

## Support Services Council Report

The mandate of Support Services is to support all of Mennonite Church Canada programs with administrative services to enable the programs of the church to do their work effectively and efficiently.

When reviewing this past year from a Support Services perspective, we respond with gratitude and thanks to God for his guidance and presence with us. Support Services has no programs of its own, but rather is an administrative body, providing communication, resource development, and human resources support, as well as looking after office support and physical assets. It also includes the broader support of managing the pension plan for employees and Pastors of Mennonite Church Canada.

### Mennonite Church Canada Communications Mission To inform, inspire, invite, and involve all parts of the church in God's mission and Christ's ministry of healing and hope.

Various communications activities provide ongoing support. This includes activities such as preparation and mailing of "Equipping," support for itinerating Witness workers, web sites maintenance, News Service, Formation and Witness projects and promotion. Then there are some activities that are new or growing. I will give a brief description of this year's activities that are not routine or offer special inspiration:

- Activity on the web site at [www.churchpandemicresources.ca](http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca) took center stage for a while, but has predictably waned along with media attention and a reduction of actual H1N1 cases. Together with help from colleagues at Mennonite Disaster Service, we have updated the site to make it more bi-national in nature in language.
- A video project called *What Makes a Mennonite?* has been completed and posted to [www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca](http://www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca).
- On Nov. 18, 2009, the new web site at [www.liveforpeace.org](http://www.liveforpeace.org) went live initially to support an outdoor advertising campaign launched by Mennonite Church Alberta in the Calgary area. As part of a national four-year Peace in the Public Square initiative, two large format billboards and 45 posters on trains and at train stops were erected. The project was deemed to be successful in terms of public and media exposure (the ads spurred TV and radio interviews). It's not clear if the campaign led to significant numbers of visitors to the sponsoring congregations. Doug Klassen, media spokesman and Pastor at Foothills MC, reports the campaign has encouraged a new "humble optimism" and contributed to a "growing missional focus" in his congregation, and that the project has sparked other ideas of how the church can present a third-way alternative to the status quo. The peace project encouraged the congregation to work with the local Mennonite ministerial at a peaceful presence at White Pride Day/Anti-Racism day (Mar. 21) in Calgary – a day that traditional sees these two groups face-off – sometimes violently – against each other. "I can't say we'd be doing this if the (Peace in the Public Square) campaign had not happened," said Doug.



Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, thanks Louie Sawatzky (foreground) Interim Executive Secretary, Support Services, for his interim leadership of Support Services. Photo by Dan Dyck

- By the time of our assembly, activity of the Communications Team on the Interfaith Religious Leaders Summit (Wpg., June 21-23), a project of the Canadian Council of Churches and an Interfaith Partnership Group, will have wound up. The World Religions Summit 2010 – a shadow summit to Canada's hosting of the G8 political leaders – is an exciting initiative that is positioning the church as an advocate with a strong interest in having a positive influence on Millennium Development Goals. The essential message is that people of faith care, and that people from different faiths can find common ground and work toward a greater good as illustrated by the Golden Rule - a common teaching in many faiths. Dan Dyck, Mennonite Church Canada's Communications Director, was asked to give leadership to the Summit Communications Team because of his work on the Canadian Council of Churches Communication Committee. Also planned is a professional development day for faith communicators on June 21.
- Our monthly radio program, *Church Matters*, available via the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre online and iTunes, as a free podcast, continues to inspire listeners.
- Additional significant projects on the slate:
  - An updated Generosity Report for use by Resource Development staff
  - A general brochure describing Mennonite Church Canada, primarily for congregational members and area churches.
  - Continued work with Mennonite Church Canada Formation producing materials in languages other than English
- We have embarked on a re-envisioning of Mennonite Church Canada's Prayer Directory.

- A survey of constituent congregations was conducted to find out if the Mennonite Church Canada phone directory in hard copy format is still useful – or should it be discontinued in favour of an online version only. The results were split down the middle; just one more issue of an Mennonite Church Canada phone directory will be produced. An online church finder at [www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca) has been available since 2004.

