



Miriam Tshimanga
Equipping Coordinator

July/August, 2009 *Equipping* # 98

In summer many of us will go on a journey. It expands our everyday view and hopefully we feel more relaxed after a holiday. Bethel Mennonite Church (Ont.) embarked on a global journey through the pages of MC Canada's World of Witness Prayer Directory. This is also a way to get acquainted with our extended church family, to go on an imaginary journey and meet Witness workers in their contexts. You can read about this global journey in one of the Celebration Stories. Dave Bergen also writes in his letter about Vacation and its meaning. Many more resources are available via this edition of *Equipping* in hard copy or e-file.

If you have questions or comments, please call 1-866-888-6785 (or locally, 888-6781) or email me at mtshimanga@mennonitechurch.ca. I am always happy to hear from our congregations. Enjoy!

- Miriam Tshimanga – *Equipping* Coordinator

PS: Please help ensure that these resources reach the right people. Thank you!

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Mennonite Church Canada

- [Assembly 2009 in review...](#) – Robert J. Suderman (pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)
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Christian Witness

- [Celebration Story July 09: Saskatoon 2009 - New churches blossoming across Canada](#) (bulletin boards, leaders, worship planners, and church newsletters)
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Support Services (pastors, leaders, church councils)

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Christian Formation

- [Dave Bergen: On vacation and new resources](#) (worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarians etc.)
- [Resource Update: July/August](#) (worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)

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- On-line only: Children's Stories (based on lectionary readings):
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/126 (worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarians etc.)
- Special Sunday Worship Resources View and download the entire grouping at:
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/482 (worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
 - Sunday School Promotion Sunday, Sept. 13: Passing on the Faith - hard copy enclosed, download at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1089
 - Publishing Sunday, Sept. 13 – see the link at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/339
 - Peace Sunday, Sept. 20 – coming soon, see the link at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1061
 - World Communion Sunday, Oct. 4 – hard copy enclosed, download at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1084
 - Mennonite Heritage Sunday, Oct. 25 – coming soon, see the link at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1060
 - Mission Sunday, Nov. 8 – hard copy enclosed, download at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1075
- *What Makes a Mennonite* brochure; Order quantities for your congregation or download via the Resource Centre at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/832 (for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
- *Many Gifts: Calling and Growing Congregational Leaders*, and [cover letter](#) [PDF file] - Karen Martens Zimmerly and Elsie Hannah Ruth Rempel; Request more copies or download via www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1085 (for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
- The Parish Paper (for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
 - [July 2009](#) [PDF file]: “Lay Testimonials Strengthen Financial Giving!”
 - [August 2009](#) [PDF file]: “Shepherding Congregations Through Grief Storms”

Extending our faith...

- Faith and Life Resources (for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, etc.) – Hard Copy Only
 - Fall 2009 Order Form
 - Transforming Lives
 - New from Mennonite Publishing Network



Robert J. Suderman,
General Secretary,
Mennonite Church Canada

Greetings to you all in the Congregations and Area Churches of Mennonite Canada.

July/August 2009, *Equipping* #98

Our assembly in Saskatoon (June 5-7) is now past (theme text: Colossians 3:12-17). Meanwhile, Mennonite World Conference (Paraguay 2009) is rapidly approaching; by the time you read this, it may already be over. I thank God for the many ways we can be church together – across our country and around the world.

It is especially important this year that I communicate to you some highlights from Saskatoon 2009, since we did have a somewhat lower turn-out than usual, given the earlier than normal date to accommodate Paraguay 2009.

In particular, I draw your attention to two decisions that were made:

- 1. Being a Faithful Church:** Delegates appreciated and unanimously affirmed a paper outlining how we as a church together can strengthen our capacity to discern and interpret scripture to address the challenges we face in the life of the church. The approved Affirmation Statement reads: “We affirm the direction of this paper and encourage the Boards, Committees, and Councils of MC Canada to use it as a tool to assist the church in addressing themes such as: unity and diversity in the life of the church; being a peace church; confessing and witnessing to Jesus Christ as Lord in a religiously pluralistic context; human sexuality in the life of the church; ecological concerns from a perspective of faith.” The discernment paper can be found on pages 65-72 of the Assembly Report/Workbook at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1070. The “Boards, Committees, and Councils” of MC Canada will be discerning what some next steps might be.
- 2. Peace in the Public Square:** Delegates unanimously approved a proposal that spans a four year period of activity to promote peace in the public square. The proposal appears on page 73 in the Assembly Report/Workbook at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1070. A supplement to this proposal for an outdoor advertising campaign was presented and well received; it can be found in a presentation at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1072.
3. We had some fruitful and helpful preliminary discussions on a decision we will make next year regarding annual vs. biennial assemblies. Delegates at the mikes were leaning toward maintaining our pattern of meeting annually, but responses from table-groups indicated a broad range of opinions.
4. We heard inspiring stories about church planting from across the church.
5. The daily news sheet with more details about the above, and a photo gallery, can also be found here: www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/saskatoon2009/.

I heartily encourage you to access these items as pastors, lay leaders, and congregations. I hope you will find them as inspiring as I did. And you will also find comprehensive coverage of the assembly in the June 22-09 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*.

As always, I am deeply grateful for your ministry and commitment to the Body of Christ.

Robert J. Suderman
General Secretary
Mennonite Church Canada



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Equipping Prayers Notes News

A resource packet for equipping Mennonite Church Canada pastors and leaders

600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll free 1-866-888-6785
P: 204-888-6781
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www.mennonitechurch.ca

Remember, you can also find these at www.mennonitechurch.ca/equipping for easy "cut and paste" insertion.		July 2009, Equipping #98
Prayers: Please pray for and with the Church	Ministry Notes: This is how your financial support of Mennonite Church Canada is ministering...from across the street to around the world	News/Announcements: Stay in tune with the wider church
Pray for Scott Bergen and Rebecca Willms , MC Canada Witness Radical Journey participants in Paraguay as they help local Mennonite Churches host the Mennonite World Conference, July 12-19.	The Mennonite World Conference Assembly Gathered begins in Asunción, Paraguay on July 14! Thanks to your support, Mennonite Church Canada is able to play an active leadership role in preparation for this gathering.	<p>Mennonite Foundation of Canada is seeking an Executive Director.</p> <p>Applications accepted until Aug. 31, 2009.</p> <p>For more information, contact MFC at 1-800-772-3257 or via mfcwpg@mennofoundation.ca.</p>
Praise God that Paraguayan visas have been granted to our Cuban brothers from the Mennonite Church in Cuba and the Baptist Fraternity for participation in the Mennonite World Conference in Paraguay, July 12-19! Many other MWC participants are struggling to obtain their visas. Please pray that all visas will be granted.	Your ongoing support of Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry opens doors to greater fellowship with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. The first ever Aboriginal Learning Tour took place in the Sask., June 7-9. Following the Mennonite World Conference, Indigenous people from across the Americas will participate in a tour of the Chaco region of Paraguay and Argentina.	
Pray that Witness workers will be blessed with good health. Currently, Lillian and Norm Nicolson and their infant daughter Nadine are encountering malaria season in Burkina Faso, Dianne Legesse of Ethiopia is travelling to Canada for a biopsy, and Daniel Pantoja of the Philippines awaits cardiac surgery. (WoW pgs. 46, 52, and 79 respectively.)	Thank you for your support of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery . With your help, we have been able to use art to introduce the good news into public schools and among prison inmates.	
Pray that God will supply provisions and healing to areas where disasters have caused suffering. In Burkina Faso, Mennonite families have lost homes and stocked granaries to fires resulting from lightning strikes. (WOW pg. 45) In Philippines, Witness worker Joji Pantoja reports that regional clashes have resulted in burned homes and thousands of evacuee-families. (WoW pg. 79)	Thanks to your support, the Mennonite Heritage Centre published a booklet introducing the 500-year Anabaptist / Mennonite history designed for first-time visitors to the Centre. For more info, visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1069	
July 5, 2009		
July 12, 2009		
July 19, 2009		
July 26, 2009		



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Equipping Prayers Notes News

A resource packet for equipping Mennonite Church Canada pastors and leaders

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Remember, you can also find these at www.mennonitechurch.ca/equipping for easy "cut and paste" insertion.		August 2009, Equipping #98
Sunday dates	Prayers: Please pray for and with the Church	News/Announcements: Stay in tune with the wider church
August 2, 2009	Pray for wisdom and strength as the Mennonite Church of Lagoa Encantada in Recife, Brazil rebuilds their mudslide damaged sanctuary. Praise God for the 20 years of ministry that they celebrated in June!	New Mennonite Church Canada fellowships are emerging – and many of them involve newcomers to Canada. Your support of MC Canada Multi-cultural ministries helps to translate resources to meet the needs of our growing church!
August 9, 2009	New MC Canada Witness workers Karen and Andrew Suderman are preparing to begin a three year term in South Africa at the end of this month. Pray that God will guide them through this transitional period and open doors to supportive new relationships.	Titus Guenther , Associate Professor, Theology and Missions at Canadian Mennonite University, went on a MC Canada Witness Special Assignment to Chile. The Peñaflor congregation have expressed appreciation for Titus's teaching and recent visit – and we extend their gratitude to you, for your support of this endeavour.
August 16, 2009	MC Canada Witness workers George and Tobia Veith , with their children, Matthew, Michael and Marika , are returning from Macau for a year of North American ministry. Pray that this time of transition will refresh their spirits and bring new vision for their ministry.	Praise God for the successful five-month Witness Special Assignment that Palmer and Ardys Becker recently completed at Bethlehem Bible College in Palestine. Thank you for enabling MC Canada's participation in God's global church!
August 23, 2009	At Assembly 2009 , delegates supported a proposal to advocate for peace in the public square. Pray that MC Canada congregations will actively engage in these projects and others that foster imagination for non-violent peace building in the public square.	Mennonite Church Canada has prepared and maintains vital pandemic preparedness resources for the church at www.churchpandemicresources.ca . Your support enables MC Canada to equip congregations to faithfully respond as God's people where hope and help is needed.
August 30, 2009	Pray that the Holy Spirit will find fertile hearts and minds in the four Canadian young adults who have been accepted for the next MC Canada Witness Radical Journey program starting in September. Tim Wenger (ON) , Kyle Berg (MB) , Gabriella Wiebe (BC) , and Ruth Weber (ON) will be assigned to either South Africa, Sweden or Paraguay.	no further announcements at press time

Philippines 2010



Peace & Reconciliation Field Exposure Learning Tour

January 21 – 31, 2010 - Vancouver Departure • March 4 – 14, 2010 - Toronto Departure

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While in the Philippines;

- Explore the country as no other tourist would
- Experience Mennonite Church Canada's Peace and Reconciliation ministry in the conflicted region of Mindanao with seasoned Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja
- Encounter the Christian and Muslim communities of Mindanao
- Live the Philippines through its food, art, people, markets, and more!

Cost per person

Vancouver Departure: \$2,700 all inclusive

Toronto Departure: \$2,995 all inclusive

This package price includes a gift to MC Canada's Philippines ministry of \$200 - a tax receipt will be issued.

