

# Discernment Guide

The work of the church is best described as discussion and discernment, rather than as debate and decision. We want to provide the best possible atmosphere for discussion and discernment in these delegate sessions.

We have much work to do in a short period of time, while at the same time conducting ourselves in a manner that allows for maximum discussion. We need to use procedures that are fair and open, but not complex and cumbersome. The size of our delegate body makes it difficult to make decisions through a process of simple consensus. A brief introduction to some basic rules may help us. As usual, we will have a parliamentarian to assist us in our work.

## About Motions

During a delegate session, you may wish to introduce a motion, raise a question, or extend discussion. Please follow these basic principles:

- A motion or resolution of new or substantive business must first be taken to the Resolutions Committee by the mover and seconder. The purpose of this committee is to help us complete our business on time by reviewing new motions for clarity and appropriateness before they are brought to the Assembly.
- The Resolutions Committee has the prerogative to combine resolutions with others or modify them for presentation, to refer a resolution to the General Board or other body as an alternative to delegate action, or to rule a motion out of order. If the delegates disagree with a decision of the Resolutions Committee they can bring a motion to the floor. In that case, the moderator will call for a vote on whether to debate the motion. This vote will require support of a simple majority of the delegates.
- To amend a motion, limit or extend debate on a motion, or lay a motion on the table, you will need to make a motion to that effect while the main motion is still under consideration. To do that, seek recognition from the moderator and then make the motion.
- To object to consideration of a motion, call for a more precise vote, ask a question of parliamentary procedure, or offer information on a question, seek recognition of the moderator and make your comment or motion. This includes a call for a recess, or adjournment.
- In order to facilitate a good process, amendments to resolutions that appear on the agenda should be presented in advance in writing to the Resolutions Committee before they can be offered to delegates.
- Any delegate may speak to points of order and other motions of parliamentary procedure, such as a motion on the table.
- Only registered delegates can make or move motions as well as vote.

- Most motions require a second – that someone else also indicates a desire to consider the motion. When the moderator asks for a second to a motion, please raise your hand and seek acknowledgement.
- The MC Canada General Board Executive Committee may offer an amendment or a new resolution without processing it through the Resolutions Committee (for the purpose of efficient process).
- If you think that it is time to end discussion you can “call for the question.” However, if there is any objection to ending discussion, then the delegate body will need to take a vote on your proposal to end discussion.

## Basic Guidelines

- Our overarching interest in a delegate assembly is to make sure that we hear from as many persons as possible.
- If you wish to speak, please approach a microphone and be recognized by the moderator.
- We ask delegates to treat each other with respect in Christian love.
- Make sure you identify yourself and your area church or congregation before making your remarks.
- Please direct your remarks to the moderator and speak for yourself only, unless specifically commissioned to speak for a group. If so, name the group. We urge delegates to listen carefully to the flow of the meeting.
- Allow everyone who wants to speak an opportunity to do so before speaking a second time to the same motion.
- Speaking not more than twice to any motion in one day will help to ensure speaking opportunities for more delegates.
- Make it clear whether you support a motion on the floor or have a different view.
- Keep your remarks brief to allow others to speak after you.

## Additional Items

Many of the proposals being brought for delegate action have been developed through an extensive process of feedback from congregations, area churches, as well as committees and boards.

- We encourage vigorous debate on proposals.
- We ask you not to show your approval or disapproval (for instance by clapping) of any speaker on the floor.

# 2009 Assembly Discernment

## 1 **Being a Faithful Church:**

### 2 **Testing the Spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment**

#### 4 **Delegate Assembly process:**

6 We will devote 3 hours to this process with the delegates.

#### 8 **Objectives of the delegate session:**

- 10 1) Participate in the church's task of interpreting the Bible and of discerning what  
11 God is saying in our time by examining all things in the light of Scripture (from  
12 the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*: Article 4, p. 22).
- 13 2) Test the insights and understandings which we bring to the interpretation of the  
14 Scripture in the faith community (from the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite*  
15 *Perspective*: Article 4, p.22).
- 16 3) Engage in deliberate processes that help us face the challenges in the life of the  
17 church.

#### 19 **Key Resource:**

21 Paper reviewed and approved by the General Board:

#### 22 **Being a Faithful Church:**

#### 23 **Testing the Spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment**

#### 25 **Delegates will be asked to respond to the following statement of affirmation:**

27 We affirm the direction of this paper and encourage the Boards, Committees, and  
28 Councils of MC Canada to use it as a tool to assist the church in addressing  
29 themes such as: unity and diversity in the life of the church; being a peace church;  
30 confessing and witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord in a religiously pluralistic  
31 context; human sexuality in the life of the church; ecological concerns from a  
32 perspective of faith.

GENERAL

FORMATION

WITNESS

SUPPORT SERVICES

FINANCE

DISCERNMENT

1 Mennonite Church Canada Assembly  
2 June 5-7, 2009  
3

4 **Being a Faithful Church:**  
5 **Testing the Spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment**  
6

7  
8 **Background**  
9

10 The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada monitors the spiritual health of our  
11 church. This is not an easy task, because it is not easy to be the church, in Canada, in the  
12 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some writers have, in fact, suggested that Canada is a country with “very  
13 hard soil” for the gospel of Jesus Christ: one of the hardest anywhere in the world. We  
14 face challenges, and each one is worth facing with the integrity of being the church.  
15

16 The General Board understands that the ongoing health of our church requires that we  
17 continue to strengthen our overall capacity to discern<sup>1</sup> the mind of God as the church  
18 engages the critical agenda of our time. This need/capacity to discern is important in all  
19 aspects of our life together. It is important in how we worship, and in how we organize. It  
20 is also important in how we respond to questions of faithfulness that are within and  
21 among us. The General Board, along with other circles of counsel, tries to discern what  
22 the important themes are that require ongoing attention. Themes that have been identified  
23 in the last years are:  
24

- 25 a) Unity and Diversity in the life of the Church;
  - 26 b) Being a Peace church;
  - 27 c) Confessing and witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord in a religiously pluralistic  
28 context;
  - 29 d) Human sexuality in the life of the church;
  - 30 e) Ecological concerns from a perspective of faith.
- 31

32 The need to be a biblically-grounded people is not new, but it is important to re-ignite our  
33 commitment and our capacity to be a people of God’s Word. Specifically, this means  
34 that:  
35

- 36 1) We covenant with each other to study the Bible together and explore the biblical  
37 teachings.
- 38 2) We covenant with each other to mutually bear the burden of remaining in loving  
39 dialogue with each other in the body of Christ. We are all sinners in need of God's  
40 grace and we know that the Holy Spirit can lead us to further truth and to  
41 repentance where needed.
- 42 3) We covenant compassion and prayer for each other.