### Communications Channels are growing

The internet is becoming increasingly important in communicating our message. The following illustrates the number of “visits” for each of the following web sites for the month of January 2010 alone:

- [www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca): 19,978 unique visitors
- [www.churchpandemicresources.ca](http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca): 470 unique visitors
- [www.alternativeservice.ca](http://www.alternativeservice.ca): 805 unique visitors
- [www.healingandhope.ca](http://www.healingandhope.ca): 286 unique visitors
- [www.liveforpeace.ca](http://www.liveforpeace.ca): 498 unique visitors
- [www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca](http://www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca): 15,725 views since inception

### Staff

We are grateful for the dedicated staff that continue in the communications support team. In support of ongoing professional development, Dan Dyck, Director of Communications, has been granted a three month professional development leave beginning in September. During this time, he will be pursuing the “Accredited Business Communicator” (or ABC) designation. We wish Dan well in his further studies. Plans are in place to cover his role during his absence.

### Human Resources

The work of Human Resources always seems to be busy.

Several significant projects have been:

1. Updating and reviewing content for the Pandemic Website
2. Review and design of pension focus groups
3. Wrote and finalized Mennonite Church Canada’s Pandemic Business Continuity Plan
4. Filing of additional forms from the CRA regarding Clergy Residence Deduction (delays have led to docked pay for some workers)
5. Pastors’ Five Year Salary Scale Review
6. General Secretary – conducted survey implementation and provide ongoing assistance to the search team
7. Honorarium Research

Low staff turnover in this period has freed up a little time to work on these projects. It is normal to have some turnover in any organization, so to see a six month period where there is none is highly unusual. However at the time of writing, we are moving into a time of transition, with a new Executive Secretary, Support Services, Vic Thiessen, beginning his new role on April 12<sup>th</sup>. As well we expect the position of General Secretary for Mennonite Church Canada will be filled by the time of this Assembly. We also anticipate combining some existing Support Services activities together with some Witness activities under a new umbrella department

yet to be named. This will take advantage of synergies, and more appropriately position processes that are already naturally aligning. Again this year, special educational sessions for the pension plan members have been held. Attendance has been low; we will explore moving to webinars in the future.

The interest in International Ministries has seen a steady increase. Placements since October include four special assignments, and at the writing of this report there are five other applications, including two couples. This office also continues to administrate the MASP (Mutual Aid Sharing Plan) for our workers and deal with unusual worker issues as needed.



Ed Janzen.

### Pension Plan Administration

The Pension Plan administration is a significant function. This is managed by the Director, Human Resources, along with the Pension Advisory Committee and the fund managers, the Ardent Group. We are very pleased with the management of this fund, which provides some financial security for all employees and Pastors enrolled. Many of the uncertainties of two years ago have now passed, and the fund is on a sound basis.

### Resource Development

The mandate of the Resource Development department is to form relationships and plan activities within the Mennonite Church Canada constituency, and to invite financial participation in the work of the church. This is both an exciting and also a daunting task. We have had only one half time position working on this task again this year, and express our appreciation for your generosity and support. The work of the church is dependant on the ongoing financial support of congregations and individuals who believe in working together to build God’s kingdom. Thank you all for your participation.

### Administration

The year has passed quickly. Some of the normal challenges this year related to our facilities. Due to the more than usual heavy rains last summer, we experienced several minor floods in the basement of the offices. This resulted in some replacement of floors and some painting.

During this year we also had a number of computer failures, reminding us that we do need timely replacement of equipment. For this reason, 12 new computers were purchased, and we are looking at planned replacement of the others. As well, in the coming year we will be looking at software needs for the future. No doubt this will also require



Vic Thiessen. Photo by Dan Dyck

not only additional one time expenses, but also adjustments in how we do things.

Over the past few years, it has become evident that we need to consider an elevator for the Heritage Centre to accommodate the many persons who visit the Centre but who currently cannot access the upper level. This includes school children and adults who visit the gallery. There are various activities on the second level. We have taken initial steps to look at structural possibilities and preliminary costs. Estimates suggest the cost will be around \$200,000. Presently we are looking at available grants to cover the cost of such a venture.

