tables.

–Prepared by Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada Witness

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For Discussion

In October of 2007 a group of Muslim scholars wrote an open letter to Christians around the world (www.acommonword.com). The letter invites us to affirm as a step toward world peace, two central beliefs common to the family of Abraham: love of God and love of neighbour. The General Board of MC Canada, with the cooperation of the Faith and Life Committee, has added its response to the many submitted from around the world. It is printed below. If you would like to discuss the Muslim letter and the General Board response to it, watch for an announcement of a luncheon time and place at the Assembly.

–Rudy Baergen, on behalf of the Faith & Life Committee



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March 18, 2009

To the Muslim authors of "A Common Word between Us and You" which was addressed to Christian Churches throughout the world:

The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada commends you for your thoughtful and respectful call for a conversation of peace between Muslims and Christians. This leadership body of Mennonite Church Canada herewith adds its voice of support and encouragement to your initiative.

At the annual Assembly of Mennonite Church Canada in July, 2008 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, delegates considered a call from its Faith and Life Committee, the body commissioned to give guidance in theological matters in our denomination, to respectfully engage people of other religious faiths.

We recognize that there are two important strands of wisdom found within Christian Scripture. One strand holds God to be present and at work in the whole world, not limited to any one story or one culture. Your exposition of the two commandments of love, love for God and love of neighbour found in all three Abrahamic faiths illustrates that conviction. Thus we affirm the importance of a respectful dialogue with those who profess a faith and spiritual way different from our Christian one. Like the Apostle Paul in his speech on the Acropolis as recorded in the Book of Acts, we should seek common understanding and be slow to condemn. As people of peace, Mennonite Christians are interested in promoting peace with people of different religious persuasions.

The other strand of wisdom found in our Christian Scripture invites us to claim and proclaim the particular truth given in Jesus Christ. As Mennonite Christians we confess that Jesus is the one who most fully reveals God to us. We confess that, as God's Son, Jesus speaks and acts on behalf of God. As such Jesus guides our view of life and our ethics.

Holding these two strands of wisdom together allows us as Mennonite Christians to appreciate the common ground within the different branches of the Abrahamic faith traditions. At the same time, we bring to this relationship our conviction, as one of the historic Peace Churches in the Christian tradition, that Jesus, through his teachings, life and death, clarifies what love for the neighbour entails. At the heart of Jesus' revelation is the call to love even the one whom our society wants us to name as our enemy (Matthew 5:43-45). God's love, as exemplified in Christ, overcomes human enmity and conflict by rejecting violence. God's love enables diverse communities to be reconciled and to seek the common good by working together for peace and justice. Thus we bring to the celebration of the common word between us the firm conviction that Jesus' command to love extends to all of humanity.

Frequently the religions of the world fix their attention on how they are different from one another. "A Common Word Between Us and You" highlights in a very helpful way the centrality of the conviction within the Abrahamic faiths that the God who calls us to love our neighbour is One. We owe a word of gratitude to you, for inviting us to affirm the common word between us for the betterment of humankind. To this end, we add our voice and signature to your initiative.

Robert J. Suderman
General Secretary
Mennonite Church Canada

Andrew Reesor-McDowell
Moderator – General board
Mennonite Church Canada

Councils and Committees

MC Canada Elected and appointed Leaders*		
GENERAL BOARD EXECUTIVE		
	Province	Term Expiry
Andrew Reesor-McDowell, Moderator	ON	2010
Garth Ewert Fisher, Asst. Moderator	SK	2010
Don Friesen, Secretary	ON	2009
Gordon Peters, Treasurer	SK	2009
Hilda Hildebrand, Member at Large	MB	2010
GENERAL BOARD		
Dan Rempel (Moderator of MCBC) (<i>As Moderator of an Area Church this person is then a part of MC Canada General Board. See By-Laws for complete information.</i>)	BC	
Walter Wiebe (Moderator of MCA)	AB	
Renata Klassen, (Moderator of MCSask)	SK	
Hans Werner (Moderator of MCM)	MB	
Leroy Shantz (Moderator of MCEC)	ON	
Betty Loewen (MC Canada appt. Member at Large)	BC	2010
Donita Wiebe Neufeld (MC Canada appt. Member at Large)	AB	2010
General Board representation from the councils - chairs Willard Metzger, Sue Steiner, Ed Janzen, Rudy Baergen. And two council appointments Lisa Carr-Pries (f), and Lynell Bergen (w)		
FINANCE POLICY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE		
Helen Kasdorf (appointed by General Board)	MB	2011
Ingrid Peters-Fransen (appointed by General Board)	MB	2010
CHRISTIAN FORMATION COUNCIL		
Sue Steiner, Chair (GB Representative)	ON	2009
Lisa Carr-Pries (GB Representative)	ON	2009
Naomi Unger (MWC Representative)	SK	2009
Tom Yoder Neufeld	ON	2010
VACANT		2010
Van Hoa Chau	MB	2011
Veronica Dyck	BC	2011
Earl Reimer	MB	2011
Coreen Froese	AB	2009
Pauline Steinmann	SK	2010
CHRISTIAN WITNESS COUNCIL		
Willard Metzger, Chair (GB Representative)	ON	2010
Lynell Bergen (GB Representative)	MB	2010
Hun Lee	ON	2011
Laura Loewen (MWC Representative)	BC	2009
Noe Gonzalia	ON	2010
Rudy Dirks	ON	2010
Emily Dueck	ON	2011
Waldo Neufeld	BC	2011
Irene Crosland	AB	2009
JD Penner	ON	2009
SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL		
Ed Janzen, Chair (GB Representative)	BC	2011
Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel	MB	2010
Gordon Baergen (replacement)	AB	2009
Mark Wurtz	SK	2011
Harry Wiens	MB	2009
Kaye Rempel	ON	2011
FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE		
Rudy Baergen	MB	2011
Karl Koop	MB	2010
Doreen Neufeld	AB	2009
Betty Pries	ON	2011
NOMINATING COMMITTEE		
Lorne Buhr	AB	2009
Clare Neufeld	BC	2010
Justina Heese	MB	2011
Gladys Bender	ON	2011
Dave Feick	SK	2009
* unless otherwise noted, leaders are elected by the MC Canada Delegate Assembly		

