

MCEC in Ministry

25th Anniversary Edition

Spring 2013



Scattered
and
Sown

In every seed,
a promise

25 years

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ

• making disciples • growing congregations • forming leaders



Mennonite
Church
Eastern
Canada

Église
Mennonite
de l'Est
du Canada

Scattered and Sown: In every seed, a promise



We are celebrating 25 years of ministry in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. In 1988, the churches of MCEC made a historic decision to merge three streams of Mennonite history into one vibrant church so that together we could more faithfully respond to God's call to be a Church in mission. It is incredible what God has done in the past 25 years in MCEC. The bold pioneers who envisioned a new path forward for MCEC churches could never have dreamt what the Spirit would do in our midst.

Who would have imagined that we would grow to worship in twelve different languages! It is amazing what God has created out of the seeds that were planted. Today we are a growing intercultural church that reflects the broad diversity of eastern Canada and continues to welcome new congregational partners from all corners of the world.

"Scattered and Sown: In every seed, a promise" is the theme for our anniversary celebration. As we look back, we are celebrating all that God has done in and through our congregations. Together we have touched the lives of young and old, formed faith, nurtured vision, educated youth and young adults, called pastors, planted churches, resourced leaders, reached out to our communities, and extended Christ's love and peace to neighbours near and far. Not all the seeds that we planted have grown or matured but we experience a tremendous harvest. With hearts full of gratitude and joy, we can celebrate the incredible ways that God has been at work in our midst.

How and where is God inviting us to plant seeds for the next 25 years? What bold new initiatives are being asked of us at this time? I believe

that God is challenging us to scatter seed with new abandon.

In an increasingly secular environment, God is nudging us to find new ways to make the good news of Jesus relevant to the world around us. Let's embrace with vigour the original MCEC vision of uniting behind a common mission. Together we can extend Christ's peace by generously scattering seeds of promise into the communities around us. Who knows what surprises will await us in 25 years!

David Martin
Executive Minister



New Seeds of Promise in MCEC. . .

Congregations welcomed at the 2012 MCEC Annual Church Gathering

Chin Christian Church, Ottawa, ON

was welcomed as an Emerging Congregation. This group of approximately 70 worshippers, with members originally from Burma, have been meeting in the Ottawa area since 2003. Faithful leadership of the Chin Christian Church is held by the elder team and lay minister, Baw Boih Hring Ngen.

Grace New Life Mennonite Church, Hamilton, ON

was also welcomed as an Emerging Congregation. Meeting together since 1991, they are known as one of the most musical congregations within the Lao Mennonite Conference of Canada. With 35-40 members from Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and North America, they are a multicultural congregation in Hamilton under the leadership of Pastor Sririsack Saythavy.

Maranatha Evangelical Church, London, ON

under the leadership of Pastor Eshetu Asfaw, is a small congregation of approximately 12 worshippers. With roots in Ethiopia, they provide an Ethiopian/Eritrean presence in the London area and they were warmly welcomed into MCEC as an Emerging Congregation.



Chin Christian



Grace New Life



Pastor Eshetu



MCEC Image

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: *Making Disciples*

Sex, Love, and Baptism - Going All the Way!

The theme for this year's Winter Youth Retreat attracted attention; the weekend was a sell-out. Irma Fast Dueck, professor at Canadian Mennonite University, engaged the youth in discussion around commitment – from commitment to relationships and cohabitation to baptism.

"I had thought of some of that stuff before, but it was good to listen to her. She was really easy to

listen to," says Justin, one of the youth who attended. "It gave me new ways of thinking about things."

Jean Lehn Epp, pastor at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church and part of the planning team said, "I think the seeds of this conversation aren't going to be known until four or five years from now. As the youth continue to process the things we talked about and the things they thought, the seeds will grow and mature in their lives."

Winter Retreat is an event that is

planned by MCEC and several ministry partners. Conrad Grebel University College provides student leaders at the retreat, Silver Lake Mennonite Camp provides kitchen staff and the facility, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate pitches in with technical skills and transportation, MCEC provides leadership, and the pastors provide an awareness of youth trends and youth culture.

Jeff Steckley reflects, "I am grateful for the way in which schools, camps, and church work together on behalf of MCEC youth."

"It's a great way to develop leaders in the church," says Amanda Mustard, part

"Youth deserve nothing less than our best efforts to invite them into community and to encounter the unsettling, life-giving ministry of Jesus."

**- Jeff Steckley
Congregational Ministries Minister**

of the planning team. Youth have planned and run the worship services the past number of years under the direction of Jean Lehn Epp. "The youth come together and think about the text and how it speaks to them," explains Jean. "It is such a joy to work with them and encourage them, guiding them through the fears and the process."

