



Surely this great  
nation is a wise  
and discerning  
people!

- Deut. 4:6



# Report: General Board of Mennonite Church Canada

Report Book  
pages 5-11

*"Surely this great nation is a wise  
and discerning people!"*

This year we will present our ministry reports during this first hour. And we will connect these reports to the budget that we will ask you to approve. During these next minutes you will hear 5 reports about what we are doing together as a church. You will notice that although we will focus our ministry reporting on activity responsible to MC Canada in terms of our head office, we trust you will also get a glimpse of this multiplies: all over the world. It is truly amazing how such multiplication happens.

There will be a good piece of time later for your responses, questions, and concerns. Throughout this reporting time, we encourage you to note any questions or comments you may wish to make, either from the written materials, or this oral presentation.

You will find written reports for the General Board reporting in your Report Book, pp.s 5-11.



## Report: General Board of Mennonite Church Canada

Who is the General Board? 18 persons:

- 5 Executive Officers
- 5 Area Church Moderators
- 5 Program Council representatives
- 3 Members at Large

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The General Board is made up of 18 persons: 5 moderators of Area Churches; 5 persons from the program councils; 5 Executive officers; and 3 members at large.



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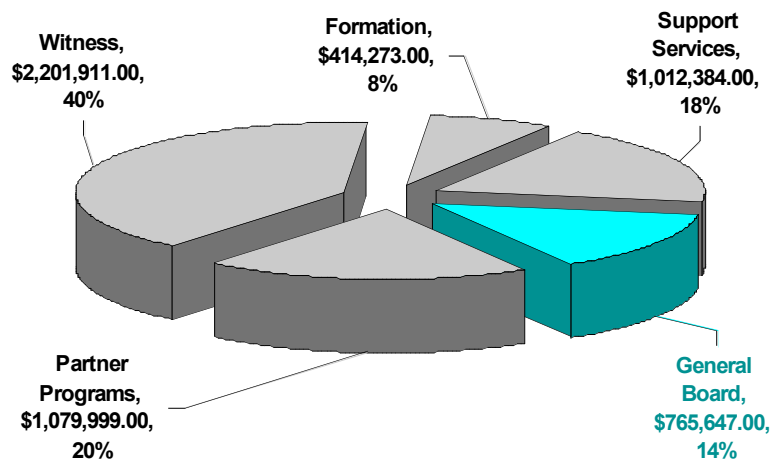
The Board meets 4 times a year.

It is a privilege to report to you, from the perspective of the General Board, about the hopes, challenges, and activities of Mennonite Church Canada.



# Budget FYE 2009

## General Board Report



*"Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!"*

The General Board's share of the budget for this fiscal year is \$765,647.



## General Board Report Staffing



Number of staff included in GB budget:

– *7 persons = 5.6 full-time equivalency*

– *(finance 4.1; administration 1.5)*

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This ministry includes 7 Staff persons; 5.6 full-time equivalence; 4.1 are in finance;



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Pause a few seconds;



**Choose you this  
day... .**

The life of the church in the world is always and always has been a life at the “crossroads.” Every day there is a need with Joshua: “to choose this day whom you shall serve” (Joshua 24:15). Because this church and ministry is of God, there will always be promise, and because of the subtle attractions to evil that surround us, there will always be peril.





# General Board Report



## “Church is Gospel”

*We need to say loudly and with conviction that “church is gospel,” just as we can say that “peace is gospel,” or that “salvation is gospel.”*

*“Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!”*

The purpose of the church is to be gospel (good news). And the gospel points us to being the church. Church and gospel are inseparable.

We need to say loudly and with conviction that “church is gospel,” just as we say that “peace is gospel,” or that “salvation is gospel.” Where-ever and when-ever the church in its life has not functioned as gospel, we need to confess and repent. And we need to choose a direction that is more faithful.



## General Board Report



With the help of God, we will engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ by:

- *Forming a people of God;*
- *Growing leaders for the church;*
- *Becoming a global church.*

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The Purpose statement of Mennonite Church Canada says that we want to “engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ.” The General Board has defined three key priorities for the church at this time; priorities that help us face the perils before us; to help us to choose wisely in the multiple crossroads that are before us; to engage the world with the reconciling gospel.

With the help of God, we will engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ by:

- Forming a people of God;
- Growing leaders for the church;
- Becoming a global church.