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Nominees



Don Friesen

GENERAL BOARD

Don Friesen, Ottawa ON (Ottawa Mennonite Church)

Nominated as General Board Secretary. Served on the General Board since 2007.

Occupation: Leading minister for 31 years.

Local church involvements: Secretary of the Refugee Assistance Program Committee; Chair of the Worship Committee.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Member of the executive of the Christian Council of the Capital Area for 20 years as president, vice-president, and several times as secretary; secretary of the local Habitat for Humanity Church Relations Committee.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: To encourage faithfulness to Jesus Christ; to provide resources for local congregations that encourage unity of purpose and action and promote conference loyalty; to give leadership to national and international witness in a manner sufficiently flexible to incorporate congregational initiatives.



Gordon Peters

Gordon Peters, Saskatoon, SK (Nutana Park Mennonite Church)

Nominated as Treasurer. Served on the General Board since 2007.

Occupation: Self-employed

Local church involvements: Church Treasurer: 6 years, MCC/Village Green Thrift Store Board member.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Various community based non-profits, run a bookkeeping business.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My vision and goal for Mennonite Church Canada would be for the organization to inspire church members to feel that they own and run the program. We can all accomplish much more as a group of committed Christians. The mission and programs run by Mennonite Church Canada are the result of years of work by committed church leaders and the membership providing the resources to make it happen. I wish for more unity of purpose and understanding that Mennonite Church Canada is nothing without the support of churches across Canada. Prayer, volunteers, and financial resources are provided by the membership, there is no other place to go to get them. I hope that we as leaders of Mennonite Church Canada would be able to tell the stories of how our programs are working towards the glory of God. As the mission of Mennonite Church Canada continues, I wish for everyone to get excited about what's happening and as a result, I know the finances will come rolling in. My vision would be that every year, General Board is able to add to the mission program, because donations have exceeded budget expectations. This may be dreaming, but if the mission of Mennonite Church Canada is the same as the mission of our churches and its membership, we will be in a position to make these additions regularly.

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FORMATION COUNCIL

Lisa Carr-Pries, Waterloo, ON (Waterloo North Mennonite Church)

Nominated as Chair. Served on the Christian Formation Council since 2006.

Occupation: Pastor

Local church involvements: I have worked with Camps with Meaning and Christian Education Committee for Mennonite Church Manitoba; on Young Adult Reference Council for North America; youth sponsor; chaired music and worship committees; MCEC Resource Advocate; President of the Inter Mennonite Children's Choir (Ontario).

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Pastor at Charleswood Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, and presently at Waterloo North Mennonite Church; member of Christian Formation Council for the last three years and two years on the General Board.

Special Interests: I love to read, play piano, and sing as a way of expressing my spirituality.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: It is a vibrant hope-filled church where all people experience God's love, follow Jesus' way and are guided by the Holy Spirit. It is a multi-generational body where all people have a thick faith and we serve each other from our God-given gifts in response to God's grace to us.

Naomi Unger, Rabbit Lake, SK (Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church)

Served on the Christian Formation Council since 2003.

Occupation: Homemaker

Local church involvements: Presently, I am a lay minister, president of the women's groups in Rabbit Lake and Glenbush, and youth leader. Also, I'm a member of the Housing Authority board, the local library board, and "Take Note" (a community women's choir). I have been a member of Christian Formation Council for the last six years and one of MC Canada's representatives on the General Council of Mennonite World Conference during that time. I've served on the Executive Committee of MWC since 2003.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: I have served in MCC assignments in Nigeria and Tanzania at various times for a total of eleven years, first teaching and then as co-country administrator with my husband, Don. For MC Sask, I conducted the Vibrant Rural Churches Project with Eric Olfert during 2002-2004.

Special Interests: My interests are worship, how faith in Christ is nurtured and lived across age and people groups as well as the resourcing of pastors and church workers.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: That the church will grow in alignment with and commitment to God's desire for shalom for humanity and all creation. I hope that believers - young and old, near and far - will be the light of Christ in their context, growing in our witness of God's grace and in our worship of God's glory.



Lisa Carr-Pries



Naomi Unger

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Coreen Froese

Coreen Froese, Didsbury, AB (Bergthal Mennonite Church)

Served on the Christian Formation Council since 2006.

Occupation: Currently a student at CMU. Past experience includes work for a non-profit organization that supports mentally disabled adults with independent living.