Amanda sums it up by stating: "We want these kids to come, worship, and meet Jesus - that's the whole point of having a winter retreat for youth."

MCEC Winter Youth Retreat takes place each January.

Celebration Timeline

1988 - 3 Conferences Become 1

Integration of
Conference of United Mennonite Churches in Ontario,
Western Ontario Mennonite Conference,
Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec, and
Mennonite Mission Board of Ontario



Signing Documents of Amalgamation
Robert Snyder (solicitor)
Roy Scheerer (WOMC secretary)
Edwin Epp (UMC secretary)
Dave Kroeker (MCOQ secretary)

Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario - Tim Burkholder



East Zorra MC Image

Go and Grow at EZ Play Group

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)

Tanya Dyck Steinmann, pastor at East Zorra Mennonite Church, explains why this verse is meaningful to a group at East Zorra: "We see the doors of our church as if they are the arms of Jesus opened wide, welcoming in, and inviting parents and children to come and receive love and compassion."

"We want to be known as a congregation who is putting themselves out there - people who care about this community and want to offer something meaningful."

At a time of financial cuts to local early childhood programs, East Zorra MC started a play group in response to a need in the community and in the congregation.

Since April 2012, a small group of parents and children gather every Thursday morning providing a place for children to play safely and for adults to connect with each other.

One of the challenges faced by them is that they are a congregation located outside of town. "We have people travelling 30 minutes to come," says Erin Schlegel, one of the program coordinators. "We also have people requesting rides who don't have access to a car."

Partially in response to this, *EZ Play Group* decided to meet during the summer months at the park in Tavistock. In these months some moms were able to walk to the park and make new connections.

"I heard about MCEC's *Go and Grow* monies and what we

were doing seemed to be in step with that, so I followed up," recalls Tanya. "We were just getting started and trying to determine how we might invest in some safety mats and better playground equipment for younger children." MCEC *Go and Grow* monies support congregations who are considering new initiatives that connect with other congregations and/or their communities.

Relationships are being built. One of the moms who became involved lives only a few farms from the church and has driven past the building many times. "We were just a building," states Tanya, "but now she knows us and has even become involved in the play group leadership."

A unique element is provided through East Zorra's parish nurse who likes to drop in occasionally to weigh babies and answer health questions. Health nurse services in the area have been cut, so this has been very popular - she usually has a line up!

"We desire to be open to how God will lead *EZ Play Group* in the future," writes Tanya in her *Go and Grow* application. "We are excited to know how God will make disciples, grow congregations, and form leaders through our group. It is our hope that we can create an environment where God's love can be shared."

Set up road marks for yourself, Make sign posts for yourself;

Celebration Timeline

1989 - A Charge to Keep



MCEC Congregational Clusters organized

Logo designed by Janet Caldwell approved



Google Image

Sports Vs. Church: "We need to stop *versing* each Other."

The whistle blows and the puck drops at the rink; the music plays at church, and worship begins.

For many families, Sunday morning presents what seems to be conflicting choices between being at church or at the sports arena. The conflict is not just real on the ice or the field. It is very real as parents, children, and youth involved in sports struggle to figure out the relationship between their faith and the sport that they love.

"The challenge for the church is that sports activities pull people

away from regular church routines," states Greg Yantzi, pastor and member of a MCEC team that is seeking to invite conversation about sports, faith and leadership cultivation.

Ruth Boehm, pastor at Faith Mennonite Church who is also part of the sports, faith, and leadership team, shares, "I feel the tension of choice between youth group and worship on Sunday morning and practice times and games. Often as soon as kids play a higher level of hockey, they are gone from church. We also have trouble finding youth sponsors; a lot of our sponsors are hockey coaches. I am so tired of this competition," Ruth continues. "To use my grade two child's

language: sports has to stop *versing* faith. We have to stop *versing* each other."

Last fall Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington, ON, included a commissioning of hockey coaches as an extension of the congregation's ministry. Ruth explains that it was a simple shift to redefine who it is that is sent, who is being asked to do the work of Christian formation, and where that might take place.

Greg and Ruth are part of a team that MCEC has formed to dream about the ways in which the seemingly contradictory concepts of sports, faith, and leadership cultivation might come together. They intend to pilot a video project of short interviews with amateur and professional athletes, parents, coaches, and church leaders. Hopes are that these videos will begin to create a buzz of conversation

"[We need to] bless and acknowledge it as an opportunity for ministry."

- Greg Yantzi

so that sports and faith no longer need to *verse* each other and that leaders who see connections and opportunities between the two, can be nurtured.

The team is finding their way through the beginning stages of this project, looking at formats and searching for volunteer coordinators and editors.

