



# REPORT BOOK

**ASSEMBLY 2008**

**WINNIPEG, MANITOBA JULY 7-8**

You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" Deuteronomy 4:6

## ***Our Priorities***

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

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



The logo for "At the Crossroads" represents the choices we have as individuals and as a church to live as the contrast community God calls us to be. The symbol is reminiscent of a road sign, indicating this choice of directions. Its immediate, bold feel invites us to radical discipleship; it communicates a sense of urgency and counter-cultural revolution.

**Mennonite Church Canada  
REPORT 2008**

Volume 44  
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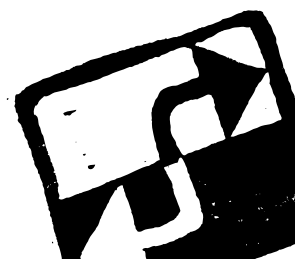
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# HOW TO USE THIS REPORT BOOK

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

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

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

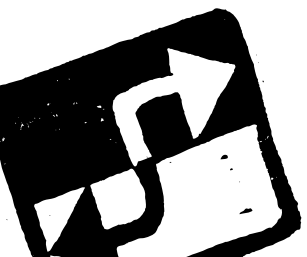
The reports and stories in this report book represent the people and ministries in the Mennonite Church Canada family. Together, they tell the larger story of God at work in the world as we align ourselves with God’s purpose.

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

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACOM.....Area Church Only Membership  
AMBS ..... Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary  
AMIGOS .....Mennonite World Conference Youth Committee  
CCC..... Canadian Council of Churches  
CFC .....Christian Formation Council  
CMU ..... Canadian Mennonite University  
COF..... Confession of Faith  
CPT ..... Christian Peacemaker Teams  
CWC ..... Christian Witness Council  
CWM..... Canadian Women in Mission  
EFC ..... Evangelical Fellowship of Canada  
FLC..... Faith and Life Committee  
FPAC .....Financial Policy and Audit Committee  
FYE..... Fiscal Year End  
GB .....General Board  
GMF..... Global Mennonite Fellowship  
IMPACT ..... International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together

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



# WORDS FROM THE MODERATOR

Welcome to the 9th annual delegate assembly of Mennonite Church Canada, which I trust will be an inspiration and a challenge for you. “At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril” is a theme that calls us to take stock of where we have come from and anticipate where we are going. It has the potential to enliven our church as we see this time as a ‘kairos’ moment, a unique time in our history which can shape our vision and work for the next chapter in our journey as a church.

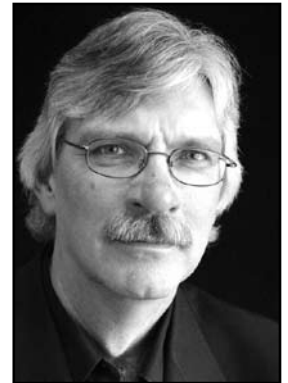
This year’s assembly has a different format than we are used to. We have intentionally compressed the time we are spending together as Mennonite Church Canada delegates in order to provide time for a unique experience as we meet together as members of MC Canada and MC USA in a ‘people’s summit’. This will be a time to think and pray together about what it means to be a faithful North American church. Although our discernment time together as delegates will all take place in just two days we will still have the same amount of time to hear what has been happening in our church over the past year and discern together future direction and financial implications.

This is my last delegate assembly as moderator and as I look back on my six years in this position, I feel privileged and honoured to have been part of Mennonite Church Canada in its varied ministries. I have seen the Spirit of God at work in our discernment times in the General Board and also in our delegate assemblies. I have been blessed by the many members of our church who continue to faithfully follow Jesus in their congregations, giving witness to the life giving reconciling love of God. It has been a joy to chair the General Board and Executive committee and to work with the gifted and faithful members of the board who have given of their time and talents to the work of the church.

We have gone through significant challenges and growing pains over the past number of years as we have worked through financial difficulties, dealt with theological and polity questions and journeyed together into being Mennonite Church Canada. This has sometimes been a painful journey. There has however also been much joy in our work as a denomination. We continue to hear about how many of our congregations are faithfully being missional in their contexts, envisioning new ways of being the church together, partnering in new ways to proclaim the good news of Jesus. We see how our work in various ministries around the globe is bringing healing and hope through God’s reconciling power.

It has been exciting and encouraging to see how we are finding ways to be more intentional in our relations as area churches, discerning together how we can be in partnership as local congregations, area churches, and a national church. There is a spirit of cooperation and vision for how our congregations across the country can more fully engage in God’s mission in the world. There is a new understanding and commitment to being more intentional in our relationships as area churches and a national church finding ways to clarify our various roles and relationships.

I have also been encouraged with how our church has discerned and actively engaged in taking seriously our three priorities: forming a people of God, becoming a global church, and growing leaders for the church. These priorities have guided the General Board as we have worked with our schools and area churches in order to discern the best way to use our resources in forming a people of God and growing leaders for the church. They have been central to our thinking as we have encouraged more active engagement with Mennonite World Conference, financially giving our ‘fair share’ as well as in ‘sharing our gifts’ with the global church. The priorities have seen expression as we have engaged with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches,



Henry Krause, Moderator

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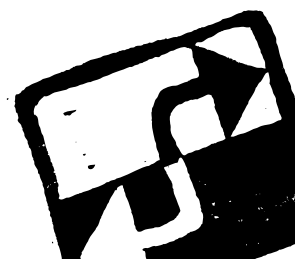
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offering our Anabaptist understandings of peace in the conversations that are happening nationally. And they have been evident in the countless ways in which staff and councils have gone about their work.

I am also very encouraged that we are doing well financially and want to acknowledge the generosity of individuals and congregations who support the ministries of Mennonite Church Canada and the good work that has been done in managing our finances. The finance department has done an exceptional job in providing accurate and timely information on our financial status. Executive staff and the rest of our staff have been diligent in drafting good budgets and working within them. Our Financial Planning and Audit Committee has given sound counsel and direction to ensure good financial management. This is no small thing and I want to recognize the quality of work and care that has gone into this.

The General Board has met four times during the last year and the report on “General Board actions” (pages 18-19) gives you an overview of the decisions which have been made on your behalf as we have taken seriously the direction given at the last delegate session and the priorities that we have agreed to together. I have appreciated the hard work and dedication with which members of the General Board take on the work assigned to them. I have learned much from working with these sisters and brothers.

The Executive Committee of the General Board usually meets before the General Board meetings in order to give thought to how best to work through the agenda the Board will be working on. It is also tasked with working closely with the General Secretary in the agenda that he carries.

The Executive Committee is also responsible for the ongoing relationship with MC USA through meeting with their Executive Committee. This year marks the culmination of a vision that began to take shape after the joint delegate assembly with MC USA in 2003. In our Joint Executive Committee (JEC) meetings we are given the mandate to continue to work at our relationship as two national churches. We have spent time thinking and working through what it means to hold two ministries in common – Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). We have different structures and governance patterns and we have been discerning together what it means when we relate to these two parts of the church in significantly different ways.

We have also spent significant time at our meetings in conversation about the People’s Summit which is now coming to fruition. It is an important part of our work to continue to nurture our relationship with MC USA.

I want to also mention the work of the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers (MSCN) which meets annually and is increasingly becoming a forum for significant dialogue as it brings together leadership from the area churches and the national church. It is an important part of building relationships between various parts of our church and allowing opportunity to meet face to face. During our time together, we hear from each other about the joys and struggles of the area churches and also spend time in discernment of shared agenda items. Although this group is not a decision making body of MC Canada, its counsel is very important to the work of the General Board.

The agenda this year included conversation about how we will continue to work together with our schools in leadership development; discernment about how to work through the questions that are raised regarding sexuality and same-sex relations; working on finalizing a ‘Partnership Covenant’ and ‘Operating agreements’ which clarify the relationships between area churches and the national church; and fulfilling the role of being part of the reference council for the Faith and Life Committee.

In conclusion, I want to thank you again for allowing me and those on the General Board to serve you. I trust that as we meet together in Winnipeg we will be encouraged, challenged, convicted, and moved to celebrate as a result of meeting each other and Christ, whose people we are.

–Henry Krause, Moderator

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# WORDS FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

## ***At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril:***

*Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people (Deut.4:6).*

This theme verse from Deuteronomy forcefully reminds us that a big part of our witness to the world is made up of what others see when they watch us. The assumptions are clear: God's people will live in the land and, by watching them, others will be able to recognize God's wisdom and preferences.

This surely is a holy vocation. It is also an enormous responsibility. It is sometimes said that a little baby first learns about God by observing the mother. This is also God's strategic plan: to shape a people who will reflect the wisdom of the God that is nurturing them.

There is *promise* in this strategy. Imagine how real God can become to others when a community lives its life like this. There is also significant *peril*. What if the people reflect the wisdom of other gods? What if the discernment of God's people becomes clouded by the perks of the land they inhabit?

