

# Christian Formation Council

## At a Glance...

### Christian Formation Council 2008-2009

Sue Steiner, Ontario (outgoing Chair); Erwin Tiessen, Saskatchewan; Tom Yoder Neufeld, Ontario; Naomi Unger, Saskatchewan; Lisa Carr-Pries (incoming Chair), Ontario; Pauline Steinmann, Saskatchewan; Earl Reimer, Manitoba; Van Hoa Chau, Manitoba; Coreen Froese, Alberta; Veronica Dyck, B.C.

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. -Colossians 3:12ff*

This year's Assembly theme, *Living Inside Out*, is a call to the church to make visible, in external behaviour, the transformation of character that God in Jesus Christ is achieving day by day within his sacred body. How do we become a more compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, loving people? By already acting in keeping with the goal toward which we must always strive – already showing kindness, displaying humility, exercising love and compassion – making it a habit to practice the Christian behaviours which we pray will one day be instinctive to all God's people. The best way the church becomes more like what we are called to be is to begin behaving today as if we are already that which we are becoming.



Arlyn Friesen Epp (Resource Centre Director), Naomi Unger (Formation Council) and Ron Rempel (MPN) at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

The purpose and passion of Christian Formation is to support and encourage the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, so that the body of Christ will display more completely the attributes of citizens of God's kingdom of healing, peace, hope, and love. To this end we are pleased to share highlights from the various areas of Christian Formation ministry.

### Ministerial Leadership

In September 2008, we welcomed Karen Martens Zimmerly as *Denominational Minister and Director of Leadership Development*. This leadership role combines the important, core activities of a "minister to the denomination" with focused attention to the vital ministry

of developing leaders for the church, in collaboration with Area Churches, church schools, congregations, and other church partners with a specific interest in calling and forming pastoral and other church leaders. One area of special attention and challenge is the nurture of leaders in congregations whose first language is other than English.

The *2007 Pastoral Trends Survey* identified the importance to thriving pastors of providing ongoing support and opportunities for feedback and interaction with peers in ministry. MC Canada is a partner in "Clarifying the Call," an AMBS initiative focused on pastors in their first 3-5 years of ministry. During 2008, two new Canadian pastors participated in this program, and in March 2009 an additional seven Canadian pastors benefited from this opportunity to share learnings and seek additional resources for healthy ministry, from peers and veterans in church leadership ministry in Canada and the United States. Other continuing benefits of the survey are a renewed attention by Area Church Ministers and the Denominational Minister to the overall wellness and wholeness of our current pastors; work on developing an integrated culture of call that involves congregations, schools, and the denomination; and some exciting exploration of the wisdom potential that exists within the growing cohort of retired pastors, for those who are entering or continuing in pastoral ministry.

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Additional initiatives to strengthen the leadership of MC Canada pastors in 2008 included the publication, with MC USA, of *“Many Gifts: calling and growing congregational leaders,”* a gift discernment resource for congregations, and, together with Area Church Ministers, *“Pastoral Care for Homosexual Individuals and their Families,”* a resource for pastors who have occasion to give pastoral care to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons and their families. These resources will be released at the 2009 Annual Ministers’ Conference and are available through the MC Canada Resource Centre.

The past year saw 63 pastors placed in 54 congregations. This number included 18 lead pastors, 26 associate or youth pastors, 17 interim/transitional pastors and two Area Church Ministers.

*Company of 1000* continues to provide valuable assistance to pastors in the form of forgivable loans to women and men preparing for pastoral and church-related ministries. During 2008, \$46,500 was disbursed to 22 individuals. In addition, \$4,000 was disbursed to International Ministries to assist 4 international Mennonite pastors in leadership training in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Paraguay, and Thailand. We encourage the members of our congregations to grow this fund by increasing their generosity to this important ministry, especially in these economically challenging times, so that our church will continue to benefit from the gifts of strong, Anabaptist leaders.

### Church Schools

A positive spirit of cooperation and commitment to shared mission continues to characterize conversation within our schools and with MC Canada and its schools. In 2008, significant progress was made toward a national consensus on competencies for pastoral leadership. It is recognized that the list of core elements under discussion, which contribute to effective pastoral leadership formation, will only be partially met through formal education and training. Competencies that relate to pastoral experience and personal spiritual and character formation extend beyond the direct mandate of our schools, and include an important role for congregations and area churches as centres of leadership formation.

One outcome of current discussion is a *Leadership Education Task Force Proposal*, drafted by the presidents of Conrad Grebel University College, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Canadian Mennonite University, and Columbia Bible College. At its March 2009 meetings, the Christian Formation Council affirmed this document in principle. Although it is still in process, the proposal is expected to serve as an important catalyst to focus and strengthen the leadership development efforts of schools and church together.

We also value the positive and growing relationship of MC Canada with our K-12 schools across Canada that are a part of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS). While having diverse origins and unique contexts for educational ministry, each school diligently and faithfully strives to create an environment for learning and the formation of Christian character. The gifts of each combine to enrich the whole, as part of a vibrant Mennonite Church in Canada.