Greg concludes, "I think it is significant for churches to not fight what is going on in people's lives but bless it and acknowledge it as an opportunity for ministry. This is where we want to be from a missional church point of view."

making disciples

Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21

1990 - To Each A Ministry



Special meeting to consider crisis in Persian Gulf



First Mennofolk music festival



1991 - Discover Our Hidden Treasure



First Vacation Bible School Troupe



Letter written to Prime Minister Mulroney citing concerns over Gulf War

Personal Reflections

Seeds of promise and blessing in MCEC . . .

Some seeds, when sown, are carried further by the wind than others. When you live on the edge of the Mennonite field, the value of certain programs and the relational aspect of belonging to a conference diminish. But the value of the conference itself does not diminish, for it is needed to help give shape and direction for growth. It holds our communal Mennonite identity, especially for those of us out in "left field." We need sisters and brothers in faith to help us find the way to be faithful servants.

Gordon Driedger
Petitcodiac
Mennonite
Church, NB



Leadership skills were nurtured, friendships were formed, fears were overcome, opinions were challenged, and caring for others was modeled. I appreciate having had the opportunity to be part of this formative time.

Elenor Taves
Valleyview Mennonite Church, ON



For me, MCEC is like a spring well. When I was young, there was a spring well in a mountain village where I lived. Villagers visited the well to get drinking water, to wash clothes, to bring the water back to their homes, to water vegetables and plants, and even to gather there




together as an informal meeting. It quenches people's thirst, it cleans people's clothes, it provides for people's needs, and it gives vitality and even a sense of belonging to the villagers. Whenever I think of MCEC, it is like the spring well for me and for many congregations. Thanks be to God for the presence of MCEC vision and ministries.

Bock Ki Kim
Pastor



Celebration Timeline

1992 - Journeying Together in Diversity

-  First Spring Conference without a Sunday afternoon service
-  *Jubilate 100* - 100 congregations by year 2000
-  MCEC worships in 7 languages
-  Position of youth delegate to MCEC conference sessions created

Six months after arriving in Ontario, I attended the conference where MCEC was officially born. I voted an enthusiastic "Yes" even as personally my heart had entered into depression. I realized I was grieving the loss of my life in Edmonton. Perhaps, I thought, people would also need to grieve the loss of their identity in the three conferences that gave birth to MCEC. Seeds do die in giving birth. My new life, and MCEC's new life, has been rich and blessed. One of many seeds sown then was the "cross fertilization" of pastors moving across conference lines. And I give special thanks for the privilege given to Lydia (my wife) and I to be interim pastors in two Swiss Mennonite background churches (Wideman MC & Hagerman MC). Blessings abound.

Gary Harder
Hagerman Mennonite Church, ON



Polly Johnson
Hunta Mennonite Church, ON

Let's run with the scattered/sown image and posit that seeds of innovative change have been planted in MCEC in the past 25 years. Our Area Church has seen seasons of growth and fallow, and we have listened to the land. If for everything there is a season, a time to sow, and a time to reap, it is now a time to begin a harvest. I believe this

harvest may produce a bumper crop of creativity, missional engagements, and a commitment to the ever-evolving dance between theology and justice, worship and mission.

Rebecca Steiner
Community Mennonite Church of Stouffville, ON



Many seeds have been sown during these 25 years that have been a blessing. The three original conferences that came together to form MCEC, even though there were some differences, have grown together within most congregations, so that those differences are now less noticeable. Pastors who grew up in one conference,

and then pastored in a congregation that was in a different conference, have usually helped to erase the old distinctive patterns. This growing-together has spread seeds of welcome to many of the newer congregations who have joined us from many other parts of the world.

Glenn Zehr
Retired Pastor

Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21

1993 - In Days to Come: A World of Newness



Presentation and approval of
MCEC Mission Statement



MCEC office moves to
4489 King St. E.,
Kitchener, ON



1994 - Seventh Annual Session



Proposed and accepted
restructuring of MCEC



Launch of Jubilee Curriculum

Jubilee

Personal Reflections

Seeds of promise and blessing in MCEC . . .

SA-BI-DEE!

MCEC has been part of Grace Lao Mennonite since the beginning: from when we formed as a group, obtained our own building, on our journey of learning and through our milestones. Our leaders have been trained and our children are growing in peace theory. Our community is growing in faith. "Ubuntu" is a southern Africa Bantu word that means "A person becomes human through other persons." MCEC does that. Thank God for the abundance that He gives to us through our conference.

Yoel Masayawong
Grace Lao Mennonite Church, ON

I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not
perceive it? Isaiah 43:19

God's ways are amazing and
beyond our imagination! God's
math for MCEC is:

1 (formerly Conference of United
Mennonite Churches in Ontario)
+ 1 (formerly Mennonite
Conference of Ontario and Quebec)
+ 1 (formerly Western Ontario Mennonite Conference)
= 90 plus churches and growing.