We are privileged that this year we will be joined by MC USA for the Peoples' Summit for Faithful Living, following on the heels of our delegate assembly. In both the Assembly and the Summit we will explore together the *crossroads* we face: the *promise* of faithfulness and the *peril* of unfaithfulness.

## ***Thank You***

We have had a very good year. We owe a big thank-you to staff, mission workers, board and council members, volunteers, Area Churches, congregations, pastors, and related organizations. A special thanks to Henry Krause, our moderator, who has helped to guide our church in the first years of its life as MC Canada. He has dedicated many hours to providing critical leadership for the denomination.

Our church is vitally present in the lives of many thousands of people at home and around the world. More importantly, through our church, many have responded to God's invitation to commit to Jesus as Lord of their lives and to become part of the church, this great movement of God.

I invite you to peruse carefully the information in this workbook, and celebrate what is happening.

## ***Finances***

Some folks claim to be bored with budgets and numbers. At Mennonite Church Canada we are not. We know that every penny is prayerfully given, gratefully received, effectively planned for, and resourcefully invested for the nurture of God's reign in the lives of people. And we are joyfully and transparently accountable for each penny. Here there are no black holes, no bureaucratic extravagances, no corporate corruption, and no slush funds. Here the dollars are invested strategically to multiply impact. The results often surprise us. When we look at budgets through a grid of faith and faithfulness, then money tells life-giving stories.

We want to thank each person, each corporation, and each congregation for making the Fiscal Year Ending (FYE) 2008 a good financial year. Both congregational and individual



*Robert J. Suderman,  
General Secretary*

### **Staff:**

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

**general** ↖

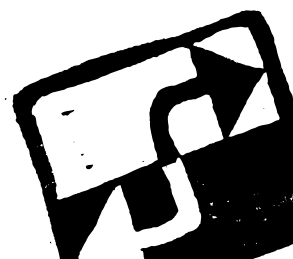
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donations exceeded our projections. Our expenditures were well within (and a bit under) our projections. And for the first time since I don't know when, we are able to project a slight increase in overall expenditures for the following fiscal year. In a world open for opportunity and crying for justice, I am grateful for what we can do together as God's people. And I am grateful that we can do more. Please communicate the gratitude of so many back to your congregations.



Daniel Pantoja, Witness Worker in the Philippines, spoke at Abbotsford 2007.

### **Discernment agenda**

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

1. We will focus on the task of the church as a witness for peace in our world. How do we understand ourselves as a "peace church" and what implications does that identity carry for us?
2. We will review the results of the Pastoral Trends survey that was carried out during the last year. This has been a major initiative and will be useful as we continue our desire to strengthen leadership for the vocation of the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
3. We will continue the discussions begun last year about the intersection of our faith with ecological/environmental concerns. Last year the Faith and Life Committee left us all with an assignment to "green" our operations. This will be an opportunity to listen to our experiences and to further learn from them.
4. We will begin a focus on how to relate better in the inter-faith environment that is ours. The Faith and Life Committee will be leading this discernment and helping us to focus our response.

### **Area Church/National Church Partnership Covenant:**

This year the five Area Churches and Mennonite Church Canada have formally agreed to a Partnership Covenant that will guide how we relate to each other. This has been a very significant and historic process and helpfully identifies how we understand our partnership within the church. Based on this Covenant, we are defining customized Operating Agreements with each Area Church that will further clarify the nitty-gritty of how we work together. I am thankful for this progress in understanding our respective roles in Canada as Mennonite Church Canada.

### **Staff and Program:**

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

1. **Der Bote:** After 84 years, the continuous ministry of *Der Bote* came to an end this year (March/08). It is impossible to measure the impact that this ministry has had over these decades. Its primary foci have shifted throughout its history, but it has been a close companion on the journey of faithfulness for many people in Canada, the USA, Mexico, South America, Russia, Ukraine, and Germany. It has been a source of: re-connecting families separated by war; providing spiritual nourishment and insight; promoting *Gemeinschaft* (community) among our people; providing a final eulogy and good-bye for dearly departed ones; being a channel of news, information, and interpretation; supporting worthwhile initiatives; keeping the 'heart-language' alive in the midst of transition; and telling and re-telling identity-shaping stories of a segment of our history and our people. It has been difficult to lay this dear friend to rest. We

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trust in God that the blessings and contributions of *Der Bote* will continue in the lives of many people. And we thank the last Editorial Committee for leading the paper through its final transition process. We also thank the staff: Ingrid Janzen Lamp (editor), Andrea Dick (layout and design), Lois Bergen (Administrative Assistant), and Dave Bergen (Executive Secretary of Formation) for their fine work.



*Kathy Koop, at the Pastoral Trends Survey Colloquium.*

**2. Denominational Minister/Executive Leadership Development:**

We want to express our thanks to Sven Eriksson for his five years of service to our church as Denominational Minister. Sven retired in early April/08. He has served the church with gentle wisdom, patient presence, and wise counsel. We are grateful for his contribution and wish him well in his next stage of life.

At the same time, we are excited to welcome Karen Martens Zimmerly as our new Denominational Minister and the Director of Leadership Development. Karen has a lengthy history of pastoral work in Abbotsford and Regina. She is closely connected in many ways to our leadership training efforts in our schools. We look forward to her contribution in this demanding but rewarding area of ministry.

**3. Pastoral Trends Survey:**

I also wish to mention the important study that we have completed in terms of the encouragement for healthy pastoral leadership experiences in our church. We are grateful to Dieter Schönwetter for contributing his skills to this research. Details of the data will be available in various workshops during the Assembly and Summit.

**Broader Relationships:**

We continue to participate in and contribute to the unity of the wider church via our connections with other church communions.

**Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) and Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC)**

1. We were requested by the CCC to help engage the agenda of the “Church’s Witness to Peace in the Public Square.” This invitation came as a result of conversations with those denominations that are part of both the CCC and the EFC. Our presentation is available for you on request. This has been a significant opportunity to engage the ecumenical community with our understanding of the gospel of peace. We are pleased to feature the CCC in one of our reporting times at our Assembly.
2. We have strengthened our presence in the CCC by appointing Arnold Neufeldt-Fast as our representative on its Faith and Witness Commission. Arnold is from the Community Mennonite Church in Stouffville, Ontario, and comes highly qualified as our representative in this body. We appreciate this willingness to dedicate his energy to this important task.
3. Mennonite Disaster Service continues to formally represent us in pandemic and emergency planning within the CCC. MC Canada Witness has called together a Task Force to facilitate congregational preparedness for a pandemic or other major emergency. A web site of materials is being prepared, and the People’s Summit will facilitate a session on this topic. MPN is planning to publish study guides and other emergency preparedness materials for congregational use.
4. The CCC is helping its member denominations to be present as an alternative voice at the G8 table (G8 is the annual meeting of the heads of state of 8 powerful nations

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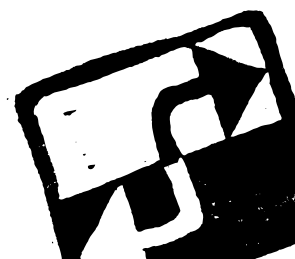
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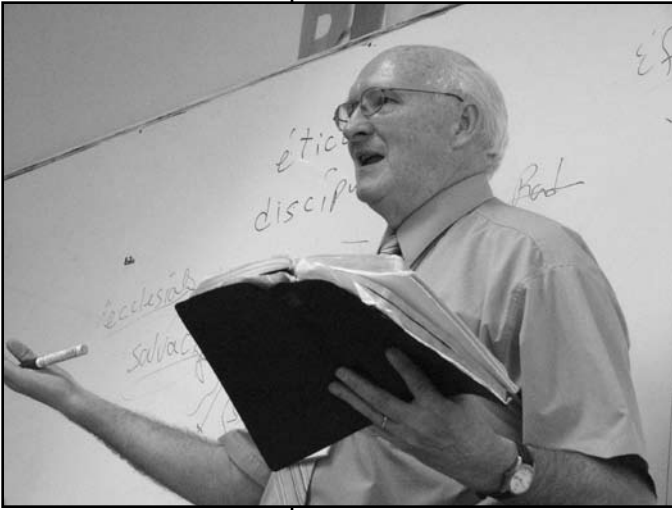
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of the world). This voice is facilitated by a parallel meeting of religious leaders who monitor the progress of the G8 in the 328 commitments they have made toward making the world a more just place.



Jack Suderman speaks on Anabaptism in Chile.

### **Mennonite World Conference (MWC)**

5. We continue our commitment to be good members of MWC. In dialogue with MWC we are trying to increase our support to meet our “fair share” for its ongoing ministry. We are pleased to report that the first two years of our 4-year commitment of \$360,000 is going very well. We are grateful to the support for this important ministry. We will be featuring an MWC report during our Assembly time.
6. A decision made a few years ago to offer some of my teaching time to MWC is continuing. In August/07 I spent two weeks with the Amor Viviente church in Honduras, teaching in 5 different leadership circles. This year we have accepted the invitation from the Integrated Mennonite Church in the Philippines, and I will be working with its leadership in July/08.

