



REPORT/WORKBOOK

ASSEMBLY 2009

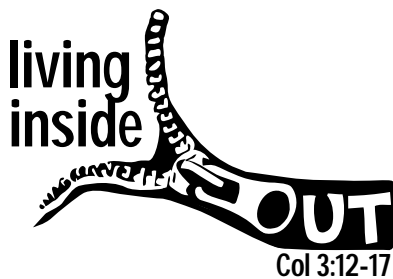
SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, JUNE 5-7

living
inside



Col 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17



Colossians 3:12-17 encourages us to wear our inner convictions on the outside, visible to the world, like a piece of clothing. A zipper separates and connects the inside of a piece of clothing to the outside. Referencing the clothing symbolism of the scripture text, this also playfully illustrates our connectedness through our common faith. As a zipper binds together two pieces of fabric, love "binds everything together in perfect harmony".

Mennonite Church Canada REPORT 2009

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Our Priorities

To engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ, with God's help we will:

- ***Form a people of God***
- ***Become a global church***
- ***Grow leaders for the church***



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HOW TO USE THIS REPORT/WORKBOOK

This book contains the reporting materials reflecting our work of the past year. In the margins, you will find an “at-a-glance” roadmap. The roadmap attempts to mirror the way Mennonite Church Canada is organized. Highlighted areas indicate where you are on the roadmap.

Please read through these discernment topics carefully and come prepared to participate.

A basic schedule for the proceedings and an agenda can be found on the last several pages.

The reports and stories in this report book represent the people and ministries in the Mennonite Church Canada family. Together, they tell the larger story of God at work in the world as we align ourselves with God’s purpose.

We hope that you find this report book to be a helpful way of visualizing relationships and getting informed.

ASSEMBLY PURPOSES AND GOALS

The primary purposes of the Mennonite Church Canada Annual Delegate Assembly are to:

1. Provide opportunities for participants to build up and nurture the church by:
 - a. Forming faith and Christian identity from an Anabaptist Mennonite perspective, in children and adults.
 - b. Learning about and discerning MC Canada’s participation in God’s work.
 - c. Debating issues facing the church and issuing statements as appropriate.
 - d. Worshiping and building community with people from across the national church.
 - e. Learning through seminars, displays and special events, which highlight available resources.

2. Conduct the business of the organization as described in the MC Canada bylaws¹ by:
 - a. Reviewing the work and ministry of MC Canada.
 - b. Accepting or rejecting the budgets and financial statements of MC Canada.
 - c. Appointing an auditor.
 - d. Accepting, rejecting or removing area churches as members or as provisional members.
 - e. Electing its officers, Boards, Councils, and Committees.
 - f. Amending the bylaws of MC Canada as needed and monitoring adherence to those bylaws.

Approved by Support Services Council March 6, 2009

¹ These are summary statements. See Part III, Section 8 of the MC Canada bylaws for a full description of the duties and powers of voting delegates.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACOM.....Area Church Only Membership
AMBS Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
AMIGOSMennonite World Conference Youth Committee
CAMSCanadian Association of Mennonite Schools
CCC..... Canadian Council of Churches
CFCChristian Formation Council
CMU Canadian Mennonite University
COF Confession of Faith
CPT Christian Peacemaker Teams
CMM.....Conference of Mennonites in Mexico
CWC Christian Witness Council
CWM..... Canadian Women in Mission
EFC Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
FLC Faith and Life Committee
FPACFinancial Policy and Audit Committee
FYE..... Fiscal Year End
GBGeneral Board
GMF..... Global Mennonite Fellowship
IMPACT International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together

JEC..... Joint Executive Council
KPMG Auditors for Mennonite Church Canada
M/S/C/..... Moved/Seconded/Carried
MCMennonite Church
MC SASK Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
MCA..... Mennonite Church Alberta
MCA..... Mennonite Camping Association
MCBC Mennonite Church British Columbia
MCC Mennonite Central Committee
MCCC.....Mennonite Central Committee Canada
MCECMennonite Church Eastern Canada
MCMMennonite Church Manitoba
MDS.....Mennonite Disaster Service
MFC.....Mennonite Foundation of Canada
MSAM.....Moderators, Secretaries & Area Church Ministers
MPN..... Mennonite Publishing Network
MWC.....Mennonite World Conference
SSC Support Services Council

WORDS FROM THE MODERATOR

Welcome to the 10th annual delegate sessions of Mennonite Church Canada. Thank you for the time and money you are generously contributing to come together as the national body to discern God's purposes for our times. The Church is a people gathered in the name of Christ. Our confession is that Jesus Christ is Lord. We gather for these days as part of a world-wide body of Christ.

In Utah there is a grove of Quaking Aspen trees. To us this looks like 47,000 separate trees, but this is one organism joined together in the root system. The trees that are rooted in good moisture or nutrient-rich soil share the moisture and nutrition with trees in other parts of the grove.

Mennonite Church Canada is 33,000 Anabaptist Christians rooted together in the name of Christ as one organism or one body. We gather as 221 congregations, 5 Area Churches, and more than 25 partner agencies together sharing what God has given parts of the body so that we can together discern God's mission in the world. We are mandated by Jesus as salt and light so that all things might be reconciled to God's purposes. As followers of Jesus, we pledge primary allegiance to God's Kingdom – to live now in ways that God intends for all creation to live. We demonstrate God's purposes, for example, by trusting in God, which enables us to love our enemies, thus extending the peace of Christ.

At these delegate sessions we gather to do what churches do – discern God's will for our time, to do this in the manner and spirit of Jesus and empowered by the resources of God's Spirit. All this so that we can be a blessing to the world. Another way to say this is that the church is focussed, with the eyes of Jesus, on discernment of three things: what God wants, how God wants it done, and finally, the gifts that God has given to accomplish his tasks.

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul speaks of the fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Firstly, these nine fruits seem to be the answer to what God wants. He wants us to love God and our neighbour as ourselves. Love is mentioned more than 500 times in the Bible, joy and peace are mentioned more than 200 times. The others are mentioned fewer times but still significant.

Secondly, these nine fruits of the Spirit appear to answer the question: What methods does God want us to use to accomplish his purpose? Again all nine mentioned apply. We are to engage our Christian community and the world with these fruits of God's Spirit. Thirdly, when we ask the question: What are the resources that God will provide to accomplish his purposes? – the same nine are relevant. God wants us to have an abundance of these as primary resources with which to engage the church and the world which God loves.

My prayer is that these fruits of the Spirit will guide and support us as we faithfully discern God's purposes and God's methods, and share God's resources for the journey.

–Andrew Reesor-McDowell, Moderator



Andrew Reesor-McDowell,
Moderator

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WORDS FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY



Robert J. Suderman,
General Secretary

Staff:

Robert J. Suderman,
General Secretary;
Karen Peters, Executive
Assistant

Living inside out... (Colossians 3:12-17):

*And be thankful (v.15);
With thankfulness in your heart to God (v.16);
Giving thanks to God (v.17).*

The very rich theme text chosen for this assembly is bathed in a spirit of thankfulness and grace. Putting to death the old self (3:5) and putting on the new person (3:12) is not an exercise of reluctance or obligation. It is a possibility of grace overflowing in gratitude. In the Greek language, grace and thankfulness have the same root (*xaris*); to be thankful is a *eu-xaristic* possibility (meaning “good grace”). What we experience in Christ and in the Body of Christ is a signal of the good grace that God showers on us.

At times we may be discouraged; at other times we may be concerned. At times we may wish we were facing a more stable world with fewer uncertainties. But in the midst of all that, in “whatever you do” (v.17), we are *eu-charistic*, thankful for the special vocation given to the Body of Christ as a place where the “peace of Christ rules in your hearts” (v.15).

The Year in review:

The part of Christ’s Body known as Mennonite Church Canada has had another very good year of effective ministry. We are grateful. You are invited to look carefully at the reports in this book, and to celebrate with us the multiplying impact of the ministries we engage together.