For more details, see the individual reports for the post secondary schools and CAMS elsewhere in this book.

### Christian Formation staff team for 2008:

Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary; Lois Bergen, Executive Assistant; Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister and Director of Leadership Development; Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Nurture; Arlyn Friesen Epp, Resource Centre Director; Anita Neufeld, Administrative Assistant, Resource Centre; Alf Redekopp, Mennonite Heritage Centre Director; Conrad Stoesz, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archivist; Connie Wiebe, Administrative Assistant, Mennonite Heritage Centre; Ray Dirks, Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery Curator; Anna Rehan, Youth Ministries Facilitator.

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## Resources

### Resource Centre

The Resource Centre continues its valuable ministry of strengthening the life of the church. We offer a rich, up to date and diverse banquet of Anabaptist resources. In 2008 we were able to add 1000 new print, visual, and electronic titles for study, worship, and personal spiritual enrichment. We are pleased with the significant increases in material use. Circulation of materials was up again over the previous year: loans by 23%; number of individual borrowers 17%; electronic orders 35%; electronic downloads 88% (total: 51,000 for the year). Overall circulation outside Manitoba has also increased significantly. Inquiries suggest that the Resource Centre, through its online presence, is making an impact beyond our own denomination.

The Resource Centre continues to list all Mennonite Publishing Network titles, and offers an easy sales portal for MPN materials. We also have active partnerships with several other Anabaptist publishers (listed online) and, in 2009, anticipate the launch of a fully integrated 'resource consortium' in partnership with several peer Anabaptist resource centres in the east and west of our country. This will enhance the ability of our congregations to access a wider and deeper range of formational resources.



2009 Volunteer Resource Advocates (l-r) – Maurice Martin (Eastern Canada), Alissa Bender (Alberta), Heidi Epp (BC), Marion Bueckert (SK), Don Engbrecht (MB)

We also continue to seek out and promote our holdings of non-English materials. 2008 saw the cataloguing of 100 new Spanish language titles and we look forward to adding further materials in many of the diverse languages of MC Canada.

Promotion of the Resource Centre occurs in several ways. Our primary means of communication is the *Resource Update*. We currently have 700 individual, personal subscribers, in addition to congregations and individuals who receive the monthly *Equipping* resource. In addition, the Centre is visible through links in MC Canada news releases, church bulletins, the *Cheaper by the Dozen* bulk loan option, and the Canada-wide network of Area Church volunteer *Resource Advocates* (with MPN).

While much good is happening, we continue to strive to do better the things we are called to do. In 2008, about 60% of our congregations used the Centre, up from a low of 39% in 2004. Despite this increase in usage, we wonder how 100% of our congregations might be encouraged to take advantage of the rich fare available in *their* Resource Centre. We receive very positive responses to the worship and other materials generated by our own congregations, shared with others through the Centre. We dream about ways we can be more effective in locating and soliciting more quality 'home-grown' resources for the benefit of the whole church. And with the rapid, ongoing changes that occur in the use of technology in our church and culture, we value the wisdom of the church in guiding decisions on how best to employ the tools that are available, for the betterment of the church and the kingdom of God.

### Resource Creation

The Christian Formation Council is committed to offer core Anabaptist teaching and formational resources to our congregations for their ongoing learning and growth. In keeping with this Formation priority, work was done on a family of "Mennonite identity" materials. The English "*What Makes a Mennonite?*" brochure, targeted to users who have some basic knowledge of the church, received a visual and textual update. It is also newly available in two Chinese language versions (traditional and simplified). A complementary English language video is on the task list. An additional brochure entitled "*Who are the Mennonites?*" telling a slightly more extensive version of the Mennonite story is being prepared for use by the Mennonite Heritage Centre and Gallery in English, French, and

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German. This piece will be used alongside the recently completed Anabaptist visual display at the Heritage Centre, and is focused on people who may be only minimally acquainted with the Mennonite Church.

In collaboration with the Multi-cultural Ministries department of Witness, efforts are underway to make *“What Makes a Mennonite?”* available in an increasing number of the languages of our church for use as a teaching and interpretive instrument in outreach ministries. In addition, we expect to make the MC Canada Vision, Identity and Purpose Statements available in the languages of the newly emerging worshipping groups in MCEC and MCBC.

A more substantial translation project currently underway is the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* into Laotian. We hope to have this completed in time to distribute printed copies to the summer gathering of the Lao Mennonite churches in North America.

The 2009 Season of Prayer material, *The Church at the Crossroads* based on Deuteronomy 4:1-9, was written by the staff team of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church in MCBC. This year, as a way of continuing supportive ministry with former subscribers to *Der Bote*, this resource was translated into German and sent to this older, German-speaking demographic in the church. And, in April 2009, a collection of 4 German sermons by Titus Guenther, entitled *“Als die neue Menschheit Gottes leben,”* was distributed to this group of constituents.