### **Other**

7. This year we hosted the annual World Day of Prayer in our Winnipeg offices. The word from the ecumenical liaison person charged with these events was that we had “raised the bar” significantly. It was good to receive our brothers and sisters in our facilities in this way.
8. We were invited to attend the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the Chilean Baptist Union. This historic denomination, larger than MC Canada, has decided that its second century will move toward a recovery of its Anabaptist roots and vision. It was inspiring to engage leaders and pastors of that denomination and to walk with them in this process. We are very pleased to have Raquel Contreras, the President of the Baptist Union of Chile, with us here at this Assembly. She will be presenting greetings to the delegates, as well as meeting with our General Board and other circles.
9. We are pleased with our ongoing partnership with the Conference of Mennonites in Mexico. This Conference supports our international ministry to a significant degree. We are also pleased to have representatives of this Conference with us for the Assembly. They, too, will be interacting in various circles during this time together.
10. Our relationship with MC USA continues to be very positive. We are looking forward to jointly hosting the “Peoples’ Summit” (July 8-10) right after the close of our delegate Assembly. MC USA is initiating an ambitious re-structuring discussion and we pray for them and wish them well.
11. I have been invited by MCC to participate as a member of its Inquiry Task Force in the re-visioning process that they are initiating. This task will take up a significant amount of time and energy, but our General Board has indicated that our close partnership with MCC deserves to be nurtured in such intentional ways during this important time of transition. I am pleased to contribute what I can to the process.

### ***At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril***

I believe that one of the greatest perils faced by the Christian church (Mennonites not excluded) is our refusal to be the church in its intended fullness. One example will suffice.

In a recent publication, Zbigniew Brzezinski, former United States National Security Advisor

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to President Jimmy Carter, estimates that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century 167-175 million human beings were killed due to politically motivated carnage. These numbers do not include the millions of citizens murdered via crime and other related causes. While statistics are not available, we know that a very high percentage of this carnage was committed by 'Christian' nations, using 'Christian' soldiers, blessed by the 'Christian' church, and justified by 'Christian' biblical interpretation. It is not simply unfortunate when the church forgets its primary identity, it is lethal.

I also believe that one of the greatest promises available to the Christian church (Mennonites not excluded) is to embrace our God-invited-and-empowered vocation to be the church. If the church could again learn to embrace suffering-love as the strategic component to people-hood, the potential is enormous. A tiny glimpse of such potential was seen in the attention paid to the Amish response of forgiveness to the school shootings in Nickel Mines, PA. It is estimated that 2,400 articles and stories were published in the secular press all around the world about the meaning of love and forgiveness in the weeks following the shooting. This was, in a sense, unsolicited exposure to the Christian message of forgiveness and love.

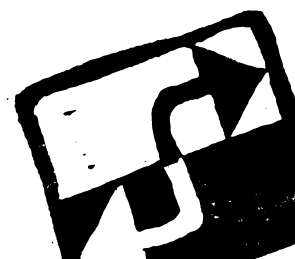
In so very many ways, we are indeed at a Crossroads. May God help us to say with Joshua that "as for me and my house, we will *serve the Lord*" (Joshua 24:15). And may God help us to understand with Paul, that *serving the Lord Jesus Christ* means to become humble even to the point of death on the cross, and trusting in the life-giving resurrection that God alone can generate out of such obedience (Philippians 2:5-11). And may it be that in so being, the nations may watch and see the wisdom of God and the discernment of God's people as a viable and good alternative to the assumed ways of our world.

—Robert J. Suderman, General Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada



The planning team for the People's Summit (l-r): Pam Peters-Pries (Chair – Mennonite Church Canada); Jorge Vallejos and Iris De Leon Hartshorn (Mennonite Church USA); MC Canada – Mildred Roth, Marlies Schaan (Kids Program Coordinator), Karen Peters, Marlies Klassen (Kids Program Coordinator), Karen Schellenberg, Dan Dyck (not pictured).

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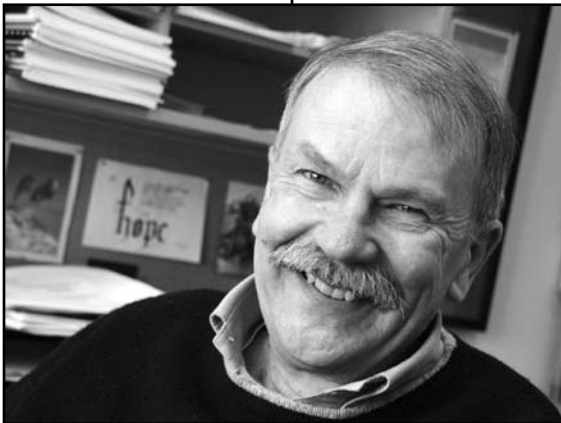


# Message from the Denominational Minister

The 2007 Denominational Minister's report reflects the transitional state of this office going into the 2008 calendar year. Sven Eriksson retired from this role on April 4, 2008 after five years of leadership in this position. He served through a very significant period of growth and change in the national church. We are grateful for Sven's leadership and the blessing God has worked in the church through his ministry.

We welcome incoming staff, Karen Martens Zimmerly, currently co-pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Regina, SK. She will assume the role of Denominational Minister and Director of Leadership Development for Mennonite Church Canada beginning September 15, 2008.

—Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary, Christian Formation



Sven Eriksson

## Reflections on the State of the Church

### 1. The Development of Leadership and a Culture of Call

There has been a very encouraging bringing together of vision, collaborative spirit, and optimism among our school leaders about working together in Christian and ministry formation as a church through our schools. This new outlook has been due to the renewed attention given in the last few years to convening our educational leaders and in providing an ecclesial vision for education. It suggests new promise in the development of a greater synergy and creativity in the cultivation of pastors and pastoral leaders for the church. There is a need to increase the level of synergy between the resources of our schools and congregations in developing both lay leadership and pastoral

leaders for congregational life. We need to give the congregation greater significance as the originating and potentially on-going matrix of pastoral formation.

#### Implications:

- a. It is in “the congregation of origins” that the call to ministry is first awakened and where early shaping of leaders and pastors takes place. This is the natural environment for rudimentary identity formation, equipping for leadership developing pastoral skills.
- b. Pastors and church leaders need to make mentoring leaders and coaching potential pastors a stronger priority. In addition, the cultivation of the congregation as good soil for pastoral formation needs to be a high priority. This is in our historical Mennonite DNA. However, it is easily neglected and lost, and in many congregations is in need of resurrection.
- c. The development of at least one teaching center in each region where students can come for course offerings from local pastors, AMBS faculty, and faculty from our colleges. Courses could be offered over weekends, as night courses, or online with folks from a region, gathering for discussion groups and seminars. There is an increasing need for local access to courses and training programs especially by the minority multi-cultural churches. Our seminary, colleges and university will need to collaborate closely to set up study/formation delivery systems at local centers.
- d. If congregations are to rise to the challenge of becoming centres for the formation/training of pastors, our seminary, in collaboration with Denominational and Area Church Leaders, will need to make “training congregations” (not only the training of

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individuals) their vision. For the local congregation to become a dynamic matrix of leadership formation, its health and “resourcing” will need to become a priority.

## 2. Serving in the Denominational Minister’s office

“Studies have shown that congregations tend to look to the region for particular services but tend to look to the denomination for identity and purpose.” (R.J. Suderman, *God’s People Now*). The Denominational Minister serves in the zone in between and connects the national identity and the services and program of the area churches. This national-to-area agenda includes:

- a. The calling system: where the national office is the clearing house as well as serving to maintain standards and practices from area church to area church.
- b. Developing and maintaining consistency and high standards in credentialing practices, hence empowering area church function and building the integrity of the denomination.
- c. Providing resources for congregations around pastoral leadership, e.g. the “Pastor and Congregation Evaluation packet.”
- d. Convening Area Church Ministers and forging them into a mutually supportive team has been a critical area of development.

There is an on-going need to “raise the bar” on our standards for credentialing (specific training and experiences that prepare people for ministering in the Mennonite Church.) This agenda will need to continue to be on the table for the Area Church Ministers as they meet together, and with the Denominational Minister.

As I reflect on the pastoral health in MC Canada, I am concerned that the strengthening of the executive capacities of area church leadership staff roles detracts from the direct supporting/mentoring/coaching role of the Area Church Minister. Under this newly emerging leadership model, will our pastors have adequately immediate access to help when they face overwhelming challenges?