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Pause a few seconds;



# General Board Report



Inter-church Relationships include:

- *Canadian Council of Churches*
- *Evangelical Fellowship of Canada*
- *Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders*
- *Mennonite World Conference*
- *Mennonite Church USA*
- *Other international partners*

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Let us share a few vignettes about the areas of ministry assigned to the General Board.

Inter-church Relationships:

The GB is charged with relating to other churches, in Canada and around the world. Some prominent groups of relationships are: Inter-church (bring in one at a time)

Canadian Council of Churches

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders

Mennonite World Conference

Mennonite Church USA

Other international partners

Financial commitment is needed to foster these relationships. Allow us to highlight some of the involvements with these groups:



## General Board Report



- Mennonite World Conference
  - *“If only you could bring your world leader to Cuba.”*
  - *Working hard to ensure that MC Canada reaches its “fair-share” of financial contribution to MWC during these next critical months leading up to the Assembly in Paraguay.*

*“Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!”*

We’ve had some trouble normalizing the visa process for our ministry Cuba. In a recent conversation, we were told: if only you could bring your world leader to Cuba. That would facilitate a lot of things. For us this is a dilemma. Who is our world leader? Given that Nancy Heisy, president of MWC, has a USA passport and Larry Miller, Executive Director has a passport from France, we think that for Cuban purposes Larry is our world leader. Seriously, it is good in so many ways to be part of a world Communion of Anabaptists. We are pleased that MWC has space on the floor here this year, and you will be hearing from them. We are working very hard to make sure that MC Canada reaches our “fair-share” of financial contribution to MWC during these next critical years leading up to the Assembly in Paraguay.



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Pause a few seconds



# General Board Report



## Canadian Council of Churches

- *CCC asked MC Canada to take a lead in helping Canadian churches focus on what our responsibility should be as a witness to the Peace of Christ in the Public Square*



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The Canadian Council of Churches asked MC Canada to take a lead in helping Canadian churches focus on what our responsibility should be as a witness to the Peace of Christ in the Public Square. We made a presentation in mid-May. You will be seeing more of that this week. It is a significant conversation, and we are pleased that you will hear more from the CCC here this week.



# General Board Report



## Mennonite Church USA

*- You have our encouragement as you engage a major process of organizational change in MC USA*

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We have an ongoing positive relationship with MC USA. We are very pleased about the joint summit here this week. Jim Schrag, Executive Director, is with us already. We appreciate the fine spirit in which we work, and we wish them well as they engage a major process of organizational change in MC USA.





# General Board Report



Union of Baptist Churches of Chile

– *Welcome to Raquel Contreras,  
President of the Union of Baptist  
Churches of Chile.*



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We have responded to a particular interest from the Chilean Baptist Union. It is a fascinating story. We are very pleased that Raquel Contreras, the President of that denomination is with us this week, and you will hear from her the relationship that is building there.



# General Board Report



## Post-secondary theological education:

- *Canadian Mennonite University*
- *Conrad Grebel University College*
- *Columbia Bible College*
- *Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary*



*We are engaging the 4 post-secondary schools in conversations about the urgent needs for leadership and pastoral training in the church.*

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## Post-secondary theological education:

The largest portion of the budget you see assigned to the GB is a grant for CMU. But it is important to note that we are engaging the 4 post-secondary schools in conversations about the urgent needs for leadership and pastoral training in the church. These four are: CMU, CGUC, CBC, and AMBS. These conversations are held at multiple levels and are very positive. There is a strong spirit of collaboration, and a good foundation of understanding of our joint tasks. Schools and constituents often ask why we can't (or don't) do more. We are attempting to find ways in which that is indeed possible. Please pray for our schools please support them, and perhaps most of all, please use the schools for yourself, your congregation, your young adults.



# General Board Report



Partnership Covenant – an historic agreement:

- *Mennonite Church Canada*
- *Mennonite Church British Columbia*
- *Mennonite Church Alberta*
- *Mennonite Church Saskatchewan*
- *Mennonite Church Manitoba*
- *Mennonite Church Eastern Canada*



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Partnership with Area Churches:

Our very positive relationships with the 5 Area Churches of MC Canada have been consolidated in a very significant fashion this year. We have unanimously signed a Partnership Covenant that more clearly defines the guidelines by which our relationships are meant to work. This is an historic document, drafted jointly by the 5 Area Churches and Mennonite Church Canada. It is available for your perusal.



