

## Introduction

Who is your neighbour? While we may feel this is a familiar question in the church, do we really know the answer? Do we realize how it is about to change even in the most practical of ways?

Statistics Canada predicts that by 2031, one in four people in Canada will have been born elsewhere. Primarily these new neighbours will be from countries in Asia and Latin America with whom we share a Pacific coast, rather than from the historical and more familiar European countries. Three-quarters of these will have neither French nor English as their mother tongue. They will be an urban population. Islam is expected to be the fastest growing religion in Canada, increasing to about 7% of the population, and Buddhism, Judaism, and Sikhism will double their numbers. Meanwhile, those espousing Christianity will drop from 75% to 65%. Welcome to a new Canada.

Who is your neighbour? Is this changing? How are we as an Anabaptist church in Canada called to respond to, adapt to, and be present among this demographic? Mennonite Church Canada Witness seeks to empower all congregations and all parts of the church to be fully engaged in God's mission, from across the street to around the world.

## Ministry focus

Mennonite Church Canada Witness focuses on reaching beyond ourselves to engage our communities, and our world, with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ. According to the Mennonite Church Canada by-laws, the Christian Witness Council should focus on six core activities. Let's see what is happening in each of these areas.

## Evangelism and Church Planting

- Witness is resourcing Area Churches by facilitating dialogue and information sharing related to church planting and missional formation.
- In November 2009, 22 Mennonite Church Canada constituents from across the country attended the bi-annual Church Planting Canada Congress in Calgary. This inspiring event has had significant spin offs in some of the Area Churches. Representatives of Mennonite Church Canada and Area Churches also caucused together twice, meeting with plenary speaker and head of the Anabaptist Network in the UK, Stuart Murray Williams, and Missional church author, Michael Frost, to discuss our challenges as Mennonites in Canada. In all, approximately 170 Anabaptists were present at this Congress,



Janet Plenert,  
Executive Secretary,  
Mennonite Church Canada Witness

## Witness Highlights for your Congregation to know!

- 167 Mennonite Church Canada constituents have participated in Learning Tours to a variety of ministry locations! Maybe it is time to consider when you might participate, or even sponsor someone in your congregation to go!
- Is God calling you to service and international ministry? Witness has a number of service opportunities available:
  - o Young Adults take note – Radical Journey is a year long international service and growth opportunity!
  - o Do you have a heart for helping people to learn and grow and a desire to serve? Witness is looking for English teachers for Korea and China and short term ministry workers for Israel/Palestine.
  - o Is God calling you to Africa? To Europe? Witness is looking for new longer term workers to serve.
- *Maskipiton* and *The Sacred Tree*, two short books bridging Aboriginal and Christian Spirituality from the Reaching Up To God Our Creator curriculum are now available in French and Spanish!
- Tell us YOUR STORY of peace-making, bridge-building, reconciliation, lowering tensions, or any other such activity! Visit [liveforpeace.org](http://liveforpeace.org), go to the 1000 Acts of Peace tab, and tell us about it! Can we log 1000 Acts for Peace?
- Did you know? There are approximately 46 Multi-Cultural congregations associated with Mennonite Church Canada, worshipping in 17 different languages.

including all the major Anabaptist denominations in Canada. Church Planting Canada re-visioned themselves recently and now works from and promotes a missional church paradigm.

- In March, the General Board approved a Witness recommendation to work towards becoming a sponsoring denomination of Church Planting Canada. Stayed tuned for how your congregation and Area Church can draw on this resource!
- Norm Voth, MCM Director of Evangelism and Service Ministries, has been asked to represent Mennonite Church Canada as he serves on the leadership team of Church Planting Canada.
- We continue to resource congregations in missional formation.

## Multi-Cultural Ministries

- There are multi-cultural congregations in each Area Church of Mennonite Church Canada. Samson Lo, Director of Multi-cultural ministries, supports and resources the Area Churches in working with the special needs of these congregations.
- The *What Makes a Mennonite?* brochure has been translated and distributed in Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, and Vietnamese as an inter-council translation project with Formation. Translations are in progress for Korean and Chin. The published translated materials have been very well received.



