

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



emc

evangelical  
mennonite  
conference



live

reach



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DELEGATES: BE SURE TO BRING THIS REPORT  
ISSUE WITH YOU TO CONVENTION.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE MESSENGER, MAY 2015

# MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

## ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE



When it comes to strategic thinking and discernment, we often hear about the men of Issachar who are described as those who understood the times and knew what Israel should do (1 Chron. 12:32). The writer of the book of Revelation calls for wisdom in understanding the times and discerning the events of chapters 13 and 17. When wisdom seems to be in short supply, James 1:5 encourages us simply to ask for it, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

This past year we have engaged in two key activities that promise to shape the life of our conference: **strategic planning and survey**. When we as a Conference agreed on a Vision Statement and Statement of Core Values at 2013 Convention in La Crete, Alta., the hard work of envisioning our priorities and shaping our commitments for the coming years began anew. This past year Conference leadership has wrestled with implementing the implications of the Vision Statement into the life of the Conference. The Strategic Planning Task Force has met several times and engaged a good number of people for their collective insights. And we have prayed for wisdom in this work. Much progress has been made in envisioning our future together around key priorities and much work remains to be done—continued wisdom and perseverance.

This year the EMC participated in a survey that gives us a clear glimpse of our beliefs, practices and values. The Global

Anabaptist Profile (GAP) surveyed more than 20 conferences around the world; and about 20 EMC churches participated in this survey. This information will give us a baseline of our commitments and convictions, and helps us to see how we compare to Anabaptist-Mennonite churches around the world. This too calls for wisdom as we interpret the data in shaping our future.

This report booklet reflects the good work that our collective prayers, people and financial support has accomplished during the past year in the initiatives of our churches locally and internationally; and the reports express the need and vision for continued ministry. This is the work that we accomplish together as we pool our resources as a conference.

The churches of Winnipeg hosted our annual Convention in July 2014 at the University of Manitoba with Richard Showalter as keynote speaker. This summer we will be hosted in Brandon with Nik Ripken speaking about the Persecuted Church around the world.

Consider these reports as an invitation. In addition to your own church involvements, our work together as a Conference is best accomplished when we offer our time, perspectives, experience and resources. As delegates to the conference, read and discuss these reports among your church leadership and be prepared to offer your insights.

God bless.

*Abe G. Bergen  
Moderator*

# GENERAL BOARD

The General Board consists of representatives from the nine regions of the Conference and Conference board chairs along with the Moderator and Vice-Moderator. The board meets in July and November prior to Conference Council; additionally the Board Executive met in March and October.

Strategic Planning - The Conference Council adopted statements of



A brochure produced by the General Board in November 2014. Find it on our website.

**Vision and Core Values.** A smaller body has met several times and began to articulate “what does this mean?” We intend to facilitate regular discussions at Conference Council. Also, Boards and Committees will be requested to correlate their reports to the strategic priorities.

The General Board committed to review the role of **women in leadership**, following review of the Statement of Faith. Although a full strategy has not yet been developed, several elements were identified for inclusion in the review: Identify EMC history of involving women; review the results of the 2006 survey; review the results of the 2014 GAP survey; implement the principles of the Harmony Project paper adopted previously.

The General Board agreed to sign on to a **Joint Statement of Reconciliation** initiated by the Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders (CCAL). On March 30, representatives offered a joint Statement of Reconciliation at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event held at Edmonton, Alta. The Indian Residential School System is a dark period in Canada’s history. It was designed to eliminate native culture by assimilating children into the mainstream of society. Children were torn away from their homes and communities and sent to boarding schools far from home. This is a painful and complicated story of loss, sorrow, shame, and hope. Worse yet is the abuse that many of these children suffered in residential schools. Even more disturbing is that

## GENERAL BOARD STAFF

Tim Dyck, General Secretary  
Erica Fehr, Administrative Assistant

## BOARD MEMBERS

Abe Bergen, Moderator,  
*Kleefeld* (2015)  
Darren Plett, Vice-Moderator,  
*Pleasant Valley* (2016)

## REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

- #1 Peter Janzen, *Hillside*
- #2 Chris Hughes, *Abbeydale*
- #3 none currently
- #4 Glenn Loewen, *Portage*
- #5 Henry Friesen, *The Connexion*
- #6 none currently
- #7 Troy Selley, *Oak Bluff*
- #8 Barry Plett, *Blumenort*
- #9 Lowell Froese, *Leamington*

## BOARD CHAIRS

Wes Kroeker, *EFC Steinbach* (Board of Church Ministries)  
Alvin Plett, *Heartland* (Board of Leadership and Outreach)  
Fred Buhler, *Pineridge* (Board of Missions)  
Allister Penner, *Fort Garry* (Board of Trustees)

## NOMINATIONS

**Moderator:** One to be elected for a two-year term

**Abe Bergen**, Box 141, Kleefeld, MB R0A 0V0 (Kleefeld EMC)

Abe has completed his first term as Conference Moderator. He is currently working in property development and serving on several boards. He has served as the Director of Development at Canadian Mennonite University. He is a graduate of Briercrest Bible College, BRE and from Providence Seminary, MDiv.

Abe’s church and conference involvements include occasional preaching and serving on committees.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GENERAL BOARD

- ▷ Initiate and recommend Conference goals and policies
- ▷ Prepare the agenda for Conference Council meetings
- ▷ Oversee the implementation of decisions
- ▷ Receive reports from the Boards and coordinate relationships between the Boards
- ▷ Initiate the formation of regions and the restructuring of existing ones when necessary
- ▷ Prepare the annual slate of Nominating Committee candidates
- ▷ Act on behalf of the Conference between Council meetings
- ▷ Serve as legal representative of the Conference
- ▷ Fill vacancies on Conference Boards which occur between Council sessions
- ▷ Deal with matters that do not come under the direction of any other Conference Board
- ▷ Maintain a Conference Administrative Handbook
- ▷ Appoint committees and task forces to work on specific projects and programs as required
- ▷ Appoint representatives to Conference-affiliated agencies and receive reports from them
- ▷ Appoint and supervise staff in accordance with policies established by the Conference Council



**Tim Dyck (middle) at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission event held in Edmonton, Alta.**

the Church inflicted much of this abuse.

The joint statement acknowledges the negative impact that the residential schools had on First Nations peoples and expresses our regret over the participation of the government and churches. A key component mentioned is our need to take ownership of our attitudes and perspectives. The statement ends with a promise to work towards reconciliation and improved relations between our churches and our aboriginal neighbours.

The EMC history book *Seeking to be Faithful*, written by Dr. Harvey Plett, is no longer in print. The General Board has identified another writer who has been approached to write a revised edition that brings it up to date and includes material from more recent history and the development of missions in EMC.

**PTS/EMC Agreement** – the General Board approved an agreement with

Providence Theological Seminary for a graduate level Anabaptist Studies Track, which will benefit EMC students and ministers new to the EMC. PTS has hired Layton Friesen for the first course.

**Mennonite World Conference** – the MWC gathering will be held in Pennsylvania in July 2015 after EMC Convention. The EMC will be officially represented, and the Board of Missions will connect with sister South American churches and assist them in attending.

The MWC invited the EMC to participate in a Global Anabaptist Project survey of Anabaptist practices and beliefs. The project was approved and 20 EMC churches were selected to participate. The data has been collected and the report will be presented at the MWC gathering in 2015.