Local church involvements: Has been involved with the Sunday school program, with the youth and the library committee. For 4 years she was the Christian Education Resource person for Alberta and is presently on the Congregational Life Committee for the Alberta conference.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Involved with Creation Stewards, a group of church people that meets once a month to discuss how to be better stewards of God's earth through simpler living, energy conservation, recycling and supporting the local economy. Great interest in children's education. For the last 2 years has been involved with a non-profit organization that trains assistance dogs for people with mobility or hearing problems.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: I look forward to working with the other council members as we continue to work at what it means to be communities of grace, joy, and peace.

(from the 2006 Report Book)

WITNESS COUNCIL

Irene Crosland, Tofield, AB (Tofield Mennonite Church)

Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2003.



Irene Crosland

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: I am filled with hope. We, Mennonite Church Canada, are a part of the Body of Christ and have the privilege and responsibility to respond and call those around us from local to global into a love relationship with Christ. Seeing God at work we are empowered by the Holy Spirit who leads us through the current difficult global economic downturn. We need to actively listen to all persons on this stage where God is always at work, asking us to step out in faith to where he guides, wisely using the resources at hand. Hunger of body and soul cry out from us all but our God is able in all things to work for the good of those who love Him.

JD Penner, Toronto, ON (Toronto United Mennonite Church)

Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2006.



JD Penner

Occupation: Bank Manager

Local church involvements: Vice-Chair, Chair and Past Chair of TUMC Board (2000-2002), Personnel Committee (2000-2001), St. Clair O'Connor Community Inc. Board, TUMC representative (2004-present), Worship Committee, Lenten/Easter Worship Planning Committee, Youth Teacher/Youth Education Coordinator, Mentor

Other vocational and volunteer experience: MCEC Ontario Mennonite Music Camp Committee Co-Chair, Diversity Inclusion Business Council, Bank of America, Treasurer, Board of Directors for Voices (a chamber choir in Toronto), Graduate of CMBC.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: I would like to see local congregations build stronger relationships with each other and MC Canada, especially as we consider our vision and resources for local and overseas mission. We are capable of doing so much more together than as separate local churches.

(from the 2006 Report Book)

Hugo Neufeld, Calgary, AB (Trinity Mennonite Church)

Occupation: Semi-retired pastor

Local church involvements: I have been an interim co-pastor at Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church (completed December 31, 2007) and Holyrood Mennonite Church (completed 2006), Co-pastor Trinity Mennonite Church, Co-Mission Minister with MCEC, Co-director and co-pastor of Welcome Inn (Hamilton, Ont.). (All positions in team ministry with my wife Doreen.)

Other vocational and volunteer experience: In the past few years since Herald Press published my book in 2006, *The North End Lives, a Journey through Poverty Terrain*, with my wife Doreen I have spoken in many, churches, schools, social agencies, retreats and other gatherings. The focus of our sharing is stories from our experience of living and working in the inner city (Good News to the poor and to the rich).

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: With our Anabaptist history and tradition that includes service, mission, outreach, and peace/justice ministry, Mennonite Church Canada (in partnership with local congregations) is in a good position to claim its strengths and prophetically move forward in making our missional emphasis relevant to our contemporary society.

SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL

Gordon Baergen, Sherwood Park, AB (Holyrood Mennonite Church)

Occupation: Retired

Local church involvements: I have served on church maintenance boards, pastoral search and worship committees, and have led music groups and worship bands. I am currently serving as church treasurer. I have served as treasurer of the local MCC Sale committee for the 2002, 2005, and 2008 events.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Short term MDS in New Orleans.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My vision for Mennonite Church Canada is that it can be a valuable resource for member churches and that it can give strong direction to make our peace and Anabaptist positions relevant in our rapidly changing world.

Harry Wiens, Altona, MB (Altona Mennonite Church)

Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2006.

Occupation: Lawyer

Local church involvements: I have served as church secretary, chair, and Sunday school teacher, and many years on board of Eden Health Care Services. Have been on a number of other boards.

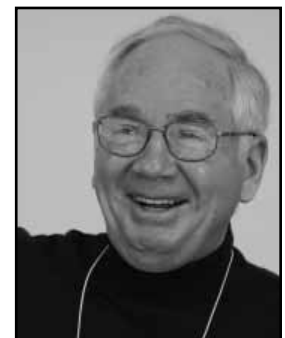
Vision/Goal for MC Canada: Much of what we are mandated to do as Christians can be done individually, but can be done more effectively if done corporately. I see MC Canada as a vehicle through which we can carry out our responsibilities.



Hugo Neufeld



Gordon Baergen



Harry Wiens

FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE

Sharon Shultz, Eyebrow, SK (Eyebrow Mennonite Church)

Occupation: Pastor

Local church involvements: Currently I am Pastor at Eyebrow Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan. I also teach Youth Sunday School class, lead singing, and help with Vacation Bible School. In the past I have served as Elder, Worship Leader, Song Leader, Treasurer, Adult Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School director and teacher. I am very involved in our community and am on the Hospital Auxiliary Board.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Chair of Pastoral Leadership Commission, MC Sask.

Special Interests: I love God's Word, the Bible, and am passionate about what it means to live as Kingdom of God people in our day.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My vision for Mennonite Church Canada is for us to live as Spirit-filled people, becoming more and more the people of God we are called to be, spreading the good news of the kingdom of God, and loving God and our neighbour, so that people from all nations, tribes, and countries can be transformed by Jesus Christ and that God's kingdom may come, on earth as it is in heaven.