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<sup>1</sup> The words “discern” and “discernment” come from the Latin *discernere*. *Cernere* means to separate, distinguish, or sift. *Dis* means to take off. It is a good word to talk about the need to sift, and to test what is among us. The Greek New Testament word most often translated as “discern” is *dokimazo* (used 31 times). This word, too, refers to testing, examining, and interpreting. It is a continuous process of faith in God and faithfulness to God.

1 4) We covenant to take part in the ongoing search for discernment and for openness  
2 to each other.

3 5) We covenant with God that as we discern his will for our lives and our fellowship  
4 we will seek to obey it, through his grace and strength.  
5  
6

### 7 **Purpose:**

8 This paper is a resource to help us think together how spiritual discernment may nourish  
9 our faithfulness to God's will for the church in our world.  
10

### 11 **Why now?**

12  
13 As a national church we are facing the complex reality that while different parts of our  
14 Body (Priesthood of Believers) are reflecting on the **same** foundational scripture, guided  
15 by the **same** Holy Spirit, revealing the mind/will of the **same** God, we are discerning  
16 what appear, at times, to be contradictory and irreconcilable directions in understanding  
17 Christian faithfulness.  
18

19 Hermeneutical<sup>2</sup> diversity is not new, neither in Christian ecumenical nor Mennonite  
20 experience. Such diversity has been/is present in understanding God's will in:  
21 circumcision, slavery, the role of women in ministry, pacifism, economic models, relation  
22 to creation, church structure, ecclesial authority and autonomy, and so on. It is important,  
23 therefore, to ask why we need to pay special attention to our capacity to discern within  
24 our denomination *now*. The answer, by necessity, is more related to the *art* of being the  
25 church than to the *science* of hermeneutical process. Basically, we believe that churchly  
26 faithfulness to scripture comes to life within an Anabaptist community through our  
27 common commitment to "sift," and to seek clarity in our desire to be God's obedient  
28 people.  
29

30 1) As Mennonites, we believe that the church needs to be scripturally grounded, and  
31 that hermeneutics are ecclesially<sup>3</sup>-based. Both of these elements signal to us that  
32 we need to take a close look at what is happening among us.

33 2) We are committed to being the church amid the spiritual unrest and ferment that is  
34 among us.  
35

36 What follows is an attempt to think organically and organizationally about the  
37 ingredients/components that the task of careful discernment places before us. The Book  
38 of Proverbs says that:  
39

40 *Without counsel, plans go wrong, but with a multitude of counselors they succeed*  
41 *(Prov. 15:22).*  
42

43 This is wise counsel for us in our time too. We are not, of course, starting at point zero.  
44 Very much discernment and many processes are already a part of our experience as a

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<sup>2</sup> Hermeneutics comes from the Greek language, *hermeneutikos*, and refers to the skill of interpretation, the capacity to make something clear.

<sup>3</sup> *Ecclesial* comes from the Greek New Testament word *ekklesia* which means "church."

1 denomination. None of what is stated here is meant to negate the efforts that have gone  
2 before. Indeed, quite the opposite. What is stated here is building on these efforts and is  
3 made possible only because of these many other encounters and processes that are  
4 already part of our communal experience. We acknowledge each of these with gratitude.  
5

### 6 **The Ongoing Task: Is Discernment Necessary?**

7  
8 Seeking clarity in faithfulness in Christian life is the never-ending, non-optional vocation  
9 of God's people. Such discernment is a critical component of the ongoing learning  
10 needed for faithfulness in the world. Several biblical texts remind us of this ongoing task:  
11

#### 12 **Luke 12:54-56:**

13 Jesus teaches that "interpreting the times" (literally: the *kairos* of God) must be as  
14 constant a discipline of the church as understanding weather patterns that shape  
15 our life. He laments the lack of capacity to do that. The inability or the  
16 unwillingness to discern the times is either due to hypocrisy, creates hypocrisy, or  
17 both.

#### 18 **Matthew 18:1-35 (see also John 20:22-23):**

19 One of the amazing, and in its context, heretical tasks given to the church is to  
20 deal with sin: to discern it, to forgive it, or to retain it. That this task is given to  
21 the "two or three" as they gather together in the name of Christ is a very large  
22 and, heretofore, inconceivable responsibility. The assumptions till then had been  
23 that this was the sole responsibility of God. The first step in dealing with sin is to  
24 discover it and to name it. The criteria for doing so are not provided in this text.  
25 This must be the ongoing vocation of the gathered church.

#### 26 **I John 4, 5:**

27 The potential for false teaching within the church is significant. The church's  
28 discipleship/faithfulness antennae must always be on high alert. The church is  
29 given the task of "testing the spirits, to see if they are of God" (I John 4:1). The  
30 reason for this is because the spiritual sources of common wisdom and practice  
31 may not always be readily evident, i.e. it is not always immediately clear which  
32 "spirits" are nurturing common assumptions.

#### 33 **John 16:1-15:**

34 Jesus promises his disciples that when he leaves he will send the Spirit, the  
35 Paraclete, to accompany them. One of the key functions of this Spirit in the midst  
36 of the community is the ongoing task of teaching them what truth is, where it is to  
37 be found, and how it needs to be practiced. The hermeneutical community under  
38 the guidance of the Holy Spirit thus becomes the locus of authoritative  
39 discernment of God's will revealed in Holy Scripture and in contextual practice.  
40

41 The common element in all of these passages is the assumption that discerning the mind  
42 of God in order to be a faithful people of God is an ongoing task. Indeed, this is more  
43 than a mere task: it is a foundational vocation of what it means to be God's people,  
44 incarnate in the world, in order to save it from its destructive potential.  
45

46 For Anabaptists, the authority of scripture is understood to be unleashed only when God's  
47 people carefully and prayerfully discern the will of God through the presence of the Holy  
48 Spirit guiding the church into an understanding of scripture that reflects God's will for

1 the world. Scripture, according to this understanding, loses its functional authority for our  
2 world when the community becomes hermeneutically unfaithful or dysfunctional.  
3 Scripture and experience both point to two important ingredients as we engage the  
4 ongoing task of discernment:

- 5
- 6 a) God has been with us. We can be confident in what has been. There is enough life  
7 lived, truth revealed, and wisdom absorbed that provide a sufficient platform for  
8 faithful living.
  - 9 b) God will be with us. We must be open to spiritual surprises. It is not that there is  
10 new spiritual truth invented, but the Spirit can uncover old truths for us in  
11 surprising ways. It is the ongoing, often vulnerable, responsibility of the church to  
12 remain open to the surprises that God may have in store for us.
- 13

14 These two ingredients may appear to be in tension. And they may generate  
15 misunderstanding, conflict, threat, and impatience. But both ingredients come from the  
16 same source, God, and we need not fear. It is the vocation of the church to walk in this  
17 tension.

