

Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches

General Operating Bylaw

Approved at ~~Gathering 2016~~Convention 2020

Preamble

Whereas the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches is incorporated by an Act of the Senate of Canada, assented to as Bill G6 on November 22, 1945 for the following objects:

- (1) to promote, maintain, superintend and carry on, in any and all parts of Canada, in accordance with the doctrinal laws, constitution, acts and rulings of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches of any or all of the work of that body;
- (2) to organize, maintain and carry on, in any and all parts of Canada, charities and missions, and to erect, maintain and conduct therein churches, schools, camps, colleges, orphanages, hospitals, and homes for the aged;
- (3) to advance in other lawful ways education, religion, charity and benevolence;
- (4) to administer in Canada the property, business and other temporal affairs of the Corporation and
- (5) to organize and carry on, in any and all parts of Canada, in furtherance of the lawful objects of the Conference, and not otherwise, the business of printing and publishing;

And, whereas it is considered expedient to enact a general operating bylaw relating generally to the conduct and the affairs of the Conference, be it therefore enacted as a bylaw of the Conference as follows:

Article 1 Interpretations

- 1.1 In this bylaw and all other bylaws and resolutions of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches unless the context otherwise requires it, the singular includes the plural; and the masculine gender includes the feminine;
- 1.2 Terms defined in the Charter have the same meanings in this bylaw;
- 1.3 “Board of Faith and Life” means the board pursuant to Article 11 of this bylaw established by the Conference to oversee the doctrinal and spiritual aspects of the Conference;
- 1.4 “Charter” means the Act of the Senate of Canada, assented to as Bill G6 on November 22, 1945 and any subsequent amendments or acts enacted in substitution therefor, from time to time;
- 1.5 “Committee” means any committee established by the Conference or the Executive Board pursuant to Article 10;
- 1.6 “Conference” means the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches;

1.7 “Confession of Faith” means the document annexed hereto as Appendix A, as same may be amended from time to time in accordance with Article 15;

1.8 “Convention” means a duly called meeting at which Member Churches are represented by authorized delegates;

1.9 “Delegate” means an authorized representative of a Member Church who is a Voting Member of the Conference;

1.10 “Executive Board” means the board of directors of the Conference;

1.11 “Executive Officer” means any person who holds one of the offices enumerated in Article 7;

1.12 “Member Church” means a local Christian congregation in Canada which is in agreement with the Confession of Faith and has been duly received into membership by a provincial conference or, upon recommendation of the Executive Board, by the Conference.

1.13 “Designate”, as related to a provincial representative attending a board meeting, is appointed by the provincial board for a specified term of service to replace the Moderator (or equivalent) at board meetings.

1.14 “Alternate”, as related to a provincial representative attending a board meeting, is an observer sent from that province for a meeting when the Moderator or designate is not available.

Article 2 Confession of Faith

The Confession of Faith shall be the statement guiding the faith and practice of the Conference.

Article 3 The Conference in Perspective

Section 1 Nationally

The Conference is and shall at all times remain a Canadian charitable organization within the meaning thereof in the Income Tax Act (Canada). Its Member Churches are local congregations which, as a condition of membership in the Conference, shall also be and remain Canadian charitable organizations.

Section 2 Provincially

A listing of provincial conferences is attached as Appendix B.

Section 3 Internationally

Internationally the Conference relates to and cooperates with similar (parallel) national bodies of Mennonite Brethren churches in other countries which are part of ICOMB to foster fellowship and to engage in joint ministries in the pursuit of its objects.

Article 4 The Canadian Conference in Relation to its Member Churches

Section 1 Admission as a Member Church

Where provincial conferences exist (Appendix B), churches are admitted to the national conference membership by action of their respective provincial conference. Any church that is accepted as a member in a provincial conference becomes at the same time a member in the Conference. Any Member Church established in a location outside of a provincial conference can become a member of the Conference upon the recommendation of the Executive Board.

Section 2 Process for Cessation of Membership

Any Member Church may by its own choice, or for cause, by action of its respective provincial Conference in consultation with the Executive Board, cease to be a member of the Conference provincially and therefore also nationally. Any church established in a location outside of a provincial conference is subject to the Conference and the Executive Board in the cessation process.

Section 3 Local Congregations

The Member Churches are local congregations consisting of baptized, Christian believers who are joined in a community of faith for mutual edification, outreach, and who subscribe to the Confession of Faith.

Section 4 Member Church Participation

Whereas each Member Church is free to manage its local affairs, Member Churches relate to each other and cooperate with one another by joining and supporting their respective provincial conference and the Conference for mutual encouragement and increased effectiveness in service and witness in Canada and globally.

Section 5 Assistance when Needed

When a Member Church is unable to resolve an issue which is harmful to its life and witness, the Conference has the right and the duty to offer its assistance in resolving the difficulty, upon request from or in consultation with the respective provincial conference.

Section 6 Suspension of a Member Church

The Conference may withdraw the privilege of membership from any Member Church which ceases to be substantially in harmony with the Confession of Faith.

Section 7 Membership in the Member Church

The regulation of membership of individuals in Member Churches is the responsibility of the Member Church. Guidelines shall be maintained by the Conference to assist Member Churches and to promote consistency of practice.

