



Spring 2014

MCEC in Ministry



**Mennonite
Church**
Eastern
Canada

Worship at The Commons: planting
seeds from the MCEC Annual Church
Gathering and 25th Anniversary
Celebration.

Photo: Jennifer Kilner, The Commons

From David Martin, Executive Minister: It Takes A Community to Raise A Congregation



As a Mennonite people, we understand well the wisdom of the proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." The strength of resources and gifts that a village can generously share within its community can have a profound impact on the health, growth, and development of their children.

As you read this Ministry Report you will quickly discover that the same wisdom is true for congregations. In MCEC, we are privileged to have the company of many congregations who together are sharing their gifts and resources to grow all aspects of the Church. Whether it is investing in the faith formation and leadership development of our youth through the Camp

Shared Initiatives grants and Anabaptist Resource Starter Kits or sharing Sunday School teachers between churches, the MCEC community of congregations is having a profound impact on the health of our faith communities.

Quite literally, the supports that we share with church plants like the Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church is helping to raise new congregations in the MCEC family of faith.

As we share resources through *Go & Grow*, established congregations are also growing and stretching their reach outward in new directions.

Congregations working together in community can

"...lives are being shaped and formed... leaders are being trained... congregations are being raised."

have a profound impact on the life of individuals and local neighbourhoods. As you read the stories on the following pages give thanks to God for the lives that are being shaped and formed, for the leaders that are being trained in Anabaptist faith and theology, and for the congregations that are being raised. Thanks be to God for the gift of the MCEC community of congregations!



Children singing in worship at Grace New Life Mennonite Church, Hamilton. Anabaptist Christian Resource Starter Kit in background.



Pastor Norm Dyck presents Listowel Mennonite Church's gift to MCEC.

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ

making disciples

Anabaptist Christian Resource Starter Kits: Congregations Supporting Congregations

Fifty years ago we were blessed by congregations who helped to plant our church," explains Norm Dyck, current pastor of Listowel Mennonite Church. "We want to bless another congregation or church plant in a tangible way."

As Listowel Mennonite Church's 50th Anniversary celebration approached, they contacted MCEC to see if there was a special project they could engage. The suggestion of Anabaptist Resource Starter Kits captured their imaginations and they began to work toward their goal of raising \$5,000 for that project.

Anabaptist Resource Starter Kits were developed in 2012 and bring Anabaptist resources to new congregations so that

leaders and families can grow in their identity as Anabaptists. Included in the kits are multi-age Sunday school curriculum, books from the *Believer's Church Bible Commentary* series, and a number of children's books to help establish the beginning of a children's peace library.

Ten kits have been purchased for distribution so far. Listowel Mennonite Church's gift will purchase five more.

Randell Neudorf, leader at The Commons in Hamilton, states, "As a small church with an even smaller budget we are very grateful to be able to use these books as another tool for learning and reflection in our community. A big thank you to Waterloo North Mennonite Church

and MCEC for this generous gift." Waterloo North Mennonite Church, the initiator behind this project, delivered one of the Starter Kits to The Commons, one of MCEC's newest congregations.

When Grace New Life Mennonite Church in Hamilton received a kit, the children were excited. Each child eagerly took one of the children's books home with a promise to exchange it for a new one the following week.

Norm concludes, "We want to foster relationships with newer MCEC congregations so they know that the wider church cares for them, they are a part of us, and we are a part of them."

Bible Quizzing

Lives Impacted Through Bible Study

The excitement is palpable, the quiz master adjusts her glasses and begins to speak, "Who said this to whom..." BUZZ! The player stands up and answers correctly!!

For years Bible Quizzing has been an important event for many youth. It is a time to work together as a team, study the Bible and learn how to apply scripture to every day situations.

Maurcie Martin, long-time Bible quizzing enthusiast reflects, "My involvement with quizzing spans 50 years. I have learned that if I keep turning the light on a passage, like a kaleidoscope, I will often gain some fresh insight into the character and activities of God in the world and in the church."

Jon Hines, a coach from Hawkesville Mennonite church, agrees. He says, "Quizzing has led me and my team to dig beyond the facts, in order to determine what God has to say to us. I have never seen youth work harder as a group at studying the Bible. I believe it will have a meaningful impact on the lives of our quizzers as they mature into leaders of the church."

A Different Kind of Bible Quiz Story! Remembering - With Ervin Wiens

In my final year of high school, I was a member of the Virgil Quiz team and our team eventually made it to the finals against the Vineland team.