Sharon Shultz

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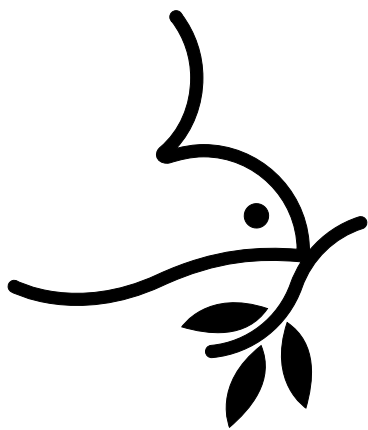
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The questions I expect my congregation will ask me about Assembly

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**Mennonite
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Last Updated July 2007

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General Bylaws

PART I - DEFINITIONS

Definition of Terms

- 1 In these bylaws:

- (a) "Act" means The Act of Incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada as amended by An Act to amend the Act of incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.
- (b) "area church" means a body of congregations that have been accepted to membership in the area church, visibly grouped in a region of Canada not necessarily bounded by provincial borders;
- (c) "congregation" means a body of persons who have responded to the call of Christ in repentance and in faith, who symbolize their unity through the

- practice of baptism and communion, and who are visibly grouped for the express purpose of implementing their obedience to Christ as head of the church;
- (d) "congregational member" means a person who is a member of a constituent congregation;
- (e) "constituent congregation" means a congregation which is a member of an area church and of Mennonite Church Canada;
- (f) "MC Canada" means Mennonite Church Canada; and
- (g) "MC USA" means Mennonite Church USA.

PART II - MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility for Membership

- 2 (1) An area church in Canada which accepts the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, supports the Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement of MC Canada and accepts these bylaws is eligible to become a member of MC Canada.
- (2) Any area church that wishes to become a member of MC Canada is invited to submit a request in writing to the General Secretary, who will submit it to the General Board which will, in turn, present the request and a recommendation to a delegate assembly.
- (3) A constituent congregation is a member of MC Canada as long as the area church to which it belongs is a member of MC Canada.

Rights and Privileges of Members

- 3 (1) Membership in MC Canada entitles area churches to:
 - (a) send delegates to a delegate assembly, as specified elsewhere in these bylaws, with the right to vote;
 - (b) representation on the General Board, as specified elsewhere in these bylaws; and
 - (c) participate in programs and receive services from MC Canada.
- (2) Membership in MC Canada entitles constituent congregations to:
 - (a) send delegates to a delegate assembly, as specified elsewhere in these bylaws, with the right to vote;
 - (b) have their congregational members serve on the General Board or stand for election to any elected positions except as otherwise provided in these bylaws; and
 - (c) participate in programs and receive services from MC Canada.

Expectations of Members

- 4 Area churches and constituent congregations are expected to:
 - (a) give faithful attention to the Scriptures;
 - (b) accept the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective;
 - (c) uphold statements of Christian faith and life made by MC Canada from time to time;
 - (d) respond to the invitation to become engaged in mission and service;
 - (e) participate in the church's life and mission through generous contributions of time and personal resources all in commitment to Jesus Christ in response to the grace of God and in loving service to the church in which the Holy Spirit lives and works; and
 - (f) assume all duties as defined in these bylaws.

Provisional Membership

- 5 (1) Provisional membership is open to any area church which:
 - (a) meets the eligibility requirement in bylaw 2(1);
 - (b) is not ready for full membership; but which
 - (c) wishes to evaluate the meaning of full membership for itself.
- (2) Provisional membership:
 - (a) may be requested in writing to the General Secretary, and the process set out in bylaw 2(2) shall apply;

- (b) is restricted to a maximum of five years;
 - (c) carries with it the expectations listed in bylaw 4;
 - (d) provides all the rights and privileges of membership listed in bylaw 3 except that:
 - (i) their delegates are not entitled to vote at delegate assemblies;
 - (ii) their congregational members may be elected to a Council, but may not serve on the General Board; and
 - (iii) participation in programs and services from MC Canada, and the costs associated with them, will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- (3) A constituent congregation is a provisional member of MC Canada as long as the area church to which it belongs is a provisional member of MC Canada.

Removal of Members

- 6 An area church may be removed from membership in MC Canada only on the recommendation of the General Board, and such recommendation may only be made after the General Board has followed procedures defined in Guidelines for Building Faithful Relationships in the Church (1998) and Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love (1995) to try to resolve matters with the area church in a way that would avert the need for such a recommendation.

PART III - DELEGATE ASSEMBLIES

Representation at Delegate Assemblies

- 7 (1) Area churches and constituent congregations may be represented at delegate assemblies as follows:
 - (a) delegates appointed by constituent congregations:
 - (i) in the ratio of one delegate for every 50 congregational members or a portion thereof; but
 - (ii) not less than two per constituent congregation; and
 - (b) delegates appointed by the area churches:
 - (i) in the ratio of one delegate for every 1,000 congregational members, or portion thereof, of their constituent congregations; but
 - (ii) not less than six and not more than 12 delegates per area church.
- (2) Each delegate may represent only one of either an area church, or a constituent congregation, but not both simultaneously.
- (3) Delegates must be congregational members. There are no other restrictions on who may be a delegate.