Section 8 No Proprietary Rights

Membership in a Member Church creates no proprietary rights in any of the tangible assets thereof. Termination of membership, for whatever reason, requires no accounting by the Member Church to the departing member with respect to such assets.

Article 5 The Authority and Accountability Structures within the Conference

Section 1 The Conference as Part of the Body of Christ

The Conference is the national entity of a community of Christian believers known as the Mennonite Brethren denomination in Canada. In partnership with fellow believers in other communities, the Conference is organized and works under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to take the gospel into all the world starting in our neighbourhoods, and beyond that, to our respective provinces, to our nation and to the ends of the earth.

Section 2 The Source of Legal Authority

The Conference receives its legal authority to exist and to operate from section 4 of its Charter, which empowers the membership of the Conference to establish the Executive Board to govern and direct the affairs of the Conference. The Executive Board receives its authority to govern from, and is accountable to, the Conference.

Section 3 The Will of the Conference

The will of the Conference shall be expressed by resolutions adopted at its Conventions. The Executive Board shall govern and direct the affairs of the Conference between Conventions in accordance with the will of the Conference.

Section 4 Plebiscites and Referenda

The Conference in Convention is empowered to decide all matters corporately affecting the Member Churches. Plebiscites and referenda may be used only if authorized by a two-thirds majority vote at a Convention.

Article 6 Conventions of the Conference

Section 1 Authority to Convene a Convention

As stated in Section 4 of its Charter, the Conference shall hold annual Conventions for inspiration, reporting, direction-setting and decision-making, at such time and place as may be decided by the Executive Board.

Section 2 Special Conventions

Subject to notice as hereafter provided, the Conference may call a special Convention at any time by decision of the Executive Board.

Section 3 Date, Location and Agenda of Conventions

The Executive Board shall give at least six (6) weeks notice of any annual or special Convention. Such notice shall stipulate the date, location and agenda with associated documents of such Convention. Notice shall be deemed to have been sufficiently given if sent by electronic means or ordinary mail to the Member Churches, or if given by announcement in the Conference periodical publications distributed to the members of Member Churches.

Section 4 Church Representation at Convention

Each Member Church shall be entitled to be represented at any Convention by delegates. Each delegate must be 18 years of age or older, must be a member in good standing, and shall be approved as a delegate by the church membership or governing board of the church. The maximum number of

delegates is one (1) pastoral delegate per church and one (1) other delegate for every twenty-five (25) members or fraction thereof of that Member Church. Executive Board members have a vote at Convention by virtue of their position as Executive Board members.

Section 5 Voting

Each delegate to a Convention shall have one vote, which must be cast by the registered delegate, either in person or according to the Digital Voting Policy for Conventions of the Conference. Proxy voting shall not be permitted.

Section 6 Quorum at Convention

A quorum for any Convention shall consist of not less than one hundred (100) delegates registered at commencement thereof, in the absence of which no binding decisions can be made. Thereafter the delegates present in person and present digitally shall be deemed to constitute a quorum. The quorum shall be reduced to thirty (30) if the agenda is limited to the appointment of an auditor, approval of annual budget, and the receiving and approving of the financial statements.

Section 7 Role of Delegates

The role of the delegates at a Convention, in addition to those which are delineated by the Charter or by virtue of law, shall be as follows:

- (1) To elect those members of the Executive Board, the Board of Faith and Life and the Nominating Committee prescribed by the governing documents; and to elect the moderator, assistant moderator and secretary.
- (2) To receive reports from the Executive Board, the Board of Faith and Life, the Nominating Committee and the external Auditor.
- (3) To hold the reporting boards/committee(s) accountable for their actions;
- (4) To provide policy direction; and
- (5) To approve amendments to the governing documents.

Article 7 The Executive Board

Section 1 The Composition and Election

As stated in Section 4 of the charter, the Executive Board consists of not less than eleven and not more than fifteen members.

The Executive Board shall be composed of the following voting members:

- (1) the moderator of the Conference, who shall chair Conventions of the Conference and meetings of the Executive Board, except if and when prevented or excused, and shall act as formal representative of the Conference;
- (2) the assistant moderator of the Conference, who shall assist the Moderator and act in the capacity of Moderator in the absence of the incumbent;
- (3) the secretary of the Conference, who shall oversee and be responsible for the recording of minutes of Conventions and of meetings of the Executive Board, and shall carry out such other duties customarily the responsibility of secretaries of corporate bodies;

(4) the moderators (or their equivalents) or a designate from each province, region or area listed in Appendix B hereto attached; alternates will not have voting rights

(5) additional members-at-large as required elected at an annual Convention.

In addition, the Executive Board includes the following non-voting members:

(1) the Executive Director;

(2) two members of the Board of Faith and Life appointed by the said Board from its membership.

The Executive Director, as an ex-officio, non-voting board member, has the right to speak to any issue. Attendance by other executive staff members is by specific invitation.

In compliance with the Charter, all board members chosen by provincial conferences or who may be members by virtue of office shall be subject to a vote of ratification at the annual Convention. All board members must receive affirmation by at least two thirds of the delegates voting at the convention.