18

19 Yet, even as the church engages the process of discernment, we confess that, at best, we  
20 will only understand “through a glass darkly [or in a mirror dimly]” (I Cor. 13:12). Our  
21 definitions and pronouncements are never the last word. Our discernment, too, comes  
22 under the judgment of the Spirit of Truth and the wisdom of God revealed in God’s  
23 *kairos* (time) and in our *chronos* (time). Doctrine, theology, and confession do not  
24 replace the living Word of God, that continually brings us into fuller truth and  
25 understanding that reflects the eternal will of God for his world.

26

## 27 **Practical Options**

28

29 The practical implication of such ongoing discernment is that the church will always  
30 speak, and then it must always speak again. And when it speaks again, it will have three  
31 options, each of which can potentially be a faithful or an unfaithful option. Many  
32 examples could be given. We will limit ourselves to only a few:

33

- 34 a) The church can repeat again what it has said before:
  - 35 **Example from the Bible:** Jesus’ reference to part of the *shema* as the
  - 36 greatest commandment: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with
  - 37 all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbour as yourself.”
  - 38 **Example from church history:** Mennonites reaffirming their
  - 39 understanding of pacifism in spite of the persecution against them from
  - 40 without, and the pressures from within in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and during
  - 41 World War I and II.
- 42 b) The church can modify what it has said before, given some new spiritual
- 43 understandings. This would normally mean that it can move further but in the
- 44 same direction that it has moved before.
  - 45 **Example from the Bible:** Jesus’ desire to fulfil and not to abolish the law
  - 46 with his six references to: “You have heard that it was said ... But I say to
  - 47 you...”

1                   **Example from church history:** Mennonites slowly moving from an  
2                   understanding of “non-resistance” to “non-violent resistance.”  
3       c) The church can change what it has said before because new perspectives have  
4       become apparent and compelling, and shifting the relative authority of canonical  
5       voices has been discerned to be necessary.

6                   **Example from the Bible:** The understanding of the “chosen people” to  
7                   include the Gentiles in a new way, which in turn changed the  
8                   understanding of circumcision and food laws in affirming what “seemed  
9                   good to the Holy Spirit and to us.”

10                  **Example from church history:** The church’s defence of slavery not being  
11                  justifiable, and the equal role of women in the ministry of the church to be  
12                  good.

13  
14       There is always tension between *sufficient wisdom* and *spiritual surprise* as the church is  
15       intentional about discernment. Therefore, the church will not (cannot) know which of the  
16       three outcomes it will experience. Spiritual/biblical discernment ultimately is an exercise  
17       of faith in and submission to the work of the Holy Spirit in the midst of God’s  
18       community. The church always engages discernment on the foundation of what it has  
19       discerned before. Discernment does not mean that we are adrift or that there is no anchor.  
20       We are confident in the past presence of God with us, and the sufficiency of the wisdom  
21       that has been discerned. Discernment does not presuppose change, but it is open to  
22       surprises engineered by the Holy Spirit. This means that while the foundation is solid,  
23       where discernment will end up is not predetermined. It is open to the inherent tension of  
24       sufficiency and surprise. The church need not, however, fear. A discerning community  
25       will come to the point where it can say “it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to  
26       us...” (Acts 15:28). And this is the trust and faith that allows the church to be the church,  
27       engaging its God-given vocation of confronting sin and engaging obedience. Conversely,  
28       a church that avoids, refuses, or cannot engage its vocation of ongoing discernment  
29       cannot be the church.

### 30 31       **Being a Faithful Church**

32  
33       Spiritual discernment engages us in deliberate processes that help us face the challenges  
34       in the life of the church. What is at stake, fundamentally, is not whether a previous  
35       position will be re-stated (spiritual sufficiency) or whether a new road will be forged  
36       (spiritual surprise). What is at stake is our capacity to be the church in fulfilling our  
37       ongoing vocation of discerning the *kairos* of God for our time. In other words, the  
38       primary issue is not what exactly we will decide about the challenges that face us; the  
39       primary issue is whether we can be the church in doing so. It is very important not to lose  
40       sight of this fundamental focus.

41  
42       This, however, begs an all important question. What are the ingredients that make the  
43       church the church as it engages tough and potentially divisive conversations? Let us  
44       suggest a few key ingredients that are foundational:

45  
46       1) Understand that we are engaging a spiritual exercise. Spiritual discernment is not  
47       focused on personal preferences, peer pressure, social niceties, political  
48       correctness, scientific debate, or institutional power. While all these undoubtedly

- 1 shape and influence us, we must understand our process to be focussed on  
2 discerning the mind of God for our lives for our time. We have the full assurance  
3 that God’s Spirit will be present, and that we need not fear the outcomes. And we  
4 can be grateful that God is God and we are not.
- 5 2) Understand that as a spiritual exercise, we will engage seriously the spiritual  
6 disciplines as taught to us by our Lord. Such a process needs to be bathed in  
7 prayer for each other, meeting together with each other, studying scripture  
8 together, fasting, worship, listening, celebration, discernment, conversation, and a  
9 commitment to learn.
- 10 3) Understand that we are engaging an ecclesial (churchly) exercise. We believe that  
11 in God’s wisdom, the church has been called to be the primary vehicle for  
12 teaching and living out the good news of God’s Kingdom present in the world.  
13 We are, therefore, confident that an ecclesial process is necessary, sufficient, and  
14 good for us at this time – and in fact at any time. In doing so, we are engaging  
15 conversations about the life of the church. It makes sense that those who  
16 participate would do so from the basis of a commitment to make the church strong  
17 and faithful.
- 18 4) Understand that God’s Spirit and therefore God’s wisdom are not confined to the  
19 church. Because this is a spiritual exercise, the domain for understanding the  
20 Spirit’s work in the world is the world itself. This suggests that we should not be  
21 surprised to discover and learn spiritual truth from individuals, groups, society,  
22 science, politics, and institutions. “Interpreting the signs of the times” means to  
23 interpret what God is doing within and beyond the church in order to bring about  
24 his Kingdom.
- 25 5) Understand that by engaging an ecclesial process, internal to the church, we  
26 believe the church to be a priesthood of all believers. This suggests that all  
27 “priests” of the church are welcome to participate and each of these voices needs  
28 to be heard with integrity and sincerity. It does not mean that each priest stands  
29 before God in a way unaccountable to the priesthood. The priesthood of all  
30 believers does not mean full agreement of all priests with the priesthood. It does  
31 mean taking seriously the voice of the priesthood, even when our personal  
32 opinions or preferences may differ. It means being confident that God’s Spirit will  
33 work through the church as a community of discernment as is promised in  
34 scripture.
- 35 6) Understand that our commitment to be the church as a priesthood of believers will  
36 mean that there will be those who want to advocate for the sufficiency of what has  
37 been discerned till now, and those who will advocate for change based on their  
38 view of the surprises of the Spirit through a re-reading of experience and  
39 scripture. It would be normal to have advocates in such a process, but we would  
40 understand that advocacy is done to strengthen the Body of Christ in faithfulness  
41 to God, not for the purpose of winning. Because advocates are needed in such a  
42 process, the process itself must not be polarized, much less adversarial.
- 43 7) Understand that such a process would, naturally, desire to come to a point of the  
44 church speaking again. As indicated, this might mean saying the same thing,  
45 modifying previous speech, or change direction from previous discernment. In  
46 other words, while the process may be long, it is not entirely open-ended.
- 47 8) Understand that this process is designed to energize, not drain, the missional  
48 capacities of the church. When we understand discernment as fulfilling the

