

# Support Services Council

## At a Glance...

### Support Services Council Members for 2008-09:

Ed Janzen, (chair); Abbotsford, BC; Bill Janzen, Calgary, AB; Harry Wiens, Altona, MB; Mark Wurtz, Rosthern, SK; Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel, Morden, MB; Kaye Rempel, Waterloo, ON

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

The mandate of Support Services is to support all of Mennonite Church Canada programs – with particular emphasis on Formation and Witness – with administration services to enable the programs of the church to do their work effectively and efficiently.

This support task includes the very practical aspects such as: looking after the property and assets of MC Canada, providing communication support, and providing human resource support. It also includes areas of broader support, such as pension plan administration for employees and pastors, and resource development. But more than a listing of activities, this is a supportive ministry to Mennonite Church Canada. At the time of this writing, we are in the midst of an economic slowdown, also referred to as a recession, and we hear many dire predictions of what is to come. We are reminded that, though our financial wellbeing is important, it is not the purpose of our existence, nor does it affect our faith, or our commitment to be a faithful church.

## Communications

If a piece of communication from MC Canada was graphically designed, has a photo, is on the internet, or comprises audio or video media, it likely passed through MC Canada's Communications team. The goal of this team is to invite, inform, inspire, and involve all of the church in God's great mission in the world as expressed through the programs and ministries of MC Canada Formation and Witness.

You may ask, "How many people visit the Mennonite Church Canada web site?" A few facts and figures at the time of writing:

Videos on MC Canada's YouTube channel have been viewed 11,400 times since inception ([www.youtube.com/mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.youtube.com/mennonitechurch.ca)). The channel hosts over 25 titles about the work of MC Canada at home and around the world.

The Communications team has developed and oversees four web sites (stats for Feb., 2009):

- [www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca) (600,000 hits; 21,000 unique visitors)
- [www.alternativeservice.ca](http://www.alternativeservice.ca) (24,000 hits; 800 unique visitors)
- [www.churchpandemicresources.ca](http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca) (6,500 hits; 235 unique visitors)
- [www.healingandhope.ca](http://www.healingandhope.ca) (3,300 hits, 276 unique visitors)

In some cases, web site visitors to [www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca) can be traced to a home country. During Feb., 2009, the top five nations represented were:

1. Canada
2. Mexico
3. United Kingdom
4. Netherlands
5. Germany

At the time of writing, 28 episodes of our radio program and podcast, **Church Matters**, have been produced (available from [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/206](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/206) and via free subscription on iTunes and other podcast providers). Approximately 20,000 listeners in

GENERAL

FORMATION

WITNESS

SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCE

DISCERNMENT

Southern Manitoba tune in to this program on every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month at 8:45 am. Since inception, 3,000 downloads have been retrieved from our online Resource Centre, plus an unknown number downloaded via multiple podcast providers. The most popular episode was on the topic of militarization in Canada.

We continue to produce a bi-weekly news service to keep the Canada-wide body informed about the latest happenings in MC Canada ministries. In 2008, we released 102 news stories about the work of the church in the world. *Canadian Mennonite* published 58 of these stories. Approximately 100 individuals are subscribers to the MC Canada News Service.

**We produced numerous print resources in 2008:**

- A refreshed version of the brochure, **What makes a Mennonite?** There are also traditional and simplified Chinese language versions available.
- A wall calendar for congregations.
- 10 times yearly editions of *Equipping*.
- Numerous displays and presentation resources.
- Numerous promotional items for our web sites and *Church Matters*
- ... and more.