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Your Deposit of \$500 secures a spot.
(9 spots are available on each tour)

Contact

Norm Dyck

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email. learningtours@mennonitechurch.ca

Visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved
for details and itinerary

Only 9 spots available
act now!



July/August 2009, *Equipping* #98

Saskatoon 2009: New churches blossoming across Canada

From a panel discussion between Area Churches that took place at Mennonite Church Canada's Assembly 2009 in Saskatoon, Sask.



Although church health and growth hasn't been on the formal denominational agenda for a while, there has been no absence of activity. At the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Saskatoon (June 5-7), representatives from Mennonite Church British Columbia, Mennonite Church Manitoba, and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada each told unique church development stories – primarily involving the attraction of new Canadians.

“To be the church is to be a multiplying organism,” said Brian Bauman, Missions Minister at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, who facilitated the discussion with Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary Witness.

The Little Flowers Community in Winnipeg's West End began as a small group of inspired people sharing homes and meals – that grew into a missional minded church with a passion for service to an economically challenged neighbourhood with a strong gang culture. They started the Dusty Cover, a used bookstore, as a place of refuge for neighbours and after school activities for kids. Before Sunday worship, members move through the neighbourhood, gathering up people and whatever food they can contribute for a potluck meal.

The gathering can end as late as 11 pm, said Norm Voth of Mennonite Church Manitoba, which partners with Youth With A Mission in the Little Flowers Community.

Lucy Roca came to Canada from Colombia in 2006 with her husband and two daughters to start a new church – because God called her to do so. The resulting church, Iglesia Minonita Refugio de Paz in Sherbrooke, Quebec, works with newcomers from Latin America, offering a familiar community and assisting in adjustments. It also works with cell groups of newcomers in Montreal. It continues to grow and has evolved into several small house congregations.

Pastor Jim Leopp Thiessen of the now five-year-old The Gathering Church in Kitchener says, “When we think about dreaming in our church, we often say we can't afford it – but that isn't the first question to ask. The first question is ‘What is God calling us to do?’ Our church is walking with Lucy's church. It's God's work and God provides the funding.”

In Mennonite Church BC, Lee Dyck says they have a motto, “Churches planting churches.” She refers to the advice of Pastor Nhiem Pham of Vancouver Vietnamese Mennonite Church, who says “do not plant a church unless people are praying for a church there.”

Nhiem Pham is currently planting his third church.

We invite you to share this story with your congregation. It should take no more than two minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include it in your church newsletter.

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11



Fanosie, Diane, Lydia and Zachariah Legesse are Witness workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and members at Bethel Mennonite Church, Elora, Ont.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:19,20)

In the fall of 2008, Bethel Mennonite Church (Ont.) embarked on a global journey through the pages of World of Witness Prayer Directory (WoW), a resource published by Mennonite Church Canada. Almost every Sunday, we take a few minutes during worship to introduce a new Witness worker or family from the pages of WoW. When digital photographs of workers are available, we project them on a screen along with a world map marking their locations.

It took us almost three months to introduce all of the African workers. Because MC Canada has so many of them, we expect that it will take well over a year to make it through the entire book!

At first, I was hesitant about using WoW in this manner; I wasn't sure how to pronounce some of the names and places in the resource. For instance, how do you say “Ouagadougou?” It's one thing to read unfamiliar names silently, but quite another to contemplate reading them aloud and in public.

We invite you to share this story with your congregation. It should take no more than two minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include it in your church newsletter.

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11

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It's a small world after all...

by: Linda Brnjas,
Pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church in Elora, Ontario

After circling every unfamiliar name in the Africa section of WoW, I called the MC Canada office in Winnipeg and asked for some guidance. Tim Froese, Executive Director of International Ministries, seemed delighted with my intention. He coached me in pronunciation and provided interesting details and updates about Witness workers. (And he told me that EVERY Sunday School needs to learn how to pronounce Ouagadougou: It's pronounced: waw-ga-DOO-goo. Try it – it's a lot of fun to say!)

Shortly after I spoke with Tim, I received a phone call from Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, Mission Formation and Partnership Facilitator for Mennonite Church Canada, who lives close to Bethel. Tim had shared our plans with her, and she wanted to help out.

As our tour of Africa drew to a close and we prepared to travel through Asia, I called Rebecca for pronunciation lessons. Although Rebecca knew most of the names, she had to double check a few – which made me feel good because if Rebecca, who is gifted with languages, isn't afraid to ask for help, I shouldn't be either. She also provided more information about the Witness workers we were introducing.

The world keeps getting smaller and smaller!

Pastor's Salary Guidelines for 2010

Introduction, Background & Tips

These Salary Guidelines come to you after consultation with and within the Area Churches of Mennonite Church Canada. They are intended to provide some uniformity across the denomination while allowing for adjustments based on the local cost of living. Following a major review of this year's Guidelines, they will undergo future minor annual revisions based on feedback received from pastors, congregations, and area churches. The salary scale figures are adjusted annually on the basis of the Consumer Price Index.

A national guideline has limitations, and does not work equally well across the country. We publish a national guideline because we believe that we should strive for common understandings and equitable compensation for all pastors in Mennonite Church Canada. At the same time, we encourage pastors and congregations to adapt it to particular circumstances. We are aware that not all congregations are able to pay this much and that others believe their pastor(s) warrant(s) a higher salary. Likewise, some pastors may have personal or family needs that are greater while others are willing to accept less than the guidelines, in light of a congregation's financial circumstances. Congregations should be aware that when a pastor chooses to accept less than the guidelines, this can complicate salary negotiations with subsequent pastors who may not be able or willing to do the same.

Where a congregation is unable to afford the guidelines and the pastor finds the congregation's offer inadequate, it will often be possible to use these guidelines to define an appropriate full-time salary and then release the pastor to supplement the congregation's offer with other employment up to the equivalent of a full-time salary.

A few tips regarding pastor's salary negotiations:

- Recognize the covenant relationship that exists between a congregation and its pastor(s), which makes it more than an employer/employee relationship.
- Salary negotiations should take place in private conversation with two or three persons designated by the congregation rather than in a public setting. Keep the discussion clear, open and confidential.
- It is appropriate for a pastor to be accompanied by an advocate in salary discussions.
- Salary discussions are not related to the decision about continuing a call, nor should they be tied into the evaluative process in any way.
- Remember that the family of the pastor is deeply affected by both the process and outcome of salary negotiations and often feels vulnerable during these times as well as when the salary is publicly reported or discussed.

Please note that all of this information is available at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/660.

If you need additional information or clarification about the salary guidelines, please call your area church minister or contact Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources at MC Canada.

Kirsten Schroeder



Director, Human Resources

Karen Martens Zimmerly



Denominational Minister



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2010 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

(Effective January 1, 2010) July/August Equipping #98

1. SALARY UNITS

The pastor's salary and all increments, with the exception of the local cost of living portion (#3 below), are calculated in multiples of a basic unit which has been set for the year at \$365.28. (See NOTE #1 below). A salary calculation form with this year's units is available.

2. BASE SALARY

The base salary for all pastoral positions is set at 65 units (\$23,743). (See NOTE #2)

3. LOCAL COST OF LIVING

The local cost of living portion of the salary reflects the differences in the cost of living in various parts of Canada, or even within a given city. Various factors influence the calculation of this amount. The most significant of these is the cost of housing, where there may be a large discrepancy between rural and urban areas. (See NOTE #3) However, this part of the salary should also take into consideration other living expenses, such as the cost of heat, electricity or groceries, which may be similar or even higher in rural areas. Pastors should not be penalized for accepting a call to serve in a setting at either end of the spectrum. Congregations will use this flexible component to ensure a reasonable salary for the pastor(s).

The local cost of living calculation adjusts a pastor's salary to reflect the cost of living in the place to which he or she is called. It is not a housing allowance. Therefore, where there are two pastors in the same family (i.e., spouses), both should receive the local cost of living portion of the salary.

4. EXPERIENCE INCREMENTS

Experience increments are calculated according to the following formula:

Years 1 through 6:	4 units per year (\$1461 per year)
Years 7 through 12:	3 units per year (\$1096 per year)
Years 13 through 18:	1 unit per year (\$365 per year)

Pastors who move from one congregation to another carry all of their experience increments with them to the new congregation. Pastors who come to an MC Canada congregation from another denomination would normally also carry all of their experience increments with them. Relevant experience in other kinds of work, ministry or service may be calculated on a pro-rated basis. (See NOTE #4)

2010 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

5. EDUCATIONAL INCREMENTS (See NOTE #5)

Educational increments should be paid according to the following formula:

- Three units (\$1096) for suitable undergraduate work
- An additional 4 units (\$1461) for a suitable post-bachelor's degree (MTS)
- An additional 6 units (\$2192) for suitable graduate work (MDiv)
- An additional 3 units (\$1096) for a suitable doctoral degree (DMin)

Degrees that are not directly oriented to preparing pastors for ministry may also be considered for some credit. Units should be awarded based on the number of years expected by the institution for degree completion (not the number of years a person is enrolled in the program). Thus, based on the principle of awarding one unit to each year of completed education, an MA would be awarded 2 units. The unit credit for S/CPE is for four full units of credit, not for the single but year-long extended unit of S/CPE.

Graduate degrees other than seminary, which while valuable for general preparation are not designed for pastoral ministry preparation, would normally be granted one unit per degree. The maximum units for all accumulated education are twelve.

6. RESPONSIBILITY INCREMENTS

Responsibility increments are paid only to the senior pastor, and may be calculated according to one of the following two formulas:

- a) Three units (\$1096) for each full-time ministry staff person whom the pastor supervises. The number of units paid would be pro-rated for part-time ministry staff. The oversight of lay ministers or youth workers should also be given consideration when calculating responsibility increments: or
- b) Three units (\$1096) for congregations of approximately 300 or more attendees and 5 units (\$1826) for congregations of approximately 600 or more attendees.

Some pastors may be assigned major additional responsibilities, such as serving as chaplain at a nursing home or hospital or a similar assignment. The congregation may decide these additional responsibilities should be acknowledged in the salary with up to 3 responsibility units (\$1096).

7. BENEFITS

It is assumed that all pastors will participate in the MC Canada pension plan, group RRSP or an equivalent plan (details are available from the MC Canada Payroll & Benefits Coordinator). All churches are encouraged to include Life and Long Term Disability Insurance, which is available through MC Canada's Group Insurance Plan, in the benefit package. They should also seriously consider supplying all pastoral staff with Extended Health and Dental benefits on a cost shared basis (through an area church plan or the Mennonite Benefit Association, where these are available, or with Blue Cross, for example). Area Church Ministers will have information regarding plans available in your area.