1 vocation of the church, we will be able to see this as an opportunity and not as a  
2 problem. This will energize our identity as a church.  
3

#### 4 5 **Summary**

6  
7 A missional/Anabaptist church is committed to its vocation of relevant presence and  
8 ministry in the place and time into which God has placed us. God wants us to see the  
9 potential for ecclesial renewal within our circumstances. Spiritual discernment is an  
10 opportunity for spiritual renewal and growth.

11  
12 Strengthening our capacity to discern together is a way of taking seriously our vocation  
13 as God's people in this time and place. It is a way of engaging God's *kairos* (time) within  
14 our *chronos* (time). This is a vocation to which the church has been permanently called.  
15 This is one opportunity (among many) for our generation to demonstrate that the church  
16 can "be worthy of the calling to which we have been called" (Eph. 4:1). It is our vocation  
17 to be the church, and when we face this vocation squarely, God's Spirit will guide us and  
18 "make peace" among us (Eph. 2:14). We cannot predict *how* God will do this work  
19 among us, but we can be confident that he *will* do this work among us.

20  
21 The heart and soul of facing the need for discernment is our conviction that the church is  
22 worth the effort. In a sense, being more deliberate in strengthening this part of our  
23 vocation may represent an opportunity of our generation to demonstrate the solid mettle  
24 that is at the heart of our commitment to be a faithful Mennonite church in our time and  
25 place.

26  
27 This document was commissioned and approved for discussion by the General Board of  
28 Mennonite Church Canada.

29  
30 Robert J. Suderman  
31 General Secretary  
32 Mennonite Church Canada  
33 March, 2009  
34

# 2009 Assembly Discernment

## *A proposal for promoting peace in the public square*

1 Peace in the Public Square  
2 Proposal for Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2009, Saskatoon

### 3 4 **A proposal for promoting the peace message in the public square:**

5  
6 Given what is (and is not) viable, what is already being done, and what is needed, we make a  
7 simple proposal:

- 8     • We propose:
- 9     • that *each* part of the Body within Mennonite Church Canada commit to publicly engage
  - 10     *one* local (regional, national, international) issue per year for the next 4 years;
  - 11     • that *each* part of the Body commit to provide the education and resourcing needed
  - 12     (within and beyond the Body) to articulate and explain the public engagement from a
  - 13     Peace Church perspective;
  - 14     • that *each* part of the Body commit to provide a written report to Mennonite Church
  - 15     Canada, outlining its engagement and reflecting on the impact of its work;
  - 16     • that Mennonite Church Canada staff commit to resource the educational needs of these
  - 17     initiatives;
  - 18     • that Mennonite Church Canada commit to compile these engagements into an annual
  - 19     summary report, providing perspective and analysis as needed and helpful;
- 20

21 Framework:

22 *Being a witness for peace in the public square is the vocation of the entire Body of Christ, that*  
23 *includes the congregations and its members, Area Churches, related institutions and*  
24 *denominational ministries. Each part of Mennonite Church Canada is strongly urged to seek*  
25 *out and act on opportunities to be a peace witness in the public square on an ongoing basis.*  
26 *These opportunities include but are not limited to: an ongoing commitment to educating,*  
27 *nurturing, and living a spirit of non-violent peacemaking, and public peace advocacy in our*  
28 *own congregations.*

### 29 30 **Background**

31 At the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2008, a resolution on Peace in the Public Square was  
32 brought by the Osler Mennonite Church (Sask.) and passed by the delegates. The resolution was  
33 in response to increasing militarization of Canadian society as evidenced by efforts of military  
34 recruitment in Canada, and Canada's involvement in the war in Afghanistan.

53 July, 2008: A Resolution from the Mennonite Church Canada Delegate Body

54 **BE IT RESOLVED:**

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

59  
60 Realizing that we are called to bear witness for Christ and his message, we request that the staff  
61 of MC Canada develop a proposal for promoting the peace message in the “public square”, and  
62 that it is presented at the 2009 annual delegate assembly.

63  
64 **EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

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

72  
73 **MC Canada staff response:**

74 We affirm the intent of this resolution in that it underscores the conviction that the vocation of the  
75 church, in all its expressions, is that of being an active agent for peace in our world. This  
76 includes, but is not limited to, the life and witness of congregations. In order to do together what,  
77 in this case, each congregation also does alone, we are organized into Congregations, Area  
78 Churches, a national church, and Mennonite World Conference.

79  
80 The basis for the gospel of peace is found in scripture (cf: Article 22 *Confession of Faith in a*  
81 *Mennonite Perspective*). Other resources enrich our understanding, some of which are our Vision:  
82 Healing and Hope, our Statement of Identity and Purpose, as well as the work of many authors.

83  
84 Tasks can be divided, but the vocation of peace is for all. One constituent summarized it this way:  
85 “MC Canada was encouraged to make the voice of peace be heard in Ottawa as well [by] making  
86 the local faithful church the primary peace agency for both proclamation and practice” (Edna  
87 Peters, *The Grapevine*, Summer, 2008, newsletter of Charleswood MC, Wpg.).

88  
89 We believe that we, as one part of the ecumenical Body of Christ, need to witness more overtly  
90 and effectively to peace as being at the core of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that  
91 Mennonite Church Canada (members, congregations, and others) can do far more than we  
92 sometimes think we can.

