

January 2004, *Equipping*



At the General Board meeting in early November a substantial block of time was given to thinking about the relationship between the church and its teaching institutions. It was a wonderfully encouraging and visionary discussion, as the reports soon to appear in Canadian Mennonite and on our web site will attest to.

In the last issue of *Equipping* I wrote about the teaching ministry of the church. I noted there that “Mennonites have invested heavily in education in order to pass on the values and convictions that we hold. Tuition fees and donations to elementary and secondary schools, colleges and seminaries add up to a tremendous commitment to teaching children and youth (and sometimes older folks through continuing education offerings) what we believe is important.”

The General Board has said that “the missional identity and ministry of the church is strengthened through educational institutions and programs that invite people to faith, develop that faith in a direction consistent with Anabaptist convictions and equip the people of God for service and leadership in the church and beyond ‘...to facilitate God’s mission in the world, so that all people may find healing and hope in all circumstances of life.’”

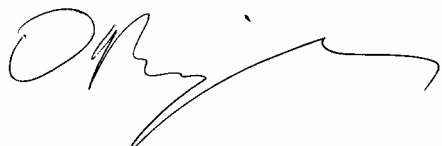
I believe it is very important that we maintain a high level of support for our schools. That translates into financial support, but there are also other important ways to ensure that our schools serve our youth, their families and our congregations. Sending students not only demonstrates our confidence in the schools we have established, it also ensures that people we care about will have solid exposure to the core values, convictions and world view that we share. We should also speak positively about our schools, promote their ministries, take advantage of their resources, and pray for their teachers, administrators, staff and students.

After our discussion with the presidents and some board members from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Columbia Bible College, Canadian Mennonite University, Conrad Grebel University College and Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools I was more strongly persuaded than ever before that all those schools have the best interests of the church and their students at heart as they carry out the tasks that the church and God have entrusted to them. Let’s all do what we can to ensure they are able to do it well.

Clarification:

The September 25 issue of *Equipping* included a statement, “Where does Mennonite Church Canada stand?” The statement included a comment about the bookstore at Assembly 2003 in St. Catharines. We wish to clarify that the bookstore, operated by The Bookshop at Pandora Press, acted entirely within the agreement we had with them and in good faith. We value the partnership we have had not only in the assembly bookstore, but also in Pandora Press’s strong contribution to the Mennonite constituency in publishing and distributing books that are important to our identity and spiritual life. If you have distributed the previous statement to your congregation, please print this clarification in your bulletin or otherwise distribute it to the same people.

Sincerely,



Dan Nighswander, general secretary