8. HONORARIA and FEES

An honorarium of \$75-100 for a preaching assignment (i.e. wedding, funeral, pulpit supply, etc.) and a fee of \$100 to \$150 per session for workshops, seminars, etc. plus mileage (whenever a total distance of more than 100 kilometres is traveled to participate in the event) is appropriate. An honorarium may be waived in the case of a pulpit or congregational exchange. (See NOTE #6)

2010 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

9. EXPENSES

Expenses are costs incurred in doing the work of the church. The pastor should not pay these costs.

a) Car and Travel Expenses: This expense, when incurred in the line of duty, should be reimbursed. An allowance is not acceptable to the Canada Revenue Agency unless it is added to the pastor's T4 or the amount is proven to be reasonable by an accurate trip log. Any reimbursement in excess of the log must be added to taxable income. Reimbursement for travel between home and the church is taxable. (Canada Revenue Agency defines the reasonable rate for 2009 as \$0.52 for the first 5,000 km and \$0.46 for each additional km.) If an interim pastor is being hired and required to commute from another community, consideration should be given to increasing the salary to offset these costs. This additional salary would be subject to all applicable deductions and benefits.

b) Workshops, Courses, etc.: Arrangements should be made to enable the pastor to attend refresher courses, workshops, seminars and other occasions regularly for the revitalization of his/her ministry. The congregation may designate in advance an amount that it will pay. Many congregations budget up to \$500 per year for this non-taxable reimbursement.

c) Books and Periodicals: Reading material is an occupational expense. Many congregations budget up to \$500 per year for each pastor for books and periodicals. This is a taxable benefit if the books/periodicals are the property of the pastor. Some churches purchase books for the pastor and then allow him/her to buy at used book prices those books that the pastor wants to keep when he/she moves.

d) Office: The congregation will provide a furnished office and supplies, as well as secretarial support as required. In most instances this will include a computer, printer and internet access.

e) Conference Attendance Expenses: When the pastor is expected to attend area church sessions on behalf of the congregation the expenses related to travel, lodging, meals and registration are paid by the congregation. Consideration should also be given to costs of the pastor's spouse attending.

f) Other Expenses: If hosting of guests is an expectation of the pastor or if the spouse of the pastor is expected to attend church functions such as weddings and funerals, and there are related expenses (such as child care or loss of work time) then those expenses should be paid by the congregation. An appropriate amount should be budgeted for such depending upon the family situation and congregational expectations.

10. STATUTORY BENEFITS - Employer Costs

There are some expenses that are mandated by the government to employers. These fees are determined by the government and are not negotiable. The figures are determined by charts provided by the appropriate government agency and are usually based upon the basic compensation figure.

11. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

a) Clergy Residence Deduction: See Note #7.

b) Vacations: All pastors should receive at least three weeks of vacation per year plus time off for all statutory holidays. After five years or more of experience (this includes pastoral experience earned in previous positions) the pastor should receive four weeks of vacation per year plus time off for all statutory holidays. (Note. Part-time employees accrue annual leave hours at an amount proportionate to their monthly FTE. For example, if a pastor is working at .80 FTE, they should get either the three or four weeks off at their regular salary, which is 80% of the full-time salary). As a contribution to the church beyond the local setting, congregations are encouraged to release their pastors for short assignments such as serving on Area Church or MC Canada boards/councils, or as

2010 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

camp chaplains, etc. This should not be counted as holiday time.

c) Parental/Pregnancy Leaves: These leaves are mandated by the government and government guidelines should be consulted when the situation arises.

d) Sick Leave Policy. Congregations are urged to establish a sick leave policy which permits 1½ days per month sick leave with an accumulation of up to 75 working days (please refer to Employment Canada [EI] benefit guidelines for details), at which time long-term disability takes effect. (Unused sick leave is not paid to the employee at termination.)

This can be done in one of two ways:

- i. The congregation can pay the full salary during this time of illness. If the congregation has a policy to cover salary during illness, it may be eligible for reduced EI premiums.
- ii. The second way to cover the cost of this period of illness is for the employee to apply to EI for unemployment benefits (normally 55% of his/her insured earnings). The congregation would top up the level allowed by the EI Commission (up to 95% of regular salary for unemployment as a result of sickness). If the congregation selects this option, the employer must register the plan (called a SUB plan) in advance with the EI Commission, and treat all employees according to this plan. This method makes the congregation ineligible for reduced EI premiums.

e) Sabbatical Study Leaves: Congregations are *strongly* encouraged to provide longer leaves for study, service or renewal (sabbaticals) for their pastor(s) from time to time. (Check with your Area Church Minister or go to <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/programs/leadership/leaves/faq.htm> on the MC Canada website for details.) Pastors may be eligible for forgivable loans from the Company of 1000 Study Reserve Fund for sabbatical study. Information and application forms are available from the MC Canada Denominational Minister's office.

f) Candidating and Moving Costs: Congregations are responsible to pay travel and lodging costs for both pastor and spouse to candidate for a position. Moving arrangements and expenses when a pastor is called to a new congregation need to be negotiated. As a minimum the calling congregation should pay the cost of a rental truck and driving costs and should offer to assist in loading/unloading. Consideration may be given to paying the costs for the pastor and spouse to make one house-hunting trip to the new community.

g) Memo of Understanding: It is important to agree on a clear Memo of Understanding with the pastor at the beginning of each term. A sample is provided in the accompanying package, in the Pastor-Congregation Relations Packet or is available upon request from the MC Canada Denominational Minister.

NOTES

1. This formula simplifies the application of the annual cost of living increase, which is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The basic salary unit is increased each year by a percentage equal to the increase in the CPI. This adjustment is calculated prior to the annual mailing of these guidelines. The April to April CPI is the standard that has been used for these guidelines. The April 2008 to April 2009 CPI used here was 0.4% (the most recent CPI figure may be found at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Cpi/cpi-en.htm>). If you use a later figure (Mennonite Church Canada uses the September to September figure for its staff) be sure to use the same 12-month period each year. It is important to be consistent in this regard. Although the April to April figure (or an alternative that you may choose) may seem unduly high or low in any given year, these fluctuations will average out over time if you use a consistent period. Note that using

2010 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

a figure other than the April to April one will mean recalculating the numbers above and applying a slightly different salary scale from that used by most other congregations. All figures calculated in the above guidelines have been rounded off to the nearest dollar.

2. The total (65 units) was arrived at by a comparison with several other denominations in Canada and their pastoral salary guidelines. The base places our salaries within the range found in these denominations. It applies to all persons involved in pastoral ministry. Congregations which hire a youth worker or other program staff without pastoral responsibilities (e.g. not including preaching, pastoral counseling, etc. – clarification is available from the MC Canada Denominational Minister) may begin with a lower base, perhaps 50 units.
3. The pastor is free to choose his/her housing. However, the calculation of the Local Cost of Living portion of the salary should be based on consideration of the fair rental value of a standard three-bedroom home in a community/neighborhood that represents the average for the congregation. The information should be obtained from a local realtor (for example, in 2005 the annual costs for Brandon, MB were \$9,600; \$12,500 for Winnipeg; \$15,600 for North Delta, BC, \$16,800 for Vancouver; and \$21,600 for Toronto).

Alternately, salary comparisons for your location and Winnipeg in the last quarter of 2009 may be obtained by calling the human resources director at 204-888-6781 or 1-866-888-6781. Please phone with your total salary calculation (excluding benefit costs) for a cost comparison.

This is not the same as the determination of the Clergy Residence Deduction (Item #11(a) above), which is the income tax deduction allowed based on the pastor's actual housing cost, including utilities. (See NOTE #7 & Appendix A below)

4. Pastors are compensated for their experience along an assumed learning curve – i.e. the number of units paid would be greater in the earlier years of ministry and grow smaller in the later years of ministry. In order to discourage financial prejudice by congregations against experienced and therefore more “expensive” pastors, these guidelines propose that experience increments be capped after 18 years.
5. Educational increments are calculated in a way that honors a pastor's undergraduate and graduate studies. The MDiv degree is considered the basic preparatory degree for ministry. However, other educational disciplines offer valuable tools for ministry and need to be recognized and considered when calculating the educational increment (i.e. Bible College studies, BEd, BSc, MA, MTS, MEd, etc.). For some degrees or studies in process, partial credit rather than full credit would be appropriate.
6. Pastors should be allowed to keep any honoraria which they receive. Honoraria are gifts of appreciation given to the pastor for his/her work and should be seen as a love gift to the pastor, not the church. Pastors are reminded that all portions of honoraria which are above and beyond incurred expenses are viewed by the Canada Revenue Agency as taxable income and must be reported on their income tax return.
7. The federal government requires employers to verify in writing that any employee claiming this deduction is eligible to do so. It is imperative, therefore, that congregations ensure adherence to the conditions of the latest CRA bulletin regarding the Clergy Residence Deduction. Links to the CRA bulletin and the Clergy Residence Deduction form may be found at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/5/7765>.



600 Shaftesbury Blvd
 Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
 T: 204-888-6781
 F: 204-831-5675
 E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
 W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

MC CANADA PASTORS' ANNUAL SALARY WORKSHEET, 2010

Congregation: _____

Pastor: _____

1. Basic Compensation

- a) *Base Salary:* 65 units @ \$365.28 each = \$ 23,743
 - b) *Local Cost of Living:* = \$ _____
 - c) *Experience Increments:* _____ Units @ \$365.28 each = \$ _____
 - d) *Educational Increments:* _____ Units @ \$365.28 each = \$ _____
 - e) *Responsibility Increments:* _____ Units @ \$365.28 each = \$ _____
- Total Basic Compensation:** \$ _____

2. Benefits: MC Canada Benefit Plans (estimates, subject to Plan requirements)

- a) Pension Plan: (congregation pays 4% ____ or 5% ____ of salary) = \$ _____
 - b) Long-term Disability: (congregation pays ____ %) = \$ _____
 - c) Life Insurance: (congregation pays ____ %) = \$ _____
 - d) Other: [e.g. Extended Health & Dental Benefits] (congregation pays ____ %) = \$ _____
- Total Benefits:** \$ _____

3. Expenses:

- a) Car and travel expenses (@ ____ ¢ per kilometre) = \$ _____
 - b) Workshops, courses, etc. = \$ _____
 - c) Books and periodicals = \$ _____
 - d) Conference attendance = \$ _____
 - e) Other expenses = \$ _____
- Total Expenses:** \$ _____

4. Statutory Benefits: Employer Costs (estimates, subject to government mandates)

- a) Health Tax (as mandated by provincial plan) = \$ _____
 - b) Canada/Quebec Pension Plan = \$ _____
 - c) Employment Insurance = \$ _____
- Total Statutory Benefits:** \$ _____

5. Total Salary and Benefits: Cost to Congregation \$ _____

6. Vacation Allowance: _____ weeks vacation, plus _____ statutory holidays

7. Study/Service Leave Provisions:

Signatures (indicate agreement with figures in items 1, 3, 6, 7, and the principles of items 2 and 4):

Pastor _____ Date: _____

Congregational Officer _____ Date: _____

MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN A CONGREGATION AND ITS PASTOR
based on the annual Mennonite Church Canada Pastors' Salary Guidelines

[All or some or adaptations of the items listed below will make up the Memo of Understanding.]