### Authority, leadership and the office of Denominational Minister

In our way of being the church, the church begins with the congregation, not with the denomination. Both the area church and the national church derive from the local church. Authority “flows upward.” Even so, there is an instinct to look for leadership and authority in the area church and denomination. Quite often this instinct is expressed as “looking to the conference for ...” This often seems to mean “those people up there who are in charge.”

In surfing the waves and undercurrents of this tradition of authority, I have observed and experienced:

- a. The most effective leadership mode is a convening mode which invites and facilitates the partners around a table to address our future together in light of the prevailing Authority of Scripture, our Confession of Faith and our common history and tradition.
- b. Making authoritative statements or pronouncements is rarely productive.
- c. Leadership pronouncements will only be as effective as the level of trust in relationship, and the depth of convening that has prevailed.

This “flat polity” with its dynamic instinct toward locally oriented authority and autonomy captures both the genius and a salient weakness of our practiced polity. It demands from the office of Denominational Minister a working leadership hermeneutic that accurately interprets the sometimes ambivalent or discordant voices. It also calls for patient perseverance and a degree of comfort with ambiguity.



*Dieter Schönwetter, project director of the Pastoral Trends Survey, gives a report at the Colloquium that was held at CMU in April.*

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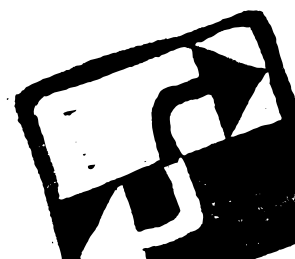
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### 3. Spiritual and Theological Wellness in a Church of significant diversity

How do we convene a church to worship with integrity and to serve in harmony when the traditions of theological exploration and discourse come from opposing ends of the theological spectrum with differing theological languages?

There has been growth and development in MC Canada over the last five years in our capacities to hold difficult theological conversations. Our conversations about homosexuality have forced our engagements beyond our settled comfort zones. This growth has been an unexpected blessing. Further, the Faith and Life Committee has contributed significantly over the last three years in some vital areas, including our understandings of creation care and the nature of church membership.

As Mennonite Church Canada looks into the future, other theological conversations await us that could divide us or bind us together. For example, we are anticipating an important conversation about Christology. How we confess Christ is surfacing as the core issue beneath our inter-faith discussions and experiences. In this and other conversations:

- a. We need to cultivate a prevailing attitude which recognizes that all of us work from an incomplete template of theological inquiry. We will need to find it easier to admit that none of us have all the theological marbles in our bag.
- b. We will need to pursue our theological conversations in light of the authority of Scripture, our Confession of Faith, and our common story of faith and discipleship with a serious commitment to stay at the table.
- c. The prevailing mode of interaction will need to be listening: Listening to one another with a determination to hear and understand the other is the first task, all the while listening to the Word and the Spirit. And our listening will need to be combined with an openness to be transformed by the listening that we do.
- d. We will need to interact peaceably, on the basis of an implicit promise that we will not coerce or disqualify one another. But we will stay at the table even when the conversation does not yield the results that we would like, or move as quickly as we would desire.
- e. Questions and challenges will need to be offered with gentleness and respect.
- f. As base one, we will need to recognize that our unity in Christ is a gift from God. Our conversation begins on the basis of this unity rather than a quality of uniformity in thought or approach or thought for which we strive.

### 4. Some Priorities for the Future

- a. The cultivation of the congregation as the most significant matrix for the development of pastors and leaders for the church. Such a vision would call for a serious re-alignment of the priorities of pastors and educators.
- b. Mentoring new pastors and providing support and resources for pastors at each stage of pastoral life is critical to the health of our church. This is a critical priority that will call for a realignment of financial resources.
- c. The increased cultivation of spiritual practices such as prayer, Bible study, and other spiritual disciplines in our congregations is necessary for the health and growth of our church.
- d. If our church is to faithfully minister to our ever-changing contexts, every congregation needs to take serious steps to become a multi-culturally friendly community.
- e. There is a need to continue to work at a sound biblical Anabaptist understanding of authority and power and how they inform the pastoral office.

—Sven Eriksson, Denominational Minister

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# Faith and Life Committee (FLC)

The Faith and Life Committee has been in existence since the fall of 2005. Its mandate is to give leadership to Mennonite Church Canada in discerning God's will on issues of theology, ethics, polity and practice. Back in 2005 the FLC prepared the following question to give a foundation from which to work:

*As a people called into being by God  
who confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour  
and seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit  
who desire under the guidance of the Holy Spirit  
to be rooted in Scripture  
shaped by the life of the church  
informed by its confessions and denominational statements  
who are part of the church worldwide  
located in the Canadian society in the twenty-first century*

## **What does it mean to be a faithful Mennonite Church?**

There are always many more issues and questions facing the FLC than we can deal with, given our time and energy constraints. Each year the priorities for consideration are tested with a Reference Council made up of representatives of the Mennonite academic institutions, the Moderators, Secretaries, and Area Church Ministers, and then approved by the General Board.

At the 2006 Assembly, the FLC presented several documents to lead the Biblical and theological reflection around the request for Area Church Only Membership. In the 2007 Assembly in Edmonton, the FLC gave special attention to the Biblical and theological perspectives behind the concern of global warming. We spoke to the issue of creation care under three titles: Creation belongs to God, Creation care is part of the good news of God's plan of reconciliation and redemption, and God will care for creation and us within it. FLC also partnered with Mennonite Creation Care Network (MCCN) in presenting several practical workshops on the topic at the Assembly. Mennonite Church Canada's concern for creation care is being carried on primarily through the MCCN. All prepared statements of the FLC are available on the Mennonite Church Canada website.

The question that is receiving primary attention this year has to do with confessing Jesus Christ in a religiously pluralistic society. This is undoubtedly one of the most important challenges that we face as Mennonite Christians in our increasingly pluralistic, multi-faith, post-modern society. As we have begun to work with it we are aware that it touches many dimensions of our faith and church life. The Faith and Life Committee will begin to offer some guidance through a plenary session at the 2008 Assembly and the Peoples Summit for Faithful Living that follows. A discernment document is included in this Report Book.

Now that we have several years of work experience behind us, the FLC, together with the General Board, is in the process of evaluating how the FLC is functioning within our Mennonite Church Canada structures. We want to pay attention to matters of follow-up, to the different venues available for us to speak through, as well as to exploring how our agenda overlaps with that of the Mennonite Church Canada Councils. We feel positive about the work that has been done and pray that God will continue to use our efforts.

*—submitted by Rudy Baergen*



*Doreen Neufeld, member of the Faith and Life Committee at the 2007 Leadership Assembly.*

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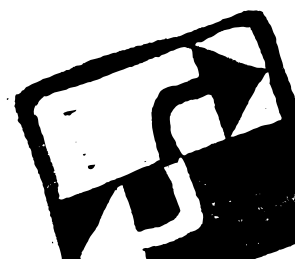
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# Assembly 2007 Actions and Follow-up

**MOTION 1:** The delegate assembly adopts the minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Session of Mennonite Church Canada as recorded and published in *Minute Book 2006* issued by Mennonite Church Canada. *Motion carried.* (No follow-up needed).

**MOTION 2:** The delegate assembly approves the actions taken by the General Board of Mennonite Church Canada in the past year. *Motion carried.* (No follow-up needed).

**MOTION 3:** The delegate assembly approves the audited financial statements for Mennonite Church Canada for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2007. *Motion carried.* (No follow-up needed.)

**MOTION 4:** The delegate assembly moves that nominations cease and the slate of nominees be approved as presented. *Motion carried.* (No follow-up needed.)

## MC CANADA BYLAWS – UPDATES

Pam Peters-Pries, referring to the preamble in the Report Book, noted the bylaw updates fall within four categories: to align with the decision made at assembly last year allowing Area Church Only Membership, to update language to reflect current usage, to clarify responsibility for relating to several institutions (AMBS, CMU, MPN), and to allow flexibility for appointments to Mennonite World Conference.

**MOTION 5:** The delegate assembly approves the changes to the bylaws for Mennonite Church Canada as presented in the Report Book. *Motion carried.*

**ACTION FOLLOW UP:** The MC Canada by-laws have been updated as approved. This is available on our website, in the report book, and available in print copy.

**MOTION 6:** The delegate assembly approves the budget as presented for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2009. *Motion Carried.* (No follow-up needed.)

**MOTION 7:** The delegate assembly appoints KPMG as the auditor for Mennonite Church Canada for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2009. – Motion Carried

**ACTION FOLLOW UP:** MC Canada has been in contact with KPMG to re-appoint them as our auditors for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2009.

## OTHER CONCERNS

### Resolution regarding Creation Care:

Whereas the earth is an expression of God's love and Christ calls us to be stewards of God's precious handiwork, Be it resolved that Mennonite Church Canada develop guidelines to reduce the consumption of energy and other resources when planning future assemblies. Moved by Dave Neufeld; seconded by Stan Olsen, carried by show of hands. *Resolution Approved.*

**ACTION FOLLOW-UP:** We have worked hard at the implementation of this resolution. More information and fuller reports have been given and processed by the Support Services Council and the General Board. These are available upon request.