*Abe G. Bergen  
Moderator*



**Ebenezer Christian Church worships in their newly renovated building.**

# BOARD OF LEADERSHIP AND OUTREACH

*Just like in life, the past year for the Board of Leadership and Outreach has been one of challenge and heartache, as well as joy and hope.*

Let me start with the challenges. Pastoral transitions can be challenging for local churches, and when you have several happening at one time it becomes challenging for a conference. In the past year we have seen as many as 21 of our churches face a pastoral transition: entering into, continuing, or completing a search process. That's a third of our churches.

The Lord is faithful and he will always provide leadership in his church. But the challenge remains in helping churches through. The BLO offers a resource guide for Pastoral

Search Committees, and I try to connect with church leadership in an effort to make the search process a healthy one. Also in the past year, we promoted the Minister-in-Training program to remind churches of the importance of raising leadership from within.

Another challenge this year has been the delay encountered in the Statement of Faith Review process. In January of this year we rebooted the effort and, for two reasons, sent study guides inviting our churches to study and discuss our articles of faith. The first reason is that it's just



**Recently hired ministers at a New Leaders' Orientation.**

## **BOARD OF LEADERSHIP AND OUTREACH STAFF**

Ward Parkinson, Conference Pastor  
Charles Koop, Canadian Church  
Planting Coordinator  
Erica Fehr, Administrative Assistant

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

Peter Doerksen, *Vanderhoof* (2017)  
Earl Unger, *Stony Brook* (2017)  
Glenn Plett, *Morweena* (2016)  
Keith Hillier, *Steinbach EMC* (2016)  
Alvin B. Plett, *Heartland* (2015)  
Kim Stoesz, *Braeside* (2015)

## **NOMINATIONS**

Three to be elected for a three year term (four EMC Ministerial members must be on the BLO at all times).

**Alvin B. Plett**, Box 37, RR 1,  
Landmark, MB R0A 0X0 (Heartland)

Alvin has completed his first term on the BLO and serves on the Nominating Committee. He has also served on the EMC Project Builders executive for many years. Alvin and his wife Katherine have spent time in Bolivia working with Old Colony Mennonites under Power to Change. Alvin currently leads the Heartland prayer and care group. He is a dairy farmer.



**Participants completed a gifts assessment as part of the October 2014 Discover Your Ministry Potential event.**

good for you. Every generation needs to grapple with what we believe. The second reason is to allow opportunity for input from each church. The Review Team will distill the input and facilitate the process of our Conference Ministerial shaping our Statement of Faith.

The BLO has also been touched by heartache. Our board chair David Funk suffered the tragic loss of an infant son and needed to step away from his BLO responsibilities. We pray for David and Kendra, and for the Fort Garry congregation in their loss. I am grateful to Alvin Plett for his willingness to step in and assume the duties of board chair.

In our work there is also much joy and hope. Two events in the past year have signaled these.

In October we, together with the Board of Missions, held another Discover Your Ministry Potential weekend, this time in Taber, Alberta. This is an exciting time of witnessing people personally discern God's call to ministry, whatever form that takes. Then in November, we held a New Leaders' Orientation in Morris, Manitoba. This involved pastors and church leaders new to our conference in the past three years. God is building our leadership from within and from the wider church.

The Ministerial Examination Committee continued its work, with three ministerial candidates and two deacon couples interviewed in the past year. There are also promising new candidates in the process for this spring. This is hopeful evidence of a strong future.

*Ward Parkinson  
Conference Pastor*



**Charlie Koop (Church Planting Coordinator) with Randy Fehr, a church planter in Aylmer, Ont.**

## CHURCH PLANTING

The ministry of the Church Planting Task Force is to come alongside churches and their local outreach projects as well as to support our church plants. We are in good hands because Jesus said he would build his church and nothing would stop him. I believe we have faithful leaders who are seeking God for wisdom and direction. I also believe that the CPTF is focused on our Conference vision statement, which is “taking risks to reach many people groups in urban centres, locally and abroad.”

Let me share what is happening with some of the church ministry projects and church plants in which we are involved.

At Fort Garry (Winnipeg, Man.), Len Harms, working together with church volunteers, ministers to University of Manitoba students by offering three ESL courses. Recently they received a request from a local group of Chinese believers who are looking at starting a Chinese service in the Fort Garry church. If this develops, Len Harms believes it would give the ESL students easier access to meaningful worship services.

At Redcliff, Alberta, Abe and Anna Bueckert are planting a church with the help of Verna Doerksen and Abe and Kara Penner. For two years they have ministered in the area with singing events, guitar lessons, youth events, Bible studies, and ESL as well as with helping people get driver’s licenses and other immigration assistance. They felt led to start Sunday worship services on Nov. 16, 2014. The group is small and has a young age demographic. They are excited about meeting together.

Many Rooms Church Community (Winnipeg, Man.) has shifted their structure from a mostly voluntary leadership team to hiring three part-time leaders. They have also started on the Church Planting Task Force subsidy program that runs for a ten-year period. The new leadership believes this change will enable Many Rooms to be more effective as they share the gospel through events such as community gardens, block parties, car sharing, involvement with local community groups, and other neighbourly connections.

Ebenezer Christian Church in Brandon celebrated their tenth

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD OF LEADERSHIP AND OUTREACH

- ▷ Serve as executive for the Conference Ministerial
- ▷ Arrange for the examination of ministerial candidates
- ▷ Identify and respond to theological issues
- ▷ Identify and respond to spiritual and social concerns
- ▷ Arrange ministerial activities
- ▷ Foster pastoral fellowship
- ▷ Promote recruitment, orientation and training of ministers
- ▷ Cooperate with local congregations or regions in Canadian evangelism and church planting

anniversary and held the dedication of their new building on Nov. 30, 2014. They also had a farewell for Pastor Hernán and Landis Benitez who had served the church for five years. Roberto Chavarria, an elder in the church, has been appointed as their new pastor. The church feels God has blessed them richly and they are thankful for the support they have received from the Conference.

Please pray for our church plants and their ministry projects. Pray that their leaders would stand firm in their faith and in their calling as servants of the Lord Jesus. Also pray for more people willing to be ministers of the gospel, serving in the places that Jesus is calling us to go.

*Charles Koop*  
Church Planting Coordinator



**Abe Bueckert commissions Abe and Kara Penner for work in Redcliff church plant.**

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES STAFF

Tim Dyck, General Secretary  
Wannetta Fast, Accountant  
Diana Peters, Administrative  
Assistant

## BOARD MEMBERS

Harold Reimer, *Morweena* (2017)  
Gordon Reimer, *Heartland* (2017)  
Allister Penner, *Fort Garry* (2016)  
Tony Hiebert, *Ridgewood* (2015)  
Jake Elias, *La Crete* (2015)

## NOMINATIONS

Two to be elected for a three year term

**Jake Elias**, Box 134, La Crete, AB  
T0H 2H0 (La Crete)

Jake has completed his first term on the Board of Trustees. He is a retired business man. He has served as a deacon, church treasurer, board member and on the church building committee.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- ▷ Prepare the annual budget
- ▷ Raise funds and manage all Conference money
- ▷ Manage the Conference Office
- ▷ Administer the Church Building Loan Fund
- ▷ Promote stewardship and estate planning
- ▷ Prepare and present an annual audited financial statement to the Conference Council

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

David wrote in Psalm 24 “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.” In short, God owns and we manage. None of this is ours but has been entrusted to us in the short time we have on this earth. The Board of Trustees is charged with managing those assets that God has entrusted with us. Those assets include not only money, but also the non-monetary assets of the EMC.

Now that 2014 resides in recent history, we can report that it was a challenging year. Financially, we were entrusted with fewer donations in 2014, which caused us to exercise additional caution with expenditures. The good news is that our expenditures in 2014 were close to the budgeted amount. The bad news is that in future years, we will need to replenish the reserves that were used to fund the shortfall of approximately \$92,000 we experienced in 2014.