Willard Metzger

- The multi-cultural congregations within Mennonite Church Canada are connecting with congregations with similar cultural and theological bases. For example: the North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, Korean Anabaptist Fellowship in Canada, North America Hmong Mennonite Churches Mission, and the Lao Mennonite Conference of Canada.
- A new Vietnamese Mennonite ministry has been forming in MCBC since 2008, in collaboration with Emmanuel Mennonite Church.
- Hun and Sunny Lee were commissioned as Mennonite Church Canada

Mission Associates for service in their home country of South Korea. Hun has been the mentor and pastor for several Korean Mennonite fellowships in Canada. His reputation has grown to the extent that he is being welcomed as a Mennonite to teach from an Anabaptist perspective in a Presbyterian mega-church in Seoul.

- The number of Spanish Mennonite house fellowships in MCEC is growing.
- More books and materials in different languages can now be found in our Resource Centre.

## International Ministries

- We are expanding Peace and Reconciliation teams in Mindanao, southern Philippines.
- International Ministries staff is working with the Lao Mennonite Conference of Canada, to explore church planting possibilities in Laos.
- We are encouraging and connecting to a growing network of Anabaptist minded church leaders in China.
- In partnership with North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, Nhien Pham is a Witness Special Assignment worker for collaborative ministry in Vietnam.
- We are exploring a new internship program in Israel/Palestine.
- We are growing connections among Anabaptist churches and ministries through the Anabaptist Network in South Africa.
- The Mennonite church in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, continues to grow young adults who are serving in the local and national church.
- We are exploring new ministry partnerships with Mennonite churches in Western Europe.

- There are Special Teaching Assignments for Titus Guenther (Chile), and Rudy Baergen (Colombia), and Palmer Becker (Israel/Palestine).
- We are coordinating the Chile earthquake response with Mennonite Central Committee and 3 Chilean church partners.
- Facilitated participation of 2 Cuban leaders at Mennonite World Conference 2009 in Paraguay. There are 103 active partnering relationships between Witness Workers/International partners and Mennonite Church Canada congregations.

## Native Ministry:

- Together with Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan's Aboriginal Neighbours, we hosted an Aboriginal Learning Tour in July 2009.
  - o "Change doesn't come from politicians. It comes from communities." - Maria Campbell, Saskatchewan River Valley, Sask.
  - o "In our case what might be the things that get forgotten in the relationship between white people and aboriginal or Metis people? We tend to forget that the First Nations people are called that because they actually were here first..." - Steve Plenert, Winnipeg, Man.
  - o "Many thanks and blessings to all the people who were involved in getting this tour together. It has been a real blessing for me!" - Barb Daniels, Riverton, Man.
  - o "The tour was intended to introduce us to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, their history and their hope for the future." - Deborah Froese, Winnipeg, Man.
  - o "And, again reinforced for me through this tour, responsible living – creation care – cannot refer 'only' to being as green as possible, to sustainable living, etc. It also includes how we live with our neighbours, locally and globally." - Rita MacDonald, Rosthern, Sask.

## Accountability:

Mennonite Church Canada Witness is accountable to the Christian Witness Council. Members of this Council until July 2010 are:

\*Willard Metzger (chair)

Lynell Bergen

Irene Crosland

Rudy Dirks

John David (JD) Penner

\*Noe Gonzalia

Emily Dueck

Waldimar (Waldo) Neufeld

Hugo Neufeld

Vacant (was Hun Lee)

\* The terms of these two CWC members are complete. Together with the current vacancy, delegates are being asked to elect 3 new members.