### *Worship*

In April 2008, an ad-hoc meeting of Canadian and U.S. Mennonite leaders, initiated by MPN, met to discuss questions and issues surrounding a possible future hymnal resource for our denominations, and other matters related to the worship life of our churches. No specific plans are currently anticipated for a new denominational music collection, due in part to the strong success of *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, and the two supplemental volumes, *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*. However, the meeting did result in the establishment of a “Bi-national Mennonite Worship Council” whose role will be to tend to the overall worship needs and trends of our two churches, including the creation of a potential new music resource or other larger worship initiatives.

### **Youth Ministry**

The activities of 2008 revolved primarily around the planning of the Youth Assembly 2009. This year’s youth gathering will be held July 6-10 in Caronport, SK, on the campus of Briercrest Bible College and Seminary. While this biennial event is normally held together with the MC Canada Delegate Assembly, a separate location and date was necessary this year due to the early occurrence of the adult delegate gathering.

Youth Assembly 2009 shares its theme with the MC Canada Delegate Assembly: *Living Inside Out*, based on Colossians 3:12-17, which calls God’s chosen people to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience as they live according to the Word – characteristics that shape the “inside” and inform the “outside.” A Youth Assembly Planning Committee consisting of eight youth and youth pastors drawn from the Area Churches, together with Anna Rehan, worked diligently throughout the year to choose speakers and define the assembly schedule, worship, and activities. A unique feature of this year’s Youth Assembly service initiatives is a “School Kit Challenge” in which youth hope to set a Guinness World Record for the assembly of the most school kits in a single initiative. These kits are destined for distribution in Cuba where MC Canada has a long-standing ministry relationship. Exploration of a suitable location for Youth Assembly 2011 has already begun.

### **Christian Nurture**

This part of the work of Christian Formation focuses on the promotion and nurture of Christians within MC Canada by setting vision, and leading in the development of ministries and resources for people across the age spectrum. In the last few years, a good deal of Elsie Rempel’s energy

## **At a Glance...**

### **Partners in Christian Formation:**

Christian Formation works collaboratively with a variety of partners who bring unique gifts and skills to the formational ministry of the church. These include: Mennonite Publishing Network; Mennonite Camping Association; Mennonite Creation Care Network; Mennonite Post-secondary schools: Canadian Mennonite University, Columbia Bible College, Conrad Grebel University College, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools and its MC Canada affiliated members: United Mennonite Educational Institute, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools, Rosthern Junior College, Menno Simons Christian School, Mennonite Educational Institute; North American Young Adult Fellowship

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has been directed to the development and launch of the Gather 'Round curriculum, and ongoing exploration of the place of children within the worship and spiritual life of our church. She continues to grow the online lectionary-based children's stories and has been involved in a number of presentations and discussions on the topic of children and communion. Other areas of ongoing activity are as editor of the Special Sunday worship resources offered to congregations through *Equipping*, writer of *KidsPak* materials encouraging children of the church to become involved in mission, and the annual at-home booklets for Advent and Lent. In addition, she brings an important voice to the table in helping to ensure that annual Assembly activities and worship are hospitable and suitable for young and old alike.

Beginning in 2009, in response to changing needs within the church, the Christian Nurture department will be refocusing its energy somewhat in the direction of ministry with seniors. With a third of Canada's population expected to reach age 65 in the next 10-15 years, this is an area of spiritual ministry that calls for critical attention. We expect to explore the potential of developing a range of workshop opportunities for congregations, and will draw on the personal gifts of individuals who are making this an area of vocational focus, along with existing and new print materials being published by the church at large and beyond. One expression of this is Elsie's participation on the editorial committee of the newly refocused *Purpose: Stories of Faith and Promise*, an MPN magazine for older readers filled with inspirational articles for daily Christian living.



Ray Dirks (Curator, MHC Gallery), Alf Redekopp (Director, MHC) and John J. Friesen (Professor Emeritus of History and Theology, CMU) in front of the new Anabaptist Display at the Mennonite Heritage Centre.

## **Mennonite Heritage Centre**

### *Archives*

The Archives continues to be a valuable ministry, as well as a repository and source of historical church and family information, available to researchers, students and interested individuals from the Mennonite constituency and beyond. We currently offer archival services to the congregations and Area Churches of MC Canada, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference (EMMC), MCC Canada and Mennonite Church Manitoba. We also hold the records for Canadian Mennonite Bible College, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada.

Acquisitions to the collection arrive on a regular basis and keep archives' staff more than busy cataloguing and organizing material so that it is made accessible for future users. Noteworthy among the many records received in 2008 are the Dr. Harris J. Loewen papers, including his role as chair of the text committee for the 1992 *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, and the papers of EMMC founding bishop Wilhelm H. Falk. In addition, we receive, on a regular basis, the annual reports, weekly bulletins, and minutes of congregations across MC Canada.

The past year also celebrated the eight-panel permanently installed Anabaptist Display telling the 500 year Mennonite story for the benefit of the many people who visit the Archives and Gallery. About 75% of these are first-time visitors, and many have little real knowledge of the Anabaptist faith story. The exhibit, more than 10 years in the making, was dedicated on December 16, 2008. Content was researched and written by Dr. John J. Friesen (Professor Emeritus of History and Theology, CMU) with graphic design by Ray Dirks (Curator, MHC Gallery).