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES December 31, 2014

	<b>Budget Fund</b>	<b>2014 Budget</b>	<b>2014 Total All Funds</b>	<b>2013 Total All Funds</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Donations	\$1,755,447	\$1,850,000	\$2,347,650	\$2,392,131
Interest Income	2,812	22,283	36,116	45,492
Other Receipts	52,451	50,000	125,182	346,789
	1,810,710	1,922,283	2,508,948	2,784,412
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Amortization	-	-	4,581	3,972
Foreign Exchange (Gain/Loss)	(22,431)	-	(22,431)	-
Board of Missions	1,158,287	1,177,000	1,520,111	1,523,480
Board of Church Ministries	188,725	206,000	222,968	321,509
Board of Trustees	210,777	202,000	219,902	229,656
General Board	44,298	40,000	63,698	59,234
Board of Leadership and Outreach	495,889	495,000	550,840	588,730
	2,075,545	2,120,000	2,559,670	2,726,581
Excess of receipts over disbursements	(264,835)		(50,722)	57,831
Transfers	194,670	197,717	-	-
Fund Balances, beginning of year as previously stated				3,045,990
Changes in accounting policy				(138,807)
Fund Balances, beginning of year	298,351	-	2,965,015	2,907,183
Fund Balances, end of year	\$228,186	-	\$2,914,293	\$2,965,014



This year was also a year for policy review. The BOT worked on a number of policies, including a conflict of interest policy and enhancements to EMC's safe workplace policies. Both these policies were developed with the intention of protecting the assets entrusted to us and being good stewards and acting with prudence.

Once again, enhancements were made to the pension and group RRSP plans. The Pension Review Committee recommended that the default investments be changed to "Target Date Funds," which the Board of Trustees has implemented. Target Date Funds are designed to include a more aggressive mix of assets

when the participant is younger, and then gradually change to a more conservative mix as the participant approaches retirement age. This approach requires less attention to the investments as the participant ages.

The Church Building Loan Fund that is coordinated with Mennonite Foundation of Canada continues to be well used by our EMC churches. Two churches received new loans this past year. Of the \$1,020,000 available for loans, approximately half is being used by the six churches with existing loans.

The budget that was approved by Conference Council for 2015 is "flat"—there is no increase. It is the board's hope that this will allow us to restore some of the surplus that was used in 2014.

We have once again retained On Business to conduct our audit for 2014. Although their fees have increased, the BOT feels that we are receiving good value for our fees.

*Allister Penner*  
*Board of Trustees Chair*



**Allister Penner, Board of Trustees chair**

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

December 31, 2014

	<u>Budget Fund</u>	<u>2014 All Other Funds</u>	<u>2014 Total All Funds</u>	<u>2013 Total All Funds</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Cash	\$262,815	\$2,123,013	\$2,385,828	\$2,600,092
Donations Receivable	157,762	25,668	183,430	223,975
Accounts Receivable	3,685	-	3,685	3,920
Prepaid Expenses	12,433	5,522	17,955	11,035
<b>Investments</b>				
Vehicle Loans	-	63,945	63,945	79,546
Building Loans	-	484,530	484,530	268,885
<b>Fixed Assets</b>				
	-	13,266	13,266	14,800
	<u>\$436,696</u>	<u>\$2,715,944</u>	<u>\$3,152,640</u>	<u>\$3,202,253</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
Payables & Liabilities	\$55,963	\$15,337	\$71,300	\$50,843
Relocation Fund	152,545	-	152,545	171,896
Loans Payable	-	14,500	14,500	14,500
	<u>208,508</u>	<u>29,837</u>	<u>238,345</u>	<u>237,239</u>
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>				
Investment in Fixed Assets	-	13,266	13,266	14,800
Externally Restricted	-	1,932,640	1,932,640	1,860,032
Internally Restricted	-	740,201	740,201	793,268
Unrestricted Budget Reserve	353,333	-	353,333	353,333
Unrestricted	(125,146)	-	(125,146)	(56,419)
Total Fund Balances	<u>228,187</u>	<u>2,686,107</u>	<u>2,914,295</u>	<u>2,965,014</u>
	<u>\$436,696</u>	<u>\$2,715,944</u>	<u>\$3,152,640</u>	<u>\$3,202,253</u>



Longevity in missionary service has given EMC missions stability since 1955.

In September 2015 the BOM will be recognizing Erna Plett and Benny and Esther Goertzen as servants who served more than twenty-five years in Paraguay. They join a long list of EMC missionaries who served in missions for most of their adult years.

If not for these and other servants, there would not be autonomous EMC-related Spanish churches and conferences in Mexico, Nicaragua and Paraguay today; nor would there be the German CME conference in Mexico. In addition, two radio stations and an HIV/AIDS ministry would not have started in Paraguay, ministries now run by national boards. Other examples could be given such as Tres Palmas and its local mission program.

Missionaries serving cross-culturally for five years or less do tremendous work and these initial years are preparation for a ministry that can often take up to ten, twenty or more years to have a firm foundation. EMC missions desires to recruit long-term missionaries who can assist

the transition of ministries from missionary to national.

Recruiting missionaries is hard but important work. In 1995 Lester Olfert wrote, "Missionaries are retiring and there are few new recruits." The same holds true today. In the February



**Esther and Benny Goertzen (left) and Erna Plett (right) will be recognized by the Board of Missions in September 2015 for over 25 years of service in Paraguay.**

2015 issue of *The Messenger* I reported that the average age of EMC administered missionaries currently serving is 55 years of age with twelve of twenty-four missionaries being over sixty years of age.

Our challenge as EMC churches is to pray, discern and send out missionaries who will serve with a desire for longevity after an initial beginning in missions.

In this report Alvira Friesen, who serves as vice-chair of EMC Missions, will be challenging us on the benefits of serving with a long-term perspective. Pray for us, the EMC, to see the benefits of this great investment of time and giftedness.

*Ken Zacharias*  
Foreign Secretary

### ENDURANCE IN MISSION

I read in the Word that the Lord will instruct the man that fears Him in the way chosen for him. King David prays: "Show me your ways, teach me your paths... guide me in your truth and teach me" (Psalm 25:4). I must believe in the personal guidance of every believer and that an attitude of submission to God will result in His choice of ministry for each one. I firmly believe that God's will for me included many years of service in the same place and to people of similar culture. From my experience I will explore some advantages of the longevity of mission as vocation.

The longer a missionary spends in a country, the more blurred the distinctions between "we" and "they" become. Everyone together becomes "us" and there is powerful fellowship in the sharing of the common bond in Christ. I was never more joy-filled and deeply satisfied as when I would hear that I was considered as

one with the body. Nationality did not divide us; neither did language, opinions, and customs. It became easier to make allowances for each other and hold each other in high respect. When love is tangible, it impacts the church community itself and those around it who observe it.

The Apostle Paul had the freedom to call the believers to imitate him as he was imitating Christ. Even though a missionary may not say those words directly, the truth of the matter is that a missionary will be an example of a life lived to honour Christ. Growth in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, or lack of it, will be observed and taken as an example.

Disappointments in ministry, temptations, bereavement, and successes will provide opportunities for teaching and application of biblical truth. The missionary will have no place to hide and the reality of his or her Christian experience will be tested many times. Thankfully, there is time to restore broken relationships and to repent of sin and be renewed in spirit. Hopefully, genuine strength of character will convince both the believer and the non-believer of the validity of a Christ-like walk, which can indeed be imitated. The challenge to incarnate the Word of God is constant!