- o “No matter what colour or denomination you are, you felt a belonging.” - Marilyn Sinclair, Hollow Water First Nation, Man.
- o “A personal encounter with the visitors, to see them and hear them, is very important to the Chaco indigenous people when building relationships. We would like to continue to connect in the future.” - Jakob Lepp, Filadelfia, Paraguay.
- Lakota theologian Richard Twiss was the Listening Circle speaker in BC. Circle evenings were held at the Skwah First Nation hall in Chilliwack and at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond.
- Cayuga theologian Adrian Jacobs was the speaker for Manitoba’s 2010 annual spring event “Removing Barriers ... Building Bridges.” This event gives voice to Aboriginal church leaders and provides opportunities for learning more about Aboriginal reality and issues. Adrian’s topic was “We Are All Treaty People; A Biblical Perspective on Covenant.”
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is active and working across Canada as the result of Prime Minister Harper’s Government Apology to residential school survivors in June 2008. Witness Native Ministry office is monitoring the plans and will be strongly encouraging Mennonite presence at every event as a way to stand in solidarity with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. The first national event is planned for June 15 – 19, 2010 in Winnipeg; the remaining events will be in other provinces in the next few years.
- Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Central Committee Canada recently renewed the Jubilee Fund. This is an endowment fund which addresses the imbalance of wealth and power between people of Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) descent and Canada’s settler population. This fund is a symbol of God’s healing and hope for a better world; a world in which bridges are built so that newcomers to this continent and the Original Peoples can live together in communities of grace, joy, and peace.

Peace and Justice Advocacy - Because we believe peace is the will of God, peace is the task of all parts of the church. (see Confession of Faith art. 22). So while Witness is the administrative home for peace initiatives in Mennonite Church Canada, all staff and parts of the church are engaged in living out our peace witness. We will highlight only some of the initiatives undertaken this year, and will give a fuller update of the Peace in the Public Square initiative during the delegate sessions.

- We created and launched the [liveforpeace.org](http://liveforpeace.org) website.
- We created a blog called 1,000 Acts of Peace, at [liveforpeace.org](http://liveforpeace.org) and we are encouraging people to post their peace acts there.
- We produced and sent [liveforpeace.org](http://liveforpeace.org) toques to six Calgary congregations.
- Staff visited Bill Siksay, the member of Parliament who introduced Bills C390 (An Act Respecting Conscientious Objection to the Use Of Taxes For Military Purposes) and C447 (An Act to Establish the Department of Peace).
- We promoted and provided resources to our constituency to fill out Peace Tax Returns during the income tax season and remained connected to Conscience Canada.



Neill and Edith von Gunten (centre) and the Witness Council pose with a quilt made especially for the von Gunten by Aboriginal women, in honour of the von Gunten’s years of service with native peoples. This, the von Gunten were told, is the Aboriginal version of the Order of Canada.

- We have written about and promoted the Department of Peace Initiative.
- We have told stories in congregations, written, and been interviewed by the Winnipeg Free Press about the Lutheran – Mennonite apology process. We are planning a Canadian response. Janet Plenert will be present at the Lutheran World Federation assembly for the final decision making.
- We participate on the Mennonite World Conference Peace Commission and are giving staff time to that.
- We co-hosted a symposium on War and Peace with the Christian Reformed Church in North America.
- We responded to the World Council of Churches’ Decade to Overcome Violence draft paper that was written by an international commission.

## Service Ministries

- Native Ministry is offering opportunities for Urban Assessment internships in three different locations in Canada. While offering the Interns an excellent opportunity to learn about the urban situation of our Aboriginal neighbours, this Urban Assessment will provide valuable information to Mennonite Church Canada for planning future ministry opportunities.
- Vacation Bible School is just one way to build relationships with Aboriginal friends. The Manitoba Partnership Circle of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal churches works and worships together, and visits each other occasionally. Many members of the partnership work together on ministries such as camp, VBS, and other service projects.



- Radical Journey is a year long international discipleship program that teams young adults together for spiritual growth and international service. This is the second year Mennonite Church Canada has offered this opportunity. Current participants are in South Africa and Paraguay. Possible sites for the 2010-11 teams include Argentina, Bolivia, China, England, and South Africa.
- Witness and Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure (MVSA) continue to collaborate in building teams of young adults who live together in community, are sponsored by a local congregation, and serve in the local community.
- In spring, 2010, Palmer Becker is serving again in a Special Assignment, teaching in Vietnam, Macau, China, and Korea.
- Learning Tours are another way to learn, serve, and be in solidarity with other Christians. Since last Assembly, Mennonite Church Canada Witness has offered the Native Ministry tour in Saskatchewan, the Native Ministry tour to Paraguay and Argentina; and together with TourMagination we offered a tour to Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay, and two tours to Philippines.
- While perhaps we don't always think of it this way, Mennonite Church Canada offers many opportunities for anyone to serve the broader church through opportunities to participate in leadership of our General Board and Councils. In addition we appoint people to serve on boards of other related organizations. Witness Council appoints people to Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and Mennonite Men.
- Congregational Partnerships staff has been working with those congregations or individuals who would like to pursue short term ministry opportunities nationally and internationally.

