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.

Budget

2007-08 GROSS & NET Program Budget with Comparatives

For the Twelve Months Ending January 31, 2008

		FYE Jan-08 GROSS Annual Budget	FYE Jan-08 NET Annual Budget	FYE Jan-07 NET Actual	FYE Jan-07 NET Annual Budget
1	***INCOME***				
2	Individual & Corporate Donations	807,300	807,300	785,225	830,290
3	Church Donations	2,803,500	2,803,500	2,849,499	2,843,000
4	General Bequest	0	0	45,000	0
5	Recognized Deferred Contributions	60,284	0	0	0
6	Other Income	632,115	0	0	0
7	Partner Programs	695,575	546,300	392,120	206,298
8	Related Organizations	297,000	297,000	414,459	85,000
9	***TOTAL INCOME***	**5,295,774**	**4,454,100**	**4,486,303**	**3,964,588**
10	***EXPENSES***				
11	**Christian Witness Council**				
12	Executive Office	139,868	114,057	82,110	90,636
13	Congregational Partnerships	182,066	182,066	141,896	188,253
14	National Ministries Admin.	8,339	8,339	9,311	8,677
15	Multi-Cultural Ministry	38,356	38,356	38,442	39,558
16	Native Ministries	114,684	104,441	89,692	89,748
17	International Ministries	1,848,855	1,404,909	1,331,746	1,458,753
18	**Total Witness Council Expenses**	**2,332,168**	**1,852,168**	**1,693,197**	**1,875,625**
19	**Christian Formation Council**				
20	Executive Office	151,477	148,321	136,849	154,249
21	Resource Centre	78,974	68,474	56,253	69,400
22	Min. & Cong. Leadership	87,218	82,718	73,480	84,100
23	Youth Ministry	27,393	27,393	27,629	27,500
24	Youth Assembly	0	0	4,756	0
25	Education & Nurture Ministries	49,373	49,373	47,392	48,530
26	**Total Formation Council Expenses**	**394,435**	**376,279**	**346,359**	**383,779**
27	**Support Services Council**				
28	Adminstration	355,037	265,780	282,020	282,880
29	Annual Assembly	69,586	(5,000)	10,677	(5,000)
30	Communications	157,907	157,307	146,384	151,585
31	Development	120,795	120,795	114,276	116,193
32	Canadian Mennonite	174,161	174,161	172,189	171,000
33 34	**Total Support Services Council Expenses**	**877,486**	**713,043**	**725,546**	**716,658**
35	**General Board**				
36	GBD Administration	172,354	164,354	199,932	200,600
37	Finance	214,820	193,020	158,094	182,985
38	CMU Grants	335,580	335,580	325,603	335,580
39	Mennonite World Conference Grants	38,000	38,000	38,000	38,000
40	**Total General Board Expenses**	**760,754**	**730,954**	**721,629**	**757,165**
41	**Partner Programs**				
42	Misc. New Initiatives	50,000	50,000	31,168	58,500
43	Int'l Worker Special Projects	0	0	583	0
44	Christian Peacemaker Teams	200,000	200,000	173,705	0
45	Company of 1000	50,000	13,400	13,571	0
46	NAMVF	25,000	25,000	0	0
47	Phillipine Partnership	80,000	80,000	52,539	26,500
48	MVSA	2,000	2,000	735	0
49	Kherson Partnership	5,000	5,000	5,251	0
50	Learning Tours	20,000	20,000	(29,610)	0
51	Canadian Women in Mission	30,000	30,000	0	0
52	Der Bote	152,300	87,300	84,272	81,825
53	MHC Archives	77,575	51,000	41,273	46,500
54	MHC Gallery	65,000	43,900	18,457	40,000
55	**Total Partner Programs Expenses**	**756,875**	**607,600**	**391,944**	**253,325**
56	**Related Organizations**				
57	Mennonite Mission Network	35,000	35,000	39,774	0
58	Mennonite Church USA	21,000	21,000	40,172	0
59	AMBS	85,000	85,000	80,999	85,000
60	Canadian Mennonite University	0	0	2,109	0
61	Mennonite Publishing Network	25,000	25,000	32,640	0
62	Messeritos Kristos College	100,000	100,000	197,765	0
63	Eastern Mennonite Missions	0	0	21,000	0
64	Mennonite World Conference	31,000	31,000	0	0
65	**Total Related Organization Expenses**	**297,000**	**297,000**	**414,459**	**85,000**
66	***TOTAL EXPENSES***	**5,418,718**	**4,577,044**	**4,293,134**	**4,071,552**
67	Operating Surplus/(Deficit) before extraordinary items	(122,944)	(122,944)	193,169	(106,964)
68	Other items	0	0	(9,096)	0
69	**Operating Surplus/(Deficit)**	**(122,944)**	**(122,944)**	**184,073**	**(106,964)**
70	Transfer To Reserves	(61,880)	(61,880)	(270,574)	(54,312)
71	Transfer from Reserves	206,685	206,685	144,890	211,524
72	Transfer To Capital Reserves	(21,861)	(21,861)	(67,485)	(50,248)
73	Transfer from Reserves for extraordinary items	0	0	9,096	0
74	Net Transfers (to)/from Reserves	122,944	122,944	(184,073)	106,964
75	***ENDING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)***	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