It is doubtful that a strong church can be established by people who are not committed to a group over a lengthy period of time. There will not always be the advantage of a nucleus of Christians in the formation of a church. There may be no believers on site to begin a fellowship with. It takes time to bring a person to a simple understanding of the Gospel and it takes even more time to walk with the new believer in the discipleship process.

## BOARD OF MISSIONS STAFF

Tim Dyck, General Secretary  
Ken Zacharias, Foreign Secretary  
Gerald Reimer, Missions Mobilizer  
Diana Peters, Administrative Assistant

## BOARD MEMBERS

Alvira Friesen, *Rosenort EMC* (2017)  
Abe E. Klassen, *Taber* (2017)  
Beth Koehler, *Steinbach EMC* (2016)  
Sid Reimer, *Fort Garry EMC* (2016)  
Len Barkman, *Heartland* (2015)  
Fred Buhler, *Pineridge* (2015)  
Warren Kroeker, *Braeside* (2015)



**Amanda Froese, Ascend intern in Bolivia**

## NOMINATIONS

Three to be elected for a three-year term

**Len Barkman**, Box 26, Landmark, Man. R0A 0X0 (Heartland)

Len has completed his first term on the Board of Missions. He has been involved in many different missions-related activities overseas as well as on the Board of Missions, often serving as administrator. He is currently coordinator for EMC Project Builders and leads the Heartland Global and Local Missions Group.



### Roque Alonso Church in Paraguay

#### **NOMINATIONS (cont'd)**

**Fred Buhler**, Box 13, Hudson Bay, SK S0E 0Y0 (Pineridge)

Fred has completed his first term on the Board of Missions. He is currently the Pastor of Pineridge Fellowship Chapel in Hudson Bay and chair of Region Three ministerial. He has served on the Board of Leadership and Outreach. Fred and Irene worked as church planters in Paraguay for two terms from 1983 to 1990.

**Brad Brandt**, Box 48, RR #1 Ste. Anne, MB R5H 1R1 (Blumenort)

Brad currently serves on the Blumenort EMC missions committee and as an EM Conference representative on the SCHS cabinet. He has been involved in Blumenort's outreach ministries in Vita, MB and in a First Nations community in Ontario as well as participating in numerous short-term missions trips. He has also previously served as a deacon and on the church board in the Blumenort EMC

Just when you are encouraged about the progress in a believer's spiritual growth, he moves away, becomes offended, is deceived by false teaching or simply disappears. You never have the luxury of giving up; you continue until there is a fellowship of believers and by the grace of God, victory is experienced on many levels, in many people in the midst of astounding circumstances over the course of years. Jesus said, "I will build my Church," and the church-planting missionary must rely on that promise every day for as long as that process may take.

Praise God! Along that road, there are amazing celebrations as newly rescued people give testimony of victory, as baptisms seal commitment to Christ and His body, as joyful songs fill the building! These experiences encourage the messenger and indeed, if they were not persistent, they would not receive these blessings. There may, however, exist another reality. Many years of

faithful missionary service may not result in the "success" sought after. I remember the account of the early missionaries to the Quechua people in Ecuador. They saw very little fruit after many years of persistently preaching the Gospel. The following generations were flooded with results!

The long period of sowing and planting was necessary for the faith to flourish. Read *Sent to the River God Forgot* by Jim and Janice Walton. In God's program, eighteen years of translating the New Testament into the Muiane language are not a waste, even though their assignment seemed to end in failure. God will praise and reward our faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:5) as we serve on the basis of His power and sovereignty.

Who should consider mission as vocation? Who should not? Is any Christian without personal responsibility? Is not each one called to be Christ's witness in Jerusalem,

in Judea, in Samaria and/or to the ends of the earth? Ultimately, Christ’s love will compel us to live for Him and share the life-giving message of salvation. For you, that might mean responding positively to a vocation of mission. You can rest on the faithfulness of the One who calls to empower and equip you for each stage of this journey.

*Alvira Friesen  
Board of Missions Vice-Chair*

### ENDURANCE WITH ASSOCIATE MISSIONS

EMC Missions has partnership agreements with about 20 mission agencies. These are organizations that have theological, missiological and administrative beliefs and practices that are similar to the EMC. These partnerships are valuable in that they extend the opportunities for those seeking to serve under EMC Missions beyond our own administrative fields.

The general requirement is for people to make at least a two-year commitment to be considered an Associate Missionary with the EMC, but in reality, most of the EMC Associate Missionaries are committed to a longer term of

service. Of the 44 singles or couples serving as Associate Missionaries, the average number of years of service under EMC Missions is 13. Eight have served less than five years, twelve between six and ten years, fourteen between 11 and 20 years, and ten have served over 20 years.

It is hard to overstate the importance of long-term service as a missionary. For one thing, it takes a long time to enter into a different culture and language. Most missionaries will tell you that after one four-year term they are barely scratching the surface of linguistic and cultural understanding. Yet having a command of the culture is critical to being effective in church planting ministry.

Some ministry work simply cannot be accomplished in a short-term. Bible translation is one example of a task that will take decades to complete, and many other tasks are equally protracted. Missionaries need to pace themselves so that they can continue to be effective in ministry over the long haul.

Missionaries need to be lifelong learners, so the longer they stay within a culture, the more effective they become in ministry. There’s an adage that “most people overestimate

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF MISSIONS

- ▷ Promote missions according to the Scriptures and the directives of the Conference Council
- ▷ Receive counsel from the Conference Ministerial in theological matters
- ▷ Inform the Conference of the Board’s activities
- ▷ Establish goals of the mission programs, formulate basic policies, and enter new fields under the authority of the Conference Council

Note: The Board meets at least five times a year for all-day meetings.

what they can accomplish in one year, and underestimate what they can accomplish in ten years.”

Some people might question why we are still sending long-term missionaries at all. After all, can’t the national church do the work that western missionaries have done in the past and with much less expense? EMC Missions believes that the need for career missionaries is just



Phil and Ellen Koop (left) and Kari and Melvin Peters (right) are long-serving EMC Associate Missionaries.



**The Minga Guazú church plant in Paraguay is one place where EMC short-term workers can go.**

as urgent today as it has ever been. There are still thousands of people groups that are unreached and unengaged, with no credible witness to share the gospel. Even in places where the church has a beginning, there is an ongoing need for career missionaries to walk alongside, train, encourage, and bless the national church workers. Career missionaries make a world of difference.

A career missionary will spend several years in ministry preparation gaining theological and missiological training before even beginning in ministry. They will take the time necessary to enter fully into the language and culture of the country where they will be living and serving. They will continue to develop skill and knowledge over decades of service. After serving for ten or more years, the skill and expertise that a



**Jessica Dyck, Ascend intern**

career missionary offers is extremely valuable to the Church in Canada and abroad. They can provide insights, wisdom and advice for the benefit of the Church. We are blessed to have so many career missionaries serving under EMC Missions.

*Tim Dyck*  
General Secretary

### **ASCEND INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

It's been estimated that 99 percent of all the people who feel God wants them to be missionaries never become missionaries. To put it another way: 1 percent of the people who feel God desires for them to serve Him as missionaries actually do it.

Fear may be the main reason for not going. Fear of the unknown, of the transition, of the upheaval, of rejection, of child rearing, of raising funds, of separation from loved ones, and of so much more. (For more information: <http://usa.ntm.org/mission-news/80971/a-recipe-for-answered-prayer>.)

So what's so great about that number? A change of just one percentage point would double the number of missionaries going out. How can we see people overcome their fears and walk in obedience to the general call of God in Scripture

and the specific call God has placed on their lives?

While long-term career workers have always been and will likely always be the most effective model for accomplishing the Great Commission, EMC understands that not everyone is ready for that type of commitment. Therefore, we offer an opportunity for people to experience life on the mission field for a shorter but focused time.