With the intent on going green, and to improve the lighting in the office with more efficient lighting, we have replaced all the fluorescent lights in the office. This has been done with the encouragement and subsidy of Manitoba Hydro. The new lights are more energy efficient (up to 40% more) as well are a little brighter, and are not supposed to flicker.

### Assembly Planning

The Mennonite Church Assembly is one of the main formational events of the year. The Purpose and Goals of an Assembly are to:

- Provide opportunities for participants to build and nurture the church, and
- To conduct the business affairs of the organization as described in the Mennonite Church Canada bylaws.

For this reason, Assembly planning is done by an Assembly Planning Committee, consisting of representation from Christian Witness, Christian Formation, the Denominational Minister, and Support Services, with each entity taking on special roles in the planning of this significant event. We are grateful also for the very significant role of the local Assembly Host Committee, and the many volunteers that make sure the details are in place, and venues planned, to provide for a rich experience.

In the past few years, we have had discussions regarding the frequency of Assemblies. At the Assembly 2009 in Saskatoon, we again took time to debate the subject, and hear the merits of annual or biennial Assemblies as discussed by the delegate body. The Support Services Council has listened and heard, and will be presenting a proposal to maintain the current practice of holding an annual Assembly, subject to a review every five years.

### Conclusion

As we look back at this year, we are reminded that this is not our work, but God's. And we are all chosen by God, and as members of one body, we are called to peace and unity. It is a privilege to be here and with gratitude to God, we continue to participate in the building of His church. Thank you for your support.

### Support Services Council Members

- Ed Janzen, (chair) Abbotsford, BC
- Harry Wiens, Altona, MB
- Mark Wurtz, Rostern, SK
- Kaye Rempel, Waterloo, ON
- Gordon Baergen, Edmonton, AB

#### The Pension Advisory Committee

includes the members of Support Services Council, plus Loren Brown, Winnipeg, MB, and Glen Siemens, Plum Coulee, MB, plus the Executive Secretary, Support Services and the Director of Human Resources.

The Support Services Council also appoints representatives to the Mennonite Foundation of Canada and the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services which publishes *the Canadian Mennonite*.

### Mennonite Church Canada members of the board of Mennonite Foundation of Canada for 2009/10 were:

- Anita Thiessen
- Karin Krahn, Calgary, AB
- Clayton Loewen, Fort Langley, BC

### Mennonite Church Canada members of the board of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services 2009/2010 were:

- Ed Janzen, Winnipeg, MB
- Joon Hyoung Park, Vancouver, BC
- Les Klassen Hamm, Saskatoon, SK
- John Goosen, Delta, BC

Submitted by Louie Sawatzky,  
Executive Secretary,  
Support Services Council

and Ed Janzen, Chair  
Support Services Council



MFC has grown steadily over the past several years. In 2009 we sent over \$9.7 million to charities, almost exclusively through recommendations from our donors. Our staff numbers have increased by 50 per cent in four years. We now have eight consultants working out of our five offices across Canada, visiting and helping hundreds of individuals and families to be faithful, joyful, givers – both in planning their wills and in supporting their congregations and favourite charities.

How does Mennonite Foundation partner with you and, by extension, with the larger Church? Our three-fold mandate continues to be: to act as a donor-advised public charitable foundation, managing money in a manner consistent with our faith-based values; to provide stewardship education resources for our Congregations, area Churches and Denominations; and to counsel and assist individuals in realizing their charitable dreams.

How are we doing this?

- We operate a donor-advised charitable foundation, with investments made only in accordance with carefully articulated screens which are based on our understanding of faith-based values.
- We offer our own modest granting program (independent of our donor-advised program) to encourage projects and programs related to stewardship, generosity, and gratitude.
- We stay up-dated on technical, legal and accounting issues relating to charities, and are happy to share our knowledge with our congregations and denominations.
- We encourage people to support their Congregations, Area churches and Denominations, and we offer creative suggestions on how they can most effectively do so.
- We stay current on faith developments as they relate to Christian stewardship, especially for financial stewardship, and we teach Christian stewardship by printed word, electronic word, presentations, seminars and individual counseling.