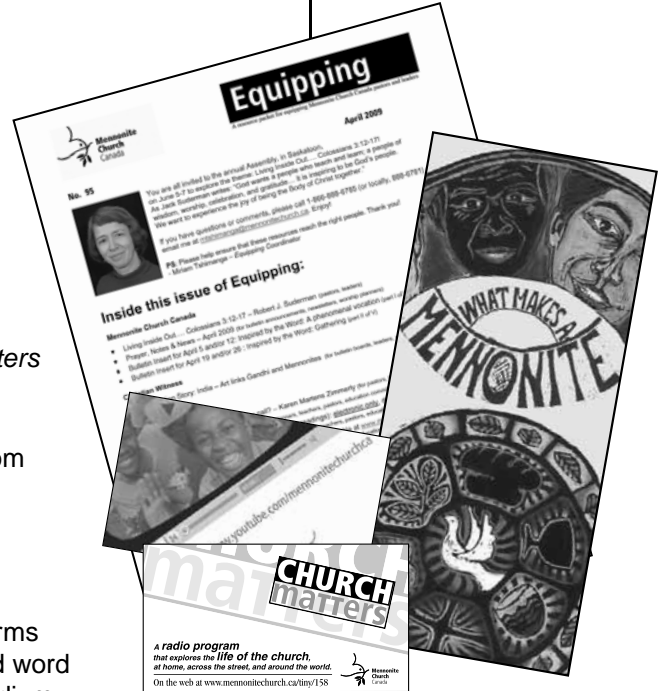
You will learn about other Communications activities in reports from Witness and Formation elsewhere in this Workbook.

**Information Technology**

Communicating effectively is an ongoing challenge, not only in terms of what is said but also how the message is delivered. The printed word continues to be an essential medium. However, the electronic medium continues to evolve and gain in importance, particularly with the younger generation. New terms describe the many ways we communicate. Facebook, YouTube, blogging, text messaging, Skype with or without web cams, Twitter, pod casting, and more are used to describe how people communicate. Each seems to have a place. Searching for information has become easy by “googling”. If we want to reach a particular audience, we need to be aware of how best to reach them. Moreover, these virtual forums evolve and change rapidly, often taking their audiences to new places in cyberspace. These are some of the challenges that new information technologies pose for us.

**Resource Development**

The mandate of the Resource Development department is to form relationships, and plan activities with the area churches, congregations, and individuals, to gain financial and other support for Mennonite Church Canada programs, ministries, and mission. In the absence of a full time Director of Resource Development (the position became vacant in June 2008), Gerd Bartel, who is a part time Western representative, has expanded his role to take on responsibilities for the whole region. This is a daunting task. We appreciate his dedication to building relationships and representing the vision and ministry of MC Canada and to cultivate, nurture, and relate to donors. In thinking more broadly for the future, we hope to develop a network of volunteers to plan and lead fundraising and other events across the country. This is a vital ministry, which enables the work of the church to continue and expand. This is only possible through the generosity and support of the many congregations and individuals who believe in working together to build God’s Kingdom. We invite your special consideration, particularly during the times of financial uncertainty.



- GENERAL
- FORMATION
- WITNESS
- SUPPORT SERVICES
- FINANCE
- DISCERNMENT

## At a Glance...

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

### MC Canada members of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service 2008-09 were:

Aiden Enns, Winnipeg, MB; John Goosen, Vancouver, BC; Ed Janzen, Abbotsford, BC; Paul Krahn, Altona, MB

### MC Canada members of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada 2008-09:

Rudy Friesen, Winnipeg, MB; Karin Krahn, Calgary AB; Tony Huynh, Winnipeg, MB; Clayton Loewen, Fort Langley, BC; Anita Tiessen, Mississauga, ON

## Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources, Kirsten Schroeder, looks after the various HR needs of the organization including the administration of the Human Resource policy, administering the Group Insurance plan and the Mutual Aid Sharing Plan for the international workers, and guided by a Pension Advisory Committee, administers the pension plan for employees and pastors.

There were a number of staffing changes within Support Services this year. A very visible and significant change is the absence of Pam Peters-Pries, Executive Secretary for Support Services. This position is now filled on an interim basis by Louie Sawatzky.