93  
94 **Possibilities for Action**

95 The Assembly 2008 resolutions calls for “a proposal for promoting the peace message in the  
96 “public square.” What are some options?

- 97 - A full-page advertisement in the Toronto Globe and Mail costs \$70,000;
- 98 - A 30 second commercial on Hockey Night in Canada costs \$30,000 (plus production  
99 costs);
- 100 - A bill-board campaign is also very costly; For \$250,000, an organization could launch a  
101 two-month billboard campaign covering Canada’s five or six biggest markets;
- 102 - Advertising on bus benches in cities: In the Winnipeg market, a bus bench ad costs about  
103 \$275 for 12 months.

- 104 - When the “Support our Troops” decals appeared on public vehicles in Southern Ontario,  
105 Pastor Don Penner wrote a sensitive letter of concern to the editor of the *Kitchener-*  
106 *Waterloo Record*. Thousands read it.
- 107 - When the Dept. of Defence send out recruitment postcards directly to homes, Sargent  
108 MC responded by re-purposing the recruitment message into protest postcards that  
109 members could send to political leaders. These were shared at the Assembly in  
110 Abbotsford (2007) where delegates and congregations were also invited to participate.
- 111 - When the town of Winkler, Manitoba, prepared a welcome home parade for a soldier  
112 who had served in Afghanistan, Pastor John Klassen wondered why a church member  
113 serving five terms in the Middle East with Christian Peacemaker Teams had not received  
114 similar recognition. Klassen wrote a column in the *Winkler Times* that was read by  
115 thousands.
- 116 - In 2007, when a Southwestern Ontario School Board approved a military co-op program  
117 designed to enhance recruitment, a group of Mennonite pastors from five congregations  
118 in the area expressed their opposition at a public meeting. This ignited debate in the  
119 public media. Many heard and read about their action, which later generated a story in  
120 *Canadian Mennonite*.
- 121 - A mother wrote a column in the *Winnipeg Free Press* about how the military had  
122 recruited her 12 year old daughter into Cadets – all expenses paid, and how good that  
123 was. An MC Canada staff member wrote a response letter to the editor challenging the  
124 idea that children should be militarized; it was published as the “Letter of the Day.”
- 125 - The Fraser Valley Peace and Arts Festival began in 1992 as an alternative to the  
126 Abbotsford Air Show. It has since evolved into a multi-day event scheduled around  
127 Remembrance Day and is now sponsored by a collaborative group of partners. Over the  
128 years, tens of thousands have been exposed to this event and its message.
- 129 - Mennonite Church Canada, with the expertise of constituent lawyer Jake Harms, drafted  
130 a Private Members Bill C-460 proposing that legal provision be made for Conscientious  
131 Objection to the payment of income taxes for military purposes. This draft was approved  
132 by Conscience Canada and was introduced into Parliament by MP Bill Siksay of British  
133 Columbia. Individuals can follow up with action via [www.consciencecanada.ca](http://www.consciencecanada.ca) where  
134 they can find letter templates, talking points for visits with political leaders, and other  
135 tools for advocacy on this issue.
- 136 - Mennonite Church Canada was asked to provide input into the Canadian Council of  
137 Churches conversation about all Canadian churches becoming peace churches. This  
138 generated much debate and an invitation for a full conference to look at this issue.
- 139 - Mennonite Church Canada representatives have participated in the ongoing meetings  
140 with President Ahmadinijad of Iran and his diplomatic corps. These conversations have  
141 generated significant amounts of attention in the public square.
- 142 - The ongoing theological educators interchange that has included our post-secondary  
143 schools has generated much public attention and press.

144  
145 These initiatives are ways in which ordinary people, congregations, pastors, and leaders are  
146 agents of peace in the public square. More ideas are possible when we engage our God-given  
147 imaginations.

148  
149 .  
150 **Appendix I:**  
151 **Some more ideas:**

- 152 • A renewed and ongoing emphasis on peace education among ourselves. Create a peace  
153 trainee program in your congregation: ex. six weeks for Peace – a unified time for  
154 congregations to work specifically at creating/developing/strengthening a culture of  
155 peace in their churches/communities timed with Peace Sunday/Remembrance Day;

- 156 Access the many resources available through Mennonite Church Canada’s Resource  
 157 Centre and our publisher, Mennonite Publishing Network.
- 158 • Elected leaders say there are few things more effective than personal visits. Make  
 159 ongoing and repetitive visits to your local MP and state a position for non-violent peace  
 160 building in the world.
  - 161 • Continuously promote Conscience Canada in your church. Using existing Conscience  
 162 Canada forms, encourage church members to withhold military taxes and/or declare  
 163 yourselves/themselves as Conscientious Objectors to military taxation.
  - 164 • Congregational clusters could partner together to host an annual “Peace Media Blitz.”
  - 165 • Local TV/radio stations often give a platform for community leaders. Encourage access  
 166 of those opportunities at any time, and repetitively.
  - 167 • Spread the Peace Church Movement: Engage actively with other Christian traditions to  
 168 be the conscience of the church in matters related to peace. Commit to establish a  
 169 relationship with another non-Mennonite congregation or other faith group in your  
 170 community. Relate to a local mosque or synagogue. Collaborate on peace initiatives.  
 171 Have a plan to keep these relationships alive over time.
  - 172 • Challenge youth to produce YouTube videos on what you as a church or individuals  
 173 within your congregation are doing for peace. Post the videos and alert MC Canada so  
 174 these videos can be “favoriteed” on [www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca](http://www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca). Or create a  
 175 short viral video promoting a message of peace and see how far it can ‘infect’ others.
  - 176 • Each Remembrance Day, host an alternative memorial service that also remembers and  
 177 honours those who have died by acting for peace in non-violent ways (e.g. Tom Fox, who  
 178 was killed in Iraq while working with CPT). At your discretion, invite local media to this  
 179 service. Film it for YouTube or other video sharing sites.
  - 180 • Join the Facebook page “Coffee for Peace” created by Witness worker Dann Pantoja, or  
 181 join another of several peace pages on Facebook – or create your own page for peace.  
 182 Engage other social media with peace movements. See how many ‘fans’ you can collect.  
 183 Invite the merger of other peace pages into one giant peace page.
  - 184 • Create events that are attractive to media as a very cost-effective way of getting a  
 185 message into the public square. Create an annual Peace Festival in your own community.
  - 186 • Engage Sunday School children in sending peace letters and drawings to the Prime  
 187 Minister and your local MP once a year.
  - 188 • Promote [www.alternativeservice.ca](http://www.alternativeservice.ca) to local elementary and middle schools and school  
 189 divisions to help create awareness among teachers and students that not everyone fought  
 190 and that conscientious objection is a legitimate position. This web site has been designed  
 191 to complement the history studies curriculum in many schools.
  - 192 • Help raise awareness of the 2010 G8 meeting in Canada and its leaders’ commitment to  
 193 the UN’s Millennium Development Goals.
  - 194 • Check out resources at the World Conference of Religions for Peace ([www.wcrp.org](http://www.wcrp.org)).