### Resolution of Gratitude

Ed Janzen presented a resolution expressing gratitude to the staff of Mennonite Church Canada; the staff of Mennonite Educational Institute, the staff at Trinity Western University, and all the churches and volunteers. It was affirmed by a round of applause. (No follow-up needed).

### Invitation to congregations – Faith and Life Committee

Let the church together proclaim that “the earth is the Lord’s” and affirm our Christian responsibility to care for our environment and all of life.

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Accordingly, each congregation is encouraged to take the following actions:

- develop and practice liturgy and celebrations honouring God and God's creation;
- develop and use curriculum which encourages careful use and sharing of the earth's limited resources;
- develop and practice good stewardship of church property including energy-saving practices, low impact, low maintenance landscaping styles, and limiting the amount of pavement;
- foster a sense of connection to the soil and food production as well as to local fields, woods and water courses, through tree planting celebrations, community gardening, and by spending time learning about and enjoying nature in our local communities.

Individual congregations are invited to report on their stewardship activities to the larger church-wide body at future Assemblies and gatherings.

**ACTION FOLLOW-UP:** A scheduled session at the 2008 Assembly for delegate feedback and further process.

### **Assembly 2007 - Affirmation Statements**

Three affirmation statements were presented to the Assembly delegates for discussion. All three were affirmed with small changes to strengthen the statements.

Following are the three statements noted with the improvements:

#### **1) CREATION CARE**

Mennonite Church Canada believes that God longs for the well-being and health of the whole world, for all of creation is bound together and belongs to God, who has created and who preserves all things. Our concern for faithfulness and discipleship should also lead us to care for creation. Mennonite Church Canada believes that God is calling us to commit ourselves to discern the paths of faithfulness to be good stewards of the earth.

#### **2) YOUNG ADULTS**

*Revised Affirmation Statement, incorporating responses from 2007 Assembly*

Mennonite Church Canada commits itself to young adults as an affirming home for their growth and faith commitment. The church needs the creativity and spiritual gifts young adults bring to the church's corporate life and public witness.

Because God invites us to partner in calling, equipping and sending the church, we seek to be proactive in creating space for young adults to discover, nurture and exercise their God-given gifts in leadership and service, in the life and ministries of the church. We pray for the grace to be flexible and to act boldly to make this possible, even when this creates a sense of holy restlessness in the institutions and practices of our present and past.

We proclaim this with the commitment to see the whole body of Christ strengthened, edified and empowered by the Holy Spirit toward the fulfillment of God's dream.

*—submitted by Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary, Formation*

#### **3) MILITARIZATION**

Mennonite Church Canada believes that "peace is the will of God" and that we need to "witness to all people that violence is not the will of God" (COF, p 81-82). Given this gospel understanding, we lament and oppose that the imaginations of our church and society are increasingly captivated by confidence in military solutions to human problems. May God grant us wisdom to discern and grace to act in ways that promote God's will for peace on earth.

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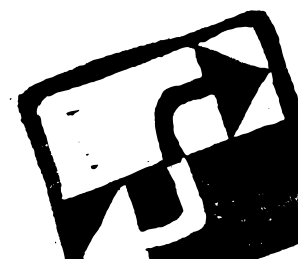
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# General Board Actions

## GENERAL BOARD MEETING - MARCH 2007

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board agrees that it would be good to have a mechanism that allows delegates to respond to the assembly discernment sessions and asks the bodies assigned to shaping these sessions to also generate statements that affirm our common ground in these areas.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board agrees that MC Canada should pursue and engage in a process of exploring ongoing dialogue with the Christian Reformed Church of Canada.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the use of New Program Funds for three new initiatives:

1. \$4,600 for “Church Matters” radio program,
2. \$800 for “God’s People Now” book, and
3. \$10,000 over two years for locating a Mennonite Central Committee International Volunteer Exchange Program volunteer at MC Canada.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board recommends to the delegate body that MC Canada approve the bylaw revisions as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** If she is available, the General Board agrees to appoint Ingrid Peters-Fransen to serve another 3-year term on the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, noting this would be her last term.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board agrees to transfer from the General Treasury to Internally Restricted Funds the following:

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## 1. Christian Witness Council

- a. \$5,000 to Witness future projects (Communications)
- b. \$7,500 to Witness future projects (Staff training)
- c. \$18,000 to International Ministries (Education)
- d. \$8,000 to International Ministries (Cuba)

## 2. Christian Formation Council

- a. \$6,055 to Resource Creation Reserve (Translation)
- b. \$1,500 to a Resource Creation Reserve (Canadian Women in Mission)
- c. \$4,498 to an Archives Reserve (Archives Grant)

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board agrees to transfer from the General Board’s Internally Restricted General fund \$69,341 to the General Treasury to offset an operating statement budget deficit.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves a \$15,000 transfer from the General Capital fund to offset the purchase of the Heritage Centre fire alarm system that was already approved in FYE’07 but not completed until FYE’08.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board recommends to the delegate body that MC Canada approve the FYE’08 budget as presented, based on a 1.18 US\$ exchange rate and a 2.0% CPI Salary adjustment.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the revisions to the “Revolving Bequest and Time Designated Fund Policy” as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the revisions to the “Partner Program Policy” as presented.

**MOTION:** Move to take Motion 5 from the November 17-18, 2006 meeting from table.

*m/s/c Leroy Shantz / Henry Block*

**AMENDMENT 1:** Move to amend Motion 5 to include area church delegates to the annual assembly.

*m/s/c Leroy Shantz / Henry Block*

**MOTION 5:** The General Board agrees that if a person is a member of an area church member congregation [whether or not that congregation is ACOM] and is chosen by an area church to be its representative to the MC Canada General Board, committees, other boards or as area church delegates to the



annual assembly, then MC Canada shall accept the appointment, as the person represents the area church and not his or her congregation. However, the MC Canada Nominations Committee shall not solicit nominations from ACOM congregations for the positions that it fills as these are not positions that represent the area churches.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board affirms the recommendation from Christian Witness Council for appointing an MC Canada Task Group for Pandemic Response Planning and asks executive staff to bring further details for our review.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board of MC Canada invites MC USA to join us for a joint gathering for study and worship in July 2008 in Winnipeg, MB. The MC Canada delegate assembly would take place July 7-8, with the joint event to follow on July 8-10, 2008.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board wishes to acknowledge receipt of the letter from Colombia and asks staff to send a response that communicates our commitment to praying for them and following through on the recommendations they have made.

#### **GENERAL BOARD MEETING - APRIL 2007**

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the minutes of the meeting held in Winnipeg on March 1-3, 2007 with a revision to correct the CPI index from 2.0 to 2.4%.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board affirms the draft letter to government about militarization and the conscientious objector tax bill, and agrees that with minor editing as discussed this letter should be sent to the Prime Minister.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the Joint Executive Committee recommendation to appoint Phil Bontrager as Chair and Laverne Brubaker as Vice-Chair of the board of Mennonite Publishing Network.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the updates to the Group Insurance Benefits Policy and the new Group Registered Retirement Savings Plan as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the revisions to the Hiring and Supervision Policy as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the revisions to the Hours of Work Policy as presented.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the revised meeting schedule as proposed.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board approves the revisions to the Investment Policy with the understanding that we are using the best research

screens available within the investment community at this time to align these investments with our faith convictions

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board agrees to move toward consolidating the church to church relationship with Chile as a pilot project to learn what this means for us and study the implications in how we relate to other churches.

**MOTION 1:** The General Board recommends to the delegate body that MC Canada approve the audited statements for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2007.

*m/s/c Clare Schlegel/Hilda Hildebrand*

**MOTION 2:** The General Board recommends to the delegate body that MC Canada appoint KPMG as auditors for the fiscal year ended January 31, 2009.

*m/s/c Clare Schlegel/Hilda Hildebrand*

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board appoints Andrew Reesor-McDowell, Sue Steiner and Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen as the Reference Group for Assembly 2007

#### **GENERAL BOARD MEETING - NOVEMBER 2007**

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board accepts the Personnel Policy changes regarding Statutory and Declared Holidays, Bereavement and Compassionate Leave, Flexible work Schedules and Overtime, and Retirement.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board accepts the Privacy Audit Report.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board encourages area churches to look at "Road Markers on a Journey" draft document, implications included, to be sent out with a cover letter.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board accepts pages 96 and 97 of the Conflict Zone Assignment Policies as part of the worker manual.

**CONSENSUS:** The General Board accepts the changes to the Finance Policy Manual, as laid out in pages 93-94 of the November, 2007 GB docket.