# General Board Report



Partnership Covenant states we will:

- *Believe the best about each other.*
- *Bless and support each others' ministries as though they are our own.*
- *Collaborate around a common national vision and mission that finds regional expression.*
- *Play a leadership role in connecting and resourcing the Area Churches for ministry.*
- *Agree that partners may offer and promote their ministries beyond their regions.*

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This covenant outlines some basic things: for example, it says that these 6 partners will (bring in one at a time)

“believe the best about each other;”

that we will “bless and support each other’s ministries as though they are our own.”

It says that each partner is committed to “collaborating around a common national vision and mission that finds regional expressions;”

that MC Canada is to play a “leadership role in connecting and resourcing the Area Churches for ministry.”

It says that because congregations are members of both the Area and National bodies, both bodies have direct access to congregations, with consultation and collaboration, of course.

It says that partners may offer and promote their ministries beyond their regions;

it says that the national church will be the preferred vehicle for international ministry.

This is quite a document, and we celebrate it and thank God for the spirit present in its text and in its drafting.



# General Board Report



The General Board monitors and approves:

- *Policies*
- *Programs*
- *Priorities*
- *Spiritual, Financial and legal health*



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Policies, programs, priorities; spiritual, financial and legal health:

The General Board sets, reviews, and monitors the policies that guide MC Canada's operations. These policies include personnel policies for staff, volunteers, and international workers; pension policies; financial policies; and many other things. Every year we look at our operations to see if the GB has what it needs to do its work well.

This year, for example, the GB approved a policy for staff going into high tension or danger zones. That was an interesting discussion.

The GB also reviews how programs are developed around our priorities. How do we work at forming a people of God? And growing leaders? And becoming a global church? The GB is also a key space for the Area Churches to talk to each other; to process agenda; to discern things together. This is an exciting part of the life of the GB as it works at the big picture of being the church in Canada.



# General Board Report



- Challenges, Issues, and Gratitude:
  - *how best to interpret the Bible*
  - *continue to feel pain about conversations (or lack of them) about sexuality*
  - *We want to grow because of conviction and commitment*
  - *Planning to use the gifts of our growing senior population while at the same time providing them with the pastoral care and guidance they deserve.*
  - *Being proactive in providing a relevant testimony of peace, justice, and well-being to our broken world.*
  - *Learn better how to relate redemptively to our neighbours of other faiths*
  - *Re-gain our conviction of the centrality of the church in God's plan for the salvation of the world*

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## Challenges, Issues, and Gratitude:

We also continue to face significant challenges:

We don't always agree on how best to interpret the Bible for life-giving purposes.

We continue to feel the pain that the conversations (or lack of them) about sexuality have among our members.

We are working creatively at being a church that grows because of conviction and commitment.

We are challenged to use the gifts of our growing senior population as well as we can, while at the same time providing them with the pastoral care and guidance they deserve.

We deeply desire to provide a relevant testimony of peace, justice, and well-being to our broken world.

We want to learn better how to relate redemptively to our neighbours of other faiths.

We need to regain our conviction of the centrality of the church in God's plan for the salvation of the world.

These challenges point to the need to talk, to pray, to study, to trust, to act, to learn, to discern, and to believe. Challenges can turn into opportunities; and opportunities can become a dream. And, as someone has said, a dream is not what we think while we're asleep; it's what keeps us awake at night.



## General Board Report



- Challenges, Issues, and Gratitude:
  - *We are blessed to be the church in Canada.*
  - *We are grateful for the good and positive spirit among us.*
  - *We want the church to be gospel, and we want the gospel to point to us as God's people.*
  - *We are grateful for the financial support.*
  - *Thank you for your prayers, your counsel, and your good will.*

*"Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!"*

We are blessed to be the church in Canada. We are grateful for the good and positive spirit that there is among us to minister together in being God's people. We want the church to be gospel. And we want the gospel to point to us as God's people.

We are grateful for the financial support. Thank you to members, congregations, and corporations that have made the financial year a strong one again. There is much gratitude for this all around the globe. We are grateful for the many volunteers that make the church work at all levels. Specifically, we give thanks for the dedicated work of our outgoing moderator, Henry Krause, for his patient and solid leadership over these last 6 years.

Thank you for your prayers, your counsel, and your good will.

May God richly bless each one.