The officers shall be the moderator, assistant moderator, secretary and Executive Director.

Section 2 Term of Office

(1) The term of office of each elected member-at-large (see section 1.1,2,3,5) is four (4) years. Members will be eligible for a second four (4) year term. Terms of elected members shall be staggered. Vacancies occurring between Conventions shall be filled, if necessary, by appointment of the Executive Board.

(2) The term of office of moderator, assistant moderator and secretary shall be two (2) years. The moderator, assistant moderator and secretary may not serve in the same position for more than two consecutive, full terms.

(3) In special circumstances, this provision may be set aside by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegates present and voting at a delegate Convention.

(4) Vacancies occurring among elected members-at-large and office holders such as moderator, assistant moderator and secretary, shall be filled by appointment of the Executive Board for the unexpired portion of the term of office. When a provincial moderator or his designate must be replaced, the respective province shall make the appointment.

(5) Newly elected provincial representatives and members elected at large shall take office upon adjournment of the annual Convention.

(6) The term of office of any member of the Executive Board may be suspended for misconduct upon resolution of at least two-thirds of its voting members. Any such suspension shall continue until the next following annual Convention, at which further disposition of the case, including termination, may be made by the Convention.

Section 3 Responsibility

The Executive Board shall through prayerful discernment seek God's leading to provide leadership in promoting vision, strategic planning, determination of the mission, enunciation of the values, overseeing financial and operational matters, setting of goals and evaluation of results in matters relating to the extension of the kingdom of God through the Member Churches.

Section 4 Specific Duties and Functions

The Executive Board as the board of directors of the Conference shall govern and oversee the affairs and assets of the Conference as required by the Charter and by virtue of law. Without restriction, this shall include the following:

- (1) select and engage an Executive Director to implement the goals and policies of the Canadian Conference;
- (2) delegate management authority and responsibility to the Executive Director;
- (3) approve the Strategic Plan and priorities;
- (4) monitor performance and measure strategic outcomes;
- (5) oversee financial and operational matters, assume fiduciary responsibility for the conference, seek financial solvency and integrity;
- (6) represent the Conference externally;
- (7) foster inter-church relations and contacts with other church-related agencies;
- (8) consult with member churches in the process of strategic planning;
- (9) provide a forum for dialogue related to matters of congregational polity;
- (10) design governance structure and processes;
- (11) meet at least three (3) times per year;
- (12) maintain a current Governance Manual;
- (13) be accountable to the Conference at its Conventions;
- (14) engage consultants, appoint commissions and create advisory and ad hoc committees as required;
- (15) appoint a parliamentarian to serve during a Convention for the purpose of ensuring that decisions are in compliance with the Conference's governing documents and that transactions are conducted according to commonly accepted rules of parliamentary procedure;
- (16) evaluate and improve itself as the governing board; and
- (17) appoint the following committees: Finance, Audit Review, Governance and others.

Article 8 Board and Committee Polity

Section 1 Board and Committee Integrity

A board or committee can express its will only when it is in session either in one location or in a teleconference. A board or committee cannot function as such except in meetings duly called and convened, and then only after roll call and before adjournment.

Section 2 Board and Committee Solidarity

Individual members have no authority to speak for or act on behalf of the board or committee except when such authority has been officially delegated. Members must take care not to commit or to appear to commit the board or committee to any stand, in private or public statements, which the board or committee as a whole may be unwilling to take.

Section 3 Protection of Directors and Officers

Every board and committee member of the Conference and any other person, including every employee, who has undertaken or is about to undertake any liability on behalf of the Conference, and their respective heirs, executors, administrators and assigns respectively, shall at all times be indemnified and saved harmless, out of the funds of the Conference from and against:

(1) All costs, charges and expenses which such a board or committee member or other person sustains or incurs in or about any action, suit or proceeding which is brought by or prosecuted against him/her for, or in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever made, done or permitted by him/her in or about the execution of the duties of his/her office, except such costs, charges or expenses as are occasioned by his/her own wilful neglect or deliberate illegal acts; and

(2) All other costs, charges and expenses, which he sustains or incurs, in or about or in relation to the affairs thereof except such costs, charges and expenses as are occasioned by his/her own wilful neglect or deliberate illegal acts.

Article 9 Executive Director

The Executive Board shall employ an Executive Director, who shall be accountable to the Executive Board for the management of the affairs of the Conference, including the following:

(1) To develop the staff infrastructure to fulfil the values, goals and mission of the Conference;

(2) To act as the team leader of the executive staff, providing direction in line with the vision and strategic plans of the Conference;

(3) To present to the Executive Board tactical and financial plans that comply with the strategic plan;

(4) To provide pastoral counsel where needed or requested by provincial conferences;

(5) To plan public events such as gatherings, study conferences, and pastors' orientation;

(6) To represent the Conference as appropriate.

Article 10 The Additional Conference Board and Committee

The Conference shall maintain the Board of Faith and Life and Nominating Committee.