The Ascend Internship Program is designed *to give those who sense the call of God to serve in full-time missions a comprehensive understanding of EMC missions work, to prepare for future service, to work alongside career missionaries, and to give them a context in which to develop their gifts in outreach, leadership, intercession and discipleship.*

From January to April of this year Jessica Dyck (Riverton Gospel Chapel) spent time in Asia assisting our EMC workers with their efforts. During the months of March to May Amanda Froese (Mt. Salem EMC) is working alongside our EMC workers in Bolivia discovering what missionary life is all about. And this fall we anticipate sending another intern to Guadalajara, Mexico, to discover a new culture and a church-planting model that is seeing some beautiful results.

Whether it is a shorter three- to six-month venture to the metropolis of Guadalajara, Mexico, or a six- to nine-month endeavour to the rural church plant in Minga Guazú, Paraguay, our prayer is that the opportunity to serve and grow in this way may lead to a lifetime of fulfilling ministry.

*Gerald Reimer*  
Missions Mobilizer



TRU, EMC's national youth leaders' retreat, provides opportunities for teaching, refreshment, and unity.

## BOARD OF CHURCH MINISTRIES

Did you know that in 2014 the cost of providing *The Messenger* was \$128,978? Of this, the Canadian government's Aid to Publishers grant, through the Department of Canadian Heritage, provided \$45,501. This is significant and we are publicly grateful for it. At the same time, EMC members and adherents gave far more. Thank you for sharing our faith in Christ, connections, education, and history in this way.

Though it's sometimes said that conference council agrees to "purchase" subscriptions or that they are "free" for members and adherents, this is inexact language. The reality is more complicated. It's outlined as follows.

### PROCEDURE FOR *THE MESSENGER* SUBSCRIPTIONS OF EMC MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS

Every church member or adherent who belongs to the Evangelical Mennonite Conference is eligible to receive a subscription to *The Messenger*. The magazine is available to the public and is optional to members and adherents. Here is how we conduct our subscription procedure:

1. The EMC is a bottom-up, not top-down, organization. Each year at the EMC's November Conference Council meeting (one of twice-yearly general meetings) local delegates of EMC churches, representing

their church members, **vote** to purchase subscriptions for EMC members and adherents (limited to one per household) for the coming year.

2. Member churches from across Canada voluntarily give a percentage of their receiptable annual revenue (which comes from the donations of its individual members and adherents) to EMC. They do this knowing that the EMC publishes the magazine on their behalf. Members and adherents thereby **pay for their magazine subscriptions through their local church giving**. The vote at conference council, by

## **BOARD OF CHURCH MINISTRIES STAFF**

Terry M. Smith, Executive  
Secretary/Editor  
Gerald D. Reimer, Conference Youth  
Minister  
Andrew Walker, Administrative  
Assistant/Assistant Editor

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

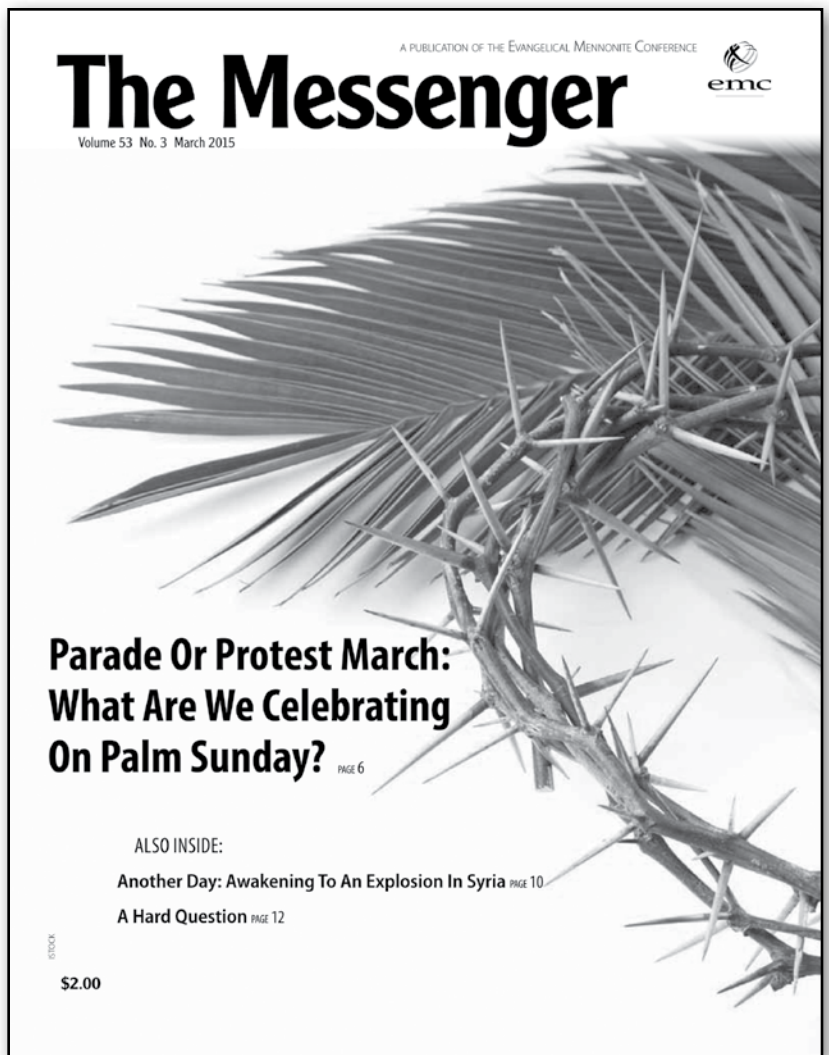
Russell Doerksen, *Fort Garry* (2017)  
Cyndy Warkentin, *Saturday Night*  
(2017)  
Jessica Wichers, *Anola* (2017)  
Kevin Wiebe, *New Life* (2017)  
Henry Friesen, *The ConneXion*  
(2016)  
Wes Kroeker, *EFC Steinbach* (2016)  
Brigitte Toews, *Heartland* (2015)

## **NOMINATIONS**

One to be elected for a three-year  
term

**Kimberly Muehling**, 433 Parr  
St, Winnipeg, MB R2W 5B6 (Fort  
Garry)

Kimberly has a B.A. (History/  
English) from the University of  
Manitoba and has completed one  
year in the Faculty of Education.  
She also studied at the Torchbearers  
International School (Capernwray)  
in Holsby, Sweden. Kimberly has  
worked at camp, taught Sunday  
school, plays the piano and,  
together with her husband Josh,  
has led a praise band for many  
years. She often serves as a worship  
leader. She has been the group  
leader for grades 1-6 in the Sunday  
school program and continues to  
write curriculum for the pre-school  
children. Kimberly has just stepped  
into the role of Sunday School  
Committee chair. Her passion for  
Christian education is evident in the  
energy, thought and hard work she  
puts into education.



**The Messenger magazine is published by the EMC and sent by request to members and adherents of EMC churches.**

- the churches and members represented by delegates, is a **regular re-affirmation of this.**
- Names and addresses of eligible members and adherents are **updated annually** by local churches to insure that our subscription list is valid and accurate. We rely on the local church to assign an agent (pastor, church secretary, church reporter, or other) to see that this task is completed. An accurate list ensures good stewardship of funds and that the magazine goes only to those who want (request) it. Monthly updates are also made based on contact from a reader or local church agent.
- The magazine is not purchased by a third party and sent to unnamed householders, nor does it go to churches where it is placed in all persons' mailboxes irrespectively of what they desire. The magazine is sent **by request** to named individuals.
- If members and adherents do not wish to receive the magazine,



their names are removed from the mailing list. Their **full donation** goes elsewhere, not to produce the magazine.