## OTHER

**Pandemic Planning:** By now the H1N1 Pandemic feels like history. It is important to note, however, that Mennonite Church Canada has a web site ([www.churchpandemicresources.ca](http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca)) ready to help congregations think about being a faithful witness during a pandemic. Many other churches and organizations have looked to our materials for guidance. The partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service in this project was very positive, and resulted in our mutual collaboration with Mennonite Publishing Network to publish three titles on being faithful in times of crisis. We are grateful that the pandemic was not as severe as it could have been, and we believe that the important work we did in thinking about a biblical response to such a crisis in our context was an important ecclesial, theological, and practical task.

**Church Matters:** Church Matters is an audio interview format program with stimulating guests. We discuss leading edge issues about church life at home, across the street, and around the world. It airs on the radio the third Sunday of every month and is available via podcast on the Mennonite Church Canada website at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/206](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/206). You can also subscribe in iTunes to have the podcasts sent directly to you. Many of the issues Mennonite Church Canada engages are featured on Church Matters. Check out the Resource Centre link above to see a listing of shows and find a topic of interest to you!

## Staffing

The staff of Witness are highly motivated and energetic, and I am grateful for their teamwork and dedication.

Here is a list of staff during 2009:

- Janet Plenert (Executive Secretary)
- Jennifer Rempel (Executive Assistant)
- Val Pankratz (Executive Assistant while Jennifer was on Maternity leave)
- Ingrid Miller (Administrative Assistant)
- Norm Dyck (Director of Congregational Partnerships)
- Rebecca Yoder Neufeld (Missional Formation & Partnership Facilitator - MCEC)
- Eric Olfert (Missional Formation & Partnership Facilitator - MC Sask)
- Tim Froese (Executive Director International Ministries, Facilitator for Latin America)
- Gordon Janzen (Facilitator for Asia & Middle East)
- Hippolyto Tshimanga (Facilitator for Africa & Europe)
- Samson Lo (Director of Multi-Cultural Ministries)
- Neill & Edith von Gunten (Co-Directors, Native Ministry)

IMPACT (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together): IMPACT 2009 was co-hosted by MC Saskatchewan and brought together pastors from Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Philippines. IMPACT 2010 will be co-hosted by MCBC, with pastors from Canada, China, Germany, Macau, Philippines, and Vietnam. The 2010 IMPACT will mark the final in the first round of events, one having been co-hosted by each Area Church.

## Challenges we face

We live in a culture of CHOICE. Never before in human history have people had to make as many choices as we do today. We know that the word of God does not change; but, how we choose to be faithful in living out our faith is a constant, and complicated, reality for us. As we have been growing into our identity as a church, both Anabaptist and Canadian, we find ourselves constantly asking what it is that we are not called to do, and what it is that we must do. Some of the challenges we face are:

- 1) Willing, Long Term Witness Workers are becoming increasingly scarce. While it is important that we provide short term opportunities, short term efforts are only helpful when built on the legacy, relationships, community, and fruit of long term work. The churches that host short term teams and persons are the result of years of long term investment. Our pool of long term, experienced workers is not large. Does your congregation have individuals with the relational gifts, potential, and vision to engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ?
- 2) Short term efforts, individualized programs, and customized projects all require significant staff and administrative time. Yet, there is greater and greater interest from constituency to fund specific (and often 'above budget') projects. How do we balance funding for staff time with both short and long term ministry efforts, in Canada and beyond?