Article 11 Board of Faith and Life

Section 1 Composition

The Board shall be composed of the following members:

(1) three (3) members elected by the Conference at the Convention;

(2) one (1) member elected by each of the organizations listed in Appendix B hereto;

(3) conference ministers elected or appointed by the organizations listed in Appendix B hereto.

(4) the executive director as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Section 2 Duties and Functions

The specific duties of the Board of Faith and Life include:

- (1) To initiate the appropriate action or serve as a resource in issues of faith and life through consultation, teaching, and publishing;
- (2) To be responsible for promoting the Conference's peace witness in Member Churches and Canada;
- (3) To plan study conferences in consultation with the Executive Board;
- (4) To appoint two of its members to the Executive Board to monitor the actions taken at an Executive Board meeting for their ethical soundness and biblical correctness and to report their findings to the Convention;
- (5) To report the plans and activities of the Board to the Executive Board;
- (6) To be accountable to the Conference at its Convention;
- (7) To undertake such other duties as Conventions may from time to time assign to this Board.

Article 12 Nominating Committee

Section 1 Composition

The Committee shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) the Secretary of the Conference who shall normally act as nominating committee chair;
- (2) the moderators, or their equivalents, or others designated by each of the organizations listed in Appendix B hereto;
- (3) two (2) members elected by a Convention.
- (4) the Executive Director as ex officio member

Section 2 Duties

The Committee shall nominate persons for election by Conventions of the Conference as required from time to time. In furtherance of its function, this Committee shall assess the skills required for elective or appointed positions and shall maintain a database of the elected and appointed incumbents and their respective terms of office.

Article 13 Audit Review Committee

Section 1 Appointment and Composition

At its first meeting after each annual meeting, the Board shall appoint the Audit Review Committee, including the chairperson. This committee shall consist of not less than three (3) and not more than five (5) members, the majority of which shall be Executive Board members.

Section 2 General Role

The Audit Review Committee's role is to act on behalf of the Board and oversee qualitative aspects of financial reporting, processes for the management of financial risk, control and audit functions, and compliance with policy and significant applicable legal, ethical and regulatory requirements.

Section 3 Specific Responsibilities

Without limiting the general responsibility, the committee will do at least the following:

- (1) To recommend to the Executive Board the appointment of an independent public auditor;
- (2) To meet at least twice annually, unless otherwise directed by the Executive Board, plan and review the annual audit with the external auditor, negotiate the remuneration to be paid to the external auditor for the ensuing year, and report to the Executive Board on the audit, and any management or audit comments by the external auditor, when the audited financial statements are presented;
- (3) To assure itself and the Executive Board that the Conference's financial policies, functions, and responsibilities are in compliance with the highest standards of integrity and in accordance with applicable laws.

Article 14 The Finance Committee

Section 1 Appointment and Composition

At its first meeting after each annual meeting, the Board shall appoint the Finance Committee, including the chairperson. This committee shall consist of not less than three (3) and not more than five (5) members, the majority of which shall be Executive Board members.

Section 2 General Role

The role of the Finance Committee is to advise the Board on all financial matters, including investments, affecting the Conference and to approve on behalf of the Board those financial strategies, contracts and agreements delegated to it under board Policy.

Section 3 Specific Responsibilities

Without limiting the general responsibility the committee will also carry out the following functions:

- (1) recommend investment policies and direction to the Executive Board;
- (2) give advice as requested by staff;
- (3) monitor the financial limitations and expectations policies; and
- (4) provide the Executive Board with progress reports and results of the investment portfolio in a timely manner but in any event not less than annually.

Article 15 Amending the Confession of Faith

The Confession of Faith has been developed by the Conference in collaboration with the United States Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. (See Appendix F: Memorandum of Understanding taken from the book entitled 86th Convention of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, July 25-27, 2002, pages 88 and 89). Following a decision in 2014 by the US MB Conference, separate Confessions of Faith documents will now be maintained for Canada and the USA. (Appendix F is now modified to remove reciprocal approval.) The Conference's confession remains the July 1999 version. Amendments thereto may be made by the Canadian Conference.

Section 1

Notice of motion to amend the Confession of Faith may be given at any Convention or by publication through written or electronic means to all Member Churches.

Section 2

Sponsorship of a motion to amend the Confession of Faith may be initiated by either the Board of Faith and Life or the Executive Board.

Section 3

Notice of motion to amend the Confession must be presented to all Member Churches three months before the Convention at which it is to be voted on. The notice of motion will include all details of the amendments to the Confession of Faith.

Section 4

A two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a Convention shall be required to carry an amendment.

Article 16 Amending the General Operating Bylaw

Section 1

Notice of motion to amend the Bylaw may be given at any Convention or by publication through written or electronic means to Member Churches.

Section 2

Sponsorship of a motion to amend the Bylaw may be initiated by the Executive Board, by any Member Church or by a group of at least 50 individuals who are members in good standing of Member Churches and who have signed a document to that effect.

Section 3

Notice of motion to amend the Bylaw must be presented to all Member Churches ~~three months~~ six weeks before the Convention at which it is to be voted on. The notice of motion will disclose the movers of the motion.

Section 4

A two-thirds majority of those present and voting at a Convention shall be required to carry an amendment.

