

# Support Services

## At a Glance...

### Support Services Council Members 2006-07:

Brice Balmer, Kitchener ON  
Bill Janzen, Calgary AB  
Rita Strickland, St. Catharines ON  
Harry Wiens, Altona MB  
Mark Wurtz, Rosthern SK

### Support Services Council appoints representatives to:

#### Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service

Brice Balmer, Kitchener ON  
Aiden Enns, Winnipeg MB  
John Goossen, Vancouver BC  
Paul Krahn, Altona MB

#### Mennonite Foundation of Canada

Rudy Friesen, Winnipeg MB  
Nick Heide, Winkler MB  
Tony Huynh, Winnipeg MB  
Clayton Loewen, Fort Langley BC  
Karen Martens Zimmerly, Regina SK  
Anita Tiessen, Mississauga ON

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## Highlights of the past year in Support Services' seven primary areas of ministry:

- **Communications:** Get the latest MC Canada news at [www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca). News stories are refreshed biweekly. Or, read the *Canadian Mennonite*! In 2006, *Canadian Mennonite* published over 150 articles about MC Canada.
- **Resource Development:** Thank you for your generous support! More than 1300 individuals and congregations made a gift to MC Canada last year, including 601 new donors.
- **Assembly planning:** Since early 2006, volunteers and staff from Support Services and Formation Council have been working hard to bring you a joint youth and delegate assembly at Abbotsford 2007. We hope folks of all ages from across the country will enjoy meeting each other at our common morning worship services, seminar times, display area, and the barbecue and fellowship evening at Trinity Western University on Thursday, July 5.
- **Information technology:** More than 80% of Canadian registrants used the online registration system provided by MC USA for the Charlotte 2005 joint assembly. We have now developed our own online registration system for Abbotsford 2007 and future assemblies.
- **Pension Plan:** A Group RRSP option was added to the MC Canada Pension Plan in September, 2006. More than 90 pension plan members attended Group RRSP information sessions in fall 2006. The Group RRSP offers flexibility, low management fees, and spousal accounts. It is open to all employees of MC Canada congregations and their spouses. To learn more, call Kirsten Schroeder at 1-866-888-6785, ext. 110.
- **Human Resources:** A review of the group life and long term disability insurance program provided by MC Canada to our member congregations resulted in improved benefits at lower cost. Life insurance benefits increased from \$60,000 to \$70,000 while total premiums for life and long term disability insurance dropped by more than 14%.
- **Property Management:** On November 24, 2006, title to the property at 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard, Winnipeg was officially transferred from MC Canada to CMU. This completed a process begun at Winkler 2004 when delegates approved a resolution recognizing that this property had been developed for the purpose of providing a Christian



*Brice Balmer, outgoing member of the Support Services Council, served since the Council's inception at Abbotsford 2001. Brice was also one of MC Canada's appointed representatives on the board of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service. Thanks for your outstanding contribution, Brice.*



education experience for the youth of MC Canada, and authorizing the General Board to assign the property to best fulfill this mandate.

### ***Does the church really matter?***

*Church Matters*, a new radio program focused on the life and significance of the church, hit the airwaves and the internet in February 2007. While there are many worship-style radio programs that focus on personal faith, *Church Matters* aims to fill a different niche. The program uses an issues and interview format to highlight the responsibility, potential, and impact of God's gathered community of people – the church. Past and future topics include the militarization of Canada, the state of the international Mennonite church, socially responsible investing, and creation care.

You can listen to *Church Matters* any time on the internet ([www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/158](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/158)) or (in Manitoba) at 8:45 am on the third Sunday of each month on CFAM 950 (Altona), AM 1250 (Steinbach) and CJRB 1220 (Boissevain). MC Canada is producing *Church Matters* on a one year trial basis. Continuation or expansion will depend on listener feedback and funding. Let us know what you think!

### ***Putting Your Money Where Your Faith Is***

This one day seminar on socially responsible investing (SRI) will take place on July 3, 2007. Taking the place of the annual Ministers' Conference, this event will provide pastors and others with an opportunity to work at theological and practical issues of applying faith to financial stewardship decisions.

Putting your money where your faith is is something that the MC Canada Pension Advisory Committee spends a lot of time doing. The July 3 event was spawned by a conversation at one of its meetings. The Pension Advisory Committee manages MC Canada's \$34 million pension plan, including setting investment policy, monitoring investment performance, and providing educational opportunities for the plan's 800+ members.

At its March 2007 meeting, the Pension Advisory Committee approved changes to the plan's Statement of Investment Policy (see sidebar) to make its SRI criteria more clear. As the SRI industry becomes more diverse and sophisticated, it is important to ensure that the pension plan's investment managers are receiving clear instructions about what our plan members are and are not prepared to support with their pension funds. The investment policy printed here applies to the pension plan's "core option". Members' contributions are invested in the core option if they do not select one or more of the 23 other investment options in the plan. As of December 31, 2006 almost 84% of the plan's \$34 million were invested in the core option.