Those were the days before we had buttons to hit in order to answer.

We had to stand and the first person to stand got first chance to answer. I didn't know any of the Vineland team but I kept noticing this rambunctious member who jumped up with such enthusiasm that she sent the chair behind her flying each time.

The Vineland team eventually won. I remember seeing that "rambunctious one" and her friends outside after the event, still as noisy as ever. And I thought, "I do not like that girl!" Marian remembers nothing about me at that quiz session.

One year later I saw her again as we both registered for a Winter Bible School program. I thought she was still too noisy and free spirited for my taste. But hey, on Valentine's Day later that year that "rambunctious woman" had the nerve to hip-check me into a snow bank and from that moment on the "dislike" quickly grew into love. In April of this year, we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary. Go figure! You never know what, or who, may come out of a Bible quiz event.

Youth working together on a team question during a Bible quiz.



Junior Youth in MCEC

Faith and Food - Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

Junior youth from Make A Difference Day 2013 in November made a difference in the lives of the residents in the Men's Hostel at House of Friendship, Kitchener, and in the lives of many through the local food bank. As part of their reflection on faith and food, the cookies they baked found a home at the House of Friendship. They also collected almost 300 cans of food which were then donated to the local food bank!

The upcoming Jr. Youth Retreat will also focus on food as a way of drawing the two events together. Held at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, the retreat will be May 23 to 25, 2014.

Project Based Learning
Breslau Mennonite Church junior youth are exploring food and faith as part of their Sunday School curriculum through *Explorations of Faith* developed by Phil Martin.

"There were some interesting connections at Make A Difference Day," says Phil. "We connected with people from Listowel. A lot of their youth are children of dairy farmers and we are very interested in questions and challenges related to farming. We are hoping to visit with them in June."

He further explains, "The youth are really engaged with their chosen project. They came at this mostly from the angle of enjoying cooking and are realizing that some of the issues around food are very complex. It is one of the most complex areas we have ever explored through this curriculum."

Camping Ministry in MCEC: We Are Stronger Together

How many pastors do you know who were camp counsellors when they were younger? How many church treasurers were first a camper? Faith formation and leadership development are two results of a strong camping ministry. MCEC is fortunate to have four strong camps, Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, Ontario Mennonite Music Camp, and Willowgrove.

This past year, through the financial support received from MCEC, Willowgrove was able to offer a number of weeks of camping to some of our first generation Canadian congregations, both as campers and as counsellors and leaders in training. Next year they anticipate four individuals from first generation Canadian congregations beginning as staff.

Hidden Acres chose to offer bursaries to their counsellors with the money they received from MCEC, allowing them to work in a summer counselling position and still meet their financial obligations in the fall.

Through shared initiative allocations, MCEC and Camping Ministries work together to nurture faith formation and leadership development in youth and young adults. We are stronger when we work together.



Sunday School at
Freedom Gospel

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ

growing congregations

Sunday School at Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church Three Congregations Working as a Team

"This is the work of God," declares Pastor Ashenafi Fulase.

"Transformation has come to our church. Our Ethiopian neighbours are choosing to come to Freedom Gospel because we have Sunday school teachers for their children."

Pastor Ashenafi found himself in a quandary. Who would teach the children of his congregation about Jesus? This past November, he met with his friends Brian Quan, pastor of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, and Tim Reimer, pastor of Danforth Mennonite Church, and expressed to them his need for English Sunday school teachers.

Enter Sammy, Judy, and Sandrine – three young women who responded to the call to come and teach. Sammy and Judy, from Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, and Sandrine, from Danforth Mennonite Church, take turns each Sunday evening teaching the

children at Freedom Gospel about the love of Jesus.

At first the children did not know what Sunday school was, nor understand why they needed to quieten and listen. This has changed dramatically and the class has grown from six students to almost 20!

As the teachers reflect on the last two months, Judy notes that now the students call each other to gather and listen. She says, "I feel very proud of them that they want to learn about God, instead of doing just what they are told." Sandrine recognizes that the children are learning and starting to teach each other. "If somebody says a bad word," she points

out, "another child will say, 'That's not what God teaches.'" Sammy recalls a Sunday that she taught. "Most of the kids only knew Jesus' name," she shares, "but they knew nothing about him. They want to know more."

Pastor Ashenafi affirms, "We are so thankful to Pastors Brian and Tim, and to Judy, Sammy, and Sandrine. It is a privilege to have Sunday school teachers in our church."