Article 17 Separately Organized Ministries

The Conference is active in several joint ministries that are operated by boards with representation from both the US Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches and the Conference. The representation by the Conference to these boards is by appointment from within the Executive Board as further specified in Article 7, Section 1. Accountability to the Conference is through communication and coordination with the Executive Board and by reports to the Conference at the annual Convention. The joint ministries are

- (1) MB Mission;
- (2) Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission.

The basic documents for each are as follow:

- (1) Memorandum of Understanding Regarding MB Mission
- (2) Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission

Article 18 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Conference shall terminate on the 31st day of December in each year or on such other date as the Executive Board may from time to time by resolution determine.

Article 19 Appointment of Auditor by Members

The annual Convention shall appoint an auditor to audit the books of the Conference. The term of office shall be until the next annual Convention. Any interim vacancy in the office of the auditor may be filled by the Executive Board. The remuneration of the auditor shall be fixed by the Convention or by the Executive Board, if authorized to do so by the Convention.

Article 20 Notice

Section 1 Method of Notice

Except where otherwise provided in this Bylaw, notice shall be validly given if given by telephone, or if in writing, by prepaid letter post, by facsimile, by email, or by other electronic method, addressed to the person for whom it is intended at the last address shown on the Conference's records.

Section 2 Omissions and Errors

The accidental omission to give notice of any meeting or the non-receipt of any such notice by anyone in a board or committee, or any error in any notice not affecting its substance does not invalidate any resolution passed or any proceedings taken at the meeting. Any Executive Board member, committee member or the Auditor may at any time waive his/her having to receive notice of any meeting and may ratify and approve any or all proceedings taken thereat.

Article 21 Dissolution

Upon dissolution of the Conference, and after the payment of all debts and liabilities, its remaining property shall be distributed to one or more charitable organizations which are registered as such within the meaning of subsection 248 (1) of the Income Tax Act and which have objects similar to those of the Conference.

Article 22 Effective Date

This Bylaw shall come into force ~~when enacted by the Conference at its Convention, July, 2016~~ on 23 April 2020 as enacted by a resolution passed by the Executive Board and as confirmed by the Conference at its Convention in June 2020.

Appendix A – Confession of Faith of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1999 Edition

INTRODUCTION

The Mennonite Brethren Church is rooted in the evangelical Anabaptist sixteenth-century Reformation, a movement that sought to recapture the faith and life of the New Testament church. The Mennonite Brethren Church was born as a renewal movement in Russia on 1860. World mission efforts and widespread migrations have produced a movement that circles the globe. The Mennonite Brethren Church emphasized the centrality of biblical authority, articulating confessions of faith in order to connect scriptural teaching with contemporary discipleship. With Menno Simons, we hold central the biblical statement, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ” (1Cor.3:11).

The 1999 North American confession is a complete revision of earlier Mennonite Brethren confessions of faith. The 1902 confession, adopted in Russia and North America, was revised in 1975. The 1999 confession was written and adopted by the North American Mennonite Brethren Church for use in the United States and Canada. The framers of the present confession gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness to the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. The present confession is the result of a decade-long process of writing, consulting Mennonite Brethren congregations and sister national conferences, revising, and final approval at the General Conference meeting in Wichita, Kansas, in July 1999. It was submitted to the International Committee of Mennonite Brethren meeting in Buhler, Kansas, in July 1999 for final acceptance.

The Bible is our written authority. As Anabaptists, we believe that authoritative interpretation of the Bible is the result of corporate reflection under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This confession is the result of such a process and not only describes how the Mennonite Brethren Church in Canada and the United States interprets the Bible for our context but is also an authoritative guide for biblical interpretation, theological identity, and ethical practice.

The reader should be alert to the following literary conventions adopted for this confession. Scripture references are listed at the conclusion of each article. These references are not meant to be exhaustive nor do they serve primarily as proof-texts for the articles. Pronouns referring to God are uniformly upper case to remind the reader that the use of the masculine pronoun is a convention of human language. God is neither male nor female; human male and female, are created in the image of God. A more complete commentary and pastoral application of this confession is available from Kindred Productions. A liturgical version of this confession, *Confessing Together*, is also commended for use in congregational worship.

Herb Koop, Moderator, General Conference of MB Churches in North America
Lynn Jost, Chair, Confession of Faith Task Force and the Board of Faith and Life
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ARTICLES

- 1. God**
- 2. Revelation of God**
- 3. Creation and Humanity**
- 4. Sin and Evil**
- 5. Salvation**
- 6. Nature of the Church**
- 7. Mission of the Church**
- 8. Christian Baptism**
- 9. Lord's Supper**
- 10. Discipleship**
- 11. Marriage, Singleness, and Family**
- 12. Society and State**
- 13. Love and Nonresistance**
- 14. Sanctity of Human Life**
- 15. Stewardship**
- 16. Work, Rest and the Lord's Day**
- 17. Christianity and Other Faiths**
- 18. Christ's Final Triumph**

1. GOD

We believe in the one, true, living God, Creator of heaven and earth. God is almighty in power, perfect in wisdom, righteous in judgment, overflowing in steadfast love. God is the Sovereign who rules over all things visible and invisible, the Shepherd who rescues the lost and helpless. God is a refuge and fortress for those in need. God is a consuming fire, perfect in holiness, yet slow to anger and abounding in tender mercy. God comforts like a loving mother, trains and disciplines like a caring father, and persists in covenant love like a faithful husband. We confess God as eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the source of all life. In him we live and move and have our being. The Father seeks those who will worship him in spirit and in truth and hears the prayers of all who call on him. In the fullness of time, the Father sent the Son for the salvation of the world. Through Jesus Christ the Father adopts all who respond in faith to the gospel, forgiving those who repent of their sin and entering into a new covenant with them. God gives the Counselor – the Holy Spirit – to all his children. God's creative and redemptive love sustains this world until the end of the age.