76 ***Note:***

77 1. This schedule has not been audited.

78 2. The columns titled "Net" have deferred contributions and other income deducted from councils' expenditures.

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Budget

2007-08 GROSS Program Budget with Comparatives

For the Twelve Months Ending January 31, 2008

		FYE Jan-08 GROSS Annual Budget	FYE Jan-07 GROSS Actual	FYE Jan-07 GROSS Annual Budget
1	***INCOME***			
2	Individual & Corporate Donations	807,300	785,225	830,290
3	Church Donations	2,803,500	2,849,499	2,843,000
4	General Bequest	0	45,000	0
5	Recognized Deferred Contributions	60,284	49,488	47,271
6	Other Income	632,115	849,364	838,219
7	Partner Programs	695,575	770,615	373,778
8	Related Organizations	297,000	414,459	85,000
9	***TOTAL INCOME***	5,295,774	5,763,650	5,017,558
10	***EXPENSES***			
11	**Christian Witness Council**			
12	Executive Office	139,868	125,716	128,852
13	Congregational Partnerships	182,066	148,766	194,253
14	National Ministries Admin.	8,339	9,311	8,677
15	Multi-Cultural Ministry	38,356	38,442	39,883
16	Native Ministries	114,684	110,882	113,932
17	International Ministries	1,848,855	1,849,333	1,966,980
18	**Total Witness Council Expenses**	**2,332,168**	**2,282,450**	**2,452,577**
19	**Christian Formation Council**			
20	Executive Office	151,477	139,148	157,220
21	Resource Centre	78,974	74,069	80,400
22	Min. & Cong. Leadership	87,218	76,656	87,100
23	Youth Ministry	27,393	27,629	27,500
24	Youth Assembly	0	4,756	0
25	Education & Nurture Ministries	49,373	47,392	48,530
26	**Total Formation Council Expenses**	**394,435**	**369,650**	**400,750**
27	**Support Services Council**			
28	Adminstration	355,037	381,700	372,472
29	Annual Assembly	69,586	88,433	95,020
30	Communications	157,907	146,712	152,585
31	Development	120,795	114,676	116,193
32	Canadian Mennonite	174,161	172,189	171,000
33	**Total Support Services Council Expenses**	**877,486**	**903,710**	**907,270**
34	**General Board**			
35	GBD Administration	172,354	213,785	208,600
36	Finance	214,820	252,384	275,435
37	CMU Grants	335,580	325,603	335,580
38	Mennonite World Conference Grants	38,000	38,000	38,000
39	**Total General Board Expenses**	**760,754**	**829,772**	**857,615**
40	**Partner Programs**			
41	Misc. New Initiatives	50,000	41,589	58,500
42	Int'l Worker Special Projects	0	833	0
43	Christian Peacemaker Teams	200,000	236,694	0
44	Company of 1000	50,000	49,264	0
45	NAVMF	25,000	31,524	0
46	Phillipine Partnership	80,000	46,088	66,500
47	MVSA	2,000	2,338	0
48	Kherson Partnership	5,000	8,400	0
49	Learning Tours	20,000	40,740	0
50	Canadian Women in Mission	30,000	0	0
51	Der Bote	152,300	148,832	158,825
52	MHC Archives	77,575	83,770	77,210
53	MHC Gallery	65,000	80,368	60,275
54	**Total Partner Programs Expenses**	**756,875**	**770,440**	**421,310**
55	**Related Organizations**			
56	Mennonite Mission Network	35,000	39,774	0
57	Mennonite Church USA	21,000	40,172	0
58	AMBS	85,000	80,999	85,000
59	Canadian Mennonite University	0	2,109	0
60	Mennonite Publishing Network	25,000	32,640	0
61	Messeritos Kristos College	100,000	197,765	0
62	Eastern Mennonite Missions	0	21,000	0
63	Mennonite World Conference	31,000	0	0
64	**Total Related Organization Expenses**	**297,000**	**414,459**	**85,000**
65	***TOTAL EXPENSES***	**5,418,718**	**5,570,481**	**5,124,522**
66	Operating Surplus/(Deficit) before extraordinary items	(122,944)	193,169	(106,964)
67	Other items	0	(9,096)	0
68	**Operating Surplus/(Deficit)**	**(122,944)**	**184,073**	**(106,964)**
69	Transfer To Reserves	(61,880)	(270,574)	(54,312)
70	Transfer from Reserves	206,685	144,890	211,524
71	Transfer To Capital Reserves	(21,861)	(67,485)	(50,248)
72	Transfer from Reserves for extraordinary items	0	9,096	0
73	**Net Transfers (to)/from Reserves**	**122,944**	**(184,073)**	**106,964**
74	***ENDING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)***	**0**	**0**	**0**
75	***Note:*** 1. This schedule has not been audited.			