"As we start this journey and grow spiritually together," Sandrine reflects, "we can learn how to be a community where we make Jesus the centre of our lives."

Strengthening Congregations Through Go & Grow

Reading the Bible with Jesus in Markham Stouffville

A dream has grown from the Markham Stouffville Mennonite Cluster to bring people from across MCEC together for a concentrated time of careful Bible study with others.

This fall, the first of four retreats will take place in the Markham Area at Willowgrove, a local Mennonite camp facility. Each retreat will focus on a different gospel.

Reading the Bible with Jesus, led by Bryan Moyer Suderman, expands on a winter Bible study series that the area cluster did together last year. How did Jesus read Scripture (what we call the Old Testament) in relation to the controversies/issues of his time? What might we learn from Jesus' example, as we read Scripture in the midst of different controversies/issues today?

"Bryan's Bible teaching has been a valuable resource for us in the Markham Stouffville area and we want to make this resource available to the broader church as well," Pieter Niemeyer, pastor at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church says in his *Go and Grow* application. "Equipping current and new disciples in reading the Bible and following Jesus is important to engage."

Markham Stouffville Mennonite Cluster applied to MCEC's *Go and Grow* for help with the retreats. *Go and Grow* monies are available to MCEC congregations to facilitate healthy congregational life. These monies are available for new endeavors that extend the peace of Jesus Christ through making disciples, growing congregations, and forming leaders.

***"Equipping
current and new
disciples
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Other *Go and Grow* recipients this past year include Stirling Avenue and Wilmot Mennonite churches. Stirling Avenue has become a KW *Out of the Cold* site, providing dinner and hospitality to the community. Wilmot is in the process of creating an outdoor labyrinth which will be available to the surrounding community with a hope of creating a space where deeper communion with God can occur.

Applications for *Go and Grow* are accepted throughout the year.

Bryan Moyer Suderman will lead *Reading the Bible with Jesus* over a series of four retreats.



Photo: Bryan Moyer Suderman

Focus on Church Planting: Such Celebration And Such Hard Work

Church Planting Is A Celebration

- We celebrate God's call for each church planter.
- We celebrate God's movement among God's people to form faith communities.
- We celebrate each church planter's commitment, passion, and energy.
- We celebrate established congregations who encourage church planters.
- We celebrate Mission Associates who work closely with church planters.

Currently seven unique church plants are resourced by MCEC.

Pastoral training is available to church planters through programs like Transitioning into Ministry (TIM), and we continue to explore the possibility of financial mentors to help church planters navigate Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requirements. We are committed to foster and encourage relationships between established congregations and church plants. Mission Associates have also become a valuable resource and encouragement.

Every neighbourhood deserves a disciple-making peace presence. We celebrate God's continued call to faithful leaders who extend Christ's peace throughout MCEC.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Church Planting Is Hard Work

- It takes great commitment, passion, and energy to church plant.
- A church planter needs lots of encouragement. We don't always do it well.
- Sometimes there is a long life and sometimes there is a shorter life to a church plant. We don't know why.
- We grieve with church planters who have experienced the loss of a vision or a dream. We often don't know what to say.
- We trust in Jesus Christ, who owns the Church, through all beginnings and endings.

Every neighbourhood deserves a disciple-making peace presence.

Photo: Google Maps





"We praise and give thank to our living Lord God Jesus for these gifts."

- Pastor Srirleack Saythavy

Photo: Grace New Life

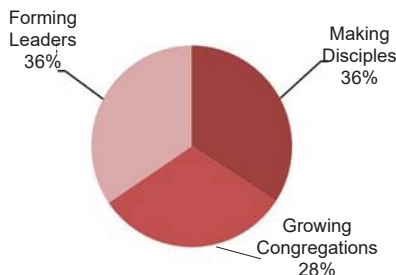
Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ

First Fruits and Planned Giving



Donations from congregations and individuals support MCEC congregations in purchasing or renovating their worship facility through the Mission Capital Fund. This year, two congregations, West Hills Mennonite Church (pictured directly above) and Grace New Life Mennonite Church (at top of page), were recipients of these funds.