3) There are thousands of charitable organizations in Canada. While only the church has the unique purpose of striving to establish and build the church (deeply rooted communities of transformation in every community in the world so that through these communities God's grace, hope, joy, peace, healing, and reconciliation will occur), many congregations invest in para-church and other organizations. We could do so much more if we concentrated our efforts together to build the church in Canada and around the world. We ask you to continue to evaluate congregational giving patterns, so that we as the church continue to build the church around the world.

4) Mobilizing the masses: As we feel it is urgent to both strengthen our 'being' a people of God, and strengthen our 'doing' as a people of God, we often find ourselves brainstorming lists of people. Who could... resource a congregation on peace tax issues? Connect a congregation to their native neighbours? Research Aboriginal urban issues? Write a brochure explaining Canada Revenue Agency issues for congregations? Create some advocacy materials for our congregations to help them advocate for a Department of Peace? Create some teaching videos? or represent Mennonite Church Canada at an event? Putting gifts to work in important parts of building the church is an ever present opportunity and challenge!

Submitted by Willard Metzger,  
Chair, Christian Witness Council

and Janet Plenert,  
Executive Secretary,  
Christian Witness Council

## The Mennonite Women Canada (MW Canada) 5 member Executive includes

Ruth Jantzi, Ontario, Secretary-Treasurer

3 regional Presidents  
Evelyn Buhr, Alberta

Ruby Harder, Saskatchewan

Shirley Redekop, Ontario,  
Women of Mennonite  
Church Eastern Canada (WMCEC)

and Erna Neufeldt,  
President Mennonite Women Canada.

Waltrude Gortzen, British Columbia,  
chair of Women's Ministries  
for Mennonite Church British Columbia (MC BC)

and Lois Mierau, Saskatchewan.

### 1. Changes to Executive membership

- Ruth Jantzi and Shirley Redekop have completed second and final terms.
- Lois Mierau, new Secretary-Treasurer as of July 1, 2010
- Pattie Ollies, new Coordinator for WMCEC as of April 2010

### 2. Task Force (TF) on Bridging the Gap and Enlarging the Tent

More than 1100 women responded to a survey prepared by the TF. Bridging the Gap and Enlarging the Tent is the title of a workshop being planned for July 1 at the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Calgary. At that time we want to share the findings of the TF and discuss new initiatives. All women welcome.



## Mennonite Women Canada Report



Names of TF members on photo: l to r Mylene Melancon, Liz Koop, Justina Heese, Waltrude Gortzen, Marguerite Jack, Irene Bartel, Ruby Harder. - photo by Keri Clason

### 3. Pennies & Prayer Inheritance Fund (PPIF)

The PPIF is a legacy of compassion from our mothers and grandmothers in showing us how to minister to physical and spiritual needs. As a revolving Fund, money from it is used to support women working with Mennonite Church Canada's ministries, and it is a home for donations made in memory/honour of loved ones.

### 4. Bible Study Guide (BSG)

Elizabeth Soto, USA, is author of the BSG for 2010 Seek Peace and Pursue It: Women, Faith and Family Care.

### 5. Spiritual Growth Assistance Fund

We are pleased to provide financial assistance to 2 women for the 2009/10 school year: Kara Carter, Milverton, Ontario and Virginia Gerbrandt, Leamington, Ontario.

Respectfully submitted by  
Erna Neufeldt, President  
Mennonite Women Canada



# Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)



Change, Challenge, Opportunity and Growth! These words are the best current descriptors of Christian Peacemaker Teams. On March 10, 2010 we bade a sad farewell to Gene Stoltzfus, founding Director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, who has

now joined a cloud of witnesses. Serving as the Director for 18 years, he gladly bore the name of Jesus as he responded to the call for Gospel peacemaking, and left an indelible legacy of inspiration for all.

With the recent announcement that CPT Co-Director (Program) Douglas Pritchard will not renew at the end of his term (effective August 31, 2011), there is a future opportunity for creative models in leadership which respond to ever changing needs of the organization, and the communities in which we serve in Iraq, Palestine/Israel, Colombia, USA/ Mexico Borderlands, and the Aboriginal communities in North America. CPT Delegations to these areas continue with an anticipated twelve delegations planned from March to December 2010.