The EMC Board of Church Ministries sets the amount of a subscription. In 2014 the average cost was \$24 (print), \$15 (digital). The average total paid circulation (print and digital combined) in 2014 was 3,289.

By the time this report is read, the **2015 annual circulation update** might have been sent to your congregation. It is required of each church to identify who will act as an “agent” for circulation matters within your congregation. It is up to each church to decide who qualifies as a

member or an adherent; and it is up to each church to make known that people can receive, or not receive, *The Messenger* as they desire.

We trust that this update is helpful. If there are questions, please contact us. Since 1963 *The Messenger* has sought to inform, instruct, and inspire. This is done only with the support of EMC churches.

*Terry M. Smith*  
Executive Secretary/Editor

### NATIONAL YOUTH MINISTRY – BUILDING BRIDGES

How do we keep teens, young adults, and university students in touch with Christ and his Church?

Teens: On May 15–18, 2015, Gord Penner from SBC will unpack the theme PURSUIT, talking about The Runners, The Route, The Race, and The Reward at Abundant Springs 2015.

**Gord Penner (left) will speak at Abundant Springs in 2015.**

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF CHURCH MINISTRIES

- ▷ Provide resources and services to help congregations with Christian education, family-life teaching, music ministries and youth work
- ▷ Minister to post-high school students and make arrangements for Conference youth events
- ▷ Produce Conference publications and periodicals
- ▷ Promote the writing and publication of Christian literature
- ▷ Administer the Conference Archives

Young Adults: On March 13–15, 2015, the second annual Young Adults’ Retreat was held. Young adults are partners in the larger work of the church. We support the Retreat financially, though it does not officially fall under our administration.

Youth Leaders: TRU, our national youth leaders’ retreat, took place on Oct. 17–19, 2014. We were blessed by the teaching, refreshment and fellowship that happened.

University Students: Mark von Kampen is our part-time chaplain on the University of Manitoba campus, where more EMCers study than anywhere else.

These are ways we seek to build bridges!

*Gerald D. Reimer*  
Conference Youth Minister/  
Missions Mobilizer



# NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The duties and responsibilities have not changed for this committee for a number of years. Its primary responsibility is to locate nominees for the vacancies on the various boards and committees serving the conference. It does so attempting to achieve regional representation on each board. Each year 70 to 80 contacts are made to “invite” people to serve the conference. In addition, attention is given to respective skills and experience.

As each nominee confirms their interest and availability a reference letter is requested from the “home” church along with a modest bio from the individual. In some cases the respective board is asked to forward a “specifics” list advising what expertise is required. (i.e., Board of Trustees needing a qualified accountant). In all cases each board is responsible to convene and organize as required.

The Nominating Committee manages and adjudicates the annual elections at the July council meeting. It prepares reports to the conference (also to the General Board and the Conference Council) on its progress and “trending” developments.

It continues to report “findings” for General Board consideration as follows:

- There is a continued discomfort regarding theological differences among churches and a measurable expectation to see those differences resolved.
- The function and purpose of the “delegate” is not clearly understood or recognized by a number of churches
- There is an improved level of communication between the Nominating Committee members and the local churches
- The median age of board

members is progressively getting higher

Recommendations:

1. The Council and General Board commission a national promotional tour in order to
  - Participate in the Statement of Faith discussion
  - Promote and educate the democratic function of the council
  - Promote the value of “Conference”
2. The Conference Council and General Board encourage the development of an “apprentice academy” (the next generation) to mitigate the advancing median age.
  - Each board recruit non-voting “junior” members.

*Sid Reimer  
Nominating Committee Chair*

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Waldon Plett, *Riverton* (2017)  
Peter Enns, *Wymark EMC* (2016)  
Pete Goertzen, *New Life* (2016)  
Alvin B. Plett, *Heartland* (2016)  
Hilda Koop, *Heartland* (2015)  
Sid Reimer, *Fort Garry* (2015)  
Alvin Rempel, *Rosenort Fellowship* (2015)  
Arnold Thiessen, *Braeside* (2015)

## NOMINATIONS

Seven to be elected for a three-year term

**Sid Reimer**, Lot 46 Perrault Rd, Winnipeg, MB R3V 1L5 (Fort Garry)

Sid Reimer is completing his first term on the nominating committee. He currently serves on the Board of

Missions and has a long history of serving in our conference and knows many people through the work of his company, Lakeview Insurance. His outgoing, enthusiastic personality makes him many friends. He served as chair at the EMC Convention in Winnipeg and has helped many EMC churches with child safety policies.

**Hilda Koop**, Box 44, Landmark, MB R0A 0X0 (Heartland)

Hilda has completed her first term on the Nominating Committee. She is part of the Heartland Community Church. Hilda is a willing volunteer and a capable organizer with a wide circle of friends. She has served on church business boards and currently coordinates a women’s group singing in nursing homes.

**John Bueckert**, 9309 – 62 Ave, Grande Prairie, AB T8W 2E7 (Westpointe)

John currently serves as elder and moderator at Westpointe Community Church and is well experienced in those roles. He is active leading within the community. He serves well with others and has a heart for the body of Christ, locally and globally. John served on the EMC Board of Missions from 2006–2012.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- ▷ Select enough candidates for all elected offices of the Conference, other than the Nominating Committee
- ▷ Conduct annual elections

# CONFERENCE-RELATED INSTITUTIONS



**CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY**

[www.cmu.ca](http://www.cmu.ca)

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) is an Anabaptist Christian University located in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



**EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA**

[www.evangelicalfellowship.ca](http://www.evangelicalfellowship.ca)

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is the national association of evangelical Christians, gathered together for influence, impact and identity in ministry and public witness. The EMC has been an affiliate member of the EFC since 1988.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY**

[www.cmu.ca/programs/gradprograms.html](http://www.cmu.ca/programs/gradprograms.html)

The Graduate School of Theology and Ministry seeks to inspire and equip women and men for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society. The programs of the Graduate School prepare for ministry and leadership in the church and church-related organizations, further graduate studies and a teaching career, and growth and service in the world.



**Mennonite Central Committee**

**MCC CANADA**

[www.canada.mcc.org](http://www.canada.mcc.org)

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. MCC envisions communities worldwide in right relationship with God, one another and creation. MCC's priorities in carrying out its purpose are disaster relief, sustainable community development and justice and peace-building. The EMC has opportunity to send two delegates to the annual delegate assembly of MCC Canada.



**MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE**

[www.mds.mennonite.net](http://www.mds.mennonite.net)

Mennonite Disaster Service is a volunteer network of Anabaptist churches that responds in Christian love to those affected by disasters in Canada and the United States.



**MENNONITE FOUNDATION OF CANADA**

**MENNONITE FOUNDATION OF CANADA**

[www.mennofoundation.ca](http://www.mennofoundation.ca)

Rooted and founded in a tradition of caring for each other and caring for our communities, the Mennonite Foundation of Canada is a public charitable foundation for people of faith, making giving joyful and easy since 1974.



**MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA**

[www.mhsc.ca](http://www.mhsc.ca)

The EMC is linked to the MHSC because the histories of the Mennonite-Anabaptist churches are connected in this country. There is, as well, a common need to help new generations understand the Anabaptist story as it is lived out today.

MHSC was established in 1968. It includes six provincial Mennonite historical societies, four Mennonite denominational bodies (including the EMC), MCC Canada, and the Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.



## MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

www.mwc-cmm.org

The EMC has been a member of the Mennonite World Conference for many decades. In addition to the assemblies, which are held every six years, being part of this global fellowship of Anabaptist churches enables the EMC to relate with other churches in many countries.



walking with God  
caminemos con Dios  
en marche avec Dieu

**Pennsylvania**  
**2015**

<b>21-26</b> July	<b>Assembly Gathered</b> Harrisburg
<b>21-26</b> July	<b>Global Youth Summit</b> Mechanicsburg



## Steinbach Bible College

### STEINBACH BIBLE COLLEGE

www.sbcollege.ca

Since 1936, SBC has been providing students with a unique opportunity to discover and develop their potential for ministry in the church and society. Courses are taught from an Evangelical Anabaptist perspective.

## CURRENT EMC REPRESENTATIVES AND BOARD MEMBERS NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

### CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Larry Eidse, *Rosenort EMC* (2016)

### EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA

Tim Dyck, General Secretary  
Abe Bergen, Moderator

### GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

Ward Parkinson, Conference Pastor  
David Thiessen, *Fort Garry*

### MCC CANADA

Ron Penner, *Aberdeen* (2015)  
Ray Plett, *Heartland* (2015)

### MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE

Matthew Kroeker, *Fort Garry* (2017)  
Murray Barkman, *Aberdeen* (2016)  
Denis Keating, *Heartland* (2015)

### MENNONITE FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Abe Bergen, *Kleefeld* (2017)  
Allister Penner, *Fort Garry*

### MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Glen Klassen, *Fort Garry* (2015)

### MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

Ron Penner, *Aberdeen* (2015)

### STEINBACH BIBLE COLLEGE

Michael Zwaagstra, *EFC Steinbach* (2017)

Richard Klassen, *Kola* (2017)  
Robert Goertzen, *Steinbach EMC* (2016)

Henry Friesen, *The ConneXion* (2016)  
Trevor Arsenault, *EFC Steinbach* (2015)

## CURRENT EMC REPRESENTATIVES AND BOARD MEMBERS PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

### EDEN HEALTH CARE SERVICES (MANITOBA)

Alvin Rempel, *Rosenort Fellowship* (2016)  
Carolyn Plett, *Blumenort* (2016)

### INTER-MENNONITE CHAPLAINCY ASSOCIATION

Tracey Hodges, *MacGregor* (2015)  
Stephanie Klassen, *St Vital* (2015)

### MCC ALBERTA

Ron Wiebe, *Westpointe* (2017)  
Nancy Friesen, *Picture Butte* (2016)

### MCC BRITISH COLUMBIA

(no representative currently)

### MCC MANITOBA

Murray Barkman, *Aberdeen* (2017)  
Peter Plett, *Ridgewood* (2016)

### MCC ONTARIO

Jacob Enns, *Leamington* (2017)

### MCC SASKATCHEWAN

(no representative currently)

### STEINBACH CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

Brad Brandt, *Blumenort* (2017)  
Burton Loewen, *Steinbach EMC* (2016)  
David Driedger, *Blumenort* (2015)

## 2015 APPOINTMENTS

### **EDEN HEALTH CARE SERVICES (MANITOBA)**

One to be appointed

### **INTER-MENNONITE CHAPLAINCY ASSOCIATION**

Three to be appointed

**Stephanie Klassen**, 96 Rampart Bay, Winnipeg, MB R3T 0N3 (St. Vital EMC)

Stephanie has served two terms with IMCA and is eligible for a third term. She is a stay-at-home mom with her twins, a boy and girl. While in university she participated regularly with the chaplaincy program.

### **MCC CANADA**

Two to be appointed

**Ray Plett**, Box 6, Grp 7, Landmark, MB R0A 0X0 (Heartland)

Ray served with MCC in India for three years and currently serves on the local Canadian Food Grains Bank board. He has been a Power Mech teacher and currently farms. He is sincerely concerned for less fortunate people and is appreciated by those who work with him.

**Ron Penner**, 48 Newcombe Cres, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3T6 (Aberdeen)

Ron currently serves as the MCC Canada Moderator and has completed his first term as an EMC representative. Ron has served in a variety of positions with the EMC and with the Mennonite World Conference. Ron and his wife Ruth have served together in pastoral ministry and in mission projects.

### **MCC BC**

One to be appointed

### **MCC MANITOBA**

Three to be appointed

**Ed Barkman**, 79 St Hilaire Pl, Winnipeg, MB R2J 4B5 (Fort Garry)

Ed Barkman has worked with MCC for a number of years and is familiar with their operations. He attends Fort Garry EMC and serves as an MCC delegate on their behalf.

### **MCC SASKATCHEWAN**

Two to be appointed

### **MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE**

One to be appointed

**Denis Keating**, Box 6, Grp 7, Landmark, MB R0A 0X0 (Heartland)

Denis is active in the Heartland Local Outreach and Global Missions Group and as a current EMC representative on the MDS Manitoba board. He has been on a number of trips to Africa to help with building, plumbing, and mechanic projects and to the southern states on MDS trips. Denis is very passionate about MDS and gets the job done.

### **STEINBACH BIBLE COLLEGE**

One to be appointed

**Trevor Arsenault**, 160 Friesen Ave, Steinbach, MB R5G 0T5 (EFC Steinbach)

Trevor has completed his first term on the SBC board. He is a graduate of SBC and William and Catherine Booth College. Currently Trevor works as a Social Worker for Child and Family Services in Steinbach. He is married to Jody and has two children.

**Nathan Plett**, Box 115 Landmark, MB R0A 0X0 (Prairie Rose)

Nathan has been an effective youth pastor since 1998, a ministry

that has included working with young adults. He serves on his church ministerial and has been involved in planning Abundant Springs and the Young Adult Retreat. He studied at Columbia Bible School in BC, and at Providence. Nathan is a discerning thinker, who is able to articulate his thoughts clearly and is not afraid to speak his mind. He is able to see the big picture, a good brain-stormer, and problem-solver. He is a capable leader, able to handle a considerable number of activities and amount of responsibilities. He believes that the word of God is our foundation for life and practice and has a burden to see young people educated in schools with that foundation.

### **STEINBACH CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL**

One to be appointed

**David Driedger**, Box 6, Grp 20, RR 1, Steinbach, MB R5G 1L9 (Blumenort)

David is currently completing his second three-year term on the SCHS Cabinet. He is a valued member of the cabinet and has served as Cabinet Chair for the several years. David has worked in non-profit organizations for 35 years and has served in many Board and Committee capacities in health, education, and church related organizations. David serves on the Blumenort EMC Leadership Team, as an instructor for an Adult Sunday class, and as part of Leadership group that runs Saturday Night Prayer meeting. He has just finished serving as a board member with PartnersANew and is an adjunct faculty member with Steinbach Bible College.

# EMC CONVENTION 2015

## FEATURES AND PROGRAM

### CONVENTION SCHEDULE

#### FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2014

7:30 a.m. Light Breakfast  
 9 a.m. Ministerial Meeting  
 Noon Lunch  
 5 p.m. Supper  
 7 p.m. **Inspirational Session 1**  
*Believers in Persecution*  
*Look at the Christmas Story*  
 8:45 p.m. Snack

#### SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2014

7:30 a.m. Light Breakfast  
 8:50 a.m. Brandon Walking Tour  
 9 a.m. Conference Council Meeting  
 Noon Lunch  
 1 p.m. Youth Event  
 1 p.m. Souris Bridge Tour  
 2:30 p.m. Tours and Workshops  
 5 p.m. Supper  
 7 p.m. **Inspirational Session 2**  
*Three Non-Negotiables in a Biblical Theology of Persecution*  
 8:45 p.m. Snack

#### SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2014

8:30 a.m. Light Breakfast  
 10 a.m. **Inspirational Session 3**  
*Faith in the Desert*  
 Noon Lunch  
 2 p.m. **Inspirational Session 4**  
*Victorious Living in Persecution*

### SPEAKER

Nik and Ruth Ripken are mission veterans of 30 years, having served in Malawi, South Africa, Kenya, Somalia, Germany, Ethiopia and the Middle East.