### **MC Canada Pension Plan – Excerpt from new Statement of Investment Policy approved March 2007**

We will attempt to avoid investing in all companies which are involved in the production of items specific to:

- Weapons or military contracting
- Tobacco or tobacco related products
- Alcohol and alcohol related products
- Nuclear production
- Pornography
- Gaming

We will also attempt to avoid investing in companies that benefit indirectly from these industries. Therefore, we will not invest in companies that earn more than 10% of their income from the distribution of specific items or production of generic items in the following areas<sup>1</sup>:

- Weapons or military contracting
- Tobacco or tobacco related products
- Alcohol or alcohol related products
- Nuclear production
- Pornography
- Gaming

We prefer a fund manager who has an active shareholder and proxy voting policy and that aligns with the above policies.

We prefer a fund manager who actively supports Community Development Investments.

Of the companies which meet the previous screens, we will attempt to invest in companies which incorporate best industry practices in the following areas:

- Human rights (local and international)
- Gender and cultural equality
- Corporate governance
- Environmental policies and records
- Stakeholder engagement

<sup>1</sup> This section intends to limit our investment in companies that don't produce items specific to the industries listed but may still benefit from those industries. For example, the 10% limit on distribution of specific items prohibits the core option from investing in a trucking company that earns more than 10% of its revenue from distributing items specific to the six industries listed. The 10% limit on production of generic items prohibits the core option from investing in a company that produces sheet metal, which can be used for many purposes, if more than 10% of that company's product is sold to the six industries listed.

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**Support Services Staff:**

**Pam Peters-Pries**, Executive Secretary; **Kirsten Schroeder**, Director of Human Resources; **Karen Peters**, Executive Assistant; **Miriam Tshimanga**, Receptionist, Administrative Assistant; **Al Rempel**, Director of Resource Development; **Gerd Bartel**, Western Director of Resource Development; **Dave Klassen**, Eastern Director of Resource Development; **Dan Dyck**, Director of Communications; **Grant Klassen**, Webmaster; **Lynette Wiebe**, Communications Coordinator (on leave); **Katharina Nuss**, Graphic Designer/Communications Coordinator.

## ***Joint Assembly with MC USA***

What do the folks of MC Canada and Mennonite Church USA have in common? We share *Vision: Healing and Hope* and the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. We share Mennonite Publishing Network and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. We share a desire to continue meeting with each other in some way, although we have acknowledged together that joint delegate assemblies are no longer necessary.

In response to this desire for continued fellowship with each other, MC Canada is inviting members of MC USA to join MC Canada in July 2008 in Winnipeg to worship and study together. As citizens of wealthy, powerful and increasingly secularized nations, we will focus on what it means for Christians and the Christian community to live as counter-cultural witnesses. This broad theme will touch on many issues, such as creation care, economic sharing, and conflict resolution.

At the time of writing, the tentative plans are for the MC Canada delegate assembly to take place July 7-8, 2008. The joint assembly will begin the evening of Tuesday, July 8 and conclude on Thursday, July 10. We look forward to this gathering of God's people and to the bold witness that we hope it will be and inspire.

*—Pam Peters-Pries, Executive Secretary, Support Services  
Ed Janzen, Chair, Support Services Council*



*Rita Strickland, Support Services Council member, juggled the needs of her infant daughter Sophia with the discussion and discernment agenda at hand during the 2007 Leadership Assembly in Winnipeg.*

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# Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC)

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

Mennonite Foundation of Canada's work as an educational arm and charitable foundation for our constituency continued to grow last year. Here are some highlights from projects and services that MFC was involved with in 2006, promoting generous living as a faithful response to God's grace.

**Resource to help people minimize or control debt.** Increasingly, personal debt and a lack of money management skills are problems in our congregations. Pastors and caregivers often feel ill-equipped to help. This past year, MFC developed a new resource, *First Things First*, to help people who want to gain control of their finances, and to help train people in the church interested in mentoring them. This newly published resource is now available.

**Church Leaders' Financial Seminars.** MFC is working with congregational leaders to help them cope with the ever-evolving laws that govern charities. In 2006, MFC hosted a Church Leaders' seminar in Red Deer, Alberta. That session helped treasurers and board members keep up-to-date with Canada Revenue Agency regulations and technology for best accounting practices. We will continue to host these seminars across Canada.

**More funds to charities through gifts of stocks and mutual funds.** Many donors have taken advantage of the change in tax law introduced in the 2006 federal budget. This change eliminated capital gains tax on mutual funds and publicly traded shares when they are donated **in-kind** to charity, making it easier for people who own these investments to donate more to charity. In 2006, MFC processed nearly \$5 million of in-kind donations of mutual funds and publicly traded shares.