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Councils and Committees

*MC Canada Elected and Appointed Leaders**		
	Province	**Term Expires**
General Board		
Henry Krause, Moderator	BC	2008
Garth Ewert Fisher, Assistant Moderator	SK	2008
Marlene Janzen, Secretary	AB	2007
Clare Schlegel, Treasurer	ON	2007
Hilda Hildebrand (appointed by General Board)	MB	2008
Jorge Hoajaca (appointed by General Board)	BC	2008
Andy Reesor-McDowell (appointed by General Board)	ON	2009
Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen (appointed by MCBC)	BC	2008
Linden Willms (appointed by MCA)	AB	2009
Henry Block (appointed by MC Sask)	SK	2008
Hans Werner (appointed by MCM)	MB	2009
Leroy Shantz (appointed by MCEC)	ON	2008
Willard Metzger (Witness chair)	ON	2007
Ernest Epp (Witness representative)	SK	2008
Sue Steiner (Formation chair)	ON	2009
Jeremy Bergen (Formation representative)	ON	2007
Ed Janzen (Support Services chair)	BC	2008
Rudy Baergen (Faith and Life Committee chair)	MB	2008
Christian Formation Council		
Sue Steiner, Chair	ON	2009
Lisa Carr Pries	ON	2009
Pauline Steinmann	SK	2007
Jeremy Bergen	ON	2007
Don Rempel Boschman	MB	2007
Van Hoa Chau	MB	2008
Veronica Dyck	BC	2008
Earl Reimer	MB	2008
Coreen Froese	AB	2009
Naomi Unger	SK	2009
Christian Witness Council		
Willard Metzger, Chair	ON	2007
Eryn Enns	SK	2007
Andy Ahn	MB	2008
Noe Gonzalia	ON	2007
Rudy Dirks	ON	2007
Ernest Epp	SK	2008
Dori Zerbe Cornelsen	MB	2008
Laura Loewen	BC	2009
Irene Crosland	AB	2009
JD Penner	ON	2009
Support Services Council		
Ed Janzen, Chair	BC	2008
Brice Balmer	ON	2007
Bill Janzen	AB	2007
Mark Wurtz	SK	2008
Harry Wiens	MB	2009
Rita Strickland	ON	2008
Faith and Life Committee		
Rudy Baergen, Chair	MB	2008
Karl Koop	MB	2007
Doreen Neufeld	AB	2009
Betty Pries (appointed by General Board)	ON	2008
Financial Policy and Audit Committee		
Clare Schlegel, Treasurer and Chair	ON	2007
Helen Kasdorf (appointed by General Board)	MB	2008
Ingrid Peters-Fransen (appointed by General Board)	MB	2007
Nominating Committee		
Lorne Buhr (appointed by MCA)	AB	2009
Clare Neufeld (appointed by MCBC)	BC	2007
Ken H. Loewen (appointed by MCM)	MB	2007
Gladys Bender (appointed by MCEC)	ON	2008
Dave Feick (appointed by MC Sask)	SK	2009
*Unless otherwise noted, leaders are elected by the MC Canada Delegate Assembly		

