

February 2006, *Equipping*

## **Mennonite Church Canada Annual Report to Congregations**

***Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice (Phil. 4:4).***

The ability to “rejoice” comes out of a profound sense of gratitude. It is with this sense of deep gratitude that we welcome the opportunity to communicate with you on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada.

There are indeed many motives for “rejoicing.” We have again experienced a significant year of ministry. It’s hard to know where to start and where to stop when we think of reporting some highlights to you.



*Re-joice*\ri-ˈjòis: to give joy to; to feel joy or great delight (Webster’s)

The leaders and staff of Mennonite Church Canada can report to you that teaching of Mennonite peace theology is facing an unprecedented demand in almost all the places of the world in which we already work – and also where we currently have no workers and fund no ministry.

We can report that online reservations of books and videos from MC Canada Resource Centre is up by 102% over last year, and that other use has increased over 40%: this suggests a heightened desire for faith nurture from individuals and congregations.

We can tell you that MC Canada’s PrayerNet ministry is thriving and useful to recipients far beyond what we might have imagined. We can also report that more congregations than ever are seeking to partner with an MC Canada ministry, and that some exciting new ministry opportunities are coming about because of these connections.

We can tell you stories about how Laotian, Hmong, and Chinese Mennonites are crossing Canadian provincial boundaries and thinking about how they can work together in new ways. We can talk about a new peace ministry in the Philippines; a new church plant and meeting place construction in Thailand; the release of Vietnamese Mennonites held captive for their principles of faith.

We can also say thank-you: at the time of writing, MC Canada’s revenue vs. projected revenue targets for 2005-06 look very encouraging. We are very grateful. (Check out <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/news/> for many more stories).

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We also rejoice in the way that staffing changes have come about in MC Canada this year. We have a very strong, competent, and energetic staff serving our churches in so many areas of ministry. We are grateful to God for providing such committed servants of the church.

And we continue to work hard at a very basic challenge: To understand more fully why the church exists in the first place. We need to be reminded of the BIG PICTURE: that the church exists to be a blessing to the world as God continues to use it to save the world from its destructive and evil ways.

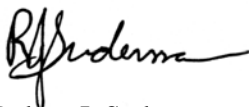
Unfortunately, the Church too often has separated and isolated its understanding of faithfulness into stand-alone components: evangelism, missions, peace and justice, advocacy, prayer, devotion and worship, church planting, Christian education, and more. Somehow we have lost our focus on the central role of ecclesiology itself (people-hood) in God's plan for redemption. It is vital that we continue to recover the foundational role of the church for faithful life and witness in the world.

The missional church vision is an attempt to reconsider and re-join categories of ministry that have unfortunately been separated. Discipleship should not exist without apostleship. Evangelism, church planting, missions, peace and justice, Christian education – the list goes on – should not exist in isolation from the other faith disciplines.

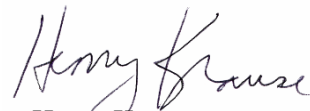
MC Canada has come a long way since first introducing a missional model for the wider church at Abbotsford in 2001. All area conferences and many congregations have embraced this model. But we still have a long way to go before that which has grown separate can be rejoined into a seamless whole.

As staff and leaders of MC Canada, we rejoice with you in your ministry and we pray for you in the work ahead. We offer our blessings to you on the journey and trust that God's blessings will richly nourish you.

Sincerely in Christ,



Robert J. Suderman  
General Secretary  
Mennonite Church Canada



Henry Krause  
Moderator  
Mennonite Church Canada

*"The church is; the church does what it is; the church organizes what it does" (Craig Van Gelder)*

To learn more, check out the inspirational video message from MC Canada, at [http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/about/missional\\_vid.htm](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/about/missional_vid.htm)