We have also said goodbye to several other valued long-term staff – Al Rempel, Director, Resource Development, and Lynette Wiebe, Communications Coordinator. We are grateful to Al and Lynette for all of their fine work over the years, and wish them well as they continue to engage with God and the church in new ways. We were also very fortunate to have worked with our volunteers Irmgard Reimer and Hyo Sook Yun, who served in terms at reception and in communications respectively.

In November we said goodbye to Alice Pound, Interim Receptionist and welcomed back Miriam Tshimanga to this position, from a maternity leave. In April, Lois Bergen took on a part time role in Support Services.

Although these changes are very significant, we are grateful and amazed at the resourcefulness, and talent of people willing to step in to fill the positions as required. We again express our appreciation and gratitude for the contributions of those who have left and those who have stepped in to take their place.

The human resources office continues to work at screening and placing international mission workers in assignments. We are pleased to see increased interest by pastors who are considering an overseas term as part of their sabbatical experience. The Group Insurance policy renewal negotiated this November led to a slight increase in premiums. Our Bereavement and Compassionate Care Policy for staff was expanded to include a section on caring for others during a critical illness.

**MC Canada Pandemic Taskforce:** In the past few years we have all become more aware of the effects of significant weather or health events outside of our control; events that disrupt lives and activities. It is prudent to do some planning in the event of a major health event often referred to as a pandemic. Led by Witness, significant work has been done by communications and HR staff as posted on the website at [www.churchpandemicresources.ca](http://www.churchpandemicresources.ca)

## Pension Plan

This has been a year of tremendous financial volatility and many people are concerned about their financial security particularly as they near retirement. The Pension plan for pastors and staff of MC Canada offers 28 different investment options. However, the majority of funds (78%) are invested in the core option known as the Socially Responsible Asset Allocation Fund. This fund aligns with our stated values of investing in socially responsible funds with a more moderate to conservatively balanced approach. This fund stood up very well during the financial downturn relative to other types of investments, but even at that, showed a return of -7.2%.

The Pension Advisory Committee continues to see education of plan members as an important and ongoing duty. In January and February of this year member education meetings were offered to plan members across the country. These information sessions provided information about the investment choices available and the opportunity for members to align pension funds with faith values and risk tolerance. They also emphasized the opportunity for private consultations with our plan advisors, the Ardent Retirement Group (1-866-943-5658). This type of service is of particular importance to those with an eye to retirement in the next five years.

GENERAL

FORMATION

WITNESS

SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCE

DISCERNMENT

## Property Management

We continue to work in the spirit of “greening” our work environment. A helpful resource with ideas of how we (and you) can work at this is found at [www.faitn-commongood.net/gss](http://www.faitn-commongood.net/gss). However, in order to be financially responsible, this is also a time of restraint, and progress has been limited to what can be done with fewer resources. Small improvements have been made to the office building and the Heritage Centre. However, we are committed to environmental stewardship in our lifestyles and in our work place.

During this past year we have also been working toward the sale of the now vacant Mennonite church building in Thompson, Manitoba belonging to MC Canada. This congregation is no longer active and the building has been used by various groups on a rental basis. When the building is sold, the proceeds will be split and applied to the General Reserve funds, the Capital Reserves, and to the New Initiatives Reserve fund.

## Assembly Planning

Assembly planning, hosting and running is not a light task. It requires many willing and capable hands. Our thanks go out to the many volunteers and staff persons who every year are willing to take on this task. As printed elsewhere in this report book, the Purpose and Goals of the annual Assembly are two-fold:

1. Provide opportunities for participants to build up and nurture the church, and
2. To conduct the business of the organization as described in the MC Canada bylaws.

It is with this in mind that every effort is made to create an atmosphere of worship throughout this Assembly, where all participants feel the presence of God in worship as well as in deliberations.

We are grateful to Elsie Rempel, Director Christian Education and Nurture, Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister, and Karen Peters, Executive Assistant, for giving direction to this year’s Assembly planning committees.