Duties and Powers of Voting Delegates

- 8 The delegates entitled to vote and present at a delegate assembly shall:
 - (a) have the authority to act on behalf of MC Canada;
 - (b) discern MC Canada's participation in God's work as reflected in its Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement;
 - (c) debate issues facing the church and, from time to time, issue statements, including, but not limited to, statements pertaining to faith and life, position statements, and statements to governments;
 - (d) review the work and ministry of MC Canada;
 - (e) approve the budgets of MC Canada;
 - (f) receive the General Board's recommendation on the appointment of an auditor to hold office until the close

- of the next regular delegate assembly, and accept or reject such recommendation;
- (g) consider and accept or reject the financial statements of MC Canada and the auditor's report;
- (h) receive the General Board's recommendation and accept, reject or remove area churches as members or as provisional members;
- (i) elect MC Canada's officers, members of the Councils and members of the Nominating Committee; and
- (j) make the bylaws of MC Canada, amend bylaws as deemed appropriate, and monitor adherence to those bylaws.

Delegate Assemblies

- 9** (1) Regular delegate assemblies shall be held:
- (a) annually, beginning normally during the first two weeks of July,
 - (b) at a place determined by the General Board.
- (2) Elections shall be held at regular delegate assemblies except where the General Board determines that it is necessary to hold elections at a special delegate assembly. The General Board and all Councils shall provide written reports of their activities, plans and relevant financial statements for consideration by delegates at regular delegate assemblies.
- (3) A special delegate assembly may be called from time to time by the General Board at a time and place it may determine.

Notice of Delegate Assemblies

- 10** (1) The date and place of the next regular delegate assembly shall be announced at the conclusion of each regular delegate assembly.
- (2) Notice of a special delegate assembly shall be given to area churches and to constituent congregations not less than 21 days in advance.

Voting at Delegate Assemblies

- 11** (1) The quorum for a delegate assembly shall be one half the total number eligible voting delegates from the area churches plus 200 voting delegates from constituent congregations.
- (2) The business of a delegate assembly may be conducted:
- (a) by consensus without a formal vote;
 - (b) by a show of hands at the discretion of the chair or on the request of a voting delegate; or
 - (c) by ballot vote when directed by the chair, or when a motion to require a ballot vote is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion.
- (3) Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, or if a motion to require a larger number is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion, a simple majority of the votes cast is sufficient to carry a resolution.
- (4) In the event of a ballot vote, the votes shall be counted by tellers who have been appointed in advance.

PART IV – NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, TERMS OF OFFICE AND VACANCIES

Qualifications for Elected Positions

- 12** (1) Each person nominated for an elected position must be a

- congregational member. However, congregational members of provisional constituent congregations are not eligible for election to the General Board.
- (2) In the event that an elected person ceases to be a congregational member, that person's term shall be deemed to have expired at that point.
- (3) No person may hold more than one elected position at the same time. Where a person who holds an elected position is elected to another elected position, that person is deemed to have resigned from the previously held elected position.
- (4) Staff of MC Canada are not eligible for election to an elected position in MC Canada.
- (5) Any question of eligibility for election shall be resolved by the General Board.

Nominating Committee

- 13** (1) Each area church shall nominate one person to the Nominating Committee for election at a delegate assembly.
- (2) The Nominating Committee shall:
- (a) in advance of a delegate assembly where elections are to be held, use its best efforts to prepare a slate of nominees consisting of one nominee for each elected position that needs to be filled;
 - (b) recommend, upon the request of a Council, persons to serve on its committees; and
 - (c) on request, suggest to the General Secretary names of candidates for vacant staff positions.

Election Procedures

- 14** (1) The Nominating Committee will receive further nominations at a delegate assembly if:
- (a) it is endorsed by five voting delegates;
 - (b) the nominee has agreed to stand for the elected position; and
 - (c) it is presented to the Nominating Committee at least 24 hours before the scheduled election.
- (2) Twenty-four hours before the scheduled election, the Nominating Committee shall present its slate of nominees, including those nominated in accordance with 14(1) above, to the delegate assembly.
- (3) Where only one person has been nominated for a given elected position, that nominee shall be declared elected by acclamation.
- (4) Where multiple nominations have been received for any elected position, there shall be a ballot vote.

Terms of Office

- 15** (1) The terms of office:
- (a) for the officers and the General Board members at large:
 - (i) shall be two years; and
 - (ii) they shall be eligible to serve for up to three consecutive terms;
 - (b) for all other members of the Councils:
 - (i) shall be three years; and
 - (ii) they shall be eligible to serve for up to three consecutive terms.
- (2) A person's term shall begin at the end of the delegate assembly at which the person was elected.

Vacancies

- 16** (1) Where a vacancy occurs in any elected position between regular delegate assemblies, such vacancy may be filled by the General Board, at its discretion, until the next regular delegate assembly.
- (2) Where a person has been appointed to fill a vacancy, the time spent completing that vacant term of office shall not be considered as a portion of any succeeding term.

PART V - GENERAL BOARD

Composition of the General Board

- 17** The General Board shall consist of:
- (a) the officers;
 - (b) the moderator or a designate of each area church;
 - (c) the chair of the Faith and Life Committee
 - (d) the following from the Councils:
 - (i) the chair of the Christian Witness Council and one other named by the Council;
 - (ii) the chair of the Christian Formation Council and one other named by the Council; and
 - (iii) the chair of the Support Services Council; and
 - (e) three members at large appointed by the General Board and confirmed by the delegate assembly.