God's Spirit at work through the ministry of MCEC
multiplies gifts of welcoming hospitality, caring
community, faithful discipleship, spirit-filled leaders,
missionary witness, and prophetic peace. May God
continue to grow a community of the Spirit within
MCEC as we extend God's welcome for all people.

Eleanor Epp-Stobbe
Erb St. Mennonite Church, ON

Twenty-five years ago I remember feeling a sense of holiness
and awe at the coming together of three unique (and
mostly homogenous) streams of Mennonite faith. It was a huge
"miracle," reversing our historical trend of creating splits. That
seed of openness to embrace others different from
ourselves has taken root and borne fruit. Not only has
each congregation become more diverse within itself, so
has Mennonite Church Eastern Canada become
more diverse - with congregations representing people of
many different backgrounds and worshipping in twelve
different languages!

What a blessing it has been
to join God in extending the
welcome to the Great Banquet!

Don Penner
Shantz Mennonite Church, ON

MCCEC has planted and
nurtured good seeds in
the past 25 years including:

- * the receptivity to new
Canadian groups which is
bearing good fruit.
- * acknowledging and welcoming
the many associated ministries
such as camping, schools,
Mennonite Central Committee,
Spiritual Directors, and many more
as crucial to the MCEC mission.
- * taking a lead role in presenting
the work of MCEC and Mennonite
Church Canada ministries as both
serving the congregations and
in the way that congregational
funding is shared. This strengthens
the entire church.
- * consistent strong support
for the congregations by gifted,
dedicated leadership staff

and outstanding volunteers.

- * its willingness to work at difficult issues of
finances and faithfulness.

Andrew Reesor-McDowell
Hagerman Mennonite
Church, ON

Celebration Timeline

1995 - Visionary Faithfulness in New Times

- MCEC initiates congregational companions
- United Mennonite Educational Institute and
Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
celebrate 50 years



For many years a small, but faithful church has been scattering and sowing seeds in Joliette: youth visited retirement homes and missionary monasteries; team-led worship for 600 catholic youth; joint Catholic-Protestant evangelistic youth rallies; initiation of monthly prayer meetings for pastors and priests; coordinating volunteers for local food bank; marriage courses for couples; sharing building with autistic respite group and Pentecostal Colombian church; coordinating the gifts of 40 quilts annually so that each refugee family felt welcomed; participating in practical ways to bless the citizens with free car washes; cleaning of parks and bus stops; providing a prayer tent and children's festival during the annual Bless Joliette event; and pioneering Mennonite Disaster Service in Quebec.



Some of these seeds are now dormant but others continue to bring forth fruit. Together we seek to live out the new mission that God gave us during a re-visioning process in 2011. Our mission is to live passionately the church of Jesus Christ in Joliette and to bring beauty and life through serving in the different spheres of influence. God has promised to continue to be with us.

Doug and Stephanie Horst
Eglise Mennonite de Joliette, QC



Some seeds are planted intentionally and watched carefully for growth. Others are cast generously about, without knowing how many will take root and when and where. I have been blessed by both planting patterns in my journey toward ministry. I am grateful for my growth as a Christian, a leader, and a participant in the broader Church through MCEC youth



activities, leadership in young adult ministry, financial support for seminary, mentorship through the Transitioning into Ministry (TIM) program and many pastors along the way, and partners like camps and schools. I pray that these seeds will continue to grow and create blessings.

Alissa Bender
Hamilton Mennonite Church, ON

For more of
Alissa's story,
see page 13.

Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21

1996 - Ninth Annual Session



First Junior Youth Breakaway event for Grade 6 - 8 students and their Sunday School teachers

1997 - Vision: Healing and Hope



First Northern Exposure young adult learning trip





Worship Team
Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church

Pastor Mesfin Woldearegay
Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church



Bethel Ethiopian Images

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: *Growing Congregations*

MCEC welcomes three new congregations!

"Canadian statistics suggest that the trend of dramatic immigrant growth in urban centres will continue into the foreseeable future," says Brian Bauman, Mission Minister. "As a Mennonite Church with many cultures, our ability to be hospitable and inclusive with our newcomer neighbours will continue to shape who God is calling us to be."

Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Kitchener, ON

Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church has been meeting since September 2010. The congregation worships the Living God, fellowships, studies the Living Word, and reaches the unreached. They have a radio program to preach the gospel in Amharic.

Each Sunday afternoon you will find approximately 35-40 persons gathering for worship in Kitchener, ON. There are approximately 60 members, with 25-30 children and youth.

Throughout the week, members are involved in five home group Bible studies, Saturday prayer and teaching service, and their Sunday afternoon worship.

Pastor Mesfin Woldearegay says, "Bethel Church is a church of love with a passion for reaching the community."

It is with great pleasure that we welcome them to the MCEC family in April 2013.