197 **Appendix II:**

198 **What is already being done through Mennonite Church Canada**

- 199 • Working with the Canadian Council of Churches in promoting an understanding of what  
 200 it means to be a Peace Church to its member denominations. This is an important  
 201 initiative when many denominations subscribe to just war theology, making Christian  
 202 unity on peace a difficult issue to overcome. See a paper presented to the CCC at  
 203 [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/960](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/960). The National Council of Churches in the USA has  
 204 asked to use this paper for its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010.
- 205 • The Christian Reformed Church has asked MC Canada to resource a Peace Day in their  
 206 denomination.

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- Witness workers in places like the Philippines and Israel/Gaza are engaged in direct peace ministries. International Witness workers in 30 countries model peace to their ministry partners and communities.
  - Sponsoring and/or supporting partners in the peace ministries of CPT, MCC, Project Ploughshares, KAIROS, Conscience Canada, Project Peacemakers, and MCC.
  - MC Canada’s Speakers Bureau is available to any congregation seeking input and guidance on peace issues.
  - MC Canada Resource Centre has one of the most unique collections of books, videos, and other resources on peace building in Canada: [www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources).
  - Our post-secondary Mennonite Schools offer numerous peace studies options.
  - A web site ([www.alternativeservice.ca](http://www.alternativeservice.ca)) offers resources on Conscientious Objection during World War II that is designed to complement elementary and middle school history curriculums.
  - *Church Matters*, a radio program and free podcast produced by Mennonite Church Canada has released 5 episodes (out of 28) focused on peace.
  - Selected videos from the Mennonite Church Canada YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca](http://www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca).
  - Mennonite Media will provide, free of charge, professionally produced Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for churches who wish to urge their local radio broadcasters to air these short promos. Preview these at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/900](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/900).

- Prepared by Dan Dyck at the request of MC Canada Executive Staff

# 2009 Assembly Discernment

## ***“Church Health and Growth – Where are we at?”***

At the 2008 Delegate session, one person came to the microphone and asked, “So are we growing as a church, or not? I don’t see that information in the workbook.” This is an important question. While we don’t measure church health in numbers, neither can we ignore the trends to which numbers point. This discernment session will invite delegates to consider together questions of healthy church growth.

### ***Proposed Outcome of Discernment time***

- Inspire delegates with stories of faithful church health/growth within MC Canada.
- Reflect biblically/theologically on our vocation for church planting and growth.
- Give national visibility and support to newer congregations within MC Canada.
- Provide some helpful information in terms of the profile of our church today.
- Identify strengths and resources needed for congregations to reach beyond themselves.
- Discern together how congregations, area churches, and the national church can best help each other to engage a more intentional strategy of church health/growth.

### ***What to Expect***

Based on the above outcomes, this session is designed to be informative and inspirational. It will challenge delegates to listen carefully and with grateful hearts to what God is doing among us through the formation of new congregations. It will also challenge us to consider our context, and ask each other how we can be most encouraging and active in being a healthy church that grows. There will be some time of presentation, story telling, and conversation at round tables.

*–Prepared by Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada Witness*

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## ***For Discussion***

In October of 2007 a group of Muslim scholars wrote an open letter to Christians around the world ([www.acommonword.com](http://www.acommonword.com)). The letter invites us to affirm as a step toward world peace, two central beliefs common to the family of Abraham: love of God and love of neighbour. The General Board of MC Canada, with the cooperation of the Faith and Life Committee, has added its response to the many submitted from around the world. It is printed below. If you would like to discuss the Muslim letter and the General Board response to it, watch for an announcement of a luncheon time and place at the Assembly.

*–Rudy Baergen, on behalf of the Faith & Life Committee*



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March 18, 2009

To the Muslim authors of "A Common Word between Us and You" which was addressed to Christian Churches throughout the world:

The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada commends you for your thoughtful and respectful call for a conversation of peace between Muslims and Christians. This leadership body of Mennonite Church Canada herewith adds its voice of support and encouragement to your initiative.

At the annual Assembly of Mennonite Church Canada in July, 2008 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, delegates considered a call from its Faith and Life Committee, the body commissioned to give guidance in theological matters in our denomination, to respectfully engage people of other religious faiths.

We recognize that there are two important strands of wisdom found within Christian Scripture. One strand holds God to be present and at work in the whole world, not limited to any one story or one culture. Your exposition of the two commandments of love, love for God and love of neighbour found in all three Abrahamic faiths illustrates that conviction. Thus we affirm the importance of a respectful dialogue with those who profess a faith and spiritual way different from our Christian one. Like the Apostle Paul in his speech on the Acropolis as recorded in the Book of Acts, we should seek common understanding and be slow to condemn. As people of peace, Mennonite Christians are interested in promoting peace with people of different religious persuasions.

The other strand of wisdom found in our Christian Scripture invites us to claim and proclaim the particular truth given in Jesus Christ. As Mennonite Christians we confess that Jesus is the one who most fully reveals God to us. We confess that, as God's Son, Jesus speaks and acts on behalf of God. As such Jesus guides our view of life and our ethics.

Holding these two strands of wisdom together allows us as Mennonite Christians to appreciate the common ground within the different branches of the Abrahamic faith traditions. At the same time, we bring to this relationship our conviction, as one of the historic Peace Churches in the Christian tradition, that Jesus, through his teachings, life and death, clarifies what love for the neighbour entails. At the heart of Jesus' revelation is the call to love even the one whom our society wants us to name as our enemy (Matthew 5:43-45). God's love, as exemplified in Christ, overcomes human enmity and conflict by rejecting violence. God's love enables diverse communities to be reconciled and to seek the common good by working together for peace and justice. Thus we bring to the celebration of the common word between us the firm conviction that Jesus' command to love extends to all of humanity.

Frequently the religions of the world fix their attention on how they are different from one another. "A Common Word Between Us and You" highlights in a very helpful way the centrality of the conviction within the Abrahamic faiths that the God who calls us to love our neighbour is One. We owe a word of gratitude to you, for inviting us to affirm the common word between us for the betterment of humankind. To this end, we add our voice and signature to your initiative.