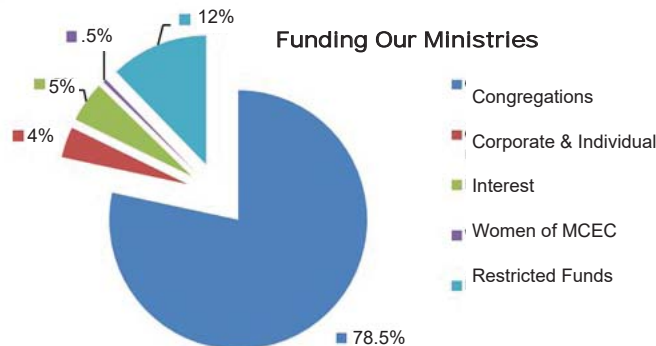
Investing in the Area Church



The generosity of donors within MCEC is tremendous! Donors have been faithful with what God has given them.

Through planned gifts, MCEC thankfully received financial support from the following estates:
Betty Buschert
Eileen Eby
Ivan Kuepfer
Violet Leis
Magdalena Martin
Enid (Harold) Schmidt
Stewart and Mary Witmer

Funding Our Ministries





Students from Refuge de Paix

Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ

forming leaders

Hispanic Leadership Training Program Bringing New Leadership Models to Congregations

What started as a quest to find leadership training for one of our leaders in Sherbrooke, QC has blossomed into an experimental leadership training program for Hispanic persons.

Marianne Mellinger, Coordinator of Leadership Formation, explains, "All of our pastoral training needs to become more flexible - not just training for other language groups, but in all the ways we do pastoral training. This is one model we are experimenting with that can potentially be transferrable into many different situations."

The Hispanic Leadership Training Program consists of six three-month courses. Past instructors have been Noé Gonzálfa, Old Testament, Rudy Baergen, New Testament, and Arnold Snyder, Anabaptist History and Theology. The course began in Sherbrooke, QC with Refuge de Paix and most recently expanded to include the Toronto Mennonite New Life Church.

"There is an eagerness to study," says Rudy Baergen. "There are some real challenges in making it work, because of jobs and busy schedules, but students have expressed great appreciation to me, others, and to MCEC for providing this possibility."

"It's a wonderful experience to work with our new Canadian congregations," Rudy Baergen reflects. "It is the kind of experience that I wish everyone could have – all our pastors and teachers."

"When I met with the teachers and potential teachers this past winter," Marianne recalls, "I was moved by the level of commitment, excitement, and interest they held." The program continues to be in an experimental stage, currently planning for fall 2014 and winter 2015, while evaluating and dreaming of innovative ways to share teaching both on-site and on-line.

Toronto Mennonite New Life Church Training - Like a Drop of Water in a Dry Desert

The classroom was set up differently this second weekend. The laptop at the front of the room connected Luis and Maciel by Skype - Luis in his hospital bed and Maciel at his side.

This was the scene as Arnold Snyder began his second teaching weekend with the Toronto Mennonite New Life Church as part of the Hispanic Leadership Training Program. "I had never done anything quite like that before," says Arnold. "Luis and Maciel were part of the first teaching weekend and wanted to finish the course, despite Luis fighting cancer. Luis made contributions from his hospital bed. It gave a different dynamic to the class."

When faced with the retirement of their long-term pastors, Toronto Mennonite New Life Church began to look for some training for

their leaders. "This was so welcomed by the community," said Maciel. "It was like a drop of water that you are desiring for in a desert!"

Between the two scheduled weekend training sessions with Arnold, the congregation led weekly Bible studies focused on the material. "It was unexpected that they held regular Bible studies based on the material," says Arnold. "When I arrived for the second weekend, they were all fired up."

Maciel explains, "There are so many fundamentals in the history of the Anabaptist movement that touch people who have gone through similar struggles in different parts of the world. My husband and I come from countries where we have suffered persecution and dictatorship. After the course, my husband said,

'This is the right thing to do and this is the right place to be - this is why I joined the Mennonite church.'"

Throughout that day, participants would stop by the computer connected by Skype to Luis and Maciel to greet them. At the end of the session, the group had prayer for everyone, but especially for Luis.

"I wish all the people I know could take this course," reflects Maciel. "This is something we will never forget. It was so meaningful to be part of because we wanted so badly to complete the course."

Maciel continues, "We are called to proclaim when we see things of the Spirit happening and I think this was a thing of the Spirit. Thanks to the work of the Spirit, Luis was able to complete his first course of this program."

Photo: Toronto Mennonite New Life Church

Toronto Mennonite New Life Students



Church Leadership Enrichment: Sabbaticals

A Time of Provision

"I thank MCEC and Preston Mennonite Church for the financial help to be able to take this extended period of time to rest in God's presence."