Also in 2008, Alf Redekopp, Director of MHC Archives, was able to spend a month in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, the ministry location of Witness workers Dan & Yvonne Snider Nighswander, as a consulting archivist to the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa facilitating the establishment of an institutional archives, in partnership with local leaders.

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## Gallery

The Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery continues to thrive as a ministry that encourages the expression of faith through artistic media and engaging in dialogue within and across faith and cultural traditions. As a partnership ministry, the Gallery draws its support from a dedicated core of supporters and volunteers. Occasional financial grants from external organizations interested in supporting the multi-cultural, peace and justice focus of the Gallery help contribute to the success and impact of this ministry.

Ray Dirks, Gallery curator, prepared a number of exciting and engaging art exhibits in 2008. These included:

- Invisible Dignity Project student exhibition
- Footsteps: Symbols of Hope for the War Affected Child, by Stella Meades and others; and Girls of Stella Matutina: Photos of Hope for the War Affected Child, by Dean Peachey.
- Manitoba Hutterite Art
- Memories & Parachutes: contemporary art from Cuba
- Material Circumstances, by Deborah Danelley
- Connections: Fibre Art, by Pam Godderis Dangerfield, Bonny Voice, and Judy Morningstar
- Standing: A Journey of Resilience: juried exhibition sponsored by MCC Victim's Voices, and Through the Flowers, by Edith Krause, inspired by letters from the Soviet Union
- Faces of Courage III, by Betty Smith, portraits of people with breast cancer

Exhibits anticipated in 2009 include: an artistic celebration of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; art by prisoners, sponsored by MCC's Open Circle; and a possible exhibit from Sudan.

## Challenges

We are distinctly aware of the impact of the current economic climate in Canada and around the world. At the same time, we are thankful for the dedication of gifted Formation staff who continue to give their best to help the ministries of our church thrive. The new budget is already marked by some reductions in operation, and we have identified contingencies which may be implemented if circumstances warrant further restraint. But we remain confident that with God's help and the financial generosity of God's people, these important ministries of MC Canada will continue to thrive, and even grow as we look beyond the current year.

We sense a growing need to give leadership to our church in the area of ministry with seniors. This year's plans include a shift in some staff time and resources in this direction, and we invite the prayers and counsel of our constituency as we both lead and respond to needs in this area.

The face of MC Canada continues to change. New churches being founded are most likely to have a cultural background rooted outside Canada. We pray for the wisdom and the resources to assist these new Anabaptist brothers and sisters in growing leaders and forming faithful communities that are true to their culture and the faith of the church.

Never far from our minds is the young adult demographic of our church. Across MC Canada, there are hopeful signs of renewal and re-rooting as the children and grandchildren of the church that has borne us begin to give visible shape and direction to a church that continues to be re-formed as it responds to our time and the calling of these next generations of God's people.

We depend on the prayers, counsel, and financial commitment of the whole church to bring to fruition the plans we have laid together toward building a strong, faithful people engaged in God's work of reconciliation, peace, and hope.

—Sue Steiner, Christian Formation Council Chair, and Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary, Christian Formation

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# Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS)

## At a Glance...

**Mission:** Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.



Reece Retzlaff

"I chose to come to AMBS because of its Anabaptist-Mennonite roots, its community and its biblical studies courses," Reece Retzlaff said. "Most especially, I chose to come to AMBS because this is where God was leading me to be. I am enjoying learning – in class and in community – more about God, others, myself and ministry. I am very grateful for the support of the church and the opportunity to study to bring these gifts back to the larger church."

*Reece, from Calgary and Edmonton, Alb., is one of fourteen students from Canada studying at AMBS in the 2008-2009 year. She is working toward a Master of Divinity degree, anticipating graduation in May 2009.*

## AMBS serves in many ways

In addition to offering masters degree programs for ministry and church leadership, AMBS offers non-traditional programs and other resources:

- Learning and sabbatical opportunities through the AMBS Church Leadership Center for people already in ministry.
- Undergraduate ministry training with programs such as the conference-based Multicultural Leadership Education effort in Ontario and Manitoba.
- Books, journals, and publications from the Institute of Mennonite Studies, such as two volumes of *Take our Moments and our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book*, available from Herald Press, and *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology*, co-published with Canadian Mennonite University.
- !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth, encouraging them to listen for God's call and test theological studies.

## AMBS relies on support from the church

AMBS is grateful for support from Mennonite Church Canada – friends, congregations, conferences, and the denomination – and for the opportunities to serve as the seminary for Mennonite Church Canada.

The AMBS budget for 2008-2009 was \$3,853,217. Canadian donors gave \$356,130 through Mennonite Church Canada or directly to the seminary. AMBS is recognized as a charity on Schedule VIII by Revenue Canada. (All amounts above are in Canadian dollars based on the exchange rate in July 2008.)