Date _____, 20_____

A covenant between _____
name of pastor

and _____
name of congregation

1. **Position and Term.** This position carries the title of _____
of the _____ and is a _____ time position. The
name of congregation full or other
term for this position is _____ years, the current term beginning _____ and
ending _____. Each term will be reviewed by the _____
governing body
or its designated representatives at least six months prior to the ending date, and is subject to
renewal by _____ percent vote for approval of the congregation (at least ninety days
2/3 minimum recommended¹
before the ending date),
OR An open-ended term will be reviewed annually by the _____
governing body
or its designated representatives. A vote by the congregation to review an open-ended term
can be taken only after a resolution to that effect has been approved by a simple majority of
the votes cast. The subsequent vote on the pastor's continuing employment must receive
_____ percent of the vote cast for approval.
2/3 minimum recommended¹

2. **Covenant Duration.** This memo of understanding is effective for one year beginning _____,
20___ and ending _____, 20_____.

3. **Salary.** The congregation provides the pastor with a cash salary of \$_____, based on
the Mennonite Church Canada Pastors' Salary Guidelines. The above salary includes a local
cost of living portion of \$_____; \$_____ based on ___ years of
experience; \$_____, based on education attained; and \$_____ based on other
considerations: e.g. _____ (if applicable).

4. **MC Canada Pension Plan.** The congregation agrees to participate with the pastor in the MC
Canada Pension Plan. The pastor will contribute 5% (or 4%) of total salary (base &
increments) by payroll deduction and this will be matched by the congregation.

5. **MC Canada Group Insurance Plan.** The congregation will pay the Life Insurance and
Basic Accident Insurance premium. The pastor will pay the Long-Term Disability (LTD)
premium by payroll deduction. (or The congregation will pay the Life Insurance and Basic
Accident Insurance premium. The pastor will pay the LTD premium by payroll deduction and
the congregation will increase the pastor's salary to offset the cost of this deduction).

¹ Check your church's bylaws or consult with your area church leader about appropriate percentage levels.

6. **Health Care Coverage.** The congregation agrees to pay the pastor the equivalent of the health or hospitalization premium (in those provinces where provincial health care is covered by a premium.)
7. **Utilities.** In the case of a parsonage, the congregation will pay \$_____ towards the utilities, or they will pay the whole utilities expense. This amount will be taxable to the pastor. The congregation will keep the parsonage in good repair, paying for such items as improvements, redecorating and repairs.
8. **Car and travel expenses.** The congregation agrees to reimburse the pastor ____¢ per kilometre for local work-related travel upon submission of detailed logs. Trips to and from the congregation will not be reimbursed. In addition, the pastor will be reimbursed for travel to provincial conference sessions and the MC Canada delegate Assembly, as well as to ministers' conferences within the area church.
9. **Office Expenses.** The congregation will provide adequate office equipment and furniture, and pay for expenses of operating the church office, such as stationery, postage, telephone, duplicating and other supplies. Secretarial help will be arranged for as needed.
10. **Vacation and Illness.** The pastor will be given _____ weeks of vacation annually, and ____ days off per week. Or the congregation may follow a "working units" approach. A "unit" refers to either a morning, an afternoon or an evening. Where this method is used, expecting between 12 and 14 units per week is the norm. This would need to be negotiated. The congregation will arrange pulpit supply for _____ Sundays per year. This should include the pastor's vacation, illness, or attending area and national church functions or special courses. Alternatively, the pastor will preach _____ Sundays per month. One weekend off per quarter might be considered as a way to support health in the pastoral family. The pastor may accumulate "sick days" at the rate of 1.5 per month to a maximum of 75 working days. Longer leaves will be based on Disability Benefits. Parental or maternity leaves are in accordance with government guidelines.
11. **Professional Growth.** The congregation will provide \$_____ annually for the pastor to apply toward subscriptions to theological journals and magazines, and the purchase of books for the study. As these will remain the property of the congregation, this amount will not be taxable to the pastor. (Or, as these will be the property of the pastor, this amount will be taxable.) Part of this amount may be used toward refresher courses and seminars (non-taxable). This amount will be cumulative if it is not all used in a given year.
12. **Continuing Education.** The congregation supports various types of continuing education which will encourage the professional growth of the pastor. Up to _____ working days and \$ _____ will be provided annually for such activities. These may be accumulated over three years to permit attendance at events such as seminary interterm or summer school.
13. **Sabbatical Study Leave.** In order to encourage significant growth in ministry and to increase the likelihood of longer pastoral tenure, the congregation agrees to establish the following sabbatical policy. The pastor will be given ____ months of sabbatical time for renewal, study, or service after ____ years of service.² During the sabbatical, the pastor will receive full salary

² Practice varies across Canada. Some policies offer 4 months after 4 years of service, others offer 4 months after 6 years of service.

and benefits as exist in the then current covenant of understanding. Sabbatical plans submitted by the pastor must be approved by _____ at least three months
governing body
prior to the sabbatical. Following a sabbatical, the pastor agrees to provide a minimum of one year of service to the congregation, with the understanding that repayment of sabbatical salary and benefits will be made for failure to do so.

14. Service Beyond the Congregation. The congregation affirms the pastor's participation in programs of the local community and the larger Mennonite Church. Such involvements will be tested with the church leadership for guidance.

15. Review. This Memo of Understanding will be reviewed annually by the Church Council, Finance or Personnel Committee with the pastor, in time for the preparation of the annual budget of the congregation.

Signatures:

Pastor

Date

Chairperson of Congregational Board

Date



Dave Bergen
Executive Secretary,
Christian Formation

July/August 2009, *Equipping* #98

New resources

Summer in Canada, perhaps because it is so brief, is a season when many people who are otherwise engaged in frenetic activity deliberately slow down the pace. This shift is shared by office executives, farmers, professionals, and labourers alike. Summertime for most people is “vacation” time.

It’s an interesting word—vacation. It comes from the verb “vacate,” which means alternately “to give up occupancy of, to give up or relinquish (an office or position), to cause to be empty.”

In so many ways, this word is an accurate description of what we in fact do when we take a vacation. We quite intentionally make a shift from our usual activities. We empty out (vacate) our time of the usual things we do and then, because nature abhors a vacuum (an empty space), we fill our time with other pursuits—rest, travel, hobbies, etc.

The Bible urges Christians: “*Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time....*” (Ephesians 5.15-16) While not spoken with awareness of how 21st century Christians would make decisions about how to spend their summer vacation, these words nevertheless provide a helpful reminder to be wise stewards of all our time. The things that fill our vacated time are to be as reflective of our identity in Christ, as the activities that occupy the rest of our life.

One of the opportunities presented by vacation time is the chance to re-attune life to qualitative rather than quantitative priorities. It is a time to rest non-anxiously in the providence of God who sustains and directs all life; a time to realign with the qualities that accrue to our identity as children of God; a chance to waste time well. My prayer for you is to have such a vacation.

Dave Bergen
Executive Secretary, Christian Formation

Many Gifts: calling and growing congregational leaders (included in this packet) is a practical resource for pastors and other church leaders. It offers helpful suggestions and resource lists to help congregations who are interested in calling out and nurturing the varieties of leadership gifts needed in the congregation, at every stage of life. Find it at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1085.

What Makes a Mennonite. This recently redesigned brochure is ideal for people new to the Mennonite Church or visiting a Mennonite congregation for the first time. It addresses some common perceptions about Mennonites, explains core beliefs in accessible language, and gives an overview of Mennonite history. It is a simple, solid tool that can help individuals and growing churches start faith conversations with their neighbours, and begin a journey of inquiry and encounter with Jesus Christ. It is available in English (one copy enclosed) - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/832 - and in two Chinese versions (Traditional - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/871 and Simplified - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/872).

VIA: exploring the way of Christ is a brand new curriculum for those who are new to the church and who may know nothing of the Bible or of Christian faith. Eight sessions introduce people to the basics of Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective, in the context of a supportive group of other discoverers. Materials are adaptable to youth or adult individuals or groups, as a pre-catechism or newcomer’s course, and are available in both English and Spanish. Find it at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1086.

RESOURCE UPDATE

BORROW ... PURCHASE ... DOWNLOAD ... LINK

600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4; 1-866-888-6785 (toll free); resources@mennonitechurch.ca; www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre

WORSHIP CALENDAR


SUMMER:


Assembly Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1076
Camp Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/267
Vacation Bible School
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/82
Summer worship
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/259


FALL:


Labour Day
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/257
Sept 13 - Sunday School Promotion
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/256
Sept 13 - Publishing Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/339
Sept 20 - International Day of Peace
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1059
Oct 4 - World Communion Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1084
Oct 25 - Mennonite Heritage Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1060
Nov 8 - Mission Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1075
Nov 15 - Peace Sunday (MCC)
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1061
Nov 29 - First Advent
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/343

MAKE THE MOST OF THIS UPDATE:

 **Circulate** widely
– to librarian, pastor, worship planners, education coordinator, and church secretary

 **Invite** friends/committee members to subscribe:
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/347

 **View** this issue electronically at
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1077 and connect with our online catalogue

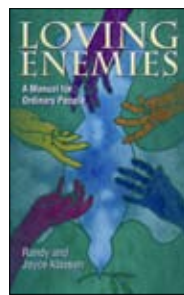
 **Submit** your own original worship service or congregational event for inclusion here and on the web

2009 SUMMER READING IDEAS

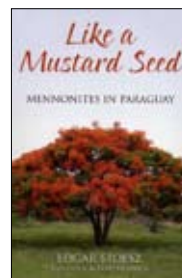
Here's a short list of new poetry, biography, and fiction titles at the Resource Centre.



New Monasticism: What it Has to Say to Today's Church



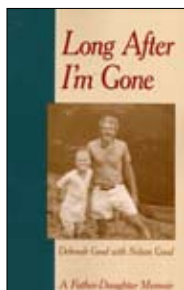
Loving Enemies: A Manual for Ordinary People



Like a Mustard Seed: Mennonites in Paraguay



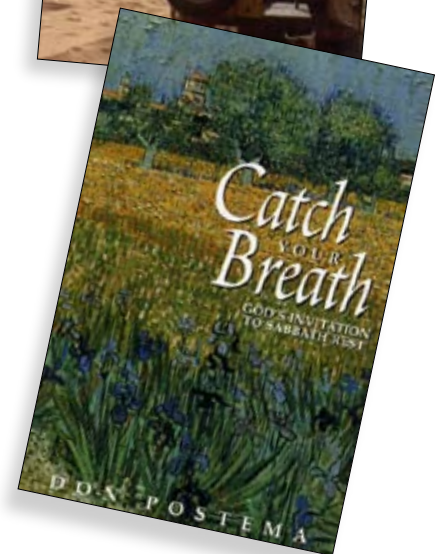
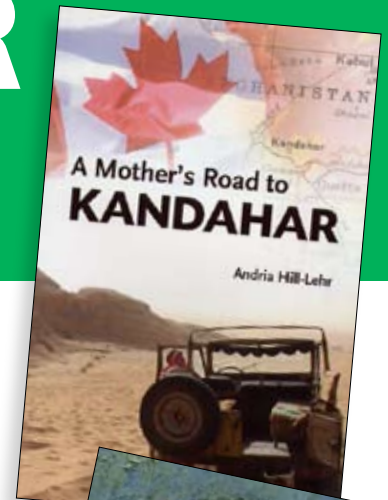
The Coat is Thin: Poems



Long After I'm Gone: A Father-Daughter Memoir



Becoming the Answer to Our Prayers: Prayer for Ordinary Radicals



[VIEW THE ENTIRE LIST ONLINE](#)

Children's Corner

Resources for the library, home, Sunday School or Sunday morning storyteller



God's Dream

by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Douglas Carlton Abrams and LeUyen Pham, Candlewick Press, 2008.