They have interviewed about 600 believers in 72 countries who live in environments of persecution. These believers have courageously shared with the Ripkens how to thrive in persecution, rather than just survive. Sitting at the feet and learning from believers in persecution has resulted in the writing and publishing of many articles and books related to faith in persecution, including *The Insanity of God* and *The Insanity of Obedience*.

Nik and Ruth are the parents of three sons, one of whom is deceased.

### INSPIRATIONAL SESSIONS

*Believers in Persecution Look at the Christmas Story* | Friday, 7:00 p.m.  
 Believers in persecution look at the Christmas story through very different lenses. We shall reproduce the story, write ourselves into its narrative, and then draw real life and biblical lessons from the text.

*Three Non-Negotiables in a Biblical Theology of Persecution* | Saturday, 7:00 p.m.

Do we know when to leave Joseph in Pharaoh's prison for the sake of the peoples of Egypt and the Jews? Let us look at what it is going to take for the Gospel to move forward.

*Faith in the Desert* | Sunday, 10:00 a.m.  
 Walk with Nik through the desert of Ethiopia and the streets of Mogadishu as God demonstrates

again and again His willingness to leave the 99 in the open country in order to find His one lost sheep.

*Victorious Living in Persecution* | Sunday, 2:00 p.m.

Believers in persecution invite you to experience real faith that can both sustain us and grow us—no matter what type of political environment we live in.

### MINISTERIAL MEETING

**Friday, July 3, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
 (sign in at 8:30 a.m.)

Ebenezer Christian Church, 1145 Lorne Ave E, Brandon | For pastors, ministers, deacons, elders, and missionaries and spouses.

### CONFERENCE COUNCIL MEETING

**Saturday, July 4, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**  
 (sign in at 8:30 a.m.)

Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium, BU Campus | Everyone welcome—only voting is restricted to delegates.

A detailed agenda is not yet available because Conference Council gatherings are being reviewed in response to your feedback.

We will attend to regular Conference business but plan to focus more tightly on substantive issues in the oral reports with generous opportunity for interaction from delegates.

We will also discuss Strategic Planning implementation.

Council ends at three and afternoon break will be provided. After the break we are planning a time of interaction with our keynote speaker Nik Ripken.

### **YOUTH EVENT**

**Saturday, July 4, 1:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

Meet at Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium entrance. The day will include a lazy float on tubes or canoes down the Little Saskatchewan River. Supper is included; youth will be returned in time for evening session. Wear weather appropriate clothing which can get wet. A release form will be required.

### **NON-DELEGATE EVENT: BRANDON WALKING TOUR**

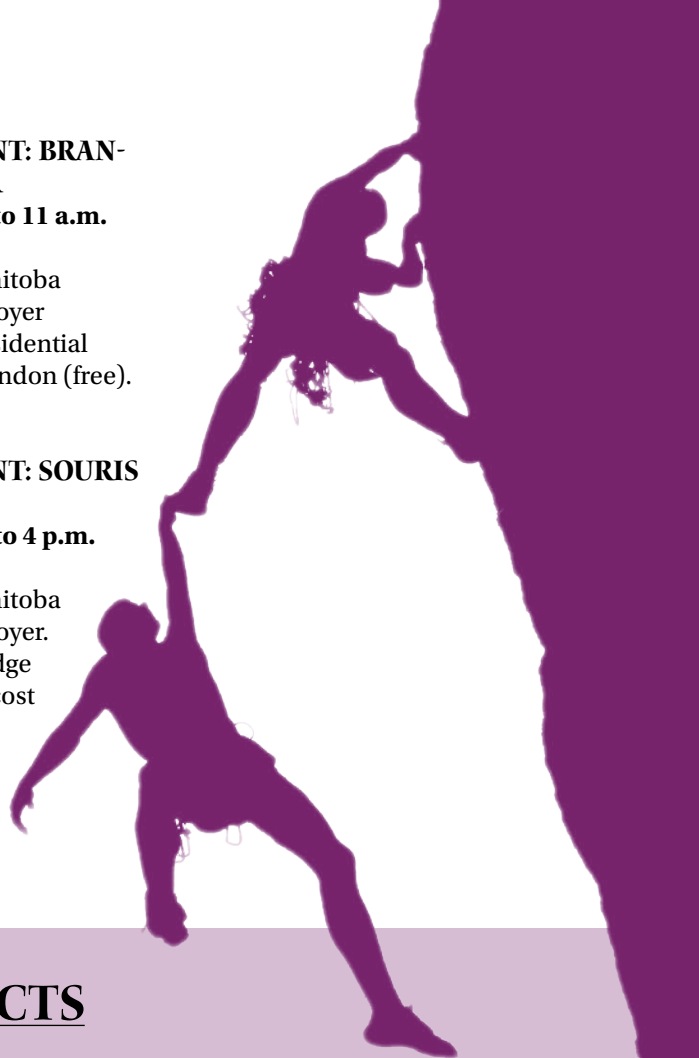
**Saturday, July 4, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

Meet in the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium foyer at 8:50 a.m. Historical residential walking tour of older Brandon (free).

### **NON-DELEGATE EVENT: SOURIS BRIDGE TOUR**

**Saturday, July 4, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.**

Meet in the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium foyer. Tour to the Swinging Bridge and Park at Souris. (\$10 cost for optional visit to three museums, a tea house, and a chance to dig at the Souris Agate Pit.)



## **CONVENTION OFFERING PROJECTS**

Friday evening an offering will be received for Steinbach Bible College. Our EMC-affiliated college is involved in training Christians to serve effectively in our world, including in the pastorate and missions.

Saturday evening the offering will help to defray the costs of Convention for food, honorariums, childcare and other costs.

Sunday morning and afternoon the offerings will be designated to missions. The goal is to raise \$20,000 for these projects.

### **BRING NATIONAL CHURCH LEADERS TO MWC: \$5,000**

This project will provide funding to bring church leaders from Nicaragua, Mexico and Paraguay to attend Mennonite World Conference in Pennsylvania this summer. EMC

Missions is also arranging for several gatherings of EMC personnel during the MWC week.

### **NICARAGUA – CINAG FACILITY UPGRADES: \$5,000**

CINAG has now been approved by the government to receive several children at their facility. However, the facility is in need of some upgrades to the key buildings. These funds would go towards bringing the facility back up to standards for providing care to the children.

### **NIGERIA – SUPPORT PERSECUTED CHURCH: \$5,000**

The Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN) has experienced incredible persecution. Many members have been kidnapped, killed or displaced, and their homes and churches have been burned or abandoned. There is a need to provide emergency relief,

rebuilding and emotional support to the EYN church.

### **CANADA – PORTAGE OUTREACH: \$5,000**

There is a significant population of recent immigrants in Portage, Man. The Portage Evangelical Church is reaching out with English language classes, cooking classes, and hosting occasional meals for about fifty people. They also provide an honorarium and travel costs for a pastoral couple from Winnipeg to minister in the Malayalam language.

*All EM Conference projects are approved by its governing boards. In the event that a project is fully funded or cannot be carried out for any reason, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference boards may apply designated donations to another approved project.*



# the **insanity** of obedience

Identifying with the  
Persecuted Church

with Nik Ripkin



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65<sup>th</sup> Annual  
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