Duties and Powers of the General Board

- 18** The General Board shall:
- (a) act on behalf of MC Canada between delegate assemblies;
 - (b) act as the legal representative of MC Canada, authorize such of its officers to sign contracts, cheques and other documents on behalf of MC Canada as the General Board may consider advisable, and prescribe the limits, if any, of such authority;
 - (c) report to, and be accountable to, its members at delegate assemblies;
 - (d) between delegate assemblies, continue the process of discerning MC Canada's participation in God's work as reflected in the Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement;
 - (e) lead MC Canada in developing its identity and vision;
 - (f) create forums for interaction among the leaders of the area churches;
 - (g) direct and coordinate the work of the Councils;
 - (h) review financial statements and direct the preparation of budgets;
 - (i) make recommendations at regular delegate assemblies on the appointment of auditors for MC Canada;
 - (j) appoint the General Secretary;
 - (k) at its discretion, fill vacancies in elected positions that occur between regular delegate assemblies;
 - (l) process issues of membership in MC Canada

- and make recommendations thereon at regular or special delegate assemblies;
- (m) foster relationships with other church bodies, including appointments as appropriate to:
 - (i) MC USA;
 - (ii) Mennonite World Conference;
 - (iii) other Mennonite church bodies;
 - (iv) Canadian Council of Churches; and
 - (v) Evangelical Fellowship of Canada;
- (n) do any other thing which is likely to support and promote the mission of MC Canada.

General Board Governance

- 19** The General Board shall formulate and adopt rules of procedure and governance under which it shall operate.

PART VI - OFFICERS

Officers

- 20** (1) The officers of MC Canada shall be the:
- (a) Moderator;
 - (b) Assistant Moderator;
 - (c) Secretary; and
 - (d) Treasurer.
- (2) The officers shall be elected at a regular delegate assembly.

Duties of the Officers

- 21** (1) The Moderator shall:
- (a) preside at all delegate assemblies;
 - (b) chair all meetings of the General Board and the Executive Committee; and
 - (c) act as the official representative of and spokesperson for MC Canada.
- (2) The Assistant Moderator shall:
- (a) assume the duties of the Moderator:
 - (i) in the absence or incapacity of the Moderator; or
 - (ii) at the request of the Moderator or of the Executive Committee.
- (3) The Secretary shall be responsible for recording all minutes of delegate assemblies and meetings of the General Board and the Executive Committee.
- (4) The Treasurer shall oversee the Financial Policy and Audit Committee established by the General Board.

PART VII – GENERAL SECRETARY

Appointment

- 22** The General Secretary shall be appointed by the General Board.

Duties of the General Secretary

- 23** The General Secretary shall:
- (a) coordinate the total program of MC Canada;
 - (b) hire and supervise the MC Canada staff;

- (c) participate, without a vote, in meetings of the Executive Committee and the General Board;
- (d) receive and record the credentials of all voting delegates prior to each delegate assembly; and
- (e) publish proceedings of each delegate assembly.

PART VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Composition of the Executive Committee

- 24** The Executive Committee shall consist of:
- (a) the officers; and
 - (b) one member at large of the General Board appointed by the General Board from among its members.

Duties and Powers of the Executive Committee

- 25** The Executive Committee shall:
- (a) act on behalf of the General Board between its meetings;
 - (b) report its activities to the General Board; and
 - (c) between meetings of the General Board, continue the process of discerning MC Canada's participation in God's work as contained in the Vision Statement and Identity and Purpose Statement.

PART IX - JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Composition of the Joint Executive Committee

- 26** The Joint Executive Committee shall consist of:
- (a) the Executive Committee of MC Canada; and
 - (b) the Executive Committee of MC USA.

Duties of the Joint Executive Committee

- 27** The Joint Executive Committee shall meet at least annually to:
- (a) foster relationships between MC Canada and MC USA; and
 - (b) foster effective cooperation regarding binational partnership activities.

PART X – FINANCIAL POLICY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Composition of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee

- 28** The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall consist of 3 people, namely:
- (a) the Treasurer, as chairperson; and
 - (b) two other persons appointed by the General Board whose term shall be three years; and who shall be eligible to serve for up to three consecutive terms.

Duties of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee

- 29** The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall meet in person at least once annually and otherwise by teleconferencing as required to:
- (a) Review the financial statements (YTD) prepared by the Director of Finance and report to the General Board.
 - (b) Recommend financial policies and procedures as needed.
 - (c) Recommend investment policies and procedures as

- needed.
- (d) Ensure that MC Canada has implemented appropriate systems to identify, monitor and mitigate significant business risks.
- (e) Monitor the review of senior management's expense claims.
- (f) Provide initial recommendations regarding the budgeting process for the upcoming year and review proposed budgets before submission to the General Board.
- (g) Act as an audit committee with the following responsibilities:
 - (i) Review and recommend the appointment of the external auditor.
 - (ii) Review annually the audit plan and fees presented by the external auditor.
 - (iii) Review the annual audited financial statements prior to submission to the General Board for their approval.
 - (iv) In camera meeting with the auditor.
 - (v) Review and report to the General Board the results of the external auditor's annual audit including the management letter and significant issues encountered during the audit and how they were resolved.
 - (vi) Review with management and the external auditors MC Canada's systems of internal control to ensure compliance with legal, ethical, regulatory and financial reporting requirements and report to the General Board as required.