Over the past several years, there has been discussion regarding the merits of annual versus biennial Assemblies. You will note this topic elsewhere on the agenda, looking for your participation and input into this discernment. We hope to condense the discussion into a recommendation for the delegate body to consider at the 2010 Assembly.

Due to the Mennonite World Conference taking place in Asuncion this year, several changes in time were made to accommodate that event, including the date changes for this Assembly, as well as the Youth Assembly taking place at the Briercrest Bible College in Caronport, July 6-10. Plans are underway for the Assembly 2010 to be held in Alberta. As per a decision made two years ago, that the Assemblies be guided by the same text for two consecutive years, the theme for the 2010 Assembly will be based on our guiding text for this year (Colossians 3: 12-17).

—Submitted by Louie Sawatzky, Interim Executive Secretary, Support Services, and Ed Janzen, Chair, Support Services Council

## At a Glance...

### Support Services staff in 2008:

**Gerd Bartel**, Western Director of Resource Development; **Lois Bergen**, Receptionist/ Administrative Assistant; **Dan Dyck**, Director of Communications; **Deborah Froese**, Director of News Services; **Grant Klassen**, Web Servant; **Karen Peters**, Executive Assistant; **Katharina Nuss**, Communications Coordinator/Graphic Designer; **Pam Peters-Pries**, Executive Secretary; **Alice Pound**, Receptionist/ Administrative Assistant; **Louie Sawatzky**, Interim Executive Secretary; **Kirsten Schroeder**, Director of Human Resources; **Miriam Tshimanga**, Receptionist/ Administrative Assistant



Support Services Council members Kaye Rempel and Mark Wurtz at the 2009 Spring Leadership Assembly.

# Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC)



In a year when disheartening financial news made the headlines far too often, we are pleased to report that God's people are still striving to lead lives of faithful, joyful generosity. Mennonite Foundation of Canada is thankful for the relationship we have with Mennonite Church Canada – the receptiveness your pastors and church leaders show to our consultants in working on stewardship education; the openness with which your members have welcomed our consultants in counseling sessions, both for estate planning and for gift planning; and the good relations between your denominational leaders and our administrative staff.

- Our objective of breaking through the \$100 million ceiling in assets under management was achieved early in the year. Donors and clients have been confident in our ability to invest and distribute charitable dollars. Despite a brief downturn in the midst of the market turmoil, we ended 2008 with an asset base of over \$106 million. The market volatility has had a limited effect on our fixed income pool payout rates. Only accounts specifically invested in equity investments will see the negative impact of the current market conditions in the immediate term. Moreover, we have built up reserve funds, and our operations are not jeopardized as a result of the general fiscal chaos. We are continuing to stand on solid ground!
- Since we are a donor-advised charitable foundation, most of the monies which we pay out every year are grants based on the advice received from our donors. We do, however, have a limited grant program which is independent of our donors, and which some of your churches have accessed for a variety of projects. We are in the process of revising the criteria for these grants. In the future, we will seek to support your initiatives that highlight and enhance financial stewardship. Stay tuned to find out how you can access some of these funds.
- We were shocked and saddened on October 23 at the death of Edwin Friesen, our stewardship consultant in Winnipeg serving churches in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. We recognize the important contributions he made, particularly in writing on stewardship themes. In early 2009, Harold Penner, MFC accountant for 10 years, was appointed to this consultant position in Winnipeg. Gerald Barkman is the new consultant working in MFC's Abbotsford office. Kevin Davidson has been hired as a second consultant to serve our churches in Alberta, along with Gary Sawatzky. Our consultants are here to serve Mennonite Church Canada, its churches and its members across Canada. Don't be shy about contacting them.
- Consultants presently serving MC Canada churches are Darren Pries-Klassen, Sherri Grosz, and Mike Strathdee in Ontario and East; Dori Zerbe Cornelsen in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; Gary Sawatzky and Kevin Davidson in Alberta; and Gerald Barkman in British Columbia. MC Canada representatives on the MFC Board are Rudy Friesen, Tony Huynh, Karin Krahn, Clayton Loewen, and Anita Tiessen.