Robert J. Suderman  
General Secretary  
Mennonite Church Canada

Andrew Reesor-McDowell  
Moderator – General board  
Mennonite Church Canada

# Councils and Committees

<b>MC Canada Elected and appointed Leaders*</b>		
<b>GENERAL BOARD EXECUTIVE</b>		
	Province	Term Expiry
Andrew Reesor-McDowell, Moderator	ON	2010
Garth Ewert Fisher, Asst. Moderator	SK	2010
Don Friesen, Secretary	ON	2009
Gordon Peters, Treasurer	SK	2009
Hilda Hildebrand, Member at Large	MB	2010
<b>GENERAL BOARD</b>		
Dan Rempel (Moderator of MCBC) ( <i>As Moderator of an Area Church this person is then a part of MC Canada General Board. See By-Laws for complete information.</i> )	BC	
Walter Wiebe (Moderator of MCA)	AB	
Renata Klassen, (Moderator of MCSask)	SK	
Hans Werner (Moderator of MCM)	MB	
Leroy Shantz (Moderator of MCEC)	ON	
Betty Loewen (MC Canada appt. Member at Large)	BC	2010
Donita Wiebe Neufeld (MC Canada appt. Member at Large)	AB	2010
General Board representation from the councils - chairs Willard Metzger, Sue Steiner, Ed Janzen, Rudy Baergen. And two council appointments Lisa Carr-Pries (f), and Lynell Bergen (w)		
<b>FINANCE POLICY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>		
Helen Kasdorf (appointed by General Board)	MB	2011
Ingrid Peters-Fransen (appointed by General Board)	MB	2010
<b>CHRISTIAN FORMATION COUNCIL</b>		
Sue Steiner, Chair (GB Representative)	ON	2009
Lisa Carr-Pries (GB Representative)	ON	2009
Naomi Unger (MWC Representative)	SK	2009
Tom Yoder Neufeld	ON	2010
VACANT		2010
Van Hoa Chau	MB	2011
Veronica Dyck	BC	2011
Earl Reimer	MB	2011
Coreen Froese	AB	2009
Pauline Steinmann	SK	2010
<b>CHRISTIAN WITNESS COUNCIL</b>		
Willard Metzger, Chair (GB Representative)	ON	2010
Lynell Bergen (GB Representative)	MB	2010
Hun Lee	ON	2011
Laura Loewen (MWC Representative)	BC	2009
Noe Gonzalia	ON	2010
Rudy Dirks	ON	2010
Emily Dueck	ON	2011
Waldo Neufeld	BC	2011
Irene Crosland	AB	2009
JD Penner	ON	2009
<b>SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL</b>		
Ed Janzen, Chair (GB Representative)	BC	2011
Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel	MB	2010
Gordon Baergen (replacement)	AB	2009
Mark Wurtz	SK	2011
Harry Wiens	MB	2009
Kaye Rempel	ON	2011
<b>FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE</b>		
Rudy Baergen	MB	2011
Karl Koop	MB	2010
Doreen Neufeld	AB	2009
Betty Pries	ON	2011
<b>NOMINATING COMMITTEE</b>		
Lorne Buhr	AB	2009
Clare Neufeld	BC	2010
Justina Heese	MB	2011
Gladys Bender	ON	2011
Dave Feick	SK	2009
* unless otherwise noted, leaders are elected by the MC Canada Delegate Assembly		

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# Nominees



Don Friesen

## GENERAL BOARD

### **Don Friesen, Ottawa ON (Ottawa Mennonite Church)**

*Nominated as General Board Secretary. Served on the General Board since 2007.*

**Occupation:** Leading minister for 31 years.

**Local church involvements:** Secretary of the Refugee Assistance Program Committee; Chair of the Worship Committee.

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** Member of the executive of the Christian Council of the Capital Area for 20 years as president, vice-president, and several times as secretary; secretary of the local Habitat for Humanity Church Relations Committee.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** To encourage faithfulness to Jesus Christ; to provide resources for local congregations that encourage unity of purpose and action and promote conference loyalty; to give leadership to national and international witness in a manner sufficiently flexible to incorporate congregational initiatives.



Gordon Peters

### **Gordon Peters, Saskatoon, SK (Nutana Park Mennonite Church)**

*Nominated as Treasurer. Served on the General Board since 2007.*

**Occupation:** Self-employed

**Local church involvements:** Church Treasurer: 6 years, MCC/Village Green Thrift Store Board member.

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** Various community based non-profits, run a bookkeeping business.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** My vision and goal for Mennonite Church Canada would be for the organization to inspire church members to feel that they own and run the program. We can all accomplish much more as a group of committed Christians. The mission and programs run by Mennonite Church Canada are the result of years of work by committed church leaders and the membership providing the resources to make it happen. I wish for more unity of purpose and understanding that Mennonite Church Canada is nothing without the support of churches across Canada. Prayer, volunteers, and financial resources are provided by the membership, there is no other place to go to get them. I hope that we as leaders of Mennonite Church Canada would be able to tell the stories of how our programs are working towards the glory of God. As the mission of Mennonite Church Canada continues, I wish for everyone to get excited about what's happening and as a result, I know the finances will come rolling in. My vision would be that every year, General Board is able to add to the mission program, because donations have exceeded budget expectations. This may be dreaming, but if the mission of Mennonite Church Canada is the same as the mission of our churches and its membership, we will be in a position to make these additions regularly.

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## **FORMATION COUNCIL**

### ***Lisa Carr-Pries, Waterloo, ON (Waterloo North Mennonite Church)***

*Nominated as Chair. Served on the Christian Formation Council since 2006.*

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Local church involvements:** I have worked with Camps with Meaning and Christian Education Committee for Mennonite Church Manitoba; on Young Adult Reference Council for North America; youth sponsor; chaired music and worship committees; MCEC Resource Advocate; President of the Inter Mennonite Children's Choir (Ontario).

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** Pastor at Charleswood Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, and presently at Waterloo North Mennonite Church; member of Christian Formation Council for the last three years and two years on the General Board.

**Special Interests:** I love to read, play piano, and sing as a way of expressing my spirituality.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** It is a vibrant hope-filled church where all people experience God's love, follow Jesus' way and are guided by the Holy Spirit. It is a multi-generational body where all people have a thick faith and we serve each other from our God-given gifts in response to God's grace to us.