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Nominees

GENERAL BOARD

Don Friesen

Don Friesen, Ottawa ON (Ottawa Mennonite Church)
Nominated as General Board Secretary

Occupation: Leading minister for 29 years.

Local church involvements: secretary of the Refugee Assistance Program Committee for ten years, 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.

WITNESS

Lynell Bergen

Lynell Bergen, Winnipeg MB (Charleswood Mennonite Church)

Occupation: Mental Health and Disabilities Program Coordinator, MCC Manitoba, focused on inclusion and healing for people with mental illness and disabilities, in the context of the broader church community.

Local church involvements: Sunday School teacher, worship committee member, choir member, pastoral advisory committee member.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Co-pastor, Arnaud Mennonite Church (1993-1999); mission worker with Mennonite Church Canada Witness in Mthatha, South Africa (1999-2006) working with African Indigenous Churches and with AIDS issues.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: Being relevant in an ever-changing world means listening to the world around us, and responding to it in light of God's Good News. Being relevant to God's Good News means being radical in the eyes of the world, in our message of peace-making, justice for all people, and care for God's creation.

Noe Gonzalia

Noe Gonzalia, Kitchener ON (First Mennonite Church - Kitchener)
Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2001

Occupation: Pastor of Hispanic Ministry

Local church involvements: Pastor representative on Mission and Service Board, constantly involved in cross-cultural issues related to the missional character of the church.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Liaison person for Hispanic church planting in Sherbrooke, Quebec (MCEC).

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My dreams and hopes for MC Canada are related to the missional path we have embraced following the character of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This vision is beginning to take root both within the local churches and within the structural realm of area churches and national church. This powerful and dynamic vision will bring together the real interest of all of us. It will no longer be the "we-they" pattern of relationship. Instead, it will be the "all of us" working together side by side as fellow servants of the true master of the church, Jesus Christ.

Rudy Dirks, Niagara-on-the-Lake ON (Niagara United Mennonite Church)
Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2004

Rudy Dirks

Occupation: Pastor

Local church involvements: Adult Sunday School teaching, preaching, counselling, worship leading, youth work, pastoral care and funerals, marriage preparation and weddings, men's ministries, seniors' ministries, married couples' fellowship, leadership training, mentoring.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Marriage and family counseling, leading seminars on Myers-Briggs personality types, leadership development with college students, college chaplaincy ministries, overseas mission work with African Indigenous Churches in Botswana, HIV/AIDS counselling training with church volunteers.

Special interests: Cross-cultural communication and ministry, lay leadership development in congregations.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: Mennonite Church Canada is a significant part of the Kingdom of God. The most important thing I can think of is that the individuals, congregations, and area churches that make up MC Canada would grow closer to God and live more and more under the influence of His Kingdom, as we walk in discipleship with Jesus, allowing His Spirit to fill us with compassion, love, and wisdom for the world in which we live.

Willard Metzger, Drayton ON (Community Mennonite Fellowship)
Nominated as chair of the Christian Witness Council
Served as chair of the Christian Witness Council since 2001

Willard Metzger

Occupation: Director of Church Relations at World Vision Canada.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Pastor in MCEC for 20 years; past chair Mission and Service Commission (MCEC); past chair Foundation of International Development Assistance (FIDA).

Special interests: Enjoys the unique perspectives of communities in the various regions of Canada and around the world.

Visional/Goal for MC Canada: To see Mennonite congregations across Canada grow in an enthusiastic embrace of engaging the activity of God in their communities and around the world.

FORMATION

Erwin Tiessen, Rosthern SK (Eigenheim Mennonite Church)

Erwin Tiessen

Occupation: Retired school teacher/principal.