We are very grateful to staff, mission workers, board and council members, volunteers, Area Churches, congregations, pastors, and related organizations. Gratitude does not mean that there are no significant challenges, or that everything has gone smoothly, as planned. We are grateful that in the midst of “all that we do” the presence of God is evident.

Leadership:

One of the persistent laments we hear is “where are the younger generations?” One of the answers is that they are now helping to lead the church.

- At a recent meeting, several of the Area Church moderators were remarking at how young their Leadership Boards are. “One of our board members comes to meetings with her baby in her arms,” said one.
- The core of pastors leading our congregations shows that the younger generations are in full gear. Almost 70% of respondents to our recent pastoral trends survey were under the age of 60. About 50% were under the age of 50.
- Almost 50% of Mennonite Church Canada staff are under 50 years of age.
- 30-40% of the program Council members of MC Canada are under 50 years of age.

Having said this, we cannot lower our guard on issues of leadership. The same pastoral trend survey shows that about 30% of pastors indicate that after 4 years, they will not be available as pastors (retirement, or shift in vocation). This is a substantial challenge, and we need to work hard at the implications of this for our church. We are very pleased with the substantive discussions with and among the 4 post-secondary schools, and with the Area Church ministers (both in Canada and the USA) as we together collaborate and work toward developing strong leadership for our church.

Cultural Diversity:

There are at least 40 congregations in Mennonite Church Canada whose ethnic make-up is other than what have been the dominant ethnic backgrounds of our church, i.e., European/Dutch/Russian/Swiss. This number will likely rise to 50 within the next 5 years, given that there are several more congregations that are in the process of affiliation. We are excited about the changing face of our church. But this reality, too, presents significant challenges in terms of leadership development, resources, and active participation in decision-making of the larger church.

Partnerships and church-to-church relationships:

Our relationships with other church partners are broad and significant. Within Canada/USA, we relate in ministry most closely to:

- The 21 other denominations that make up the Canadian Council of Churches;
- The 1,000 (or so) other churches and entities that make up the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada;
- The 5 other denominations that, like us, are members of both the CCC and the EFC;
- A more focused relationship with the Christian Reformed Church in North America;
- Mennonite Church USA via our joint ministries (Mennonite Publishing Network and AMBS), our partnership ministries, and the Joint Executive Committee;
- Other Anabaptist groups in Canada via the Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders.

Internationally, our relationships and partnerships, many of them through Witness ministries, are numerous. I will mention only a few:

- Mennonite World Conference: we have our full complement of representatives on the General Council of MWC. We also continue the MWC gift-sharing initiative (this year I taught a workshop to 50 or so pastors and leaders from the Integrated Mennonite Churches of the Philippines). Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary of MC Canada Witness is the chair of the newly formed Mission Commission of MWC.
- Our membership, with 60+ other national churches in the Global Mission Fellowship, chaired by Janet Plenert and administratively supported by Eric Olfert, another one of our staff members.
- Mennonite Partners in China;
- Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission;
- National churches in: Colombia, Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Congo, Hong Kong, Chile, Ethiopia;
- Church development initiatives in Ukraine, Germany, S. Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Cuba, Macau;
- Anabaptist Peace and Resource Centres in: Colombia, S. Korea, England, S. Africa.

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MCC New Wines: New Wineskins:

An important initiative that has engaged us in significant ways this year is our participation in the MCC re-visioning exercise that is underway. This is very important, as denominational owners, partners, and other stake-holders are trying to re-shape MCC for its important ministry for the 21st century. Significant proposals are on the table. Your prayers and participation have been, and continue to be, welcome.

Finances:

Who could have anticipated the financial strains and stresses that have hit our world, our country, and our church in the latter third of 2008? We finished our last fiscal year and began this one with very high levels of confidence in the financial buoyancy of our budgets. The year ended on a different note. Especially, we were impacted by the elimination of expected investment income, a dramatic down-turn of individual/corporate giving, and the drop in investment assets that needed to be considered as expenditure in our financial statements. Fortunately, much of this was off-set with substantial under-spending of our proposed budgets.

Total budgeted donation income fell about 4% short of projections. This seems positive in light of the dramatic down-turn in the global economies. We are indeed grateful for the very strong support and commitment from the congregations and donors. However, because we have very little flexibility in our budgets, 4% does represent significant potential impact on program if it becomes a longer-term reality. We are grateful that we do have some reserve funds on hand that are specifically designed to even out some of these shorter-term bumps. We are projecting a cautious budget for this year, with substantial decreases (deferrals) in needed spending.

Canada Revenue Agency Regulations (CRA):

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the increasing legal complexities of engaging ministry beyond Canadian borders. As a staff we have spent much time trying to address the increasingly stringent requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency in terms of the "end-use control" of donated funds. CRA looks for accountability tools that document that every dollar sent beyond Canadian borders has been used for its intended purposes.

These tools are complex, both for the donor and for the partner. One result is that, in some cases, our preferred missiological approaches are in jeopardy. Another is that, in many cases, the preferences of donors and congregations for "direct" designated giving, in the sense of designating or sending funds to projects not within MC Canada's partnership agreements, are not viable (or at least not legal). We need to request much patience and understanding from our partners, and also of you, our constituents. Of course, we also need to request patience from our staff, who are heavily invested in being good partners.

We do have good legal and other counsel, and we are doing our very best to navigate these waters.

We also strongly urge congregations to be aware of the complexities of these regulations for your own processes. In the same way that we are instructed to know where the gas lines are before we dig in our yards, it's very important to understand the complexities of sharing charitable dollars across the Canadian border.

Discernment agenda:

This year our delegate discernment sessions will again focus on the life of our church as it engages our context with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Two critical themes will be processed.

1. Our theme text exhorts us to “teach and admonish one another in all wisdom” (Col.3:16). One of our themes is designed to do exactly that. We will seek to explore ways in which we can strengthen our capacity as a Body of Christ to read and interpret the Bible together for the sake of being a faithful people of the Word. Pastors, congregations, Area Churches, and our Faith and Life Committee have all pointed to the critical importance of this agenda for our church. The General Board has crafted a Statement for Affirmation to which delegates will be asked to respond. This will focus this discussion.
2. We also will take a closer look at the health of our church, especially related to its growth. There are exciting things happening among us, and we want to focus on what we can learn from these signs of life and growth.

Staff and Program:

More information about programming is available throughout this booklet. I wish to highlight only a very few items:

1. Pam Peters-Pries resigned from her position after almost 8 years as Executive Secretary of Support Services. Her contribution to our church is deep and lasting. She has committed her time, creativity, and energy to the nuts and bolts of making our church function better. We are deeply grateful to her for this contribution. The opportunity for part-time work, within easier commuting range has attracted her, given the family stage they are in. We thank her, bless her, and wish her much joy in her new tasks. Louie Sawatzky has agreed to an interim, part-time position in filling Pam’s role. Louie has a long history in corporate executive leadership along with ongoing and multiple roles of leadership within the congregation. He also served as chair of the Support Services Council, and thus is familiar with the agenda and processes. We welcome him to this position and he is already taking the agenda in stride.
2. Given the two vacancies in Support Services (Executive Director and Director of Resource Development), we are taking some time to review our structure and to see if any shifts would be advisable. We trust this process will be completed by the time of the Assembly.



