

**Mennonite Church Manitoba**  
**61<sup>st</sup> Annual Delegate Session**  
**February 22-23, 2008 at Steinbach Mennonite Church**  
**Theme: "Faith Grows"**

**Friday, February 22, 2008**

**Leadership Seminar at Elim Mennonite Church, Grunthal**  
**1:00 to 4:30 p.m.** *"Pastoring Persons Through Their Life Cycle"*  
Ken Hawkley, seminar leader

**4:30** Registration and displays

**5:30** Meal

**7:00 to 9:00** **Worship**

**GATHERING**

**Prelude**

**Call To Worship**

Jesus, Tender Shepherd, Hear Me

**Prayer**

**Congregational Singing**

Mountain Of God

The Wellspring

Days Of Elijah

**PROCLAIMING**

**Litany**

**Worship Music**

Unless A Grain of Wheat

**Introduction of Speaker And Theme**

**Reader's Theatre**

**Message**

**RESPONDING**

**Congregational Singing**

In the Bulb there is a Flower #614

**Stories From Our Conference Programs**

**Prayer Circle**

**Congregational Singing**

Be Still and Know That I Am God

**Celebration of Church Life** – Births/Adoptions, Baptisms, Deaths

**Community Notes**

**Offering**

**Communion**

Let Us Break Bread Together #453

Seed, Scattered and Sown #454

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant #307

Nothing is Lost on the Breath Of God

Take My Life #389

Great Is Thy Faithfulness #327

**SENDING**

**Blessing & Sending**

You Shall Go Out With Joy #427

**Saturday – February 23, 2008**

Gathering songs (2)

Steinbach Mennonite Church (SMC) Music Team

**8:30 a.m. Worship:**

Welcome & opening prayer

Hans Werner, Moderator

- Greetings from SMC – Kevin Pankratz
- brief introduction of Ken Hawkley, guest presenter, & refresher on theme.

Congregational song – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty - SMC Music Team

Ken Hawkley's presentation: Nurture is essential in order for faith to grow. We nurture in many ways: by listening, by caring, telling the truth, by receiving. Nurture is part roots and part wings.

Prayer

Harold Peters Fransen

**9:00**

**Discernment Session I** - on faith development issues (discernment guide provided):

- Hans outlined the process for the discernment sessions
- Table Groups: There were assigned table groups with designated leaders. This initial session is a brainstorming session.
- Plenary feedback:
  - o A number of tables commented on how we are looking at changing culture, from the culture of youth, multicultural communities and how that impacts the church. The challenge of keeping youth in the church was highlighted.
  - o How do we invite young families into church and when we are there how do we nurture their faith?
  - o As volunteerism decreases, how do we find ways to nurture youth, young adults and young families?
  - o Are we listening to people who choose not to stay in church? We need to look at why people are leaving.
  - o Organizational leadership structures – how does it impact local congregations?
  - o Hospitality outside our cultural context – are we welcoming to people from outside the historical Mennonite culture?

**9:45**

**Reports:**

Quorum has been reached with 156 delegates in attendance and 44 churches represented.

Minutes of the 2007 Fall Delegate Session – **Motion: That the minutes of the Mennonite Church Manitoba October 25, 2007 Fall Delegate Session, as circulated in the 2007 Report Book, be approved. M/S/C Julie Derksen, Steve Plenert.**

**Board Report** found in Report Book.

**2007 Financial update** – Tom Seals, Treasurer, reviewed the financial statements as reviewed by auditors.

**Camp Review Process** – Hans Werner reviewed the resolution leading to the camp review process. Edgar Rempel summarized the steps taken since the Fall ADS.

**Land Use Task Force** – Hugo Peters reported on the activities of the Task Force comprised of Don Dyck, Justin Zacharias, Barb Unger, Vern Klassen Wiebe and Tamara Petkau. The group has met twice since the October meetings. They have spent time getting to know each other and reviewing the theological and biblical underpinnings with which to embark on this task. They take their role very seriously and are eager to work as a group.

**Nominations Committee report** – Laverne Siemens, Chairperson, summarized the report of the Nominations Committee as found in the Report Book. Two additional nominations are Glen Winter for Eden Health Care Services and Henry Thiessen for Canadian Mennonite University. We are still looking for individuals for the West/North Cluster on the Board as well as a representative for MDS.

**Introduction of Henry Kliewer** – Edgar introduced Henry Kliewer as the incoming Director of Leadership Ministries and reported that he will begin the position on May 1, 2008. Henry commented about his expectations for the role and prayed with us.

**Brief Ministry Reports of two go-forward initiatives** – Bob Wiebe, Director of Camping Ministries, brought forward the camp strategic planning event as the first go-forward initiative and the second was the Camp Manager position at Camp Assiniboia has been filled by David and Kathy Hogue. Norm Voth, Director of Evangelism and Service, highlighted two go-forward initiatives from his report including a program called *Refinery* designed to train church planters. Evangelism and Service is also exploring relationships between MCM congregations and aboriginal leaders relating to urban issues. Harold Peters Fransen, Interim Director of Leadership Ministries, summarized two go-forward initiatives from his report highlighting a resource committee as well as initiatives to encourage women in Ministry.