God's dream is that we might see each other as brothers and sisters, no matter their way of speaking to God, no matter the size of their nose or the shade of their skin. Aided by vibrant artwork evoking such images as a rainbow and a sharing circle, Tutu offers the essence of his Ubuntu philosophy, a wisdom so clear and crystalline that even the smallest child can understand.

For additional children's books, see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/168

Online survey results

A big thanks to the 100 people who offered feedback to us about this *Resource Update* publication.

A few interesting summaries:

- **93%** felt that the newsletter has the “right amount” of content and felt able to skim it for relevant material. *We’ll continue with a 4-page spread.*
- Many indicated appreciation for the various embedded links in *Resource Update*. Even more electronic helps were requested. *For starters, we’ll post our “Website Window” more frequently (and welcome your website recommendations).*
- Books are still the resource type of choice (86.2% respondents suggesting they would order a book, compared to 55.3% who might download a resource, and 46.8% who would borrow a DVD). *We’ll keep shipping those books out across Canada free-of-charge – both ways!*
- There were several suggestions for a “cleaner, more colourful” *Resource Update*. *We’ll tinker at the design. Note the addition of our “motto” on our header: “Borrow, Purchase, Download, Link”.*
- “On the Road”, “Tool Tips”, “In on the Action?” were rated lowest. *These will appear less often.*
- We’re grateful the *Resource Update* reaches many people: pastors, teachers, librarians, chaplains, professors, service workers, worship leaders, church leaders – and many more. *We’re delighted that as many as 63.8% subscribe to the Resource Update out of personal interest. Keep passing the word along!*

We’re open to ongoing feedback
resources@mennonitechurch.ca



Assembly 2009 Resources

Need to reference the discernment sessions or staff reports?

Want to read the daily news sheet or include some of the Assembly worship in your plans? Check www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1058.

From our Churches

Original materials from our constituency

Bottom Line: Stewardship and Missions Sermon
by Carol Penner, The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, ON.

Who paid the bills for Jesus’ ministry?
We might be surprised to learn it was Mary Magdalene. How were she and the other women engaged with Jesus’ work? This sermon challenges us to be involved in mission and to support the bottom line as modeled by faithful women in Jesus’ time.

Download at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1081


 Share your church’s original material

Website Window

Links worth noting

Our catalogue links you to many websites – here are some recent additions:

- Worship Resources on Reconciliation from the World Council of Churches
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1062
- Online reading from Tyndale Seminary
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1063
- Mennonite Women Canada blog
www.mennowomencanada.blogspot.com
- MC USA worship service: “Following Jesus in a World that is Not”
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1064
- ChurchFlu - www.twitter.com/churchflu
- Bill C-390: Conscientious Objection Act
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1065
- Alternative worship website
www.alternativeworship.org
- Sermon collections from our MCBC churches
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1066
- Mother’s Day for Peace
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1067
- Write-Hand Lettering: Hand-Painted Banners and Art
www.writehand.ca

 Do you have any sites to recommend?

CMU Bookstore
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. • Winnipeg

We have a great selection of theology books from a variety of publishers and authors.

For special orders contact

cmubookstore@cmu.ca
Call 204.487.3300 | ext. 339
or toll-free 877.231.4570
www.cmu.ca



***Woven into Harmony:
50 Hymn Texts***

by Adam M. L. Tice, GIA Publications, 2009.
Subject: [Music](#)

Check out this new collection of hymns from a Mennonite hymn composer that offers fresh language and vivid imagery through an Anabaptist lens.



***The Forgotten Ways Handbook:
A Practical Guide for Developing
Missional Churches***

by Alan Hirsch, Baker Publishing Group, 2009. Subject: [Missional Church](#)

A companion to his bestselling missional book *The Forgotten Ways*, this handbook with 7 sessions moves beyond theory to practice, offering ways for the church to apply these ideas to their life and ministry.



***The Searching Generation:
The Spiritual Life of Twenty-Somethings***

DVD, Auroris Media.
Subject: [Young Adult](#)

A provocative yet contemplative documentary film about two generations: Generation X and Millennials, opens a dialogue between traditional religious communities and the emergent generation. Includes discussion guide.



***Community Research Guide
for Church Leaders***

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, 2008.
Subject: [Community Ministry](#)

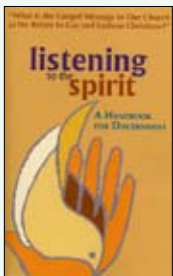
A practical and adaptable resource from the EFC's Centre for Research on Canadian Evangelicalism on how your congregation can learn about its neighbours.



***Live! God Views: Seeing Clearly
the One who Loves You Most***

DVD, by Curt Cloninger, LifeSprings, 2003.
Subject: [God](#)

Curt Cloninger portrays six very comic misconceptions about God, and concludes with two poignant monologues about God's true nature. A good discussion starter on our various images of God.



***Listening to the Spirit:
A Handbook for Discernment***

ed., William Paulsell, Chalice Press, 2001.
Subject: [LGBT](#)

A process of discernment that helps us listen to the Holy Spirit for guidance as congregations consider the question, What is the gospel message to our church as we relate to gay and lesbian Christians?

Farewell to Anita

Anita Neufeld will be leaving her role as Assistant at the Resource Centre on July 31, 2009. It will be a loss to see her go – many of you have had contact with her these last three and a half years, perhaps recently in her appeals for congregational resource submissions. She has made an invaluable contribution to the Centre as we've brought our entire library of resources on stream in a single, searchable online

catalogue. She's also often been the reliable hands behind the quick same-day mailing service that you've come to expect.

Anita has accepted the position of Manager at the Canadian Mennonite University Bookstore.

Please join us in wishing her God's blessing in the coming transition and in her ministry ahead.



DID YOU KNOW?
Resource Centre Facts

We offer free consulting

Can't find what you're after?
Don't know what you're after?
Give us a call or email;
we'll advise you – at no cost!

1-866-888-6785 (toll free)
resources@mennonitechurch.ca

**The Bookshop
at PANDORA PRESS**

We stock all books included in this Resource Update including those books written and published by Mennonites.

33 Kent Ave, Kitchener, ON, N2H 3C1
Phone: 1-866-696-1678 www.pandorapress.com

From Mennonite Church Canada



What Makes a Mennonite

This brochure explains core beliefs and provides an overview of Mennonite history. Available in:

- English
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/832
- Traditional Chinese
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/871
- Simplified Chinese
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/872

\$0.20



Who Are the Mennonites?

This brochure outlines the origins and beliefs of Mennonites and highlights the contributions of the Manitoba Mennonites. Trilingual format in English, German, and French.

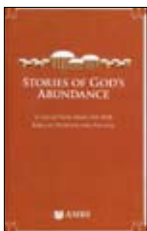
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1068

\$0.40

From our Partners

We've added 2 new partners recently:

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary



Stories of God's Abundance:
A Collection from the 2008
Biblical Storytelling Festival
AMBS, 2008.

The November 2008 festival at AMBS focused on Bible stories about food, and presented scripture in a variety of styles.

For other AMBS resources, see
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1073

Institute for Mennonite Studies



In Celebration of Wisdom:
Life and Meaning in Job, Proverbs,
and Ecclesiastes
edited by Steven Schweitzer, IMS, 2009.

The authors of the 13 essays in this volume argue that the Wisdom tradition is often ignored in the development of theology, in favour of concepts such as Covenant or Law. Here, they put forward a strong argument for its unique richness and usefulness for the church.

For other IMS resources, see
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/270



Many Gifts

This booklet is a practical resource for church leaders in calling out and nurturing the gifts of children, youth, and adults. Includes an extensive list of resources found at the Resource Centre.

\$5.00 or download for free
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1012



Mennonites: A Brief History of Witness, Service, Peace

A booklet on the origins and beliefs of the Anabaptists, including the Mennonites, Hutterites, and Amish.

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1069

\$3.00

From our Press

Use the links below to borrow or purchase these items:



What is Iran? A Primer on Culture, Politics and Religion

by Laurie Blanton Pierce, Herald Press, 2009.

Written from a peace-building perspective and informed by almost two decades of Mennonite experience in Iran, the author provides insight into a country that often makes the news but is rarely understood.



Walk in Peace

by Ingrid Hess, Herald Press, 2009.

Voices a prayer for children everywhere: God watches them as they venture into the world.



Timna

by Lucille Travis, Herald Press, 2009.

Timna is one of Noah's daughters-in-law and this is her story of the flood and the ark. Written for 9 to 14 year-olds.



Now Go Forward: Reaching Out to Grow Your Congregation

by J. David Eshleman, Herald Press, 2009.

The author's passion has been to bring unchurched people to healthy congregations. This book challenges congregations to make disciples not just around the world but in their own backyards.



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July/August 2009, *Equipping* #98

Worship resources for

Sunday School Promotion Sunday 2009

September 13, 2009

PASSING ON THE FAITH

By Abe Bergen

The following worship service has been written to celebrate the beginning of the new church school year. Please use it as is or adapt to fit your congregation.

Call to Worship:

- L This is the day that the Lord has made
- C Let us be glad and rejoice in it.
- L This is a day of new beginnings – new classes, new teachers, new lessons.
- C We are grateful for new beginnings.
- L This is a day to commit to new learning opportunities, to open our minds and our hearts to what God wants us to learn.
- C We are grateful for new learning opportunities.
- L This is the day that the Lord has made.
- C We are glad and rejoice in it.

Hymn: Sing Praise to God who reigns, HWB #59

Scripture: Psalm 1:1-3

Hymn: O God, your constant care, HWB #481

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

Message: Passing on the Faith
“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.” (v. 52)

Hymn: Teach me, O Lord, HWB #487

A Service of Dedication:

Leader: Passing on the faith is an important calling. Our relationship with God existed before birth and can continue to be nurtured in many and unique ways throughout one’s lifetime. This lifelong journey is nurtured when the congregation and home become intentional in teaching, modeling, and encouraging all in their faith journey.

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11

Congregation: We are grateful for the freedom and opportunity we have to nurture faith. We confess that we often take this privilege for granted and become lax in our expectations and efforts. Forgive us for not making faith nurture a priority in our homes and congregations.

Leader: The congregation and the home intentionally partner together to shape faith in people of all ages.

Persons living in households: We need the congregation to train, support, and provide spiritual care for us as we attempt to follow Christ faithfully in our homes and daily life.

Christian Educators (teachers, education committee members, club leaders, etc.)
Because it takes more than Sundays alone to grow in relationship with God, we need homes to partner with us in this task by taking time for God every day of the week.

Leader: The congregation has a primary role to strengthen and support families and households in their faith-shaping responsibilities.

Christian Educators: We will teach with passion and conviction. We will do our best as we prepare our lessons. We will strive to get to know our students and engage them in the learning process.

Children and Youth: We will respect our teachers and look forward to learning about God and God's ways for us.

Young Adults and Adults: We will respect our teachers and risk learning in ways that help us to grow as Christian disciples.