As part of CPT's Undoing Racism strategic directions, a facilitation group has been formed to develop a new CPT mission statement and based on the statement, a new CPT slogan and logo. Further initiatives in undoing racism included a gathering of People of Color within CPT in Colombia in February 2010. This past November, three CPT members engaged in a speaking tour through the USA and Canada as a way of demonstrating the transformed identity and racial diversity within the organization. In 2009, first time ever CPT trainings were held in Colombia and in the United Kingdom. There are now interested groups in Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

Over the past year the Aboriginal Justice Team has organized delegations to Grassy Narrows First Nation, participating in a Six Nations Solidarity Network, and supporting the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. During the summer, CPT members stood in solidarity with Beausoleil First Nations in opposition to Dump Site 41, a landfill being constructed over the Alliston Aquifer in Simcoe County, Ontario. After three months of blockading, the County Council ultimately decommissioned the site. Further activities of the team include events in Toronto in April 2010, calling for government action on the ongoing negative health effects of mercury contamination in the water accessed by Grassy Narrows First Nations. Two new Full Time members joined the team in April.

In Colombia, the team continues making visible, the violence against the accompanied communities and their nonviolent resistance, through team conversations, delegations, articles accompaniment trips and public actions. Of concern is the situation in Las Pavas, where 123 families were uprooted and moved away from their land by police and Daabon – a Colombian multinational palm oil company. The company is developing a palm plantation, the oil of which is used in Body Shop products. CPT has started a campaign in North America encouraging consumers to boycott these products.

In the Middle East, the Iraq Team continues its presence in Kurdistan. In March 2010, they published a report documenting the bombings along the Iraq/Turkish border, which has displaced the people living in the area. The Palestine team remains strong and healthy after the Al Khalil project was interrupted for a period of assessment and re-visioning. In At Tuwani, the community members have strengthened their commitment of non-violent resistance to the ongoing attacks from nearby settlers and soldiers, which are increasing in severity and in numbers of incidents.

Financially, CPT has had a fiscal year end with an unprecedented growth in individual donations, allowing a deficit budget of \$107,000 to end in a surplus of \$71,000! Hallelujah! We thank God and all our constituents for their ongoing financial and prayerful support!

Respectfully submitted by Esther Kern

After fleeing war and harsh economic conditions in Vietnam 30 years ago, Te and Thanh Trinh's dreams of a new life in Canada have been fulfilled. Their children, ranging in age from two weeks to nine years old in 1980 when they were sponsored by the Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach, Manitoba, now fill positions as a medical physician, pharmacist, massage therapist, occupational therapist and sports store manager. The family has expanded to include spouses and four grandchildren.



**Mennonite  
Central  
Committee**

"This was my dream for my family—my dream has been fulfilled," said Thanh, adding he and his family attribute their successes and accomplishments to the enduring friendship and support they received from a Steinbach family, Elbert and Lorraine Toews and their children. The two families share family gatherings, vacations, graduations and weddings. "They are our parents—they are mom and dad," said Thanh.

MCC's refugee assistance program started in 1979 when MCC Canada, on behalf of Mennonite churches in Canada, negotiated a private sponsorship agreement with the federal government to sponsor refugees from Southeast Asia. Since then, congregations have welcomed more than 40,000 refugees to Canada. It is an astonishing number and attests to the compassion of those who respond to the needs of others, in the name of Christ.

### Some other highlights:

**Haiti earthquake** - The outpouring of support from churches, community groups, businesses and individuals makes it possible for MCC to undertake a multimillion-dollar, multi-year response to help people recover from the disaster. MCC has been working in Haiti since 1958 and is working closely with church groups and other partner organizations in Haiti.

**Food aid** - MCC food aid reached record levels this past year as MCC responded to hunger caused by natural disasters, skyrocketing food prices and climate change. Much of the food aid was delivered through Canadian Foodgrains Bank. MCC Canada continues to be a major partner in CFGB.

**Global Family education sponsorship program** - The MCC Global Family program helps make creative, community-based education available to children and young adults. Students who achieve education gain confidence and skills that enable them to improve their lives and their communities. MCC is promoting a Global Family growth strategy to reach \$5 million by 2017. With your help it can be done.