Pam Peters-Pries, outgoing Executive Secretary, Support Services, at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

Other:

1. **G8 and World Religious Leaders Summit:** The 8 influential nations that make up the G8 are meeting in Canada in June 25-27, 2010. Through the Canadian Council of Churches, we are addressing them on their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals that they set a number of years ago. Related to this, there will be a parallel gathering of World Religious Leaders meeting in Winnipeg. This, too, is hosted by the CCC. We will be contributing to the dynamics of this gathering. Dan Dyck, our Director of Communications, is the inter-faith communications team-leader, and is also helping to plan a parallel inter-faith communicators event. It is believed to be the first of its kind in Canada.
2. **Lutheran Apology:** As indicated at our Assembly last year, the World Lutheran Federation has decided to issue an apology to Anabaptists at its 2010 Lutheran World Assembly. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada has invited us into a conversation about how this could be replicated as a parallel process with Mennonite Church Canada. This discussion will continue.
3. **Christian Reform Church in North America:** This denomination has requested an extended discussion about issues of War and Peace as understood by our respective denominations. They (and we) also wish to promote relationships on the ground

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between our two denominations. We are planning a small symposium for October/09 to address these interests.

4. **Common Word:** Our General Board has agreed to sign on to the “Common Word” initiative, begun by 138 Muslim theologians. This initiative is a way of bridging understanding and promoting peace between Islam and Christianity. We have submitted a brief explanatory document together with our signature.
5. **Peace in the Public Square resolution:** We have responded to the delegate resolution from Assembly/08. This proposal will be open for dialogue at this delegate assembly.
6. **Pastoral Care:** We reported last year that our leadership office (together with Area Church ministers) is preparing a tool designed to assist pastors who have occasion to give pastoral care to lesbian and gay persons and their families. We are working to have this ready for distribution at this Assembly.
7. **Conference of Mennonites in Mexico:** Tim Froese (International Ministries Executive Director) and I made a reciprocal visit to our Mennonite partners in Mexico in March/09.

They have been faithful in sending delegates to our Assemblies and are making substantial financial contributions to our Witness ministries. We are grateful to represent you in this partnership.

8. Mennonite Church USA: Our relationship continues in a very positive way through our meetings of the Joint Executive Committee. Given that MC USA is going through a significant organizational re-structuring process, we are in close conversation with them especially in terms of how this may, or not, impact what we do jointly, namely Mennonite Publishing Network and AMBS. We have prayed for and now celebrate Jim Schrag’s (Executive Director, MC USA) successful heart by-pass surgery. We are grateful that he is well and continuing in his leadership role until his projected retirement in November/09.



General Board members Jack Suderman, Andrew Reesor-McDowell, and Don Friesen at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

Conclusion:

I remember being present in a peace/safety “summit” in Colombia, where church, government, civic, and military leaders met for several days to assess how to nourish peace in the chronic violence of that society. Given the high level officials that were meeting, including the top policy advisor to the President of Colombia, the summit was held on a tiny island in the Caribbean for security and safety reasons. As they each shared their perspectives, one of the surprising revelations was that the church was the only organization that was present in every region of the country. Even the President, the military, police forces, guerrilla groups, and para-military faced too many restrictions and risks to be everywhere. Only the church was present everywhere, in every nook and cranny, with no exit strategy.

This realization boggled the minds there, including the minds of the church leaders. They had never before considered the potential of their pervasive presence in such a strategic way. This scenario, in part, points to the way things are meant to be. Communities disciplined in the ways of Christ... a people-hood providing a divine alternative to the assumptions of society.... present everywhere. The potential of that vision continues to affect me profoundly. We now have about 11,000 such Anabaptist communities around the world, 221 of them being Mennonite Church Canada. These 221 MC Canada congregations last year received about \$44,000,000 in revenues. While the power of the 11,000 must not be measured according to financial strength, perhaps it can be symbolic of the potential of the church for action and ministry... everywhere.

Our theme text exhorts us to “put on...” and “above all [to] put on love...” (3:12, 14), and to do so “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and to “give thanks.” May it be so.

—Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary

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Message from the Denominational Minister

The One who created us and fashioned each one of us in the womb (Psalm 139:13) is also the One who refashions us into a faith community that is holy and loved. And in this community Christ gives us his nature of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience to become the work wardrobe we need for being the church. When relationships fray this fabric, Christ's forgiveness and love are the enduring threads to mend the tears.

Can this coming year be a season in which we strengthen the chords of forgiveness and love, for the challenging work of discerning what it means to be a faithful church? Can the qualities of Christ's nature become the identifying marks of our relationships in the church and in the world?

Grow leaders for the Church

This is one of MC Canada's three broad priorities. The calling of leaders to equip the church for ministry is first of all God's initiative (Ephesians 4:11,12). So how are we listening for God's directive in our current context?

1. Where do leaders come from?

Results from the 2007 Pastoral Trends Survey suggest that about one third of our current pastors will leave pastoral ministry in the next 3 to 5 years. This need for pastors is raising the larger questions of "where do leaders come from" and "how do individuals hear the call to ministry"? Our Confession of Faith states that the church calls, trains, and appoints gifted men and women for ministry (Confession of Faith, p. 59). There is growing realization that the calling of leaders needs to be a collaborative effort that includes local congregations, Area Churches, schools, and Mennonite Church Canada, each owning its part in forming healthy leadership that contributes to healthy, vibrant congregational life and mission.

2. What kind of leaders do we need?

We have many pastors who would fit the descriptor of shepherd and pastoral care giver who have provided wise and caring leadership to our church members. Younger leaders are not necessarily interested in church models that rely on committee structures. So how are we broadening the vision for a diversity of pastoral models and leaders that equip our congregations to join God at work in the world?

3. What does it mean to have healthy, thriving pastors?

While all of us are called to ministry, pastors have been called to a leadership role that has some of its own unique joys and challenges. How do we work at thriving pastoral development to guide both the pastor and the congregation from the beginning question of "am I being called to ministry?" through the retirement years? Consider the following continuum for thriving pastoral formation:

- Equipping congregations to own and develop practices that **nurture a culture of call**.
- Opportunities for individuals to **test the call** through our schools, camps, local, area and national church.
- Connecting individuals with our schools for **training and education** and staying connected in their educational process.



*Karen Martens Zimmerly,
Denominational Minister*

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- Providing intentional support and training to help new pastors make the **transition into ministry** in the first few years.
- Nurturing healthy, **pastoral self-care**, including the necessary resources for maturing spiritual, emotional, relational, and vocational development.
- Finding ways to share the **rich wisdom and gifts from our seasoned, mature pastors** beyond the local congregation in equipping and encouraging other leaders and congregations.
- Preparing and affirming pastors for **retirement ministries**. Where on this continuum is your congregation contributing to healthy pastoral formation? Where do you need support?

4. Multi-cultural leadership training

Each Area Church has congregations or groups within a congregation where English is not the first language. The leaders of these groups are not always able to access the training supports that are provided for pastors and so, together with Area Church leaders, we are identifying the most critical leadership training needs to help move forward in equipping these leaders.

Through being at home in God's word, joining together in grateful worship, and in thankful living, may we find God's way to be the church and engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ!

–Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister

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Faith and Life Committee (FLC)

The Faith and Life Committee (FLC) was formed in 2005 to assist Mennonite Church Canada in discerning the will of God in matters of theology, ethics, polity, and practice. The work of the Committee is given focus by the basic question: What does it mean to be a faithful Mennonite Church in our Canadian context?

Each November, the FLC meets with a Reference Council, made up of representatives from our academic institutions, the Moderators, Secretaries, and Area Church Ministers, to discern which issues, out of the many that confront our denomination, should receive priority attention. After further discernment, the FLC then brings its recommendations for focusing the issue to the General Board for approval before developing a response.

Since 2005, the FLC has made presentations on unity in the body of Christ, on care of the creation as the will of God, and on confessing Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic world. These presentations and documents are all available on the Resource Centre page of the MC Canada website (www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/263).

Before the FLC moves on to another issue, the General Board and the FLC seek to ensure that the appropriate follow-up will be lodged within the Mennonite Church Canada structure.

