

*Joint Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Church USA release
For immediate release
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- by Pam Peters-Pries*

People's Summit

Winnipeg, Man. — Members of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada will meet together at a bi-national “People’s Summit for Faithful Living” on July 8-10, 2008 on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg.



A ‘summit’ is not what Mennonite Church USA or MC Canada normally call a gathering of their members. Summits are often restricted to selected leaders, or imply a sense of secrecy. Summits always communicate a sense of urgency.

It is a sense of urgency that led planners to name this bi-national gathering a “People’s Summit for Faithful Living.” Under the theme “At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril” participants will focus on the urgent task of

being a faithful community of God amidst the many challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Deuteronomy 4:1-9 will be the theme text.



“The book of Deuteronomy is especially suited for use in such a summit,” said Jack Suderman, General Secretary of MC Canada. “It is directed at God’s people as they move into the land God has allowed them to possess, where they face important questions like why does God work through people-hood even when that people is not deserving? What does covenant mean and how does that inform our questions of faithfulness? What are the temptations of God’s people in the land in which they live? Where do God’s people find security as they live in the land and are tempted by wealth, power and ownership?”

These are the urgent questions that the summit will address through worship, study and discussion. Mennonite Church USA identified similar questions at its convention in San Jose when it passed a resolution calling for, “...resources that help us live faithfully in Christ-like ways, sometimes at odds with our national culture, acknowledging that no culture is either completely redeemed or completely fallen.”

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Ron Byler, Associate Executive Director of Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership, notes that, “We will be looking to further our work in response to our delegates with this upcoming event. For me, an important part of our theme is what it means to live as a contrast community.”

Plenary worship speakers are Tom and Christine Sine of Seattle, Wash., April Yamasaki of Abbotsford, B.C., and Tom Yoder-Neufeld of Waterloo, Ont. A variety of workshops and activities and time for visiting and recreation will round out the two and a half day event.



The People’s Summit was announced in July 2007 at the Mennonite Church USA biennial convention in San Jose, Calif., and the MC Canada annual delegate assembly in Abbotsford, B.C. The two bodies last met together at a joint convention in Charlotte, N.C., in 2005, where delegates strongly supported continuing to meet together.

The People’s Summit will begin the evening of July 8 and continue through the evening of July 10 and will be held on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Attendees are invited to make a vacation of the People’s Summit and include Manitoba attractions such as the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, beautiful Whiteshell Provincial Park and the hugely popular Winnipeg Folk Festival.

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Information and registration is available at www.summit.mennoniteusa.org (for Mennonite Church USA) and at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/534 (for MC Canada).

MC Canada to hold its own annual assembly

MC Canada will hold its own separate delegate assembly at the same location from July 7-8 (just prior to the People’s Summit) to address issues, business items, budgets, and receive ministry reports. Agenda items will include follow-up on the 2007 creation care and militarization discussions, inter-faith dialogue, and issues arising from the fall 2007 survey of current and former pastors.

Photo 1 cutline: Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA will meet together at a bi-national People’s Summit for Faithful Living on July 8-10, 2008 in Winnipeg. Under the theme “At the Crossroads: Promise and Peril” and using Deuteronomy 4:1-9 as a theme text, participants will focus on the urgent task of being a faithful church of God and what it means to live in the world as a contrast community. – 2007 file photo by Dan Dyck

Photo 2 cutline: The planning team for the People’s Summit includes (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) - photo by Dan Dyck