**Professional Development.** MFC staff continues to upgrade their qualifications to better meet needs of individuals and congregations. Several consultants achieved the Elder Planning Counsellor (EPC) designation specializing in issues facing people 55+. Several consultants are in various stages of completing course work required to attain the Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation.

**Updated Web Site.** Work is underway to expand the information and services available on our website. Stay tuned.

**New Staff.** MFC hired two new consultants and a new head office receptionist last year. Kevin Lim was hired to work with British Columbia clients from our Abbotsford office, replacing the retiring Dave Kroeker. Sherri Grosz began working out of the Kitchener, Ontario office in August, becoming the third consultant in Eastern Canada. Seven consultants now serve in five offices across Canada. Carol Reimer began work as a head office receptionist in October. MFC has 13 staff in total.

**Distributions to Charities.** In 2006, MFC was privileged to disburse over \$5 million to many church and community related causes on behalf of numerous donors. Of the \$88 million MFC manages, \$28 million is currently reinvested in church and related institution mortgages across Canada.

—Erwin Warkentin, General Manager, MFC

## At a Glance...

**Officers:** Erwin Warkentin, General Manager; Rick Braun-Janzen, Assistant Manager; Anita Tiessen, Board Chair; Ron Warder, Vice Chair; Richard Steinmann, Secretary; Clayton Loewen, Treasurer

**Stewardship Consultants:** Jim Brown, Sherri Grosz, Dave Kroeker, Darren Pries-Klassen, Gary Sawatzky, Mike Strathdee.

**MC Canada Reps:** Rudy Friesen, Nick Heide, Clayton Loewen, Anita Thiessen, Karen Martens Zimmerly, Tony Huynh.

**Representing:** Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Chortitzer Mennonite Conference, Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada, and Northwest Mennonite Conference.

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## At a Glance...

**Focus Statement:** *Canadian Mennonite* is the part of our church that ministers simultaneously to more than 30,000 of us twice a month. It lets us share our joys and sorrows, speak in love and truth to each other, and call one another to obedience and service in the Kingdom of God.

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

**2006 Expenses:** \$639,000 (2006 net income was \$166,000 from MC Canada, \$145,000 from the five area churches and \$361,000 from the magazine itself)

**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.

**Reporting to:** Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board, a twelve-member board that includes four Mennonite Church Canada-appointed board members (these were Brice Balmer, Aiden Enns, John W. Goossen and Paul Krahn as of December 2006). The board chair is Bernie Wiebe.

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**Dear MC Canada Delegates:** At one of our congregations, a pastor told me that his congregation valued its connection to the larger Mennonite church but that a sense of isolation and the opportunities and commitments of local ministry made those links hard to strengthen. But *Canadian Mennonite* was something that was able to bridge those gaps. "The Every Home Plan is working," he told me. **"People get the issues and read them."**

*Canadian Mennonite* is a ministry delivered directly into the hands of more than 30,000 attending our churches. The magazine provides news, engaging and challenging opinion pieces, and a place for Mennonites from all parts of the church to share their vision of church life together. The quality of the magazine was recognized again by the Canadian Church Press in 2006 when we won six awards for our work, our best showing since at least 1997.

As Mennonites, one of our distinctives is the spiritual importance we place on community and discipleship. We make a promise before God upon baptism to give and receive counsel from each other. *Canadian Mennonite* is one way we **live out our spiritual values** with each other, testifying to the work of God in our lives and our world.

*Canadian Mennonite* is the primary way for MC Canada Mennonites to communicate with each other. Through it, you've **shared your stories of how to be faithful Mennonite witnesses and servants of Christ** in 21<sup>st</sup> century Canada. You've used the magazine to learn about the many ministries of our churches, the denomination's national and international ministries, camps, schools, and other Mennonite organizations in Canada and elsewhere. You've used its pages to stay informed and to share your views on important issues of the day. You've given financially to help us continue to provide church subscriptions at **about half of actual cost** in order to reach as many as possible. You've continued to support *Canadian Mennonite* as the one publication Mennonite church households have in common. **Thank you so much** for the many ways you have enriched Mennonites across the country through *Canadian Mennonite!*

For 2007, we are working on features on the church's response to climate change; faith and finances; growing leaders through Mennonite education; female spirituality; "high church" Mennonites; further reflections from Jack Suderman's church visits; faith and the global economy; food and agriculture (following up on the 2002 "Peace with the Land" conference); peacemaking (from domestic violence to elder abuse to Afghanistan); the role of sport and church teams in church life; and how we connect our faith with our health and our body image.

Thank you to all of you for your support through the national church and the five area churches. These six publishing partners work together to govern the magazine and buy subscriptions for all those in our churches. We very much value your support and commitment to help provide this publishing ministry of and for the church.

Grace and peace,  
Tim Miller Dyck, Editor and Publisher



Tim Miller Dyck