



Mennonite Church Canada: Our Nationwide Community of Faith

Annual Report 2017

“God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow as communities of grace, joy, and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world”

This has been a year of transition. Yet in the midst of significant staff reduction and restructuring, we have continued to position ourselves so that God’s healing and hope can flow through us to the world. Some of the program highlights of this past year:

Indigenous-Settler Relations

Formal Name Change: We are excited to announce a formal name change from “Indigenous Relations” to **Indigenous-Settler Relations** (approved by Joint Council, December 2017). The change seeks to communicate to constituency and the broader public that our nationwide work is an effort to renew and repair mutual relationships between both Indigenous *and Settler* peoples.

UNDRIP and Bill C-262: In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called all Canadian churches to engage the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) within our respective constituencies and the broader Canadian public (Call to Action #48). According to the TRC Final Report, the Declaration is so important that it should be understood as the “framework for reconciliation” in Canada. In response, Mennonite Church Canada’s Indigenous-Settler Relations program has sought to mobilize the church in support of the Declaration through teach-ins, two book resources (*Wrongs to Rights* and *Lifting Hearts off the Ground*), the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, the Fast for Indigenous Rights, and a postcard campaign of over 35,000 cards.

A significant part of our education and advocacy efforts have been directed towards Bill C-262—*An Act to Ensure that the Laws of Canada are in Harmony with the UNDRIP*. A private members bill crafted by Romeo Saganash—Cree Member of Parliament (NDP) and residential school survivor— Bill C-262 would affirm that the Declarations’ minimum standards for the survival of Indigenous peoples have legal application in Canada.

Upon initial introduction of Bill C-262, many said that it would never get the support of the Government. Yet through the tireless work of grassroots advocacy—including Christian Peacemaker Teams and Mennonite Church Canada—the Government of Canada announced on November 20, 2017 that it is going to support the Bill. It is amazing news! We still have a ways to go before it receives ‘royal assent’ and thus becomes law. Yet if passed, Bill C-262 will be a tremendous step towards the liberating justice that Jesus proclaimed for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19).

International Witness

Our International Witness work has continued to remain strong with 19 workers through this past year. Some highlights this year include;

- **Peacebuilders Community Inc, PBCI**, responded to violence in Marawi City, Mindanao with 288 Peace & Reconciliation (PAR) monitors in the affected region.
- The newly formed **Mennonite Church South Korea, MCSK**, hosted its second annual “Assembly” in September.
- Witness worker **Bock Ki Kim** is leading an effort to plant a new Anabaptist/Mennonite church in Seoul.
- **Mike & Cheryl Nimz** are helping to start a new Anabaptist group in Birmingham, England.
- **Nathan and Taryn Dirks** (after 5 years) completed their ministry in Botswana, leaving a great impact in the whole country for having built the first Futsal/sports park in Botswana.

Mushroom cultivation was taught to women of the Grace Community of Churches (GCC) in South Africa. A brick-making machine has also been purchased in collaboration with AIMM, MCC and MMN to help construct church buildings.

- **Other workers** include: **Darnell & Christina Barkman** (Philippines); **Jeanette Hanson** (Canada/China); **Lillian & Norm Nicolson** (Burkina Faso); **Jennifer Otto & Greg Rabus** (Germany); **Tom & Christine Poovong** (Thailand); **Hippolyto & Miriam Tshimanga** (South Africa); **George & Tobia Veith** (China).

Although we are not able to include highlights from all our workers, please check out further reports in the following link: https://donate.mennonitechurch.ca/projects/by_worker

CommonWord Report

CommonWord is a unique and growing hybrid ministry embracing the resourcing needs of the church, university, and neighbourhood; the local and national communities; and Mennonite and ecumenical conversations. By providing this fusion of services, curated resources are available to buy, borrow, or download. CommonWord also provides resource consultations from the staff.

We are grateful to report strong numbers in 2017 that reflect a growing ministry:

- Sales revenue, for the first 10 months of our current fiscal year, is up 27.6%. Online sales revenue is up 41%, including competitively priced MennoMedia titles and Mennonite Church Canada products.
- In 2018, 48% of items borrowed by congregations circulated outside Manitoba, including increases in MCBC, MCA and MCEC.
- 17.2% of all items borrowed in 2018 circulated outside Mennonite Church Canada, the highest percentage ever.
- Download totals increased 18% in 2018, including “Community Developed” titles contributed by congregations and others.

Help bring CommonWord to your congregation:

- **Connect leaders and readers** to the 12,000 items at www.commonword.ca. Friend us on Facebook and sign up to receive our electronic *Curator*. Certainly visit us if you're ever in Winnipeg.
- **Request a display** on a particular theme to match a worship or educational event. We'll help with the selection and send up to 20 loan books for free.
- **Submit a Cheaper by the Dozen order**. We'll send you 12 different book titles on loan for an extended period – again at no cost. A great way to supplement your church library, discuss a committee issue, or encourage reading! Set up a standing order and we'll do this on a regular 6-week cycle.
- **Make your purchases through CommonWord**. We special order most titles. And regularly discount most items. One congregation recently combined their families' “gift-giving” for Christmas with a single purchase through CommonWord. One congregation supports their pastor's continuing education fund by having an account at CommonWord. One family gifted their loved one with a standing monthly order of “book and coffee” from CommonWord. We'd be glad to talk about possibilities!

Thank you for continued financial support of the Regional Churches, which makes the work of the nationwide priorities possible.

Willard Metzger