Local church involvements: Currently a deacon, also served as worship committee member and occasional pulpit assistant/speaker.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Spent over 30 years in Mennonite church school education as teacher and administrator at United Mennonite Educational Institute and Rosthern Junior College.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My work in Mennonite schools has confirmed for me the significant and very crucial role that our schools play in the life of our congregations and church structures. Our church structures need to find avenues to partner more closely in the lives and education of their youth and young adults from Kindergarten to seminary.

I am eager to help define a relationship between our congregations/structures and our schools, and to have both parties understand the need for the other in our calling to be church and educator. Mennonite Church Canada, area churches and congregations need to find ways for the church to continue to be seen as significant and relevant to both our current membership and others seeking church affiliation. In particular, we need to highlight those understandings and perspectives that our Mennonite churches hold that are sought out by others beyond our circles. We need to profile our interest and strengths in service, peace, engaging other faiths, and building community and understand these as God's gifts to us which we are called to share in the building of His Kingdom.

Pauline Steinmann

Pauline Steinmann, Saskatoon SK (Wildwood Mennonite Church)
Served on the Christian Formation Council since 2003

Occupation: Pastor

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Co-chair of the MC Saskatchewan Pastoral Leadership Commission; served on the boards of the Ten Thousand Villages store in Saint John, New Brunswick and of OPAL, a residential service for disabled persons; served in various congregations as a member and chair of the worship committee, member of the pastoral team, adult and children's Sunday School teacher, youth sponsor, worship leader.

Special interests: Firm believer in the ongoing need for spiritual formation throughout life; interested in how that best happens at different stages in life.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My hope for the church is that we would be a vibrant, relevant church, able and ready to respond to the challenges both locally and globally, to use our comfortable middle class North American abundance for the good of the world.

Tom Yoder-Neufeld

Tom Yoder Neufeld, Waterloo ON (First Mennonite Church – Kitchener)

Occupation: Professor at the University of Waterloo.

Local church involvements: Member of visioning committee, Sunday School teacher, song leader, occasional preacher.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Hospital and prison chaplaincy; pastor in Thompson, MB and Boston, MA; involved in teaching Bible at Conrad Grebel University College since 1983; director of Master of Theological Studies program from 2000-2006; frequent teacher and preacher in congregations and at conferences.

Special interests: Pastoral leadership formation.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: Apart from the goals I share with all members of MC Canada, I wish to contribute in particular to meeting the urgent need for pastoral and theological leadership, and to consider how MC Canada might facilitate meeting that need as a shared enterprise among the various institutions devoted to leadership formation and education.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Diane Hildebrand Schlegel

Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel, Morden MB (Morden Mennonite Church)

Occupation: Associate Pastor of Christian Formation.

Local church involvements: Enjoys making music and teaching with all age groups in the congregation.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Resource to communications staff in MC

Canada, participated in a communications audit in MCEC, served on writing team for Lent 2007 worship materials, mother of three children, worked as an occupational therapist for 11 years.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: I have a particular interest and hope for the ways that we connect and network as the congregations of MC Canada. We have much to learn from each other – from what God is doing and wants to do among us and through us – in communities all across this country.

Bill Janzen, Calgary AB (Foothills Mennonite Church)
Served on the Support Services Council since 2006

Bill Janzen

Occupation: Financial consultant.

Local church involvements: Worship leader, has served on church council and search committees.

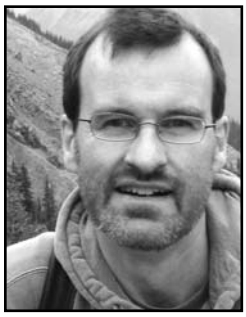
Other vocational and volunteer experience: Extensive involvement with the MCC Relief Sale and some involvement with Menno Simons Christian School.

Special interests: A vision for the broader church and issues of stewardship and management.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My vision for MC Canada is that it continue on the path of trying to live into what God wants us to be. I appreciate the strong Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective that I have been nurtured in, but also realize that spirituality is not static. I look forward to experiencing the discernment, discovery, and discipleship at the level of the broader church.

FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE

Karl Koop, Winnipeg MB (First Mennonite Church - Winnipeg)
Served on Faith and Life Committee since 2005


Karl Koop

Occupation: Associate Professor of History and Theology at Canadian Mennonite University.

Local church involvements: Various committees, preaching, worship leading and music.