PART XI FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE

Composition of the Faith and Life Committee

- 30** The Faith and Life Committee shall consist of 5 people, namely:
- (a) a chairperson, who will be a member of the General Board, elected at a regular delegate assembly;
 - (b) two additional persons elected at a regular delegate assembly;
 - (c) one additional person appointed by the General Board;
 - (d) one staff member appointed by the General Secretary.

Duties of the Faith and Life Committee

- 31** The Faith and Life Committee shall meet at least three times annually, and one of the meetings will be together with a Reference Council which shall include the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers and faculty members appointed by our higher education institutions, to:
- (a) Attend to the interface among Scripture, the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* and our identity as MC Canada.
 - (b) Give leadership to Mennonite Church Canada in discerning God's will on issues of theology, ethics, polity and practice.
 - (c) Work cooperatively with educational institutions and other church agencies to facilitate, create and distribute resources for study by and guidance for the church.

PART XII - MINISTRIES OF MC CANADA

Christian Witness Council

- 32** (1) The core activities of the Christian Witness Council shall focus on carrying out mission work together with area churches and their constituent congregations including, but not limited to:
- (a) evangelism and church planting;
 - (b) international missions;
 - (c) multicultural ministries;
 - (d) Native ministries;
 - (e) peace and justice advocacy; and
 - (f) service ministries.
- (2) The Christian Witness Council shall consist of 10 people, namely:
- (a) a chairperson elected at a regular delegate assembly;
 - (b) nine other persons elected at a regular delegate assembly.
- (3) The Christian Witness Council shall have authority to:
- (a) select any other officers from among its members that it deems desirable;
 - (b) hire staff to oversee its programs;
 - (c) modify the organization of its programs to adapt to the needs of MC Canada and the availability of resources;
 - (d) oversee its programs, staff and budgets;
 - (e) delegate parts of its authority to various committees, and
 - (f) appoint representatives to related organizations.
- (4) The Christian Witness Council shall prepare financial budgets for its own programs, with assistance from the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and reports for presentation at regular delegate assemblies, covering their activities since the last regular delegate assembly, and shall prepare and provide to the General Board such other statements or reports as the General Board may request.
- (5) The Christian Witness Council shall, on behalf of MC Canada, relate to:
- (a) Mennonite Central Committee;
 - (b) Canadian Women in Mission;
 - (c) Christian Peacemaker Teams; and
 - (d) any other organization or group assigned to it by the General Board.

Christian Formation Council

- 33** (1) The core activities of the Christian Formation Council shall focus on providing leadership and resources to enable area churches and their constituent congregations to promote the Christian formation of their members, including, but not limited to:
- (a) congregational and ministerial leadership;
 - (b) youth and young adult ministry;
 - (c) Christian education and nurture; and
 - (d) resources and publishing.
- (2) The Christian Formation Council shall consist of 10 persons, namely:
- (a) a chairperson elected at a regular delegate assembly;
 - (b) nine other persons elected at a regular delegate assembly.
- (3) The Christian Formation Council shall have authority to:

- (a) select any other officers from among its members that it deems desirable;
 - (b) hire staff to oversee its programs;
 - (c) modify the organization of its programs to adapt to the needs of MC Canada and the availability of resources;
 - (d) oversee its programs, staff and budgets;
 - (e) delegate parts of its authority to various committees, and
 - (f) appoint representatives to related organizations.
- (4) The Christian Formation Council shall prepare financial budgets for its own program, with assistance from the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and reports for presentation at regular delegate assemblies, covering their activities since the last regular delegate assembly, and shall prepare and provide to the General Board such other statements or reports as the General Board may request.
- (5) The Christian Formation Council shall, on behalf of MC Canada, relate to:
- (a) Mennonite Publishing Network;
 - (b) Mennonite Camping Association;
 - (c) Elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools related to MC Canada; and
 - (d) any other organization or group assigned to it by the General Board.

Support Services Council

- 34** (1) The activities of the Support Services Council shall focus on structures and staff to provide support services to MC Canada including, but not limited to:
- (a) planning delegate assemblies;
 - (b) communication;
 - (c) information technology;
 - (d) human resources management;
 - (e) pension plan;
 - (f) property management; and
 - (g) development and constituency relations.
- (2) The Support Services Council shall consist of six persons, namely:
- (a) a chairperson elected at a regular delegate assembly;
 - (b) and five other persons elected at a regular delegate assembly.
- (3) The Support Services Council shall have authority to:
- (a) select any other officers from among its members that it deems desirable;
 - (b) hire staff to oversee its activities;
 - (c) modify the organization of its programs to adapt to the needs of MC Canada and the availability of resources;
 - (d) oversee its programs, staff and budgets;
 - (e) delegate parts of its authority to various committees; and
 - (f) appoint representatives to related organizations.
- (4) The Support Services Council shall prepare financial budgets for its own program, with assistance from the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and reports for presentation at regular delegate assemblies, covering their activities since the last regular delegate assembly, and shall prepare and provide to the General Board such other statements or reports as the General Board may request.
- (5) The Support Services Council shall, on behalf of MC Canada, relate to:

- (a) Mennonite Foundation of Canada;
- (b) Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service; and
- (c) any other organization or group assigned to it by the General Board.