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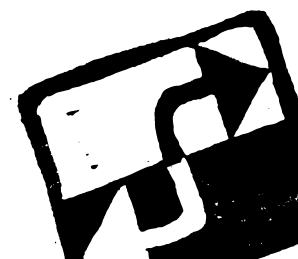
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# Mennonite World Conference (MWC)

## At a Glance...



### MWC exists to:

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

### Officers:

**President:** Nancy Heisey, USA

**Vice President:** Danisa Ndlovu, ZIMBABWE

**General Secretary:** Larry Miller, FRANCE

**Treasurer:** Paul Quiring, USA

### MWC Canadian Office:

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



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

MWC represents 97 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ national churches on six continents. These churches are increasingly having more fellowship with each other, offering more solidarity and support to each other, and seeking more counsel and accountability from each other. MWC helps to facilitate and coordinate these connections.

Linking to one another includes keeping connected through Courier magazine, News Service articles, the web site ([www.mw-cmm.org](http://www.mw-cmm.org)) and the Anabaptist Shelf of Literature. *What We Believe Together* by Alfred Neufeld is the 2007 Shelf selection. Neufeld, a teacher and theologian from Paraguay, explores the Statement of Shared Convictions that was approved by the General Council in 2006.

Facilitating community also happens when we celebrate World Fellowship Sunday together every January and when we meet face-to-face at global assemblies.

Assembly 15 will be held in Asuncion, Paraguay, July 14 -19, 2009. Hispanic, Germanic and indigenous Mennonite churches in Paraguay are working together in new ways to host the worldwide Anabaptist family. They invite us to attend. AMIGOS is excited about organizing the Global Youth Summit for young adults.

Actions to support churches in situations of suffering, conflict or crisis include Koinonia visits, the establishment of Global Deacons who will suggest appropriate responses to pressing concerns, and managing the Global Church Sharing Fund.

A Koinonia delegation visited Zimbabwe in August, 2007. They listened, led workshops, brought a gift of money and most importantly, let the Zimbabwean Brethren in Christ church know that they are not alone. Please pray for peace and justice in that country.

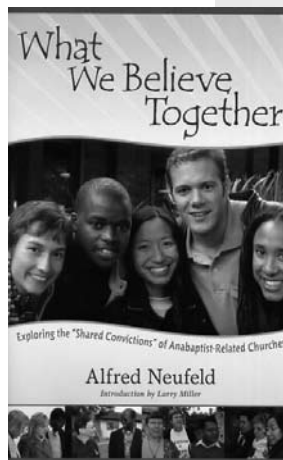
How have we related to other Christian world communities this past year?

- The Catholic-MWC International Dialogue (1998 -2003) resulted in an MWC visit to the Vatican in October, 2007, invited by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Learning to know each other better and sharing peacemaking goals resulted.
- The Lutheran and Mennonite International Study Commission, which has dealt with the implications of Lutheran condemnations of Anabaptists during the Reformation, met in June and will give their final report later in 2008.
- MWC delegates attended the Global Christian Forum in November. This was the most complete gathering of Christians since the first century.

Some final items of interest: MWC is participating in MCC's re-visioning process. And, MWC is in the process of reorganizing into commissions in such areas as missions (with Global Mission Fellowship), peace, faith and life, and service. These areas represent tasks and issues with which MWC is deeply engaged.

I encourage every congregation to become informed and involved by being a MWC "connector" and to support MWC with your dollars and your prayers. As Alfred Neufeld suggests, being "part of a global community of faith will enrich our worship, our life together and our faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ."

—Naomi Unger, MC Canada representative to MWC



Alfred Neufeld listens to a discussion during last August's meeting of the MWC Executive Committee in Asunción, Paraguay. Alfred, who serves as the chair of the National Coordinating Council for Paraguay 2009, also recently wrote "What We Believe Together," a discussion guide to MWC "Shared Convictions" statement. The guide is the 2007 Global Shelf of Anabaptist Literature selection.

# Mennonite Church USA (MC USA)

## ***Dear Brothers and Sisters in Canada,***

We extend greetings to you from Mennonite Church USA and its 100,000-plus members represented across a nation and geography that is similar in its expanse to yours.

We give thanks for the special ministries in which we collaborate in publishing, theological education and in sending workers around the world.

In the larger church of Jesus Christ, but particularly in the Anabaptist/Mennonite understanding of scripture and how God has worked in history, our two churches share much in common.

It is a privilege and pleasure to share a special time together this summer under the theme of *At the Crossroads, Promise and Peril*. This People's Summit for Faithful Living, will be a time of shared listening and speaking, of mutual discernment in prayer, worship and study, and a time for renewing old relationships and forming new ones.

We find ourselves in a common search with you to understand in new ways the meaning of the people hood of God in Jesus Christ. Why has God chosen this form, which we call the church, to demonstrate God's plan for the salvation of creation with us at the center of that creation?

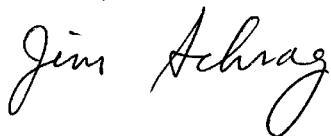
Recently the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board candidly shared with the rest of the church its belief that such a vision for the church is not sufficiently supported by the ways in which we presently "do church" in Mennonite Church USA. Such a confession by the church's leadership board has started a new round of examination of how we communicate our identity, how we share our resources for the variety of callings present in the church, and how the church is governed. The impetus for such an examination lay in the call from the merger process of 2000, which called on a review of the church six years after its inception. That time is now upon us.

We seek your kinship and support in prayer as we attempt to find out more of what God is doing in the world around us and to align ourselves with God's ever-fresh and vibrant activity of redeeming us with all of creation.

It is a pleasure for some of us to accept your hospitality in a special way this summer – hospitality that reminds us of the special love of God we know in the church in our relationships of common purpose and calling.

May God bless all of you richly.

In Christ,



–Jim Schrag, Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA



Jim Schrag

general 

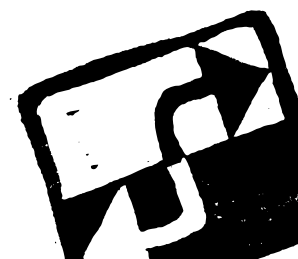
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# Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA)

Fifty years ago, the welfare of those making up what is now Mennonite Church Alberta rose and fell with the status of the agriculture sector. Today many more would be dependant on the oil industry than on agriculture.

This change and its related influences on our people has left many of us scratching our heads at times when we try to be a Church together. However, in spite of our busy schedules, distances that divide us, gas prices that make travel more difficult and language and cultural differences, we still find ways of functioning as a Conference of churches with common goals.

We lament the lack of youth and young adults, yet we acknowledge those that are active and demonstrating strong leadership in our churches. We regret the loss of traditional programming such as our long-standing Songfest, yet look forward with some excitement to what, as yet unknown, program is about to take its place. We accept that shrinking budgets may be a reality into the future, yet we also have a tradition that already has been influenced by a 'More with Less' theology. We accept the fact that some of our churches will grow in membership in the coming years, and others will decline. In both cases, adaptations of leadership and ministry structure will need to be made.

I probably haven't made any points that are unique to MCA. We all have similar experiences in our own context. Let us all, as Area and National Churches continue to work together in supporting each other in prayer as we minister to our membership and beyond.

—Linden Willms, *Outgoing Moderator, Mennonite Church Alberta*

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**CHURCH  
matters**

**A radio program**  
that explores the **life of the church,**  
at home, across the street, and around the world.

On the web at [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/158](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/158)



[www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca](http://www.youtube.com/mennonitechurchca)



# Mennonite Church British Columbia (MCBC)

During 2007/2008 Mennonite Church British Columbia (MCBC) has been growing in commitment. On May 27, 2007, 30 of 34 congregations covenanted with each other and MCBC to remain member congregations in MCBC and entered into 6 Common Commitments as follows: Essential Doctrine & Practice; Meaningful Worship and Fellowship; Shared Ministries; Discernment; Mutual Accountability; Service.

Here is a testimonial on what God is doing in one of these committed congregations:

## God Opening Doors Of Ministry

I am often amazed at how our God works in lives and churches and stand in awe of His power, grace and wisdom at what he's doing at Living Hope Christian Fellowship (LHCF). Ten years ago Yarrow United Mennonite Church sponsored the Thein family from Burma to come to Canada. They later moved to Surrey and made Cedar Hills Mennonite Church their home. When Cedar Hills merged with LHCF the Thein family became an active part of this new congregation. Three months ago Mr. Thein approached Pastor Lorin asking if he could bring to church a few Karen friends – a people group from Burma – whom he was meeting with for Bible study. The following Sunday over 30 Karen people walked into our 11 am celebration and our life as a church has not been the same since.