Other vocational and volunteer experience: Associate pastor at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church; worked with MCC in pastoral work and ecumenical relations in Germany; Assistant Professor of Theology and Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies at AMBS from 1997-2002.

Special interests: Anabaptist-Mennonite history and theology; ecumenism.

Vision/Goal for MC Canada: My hope is that Mennonite Church Canada will be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ through worship, fellowship, mission and service. The road to faithfulness necessarily includes understanding one's own tradition and conversing with the wider church – for in a divided world, no ecclesiology can exist in isolation; it must be ecumenically oriented.

Caring for Creation is the Will of God

God longs for the well-being and health of the whole world, for all of creation is bound together and belongs to God, who has created and who preserves all things. Our concern for faithfulness and discipleship should also lead us to care for creation. We believe that we are called to commit ourselves to be good stewards of the earth.

Such a call invites the church to consider several questions:

(1) To whom does creation belong?

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he had founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. Ps. 24:1-2 (See also Gen. 1:12, 18, 21, 25, 31; Gen. 9:12-13; Lev. 25:8-12; Ps. 19:1; Ps. 24:1-10; Job 39-41; Matt. 6:26-29; Rev. 21:1-4).

(2) What is the rightful place of humanity in creation?

God blessed them, and God said to them. Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. Gen. 1:28 (See also Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 8; Phil. 2:1-11).

(3) What does the care of creation have to do with God's plan of salvation?

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Col. 1:19-20 (See also 2 Cor. 5: 17-19; Rom. 8:18-25)

(4) How is creation care an expression of justice and peacemaking and the love of my neighbour?

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength… [and] you shall love your neighbour as yourself. Mark 12:30-31 (See also Exod. 23:1-12; Isa. 52:7; Luke 4:18-19).

(5) What is the future of creation?

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. Rom. 8:19-21 (See also Rev. 21:1-2)

(6) What is our future?

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Ps. 46:1-2 (See also Matt. 6:26-29)

–Rudy Baergen, Chair, on behalf of Faith and Life Committee

Notes...

general

formation

witness

support services

finance

discernment

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

Affirmation Statements for Assembly 2007

Introduction

The three affirmation statements on creation care, young adults, and militarization that follow will each form the basis for a period of delegate discernment time at Abbotsford 2007. At the conclusion of each discernment time, delegates will be asked to approve the affirmation statement as a response to what they have experienced during that time.

What does it mean to approve these affirmation statements?

These statements are intended to affirm basic directions of our church. They should not be seen as breaking new ground but rather as putting what we already believe into a spotlight. They should be viewed as "road signs" on our journey as a church, indicating key values to each other and to a watching world. Affirming these statements allows us to highlight together our concern and commitment on these three important issues of our time and place.

Affirming these statements can help us to discuss our concerns and commitments with other Christians, people of other faiths, and people of no faith. For example, the statement on militarization could be used to communicate MC Canada's position to our government, the Canadian Council of Churches, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Affirming these statements can help us begin other important discussions and processes regarding these three issues. Affirming a statement together will not "resolve" any of the three issues we are addressing. Our intent is to speak to the issues, and, by doing so, to invite further reflection and action: What are we going to do? What can my congregation do? What can I do? Therefore, affirming these statements should be seen as a point on a journey of discernment and action, and not the end of it.

We encourage area churches and congregations to prepare their delegates by discussing these affirmation statements with them in advance. The questions below are offered to guide that discussion. Additional discussion questions and materials will be provided during the discernment time at the assembly.

1. Does the affirmation statement speak to the heart of the issue it addresses?
2. Does your congregation or area church support the basic direction affirmed by the statement? Why or why not?
3. What questions, concerns or ideas for further process are inspired in your congregation or area church by the affirmation statement?

Affirmation Statements for Assembly 2007

CREATION CARE

Mennonite Church Canada believes that God longs for the well-being and health of the whole world, for all of creation is bound together and belongs to God, who has created and who preserves all things. Our concern for faithfulness and discipleship should also lead us to care for creation. Mennonite Church Canada believes that God is calling us to commit ourselves to discern the paths of faithfulness to be good stewards of the earth.

YOUNG ADULTS

Mennonite Church Canada desires to be an affirming home for the growth of faith and commitment for young adults and needs the creativity and fresh perspective they bring.