At the 2008 Assembly in Winnipeg, the FLC initiated a discussion on our call to confess Jesus in our complex, multi-cultural, religiously pluralistic world. We suggested that as we associate more and more with people of other or no religious faith, we need to renew our commitment and ability to confess Jesus, even while we listen to and walk respectfully with fellow citizens who live by a different faith. Since the summer of 2008, the major work of this committee has been to develop strategies to better enable us to do that. A printed series of stories and reflections on confessing Jesus in our social and work life is being planned.

Meanwhile, the FLC collaborated with the General Board to prepare a response to an open letter authored by Muslim scholars inviting Christians and Jews to affirm, as a step toward meaningful peace in the world, our common convictions of love for God and love for neighbour. (The General Board letter is also available at the above-mentioned web page.) In this vein of encouraging mutual respect, the FLC has offered its support and encouragement to the ongoing dialogue between Mennonites and Muslims as well as looking for ways and places to enter significant discussion with our Jewish neighbours.

At the annual March meeting, the FLC turned its attention to other pressing concerns, and work has begun on new activities. Whenever we gather, we commit our discernment to God's guidance. Theological discernment in our time is an exciting privilege but without God's help our efforts to respond will surely be in vain. May God's Spirit be our source of inspiration and give us direction.

—Submitted by Rudy Baergen, Chair



Rudy Baergen (Chair, Faith and Life Committee) and Sue Steiner (outgoing Chair, Christian Formation Council).

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Assembly 2008 Actions and Follow-up

Motion 5:

BE IT RESOLVED:

Our Nation is at war and we are becoming a more militaristic culture. The principles of redemptive violence are being aggressively promoted to justify the increase in military spending and the shedding of blood by Canadian soldiers. Christ's message of peace, reconciliation, and grace needs to be heard in our country.

Realizing that we are called to bear witness for Christ and his message, we request that the staff of MC Canada develop a proposal for promoting the peace message in the "public square", and that it is presented at the 2009 annual delegate assembly.

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

We are very concerned about the increased militaristic propaganda in the mass media, such as recruiting commercials and military presence at televised sports events, and we strongly feel that we must counter this by getting the peace message out to the general public. What we envision might include the use of mass media like newspaper, radio, T.V., and internet. Since we understand the cost involved in this, we suggest MC Canada may want to combine resources with other peace organizations (independent and those that are branches of other denominations). We feel a positive message, such as using the Golden Rule, would be most effective.

Follow Up:

Mennonite Church Canada staff has developed a proposal to promote peace in the public square for approval at Assembly 2009. This proposal with supporting information is in the delegate Report Book.

Motion 1:

The delegate assembly adopts the minutes of the 8th Annual Session of Mennonite Church Canada as recorded and published in the Minute Book 2007 issued by Mennonite Church Canada.

Motion 2:

The delegate assembly approves the actions taken by the General Board of Mennonite Church Canada in the past year.

Motion 3:

The delegate assembly accepts the financial statements as presented.

Motion 4:

The delegate assembly appoints KPMG as auditor for FYE 2009.

Motion 6:

The delegates approved the MC Canada budget for FYE 2008-2009.

Motion 7:

The delegates accepted the 2008-2009 slate of nominees as presented by the Nominations Committee.

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General Board Actions and Follow-up

February 29-March 1, 2008

Consensus #1: The General Board accepts the GB minutes of November 23-24, 2007.

Consensus #2: The General Board affirms the thinking of the conceptual paper on church-to-church relationships.

Consensus #3: The General Board affirms the next steps outlined in the report on interaction with UBACH (Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile).

Consensus #4: The General Board agreed that #11 of the Partnership Covenant be reworded to read: "We affirm that the national church is the preferred *vehicle* for *our common* international ministry. In keeping with the regulations of the Canada Revenue Agency, the national church is accountable for all of the ministries it engages. Therefore, the national church will evaluate *such* international ministry initiatives, and will only approve those that align with its priorities."

Consensus #5: The General Board agreed to the following transfer from the General Treasury to Internally Restricted Funds:

1. Witness Council

- a) \$6816 to an International Ministries Reserve (Lillian Haas Training)
- b) \$8224 to International Ministries (Medical Reserves)

2. Formation Council:

- a) \$25343 to a Youth Assembly Reserve (surplus)
- b) \$3000 to a Formation Reserve (pastoral trends survey)

3. Support Services:

- a) \$11250 to a Support Services Reserve (building)
- b) \$2000 to a Support Services Reserve (Tolemac)

Consensus #6: The General Board affirms the use of a 1.00 US\$ Exchange rate and a 2.2% CPI Salary adjustment. (FYE 2009)

Consensus #7: The General Board will recommend this budget to the delegate assembly in July 2008.

April 18-9, 2008

Consensus #1: The General Board accepts the GB minutes of February 29-March 1, 2008.

Consensus #2: The General Board supports the cover letter to Jack's paper, "Faith and the Public Square: The Church's Witness to Peace".

Consensus #3: The General Board will recommend the financial statement to the delegate body in July 2008.

Consensus #4: The General Board recommends that KPMG be our auditors for a third year.

Consensus #5: The General Board approves the "Pandemic Absence Policy".

Consensus #6: The General Board approves the "Personal Responsibility and Consideration of Risk" policy.

Consensus #7: The General Board approves the "Process to Accept New Groups (Christian) into the MC Canada Pension and RRSP Plans," with the understanding that all references to "interfaith" be replaced with "Christian".

Consensus #8: The General Board approves the "Leave – Special" policy.

Consensus #9: The General Board approves the "Staff Counselling Fund" policy.

Consensus #10: The General Board approves the "Workplace Safety and Health Policy".

Consensus #11: The General Board accepts the

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“Recommendations and Statement of Understanding regarding Youth and Delegate Assemblies”.

Consensus #12: The General Board approves the items pertaining specifically to its area of oversight, and further approves the entire list of Recommendations as Directional Statements guiding further conversation and planning. (This is in reference to the Road Markers Document; Conversations with Post-Secondary Schools.)

Consensus #13: The General Board supports the recommendation that MC Canada become a supporting organization of the Federal Department of Peace movement.

Consensus #14: The General Board agrees to continue to work on the documentation of operating agreements with each Area Church.

Consensus #15: The General Board affirms the reappointment of Hilda Hildebrand to the General Board, Helen Kasdorf to the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and Betty Pries to the Faith and Life Committee.

Consensus #16: The General Board supported the idea of a slightly expanded Executive Committee of the General Board meeting with the mymenno group, and that we will continue discussions about a long-term plan to address the second part of the 1986 resolution on human sexuality.

July 6-7 and 11, 2008

Consensus #1: The General Board accepts the GB Minutes of April 18-19, 2008.

Consensus #2: The General Board decided to request a recommendation for one appointment each from the Formation and Witness Councils respectively (to the Mennonite World Conference). Those recommendations should be brought to the GB in November for discernment and appointment.

Consensus #3: The General Board decided to send six people to the 2009 MWC Assembly and to budget accordingly.

Consensus #4: The General Board decided to appoint Marvin Thiessen, Scott Brubaker-Zehr, and Hilda Hildebrand to the Assembly Resolutions Committee; Randy Klaassen, Judith Doell, and Sue Shantz to the Assembly Listening Committee; John Sawatzky as the Parliamentarian; and Sam Steiner as the Assistant Secretary.

Consensus #5: The General Board appointed Betty Loewen and Donita Wiebe-Neufeld as GB Members at Large.

Consensus #6: The General Board encourages the Executive Committee and the General Secretary to provide their best thinking at the November GB meeting on a long-term plan to address the second part of the 1986 resolution on human sexuality.

November 14-15, 2008

CONSENSUS #1: The General Board (GB) accepts the GB minutes of July 6, 7, and 11, 2008.

CONSENSUS #2: The General Board agrees to overturn the transition decision which assigned the Native Ministry funds to the Asset Liability Committee for distribution.

CONSENSUS #3: To accept Support Services Council recommendation that it has reviewed the Pension Plan Annual Information Return and Form 3 return.