"We can't be an island. We need to belong to a Canadian church that can share their experience with us. We are called to be a blessing to Canada; this is the Lord's land."

- Pastor Mesfin

Celebration Timeline

1998 - Hosanna! Remembering - Envisioning

- ✦ 10th Anniversary of MCEC
- ✦ MCEC Giving Project begins
- ✦ Beginning of Conseil Mennonite Québécois

1999 - Live It Generously



✦ Introduction and adoption of A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership

✦ Creation of Stewardship Commission

✦ Peace it Together (PiT) Bus Accident on route from MCEC to Winnipeg



Set up road marks for yourself, Make sign posts for yourself;



Jennifer Kellner Image

The Commons, Hamilton, ON



On Sunday, November 25, 2012, The Commons celebrated joining their "new tribe" of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada by holding a Mennonite Bowling Party! Jen, a member of their community, remarked, "What makes it a Mennonite Bowling Party? WE DO!!"

For the worship that followed, they had a number of interactive stations where people were given opportunities to reflect and interact with ideas of peace, advent, meditation, grace, and prayer. One station had a pamphlet entitled, *What Makes A Mennonite* containing

highlights from Mennonite History and Theology. "It was a great introduction for a community like ours," says Randell Neudorf, Community Curator (a.k.a. Pastor) of The Commons.

The Commons has a core group of 15 -20 people, with roots as a faith community reaching back to 2001. Since 2005 they have been worshipping on Sunday evenings in the Beasley neighbourhood of Hamilton.

Finding a denominational home has been an important journey for The Commons. They have longed to find a tribe that they could call home - a tribe who was accepting of who they were and a community who would

nurture and mentor mutually.

Upon hearing that the MCEC Executive Council approved a recommendation that they be accepted as an emerging congregation, they immediately placed the Mennonite dove on their website and planned a party!

We warmly welcome them into the MCEC "tribe."

- from previously published reports by R. Neudorf and L. Williams



MCEC Prayer Card
Watch for it in your congregation!

growing congregations

Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21

2000 - Living Hope for God's People

- ✧ Formation of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA
- ✧ First retreat for retired pastors





Medahniale Ethiopian Image

growing congregations

Medahniale Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Toronto, ON

With a mission to reach out and preach the gospel to the Ethiopian community in the greater Toronto area, a congregation of 30 individuals currently gather as Medahniale Ethiopian Evangelical Church.

"We feel that there is a great need to be in the community," says

Pastor Tadesse Mekuria. "The church can play a great role and help many individuals struggling with addictions."

Pastor Tadesse further explains that some of their congregation members have been freed from their own addictions and now lead healthier lives!

Assisting newly arrived immigrants with settlement issues, connecting them with existing congregation members, and familiarizing them with a new environment is a

natural outreach for this congregation.

We warmly welcome Medahniale Ethiopian Evangelical Church to the MCEC community of congregations this April 2013.

"The church can play a great role in helping many individuals struggling with addictions."

Some of our congregation members have been freed from addictions and have been able to lead healthy lives again!"

- Pastor Tadesse



Medahniale = World Saviour
Set up road marks for yourself, Make sign posts for yourself;

Celebration Timeline

**2001 - Beyond the Gaze:
From Worship to Witness**

Entered into Season of Discernment on Matters of Disagreement

Name change to
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada/
Église Mennonite de l'est du Canada





MCEC Image

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ: *Forming Leaders*

Ordination Is . . .

Each year the Leadership Council, which has responsibility for ministerial credentials in MCEC, responds to a number of requests for ordination.

"It's a privilege and joy to hear each person's story of being called," Henry Paetkau, Area Church Minister reflects. "These are sacred moments, each one a demonstration of the Spirit at work in the church and alive in God's people."

Vicky Roeder Martin: Commitment

Tell me about your call to ministry.

I grew up at Calvary Church in Ayr and was baptized at the age of 11. I took it very seriously and loved being a part of the church - being committed and involved. I never was told that I could be a pastor but I wasn't told that I could not be a pastor - it wasn't talked about.

I loved working with teens and youth and the idea of doing it in the church appealed to me. Someone dropped off a job description from Floradale Mennonite Church as they were looking for a youth worker. That was my beginning into more formalized ministry.

As the completion of my Master of Theological Studies degree drew closer, I wondered what I was going to do. As much as I felt called to ministry, I still wasn't sure how this was

going to work out but then realized that God would open the door where I needed to be. That's how I arrived as Associate Pastor at Breslau Mennonite Church.

What support systems are in place for you?

I am part of MCEC's Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program and am thankful for that group. It lays an important foundation. In pastoral ministry you need to seek out relationships to stay accountable and support one another. My MCEC mentor is also very supportive. It has been amazing to journey with her through these years of formation.

Why do you want to take this step of ordination?