Leader: The Christian home has the primary responsibility to form faith in children and youth.

Parents of Children and Youth: We accept this awesome responsibility and commit ourselves to share our faith with our children and teenagers. We will talk about God when we are at home and when we are away – at mealtime, at bedtime, during car time, during playtime, during sick time – anytime and all the time.

Leader: A vibrant lifelong faith is nurtured when we celebrate God's activity in the world through corporate and personal worship; as we participate in congregational life, God's gathered community; as we interpret God's Word through reflection, exploration and discovery, and as we join in God's activity in the world by serving others in acts of compassion, peace and justice.

All: And God calls us to a lifelong adventure. This year we want to commit ourselves to growing in our understanding of that call and living out that calling in ordinary and extraordinary ways.

Closing Prayer:

God, we thank you for calling us as partners in this important endeavour of nurturing faith in each child, teen, young adult, and adult present here. Thank you for Christian educators who give of their time and talent to teach others. Thank you for parents who have laid a foundation of faith through their modeling and sharing. Thank you for our church leaders who provide curriculum and training opportunities for our congregations. Bless all our efforts – both individual and corporate – so that many will grow in their commitment to you. Amen.



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July/August 2009, *Equipping* #98

Worship resources for

World Communion Sunday 2009

October 4, 2009

Written by Carol Penner, Pastor of The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, ON.
Edited by Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Nurture, Mennonite Church Canada.

INTRODUCTION

World Communion Sunday is an opportunity for the wider Christian Church to move beyond historical and theological differences and worship together in active hope of genuine unity in Christ, even while we recognize and confess that separating walls remain high, and truly ecumenical Communion remains rare. May it help us live into the unity God has already given the church.

Scripture Focus: Isaiah 43: 1-7 and 16-21.

Suitable Songs from

Hymnal: A Worship Book(HWB), Sing the Journey(STJ), and Sing the Story(STS):

HWB 22 Lord Jesus Christ, be present now
HWB 421 Bless'd be the tie that binds
HWB 454 Seed, scattered and sown
HWB 459 I come with joy to meet my Lord
HWB 640 This is a day of new beginnings
STJ 87 Put peace into each other's hands
STS 34 You are holy
STS 60 Come to me, come to us
STS 77 Here is the bread

Suggested congregational responses appear in bold.

GATHERING

Isaiah 43:19 (read in unison)

**See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.**

Lord we have come to worship
old and young, rich and poor, happy and discontented,
at peace and restless, more or less full of faith, we come.

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11

We come curious about this “new thing” that you can do...

Can you sustain our world through financial meltdown?

Can you sustain our world through devastating environmental change?

Can you sustain our world through the valleys of violence and bloodshed?

We need a way through the wasteland parts of our lives.

In this hour of worship, help us to perceive your power.

You are here for all of us with streams of living water—
cold, refreshing, abundant, unstoppable.

Hallelujah! **Amen.**

CONFESSION

As a sign of unity with members of the church through time and around the world, the congregation says the **Apostle’s Creed, 712 Hymnal: A Worship Book.**

CHILDREN’S STORY: “ON THE WAY TO CHURCH”

I passed (two) churches on the way to this church...did any of you pass by a church when you drove or walked to church today? (*Converse with them about this.*) Why didn’t you go to that church? This is the church your mom or dad or caregivers choose to come to...for many reasons (*list a few; example...grew up in this denomination, had friends here, attracted to the way they preached the gospel*).

We choose to be in one church, but it’s not because it’s the best church, or the most faithful church, or the only right church. All Christian churches believe in God who created us, Jesus who saves us, and the Spirit who helps us or sustains us...but we talk about this in different ways, and we worship God in different ways. Jesus’ church keeps surprising us with the many ways there are of being the church, ways we can’t even imagine.

Today we are celebrating World Communion Sunday. That means we are celebrating the world-wide church...the ways it is different and beautiful, and the way God works in different ways in all the different churches in the world.

In case you didn’t notice on your way here, on your way home, keep your eyes peeled for all the different churches in your neighbourhood. God is at work and is being worshiped in every church.

Prayer: Thank you God for so many churches and that we can worship you in so many ways. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Thank you for your Spirit which sustains our world,
connecting us more surely than any world wide web,
binding us together more closely than any cable could.

**Thank you for the beauty of the church with all its denominations,
with people of every colour, nation, and culture.**

Thank you for beautiful music of languages and our ability to learn them.
Thank you for the beauty of worship in many forms.

Thank you for the beauty of this world which feeds our souls.

Thank you for beauty of compassion which moves us to action
when we see our brothers and sisters in need,
whether they be next door or on the other side of the globe.

In this spirit of beauty, today we pray for those we know who are hungry or afraid,
especially...

Today we pray for those who face violence, especially...

Today we pray for those who are working for peace, and for those who need to work for peace, especially... *(include mission workers and names of national leaders)*

Lord, you are doing a new thing in our world,
you are working in ways we can hardly imagine.

Thank you for your vision, which is greater than our own.

Help us to put our trust in you,
our Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, and Friend.

(and now we continue together with the prayer Jesus taught us.)

Lord's Prayer (a contemporary version appears in HWB, #731)

The Lord's Prayer as preparation for communion is another sign of solidarity with Christian churches around the world. Invite people to kneel at their seats if they are able. Kneeling during prayer, which we may consider as a liturgical church tradition, was an early Anabaptist custom though it has been less of a custom in more recent years.

OFFERING PRAYER

Invitation to the offering:

God calls us to be generous
not when all the bills are paid,
not when we have all that we need,
not when we see our way clearly;
God calls us to be a generous people now,
in this moment,
trusting ourselves to the care and provision of God.
Let us continue our worship with giving our tithes and offerings.

BLESSING THE OFFERING:

Lord, with this action of offering we tell your story,
how you sustain your church from generation to generation.
You deal generously with us, you give great gifts!
Your goodness is everlasting, lasting forever.
Accept the gifts of our hands and the thankfulness of our hearts.
Hearts and hands and voices around the world, all lifted in praise to you. **Amen.**

SERMON OUTLINE

Text: Isaiah 43:1-7, 16-21

Some of these verses are very familiar, often read at Christmas. We rarely put ourselves in the shoes of the first listeners to these texts. Why do we need to know their context? Why is the history important for understanding the words?

INTRODUCTORY EXAMPLE:

Consider Winston Churchill's famous words, "This is Britain's finest hour." One can't understand these words unless one understands what was happening in Britain in 1940. That year could also be seen as Britain's darkest hour—a time of great fear and anxiety. Most of Western Europe was

overrun by Hitler's troops. France had just fallen. There was a massive evacuation of troops from Dunkirk and a very real fear that England would soon be invaded, and face Hitler's tyranny. It was in this context that Winston Churchill stood up in the House of Commons and said, with conviction, "We are not in any way defeated... people looking back will say that this was our finest hour!" His voice of hope carried a vision of Britain's strength and courage.

Just as history gives depth to the famous words, the selected words from Isaiah need a historical context. Israel was a divided kingdom. Judah had the capital Jerusalem in it, but it was a very tiny country, smaller than Ontario's Niagara Peninsula. It was a small country in the midst of very strong and powerful neighbours. In the 100 years before today's Isaiah text, the country had fallen repeatedly into the hands of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Babylonians.

Judah had tried to throw off its oppressors by siding with allies who they hoped would treat them well, but Judah's leaders invariably chose the weakest link. At the time this text was written, the country had known only war, invasion, and powerlessness for several generations. Then things got worse. The Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, came, smashed Jerusalem, and deported many people to Babylon. The people who were left behind had nothing, no temple, no crops; they were poor, disoriented, and starving. Things had turned from bad to worse, and many people scattered into other countries.

Into this darkest hour the writer of this part of Isaiah wrote these startling, hopeful words of comfort: "Have no fear. I am with you." "I will gather you together." "I will do a new thing."

The preacher can easily segue from the example and scriptural context to the congregational context with statements such as: Are you facing a darkest hour? Is the congregation grieving or worrying about someone who is sick? How do the words of Isaiah hit us in our darkest hour? This could be followed by a segue into the darkest hour they feel the worldwide church is facing: environmental crisis, economic collapse, or the church losing relevance and members.

Wonder together about some, or all of these questions: How is God doing a new thing? How can God use the church today to bring love and peace into the world? How do these words of Isaiah inspire us? What new words of hope do we need to speak into our context? Does our church community have the courage to speak hopeful words, to live in hope, expecting to see the new things God is doing?

WORDS OF INVITATION

You are invited to the Lord's Table. Those who are baptized and have committed their life to Christ may come and take the bread and the juice/wine. Everyone, including children, is invited to come and take grapes as a sign of God's love.

As we come to the Lord's Table today, we remind ourselves that this is not our congregation's table, it is not a Mennonite table, it is the table of Jesus Christ, who invites us to a feast prepared for all God's people. God invites people from all highways and byways to come to this meal.

We are invited to this table of our Lord with churches from all Christian denominations and on all continents. We join together with Christians in Zimbabwe, Palestine, Korea, Columbia, Germany, Australia, China, and Mexico [substitute with countries significant to your context].

The Lord's Table offers us unity even in our diversity. Think of churches you have visited, or Christians you have met who have challenged you with their diversity. [Invite people to name these churches out loud; eg. "We join with the Anglican church in... Arusha, Tanzania."]

We join with all God's children at this Table to find life in Jesus Christ, and to be sustained for the journey ahead.

COMMUNION PRAYER:

Thank you, Lord, for the people you bring to this Table,
brothers and sisters in Christ.
We come to this table, knowing that God created us and loves us all.
We come to this table, knowing that Jesus died for us all.
We come to this table, knowing that God's Spirit sustains us all.
We come to this table, to experience the mystery of our faith,
Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Gracious God, thank you for this meal
which you have prepared for all your children.
Thank you for the gift of your son,
for his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection which are for our salvation.
As we come to the table, grace us with your Holy Spirit
so that we can understand the wideness of your love.
You unite our congregation with other congregations around the world.
We are one people, one body, your Church
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

We come to this table remembering that on the night before he died, Jesus gathered his friends.
He blessed the bread and broke it and gave it to them with the words,
"Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Each time you do this, remember me."
Then Jesus took a cup of wine, and gave thanks for it and passed it to his friends, saying,
"Drink this cup. This cup, poured out for you, is the promise of God.
Whenever you drink it, remember me."

Share the bread and wine/juice with the words: The body of Christ, broken for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Benediction: Go into your week with your eyes peeled for the new thing that God is about to do
in our lives. Come, Lord Jesus! **Amen.**



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June 2009, Equipping #97, reinserted Equipping #98

Worship Resources for

Mission Sunday 2009

November 8, 2009

Introduction:

These worship resources are designed to assist you in planning for worship on Mission Sunday. The focus of this special Sunday is on the mission of the church, a mission to which all are called, all are equipped, and all are sent. This particular worship resource has been prepared on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada Witness by Jeff and Tany Warkentin, Witness workers in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, who are encouraging young adults to grow as church leaders. The focus of this resource is on giving as an act of worship, something they are learning from their host culture. In Burkina Faso, it is customary to offer your food to someone else before you eat a meal. How might such a cultural practice bless our congregations as we engage in mission? Biblical precedents for such generous giving are contained in this service's lectionary based Scripture texts. Jeff and Tany pray that Christ's worshipful gift of his life and death might open the door for all of us to give more generously and thereby worship God more fully. For information on their ministry see World of Witness, p 47; **KidsPak:** The Little Church in the Big City, www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/562 with additional stories of church members; or the Warkentin blog at www.warkentins-blog.blogspot.com.