**Plenary feedback/questions:** The cry for help from the Riverton Fellowship last night was heard and needs reflection.

## Set up workshops - Edgar Rempel

**10:30** Refreshment break

**10:45** **Workshops:** The following workshops were held, addressing various aspects of corporate and individual perspectives of faith development.

- Honouring Scripture in our Worship – Arlyn Friesen Epp
- Money and Faith: Where's the Interface? – Erwin Warkentin
- Introduction to Listening Prayer – Darlene Enns Dyck
- Faith Grows in Worship & Song (Sing the Story) – Marilyn Houser Hamm
- Ministry Priorities for Mennonite Church Manitoba – Edgar Rempel

**12:00 p.m.** **Lunch break**

**1:00** Gathering song SMC Music Team  
**Worship:**  
Congregational singing SMC Music Team  
Ken Hawkley's presentation – Ken talked about celebrating the little moments in our lives where we see the fruits of our labour. See the harvest.... Celebrate small and big milestones in our congregation. A church that's eager to celebrate is a church that's eager to see the good that God has done in each one of us.  
Prayer Bob Wiebe

**1:30** **Discernment Session II** – table group consensus on congregational issues (discernment guide provided)

**2:25** Refreshment break

**2:40** **Discernment Session III** – plenary session with table groups reporting:

- Aging and shrinking congregations and perceived immigrant explosion in certain communities. Different options: best practices – what do we do well: book clubs, open to the community, emerging church movement, and how to incorporate some of that into our churches. Helping congregations identify their distinctive abilities.
- We lack something unifying for ourselves. How will we continue to have camp in a way that works for us as an entire Conference? Do we identify ourselves by camp? What about Peace and Justice – and yet we don't have a program around that. They talked about autonomy – how can churches be autonomous and yet support conference. What resources do congregations need?
- How do we learn to talk to each other again so we can see our diversity as a gift? Commitment to a theology of unity so that we can be open and truthful and not worry about people leaving. Methods of following up: a way to get together once a month and have coffee – relationships. Miss the idea of sister congregations so we can build relationships between churches. Finally, joint church services.
- How to nurture authentic faith for persons of all generations. Discern gifts and invite them to use those gifts in the life of the church. Respect the culture from which people come (youth, ethnicity). Truth telling: the church needs to be a place of honesty – the truth of the gospel. Follow up: Congregations who are succeeding at nurturing faith will need to be given a forum to describe what they are doing well. Also, to identify failures at nurturing faith and describing them.
- Why are people of all ages leaving our churches and why are young people not participating? Finding ways to re-engage the people.
- Major change is needed – transformation not tinkering. Building relationship – intergenerational and intercultural is key. Prevent conflict from tearing churches apart.
- There is passion in our churches but we need to keep it alive. Disconnect between generations – events and activities to work together within the generations. Connect work in camps with people who need work activities. We need to care for each other – small groups and visits.
- Structural confusion – we want the vision to come from the local church, but we're also looking to our conference to set the vision, but when they do we're not sure we want to follow. Failure to reinvent ourselves. We need to have a compelling vision. What are we growing towards? – we want to become Christ-like. Essential practices – prayer.
- Where have our young people gone? We could find out if they are attending other congregations. Volunteerism is shrinking - service, commitment and outreach are things that

we hold dear and this causes us concern. Do children know that conference is the reason that there is camp?

- Apathy and the struggle of the middle and upper age demographic. They are very involved but may be spiritually starving.
- How to partner rural and urban churches so that when kids move to the city they are already acquainted with an urban church? We need to stop beating ourselves up for what has or hasn't happened and move forward with optimism and God's grace.
- Relating to the community around our churches – outwardly focused. Declining resources – memorial gifting and stewardship.
- How can we connect with ????? school institutions to channel young adult energy back toward congregations?

**3:30**

**Wrap-up:**

- Related organizations: Power Point Presentation
- **Resolutions:**
  - **Motion to accept the board and ministry reports presented in the Report Book.**  
**M/S/C: Resolutions Committee, Laverne Siemens**
  - **Motion to accept board actions in 2007:**
    - o **M/S/C: Resolutions Committee, John Dyck**
    - o Discussion: Peter Rempel asked for a list of board action that is to be accepted. ????????????????
  - **Motion to thank organizers of this annual session:**
    - o **M/S/C Resolutions Committee, Erin Morash**
    - o Edgar presented a gift of a ceramic peace lamp to Steinbach Mennonite Church
- **Elections: Motion to approve the slate of nominations as presented in the Report Book and updated at this session. M/S/C Nominating Committee, Paul Peters**
- Commissioning Harold Peters-Fransen

**4:00**

**Sending**

**Adjourn**