GOD THE SON

The Son, through whom all things were created and who holds all things together, is the image of the invisible God. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, Jesus took on human nature to redeem this fallen world. He revealed the fullness of God through his obedient and sinless life. Through word and deed Jesus proclaimed the reign of God, bringing good news to the poor, release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. Christ triumphed over sin through his death and resurrection and was exalted as Lord of creation and the church. The Saviour of the world invites all to be reconciled to God, offering peace to those far and near, and calling them to follow him in the way of the cross.

Until the Lord Jesus returns in glory, he intercedes for believers, acts as their advocate, and calls them to be his witnesses.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, the Counselor, is the creative power, presence and wisdom of God. The Spirit convicts people of sin, gives them new life, and guides them into all truth. By the Spirit believers are baptized into one body. The indwelling Spirit testifies that they are God's children, distributes gifts for ministry, empowers for witness, and produces the fruit of righteousness. As Comforter, the Holy Spirit helps God's children in their weakness, intercedes for them according to God's will and assures them of eternal life.

Genesis 1; Exodus 15:2-3; 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Psalm 8; 23; 139; Isaiah 55:8-9; 66:12-13; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hosea 11:1-4; Matthew 1:18-25; 5-7; 28:18-20; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 4:18-19; John 1:1-18; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; Romans 8:1-17; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 13; 15:3-8; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:16-21; 13:14; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 1:15-2:22; 3:14-21; Philippians 2:6-11; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Hebrews 12:7-11; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 1 John 2:2; Revelation 5:5-6, 9-10

2. REVELATION OF GOD

GOD'S SELF-REVELATION

We believe that God has made himself known to all people. God's power and nature have always been evident in creation. The Old Testament reveals God as the one who established a covenant relationship with Israel to make known to all people the eternal plan of salvation. God revealed himself supremely in Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit continues to make God known to individuals and the church; this revelation is always consistent with the Scriptures.

THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD

We believe that the entire Bible was inspired by God through the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit guides the community of faith in the interpretation of Scripture. The person, teaching and life of Jesus Christ bring continuity and clarity to both the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament bears witness to Christ, and Christ is the one whom the New Testament proclaims. We accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative guide for faith and practice.

Genesis 9:1-17; 12:1-3; Exodus 6:2-8; Psalm 19:1-11; 119; Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:27, 44-47; John 1:16-18; 16:13; Acts 8:34-35; Romans 1:18-21; Hebrews 1:1-2; Colossians 1:15-23; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21

3. CREATION AND HUMANITY

CREATION

We believe that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and they were very good. All of creation expresses God's sovereign will and design but remains distinct from the Creator. The universe

belongs to God, who takes care and delight in sustaining it. Creation declares God's wisdom and power, calling all to worship him.

HUMANITY

Humans, the crowning act of creation, were designed to live in fellowship with God and in mutually helpful relationships with each other. God created them male and female in his own image. The Creator gave them the mandate to rule and care for creation as a sacred trust and the freedom to obey or disobey him. Through the wilful disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin entered the world. As a result, human nature is distorted and people are alienated from God and creation. Creation is under the bondage of decay. Humans and all creation long to be set free.

THE NEW CREATION

Sin, guilt, or death will not prevail. God will create a new heaven and a new earth in which there will be no evil, suffering, and death. The first signs of this new creation are already present in those who accept God's forgiveness through Christ. In Christ all things are being reconciled and created anew.

Genesis 1-3; Psalm 8:6; 19:1-6; 24:1-2; 89:11; 95:5; 104; Proverbs 8:22-31; Isaiah 40:12-31; 44:24; John 1:1-4, 10; 17:5; Romans 1:19-20; 5:17, 21 6:4; 8:18-25; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 15:20-27; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:6; 5:16-19; Galatians 3:28; 6:15; Ephesians 1:4, 9-10; 2:11-22; 4:24; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:8-11; 21:1-5; 22:13

4. SIN AND EVIL

SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

We believe that the first humans yielded to the tempter, Satan, and fell into sin. Since then, all people disobey God and choose to sin, falling short of the glory of God. As a result, sin and evil have gained a hold in the world, disrupting God's purposes for the created order and alienating humans from God and therefore from creation, each other and themselves. Human sinfulness results in physical and spiritual death. Because all have sinned, all face eternal separation from God.

PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS

Sin is a power that enslaves humanity. Satan, the adversary, seeks to rule creation and uses sin to corrupt human nature with pride and selfishness. In sin people turn from God, exchanging the truth about God for a lie, worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator. Sin opens individuals and groups to the bondage of demonic principalities and powers. These powers also work through political, economic, social and even religious systems to turn people away from holiness, justice and righteousness. Whether in word, deed, thought or attitude, all humans are under the domination of sin and, on their own, are unable to overcome its power.

Genesis 3; 6:11-12; Psalm 14:1-3; 36:1-4; 52:1-7; 58:1-5; 82; Isaiah 53:6; Ezekiel 16:49-50; Amos 2:4-8; Mark 7:20-23; John 8:34, 44; Romans 1:21-32; 3:9-18, 23; 5:12-14, 18-19; 6:23; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 1:8-10; Revelation 12:9

5. SALVATION

GOD'S INITIATIVE

We believe that God is at work to accomplish deliverance, healing, redemption, and restoration in a world dominated by sin. From the beginning, God's purpose has been to create for himself a people, to dwell among them and to bless them. Creation and all of humanity are without hope of salvation except through God's love and grace. God's love is fully demonstrated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

GOD'S PLAN

Throughout history, God has acted mightily to deliver people from bondage and draw them into a covenant relationship. Through the prophets God prepared the way of salvation until finally God reconciled the world to himself by the atoning blood of Jesus. As people place their trust in Christ, they are saved by grace through faith, not of their own doing, but as a gift of God. God forgives them, delivers them from sin's bondage, makes them new creatures in Christ, empowers them by the Holy Spirit and seals them for eternal life. When sin and death are finally abolished and the redeemed are gathered in the new heaven and the new earth, God will have completed the plan of salvation.

HUMANITY'S RESPONSE

Though Jesus entered a world ruled by sin, he chose not to submit to its allure and broke its domination. Through his obedient life, his death on the cross and his glorious resurrection, Christ triumphed over Satan and the powers of sin and death, opening the way for all people to follow. Convicted by the Holy Spirit, people turn from sin, entrust their lives to God, confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and join the family of God. All who receive Christ are born again, have peace with God, and are called to love one another and live at peace with their neighbour. Those whom God is saving no longer live for themselves, for they have been set free from sin and called to newness of life.

Exodus 6:1-8; 15:2; 20:2; Psalm 68:19-20; Isaiah 43:1; Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 10:45; John 1:12; 3:1-21; 13:34-35; 16:8-11; Romans 3:24-26; 5:8; 12-21; 8:18-25; 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Ephesians 1:5-10, 13-14; 2:8-9; Colossians 1:13-14; 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:12; 5:7-9; 9:15-28; 11:6; 1 John 4:7-11; Revelation 5:9-10; 21:1-4

6. NATURE OF THE CHURCH

CALLED BY GOD

We believe the church is the people called by God through Jesus Christ. People who respond in faith are united with the local congregation by the public confession of baptism. Church members commit themselves to follow Christ in a life of discipleship and witness as empowered by the Holy Spirit.

BODY OF CHRIST

The church is one body of believers, male and female, from every nation, race and class. The head of this body is Christ. The church, united by the one Spirit, makes Christ visible in the world. The church exists as local bodies of believers and as a worldwide community of faith.

WORSHIP

The church is nourished and renewed as God's people gather regularly to glorify God. The early church gathered on the first day of the week to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The worshipping community celebrates God's faithfulness and grace, reaffirms its faithfulness to God, builds up the members of the body, and seeks God's will for its life and mission. As the church observes baptism, and the Lord's Supper, it proclaims the good news of salvation.

FELLOWSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The church is a covenant community in which members are mutually accountable in matters of faith and life. They love, care, and pray for each other, share each other's joys and burdens, and admonish and correct one another. They share material resources as there is need. Local congregations follow the New Testament example by seeking the counsel of the wider church on matters that affect its common witness and mission. Congregations work together in a spirit of love, mutual submission, and interdependence.

The New Testament guides the practice of redemptive church discipline. The church is responsible to correct members who continue to sin. Congregations forgive and restore those who repent but formally exclude those who disregard discipline.

GIFTS FOR MINISTRY

Through the Holy Spirit, God gives gifts to each member for the well-being of the whole body. These gifts are to be exercised in God's service to build up the church and to minister in the world. God calls people to equip the church for ministry. Leaders are to model Christ in their personal, family, and church life. The church is to discern leaders prayerfully and to affirm, support, and correct them in a spirit of love.

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| Matthew 16:13-20; 18:15-20; John 13:1-20; 17:1-26; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 37-47; 11:1-18; 15:1-35; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; 12-14; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 3:26-28; 6:1-5; Ephesians 1:18-23; 2:11-22; 4:4-6; 4:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 5:1-4. |
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7. MISSION OF THE CHURCH

THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

We believe the good news of God's salvation in Jesus Christ is for all people. Christ commands the church to make disciples of all nations by calling people to repent and by baptizing and teaching them to obey Jesus. Jesus teaches that disciples are to love God and neighbour by telling the good news and by performing acts of love and compassion.

