

March 2004, *Equipping*

For staff and elected leaders of MC Canada, the first week of March is a very important time of the year. That is when our Leadership Assembly is held, a gathering together of the following leadership groups:



- General Board
- Financial Policy and Audit Committee
- Christian Formation Council
- Christian Witness Council
- Support Services Council
- Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers (of area conferences and the national church)
- Canadian Women in Mission

In all about seventy persons will gather from March 3 to 6, this year at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, to review, plan, interact and pray.

Many of the actions taken here are in preparation for our Assembly in July (7-11 in Winkler, Manitoba—I hope you are planning to be there). Highlights from the agendas include:

1. Reviewing our mission statement and priorities;
2. Presenting financial reports (we are very pleased with the preliminary results);
3. Approving budget plans for 2004-2005 and priorities for 2005-2006;
4. Signing a Partnership Covenant with Conferencia Menonita de México;
5. Praying with leaders from Mennonite Church BC about their upcoming special conference session (March 13);
6. Discussing how we relate to the Brethren Mennonite Council for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns;
7. Discerning questions to put before delegates at this summer's Assembly;
8. Signing a "trust agreement" with Canadian Mennonite University on property ownership and use in anticipation of their residence construction project;
9. Sharing information on how the new privacy legislation impacts the activity of area conferences and the national church;
10. Deciding how to review and evaluate Witness programs;
11. Reviewing a proposal for a United Mennonite Conference in the Ukraine;
12. Discussing how to maximize the ways 'our' schools (primary, secondary and post-secondary) contribute to the formation of children and youth in our churches;
13. Discussing how Mennonite Publishing Network can provide resources for our churches;
14. Reviewing pastor's salary guidelines for 2005.

We earnestly solicit your prayers for all the people who will gather for this event and for wisdom to discern where God is working and where God is leading. We are profoundly aware that '*Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain*' (Psalm 127:1). And since the meetings will start early and end late each day, we note also the next verse: '*It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved.*'

If you want to address any of the items listed above, send me a note and I will forward it to the appropriate decision-makers.

Sincerely,