### ***Naomi Unger, Rabbit Lake, SK (Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church)***

*Served on the Christian Formation Council since 2003.*

**Occupation:** Homemaker

**Local church involvements:** Presently, I am a lay minister, president of the women's groups in Rabbit Lake and Glenbush, and youth leader. Also, I'm a member of the Housing Authority board, the local library board, and "Take Note" (a community women's choir). I have been a member of Christian Formation Council for the last six years and one of MC Canada's representatives on the General Council of Mennonite World Conference during that time. I've served on the Executive Committee of MWC since 2003.

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** I have served in MCC assignments in Nigeria and Tanzania at various times for a total of eleven years, first teaching and then as co-country administrator with my husband, Don. For MC Sask, I conducted the Vibrant Rural Churches Project with Eric Olfert during 2002-2004.

**Special Interests:** My interests are worship, how faith in Christ is nurtured and lived across age and people groups as well as the resourcing of pastors and church workers.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** That the church will grow in alignment with and commitment to God's desire for shalom for humanity and all creation. I hope that believers - young and old, near and far - will be the light of Christ in their context, growing in our witness of God's grace and in our worship of God's glory.



*Lisa Carr-Pries*



*Naomi Unger*

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Coreen Froese

**Coreen Froese, Didsbury, AB (Bergthal Mennonite Church)**

*Served on the Christian Formation Council since 2006.*

**Occupation:** Currently a student at CMU. Past experience includes work for a non-profit organization that supports mentally disabled adults with independent living.

**Local church involvements:** Has been involved with the Sunday school program, with the youth and the library committee. For 4 years she was the Christian Education Resource person for Alberta and is presently on the Congregational Life Committee for the Alberta conference.

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** Involved with Creation Stewards, a group of church people that meets once a month to discuss how to be better stewards of God's earth through simpler living, energy conservation, recycling and supporting the local economy. Great interest in children's education. For the last 2 years has been involved with a non-profit organization that trains assistance dogs for people with mobility or hearing problems.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** I look forward to working with the other council members as we continue to work at what it means to be communities of grace, joy, and peace.

*(from the 2006 Report Book)*

**WITNESS COUNCIL**

**Irene Crosland, Tofield, AB (Tofield Mennonite Church)**

*Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2003.*



Irene Crosland

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** I am filled with hope. We, Mennonite Church Canada, are a part of the Body of Christ and have the privilege and responsibility to respond and call those around us from local to global into a love relationship with Christ. Seeing God at work we are empowered by the Holy Spirit who leads us through the current difficult global economic downturn. We need to actively listen to all persons on this stage where God is always at work, asking us to step out in faith to where he guides, wisely using the resources at hand. Hunger of body and soul cry out from us all but our God is able in all things to work for the good of those who love Him.

**JD Penner, Toronto, ON (Toronto United Mennonite Church)**

*Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2006.*



JD Penner

**Occupation:** Bank Manager

**Local church involvements:** Vice-Chair, Chair and Past Chair of TUMC Board (2000-2002), Personnel Committee (2000-2001), St. Clair O'Connor Community Inc. Board, TUMC representative (2004-present), Worship Committee, Lenten/Easter Worship Planning Committee, Youth Teacher/Youth Education Coordinator, Mentor

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** MCEC Ontario Mennonite Music Camp Committee Co-Chair, Diversity Inclusion Business Council, Bank of America, Treasurer, Board of Directors for Voices (a chamber choir in Toronto), Graduate of CMBC.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** I would like to see local congregations build stronger relationships with each other and MC Canada, especially as we consider our vision and resources for local and overseas mission. We are capable of doing so much more together than as separate local churches.

*(from the 2006 Report Book)*

## ***Hugo Neufeld, Calgary, AB (Trinity Mennonite Church)***

**Occupation:** Semi-retired pastor

**Local church involvements:** I have been an interim co-pastor at Calgary Chinese Mennonite Church (completed December 31, 2007) and Holyrood Mennonite Church (completed 2006), Co-pastor Trinity Mennonite Church, Co-Mission Minister with MCEC, Co-director and co-pastor of Welcome Inn (Hamilton, Ont.). (All positions in team ministry with my wife Doreen.)

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** In the past few years since Herald Press published my book in 2006, *The North End Lives, a Journey through Poverty Terrain*, with my wife Doreen I have spoken in many, churches, schools, social agencies, retreats and other gatherings. The focus of our sharing is stories from our experience of living and working in the inner city (Good News to the poor and to the rich).

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** With our Anabaptist history and tradition that includes service, mission, outreach, and peace/justice ministry, Mennonite Church Canada (in partnership with local congregations) is in a good position to claim its strengths and prophetically move forward in making our missional emphasis relevant to our contemporary society.

## ***SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL***

### ***Gordon Baergen, Sherwood Park, AB (Holyrood Mennonite Church)***

**Occupation:** Retired

**Local church involvements:** I have served on church maintenance boards, pastoral search and worship committees, and have led music groups and worship bands. I am currently serving as church treasurer. I have served as treasurer of the local MCC Sale committee for the 2002, 2005, and 2008 events.

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** Short term MDS in New Orleans.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** My vision for Mennonite Church Canada is that it can be a valuable resource for member churches and that it can give strong direction to make our peace and Anabaptist positions relevant in our rapidly changing world.

### ***Harry Wiens, Altona, MB (Altona Mennonite Church)***

*Served on the Christian Witness Council since 2006.*

**Occupation:** Lawyer

**Local church involvements:** I have served as church secretary, chair, and Sunday school teacher, and many years on board of Eden Health Care Services. Have been on a number of other boards.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** Much of what we are mandated to do as Christians can be done individually, but can be done more effectively if done corporately. I see MC Canada as a vehicle through which we can carry out our responsibilities.



*Hugo Neufeld*



*Gordon Baergen*



*Harry Wiens*

## **FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE**

### **Sharon Shultz, Eyebrow, SK (Eyebrow Mennonite Church)**

**Occupation:** Pastor

**Local church involvements:** Currently I am Pastor at Eyebrow Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan. I also teach Youth Sunday School class, lead singing, and help with Vacation Bible School. In the past I have served as Elder, Worship Leader, Song Leader, Treasurer, Adult Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School director and teacher. I am very involved in our community and am on the Hospital Auxiliary Board.

**Other vocational and volunteer experience:** Chair of Pastoral Leadership Commission, MC Sask.

**Special Interests:** I love God's Word, the Bible, and am passionate about what it means to live as Kingdom of God people in our day.

**Vision/Goal for MC Canada:** My vision for Mennonite Church Canada is for us to live as Spirit-filled people, becoming more and more the people of God we are called to be, spreading the good news of the kingdom of God, and loving God and our neighbour, so that people from all nations, tribes, and countries can be transformed by Jesus Christ and that God's kingdom may come, on earth as it is in heaven.



Sharon Shultz

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