Because the wellbeing of the present and future church depends on our capacity to incorporate young adults we **must** be proactive in creating space for young adults to offer and exercise their God-given gifts in leadership and service, in the life and ministries of the church. We pray for the grace to be flexible and to act courageously to make this possible, even if it feels threatening to the institutions and practices of our present and past. We proclaim this affirmation so that the whole body of Christ might grow in wisdom and knowledge and be empowered by the Holy Spirit toward the fulfillment of God's dream.

MILITARIZATION

Mennonite Church Canada believes that "peace is the will of God" and that we need to "witness to all people that violence is not the will of God" (COF, p 81-82) Given this gospel understanding, we lament and oppose that the imaginations of our church and society are increasingly captivated by confidence in military solutions to human problems. May God grant us wisdom to discern and grace to act in ways that promote God's will for peace on earth.

Outdoor advertising for the Canadian military

A Letter to the Government (2006 follow-up)

Follow-up to Edmonton Resolution on Conscientious Objection to payment of taxes for military purposes.

At the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Edmonton (July 2006), delegates passed a resolution asking MC Canada to "…make representation … to the Government of Canada, urging the government to enact legislation which would allow conscientious objectors to direct the military portion of their taxes to activities of development and peace."

The letter to government leaders that follows is a response to the 2006 resolution. Additional discernment time at this assembly will be devoted to discussing possible further actions in regards to this 2006 resolution.

The Right Honorable Stephen Harper

Prime Minister of Canada

April, 2007

Dear Mr. Harper:

On behalf of the 225 congregations and 33,000 members that make up Mennonite Church Canada, we address you with concerns over our common quest for peace in our world. This quest must begin with our own actions for peace as individuals and as a church, but must also include our government in both domestic and foreign policy arenas. We are encouraged in this quest by the words of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney:

*So I approach the **pursuit of peace** with determination, recognizing both the enormity of the task and the **requirement for action**. To those who say it cannot be done, I say **it must be done**. To those who say Canada can't do it alone, I say **we can do it together**. And to those who claim it is none of our business, I say **the search for peace is everyone's business**.*

Specifically, we urge your government to support a Private Member's Bill that will be introduced into the House by Bill Siksay (Member of Parliament for Burnaby – Douglas in British Columbia) that would allow for Conscientious Objection to the payment of those taxes designated for military purposes. This is an historic initiative, and we urge you to support this Bill when it is introduced. But more than that, we urge you to mobilize your government and members of Parliament of both sides of the House to support this Bill.

The "pursuit of" and the "search for" peace are also at the heart of our sacred scripture. The Psalmist exhorts us to "seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). The Apostle Paul instructs us to "pursue what makes for peace" (Romans 14:19). The Apostle Peter teaches us to "seek peace and pursue it" (I Peter 3:11). And Jesus the Christ taught us that the best way to deal with enemies is to "love them" and to "pray" for them (Matthew 5:44). Mennonite

Church Canada is a Christian denomination that has had the "search for and pursuit of peace" in our heart and soul since our inception in Canada in the early 1800s, and before that in the birth of the Anabaptist movement in Europe in the 16th century, and before that in the words and life of Jesus of Nazareth, the foundation of our church.

We wrote to you in July/2006 about our concern regarding the escalation of military response in Lebanon, Gaza, and Israel. At that time we expressed our concern as follows:

We are concerned about what appears to be a multi-faceted and intentional escalation of public advocacy, decisions, and actions that foster the increasing militarization of the Canadian mind, psyche, soul, and imagination.

Since then our concern has only increased. In July 2006, the delegates of our congregations, meeting in our annual Assembly in Edmonton, expressed their concern in a tangible way. They went beyond affirming our historic conviction that Conscientious Objection status needs to be available for those who cannot in good conscience serve the military purposes of our nation, to express their reluctance to pay those taxes that finance the capacity of others to do so. The delegates asked that these concerns be brought to the attention of our government together with some suggestions about how the tax question could be addressed.

We are aware of and pleased with the initiative of Mr. Bill Siksay in introducing the Private Members Bill C-348 on June 22/06. This Bill, *Conscientious Objection to the Use of Taxes for Military Purposes*, proposed a vehicle which addressed some of our concerns and we applaud this effort.

