



Menno Church Canada

2011 Annual Report to Area Churches



Willard Metzger with Mardi Tindal and Kaitlin Bardswich at the United Nations Climate Change Conference – photo courtesy Kaitlin Bardswich

A good place to start any annual report is to say “Thank you.” Thank you for inviting me and my colleagues into your churches, your homes, and your places of business. Together with co-workers, national church staff has made well over 300 visits to congregations in 2011. If we have not visited you yet, we welcome your invitation.

This first full year of my leadership in Menno Church Canada has been a whirlwind. I have personally visited 23 congregations for Sunday services and greeted many of you on an individual basis, met with your staff and strengthened relationships in Area Churches, gotten to know business leaders across Canada, engaged in issues of Christian concern in and beyond the wider church (Mining Justice, Climate Change, Interfaith Forum on Poverty, Church Planting Congress, Global Leadership Summit, met with numerous federal political leaders on issues such as a proposed Office of Religious Freedom and Climate Justice), attended at least a dozen General Board and other governance meetings, gained a stronger understanding of the important role of our Mennoite schools, have gotten to know of our many Mennoite-related ministries, and conducted numerous media interviews.

I wish I had the time and space to share with you the many inspiring and encouraging stories I have heard this past year. When I meet with you and hear your stories, I am as proud as a humble Mennoite is allowed to be.

Although we are only 5 Area Churches, 225 congregations, and 33,000 members, I thank God for the disproportionately large impact we are having across the nation and around the world. Our work in food banks, thrift stores, day cares, and working in poverty relief, neighbourhood ministries, disaster relief efforts, financial stewardship, publishing, schools, and more is having an impact. We continue to have vital international ministry in 25 countries around the world. This past year I have seen the face of Jesus in congregations, in the board rooms of business, in coffee shops, and in our ecumenical body of Christ. *I have often wondered how all of this would be possible if we did not have the gift of an organized church, supported and resourced by pastors and disciples, clusters of congregations, Area Churches, and the National Church.* Would we be able to support our many ministries in and beyond the church without committed volunteers and millions of dollars in donations if an organized church did not exist?

At the Menno Church Canada Assembly this past July, we continued to advance the Being a Faithful Church process, with a focus on human sexuality (see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1643). Beyond human sexuality, future foci on Being a Faithful Church promises to shape our community of faith in ways we cannot yet imagine for our joint ministry of discipling believers, managing our resources, caring for creation, treating our neighbours as ourselves – and growing our church. I strongly encourage each one of you to examine how Being a Faithful Church can make your faith even stronger. Together we are learning and in some cases re-learning the importance of how to interpret scripture for our time.

During this first full year of leadership I have come to understand what we need to focus on as a national church for the next 3 – 5 years. These foci will continue to advance our three main priorities: Forming a People of God; Becoming a Global Church; Growing Leaders for the Church.

- We will strengthen our relationships with Area Churches, increase our sense of connection as a family across Canada, and consult with our many ministry partners on how we can build a stronger church together (MCC, MDS, MEDA, MennoMedia, *Canadian Mennoite*, MFC, MVSA, CPT, our schools, and others).
- We will bring our Canadian Mennoite Church voice to the national issues of our time: Aboriginal reconciliation of relationships, interreligious relationships, creation care, multiculturalism, and increasing militarism in Canada.



Mennonite Church Canada

2011 Annual Report to Area Churches

- We will look to a strong future for the church by better understanding our new emerging churches and our new emerging church leaders, and the voice and passion of our youth and young adults.
- The above foci will require sharply focused attention to the finances of our national church. Inviting people to be financial supporters of Mennonite Church Canada involves everyone. Volunteers, individual donors, congregational contributions, prayer partners, seed donors, major gift donors, and end of life gifts will all be needed to build up the church of the future.

In 2012, I invite you to support your Area and National churches in the following ways:

- Pray for your Area Church and National Church ministries, leaders and staff.
- Consider making a first time gift to your Area Church and to Mennonite Church Canada.
- Increase your existing giving to your Area Church and to Mennonite Church Canada.
- Increase your congregation's budget line giving to your Area Church and to Mennonite Church Canada.
- Volunteer your time and your spiritual and practical gifts.
- Actively participate in your Area Church annual meetings and the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in 2012 (July 12 – 15 in Vancouver).

I invite you to find out more about Mennonite Church Canada's activities and ministries. If you would rather contact us by phone, please do so at 1-866-888-6785:

- Equipping is a 10 times per year mailing of news, prayer requests, bulletin announcements, thank yous, information, and inspiration sent to every congregation. Find it online at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/128 or ask for it in your church office.
- The Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre is available to you 24/7 at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/. There is a monthly contest and thousands of books, DVDs, and worship service resources, available to you at no or low cost.

- Church Matters is a podcast featuring news and interviews about and beyond Mennonite Church Canada. You can find on iTunes or at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/206.
- Subscribe to the prayer newsletter, PrayerNet at www.mennonitechurch.ca/prayernet/.
- Get Mennonite Church Canada's bi-weekly News Service. Subscribe here: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/174.
- Visit the Mennonite Church Canada YouTube channel for ministry stories and activities: www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca.
- Congregational members receive a free household subscription to the *Canadian Mennonite*. Get yours at www.canadianmennonite.org/subscriptions/subscribe or call 1-800-378-2524.

I often think of you and pray for you in your congregations and Area Churches as you serve in your neighbourhoods and communities, in your workplaces, and in your homes and families. I pray that 2012 will bring you much joy and faithfulness.

Willard Metzger,
Executive Director, Mennonite Church Canada

PS: At www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1687 you will find a collection of ministry highlights from the past year. This is a summary of ministry notes we have sent to congregations in 2011. These handy 'at-a-glance' notes offer bite-size nuggets of the ministry we do together and make an easy to read digest of activity for your annual report.