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Reviving a Vision for Church Planting

What is the role of the national church in church planting? What is the role of the Area Church? Are MC Canada congregations giving birth and life to new congregations? Are there emerging congregations coming to Mennonites and wanting to be a part of our faith family? Do we believe that we should be church planting? Can we be healthy and vibrant as a people of God if we are not growing? Where do we get help to encourage and nurture new congregations?

These are but a few of the questions being asked in our congregations about church planting today. This summer in June (yes June, not July) we will gather as a church from across the country to worship and work together at discerning matters of vital importance to the life and future of the church. Two discernment topics will be prepared for discussion, one of which is church health/growth/planting. This is important agenda which has been worked at by area churches, but has not received significant, focused delegate conversation in recent years.

Mennonite Church Canada Witness has convened an informal network of church leaders from each Area Church to talk together about church planting, and to help give shape to the Assembly discernment session. There is clear interest from across the country to have such a forum to share, encourage, network and resource one another as we seek to be a healthy, growing church. This group has suggested that we may paint a picture of where we have come from and where we are going as a denomination, articulate a theological framework for church planting, provide demographical data, share stories of church plants, and maybe even ask the question, 'do we believe sufficiently in the overflowing grace of God's presence in our lives, that we believe we must share and model it with others.?'

We ask for your prayers, and input as we prepare for Assembly 2009. If you have suggestions about church planting, please feel free to contact me, or your Area Church leaders.

—Janet Plenert, *Executive Secretary, Witness*

For church planting resources, see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/866