- Claire Osinkosky, pastor, Preston Mennonite Church - From reports

"I can't begin to fully articulate what I've learned or what the impact of my sabbatical will be on my life and ministry. I know from the depths of my being that I have been carried and cared for in this time and that the transformative work that God is doing within will continue."

Jeff Steckley, MCEC Congregational Ministries Minister

"I think my sabbatical has increased awareness for me that I need to take care of my own spirituality in order to be effective as a pastor. Those things kind of slip away on you when you are busy. I have been more intentional about that since coming back."

Claire Osinkosky, pastor,
Preston Mennonite Church

"I had really good support for my sabbatical. I was able to disengage from congregational ministry and was free to be away for three months. That was a huge gift to me and I am grateful. I was then ready to go back and hit the ground running!"

Ruth Boehm, pastor,
Faith Mennonite Church

"My sabbatical was a rest focusing on God, who goes before us in all of life, and who is more visible to us when we get out of our regular routine."

Dave Rogalsky, pastor, Wilmot Mennonite Church,
correspondent, *Canadian Mennonite*

A Sabbath call for rest and renewal invites us to make a commitment to personal growth and to deepen our knowledge of God and our world.

The demands of leadership in people-related ministries are such that regular refreshment, renewal, and input opportunities are essential in order to grow personally and to remain effective in one's work.

Enrichment leaves, also known as sabbaticals, often include study tours, self-directed study, short term courses, seminars, or other types of enrichment.

MCEC encourages pastoral leaders and congregations to embrace the biblical understanding of Sabbath.

- From MCEC documents



At A Quick Glance 2014 In Review

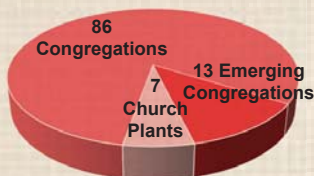
25

years of ministry as an MCEC community of congregations



Did you know?

MCEC emerging congregations are in a time of mutual discernment and testing with MCEC for a long-term relationship?



106

MCEC Congregations/Faith Communities

14

languages of worship

11%

of MCEC congregations are first generation Canadian congregations

23%

of MCEC congregations hold services in languages other than English

490

attended Annual Church Gathering 2013



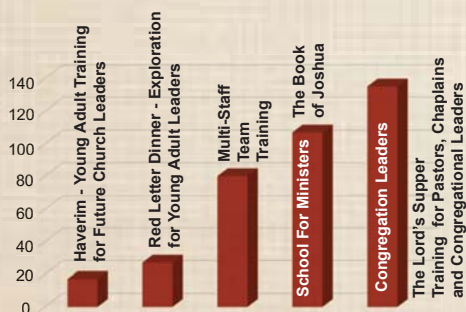
3

Staff Members travelled with MC Canada to UK for a learning tour



17

attended Church Planting Canada Congress in Oakville, ON



366

Persons Participated in these Leadership Development events



460

Youth and Jr. Youth Impacted at Faith Formation Events



10

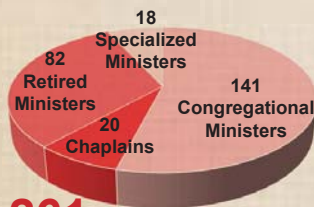
Anabaptist Resource Starter Kits distributed to new MCEC congregations/church



3

Mission Associates began ministry working with church planters and newer congregations

Pastoral Leadership



261

MCEC Pastors

24

ministers and chaplains concluded their assignments

9

ministers new to MCEC began ministry assignments

19

ministers installed in congregational ministry

6

ministers licensed toward ordination

5

ministers ordained plus 2 ordination credentials received

17

participants in Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) in first, second, or third year of program

Points of Connection Ways to Get Involved



Weekly Bulletin

Please subscribe at www.mcec.ca.



MCEC's NEW Website

Check it out at www.mcec.ca.



theExchange

An electronic place where congregations can share and request resources.



Speakers

MCEC staff are available to speak in your congregation. Contact Joan Schooley - jschooley@mcec.ca.



Facebook

Like us on Facebook.



Make A Donation

Strengthen MCEC ministry.

MCEC ON KENT

Stop For A Visit

Please stop by at 50 Kent if you are in the area. We would love to say hello and show you around.



**MCEC
offices
relocated
to 50 Kent
this past
fall.**

**We are
grateful
for this
wonderful
gift.**

Thank you!

MCEC staff with other tenants of 50 Kent.