CONSENSUS #4: To accept the results of the September 2008 annual privacy audit.

CONSENSUS #5: To approve the changes to the Compassionate Leave Policy as noted in the docket (pages 44-46 of docket).

CONSENSUS #6: To approve the recommendation regarding the sale of the Thompson United Mennonite church.

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Mennonite World Conference (MWC)

At a Glance...



MWC exists to:

- be a global community of faith in the Anabaptist tradition
- facilitate community among Anabaptist related churches worldwide
- relate to other Christian world communities and organizations.

Officers:

President: Nancy Heisey, USA

Vice President and

President Elect: Danisa Ndlovu, ZIMBABWE

General Secretary: Larry Miller, FRANCE

Treasurer: Paul Quiring, USA

MWC Canadian Office:

50 Kent Avenue
Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1
CANADA
Tel: (1) 519-571-0060
Fax: (1) 519-571-1980
Kitchener@mw-cmm.org
www.mw-cmm.org

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Mennonite World Conference is a communion (*koinonia*) of Anabaptist-related churches linked to one another in a worldwide community of faith for fellowship, worship, service, and witness.

Those links will be strengthened during MWC's 15th assembly in Asuncion, Paraguay this summer (July 14 -19). Much staff time and many resources are devoted to preparing for that "family gathering." The Centro Familiar de Adoracion is the venue for worship and fellowship, workshops, and sharing. The foundational text is Philippians 2:1-11 with the words, "Come together in the way of Jesus Christ" pointing us to the themes of unity and service. Each continent will be represented in Bible studies and sermons, prayers and presentations.

Numerous special interest groups will meet around Paraguay 2009, such as the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. The second Global Youth Summit, planned by MWC's 'AMIGOS' will explore the meaning of Christian service under the theme: "Service, Live the Difference." Kristina Toews is MC Canada's youth representative.

A highlight in 2008 was the formation of four commissions and the calling of their leaders. Cynthia Peacock of India will head the new Deacon Commission, Alfred Neufeld of Paraguay the Faith and Life Commission, Mulugeta Zewdie of Ethiopia the Peace Commission, and Janet Plenert of Canada the Mission Commission.

According to Larry Miller, General Secretary, through these commissions and their leaders, "the reality of the global church can be seen and felt and touched and savoured." While each commission will have its specific tasks, they will work to promote unity and the concept of a holistic gospel. The commissions will help God's people to put our beliefs into practice. They are not a new bureaucracy but the "place" where gifts and wisdom will be shared, needs, challenges and questions heard, and initiatives connected.

Other 2008 praise items are:

- Congolese Inter-Mennonite Forum for Conversation, administered by MWC, held its second annual gathering in November to reflect on the kinds of relationships they as churches would like to have with other Mennonites.
- In November, an MWC Koinonia Delegation attended the official organizing conference of the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Ho Chi Minh City, and symbolically welcomed the new denomination into MWC.
- Robert J. Suderman conducted two days of teaching for the Integrated Mennonite Church in the Philippines in August through MWC's Global Gift Sharing program.
- MWC participated in the Reconciliation Ceremony of Congo Mennonite Church pastors in late November – the culmination of much hard work and persistence in the past year.

MWC urges us to 1) be inspired and informed through MWC's website, News Service, *Courier*, the books in the Anabaptist Shelf of Literature and in the Global Mennonite History project (the Latin American, Asian and North American volumes are coming soon); 2) pray for our Anabaptist brothers and sisters around the world; 3) be generous in your financial gifts to the various funds that make MWC programs and networks possible.

—Submitted by Naomi Unger (on behalf of your three representatives to MWC's General Council: Laura Loewen, Andrew Reesor-McDowell and Naomi Unger)

Mennonite Church USA (MC USA)

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world.

Together with Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA shares this vision statement for our church to be a beacon of healing and hope in the world. As a church existing in North America in the 21st Century, we continue to seek meaningful and practical ways of joining the places God is at work.

In February 2008, the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board declared that "our vision and call to engage in God's purposes in the world is not adequately supported by our present relationships, behaviors, and organization." This statement was born of a desire for all parts of Mennonite Church USA to become a community of Christians who learn from each other and together find creative ways of joining God's work in our world.

The year since this statement has found the Executive Board and its Executive Leadership staff working alongside other parts of the denomination, including agencies, *The Mennonite*, area conferences and the Constituency Leaders Council and others to begin dreaming of new ways we can work together.

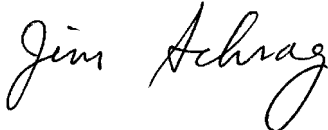
Some of the progress we have made includes:

- Regular team interaction among the executive directors of each churchwide agency and the executive and associate executive directors for Executive Leadership.
- A summit of communication and development staff from across the denomination to collaborate and create a vision for how they will work more closely together with people in the pew in mind.
- The Constituency Leaders Council has appointed a task group of conference ministers and moderators to help the CLC reexamine the role of area conferences and other parts of the church in our churchwide system.
- The hiring of a consultant on churchwide operations and alignment who will help Mennonite Church USA live within its means, eliminate duplication, simplify the churchwide system and identify ways of integrating churchwide priorities into all churchwide ministries.

Finally, I have announced my retirement as executive director of Mennonite Church USA, effective in November of this year. In January, the Executive Board named a search committee to find my replacement.

May God bless Mennonite Church Canada and its ministries, leaders, and congregations. You are a vital part of the global Anabaptist family, and we give thanks for the ways you serve God's Kingdom here on earth.

Together in Christ,



Jim Schrag, Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA



Jim Schrag, Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA.

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Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA)

At a Glance...

MC Canada

Representatives:

Walter Wiebe, Moderator of MCBC – General Board; Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, General Board Member-at-Large; Coreen Froese, Christian Formation Council; Irene Crosland, Christian Witness Council; Gordon Baergen, Support Services Council; Doreen Neufeld, Faith and Life Committee; Lorne Buhr, Nominating Committee

MC Canada Staff in Alberta:

Jim Shantz, Missional Formation and Partnership Facilitator (Alberta)

This past year Mennonite Church Alberta, through the efforts of its Executive and in particular the initiative of its moderator, has been embarking on a series of Congregational visits. The purpose of these visits has been to update our constituents on the ministries conducted by the Committees and the General Council of MCA and then to discern some hopes and dreams for the future.

Ministries include:

- A camp ministry (Camp Valaqua in the foothills of the Rockies) which saw 423 campers in attendance last year and trained 16 leaders. Valqua has two full time employees.
- Employment of a 3/4 time Area Minister who assists in all pastoral leadership matters, coordinates and resources the Pastors Council, assists congregations in various matters and works at leadership recruitment and development.
- A contract with Corrections Canada to provide a Protestant Chaplain for the Bowden Alberta Institution.
- Distributing financial assistance for student bursaries.
- Purchasing the *Canadian Mennonite* for every MCA church member.
- Providing financial assistance for Rosthern Junior College.
- Distribute financial assistance for various Alberta ministries such as Native Ministries in S. Alberta and radio broadcast support for the Mexican Mennonite population.
- Provide administrative oversight for the Edmonton Worship Center which currently houses Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite and Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Churches.
- Organizing and presiding over the MCA annual delegate assembly.

Some hopes and dreams we are naming:

1. See the development of new churches for an emerging generation.
2. Build a retreat centre at our camp property.
3. Develop intentional student communities in our urban centres close to the 3 major universities in Alberta.
4. Hire a provincial Youth Ministry co-ordinator.
5. Develop a long term plan for camp ministry.
6. Provide tuition for any Alberta student who wishes to attend one of our Bible Colleges or Seminary.
7. Promote unity by organizing new inter-church activities.
8. Update the MCA website.

A discernment process is being undertaken to determine which of these dreams are of greatest priority and for which there would be the most interest and support.