Canada has accepted a sizable number of Karen people into Canada in this last year, with many hundreds more coming in the next two years. Many are finding homes in Surrey close to LHCF's facility. God is opening our hearts to reach out in ministry to these people who have suffered such hardship in their homelands. Presently 60-70 Karen people are in some way connected to our church family. Our 11 am celebration offers simultaneous translation into both Mandarin and Karen. Our children's ministry is flooded with ESL students full of life and eager to learn yet hindered by language limitations. Karen children joined in the Christmas musical, while our youth group has become home to Karen teenagers struggling to find a new identity and place to belong. We provide transportation service for 50+ people weekly, are facilitating an adoption program where each Karen family will be 'adopted' by a church cell group. Our youth cells made 'Christmas shoeboxes' for Karen kids. Our church's Christmas hampers were made 'Karen friendly,' and we've begun monthly evening worship celebrations in the Karen language. Even the Canadian government has called and asked if we can partner with them to provide care for these new refugees. Now if that is not a miracle I do not know what is! It is overwhelming, more than a bit scary but tremendously exciting to be partnering with God in this ministry.

What does the future look like? We do not have a clue. We are so thankful to MCBC for providing us with some funds to purchase Karen Bibles, translation headsets and honorarium monies for some specific hands on people ministry. We covet your prayers as we are in so far over our heads on this one that we cannot even see the surface. Our goal is not only to meet the needs of the Karen people who have started attending LHCF but prepare for the future and what we believe will be an even more significant opportunity to share God's love in Jesus Christ.

I see this whole ministry starting a decade ago when people from MCBC reached out to a family from Burma. Now things have come full circle where that very family is partnering with us in helping many others. None of this would be possible if not for the love and support shown by the MCBC family both 10 years ago and today. I am glad to be part of such a family.

–Lorin Bergen, Living Hope Christian Fellowship

## At a Glance...

**Activity/Program:** An Area Conference desiring to work together to achieve those things which we cannot do easily as separate churches.

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

**Average Annual Budget:** 426,700 (not including Camp Squeah)

**Staff:** Garry Janzen, Executive Minister; Janette Thiessen, Office Administrator; Rob Tiessen, Camp Squeah Executive Director

**Leadership Board Executive Officers:** Gerd Bartel, Moderator; Dan Rempel, Vice-Moderator; Linda Matties, Secretary; John Redekop, Finance Chair

### MC Canada Representatives:

Gerd Bartel, Western Director of Resource Development; Veronica Dyck, Christian Formation Council (2008); Jorge Hoajaca, General Board Member-at-large (2008); Ed Janzen, Support Services Council (2008); Henry Krause, General Board Moderator (2008); Laura Loewen, Christian Witness Council (2009); Clare Neufeld, Nominations Committee (2010); Dan Rempel, General Board Representative



Living Hope Christian Fellowship

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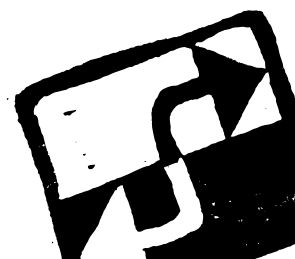
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# Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC)

## At a Glance...

**Executive:** Leroy Shantz (Chair), Myrna Miller Dyck, Helen Eby, Fred Kinsie, Robert Konrad, Larry Martin, Carol Penner, Jana Schmidt, Russ Snyder-Penner

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

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*Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: making disciples, growing congregations, forming leaders* is MCEC's vision and identity statement. It informs and directs the ministry of the MCEC community of congregations, which is comprised of over 90 congregations in Eastern Canada.

### • **Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: Making Disciples**

Joanne Sou from Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church is a teenager living in Toronto. This past year she visited Laos with her family where they were able to reach out to many children who forage daily in the local dumps for life giving sustenance and hope. Because of Joanne's vision and the generosity of her congregation, hope was offered to a community in Laos through used clothing, new buildings and a much needed roof over a school. Through the nudging of God's Spirit, the relationship continues to grow between the communities and dreams are emerging for a Mennonite church plant and a Mennonite technical school. Pray for Joanne and the many disciples that are being nurtured in both Toronto and Laos.

### • **Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: Growing Congregations**

What happens when congregational leaders from area congregations come together for intentional conversation about generosity? The MCEC community of congregations met over the past year for this very purpose. The information gathered from those meetings and from an on-line survey culminated in a Fall Church Gathering focused on generosity. Through Bible study and reflection, we were challenged to be hilarious givers as we take part in God's economy and culture of generosity. We were urged to rediscover the gospel and the grace of God, which is at the very heart of our relationship **to** God.

### • **Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: Forming Leaders**

Leadership and leadership development is vital to the health of the MCEC community of congregations. Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) is a new venture designed to provide support and resources for pastors who are beginning congregational ministry, as well as for the congregations walking alongside them. The spiritual practices and personal habits enhanced and developed through TiM will serve the pastors and their congregations in their future ministry together. Pray that the gifts in our pastoral leaders will continue to be released for leadership and ministry within God's people.

In April 2007, Vision Mennonite Church was welcomed into the MCEC community during our Annual Church Gathering. Vision Mennonite Church is a Korean faith community which has existed in London, ON since 2000. As a gathered Area Church, it was refreshing to worship through a simple song, *Jesus Loves Me* – sung in Korean and in English, as we were reminded of the love of God.

We look forward to a year of extending the peace of Jesus Christ to those in our congregations and in our communities. May God be honoured.

–Lisa Williams,  
Director of Communications



Joanne (right), and her younger sister, extending the peace of Jesus Christ in Laos.

# Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM)

The theme for Mennonite Church Manitoba in 2007 was "Living on the Edge" and is reflected in Luke 4: 18 & 19 "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*"

This year's theme is the conclusion of the three year theme "Rooted in the Centre – Living on the Edge". The development of the "Living on the Edge" theme has called us to reflect on four important issues: the various stages of faith development, being the Church in our cultural context, dealing with conflict and change, and the development of leadership in the Church. These four issues will be the focus of our reflection and discernment for the next four years.

**Camping Ministry** Highlights experienced in "Camps with Meaning" in 2007 included:

- a revamped **Servant in Leadership Training Program** replaced the Counselor in Training Program.
- A **Youth Camp** was added to the Camp Assiniboia schedule.
- a CD of homegrown songs entitled "**Circle of God's People**" was released.
- a **Homesteading Retreat** was held, where skills such as sausage making and building wicker furniture were taught and an outdoor oven was constructed.
- Camp Koinonia held its first **Winter Retreat for Adults with Disabilities**
- **Camp Moose Lake** celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- **Restructuring** of support committees took place, resulting in the creation of Camp Planning Committee (CPC) which will work together with the Director of Camping Ministry to set direction and assist with major decisions.
- The CPC held a **strategic planning retreat** in February. An action plan will be implemented during the next months and years.
- **Family Camp** is a new addition to the summer program lineup.
- **David (Manager) and Katherine (Guest Group Coordinator) Hogue** will start employment at Camp Assiniboia in June.

**Evangelism and Service Ministries** works with congregations in three different areas of ministry. One is to offer resources in missional formation tailored to each congregation's need for reflection and discerning their faithful response to God's work among them. A second area of work is encouraging and resourcing congregations for church planting. Congregations work through a process of discernment and receive training and coaching for church planting leaders. A third focus is to promote service and provide opportunities for participation.

—cont'd on page 24

## At a Glance...

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

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

**Annual Budget:** \$1,770,800

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

**Staff:** Edgar Rempel, Executive Director; Tom Seals, Treasurer; Beverley Sawatzky and Eva Loewen, Administrative Assistants; Harold Peters-Fransen, Interim Director of Leadership Ministries; Peter Zacharias, Interim Director Pastor Care; Henry Kliever Director of Leadership Ministries (May '08); Norm Voth, Director of Evangelism and Service Ministries; Bob Wiebe, Director of Camping Ministries; Darryl Neustaedter Barg, Associate Director Media Ministries; Dorothea Rempel Kampen, Frohe Botschaft Producer; Camp Managers and Staff.



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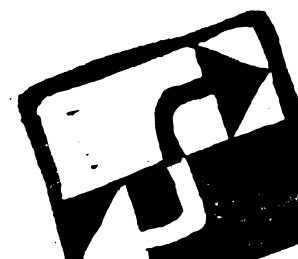
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In 2008 there are two primary initiatives for Evangelism and Service Ministries. One is an exploration of church planting for young adults called Refinery. Participants will live, work and study with church planters in Los Angeles, CA from September 9 till December 2. The experience will expose them to creative and innovative models for church planting and congregational development. When participants return they will be available to Manitoba congregations to share their experience and/or participate as leaders in new church plants.

A second initiative is a focus on building bridges with Aboriginal neighbours in urban settings. Manitoba has a growing Aboriginal population and there is opportunity to develop partnerships for learning and service. Congregational partnerships with Aboriginal congregations continue to offer opportunities for service and learning. Service opportunities include summer VBS programs, gardening projects and camp. Every spring an Aboriginal theologian or church leader is invited to teach and engage in dialogue about issues at the intersection of faith and culture.