For me it is a public confirmation and commitment of a lifelong desire to serve. Whether I would be ordained or not, I felt called to serve God for the rest of my life, but the fact that God has opened the opportunity for ordination, I feel that it is a public communal vow. You get married in front of people and acknowledge your commitment. Similarly, I see ordination as a way of publically saying that I want to serve the church and want to be mutually accountable to one another.

Vicky will be ordained at Breslau Mennonite Church on May 26, 2013.

2002 - Missional Church: Rhyming with God



Health and dental benefit plan for pastors and congregational employees started



Decision that Fall Delegate sessions be held every second year

2003 - Missional Church: Gifted and Called



50 MCEC Youth attend Mennonite World Conference in Republic of Zimbabwe, AFRICA



Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21



MC Canada Image

Alissa Bender: Journey of Covenant

I climbed onto a rollercoaster and got into the very back seat. The rollercoaster started moving but it actually started moving backwards. All the individual seats then started turning around so that my seat was at the front. I was terrified! Here I had sat in the back, and now I was at the front - and we were going up a big hill! But what a wonderful ride!" Alissa awoke from her dream with a start.

Herb Schultz, Alissa's pastor when she was in high school, was the first person to ask her if she had ever considered ministry. Self-described as a shy girl while in high school, Alissa, now pastor at Hamilton Mennonite Church laughs, "I had not. I couldn't imagine writing a sermon every week! It just wasn't on my radar."

Bit by bit this changed. "Eventually I came to a point of

knowing that I was always going to be active in the church in some way, but I was not ready to say that I was going to be a pastor," Alissa recalls. "Through my internship experiences at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, I began to see myself in ministry and to realize that this fits." During the last year of Seminary, she began looking for a pastoral ministry position.

Ordination was a journey for Alissa. "I was ready for a ministry position when I left Seminary but the idea of ordination still made me nervous or anxious," she remembers.

During a time of personal reflection while reading the Mennonite Minister's Manual, God spoke to her. "The idea of ordination suddenly came alive for me! It was

really a beautiful experience," she recalls. The Manual speaks of ordination as a covenant – a three-way covenant between pastor, God, and the church. The pastor makes the commitment to walk and follow Jesus on this path of ministry, and to listen for God's voice in doing that. The church promises to support and encourage the pastor, and to answer their own calls to ministry in whatever place they can do that. God makes a promise too, to say that God will be with us and has called us by name. The promises go in all three directions.

"That rollercoaster dream still comes back to me at times," she muses. "I realized that I have always

gotten into the back seat, but God was planning to turn things around so I would be at the front. As I reflect on coming to this place of ordination, I recognize that some people have moments, but I have had journeys."

Alissa will be ordained at Hamilton Mennonite Church on April 28, 2013.

Set up road marks for yourself, Make sign posts for yourself;

2005 - New Wine, New Wineskins



Tony & Peggy Campolo speak in MCEC: Is the Homosexual My Neighbour?

15th Anniversary of Mennofolk

Celebration Timeline

2004 - Come Together in Christ

Presentation of new Statement of Identity and Purpose:
Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ
making disciples - growing congregations - forming leaders





Larry Shantz SIMC Image

Kevin Derksen - Extension of a Baptismal Calling

In preparing to be ordained, I have found it helpful to think about ordination as an extension of baptismal calling.

We affirm that some are called to ministerial leadership, but we also want to affirm that all in the church are called to ministry. Relating ordination back to baptism reminds me that the covenant I make takes up a calling common to all who have entered those waters. Ordained ministry is one particular outworking of that baptismal calling.

One of the things that excites me about ordination is the relationship established with the broader church that holds me accountable to a life in ministry. Ordination confirms a calling not only to the congregation I currently serve (St. Jacobs MC), but to the church in whatever place I may yet find myself. I appreciate that there are structures of both support and accountability to remind me that this is a commitment that both I and the church have made together.

The MCEC Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program was a significant experience of being supported and nurtured by the church into a place where

I could enter the covenant of ordination. Sharing with others in similar positions, but also being coached by experienced folk who knew how to ask the right kinds of questions, was very helpful.

I think the local congregation is also hugely important in discerning and testing the vocational fit of ministry. I have learned a lot on the job. St. Jacobs MC invited me to experience and engage the whole range of pastoral activities and tasks, offering regular support and encouragement along the way. This has been very significant in terms of developing pastoral identity.

But even earlier, I have to name the congregation in which I grew up (River East Mennonite Brethren in Winnipeg) as a significant place of

ministerial training and discernment. Much of what I brought into ministry was simply what I had absorbed while participating in a congregation that did ministry together well. In that sense, the shift into pastoral ministry at St. Jacobs MC felt like a very natural transition.