Mennonite Church Alberta is grateful to God for his sustaining Presence in the past and looks forward to the paths in which God will lead her in the future.

–Submitted by Walter Wiebe, Moderator, and Jim Shantz, Area Church Minister, Mennonite Church Alberta

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Mennonite Church British Columbia (MCBC)

A peek into the life of Granisle's Church of the Way

Matthew 9:35-38 is a disturbing, yet potentially hopeful gospel story. Picture this: Jesus has just spent some days tramping around the villages of Palestine, hanging out with locals and sharing the healing news of God's kingdom. Totally spent, he takes his closest buds to a roadside rest stop. They boil water for tea, and Jesus confides:

"Isn't it overwhelming? So many lost and confused folk out there; so many in need of God. The harvest is enormous. But there's hardly any of us to do the work. I could throw my hands up. What can we do?" Jesus sighs and looks to the sky. "One thing I know. We've got to pray. Come, God. Bring some workers. Without you, no hope."

It's a Jesus-tale that's familiar to many. Which congregation hasn't prayed these words? This text is especially fitting for my tiny church, Granisle's *Church of the Way*. Everywhere I go, be it the pews of our sanctuary, the paved streets of our village, or the dirt roads of Tachet – our neighboring First Nation's reserve – I can hear Christ's Spirit mumble these words: "Big harvest. . . amazing potential. . . but whence the workers?"

When I was called to Granisle a year or so ago, I was sent by MCBC with a special job: to build bridges of reconciliation between the primarily white church and the First Nations community. I knew right away that this would be challenging, but in my naivety, I still thought I could roll up my sleeves, preach "in-Christ unity of Red and White," and presto, such would be miraculously "accomplished."

Then reality set in. My beloved sisters and brothers at *Church of the Way* were in a much different place than me. As a young and zealous "Anabaptist," breaking down dividing walls is a gospel imperative for me. I felt – and still feel – compelled to put lots of energy into this. But my friends were somewhere else in their faith journey. Most of them were seniors and retirees. They had worked hard, lived good, long lives, and were now seeking a place to enjoy a time of well-deserved rest. Doing "reconciliation" sounded like time-consuming, tiring and uncomfortable work. I understand this. Perhaps, like the aged widow Anna in Luke's gospel, their calling is to spend the rest of their days in the "temple", serving God through prayer and worship, while young folk like me "work the streets."

After a year and a half, I long to give an amazing ministry report filled with "mighty deeds and works of power." But I can't. Yes, "the harvest is plentiful," but it's still waiting to be harvested.

That's not to say good things aren't happening in our midst. We have, for instance, a weekly Youth Group, where a group of 10 Native kids faithfully gather to explore life with the Creator and one another. These kids are terribly "harassed" by the chaotic forces of life, yet despite all that, they're still so deeply beautiful. We eat together, pray, goof off, talk about life and, every so often, set our eyes on that Sweet Jesus. There are times Annie Williams (my co-leader) and I face and share their difficult challenges. There are times we want to

At a Glance...

Activity/Program: An Area Church desiring to work together to achieve those things which we cannot do as easily alone.

Ministry goals and objectives: Mennonite Church British Columbia is a faith community of Christian churches with a passionate allegiance to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Our purpose is to enable congregations to individually and collectively engage most fully in the mission of Christ.

Average Annual Budget: \$472,850 MCBC; Camp Squeah budget: \$749,000

Staff: Garry Janzen, Executive Minister; Janette Thiessen, Office Administrator; Rob Tiessen, Camp Squeah Executive Director; Tim Larson, Camp Squeah Program Director; Dan Friesen, Camp Squeah Site Manager; Dave Wismath, Camp Squeah Administrative Assistant/Facilities Rental Coordinator; Liz Flinn, Camp Squeah Food Services Manager; Miles Bissky, Camp Squeah Head Cook; Pam White, Camp Squeah Bookkeeper;

Leadership Board: Gerd Bartel, Moderator; Dan Rempel, Vice-Moderator; Linda Matties, Secretary; John Redekop, Finance Chair; Lee Dyck, Evangelism and Church Development (ECCD) Chair; Sue Kehler, Nominations Committee Coordinator; Laura Loewen, Church Health Committee Chair

MC Canada Representatives: Gerd Bartel, General Board; Veronica Dyck, Christian Formation Council; Betty Loewen, General Board Member-at-large; Ed Janzen, Support Services Council; Laura Loewen, Christian Witness Council; Waldo Neufeld, Christian Witness Council; Clare Neufeld, Nominations Committee; Dan Rempel, General Board Representative

MC Canada Staff in BC: Gerd Bartel, Western Director of Resource Development; Samson Lo, Director of Multicultural Ministries

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Steve Heinrichs

hug them to bits, having caught a glimpse of the Good in them. I don't know how many times I've come away from the reserve after Youth, and cried out, "O God, there is so much need here! So much potential good! But who can do it?"

That's where ministry is in Granisle. No lights, no glory. Lots of weakness and stumbling. We're not out there with Jesus, healing and converting the masses. We're trying to find that roadside rest stop so that we can nod our prayerful hearts in desperate solidarity: "Lord of the harvest. Please come."

—Submitted by Steve Heinrichs, Pastor



Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM)

At a Glance...

MC Canada

Representatives:

Hilda Hildebrand, General Board Executive, Member-at-Large; Hans Werner, Moderator of MCM; Van Hoa Chau, Christian Formation Council; Earl Reimer, Christian Formation Council; Lynell Bergen, Christian Witness Council; Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel, Support Services Council; Harry Wiens, Support Services Council; Rudy Baergen, Faith and Life Committee; Karl Koop, Faith and Life Committee; Justina Heese, Nominating Committee

The theme for 2008, introduced at the February Annual Delegate Sessions, was "Faith Grows". We reflected on the various stages of faith development that take place in our worship and discernment. The Emmaus Road experience found in Luke 24 set the stage for our reflection with verse 32 focusing our attention – "... *Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?*" This year's theme is the first part of a four-year theme based on Genesis 12:1; "Go ... *to the land that I will show you*".

This report highlights the work of MCM's ministries carried out during 2008 on behalf of MCM congregations.

Camping Ministry – Bob Wiebe

Camps with Meaning (CWM) experienced renewal through strategic planning in 2008. CWM also continued to bear fruit through established programs.

Two Strategic Planning retreats were conducted. The first session, in February, created a new statement of purpose, mission, vision, and values. It endorsed a detailed recommendation for facility upgrades and reviewed a survey of guest groups needs. The second retreat, in November, worked on three areas of ministry opportunity: faith and discipleship, creation care, and changing demographics. A renewed strategic plan incorporating these elements will be presented to the MCM Board early in 2009.

The Summer Program theme was "Shalom: Our Journey With God". Camp Moose Lake hosted a record 360 campers. Camp Assiniboia reached 672 campers, a five-year high. Camp Koinonia experienced a drop of 67 in enrolment of children and youth. Overall there were 20 fewer campers than last year. A Family Camp was initiated this year at Camp Moose Lake. All our campers had multiple opportunities to grow in faith.

We were pleased to see a growth in the number of guest groups using our camps. A milestone in the retreat program was reached when volunteer Director **Val Pankratz** 'retired' after 10 years of fruitful ministry.

Key personnel changes included the placement of **David and Katherine Hogue** at Assiniboia as Manager and Guest Group Coordinator respectively and the resignation of **Will and Alvi Martens** at Camp Moose Lake. The Martens will be replaced by **Art and Mary Anne Falk**.

Improvements included the completion of a timber frame Picnic Shelter at Camp Moose Lake. The Assiniboia Main Lodge and the Manager's Residence at Camp Assiniboia were renovated. Camp Koinonia improved lighting and purchased a kitchen steamer.

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CWM is blessed to have a number of faithful volunteers and a family of supportive congregations. Thank you.