*—Respectfully submitted, Erwin Warkentin, General Manager*

GENERAL

FORMATION

WITNESS

SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCE

DISCERNMENT

# Canadian Mennonite (CM)

## Dear Mennonite Church Canada delegates:

God is with us! At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus assures his disciples, "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." In the first chapter of the same book, Joseph learns from an angel that his wife-to-be will soon give birth to Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." In between those two promises are the reports of what Jesus did and said that have inspired so many for so long.

The stories of God with us – then and now – are a strength and a gift to us. It's the privilege of our church magazine, *Canadian Mennonite*, to have an important part in that ministry. Not that the magazine is Scripture by any means, but we, along with Matthew, want to tell the profound and moving accounts of God working in human lives. This past year, about 30,000 people in MC Canada households had the chance to read about 1,100 articles in *Canadian Mennonite* about just this, and how Canadian Mennonites responded to God's love by loving the people around them in return.

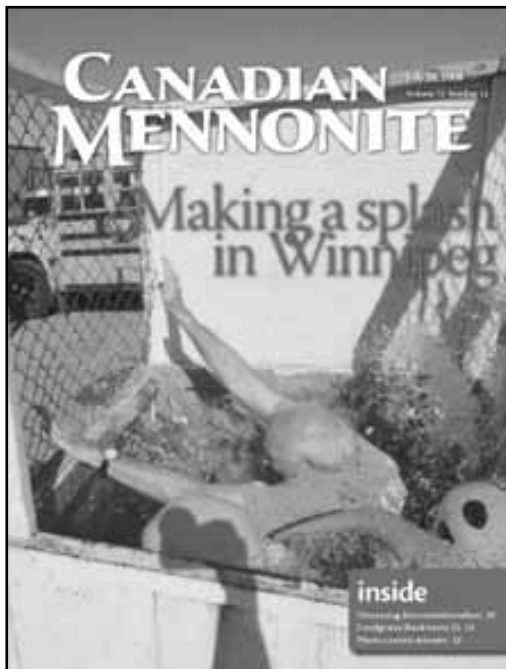
Perhaps you saw God at work in the October 2008 reports from three teenagers writing about their experiences in the desert, alone with God. "It's very rare that anyone can find time like that in their busy lives to talk to God or even acknowledge him in any way. As I was sitting there I started to notice every little bug, cactus, and living thing around me, and I remembered that God made everything there," wrote Lise Pearce in her report, after discovering God being with her in an unexpected way.

Or perhaps you saw God with us in the stories of five people who discovered God present in the Mennonite Church not through growing up in it but in coming to it as adults, or in our reports on emerging church plants in several parts of our church published throughout 2008.

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

God's grace and peace to you all.

–Tim Miller Dyck, outgoing Editor/  
Publisher and Dick Benner, incoming  
Editor/Publisher



## At a Glance...

### CANADIAN MENNONITE

**Activity/Program:** Publishing a national magazine primarily for those attending MC Canada churches

**Mission Statement:** *Canadian Mennonite* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/ Mennonite periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (guided by Hebrews 10:23-25, which calls on us to be concerned for one another, encourage each other and help one another do good). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, news and analysis of issues facing the church.

**2008 Expenses:** \$636,000 (net income was \$158,000 from MC Canada, \$127,000 from the five area churches and \$351,000 raised by the magazine through other means)

**Reporting to:** Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Board, a twelve-member board that includes four Mennonite Church Canada-appointed board members (as of Dec., 2008, these were Aiden Enns, John W. Goossen, Ed Janzen and Paul Krahn). The board chair is Larry Cornies.

GENERAL

FORMATION

WITNESS

SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCE

DISCERNMENT