Council Governance

35 Each Council shall formulate and adopt rules of procedure and governance under which the Council shall operate.

PART XIII – MODERATORS, SECRETARIES AND CONFERENCE MINISTERS MEETING

Membership

36 The members of the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers meeting shall consist of the moderator or a designate, leading staff member and conference minister of Mennonite Church Canada and each of its member area churches.

Functions

37 The Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers will meet annually to:

- (a) Report to each other the ministries and state of health of the national church body and its area churches.
- (b) Serve, together with others, as a reference council for the Faith and Life Committee.
- (c) Discuss issues of common concern in order to provide mutual counsel and support and to seek common approaches where appropriate.
- (d) Develop relationships of trust, respect and mutual subordination.
- (e) Other functions that may be helpful to building up the unity and faithfulness of the church.

PART XIV – OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Fiscal Year

38 MC Canada's fiscal year shall end on the 31st day of January in each year.

Corporate Seal

39 The Corporate seal shall:

- (a) have inscribed thereon Mennonite Church Canada; and
- (b) be affixed to such signed documents as the General Board considers necessary or advisable.

Indemnities

40 Every officer, member of the General Board and member of a Council of MC Canada, and their heirs, executors and administrators shall at all times be indemnified and saved harmless, out of the funds of MC Canada, from and against

- (a) all costs, charges and expenses whatsoever which such

officer or member sustains or incurs as a result of any claim, demand or proceedings made or brought against him or her for anything done, or omitted or permitted to be done, in the course of carrying out his or her responsibilities as an officer or member, except for any costs, charges and expenses sustained or incurred by the officer or member because of the wilful neglect of such officer or member; and

- (b) all reasonable costs, charges and expenses incurred by such officer or member in the course of carrying out his or her responsibilities as an officer or member.

PART XV – AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS

Amendments to the bylaws

41 (1) These bylaws may be amended at any regular or special delegate assembly; provided that the proposed amendments have been sent to the member area churches and their constituent congregations at least two months in advance.

- (2) In order to pass, bylaw amendments require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Coming into force

42 (1) These bylaws come into force at the conclusion of the delegate assembly at which they are adopted.

- (2) Any subsequent amendments to these bylaws come into force at the conclusion of the delegate assembly at which they are adopted.

Approved: July 14, 2001

Amended: July 6, 2002

Amended: July 9, 2005

Amended: July 6, 2007



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2009 Assembly Agenda (subject to change)

Friday June 5, 2009

BLOCK 1:

1:00pm to 1:30pm – 30 Minutes	Opening Worship
1:30pm to 3:00pm – 90 Minutes	Welcome and opening matters Introductions including special guests and assembly officers General Board Reporting Nominating Committee A Narrative approach to program and priority reporting

BLOCK 2:

3:30pm to 6:00pm – 150 Minutes	Call to order Delegate Discernment: Being a Faithful Church
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BLOCK 3:

7:00pm to 8:30pm – 90 Minutes	Call to order Delegate feedback, questions and comments Financial matters Delegate Discernment: Frequencies of Assemblies at a National Level Listening Committee Reporting Announcements
8:30pm to 9:00pm – 30 Minutes	Closing Worship

Saturday June 6, 2009

BLOCK 4:

8:30am to 9:00am – 30 Minutes	Opening Worship
9:00am to 10:00am – 60 Minutes	Call to order Resolutions Committee Recognizing our churches that are joining, leaving, and closing Reports from Ministry Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global Mission Fellowship• Mennonite Publishing Network• Post-secondary schools

BLOCK 5:

10:30am to 12Noon – 90 Minutes	Call to order Finance Reporting Delegate feedback, questions and comments Delegate Discernment: Peace in the Public Square
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BLOCK 6:

3:00pm to 6:00pm – 180 Minutes	Call to order Elections Budget Approval Delegate Discernment: Church growth/health for our denomination.
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BLOCK 7:

7:00PM to 8:30PM – 90 Minutes	Call to order Resolutions Committee Report Listening Committee Report Invitation to large worship services tomorrow AM Invitation to Assembly 2010 Announcements Closing
8:30pm to 9:30pm – 30 Minutes	Closing worship

Preliminary Schedule (subject to change)

	Thursday <i>June 4</i>	Friday <i>June 5</i>	Saturday <i>June 6</i>	Sunday <i>June 7</i>	
8:30 AM		Assembly Registration Education Building Foyer	Morning Worship	Closing Worship – MC Sask Congregations Invited; Education Gym	
9:00 AM			Discernment in the Education Gym		
10:00 AM			BREAK		
11:00 AM			Discernment in the Education Gym		
12:00 PM			LUNCH		
1:00 PM	Registration for Ministers' Conference Education Foyer	Opening Worship	LUNCH AND ACTIVITIES	SAFE TRAVELS HOME!	
2:00 PM	Ministers' Conference Quance Theatre Education Building	Discernment in the Education Gym			
3:00 PM	BREAK	BREAK			
4:00 PM	Ministers' Conference continued	Discernment in the Education Gym	Discernment in the Education Gym		
5:00 PM					
6:00 PM	SUPPER	SUPPER	SUPPER		
7:00 PM	Ministers' Conference continues	Discernment in the Education Gym	Discernment in the Education Gym		Aboriginal Learning Tour Orientation (meeting place TBA)
8:00 PM		Evening Worship	Evening Worship		
9:00 PM		Late Night Activities	Late Night Activities		