**Leadership Ministries** The work of walking with our congregational leadership is a blessing. Several congregations welcomed new pastors and associate pastors, and a number, together with Mennonite Church Manitoba, ordained their pastors. Education opportunities included a day with Harry Huebner on the role and practise surrounding communion, and a ½ day with our Annual Delegate Session speaker, Ken Hawkey, interacting about how we recognize our own faith development, while walking with others at different stages in theirs.

We welcome Henry Kliever on May 4, as the new Director of Leadership Ministries, with a primary call in the area of pastoral care for our pastors. In order to free up more time for this task, a number of people have agreed to walk with congregations through searches and through pastor job reviews. Calling persons to consider pastoral ministry is also a major thrust which must be on the front burner.

—Edgar Rempel, Executive Director

## Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask)

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MC Sask is excited about easing into a **new structure** that is designed to enhance our vision of being “Christ Centred and Sent.” A key feature is the Vision and Wholeness group which is intended to give theological shape to our journey together, to have an advisory function, and to observe and bring together the past, present and future.

In March, 2007 the MC Sask office was moved out of the Mennonite Trust offices to a new location; 10A-301 Pakwa Place in Saskatoon. **Charlotte Bueckert** is the office administrator, offering a competent and consistent presence in the office.

A **VBS Troupe** was again offered to congregations last summer. The troupe was given very capable leadership by Heather Ens. Her experience in elementary education was helpful as she was able to share her learnings with the others. The rest of the troupe was Laura Epp (Zoar-Langham), Craig Friesen (Osler) and Stephanie Siemens (Warman). This group connected well with each other and the children and adults in the churches they attended. The theme for the week was “Be Bold! God is with You!” They brought the VBS program to 7 congregations.

**GreenTrek** is an attempt to not only interest the younger folks, but also anyone who is interested in the care of the earth. GreenTrek is being planned and supported by

people from various sectors of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. The Trek will be a pilgrimage with visits to various alternative operations and sacred sites where people who want to make a difference in how they interact with the earth will share their insights and offer challenges for how to move forward. Participants will walk, ride bike, ride horse or ride in some alternately fueled vehicle to make this pilgrimage.

**Touring Mission Fest** is the bus tour that takes mission seekers to various communities to experience first hand how God is active in those communities. Two tours will happen in 2008. One will visit MC Sask congregations at Horse Lake, Prince Albert, and Carrot River. The other will visit congregations at Hanley, Clavet, and Drake.

A phenomenon that has been quietly building over the past five years is a growing connection between Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations and **Colombia**. A large part of this has been welcoming and embracing Colombians who are fleeing the violence in their homeland as refugees. A half-dozen MC Sask congregations around the province have been part of sponsoring Colombian families as refugees. Mount Royal MC in Saskatoon has welcomed large numbers of government sponsored Colombian refugees and is developing a 'nested' Hispanic congregation. Its Colombian pastor has spoken in about a dozen MC Sask congregations and financial support for his ministry has come from MC Sask broadly, including Ministries Commission budget and direct contributions from 9 MC Sask congregations. And finally, Eigenheim MC has developed a congregation to congregation partnership with Colombia including reciprocal visits, and at least one other MC Sask congregation is exploring the possibility of following suit. Well over half of MC Sask's 33 congregations have already been involved in at least one of the activities mentioned above.

Throughout 2007 Pastoral Leadership Commission has continued to focus on the three areas of calling, equipping and growing leaders for the church within Saskatchewan. Our prayer and desire is that the leaders of our congregations will engender places of worship where all are invited to experience the love and grace of God.

We are excited about the influx of **new leaders** we have received in the past year or two. Men and women, newly educated and experienced pastors are adding energy and enthusiasm to leadership within the province.

A seminar entitled "New Vision for the Longer Term Pastorate" will be held in June 2008 at Shekinah Retreat Centre, and taught by Ed White of the Alban Institute. We continue to work with the MC Sask Executive to ensure that this kind of resourcing and growing of our leaders can continue to happen.

MC Sask has a Congregational Life Resource Team consisting of volunteers with a helpful range of skills and experience. Members respond to requests from congregations looking for assistance on a variety of issues: evaluations, conflicts, renewing a pastor's call, etc.

*—submitted by Jerry Buhler, MC Saskatchewan Area Church Minister*

## At a Glance...

**Moderator:** Renata Klassen

**Deputy Moderator:** Henry Funk

**Secretary:** Grace Funk

**Chair of Finance:** Armin Krahn

**Staff:**

Anna Rehan, Area Church Youth Minister

Jerry Buhler, Area Church Minister

Charlotte Buekert, Office Administrator

**MC Canada staff in Saskatchewan**

Eric Olfert, Missional formation and partnership facilitator for Saskatchewan

Anna Rehan, Youth Ministries facilitator



*Charlotte Buekert*

**general** ↗

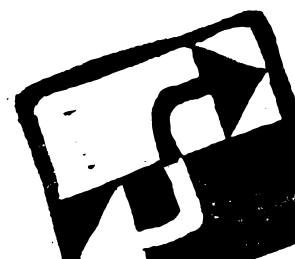
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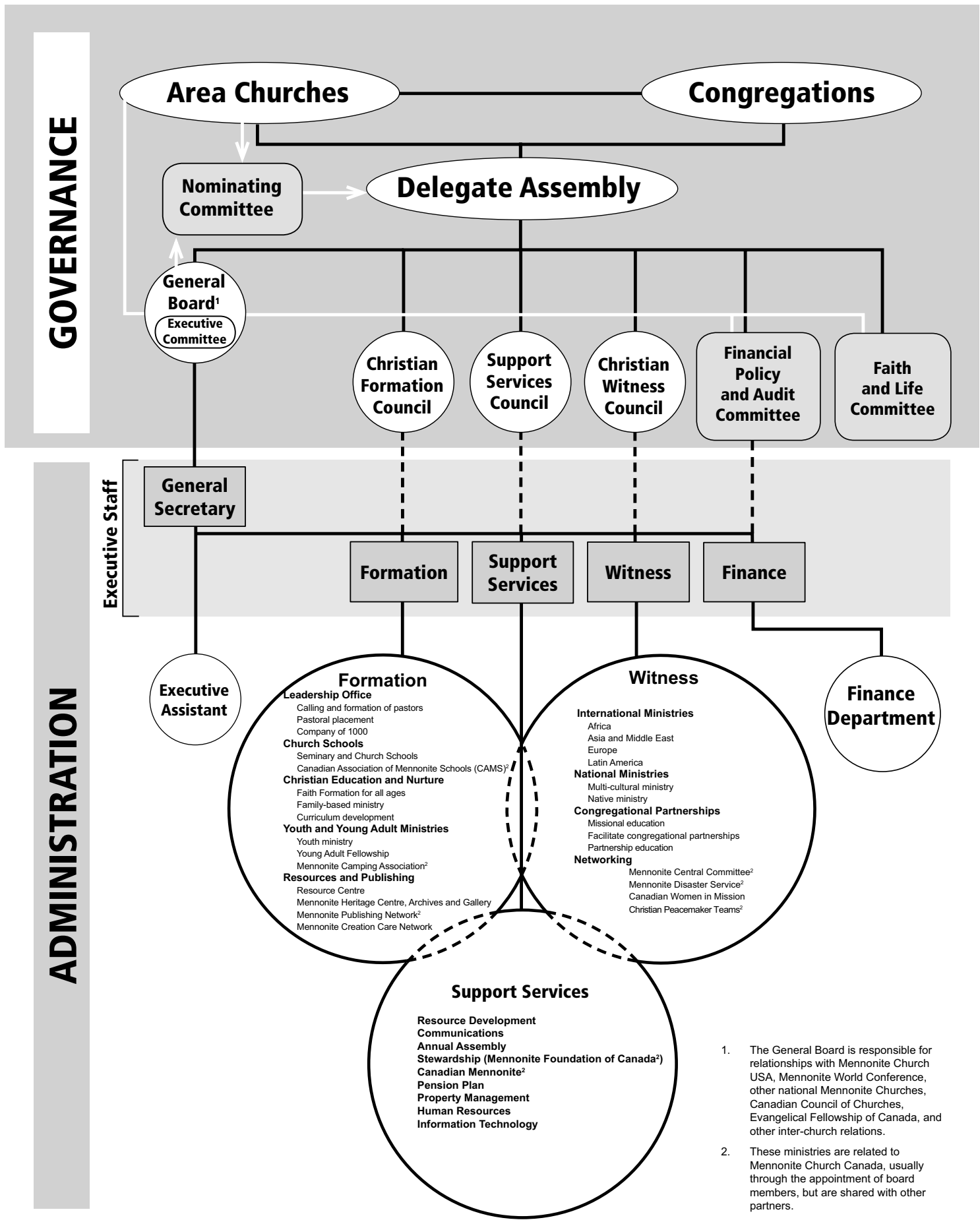
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# Mennonite Church Canada Organizational Chart



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