The ordination service itself is an interesting blend of personal investment and release. I did a lot of work putting the service together, but then sat down and simply received. You do not preach the sermon at your own ordination, and I think this is important. One thing ordination names is a kind of submission that is also a gift of unmerited blessing. Here the church affirms, calls, and raises up – this is a covenant of grace.

Kevin was ordained at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church on February 17, 2013.

Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21

2006 - More Than Enough: Releasing God's Gifts



First MCEC Administrators' Day for Administrative Assistants



MCEC hires three regional ministers - Maurice Martin, Marvin Friesen, Gord Alton



Mennonite Church Canada Listening Tour begins





Google Image

financial seeds of promise

“Without the seeds of continued financial and prayerful support from congregations and individuals in MCEC, the numerous ministries and activities described in this booklet could not have borne fruit,” says Ester Neufeldt, Operations Minister. “On behalf of these ministries, thank you!”

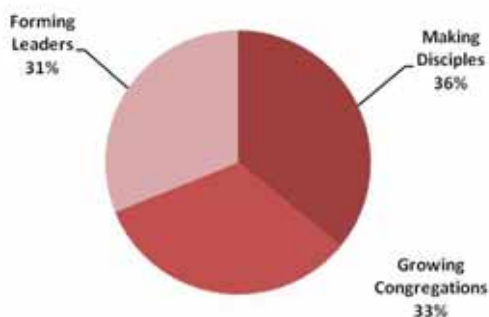
Carol Penner, MCEC Moderator, also expresses her genuine thanks. “I want to thank all of the congregations and individuals who have so generously supported our work together as Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Our work is sowing seeds for future harvests!”

Each gift holds a seed of promise.
Each gift gratefully received.

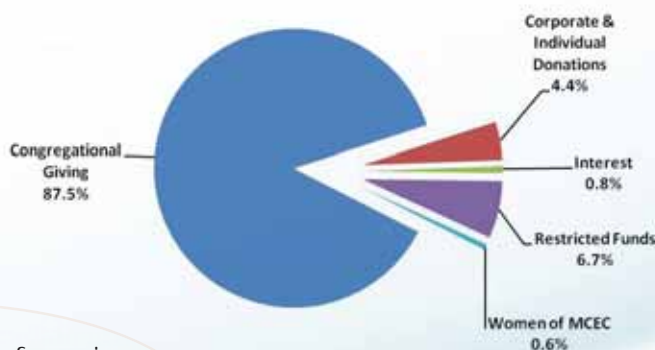


Please give generously at
donate.mennonitechurch.ca/MCEC

Investing in the Area Church



Funding our Ministries 2012-2013



Through planned gifts, MCEC thankfully received financial support from the following estates:

- ✧ Amy Hunsberger
- ✧ Alice Koch
- ✧ Ivan Kuepfer
- ✧ Nelda Lichti
- ✧ Ervin L. Martin
- ✧ Mary Margaret Reesor
- ✧ Enid (Harold) Schmidt
- ✧ Erma Snyder

Celebration Timeline

2007 - Equipping God's People for Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ



- ✧ Initial Transitioning into Ministry (TIM) group for first time pastors and the congregations who support them

2008 - Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ - Making Disciples



- ✧ MCEC 20th Anniversary
- ✧ Yella - First young adult learning trip to Israel & Palestine
- ✧ IMPaCT (International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together) hosted by MCEC





MCEC Image

ministry structure

MCEC Community of Congregations

Represented by delegates appointed by individual congregations
3 per congregation and 1 youth delegate
1 additional delegate for ever 50 members over 150

Executive Council

Comprised of 9 elected volunteers from the MCEC constituency

Oversees the mission, vision, and purpose of MCEC and guides the Executive Minister in the implementation of ministry objectives.

MCEC Leadership Team

Comprised of 5 Senior staff

Congregational Ministries Minister

Oversees the support and resourcing for healthy congregational life and ministry.

Operations Minister

Oversees the fiscal, legal, property, and administrative structures that support MCEC ministry.

Executive Minister

Oversees MCEC staff and provides a link between Leadership Team and Executive Council.

Mission Minister

Oversees missional initiatives such as church planting and congregational outreach.

Area Church Minister

Oversees the calling, training, review, and credentialing of pastoral leaders.

Congregational Ministries Council

Advisory Council comprised of 7 elected volunteers.

Administrative & Financial Services Council

Advisory Council comprised of 7 elected volunteers.

Mission Council

Advisory Council comprised of 7 elected volunteers.

Leadership Council

Advisory Council comprised of 7 elected volunteers.

Representative Appointments

Elected volunteers who sit on the boards of MCEC partner ministries.