We also ask our Denominations, Area Churches, and Congregations to affirm our ministry by:

- Allowing and encouraging our stewardship consultants to preach and teach in your congregations (Dori Zerbe Cornelsen, Mike Strathdee, Sherri Grosz, Gary Sawatzky, Kevin Davidson and Arnie Friesen are the regional consultants for Mennonite Church Canada congregations).
- Credentialing our consultants and managers, recognizing the unique but vital ministry that we provide in your congregations.
- Using, and encouraging your congregations to use, our services in fund management.
- Providing MFC with capable and reliable governance; Mennonite Church Canada representatives at our governance table are Karin Krahn and Clayton Loewen.

On December 1, 2009, MFC appointed Darren Pries-Klassen as Executive Director, replacing Erwin Warkentin. Prior to his appointment, Darren served MFC over the past 11 years as a stewardship consultant in the St. Catharines office. MFC is confident that his experience, education and leadership qualities make him well-suited to lead us into the future. Darren is enjoying renewing acquaintances in many areas of the country.

We are encouraged that you consider us to be a voice of ministry in your midst that contributes to and enhances your congregations and area churches and denomination as they strive to be the Church.

*You will find more information and stories about our work on our website: [mennofoundation.ca](http://mennofoundation.ca). If you have not already signed up for our free electronic newsletter, please visit our website and do so today.*

## Canadian Mennonite

### Dear Mennonite Church Canada delegates:

This past year has been quite a journey for me, taking over the wheel of the *Canadian Mennonite* from Tim Miller Dyck, the able navigator of this ship who has built solid relationships with our publishing partners - the five Area Churches and Mennonite Church Canada. Needless to say, it has been a steep learning curve, not so much with publishing tasks, but learning the perspectives, vision, mission and the cultural ethos of the leaders and lay persons in a different church system. While I had formed some bi-national relationships prior to this task, it is different living and working here than with the occasional "meeting and greeting."

The welcome has been warm, though, and the support, especially of the CMPS board and my staff has been most gratifying. Many of you, in the wider church, have also been gracious and understanding. Our donors have been generous beyond expectations. We have an engaged readership, both affirming and critiquing our work and making CM a dynamic "kitchen table" of conversation over a wide range of issues.

To an editor/publisher that is perhaps the most gratifying part of the task. I am comfortable with controversy and think part of our mission is to provide a safe place for discussion as we grow and develop our faith. Looking back over the letters, it is obvious that Canadian Mennonites are struggling with their identity, are, not surprisingly, somewhat divided on such worldwide issues as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, are concerned about the ever-growing preoccupation with consumerism and differ on biblical interpretation, to name a few of the overriding issues. This past year, Mennonite Church Canada households had the chance to read again about 1,100 articles (similar to last year) in *Canadian Mennonite* about these issues and the many activities of our 225 congregations and mission, service and educational institutions.

One of the high points of my year, and I hope for our readers seeing our reporting, was attending Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay in June. This "coming together around Jesus Christ" (the 15th assembly theme) amounted to a Sinai experience for me, or a 21st century Pentecost.

Each issue of *Canadian Mennonite* is full of stories, news, letters and other writing about our faith (now including a website *News Update* every Friday and our blog). *Canadian Mennonite* is a way for all of us, through our Every Home subscription plan, to experience God with us. Thank you for the church's financial support that allows us to provide church subscriptions to every home at much below cost. Through your vision, *Canadian Mennonite* continues to be the church ministry that all Canadian Mennonites can share.

God's shalom.

Submitted by Dick Benner,  
Editor/Publisher, Canadian Mennonite



### Activity/Program

Publishing a national magazine primarily for those attending Mennonite Church Canada churches

### 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.

### 2009 Expenses

\$643,230 (net income was \$158,235 from Mennonite Church Canada, \$128,971 from the five area churches and \$351,105 raised by the magazine through other means)

### Reporting to

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board, a twelve-member board that includes four Mennonite Church Canada-appointed board members (these are Ed Janzen, Les Klassen Hamm and Joon Hyoung Park as of March, 2010). The board chair is Tobi Thiessen.