Evangelism and Service Ministries – Norm Voth This year two exciting dreams emerged. One is a group forming to explore liturgical worship. While this is still in progress, several practices emerged as important for participants. These included the following

- worship rooted in church history,
- room for the mystical, ritual and contemplative,
- greater emphasis on communion,
- openness to learning from other traditions.

This group has just begun meeting on a monthly basis for worship and discernment for future development.

A new congregation, in partnership with Youth With A Mission, is emerging in Winnipeg's West End. The focus is on developing an intentional faith community that includes worship but also works for community transformation. This past fall a group of community residents began meeting every Sunday evening for supper and conversation about faith and life. Out of those meetings came a desire to develop a more formal worshipping community. This group is asking us for leaders to assist with the development work. How can we help provide leaders for starting new congregations?

This past year I worked with the Elim, Sargent Avenue, Sterling and Grace (Brandon) congregations at an intentional missional formation process that includes reflection, discernment, and development planning. Some congregations are engaging missional identity through partnerships with Aboriginal congregations. These partnerships allow for cross cultural learning and addressing issues like racism, peace and systemic injustice.

The past decade or two has seen a marked shift toward short term service projects. I continue to participate as a member of the leadership group for Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure but most volunteers currently come from Europe. It is increasingly difficult to recruit participants from our Canadian constituency. On the other hand, every summer a number of youth groups from MCM congregations help provide camp and DVBS programs in Aboriginal communities. These short term service projects continue to offer opportunities for service and building relationships.

Leadership Ministries – Henry Kliever: During my first eight months as director of leadership ministries, I spent most of my time getting to know congregations and pastors. Nellie and I visited half of our 50 congregations. I attended the monthly pastor cluster meetings. A number of search committees solicited help in their pastor search processes. Twenty pastoral transitions took place or are in process during 2008.

I also became acquainted with our support structures, getting to know our MCM staff and board, as well as my reference group. Four additional resources have been put into place: the credentialing committee, pastor search resource people, pastoral evaluation resource people, and conflict advisors. I am grateful to my predecessors, Harold Peters-Fransen and John P. Klassen, for these groups and look forward to employing them even more effectively.

The credentialing committee was active, helping to process two pastor ordinations (Judith Froese Doell and Karen Schellenberg) and one license toward specific ministry (Arlyn Friesen Epp as MC Canada Resource Centre Manager). The reference group is emerging in potential, helping in the discernment of issues facing congregations and area church in the areas of leadership and congregational life.

My gifting lies in the area of pastoral care. I need to spend time alone with God in order to do that in the power of his Spirit. My prayer is that each of us may increase in love of God and neighbour, and that our congregations will reflect the light of Christ to our community across the street and around the world.

At a Glance...

Activity: A community of 50 congregations, together presenting Jesus Christ to the world.

Our Vision: To be a community of congregations unified in Jesus Christ, living a biblical Anabaptist faith, together presenting Jesus Christ to the world.

Annual Budget:
\$1,822,781

Board of Directors:
Hans Werner, Moderator;
Directors: Don Bergen, Julie Derksen, Gordon Driedger, Tym Elias, Erin Morash, Dan Horne, Kathryn Reimer.

Staff: Edgar Rempel, Executive Director; Tom Seals, Treasurer; Beverley Sawatzky and Eva Loewen, Administrative Assistants; Henry Kliever, Director of Leadership Ministries; Norm Voth, Director of Evangelism and Service Ministries; Bob Wiebe, Director of Camping Ministries; Darryl Neustaedter Barg, Associate Director Media Ministries; Dorothea Rempel Kampen, Frohe Botschaft Producer; Camp Managers and Staff.

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Church Community Building Ministry – Edgar Rempel: In the broader scope of MCM's work in 2008, we were called upon to rethink how we do the ministries that congregations do together. As a result of reduced giving from congregations in 2007 and prior years, the ministry budgets needed to be revised downward to bring them in line with giving. The board reduced program spending by \$100,000 for 2008 to align program spending with available resources from congregations. This left us with the challenge of continuing ministries at a reduced level. The challenge was met by carefully cutting expenditures and yet maintaining the core ministry. We thank congregations for their ongoing support and commitment to our joint ministries.

Addressing the financial challenge meant taking a close look at how we move into the future. The board initiated a process in the latter part of 2008 that engages the constituency in dialogue. This process will seek to redefine who MCM is and the ministries that we will do together as a community of congregations. We look forward to 2009 as we embark on this important time of discernment. May God grant wisdom and guidance as we seek to do God's will in MCM.

–Submitted by Edgar Rempel, Executive Director



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Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC)

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: Making Disciples

Discipleship has been a focus for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in 2008. Extending the peace of Jesus Christ by making disciples has informed our directions and guided our steps throughout the year. God has created disciples within the MCEC/Mennonite Church Canada community of congregations in many ways and through many different avenues.

Disciples . . .

- nurtured through two new congregations within MCEC who officially came into fellowship with the MCEC/Mennonite Church Canada community of congregations. Making faith relevant to the communities around them, The Church of the Living Word in Ottawa and the Markham Christian Worship Centre were welcomed at the 2009 MCEC Annual Church Gathering in April.



Andrea Yantzi (Hillcrest MC) and David Driedger (Hillcrest MC) test their communication skills during the MCEC communication event in 2008. Photo by Lisa Williams.

- extending the peace of Jesus Christ as they gathered for Jr. Youth Breakaway under the theme “Footprints in the Sand.” Two hundred and forty youth and their sponsors created a huge peace sign with their shoes – symbolizing that we can take peace with us wherever we go.
- impacted by the IMPaCT program – a Mennonite Church Canada international pastoral exchange program co-sponsored in 2008 with MCEC. Eight pastors from MCEC came together with pastors from Ukraine, United Kingdom, Burkina Faso, Congo and South Africa

for Bible study, worship and fellowship. Not only were the individuals in the program impacted, but also host congregations, lodging and meal providers, planners who made it possible, and many who provided financial and prayerful support.

- resourced through events like Intersect '08 – Bringing Effective Communication to Real People. Congregational and agency representatives gathered to begin the conversation about effective communication with the MCEC constituency.
- encouraged and stretched as 22 young adults and sponsors traveled to Israel/Palestine for the Yella learning trip, made possible through the support of the MCEC



IMPACT 2008. Photo by Lisa Williams.

community of congregations. Leadership skills and gifts were empowered and released as the group embarked on this life-changing experience together.

We are grateful for the faithfulness of God as the peace of Jesus Christ continues to be extended in Eastern Canada. May God be honoured.

–David Martin, MCEC Executive Minister

At a Glance...

Executive: Leroy Shantz (Chair), Myrna Miller Dyck, Helen Eby, Fred Kinsie, Robert Konrad, Jana Schmidt Lepp, Russ Snyder-Penner, Tim Wagler

MCEC Staff: David Martin (Executive Minister), Muriel Bechtel (Conference Minister), Jeff Steckley (Congregational Ministries Minister), Brian Bauman (Mission Minister), Ester Neufeldt (Operations Minister), Maurice Martin (Regional Minister), Al Rempel (Regional Minister), Marianne Mellinger (Coordinator of Leadership Formation), Lisa Williams (Director of Communication), Joan Schooley (Administrative Assistant), Bev Raimbault (Administrative Assistant), Margaret Oakey (Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant)

MC Canada Representatives in Ontario: Andrew Reesor McDowell, General Board (MC Canada Moderator); Don Friesen, General Board (Secretary); Leroy Shantz, General Board (Moderator of MCEC); Sue Steiner, Christian Formation Council (Chair); Lisa Carr-Pries, Christian Formation Council; Tom Yoder Neufeld, Christian Formation Council; Willard Metzger, Christian Witness Council (Chair); Hun Lee, Christian Witness Council; Noe Gonzalia, Christian Witness Council; Rudy Dirks, Christian Witness Council; Emily Dueck, Christian Witness Council, JD Penner, Christian Witness Council; Kaye Rempel, Support Services Council; Betty Pries, Faith and Life Committee; Gladys Bender, Nominating Committee

MC Canada Staff in Ontario: Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, Missional Formation and Partnership Facilitator (Eastern Canada)

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask)

At a Glance...