Theme: *Giving Worship*

Scripture Texts: 1 Kings 17:8-16, Psalm 146, Hebrews 9:24-28, and Mark 12:38-44.

Suggested Hymns:

STJ 98 *All will be well*

HWB 37 *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*

HWB 309 *Built on the rock*

STJ 5 *Come and be light for our eyes*

HWB 383 *God, whose giving*

HWB 411 *I bind my heart this tide*

STJ 3 *Jesus calls us here to meet him*

STJ 54 *Longing for light*

HWB 418 *Move in our midst*

HWB 389 *Take my life*

HWB: Hymnal – A Worship Book
STJ: Sing the Journey

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11

Invocation:

Almighty God, make us aware this day that we dwell in you. Holy Spirit, empower us to offer our minds, our souls, our lives, and our resources as an act of heart-felt worship. Come, Lord Jesus, come save us and help us follow your example of giving the best of yourself so that we are freed to give the best of ourselves.

Call to Worship: *Adapted from Psalm 146*

Leader: Praise the LORD!

All: Praise the LORD, O my soul!

Left: *I will praise the LORD as long as I live;*

Right: *I will sing praises to my God all my life long.*

Leader: Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals in whom there is no help.

Left: *When their breath departs, they return to the earth;*

Right: *On that very day their plans perish.*

Leader: Happy are those whose hope is in the LORD their God

Left: *Who made heaven and earth*

Right: *The sea, and all that is in them;*

Leader: Who keeps faith forever;

Left: *Who executes justice for the oppressed;*

Right: *Who gives food to the hungry.*

Leader: The LORD will reign forever; Your God, O Zion, for all generations.

All: Praise the LORD!

Prayer of Confession:

Lord, we come before you as your people, aware of our broken world where many do not have enough. We recognize how often we fall short of giving enough of ourselves; our energy, our time, and our resources to your work. We blame our busy schedules. Forgive us for living by our priorities instead of your priorities. Forgive us for tightly holding on, and trying to be in control, instead of letting go and trusting your lead. Work in us. Help us embrace your kingdom work so that our whole lives might become a ministry, a pleasing sacrifice of worship poured out to you. Amen.

Children's Time:

Gathering Activity: Welcome the children as they gather for children's time and encourage them to imagine themselves sitting on the lap of Jesus, and that he is telling them one of the stories he learned as a boy in Synagogue school. Show them where we can still read that story in our Bibles, in 1 Kings 17:8-16. Introduce the story theme with questions such as:

- Have any of you ever had something really yummy to eat that you did not want to share with anybody else?
- Have any of you ever shared a yummy treat with someone even though you wanted to keep it all to yourself? How do you think that made God feel?

Tell them that, in today's story, a woman from Zarephath did exactly that. And what happened in the story shows us how pleased God is when people do that kind of sharing. Listen:

Story: One day a man named Elijah got a call from God. Not a telephone call; no. Elijah heard God telling him to go and live in a certain town called Zarephath. Now, the whole area had not had rain for a long time. And without rain, food could not grow. But God told Elijah not to worry that there was no food. God said that a woman in Zarephath would feed Elijah.

Well, that was enough for Elijah. Off he went to live in this new town. When he got to the town, he met the woman and asked her for a drink and for a piece of bread. The woman was sad and replied, "I am just now gathering sticks to bake up the last of my flour and oil. After that, my son and I will die of hunger." She did not think she had enough food to offer Elijah. But Elijah did not give up. He said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go and make your bread and bring me some of it because God has promised that your jar of flour and your bottle of oil will not run out until the rain comes back and the land produces more food."

The woman might have been afraid, but she went and did as Elijah said. She baked bread, gave some to Elijah and there was still enough for herself and her son. Everyday she came back to her jar of flour and bottle of oil, and there was still enough flour and oil left to make bread again. This went on until it rained and other food grew again, so she never ran out of food, just as God had said would happen.

This woman's sharing made God very happy. Her sharing what she had with Elijah showed God that she loved and trusted God. When we share things we really like, it is like that, too. It is like saying, "God, I love you, and even if I give away my favourite toy, my favourite cookie, or even all of my money, I know, God, that you will take care of me and give me enough."

Wondering questions:

1. I wonder how I would feel if I only had a small snack and someone asked me if they could eat it.
2. I wonder if I would be able to give my last bit of food to someone else even if I was really hungry.
3. I wonder what we could share with others this week – a toy, a snack? With whom could you share it? With your brother or sister? With a friend? With someone who doesn't have enough?

Prayer: *Dear God. Thank you for all that you give us. Help us to share what you give us with others, and as we share, help us to think about how much you love us and how much we love you.*

Response: Now I will give you a chance to share with others. Here is a little snack that each of you may take – but the snack is not for you. This snack is for you to give to someone else, even if you would rather eat it yourself. But if you give it away, I think you will find, just like the woman of Zarephath did, that when you share with someone else, there will be enough for you as well, and that they will share the snack with you.

Sermon Leads:

1. In Burkina Faso, it is customary to offer your food to someone else before you eat a meal. When you buy something at the market, it is common that someone will ask you for it. When you give it to them, they will often give it right back to you. If the person who asks for it is really hungry, they will eat some of it and then give the rest of it back to you. This cultural practice inspired the children's story and can be built upon in the sermon.
2. Our God sustains and revives us for mission. How is God inviting us to "give it all away" like the widow in the 1 Kings text, or the woman in the Mark text? Is God inviting us to "go and live elsewhere" or to live sacrificially in our local context? Can we learn to count on God to take care of the details? How is God inviting us to do something radically different with our lives, to change what we put our time into, and perhaps leave the familiar, to integrate more wholly into God's plan for the world? God wants more than our money. God wants us as partners in mission. Have our lives, our work, and our church ministries dried up like the River Wadi (see beginning of 1 Kings 17)? Does this leave the door open for taking risks in following God to new areas of ministry and becoming more dependent on God?
3. As partners with God in mission, we dare to believe that, with God, all things are possible: Birds may provide us with food (see beginning of 1 Kings 17), the poor can have food resources miraculously replenished; even the dead may be resurrected (see end of 1 Kings 17). God works in mysterious and miraculous ways. How does our post-modern culture encourage or discourage such faith?
4. Can we think of sacrificing aspects of our lives as worship? Which common acts of giving are done grudgingly? Which ones are too ritualized? Which ones feel like acts of worship? In a context and understanding of God who gives, we can place giving and sacrifice back into the proper biblical framework as worship.
5. Christ reveals himself as the ultimate God-worshiper by giving his life in obedience to God's plan. How did Christ's worshipful gift of his life unto death open the door for all of us to worship God more fully? As followers of Jesus, what is our proper response to Jesus' act of worship? Are we also called to express our faithfulness through offering our own selves according to the model Jesus gave us and in response to the needs of the world?
6. As the economic world shakes from an "economic crisis," are we up to the challenge of dropping our last two coins into the treasury? Are we up to the challenge of giving what needs to be given in order for mission and ministries to continue, or do we succumb to the temptation of reducing our giving because our surplus and profits are less? What blessings lie in store for us as we learn to give sacrificially?

Offering:

Lord, help us to give more of ourselves each day as an act of joyful worship to you. Amen.

Or STJ 152.

Benediction

Now, may the Holy Spirit's encouragement and Christ's once and for all act of giving and worship empower us to continue our worship in acts of giving – of our thoughts, our prayers, our resources, and our whole selves. May our giving be an act of worship that fills us with joy and confidence in our faithful God to share the blessings we have so richly received. Amen.



Formation

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“Many Gifts” Resource Cover Letter

Equipping, July/August 2009, #98

Dear Pastors and Church Leaders,

Last fall, Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA held a bi-national consultation on gift discernment. The consultation began by recognizing that, as denominations, we have not addressed this area of congregational life in the last number of years and many congregations are now struggling to find individuals to serve in various congregational positions. Good news stories were also shared; stories from congregations, Mennonite schools, and area churches. The stories featured people who were mentoring and developing leaders of all ages for a wide variety of ministries.

Through worship and reflection on how these settings for leadership development had grown, the group brainstormed for ways of equipping our congregations so that these good news stories could multiply and our church could live out the vision of Ephesians 4: 12,13, “... *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.*” At the end of the consultation, we (Elsie and Karen) were invited to develop a resource that would assist congregations in calling and growing congregational leaders.

We are delighted to present your congregation with the booklet that has emerged: *Many Gifts: Calling and Growing Congregational Leaders*. This is the first in a series of resources to be developed to equip you and your congregation to call and nurture leaders for the church’s mission with its varied ministries.

We pray that the booklet *Many Gifts* will provide helpful tools for nurturing the leadership gifts at all ages. We hope that engaging the content of this booklet will be of help to your congregation as you mature in forming a people of God and engaging the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

Elsie Rempel
Director of Christian Nurture

Karen Martens Zimmerly
Denominational Minister and Director of
Leadership Development

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

July 2009 - Volume 17, Number 7

Bill Couch

Lay Testimonials Strengthen Financial Giving!

Question: Which of these methods increase financial giving in congregations? (a) Sermons, (b) Effective annual stewardship programs, or (c) Lay people's convictions?

Answer: All of the above!

Many helpful sermon resources* and annual stewardship programs** are available. But how can lay people encourage increases in financial giving?

Monthly lay testimonials during worship that stress "the need of the giver to give for his or her spiritual benefit" increase financial giving far more than monthly reports that say, "We need money to pay the church's bills." or "Please help balance the budget."

Small Congregation Methods

Select lay people who believe in and practice giving 10 percent of their incomes to God's work. Once a month, invite each of them to make a three-minute presentation during worship (prior to the offering) that answers four questions: 1. What is my name? 2. How long have I been participating in a congregation? 3. When and why did I first begin giving 10 percent of my income to God's work? 4. What spiritual benefits have I experienced from tithing?

Larger Congregation Methods

Handpick people who are tithers and good communicators. Write them the following letter.

Below the date, put "TO: [list everyone to whom you are writing]" and "FROM: [Senior Pastor's Name]."

Would you consider being part of something new that can powerfully impact our church and transform individuals' lives?

Beginning Sunday, January 26, I would like you to become one of the laypersons who gives a brief meditation about the joy of giving, right before we take the offering. Before your heart stops beating at the thought of speaking to hundreds of people, let me tell you what I expect!

1. I expect people to listen to another layperson talk about giving far more readily than they listen to me. People expect preachers to speak about giving. They don't expect to hear from people like themselves who have discovered the joy of giving. Your testimony can change someone's life as they begin to follow Christ in the area of giving.

2. I expect to give you specific and detailed training about

how to present your story. We'll meet together on Tuesday, January 21, at 7:00 p.m. in Room S101. I'll help you know "what and how" to say a two- or three-minute message.