Mennonite Church Canada

From Willard Metzger, MC Canada Executive Director Seeds of Opportunity and Promise



Greetings on behalf of your national church family!

The theme of this annual church gathering, "Rich Soil for Seeds of Promise," is apt. There are so many seeds of opportunity and promise. In my visits with people across the nation, within and beyond our Mennonite faith family, I encounter many individuals who have grown into, versus been born into, our community.

Some were born into Christian families of other faith traditions. They speak with warm appreciation about their discovery of rich Anabaptist teachings. Sometimes they call themselves "hyphenated" Anabaptists:

Baptist-Mennonite; Anglican-Mennonite; or Lutheran-Mennonite.

Some are newer to Canada and resonate with the Anabaptist emphasis on community and following Jesus. They trace their origins to Laos, China, Colombia, Ethiopia, Congo, and other countries and cultures.

Some were born into families of no faith. They have explored Christian and non-Christian faiths and beliefs. Their eyes soften as they talk about our strong Anabaptist values of peace and justice.

Virtually all of them describe their experiences in the same way: "I found my spiritual

home" in the Mennonite/Anabaptist faith family.

The Mennonite Church family in Canada is in a privileged position. We are relatively rich in physical, spiritual, and theological resources. We have an abundance of opportunity. I am reminded of Esther, who became royalty through marriage and took great risk to save a people: "Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." (Esther 4:14)

May God bless and keep you as you gather to discern God's leading for such a time as this.

MCEC Community of Congregations

Seeds of Promise

Bloomingdale Mennonite Church of the Living Word in Ottawa
 Calvary Church Ayr (Mennonite) Rockway Mennonite Church
 Breslau Mennonite Church Community Mennonite Church of Stouffville
 St. Catharines United Mennonite Church Warden Underground
 Tavistock Mennonite Church First Mennonite Church Community Mennonite Fellowship
 Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church Valleyview Mennonite Church First Among Mennonite Church
 Maple View Mennonite Church Freedom Gospel Ethiopian Church
 Markham Chinese Mennonite Church Grace Mennonite Church Faith Mennonite
 Leamington United Mennonite Church Bethany Mennonite Church The Commons Hagerman Mennonite Church Hamilton
 Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church Grace Lao Wideman Mennonite Church
 Bethel Ethiopian Evangelical Church Steinmann Mennonite Church Elmira Mennonite Church
 Rouge Valley Mennonite Church Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal The Gathering Hanover Mennonite Church
 Markham Christian Worship Centre Brussels Mennonite Fellowship Milverton Mennonite Fellowship
 Agape Fellowship Church St. Agatha Mennonite Church Chin Christian Church - Ottawa
 McArthur's Mills Christian Fellowship Shalom East Zorra Mennonite Church Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church
 Tree of Life/Arbre de Vie Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship Wilmot Mennonite Church
 Avon Mennonite Church Riverdale Mennonite Church Waterloo-Kitchener United
 Harrow Mennonite Church Niagara United Mennonite Church The Village International
 Mannheim Mennonite Church Blenheim Ecumenical House Church Windsor Mennonite
 Hawkesville Mennonite Church Cassel Mennonite Church Waterloo North
 Lao Christian Fellowship Nairn Mennonite Church St. Jacobs Mennonite
 Hillcrest Mennonite Church Vineland United Mennonite Church Danforth Mennonite
 Maranatha Evangelical Church L'Essential
 Crosshill Mennonite Church Preston Mennonite Church Refuge de paix
 Hunta Mennonite Church Nith Valley Mennonite Church Zion Mennonite Fellowship
 Quest Christian Community Rehoboth Evangelical Church Erb Street Mennonite
 Jane Finch Faith Community Living Water Community Christian Fellowship Toronto Mennonite New Life
 KW House Church River of Life Fellowship Wellesley Mennonite Church West Hills Mennonite
 Kingsfield - Clinton North Leamington United Mennonite Church Toronto United Mennonite
 Wanner Mennonite Church Bethel Mennonite Church Chin Christian Church - Kitchener
 Kingsfield - Zurich Mennonite Church Open Table Waters Mennonite Church
 Poole Mennonite Church Église Évangélique Mennonite de Joliette
 Petittcodiac Mennonite Church Calvary Mennonite Church
 Listowel Mennonite Church Ottawa Mennonite Church
 Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship
 The First Mennonite Church
 Rainham Mennonite Church



Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ
 making disciples • growing congregations • forming leaders

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