## AMBS leadership changes

Nelson Kraybill concludes twelve and a half years as president of AMBS in July 2009. An interim president has been named by the board of directors (George R. Brunk III), and a search committee is working toward appointment of a president. Canadian representatives on the search committee are Ray Friesen, chair of the AMBS board, Kathy Koop, secretary of the board, and Sue Steiner. Board member Randall Jacobs chairs the search committee. Please pray that God will guide the decisions and prepare the next president of AMBS for this ministry with both the seminary and the church.

Three Canadians, in addition to the two named above, serve on the AMBS board: Bruce Baergen, Erika Friesen, and Jorge Hoajaca.

## More information

See more about what's happening and who is studying at AMBS at [www.ams.edu](http://www.ams.edu). Become a fan on the AMBS Facebook page and get notices of news and upcoming events.

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# Canadian Mennonite University (CMU)

**Greetings from CMU!** Our theme verse for the year comes from John 17:21, where Jesus prays that those who believe in him “may be one, just as you are in me and I am in you.” At CMU, we seek to live out that verse as students from over 30 denominations – including 120 students from MC Canada – seek to become thoughtful Christian leaders in church and society through studies in the arts, music, music therapy, theology, and church ministries.

It has been a very good year for CMU; in January we reached a milestone when 506 students enrolled in undergraduate programs at our Shaftesbury campus. Altogether, 630 students are studying through that campus, including 32 graduate students and 92 students in the Outtatown adventure and discipleship program. Together with 1,060 students at Menno Simons College, our campus at the University of Winnipeg, a total of 1,690 students are taking courses at CMU.

In addition to the good student numbers, our strength and quality as a university was recognized last October when we became a member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, or AUCC. This is a very significant step; by being made a member of the AUCC we have received, so to speak, the “Gold Seal of Approval.” This means, among other things, that CMU’s degrees are now recognized, and that students can more easily transfer credits to other schools.

## **A few other highlights:**

- We added new programs in Business & Organizational Studies and Disaster Recovery Studies, the former with the support of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and the latter in partnership with Mennonite Disaster Service. We also added five new faculty in the areas of business, psychology, biology, communications, and music therapy.
- We received a gift of \$1 million for our library.
- In response to requests from Mennonite churches and conferences, we developed a new Masters of Arts in Christian Ministry program, designed for those who want to improve their ministry in the church or explore their calling to church ministry. It will be launched in fall, 2009.
- We offered resources to the church through our annual Church in Ministry Conference; through our annual lectures; through the journals Vision and Direction; and through workshops and other events.
- We appointed Terry Schellenberg, formerly principal at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, to be our new Vice President External.
- 135 students did practicum service assignments in Canada and around the world.
- Financially, we ended the 2007-08 budget year with a slight deficit, which we were able to cover from previous surpluses. For this we are thankful to God, and to you. But we know that the next year will be difficult for CMU, as it will be for many other organizations, ministries, and individuals. We hope you will continue to remember CMU as you consider where to donate this year.

Finally, 2008 marked the tenth anniversary of the founding of CMU. It was on November 18, 1998, that representatives of Concord College, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, and Menno Simons College signed a Memorandum to create the university. That date is significant because that is when the colleges and their owners – Mennonite Church Canada, the Manitoba Conference of Mennonite Brethren, and the Friends of Menno Simons College – agreed to take the risk of working together for the cause of Mennonite higher education in Canada. By every measure, I think I can say that their hopes for this venture have been realized – the risk has paid off. CMU today is a strong and vital part of the church’s mission in Canada, preparing leaders who are ready to give good answers for their faith, no matter where God calls them to serve.

–Gerald Gerbrandt, President

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# Columbia Bible College (CBC)

## At a Glance...

**Our Mission:** Preparing people for a life of discipleship, service and ministry” by offering schools of discipleship, ministry preparation, and continuing education; and resourcing evangelical churches of our region for their mission.

### Number of Students (Approximate)

- Discipleship: 130
- Ministry preparation: 340 (Pastoral, Counseling, Early Childhood Education, Educational Assistant, Intercultural Studies, Outdoor leadership, Youth work, Worship Arts)
- Continuing education: Several hundreds in courses, seminars, and conferences.

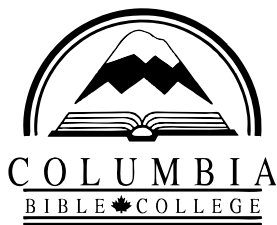
### Key Initiatives

(Visit our website for more information: [www.columbiabc.edu](http://www.columbiabc.edu))

- Columbia on the Road – mini-courses offered in churches.
- Columbia Online – selection of courses and ministry certificates offered online.
- Church match bursary program
- Updated College Bylaws
- Added new Academic Dean (Virginia Hooper) and Business Administrator (Terry Christie)
- Working with sponsoring churches to plan future new programs.

**Annual Budget:** \$5.6M; Funded provincially.

**Reporting to:** Special Assembly comprised of delegates from BC Mennonite Brethren and MC British Columbia. Informally connecting with Mennonite Church Canada’s Christian Formation via David Bergen, Executive Secretary.