**Low German program** - MCC's program continues in Mexico and throughout the hemisphere, addressing educational, economic, social, spiritual and health needs in Low German speaking communities.



**Thrift Shops** - MCC's 56 thrift shops in Canada contributed \$5.9 million to MCC this past year—the highest amount ever raised by the shops. More than 4,600 volunteers are involved in MCC's thrift shops in Canada. Thank you.

**MCC Peace Button**-The message on this small red pin – to remember is to work for peace – resonates with Canadians and people beyond our borders. In 2009, MCC filled orders for more than 4,500 peace buttons. Most of them were distributed in schools and churches in November.

**MCC New Wine Statement** – MCC has approved a set of foundational statements on identity, purpose, vision, priorities, approaches and values, along with a statement of 'shared convictions' of global Anabaptists as adopted by the Mennonite World Conference, March 2006. The work of re-structuring MCC – the 'New Wineskin' – continues based on structural principles affirmed in the course of the year.

In its Statement of Identity, MCC states: "Mennonite Central Committee is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches." As such, MCC is a ministry of Mennonite Church Canada. We thank you for your continued support of MCC's mission in the world. May God bless you richly.

Respectfully submitted Donald Peters  
Executive Director, MCC Canada



# Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS)



Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers continue gladly wearing the name of Jesus across Canada and the USA by enabling people affected by disaster to return home and regain hope. This past year, 712 Canadians travelled to project sites for a week to swing a hammer. They served in American Samoa, Camero, LA, Cheek, TX, Diamond, LA,

Dulzura, CA, Eagle, AK, Marble Falls, TX, New Iberia, LA, New Orleans, LA, Pass Christian, MS, Picayune, MS, Ramona, CA, Stevens Village, AK, and Winnipeg MB. In many of these locations, 281 Canadians served for a month or more where fires, hurricanes, and floods had damaged or destroyed homes and communities. (41 of these volunteers were pulling RVs and stayed in an RV camp.)

A pastor who volunteered with MDS writes: *"I understand that the ultimate goal of MDS is to get folks back into safe housing, but the benefits that all of us experience as we worked side by side, shoulder to shoulder is lasting and real...As I return to my everyday life here in Manitoba, I will remember the feeling of being a part of something that I did not begin, nor did I complete – I was merely one small part of the whole. MDS has shown me again that God only requires me to do and be my part – and together the work is getting done...."*

What is MDS doing in Canada?

- BC MDSers repaired homes in Duncan (Vancouver Island) after major flooding in the fall.
- AB MDSers did a major home repair in Smokey Lake after a housefire (no insurance).
- SK MDSers spent a weekend renovating a house for dorm parents of Rock Solid Refuge in Shaunavon (troubled teen boys home).
- MB MDSers continued on the renovations at Red Road Lodge (hotel for transient and homeless folks in Winnipeg) and did a major home repair for a Winnipeg woman after a housefire (no insurance).
- ON MDSers cleaned up late summer after tornadoes in Durham/Vaughan and also hosted the Region V (Canadian) fall board meetings/retreat.

And this as well ...

- SK MDS hosted the binational MDS All Unit meetings/convention in Warman in Feb. 2010 with over 250 people in attendance to hear about the work of MDS.
- SK MDS will host the Canadian summer youth project at Rock Solid Refuge building a dorm/recreation centre with youth groups during July and August.
- MDS continues to partner with Canadian Mennonite University with the delivery of Disaster Recovery Studies program and summer field experiences for students. Three students completed 8 weeks of MDS field work in the summer of 2009 and more will join MDS in May-June of 2010.

CMU students write: *"I've gained a lot of leadership skills...I've definitely grown and now I know what kind of efforts you need to put in, in order to actually build a home." And "Doing MDS this summer ignited the desire to do volunteering (service) that will stay with me for the rest of my life. The practicum allowed me to see aspects of the Disaster Recovery Studies course at work in the community through getting to know the people we worked for."*

Submitted by Lois Nickel,  
Director Region Relations and Programs,  
MDS Extension Office, Wpg.