3. I expect you to do this no more than once or twice this year. Then, if you want to continue, that would be great. Or, if you decide you would rather not continue, that is fine.

4. I expect us to see giving increase significantly due to these testimonies. Some churches report 10 or 20 percent increases, just by implementing these lay testimonies.

5. I expect you to say "yes!" But, if after prayerful consideration, you do not feel led to do this, please call and let me know. If I don't hear from you, I'll expect to see you January 21.

6. I expect God's blessing upon this important ministry!

The Training Meeting

Prepare a handout agenda something like the one below. At the top print your congregation's one-sentence mission statement and one-sentence vision statement.



A. Opening Prayer/Share Time.

B. Why Witness to Your Stewardship Convictions?

- A planted seed can transform a life.
- The beliefs of laity powerfully influence other laity.
- The need of givers to give is greater than our church's need to receive.

C. Understand What Motivates People to Give Money to a Congregation. A survey of 26,184,335 people from 15 denominations revealed the seven greatest motivations for giving money to a church: (1) I am grateful to God. (2) Giving is part of my spiritual relationship to God. (3) I feel privileged to serve. (4) God asks for an appropriate percentage of my income. (5) I like to help other people. (6) I want to help my church. (7) Giving adds meaning to life.

Items at the top of that list motivate far more people to give than do items at the end of the list. (Douglas W. Johnson and George W. Cornell, *Punctured Preconceptions* [New York: Friendship Press])

D. Group Sharing. In groups of three people, ask these questions, one at a time. Each person shares his or her answer. (1) What motivates me to give? (2) When and why did giving become important to my spiritual life? (3) Can I recall a specific experience when giving impacted my life?

E. How to Write What You Plan to Say. Decide on the *main point* you want to get across. Limit yourself to *one* point. You'll have another opportunity to do this, so don't feel like you have to say everything!

•Your main point is more effective when it comes from personal experience. What motivated you to begin giving? What benefits have you experienced from giving? How has your relationship with God grown through giving? How do you feel when you give?

•Choose *feeling* words that touch the heart: *joy, love, grateful, thankful, transformed, etc.*

•Optional: Choose a Scripture verse that captures how you feel about giving.

F. How to Prepare to Say What You Write. Write it out, word for word. Read it aloud and time yourself. Please respect the *three-minute limit!* Complete this step by Thursday evening.

•Revise as new ideas come to mind. Some people prefer to read their manuscript aloud to their family and ask for constructive feedback. What was my main point? Did I keep your attention? Did anything NOT make sense?

•A day later (Friday) get by yourself and read the manuscript *aloud*. Read to absorb the content, without trying to put expression into it.

•Read the manuscript *aloud* again. Underline nouns and verbs that sound like strong emphasis points.

•The next day (Saturday), get by yourself and read it *aloud* for a third time. Try to *visualize* the picture-words and action-sentences. *See* what is happening in your mind's eye and you sound conversational in a speech.

•In these practice readings, raising your voice slightly higher than normal releases nervous tension and helps you to sound more natural. Read slightly faster than seems normal. You sound slower to others than you sound to yourself.

•Read your manuscript out loud, by yourself, once or twice on Sunday morning. Warning! Practicing your manuscript more than four or five times may cause you to work too hard at emphasizing specific words and thus reduce your ability to sound conversational.

G. How to Say What You Have Written. Sit in one of the chairs behind the pulpit. Concentrate on relaxing your hands, fingers, and facial features. Before you walk to the pulpit, take two deep breaths and smile. This feeds the brain needed oxygen and makes you look relaxed even though you don't feel relaxed.

•Go to the pulpit, armed with your notes, prior to the offering. Adjust the mike so it points directly toward your mouth. Say, "Will the ushers please come forward as we prepare to worship with our tithes and offerings."

•Begin speaking as the ushers come forward. They will stand at the front of the aisles until you finish speaking.

•*Smile* during your delivery. Make eye contact with congregants as much as possible. *Don't* concentrate on reading the words with feeling. That produces a preachy-sounding "pulpit inflection." Instead, try to visualize every picture-word and action-sentence in your mind as you say it. This brings you close to a conversational style.

•Close with a two- or three-sentence prayer, thanking God for His blessings. *Never* pray: "Lord, bless this *small* portion we are returning to you."

•Place your contribution in the plate as the usher comes to the platform.

The Bottom Line. In one congregation, these lay testimonials increased total annual giving 23 percent!

*Bill Couch, *How to Talk with People about Financial Giving: Biblically Based Messages that Motivate* (this is Volume 30 of the *Herb Miller's Nuggets Series*). To obtain a contents-description and order form, go to the www.TheParishPaper.com Website. (Note: the contents-description and order form is available ONLY from www.theparishpaper.com and NOT in response to requests by E-mail, U.S. Mail, FAX, or telephone.)

***New Consecration Sunday, Revised Edition: Stewardship Program with Guest Leader Guide and CD-ROM* (Nashville: Abingdon Press); www.cokesbury.com or telephone 800/672-1789.

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Richard Bales

Shepherding Congregations through Grief Storms

Sylvia's husband died in a tragic hunting accident. Ten years later her friends described her as angry and bitter. "She never got over it," one said. "Stuck in the unfairness of her loss...can't move beyond it."

First Church's much-loved pastor retired. His replacement was an equally effective speaker, a caring pastor, and a far better administrator. But many long-term members did not like him. After four painful years, he relocated to another congregation.

Any significant life change (whether positive or negative) can cause feelings of loss and grief. As with individuals, a congregational grief experience often unfolds in the five stages that Elizabeth Kubler-Ross outlined decades ago: denial, anger, depression, bargaining, and eventually—with the passage of time—resolution and healing.

But the way congregations experience grief makes it more difficult to recognize. Church members adjust to the grief of loss like a flotilla of ships moving through a storm at sea. Some ships move safely and quickly through the wind and waves, others slowly. A few ships do not survive the grief storm and are lost at sea: they stop attending or transfer to another congregation.

What Causes Grief Storms?

During significant change some church members get stuck in one of the first four stages of grief (denial, anger, depression, or bargaining). Examples:

New building— "My parents were married in that beautiful sanctuary! Why do we have to tear it down?"

Relocation to a new site— "It may be a better location, but it just doesn't feel like church!"

New senior pastor— "I know she is a good preacher, but I think ministers should be men!"

New choir director— "Why does he have to change everything?"

Significant growth in attendance— "I feel like I don't know anyone anymore!"

Significant decline in attendance— "I remember when the sanctuary was packed! Why can't our new pastor make it that way now?"

New adult Sunday school class— "I think its ridiculous! We would like to have those new people in *our* class!"

Stuck in One of the Grief Stages?

During major staff changes, some members respond with *denial*. "This can't be happening; our church cannot survive without this person!"

Members in the *anger stage* often look for someone to blame (the pastor, the personnel committee). "They just wanted to get rid of him!" Angry comments sound like pounding waves on the sea. "This will not solve the *real* problem!" "You are just jealous of her abilities!" "A good Christian wouldn't permit this!"

Some people express *depression* by avoiding people they perceive as the enemy, or by not attending worship.

People in the *bargaining stage* may think or say to God or a church leader, "I'll do this noble deed if you make things go back to the way they were."

As time passes, the congregation progresses through these early stages of grief. Most members arrive at a new understanding and hope. The majority of "ships in the storm" arrive at *resolution and healing*.



How Do We Shepherd during Grief Storms?

The first and most important step is *recognizing who is responsible for guiding a congregation through the grief process*.

With a flotilla of ships in a storm at sea, the admiral is responsible for seeing them through to safety.

In congregations, the senior pastor, staff, and lay leaders are responsible for grief-process shepherding.

Prepare mentally and spiritually. The pastor asks himself/herself biblically based theological questions such as the following:

“Shall I respond to these pounding waves of negative comments and actions with Grace or Judgment?”

“Shall I respond by feeling personally attacked?”

“Or shall I, with God’s Grace, rise above the wind and storm by recognizing that many of the inappropriate comments and actions arise out of the normal grief stages?”

Communicate, communicate, and communicate. Pastors who effectively lead congregations through grief storms repeatedly communicate four concepts:

1. Because of these events, we are entering a time of congregational grief.

2. Various members move through the five grief stages at different rates of speed.

3. Emotional responses arising from grief may seem like personal attacks; we have the privilege and responsibility of responding with Grace, not Judgment or anger.

4. We are responsible for providing tangible tools that encourage members to express their grief in appropriate ways.

Provide tangible ways to grieve.

The first reaction to a painful change is usually *denial*. For example, one church razed a beloved old sanctuary and classrooms to build a new fellowship hall, kitchen, and classrooms on the site.

The *denial stage* began long before the congregation approved the project. Some people said, “This building is sound; we can’t tear it down!”

Others said, “We remember all the baptisms and weddings and can’t bear to think of losing this building. Surely, we aren’t going to tear it down!”

Effective *denial-management strategies* flood the congregation with accurate information. In one church, this included a presentation by the fire marshal, who said, “A fire in the old building would also destroy the new sanctuary and classrooms—in less than ten minutes.”

Another strategy was a video presentation by the Trustees, showing water-damaged floors and stairways that no longer support even a child’s weight. Such strategies can lead congregations to move more unanimously toward joyfully launching the razing and rebuilding.

Examples of strategies for reducing *anger* and *depression*: A monthly *Building News Bulletin*, in addition to the church newsletter, that focuses on major changes the congregation is experiencing. The bulletins remind members of the creative means they used to maintain unity during previous challenges—like moving from the old sanctuary forty years ago. The *Building News Bulletins* include pictures of the project’s progress and examples of new opportunities the new facilities will provide.

One church gathered all the available wedding photos, showing happy families at the old pulpit area and altar rail. The monthly *Building News Bulletin* invited all members to see these photos, prominently displayed on a large bulletin board.

Another church lessoned *anger* and *depression* with a report explaining plans to use some of the pulpit furniture and altar rail, as well as portions of the stained glass windows, in the new facilities.

Another strategy: Invite members to come to the site of the beloved old building, pick up one of the discarded bricks, and take it home as a memento.

A special event or worship service sometimes allows members to say, “Most of us have made it through the storm, and we are now ready to move on.”

Through such strategies, leaders can encourage members to move through denial, depression, anger, and bargaining, as they progress toward resolution and healing.

Do We Understand the Five-Percent Principle?

A small number of people do NOT progress to *resolution and healing*—no matter how effectively the pastor and leaders shepherd the congregation through the first four stages of grief. Up to five percent of a congregation’s members sometimes get stuck in *anger* or *depression*!

The wise pastor prepares for this common phenomenon through prayer and dependence on God’s grace. He or she resists self-blame by remembering that this five-percent group is typical across the nation.

He or she may want to orally share (do NOT print it!) this “five-percent principle” with church leaders and staff, so they also can mentally and spiritually prepare to offer grace to people in this almost inevitable group.

The Bottom Line

A storm of congregational grief—like the grief we experience at the death of a loved one—is a *process*, not an event.

Capable church leaders recognize that grief is a process and take responsibility for shepherding the congregation to safety and fair weather.