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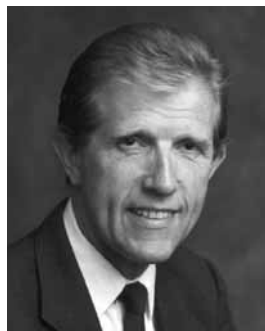
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George Schmidt

## Giving Tribute to a Lifelong Educator: George Schmidt

A few months ago, George Schmidt finished his earthly journey after a brief battle with cancer. George is a trophy to the cause of Bible Colleges – first getting a start at Bethel Bible School as a student and then serving in a number of roles at Columbia over 34 years.

At his memorial, person after person described his gracious fairness, seemingly unending patience with and for people, and humble service to whatever God and His people asked of him.

He lived Micah 6:8 “To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”

Hundreds were influenced by this faithful, unassuming teacher and mentor. Our denomination was enriched by his service on various boards and the people he has mentored into various ministry roles.

Columbia continues to matter because it continues to prepare people for a life of faith, servanthood, and ministry. When we imagine how many people are touched by someone over a lifetime of 70 years, thousands can be touched and blessed, hundreds of churches enriched, and many communities influenced with the love and gospel of Christ.

We look forward to continuing our service to the church over the years ahead.

–Submitted by Ron Penner



# Conrad Grebel Univeristy College (CGUC)

## ***Challenging mind and spirit***

“Conrad Grebel University College is a liberal arts college founded by the Mennonite Church and affiliated with the University of Waterloo. The mission and programs of the College are rooted in and inspired by its Christian identity and its Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage. The mission of Conrad Grebel University College is to seek wisdom, nurture faith, and pursue justice and peace in service to church and society.”

This opening to Conrad Grebel University College’s new mission statement illustrates how the College “lives inside out.” Beginning with our internal identity, we reach out to the world through our students, alumni, teaching, and academic research.

Each year Grebel welcomes over 100 “frosh” to our residence community of over 240 students from all 6 of the faculties in the University of Waterloo and almost every province in Canada. This vibrant community offers leadership opportunities in Student Council, donning, intramural sports, faculty engagement groups, mentoring, and committee involvement. Chaplain Ed Janzen works with an active Chapel Team to coordinate weekly worship and other ways to challenge the spirit.

Grebel’s academic program provides an intellectually challenging environment for young adults. Grebel professors teach 72 undergraduate classes, the majority of this teaching is in Music, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Religious studies (approximately 3,200 course enrollments).

The Master of Theological Studies program currently has 31 active students. This year we provided almost \$50,000 in scholarships to students in our graduate program. This includes a Full Tuition Scholarship for full-time students.

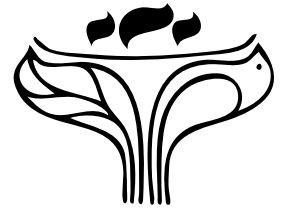
Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre continues to be an important academic community for doctoral students at the Toronto School of Theology. Graduates of this program include new faculty members, Jeremy Bergen and Derek Suderman.

Faculty publications like Nathan Funk’s “Islam and Peacemaking in the Middle East” and Marlene Epp’s “Mennonite Women in Canada: A History,” illustrate the impact our professors have on the life of the Mennonite church and our world.

The 2008-09 budget of \$5.4 million included a grant from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada of over \$180,000. Donations account for 10% of our budget.

We are grateful to be an integral part of the mission of Mennonite Church Canada.

–Submitted by Ronald J.R. Mathies, Acting President



*Alina Balzer Peters from Saskatoon is a Don in the residence at Grebel. She is enrolled in Music and Women’s Studies at the University of Waterloo. “I chose Grebel for the opportunity to live across Canada in a community that would allow me to make that transition. I found that even with a large leap across the country I still had a home.”*

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# Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS)

CAMS is an association of Canadian Anabaptist/Mennonite/Christian schools that seeks to provide mutual support of the common ministry that we share.

We have a variety of schools in our regular ranks: Mennonite Educational Institute (MEI) in B.C.; Menno Simons Christian School (MSCS) in Alberta; Rosthern Junior College (RJC) in Sask.; Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI), Steinbach Christian High School (SCHS), Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute (MBCI), Westgate Mennonite Collegiate (WMC), Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary Schools (WMES) (in Manitoba); and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate (RMC) and United Mennonite Educational Institute (UMEI) in Ont.

Some schools are elementary schools, some secondary, some both. These ten schools trace their lineage to a number of Mennonite conferences and groups. As well, the schools have a wide range of linkages to a variety of supporting conferences and associations.

Each school's circumstances are unique. And yet, as a group we communicate and gather regularly, and share insights and expertise freely. And, I might add, we appreciate very much the connection to the Church and its bodies, like Mennonite Church Canada. While the church schools sometimes feel like forgotten children, and CAMS schools together occasionally feel like a gathering of orphaned children from a variety of parents, we welcome a connection like the one we feel is growing and developing with MC Canada.