Moderator: Renata Klassen

Deputy Moderator: Henry Funk

Secretary: Grace Funk

Chair of Finance: Armin Krahn

Staff:

Anna Rehan, Area Church Youth Minister
Jerry Buhler, Area Church Minister
Charlotte Bueckert, Office Administrator

MC Canada

Representatives:

Garth Ewert Fisher, General Board (Asst. MC Canada Moderator); Gordon Peters, General Board (Treasurer); Renata Klassen, General Board (Moderator of MC Sask); Naomi Unger, Christian Formation Council; Pauline Steinmann, Christian Formation Council; Mark Wurtz, Support Services Council; Dave Feick, Nominating Committee

MC Canada staff in Saskatchewan

Eric Olfert, Missional formation and partnership facilitator for Saskatchewan
Anna Rehan, Youth Ministries facilitator

GENERAL

FORMATION

WITNESS

SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCE

DISCERNMENT

Fifty years ago, in 1959, the first Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan session was convened in Rosthern with Paul Schroeder as moderator. In the intervening fifty years, some things have changed dramatically, such as who attends and provides leadership in our organization. But certainly the central focus has remained constant, and a number of the programs are ongoing. We continue to remind ourselves of our common purpose. In our delegate session in 2006 we accepted a vision statement that acknowledges that we are "Christ Centered and Sent". Our Vision for 2010 calls us toward a more Christ-like lifestyle and ministry in our changing times. This common purpose is reflected in the activities and programs led by various commissions. Here are a few examples.

An **Aboriginal Learning Tour** is being planned by the Ministries commission in conjunction with MC Canada's annual delegate sessions. We will give the opportunity for participants to learn and experience our Native brothers and sisters on their ground. This will take place over two days (June 8th & 9th) with the first day being planned away from city settings and the final day within Saskatoon

The **Pastoral Leadership Commission** continues to work diligently at providing opportunities for our pastors to improve our skills and give us tools to better ourselves. The highlight of the year for the PLC was sponsoring an Alban Institute workshop at Shekinah Retreat Centre. The topic was "A New Vision for the Long-Term Pastorate", led by Ed White, Alban Institute Consultant. In addition to our own pastors, we had a number of pastors from other denominations join us as well. It was a rich time of learning and sharing experiences with one another.

Last year we identified that another of our needs here in MC Sask is to equip and grow pastors who are skilled in intentional interim ministry. To that end we have begun planning for an Interim Ministry Course to be held in May 2009. Ken Bechtel and Harold Peters-Fransen, both seasoned intentional interim pastors are our resource persons.

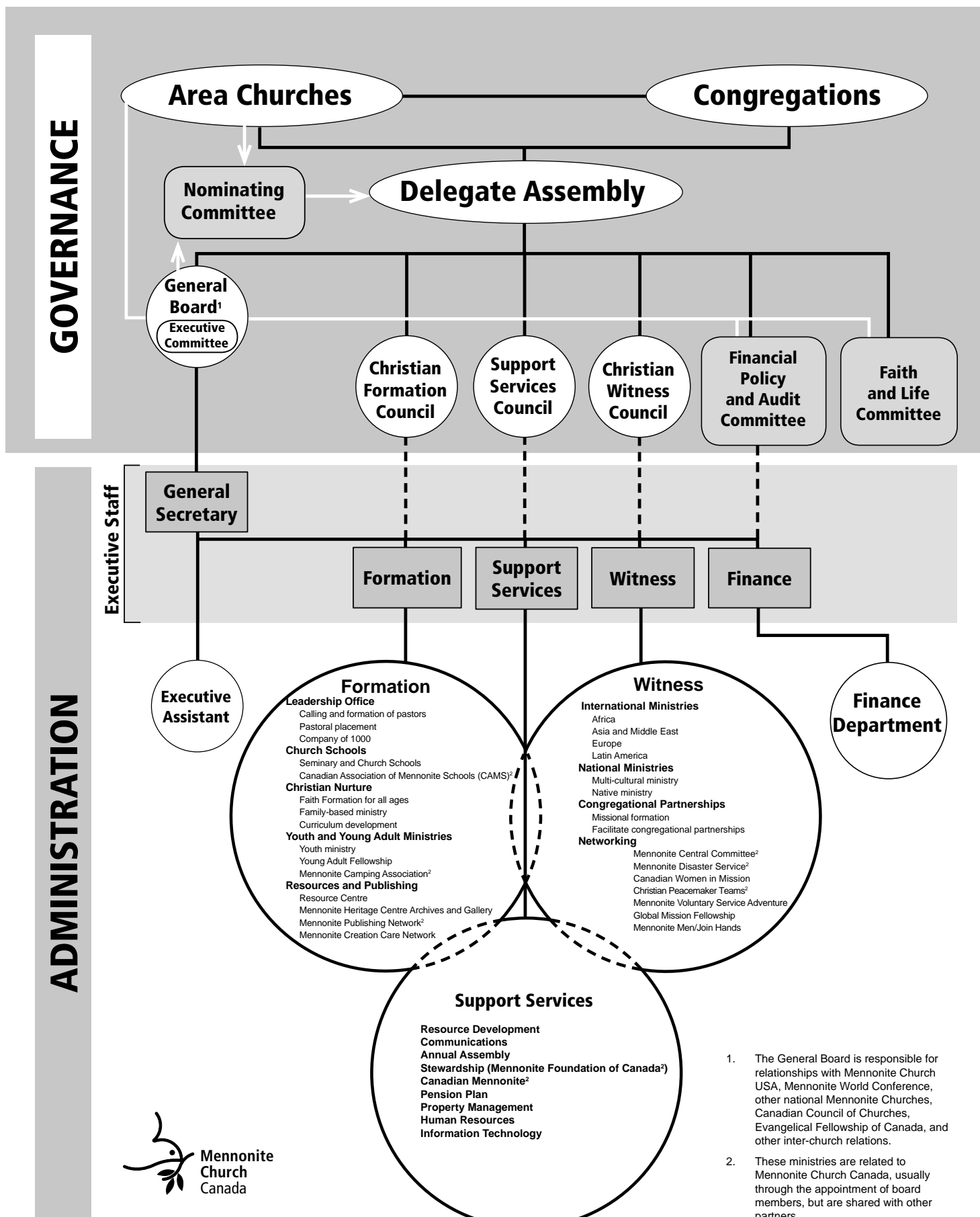
Collaborating programs such as P2P, Circles of Support and Community Chaplaincy under a newly organized Restorative Justice Ministries Saskatchewan committee is allowing for new conversations and new energy to be brought to the work of offering healing friendships to offenders in institutions and helping released offenders to be safe and healthy on the streets.

- We were able bring a **VBS Troupe** to six congregations last summer. The theme for the week was "Listen Up! Messages from God"
- June 4-7 we will host the MC Canada Assembly
- **Mennonite Church Canada Youth Assembly 2009** will happen in Caronport, SK on July 6-10. The theme is "Living Inside Out."
- **IMPACT** will happen in Saskatchewan in 2009
- The Rosthern Mennonite Nursing Home has hired a chaplain, Patty Friesen
- Camp Elim is planning a building project
- **The Congregational Life Resource Team** continues to assist congregations with evaluations and visioning.

—Submitted by Jerry Buhler



Mennonite Church Canada Organizational Chart



1. The General Board is responsible for relationships with Mennonite Church USA, Mennonite World Conference, other national Mennonite Churches, Canadian Council of Churches, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and other inter-church relations.
2. These ministries are related to Mennonite Church Canada, usually through the appointment of board members, but are shared with other partners.