For Mennonite Men, 2009 was a very good year financially. We celebrated 25 years of providing JoinHands Mennonite Church Building grants of more than \$1.5 million to 55 young congregations acquiring their first church building. Three grants given included: Salina Mennonite,

Salina, KS which received a \$30,000 grant and Luz del Evangelio, Dallas, TX and Living Water, Chicago, IL both of which received \$40,000 grants. A \$10,000 tithe grant is available for Mennonite Church Canada Witness which is in the process of selecting a recipient.

Even with a significant increase in contributions each year it remains an ongoing challenge to help young congregations acquire their first church building and to do it in a timely manner. Eight congregations have been approved to receive JoinHands grants and seven additional applications are being processed, 80% of which are racial-ethnic or multi-cultural. During 2010, grants will be given to Encuentro de Renovacion, Miami, FL, Ethiopian Evangelical, Lancaster, PA and tithe grants to Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network.

In the past year, Mennonite Men partnered with Mennonite Publishing Network in producing a new study book on male spirituality. Authored by Gareth Brandt, of Abbotsford, BC, *Under Construction: Reframing Men's Spirituality* offers a fresh perspective on men's spirituality. Mennonite Men's ecumenical connections with Denominational Men's Ministry Network of North America (DMMNNA), provides opportunity to share

about the availability of resources such as this. In January, Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Formation, was the resource person at this year's annual meeting and used this book as the basis for the sessions. Dave has also been selected as President of DMMNNA, 2010-2011.

Mennonite Men has a half time staff person, a Canadian coordinator and board members who actively participate in its programs. Activities include a presence at many church related gatherings, formation of networks in a number of US Area Conferences and Canadian Area Churches that relate to congregations and men's groups, promoting Anabaptist study resources and interpreting the ministry of Mennonite Men throughout the denominations.

Jim Gingerich has served as half time coordinator for Mennonite Men for the last 12 years. He will be retiring from this position at the end of May. We are very pleased to advise that Mennonite Men has selected Don A. Yoder as the next Mennonite Men coordinator. Don, who currently serves as Director of Seminary and Graduate Admissions and Director of Seminary Vocational services at Eastern Mennonite University, will begin as Mennonite Men Coordinator on June 1. He will be working out of the Mennonite Church USA office at Harrisonburg, VA.

Submitted by Marvin Baergen  
Canadian JoinHands Coordinator

and Jim Gingerich  
Mennonite Men Coordinator

## Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure (MVSA)

Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure, or MVSA ([www.mvsa.net](http://www.mvsa.net)), is the Christian Voluntary Services program of four congregations within Mennonite Church Canada membership with similar outreach programs, cooperating and supporting each other to offer a consistent Christian Voluntary Services program for young adults in Canada.

We are privileged to report another very good year of Christian Voluntary Service experiences for the thirteen young adults participating in the program in Canada this year. These include four participants in Lethbridge, five in Winnipeg, three in Toronto, and one in Montreal.

It is a rewarding experience, not only for our participants but especially for our church. These young people stretch us and energize us. For some this is a first time opportunity to experience new ideas, new situations, and new understanding with their peers, in a safe environment, while dedicating their time and expressing their faith in action and service to those in need. For many young men from Germany, the time of service is also an alternative to military service.

During the past several years, most of our participants have come from Germany and this year also from France. MVSA works with two German organizations, Christliche Dienste and Eirene, who have strong mission programs and provide opportunities for young adults to serve in various countries. Our hope is to find ways to recruit more Canadian and American participants in the future.

We see great value in the MVSA program in the following ways;

- Value to the individual volunteers, now and in their future
- Value to the life of the sponsoring congregation
- Value to the agencies of placement
- Value to the many people they touch in their everyday work
- Value to the home congregations when the volunteers complete their terms

Some of these values can be determined immediately, in the faces of those who are in contact with the volunteers or who benefit from the services provided, or in the congregations where the volunteers participate. Some values will not be evident until much later, when the influences of the Christian Service experience in future life choices or shifts in personal values become clear.

Submitted by Ernie Engbrecht