In the past year we have gathered on several occasions. In October, administrators met on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University to discuss a number of issues. At the end of January we met again, this time in Pittsburgh, on the occasion of an American MEA-sponsored Education Leaders Gathering. Finally, administrators and staffs met in Brandon, Man. in February on the occasion of a CAMS-sponsored Educators Gathering on the topic "The Power of Story". And we are already planning ahead for Spring 2010 for a choral/band music festival in Winnipeg where our choirs and bands will gather to make music and praise God together.

The text for our next CAMS gathering calls us to *"let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom."* Yes, that's what we're about in our CAMS schools, and it's what we want to pass on to a new generation of young people who may well be the leaders of the church tomorrow.

—Submitted by Victor J. Winter, Chair



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# Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN)

**Home of Faith & Life Resources and Herald Press**

**A ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA**

## WHAT WE PUBLISH

- **Books.** New titles for 2009 include books on mission, renewal, peacemaking, and theology – plus children’s books, novels, biographies, and two new titles in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series. The backlist includes 400 titles for all ages on a wide range of topics.
- **Curriculum.** *Gather 'Round* – a Bible-based curriculum for pre-school to youth, and for parents/caregivers. *Adult Bible Study*, with supplemental online materials. A new discipleship curriculum, in both English and Spanish, called *Via – On The Way With Christ*. The 2009 VBS materials feature the missional church theme, “Catch the Spirit – Join God’s Work in the World.” These materials can be adapted for mid-week programs.
- **Periodicals.** *Rejoice*, a devotional magazine. *Leader*, a magazine to equip the missional congregation; includes popular seasonal worship resources. *Purpose*, a magazine with columns on food, peace, humour, and resources for faithful living. *With*, a magazine for youth, to be discontinued in summer of 2009.
- **Church and leadership resources.** Hymnals and hymnal supplements. New instrumental CD from hymnal supplements to be released in summer 2009. *Close to Home* pamphlets on sensitive issues. Church bulletins. Bible reading record booklets for all ages. Certificates for membership, baptism, marriage, parent/child dedication, transfer of membership. And other essential resources for your church!



## HOW TO FIND THE RESOURCES YOU NEED

- **From MPN.** Comprehensive 2009 catalogue sent to all congregations. Website ([www.mpn.net](http://www.mpn.net)) with web store. Updates through *Equipping*. Canadian toll free line: 800-631-6535. Browse & Buy program available for congregations.
- **From Mennonite Church Canada.** A helpful partnership agreement includes online access to most MPN resources through the Resource Centre website ([www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre)). Also, area church resource advocates, coordinated by the Resource Centre staff, provide visibility to MPN resources.
- **From other channels.** Herald Press books available through most bookstores and through online retailers such as Amazon and MennoLink.

*Report by Ron Rempel, Executive Director, Mennonite Publishing Network, for Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, June 2009*

## At a Glance...

### Financial snapshots

Income last year was \$3.2 million in sales and \$169,000 in donations with 14% of donations from Canada. Sales income 9% less than previous year. 2009 budget includes expense cuts.

### Board of Directors

3 from Mennonite Church Canada and 5 from Mennonite Church USA. From Canada: Laverne Brubacher (ON), vice-chair; Dan Jack (AB), treasurer; Abe Bergen (MB). From USA: Phil Bontrager (OH), chair; Rachel Gerber (CO), secretary; Joe Lapp (VA); Melba Moore (CA); Curtis Berry (PA).



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# Mennonite Camping Association (MCA)

Mennonite Camping Association, established in 1960, links Mennonite Camps with each other and with Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. It promotes Christian camping from an Anabaptist perspective and strengthens outdoor ministries in our denomination in a variety of ways. Major Camping Association events are the semi annual bi-national and regional conventions. The 2008 Bi-National Convention took place March 17 - 20, 2008 at Spruce Lake Retreat, Pa., with the theme of "Breaking Through Walls". The next bi-national convention, in 2010, will take place at Hidden Acres, Ont.

The newly revised MCA web site includes a growing amount of information about MCA activities, individual camps, maps, newsletters, and downloadable resources from member camps. MCA newsletters aim to go out monthly and are available at [www.mennonitecamping.org/mca/](http://www.mennonitecamping.org/mca/) for members and the general public.

Current Board Members are Ken Bontrager (Camp Deerpark, Westbrookville, N.Y.), Corbin Graber (Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp, Divide, Colo.), Lanny Millette (Camp Hebron, Halifax, Pa), Lori Lichti (Amigo Centre, Sturgis, Mich.), Doc Johnson (Mennohaven, Tiskilwa, Ill.), Sarah Dougald (Glenbrook Day Camp, Stouffville, Ont.), Elsie Rempel (Mennonite Church Canada), Evon Castro (Mennonite Church USA), Linford King (Mennonite Church USA).

The denominational representatives on this board present the priorities and selected resources from our denomination, and our publisher, Mennonite Publishing Network, to the board and convention participants, and regularly affirm the camps for their contribution to the growth of leaders and to an awareness of being part of a global church and a people of God. We report back to our denomination about the way MCA camps seek God's face in creation, receive God's Love in Christ, and radiate God's love in Christ. The MCA board is exploring how they can help the larger MCA camps promote themselves to the Mennonite institutions so that their business stays within our communities. MCA is also willing and eager to present displays and workshops at National Assemblies/Conventions. In Canada, this role has been accepted by Bob Wiebe from Camps with Meaning, Man.