We have been working with Mr. Siksay, and with other concerned groups coordinated by Conscience Canada, to strengthen the impact of this Bill. Mr. Siksay is now drafting a new strengthened Bill to be introduced into Parliament at the earliest opportunity. This Bill will propose concrete ways in which our concerns can be more fully addressed. Not only will it propose a way in which the end-use of our taxes is subject to the conscience of the taxpayer, it will also suggest alternate ways in which those same tax-dollars can be effectively used for the pursuit of peace via nonviolent and peaceful means.

The logic for this Bill is clear. The end-use and impact of our money are as important as are the end-use and impact of our actions. If conscience is a legitimate cause for exemption to what we oppose, namely military service, conscience must also be a legitimate cause for exemption *to pay* for what we oppose, namely military action.

Allowing taxpayers to designate their taxes to nonviolent strategies is only one small step in our "search for" and "pursuit of" peace. We also urge you to become a world spokesperson and statesman in the promotion of a peace that is gained through peaceful (and not violent) means.

For example, Mr. Prime Minister, it is not convincing to us that the Canadian military forces should be seen and promoted as being the front line of "rebuilding the infrastructure" and engaging in "development" work in Afghanistan, as we hear your officials and military spokespersons argue so often. By this we are not suggesting that Canada should not be engaged in developing that and other countries. But it is not logical that our military forces should be the vehicle for social development and re-construction there. Again we would call you to an alternative imagination in how the same level of budget could be used for the social and economic development of Afghanistan but via development organizations that have a solid reputation for using nonviolent strategies for social development.

We draw your attention to the words of another eminent Canadian, also a predecessor to you. The words of Lester Pearson, although spoken half a century ago, are as relevant (or more so) today as they were then:

The stark and inescapable fact is that today we cannot defend our society by war since total war is total destruction, and if war is used as an instrument of policy, eventually we will have total war. Therefore, the best defense of peace is not power, but the removal of the causes of war, and international agreements which will put peace on a stronger foundation than the terror of destruction (1957).

[We must search for] peace based on something more enduring than force (1955).

Mr. Prime Minister, we pray for you, we are open to meet with you, and we are prepared to work with you and your government toward transforming the increasing Canadian confidence in military solutions into a strengthened imagination for the potential of nonviolent options regarding the complex issues facing your government and our world. Other statespersons have, in the past, demonstrated the positive impact of such alternative imaginations. We urge you to now step into that circle and continue the legacy of peacekeeping and peacemaking that Canada has established at home and abroad. In doing so you will be giving leadership to the "new imagination" for peace that we called you to exercise in our July 2006 letter to you.

Statistics from the United Nations tell us that in 2005 the annual world military expenditure reached $1.1 trillion dollars while the United Nations spent approximately $5 billion dollars on peacekeeping efforts. This is less than 0.5% of military expenditure. Can we imagine ways in which these numbers could be inverted? The increasing militarization of the world, and the reactive militarization of Canada, is not the road to peace. We urge you, Mr. Prime Minister, to demonstrate a Canadian commitment to the pursuit of peace by supporting provisions, such as the upcoming Bill, that advocate for nonviolent strategies, and at the same time to become a proactive proponent that encourages the imaginations of our citizens in the search for peace via peaceful means.

Prime Minister Trudeau, in accepting the annual award of the Albert Einstein Peace Prize Foundation (1984) stated:

… politicians act as if peace is too complicated for them.

Our confidence is that peace is not "too complicated" for us. This confidence arises from our faith that God is at work and that God's strategy, as illustrated through Jesus Christ, is a strategy of nonviolent communities pursuing peace via peaceful lives and means. This confidence is more that sectarian religious conviction. There is by now ample evidence from multiple sources and experiences within and beyond the church that point to the wisdom of this confidence. Nonviolent strategies do indeed have the power to effectively engage the societal and global cul-de-sac of confronting the injustice of violence with further violence that inevitably generates additional injustice. We call on you to help Canadians break this spiral of violence and foster imaginations of peace for the sake of and the pursuit of peace.

Sincerely,

Henry Krause
Moderator,
Mennonite Church Canada

Robert J. Suderman
General Secretary,
Mennonite Church Canada

Janet Plenert
Executive Secretary,
Mennonite Church Canada Witness