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To our Mennonite Church Canada congregations,

On Christian Formation Sunday (Sept. 8) we bless all those who are called to the church's ministry of faith formation that cultivates maturing disciples of Jesus Christ. We invite you to take some time to reflect on the significance of 'Why Mennonite Education Matters' and pray for our Mennonite post-secondary schools who are partners with the church. You can also order Mennonite education brochures for your congregation, free of charge, from <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2098>

-Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister

“Mennonite Higher Education Matters”

“Step In” to our Culture....

1. Welcoming Place
2. Calling to a Higher Purpose
3. Witness of Vibrant Faith in Practice
4. Nurturing Relational and Academic Connections
5. Commitment to develop leaders for the Church in the World

Welcoming Place. Our students say it best: “Mennonite schools feel like home”; “they are places of comfort and challenge”; “they are places of trust to test, debate, enrich, and deepen our most cherished ideas about the world and our place in it.” Because we have small campuses and classes equipped with faculty and staff who embrace mentoring and building community beyond the classroom, students don't get “lost in the shuffle.”

Calling to a Higher Purpose. The aim of any good school is to help students understand the past and prepare for the future—to look backward and forward; the additional aim of our Anabaptist schools is to help students discern their faith and connect mind, body and spirit—to look inward and beyond. In the spirit of broadly educating the whole student, our schools define success by how well they very intentionally nourish heart, hands and head.

Witness of Vibrant Faith in Practice. As Mennonite educators, we are called to tell and retell the Mennonite story—a story based in the biblical message of God's love for us, voluntary believer's baptism rooted in the Radical Reformation, and our church mission today: “to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.” As a small denomination on the world stage, Mennonite Church Canada can leverage its well-positioned schools to “shine the light” of healing and hope for all who join our communities of learning.

Nurturing Relational and Academic Connections. We emphasize connections (interdisciplinary dialogue) over compartments (silos of specialization) in matters of academics. Each of our Mennonite institutions nurtures academic excellence along with active peace-making and compassionate service to better equip our students to navigate the complexities and challenges of their careers in the communities they serve. These strong communal ties translate into a wide circle of life-long friends who are there to encourage, empower, and enjoy in good and difficult times.

Commitment to develop leaders for the Church in the world. The evidence remains compelling that if a student attends a Mennonite school they are more likely to remain in the church and provide leadership of all kinds (pastoral, financial, choral, youth, outreach, etc.) in their church. As church membership in all denominations drops in North America, a reinvigorated engagement with the mission of the church is needed. A Mennonite education is one excellent remedy. The uncompromising message we profess is that knowledge is not sufficient, service is not sufficient, unless connected to a witness grounded in Christ, committed to peace, and practiced in community.

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



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What our leaders are saying.....

“Mennonite education matters for pastors if we want congregations to have an Anabaptist vision, holding together grace, peace, and witness in a global perspective.”

-Sara Wenger Shenk, President, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, IN

“Mennonite education matters because we are not just preparing our students for a meaningful career, but for a meaningful life; we counter the “some assembly required” trend by meeting the strong push of specialization with the gentle pull of community accountability.”

-Susan Schultz Huxman, President, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, ON

“Mennonite education matters because our world and our churches need well-trained people who are radically committed to following Jesus into the places where they can best participate in God’s mission of shalom-building (reconciling, redeeming and transforming all creation).”

-Bryan Born, President, Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, BC

“Mennonite education matters because it nurtures within students the capacity to imagine the world differently than it already is, and the courage to bring together good science, fine arts, sound theology, fair trade, and more in ways that respond effectively to today’s urgent concerns and refreshing possibilities.”

-Cheryl Pauls, President, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, MB

“Mennonite education matters to the church. We welcome a new generation of leaders whose academic rigor and vocational training is profoundly shaped by a life centred on Jesus Christ, and who join the church in creatively engaging the challenges and complexities of our world with ‘in the flesh’ hope and peace of Jesus Christ.”

-Willard Metzger, Executive Director, Mennonite Church Canada



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