This past year, a flexible "Food & Farming" retreat outline and planning guide was developed by an MCA sub-committee, and several MCA camps are using this outline to host Food & Farming Retreats in March of 2009. In Canada this included MC Manitoba's Camps with Meaning and MC Sask's Camp Shekinah.

MCA and the camps it links with, as well as the broader church, form a vital part of calling, equipping and sending the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*—Submitted by Elsie Rempel*

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# North American Young Adult Fellowship

The North American Young Adult Fellowship (YAF), a shared ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA, has been in existence since 2001. Its purposes are:

1. To assist young adults in becoming more active in congregational life and to assist congregations in reaching young adults.
2. To connect with colleges and seminaries in order to assist and be assisted in the wider purposes of young adult ministry.
3. To provide resources for both young adults and congregational leaders on issues and concerns important to young adults.
4. To assist regional denominational staff in building networks among young adults in their constituency.
5. To gather young adults together in an annual gathering for inspiration, nurture, encouragement, discussion, and action, and to encourage them to become more involved in church life and building bridges across the generations.
6. To be the body that helps church-wide agencies call and encourage young adults to serve as staff, board members, pastors, and in other leadership capacities and to continue the bi-national relationships that young adults feel are so important.
7. To aid in guiding national staff and programming designed for young adult ministry.

While we consider other avenues for carrying out these purposes, the majority of our efforts are focused on the annual Young Adult Fellowship retreat which takes place sometime between the end of September and the beginning of November. The location varies from year to year between Canada and the US and from east to west.

The 2008 Young Adult Fellowship retreat, "Rise Up," was held Oct. 31- Nov. 2 at Camp Overlook, near Harrisonburg, Virginia. The retreat used a participant-driven discussion format called Open Spaces to identify, discuss, and plan responses to the issues most important to American and Canadian Mennonite young adults today. The three issues given highest priority were church welcome (or lack thereof, at times), quarter-life crisis (more about this on the back cover of the December 2, 2008 issue of *The Mennonite*), and disagreeing well.

## Here is some of the positive feedback we received from retreat participants:

- "...we were able to sort through what is really pressing for us and glean wisdom..."
- "[My highlight was] seeing that there is still a powerful value in our spirituality and church life amongst our generation, as well as energy to increase this."

Out of the 20 responses received from participants, 19 identified tackling young adult issues and/or connecting with other Mennonite young adults as the highlight of the retreat. We could not be more excited about that outcome.

## However, the following response reflects another common refrain:

- "I feel like [this] was organized quite well. We just need to find a way to get the word out about it."

This response was not surprising. For years, advertising has been our biggest hurdle. We believe you, the delegates at our Assemblies, are one of our biggest allies in getting the good word out to the young adults of our church.

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### Here are some ways you can help:

1. Every year we send an email with a retreat poster and registration form to each Canadian area church and U.S. area conference. Watch for information about the 2009 Young Adult Fellowship retreat coming your way this summer and help others in your region be aware of and engage in this event.
2. The YAF planning committee is convinced that we will not be fully meeting our mandate until we have representation from each area church/conference at the annual YAF retreat. When you receive the registration form, identify at least one young adult in your region or congregation who could go. Offer funds to assist your young adults to attend.
3. Since there's more than just regional diversity in our Church, consider the ethnic diversity in your region or congregation when you choose young adults to sponsor. As part of our mandate, we hope for more participation from our Latino, Chinese, Vietnamese, First Nations, Laotian, African-American, and other underrepresented young adults.
4. For YAF to have the most tangible impact on the Mennonite Church, it also needs to have a positive regional impact. Work with young adults in your region and congregation, especially those who have attended these retreats on your behalf, to establish a regional young adult council with regional young adult events.
5. Place the oversight of this council into the job description of a regional denominational staff member. Experience shows that young adult involvement in the church is only sustainable when it is made an area of priority for a staff member.

Despite serving as MC Canada and MC USA's young adult arm for close to 10 years, YAF is still introducing itself to many. If you want to know more about who we are, what we do, and how we do it, please contact us. Dave Bergen at the MC Canada office (1.866.888.6785; dbergen@mennonitechurch.ca) and Scott Hartman at the MC USA office (1.866.866.2872; scotth@mennoniteusa.org) are two great people to start with.

Our most recent retreat was filled with passion and hope. It was a welcome reminder that in a time when many express anxiety over declining church membership numbers, the young adults of our church hold the potential of a bright future for the Mennonite Church in Canada and the United States. With your help, and the Holy Spirit's guidance, this bright future can be realized.

- *Young Adult Fellowship Committee*: Peter Epp (Oregon), Alissa Bender (Alberta), Dave Maurer (Ohio), Jill Swiers Baker (Oregon/Minnesota), Jessica Dyck (Manitoba/Ontario), Scott Hartman (Indiana/MC USA staff representative), Dave Bergen (Manitoba/MC Canada staff representative)

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