Other MCEC Staff

Administrative Staff
Church Engagement Minister
Coordinator of Leadership Formation
Director of Communications
Regional Ministers

Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21

2009 - Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ - Growing Congregations



Irma Fast Dueck challenges pastors and lay leaders re: baptism and church membership



Congregational Life Cycle explored by MCEC congregations



Betty Pries





Ben Wong Image

... Yesterday and Tomorrow

Foster

Healthy Congregational Life

- 78 youth engaged scripture through Bible Quizzing
- Bible Quizzer of the Year: Angelina Reesor from Markham
- Will nurture deep level "values" conversations through initiatives around financial literacy and sports and faith

Support

Emerging Congregations and Church Plants

- 12 emerging congregations
- 9 church plants
- 6 exploring faith communities
- 27 attended Church Planters' Equipping Day in June: Using the Bible to Resource the Church
- 9 church planters and leaders attended Global Leadership Summit
- Ongoing development of relationships between established congregations and newer congregations through Anabaptist/Christian Resource Kits
- Further exploration of faith challenges in transition from culture of origin to Canadian culture

Share

MCEC Stories

- 4 prayer cards shared with congregations
- *Sprout* - inspiring stories from new and emerging ministries distributed
- 463 persons receive MCEC's Weekly Email Bulletin containing highlights and events
- Continued celebration of intercultural stories and community within MCEC

Collaborate

with Partner Ministries

- 1st Jr. Youth Retreat with 99 participants held in partnership with Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and Silver Lake Mennonite Camp
- 157 attended Jr. Youth Make A Difference Day in partnership with Rockway
- 115 participants in Winter Youth Retreat in partnership with Rockway, Silver Lake, and Conrad Grebel University College

Encourage

Pastoral/Congregational Leaders

- 296 active and retired pastors
- 19 chaplains
- 10 credentials granted
- 3 ordinations
- 6 licensed toward ordination
- 1 licensed for specific ministry
- 27 ministerial placements
- 17 new ministers to MCEC
- Will facilitate opportunities for young adults to explore a call to urban ministry
- Growing discovery of the mutual support and accountability gifts of our international pastors

Provide

Resources

- 112 attended workshop on Funerals
- 128 attended School for Ministers with Stuart Murray
- 19 attended workshop on engaging people of other faiths
- 30 attended a Contextual Bible Study on Hearing God speak in these times
- 25 Administrative Assistants attended a workshop on missional living
- Continuing education program to be offered for 2013-2014



Set up road marks for yourself, Make sign posts for yourself;



2011 - What is the Spirit Saying to the Churches?

Mennonite Archives of Ontario reaffirmed as official archive of MCEC

Church Engagement Minister hired to work on behalf of MCEC and MC Canada

2010 - Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ Forming Leaders for God's Mission

Resource Generation task group developed

Emergency preparedness protocols developed

Discussions with Mennonite Central Committee Ontario re: participation in an Anabaptist based office campus

Celebration Timeline





MC Canada Image



Willard Metzger,
Executive Director
Mennonite Church Canada

How Will the Church Look in 25 Years?

Congratulations to MCEC on 25 years of being faithful!

Anniversaries are good opportunities to reflect on the past. Anniversaries also make an excellent platform to envision a future.

What will the church look like next year? In the next 10 years? 25 years?

From the national perspective of your church, there are three issues today that I believe will irrevocably shape the future of the church in Canada:

✿ Our relationships with Canada's First Peoples;

✿ Climate justice and creation care; and
✿ Interfaith relationships.

How the church responds to these three issues is a litmus test for how the Christian Church will be understood in the future. Will the Church be able to show God's loving grace without judgment? Will our welcome of others be conditional on their conversion into people like ourselves? Will the Church's behaviour warrant a serious second look from those jaded by their past experience with the Church?

In January of this year, Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada's Director of Indigenous Relations, wrote a reflection on the *Idle No More* movement

(www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1931). For some of us, his words are tough to digest. Yet, in just a short time the article received over 1,000 "Likes," over 400 "Shares," and over 80 comments on the *Idle No More* Facebook page. Ninety-five percent of the comments were positive. One post especially stood out: "[I'm] not a fan of churches but I definitely love his message."

I believe the future of the church will depend on our ability to transcend the very real perceptions of a church that is more interested in protecting its self interests than it is in loving and caring for those outside of the faith in a loving, caring, compassionate Creator.

This is what Mennonite Church Canada, as your national church, wants to do – and needs to do. We need to do it together. Will you join in the effort?

Consider well the highway, the way by which you went. - Jeremiah 31:21

2012 - Leadership for a Transformed and Sent People

✿ Approval given in principle to participate in proposed 50 Kent building project



2013 - 25th Anniversary



Mennonite United Grace Life Community Church Christian First Ethiopian St Ottawa Chin Kingsfield Fellowship



Please give generously.
Plant seeds for the future at
donate.mennonitechurch.ca/MCEC



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Eastern
Canada

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