THE WITNESS

The Holy Spirit empowers every Christian to witness to God's salvation. The church as a body witnesses to God's reign in the world. By its life as a redeemed and separated community, the church reveals God's saving purposes to the world.

Matthew 5:13-16; 22:34-40; 28:18-20; Mark 1:15; 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37; 24:45-49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16-18; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 3:10-11

8. CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

CONFESSION

We believe that when people receive God's gift of salvation, they are to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sign of having been cleansed from sin. It is a covenant with the church to walk in the way of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

MEANING

Baptism by water is a public sign that a person has repented of sins, received forgiveness of sins, died with Christ to sin, been raised to newness of life, and received the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sign of the believer's incorporation into the body of Christ as expressed in the local church. Baptism is also a pledge to serve Christ according to the gifts given to each person.

ELIGIBILITY

Baptism is for those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and commit themselves to follow Christ in obedience as members of the local church. Baptism is for those who understand its meaning, are able to be accountable to Christ and the church, and voluntarily request it on the basis of their faith response to Jesus Christ.

PRACTICE

We practice water baptism by immersion administered by the local church. Local congregations may receive into membership those who have been baptized by another mode on their confession of faith. Persons who claim baptism as infants and wish to become members of a Mennonite Brethren congregation are to receive baptism on their confession of faith.

Matthew 3:13-17; 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:2-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Colossians 2:12-13; Galatians 3:26-27; Ephesians 4:4-6

9. LORD'S SUPPER

MEANING

The church observes the Lord's Supper, as instituted by Christ. The Lord's Supper points to Christ, whose body was broken for us and whose blood was shed to assure salvation for believers and to establish the new covenant. Through the supper, the church identifies with the life of Christ given for the

redemption of humanity and proclaims the Lord's death until he comes. The supper expresses the fellowship and unity of all believers with Christ and embodies remembrance, celebration, and praise, strengthening believers for true discipleship and service.

PRACTICE AND PARTICIPATION

In preparation for the fellowship of the Lord's Supper, all believers should examine themselves. All those who understand the supper's meaning, confess Jesus Christ as Lord in word and life, are accountable to their congregation, and are living in right relationship with God and others are invited to participate in the Lord's Supper. The normal pattern in the New Testament was that baptism preceded participation in the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 26:26-30; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-32

10. DISCIPLESHIP

FOLLOWING JESUS

We believe that Jesus calls people who have experienced the joy of new birth to follow him as disciples. By calling his followers to take up the cross, Christ invites them to reject the godless values of the world and offer themselves to God in a life of service. The Holy Spirit, who lives in every Christian, empowers believers to overcome the acts and attitudes of the sinful nature. Filled with love and gratitude, disciples delight to obey God.

UNITED IN A DISTINCT COMMUNITY

Christians enjoy fellowship with God and other believers. At baptism believers join the local church, commit to build up the body of Christ and witness to the good news of the Christian hope. In community members grow in maturity as they demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit, use their spiritual gifts, and practice mutual accountability in the disciplines of the Christian life. Christians confess sin, repent, and experience God's grace in the life of the Christian community.

DEMONSTRATING TRUE FAITH

Jesus teaches that discipleship is the way of self-denial and promises blessing for those who suffer for righteousness. Disciples are to resist worldly values and systems, the sinful nature, and the devil. Disciples give generously and reject materialism, which makes a god out of wealth. Disciples treat others with compassion and gentleness and reject violence as a response to injustice. Disciples speak honestly to build others up and reject dishonest, vulgar, and careless talk; they seek to avoid lawsuits to resolve personal grievances, especially with other believers. Disciples maintain sexual purity and marital faithfulness and reject immoral premarital and extramarital relationships and all homosexual practices. To be a disciple means to be true to Jesus in everyday life.

Psalm 1; 119; Amos 5:24; Matthew 5-7; 18:15-20; Mark 8:34-38; John 8:31-32; 13:34-35; 15:14-15; Acts 2:41-47; Romans 1:24-32; 8:1-30; 12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 11:1; 12:1-13; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 2:20; 5:16-26; 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16; 5:1, 18; Philippians 2:6-8; Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 5:17; 1 Timothy 1:9-11; 2:1-8; 4:6-8; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 12:1-3; 13:4-5; James 1:22-27; 4:7; 1 Peter 2:20-25; 3:15; 5:8-9; 1 John 1:3; 6-9; 2:15-17

11. MARRIAGE, SINGLENESS AND FAMILY

We believe that marriage and the family are instituted by God. The church blesses both marriage and singleness and encourages families to grow in love.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is a covenant relationship intended to unite a man and a woman for life. At creation, God designed marriage for companionship, sexual union, and the birth and nurture of children. Sexual intimacy rightfully takes place only within marriage. Marriage is to be characterized by mutual love, faithfulness, and submission. A believer should not marry an unbeliever.

The community of faith blesses and nurtures marriage relationships and makes every effort to bring reconciliation to troubled marriages. Human sinfulness, however, may sometimes lead to divorce, a violation of God's intention for marriage. With truth and compassion, the family of God offers hope and healing while continually upholding the biblical ideal of marital faithfulness.

SINGLENESS

Singleness is honoured equally with marriage and is sometimes even preferred. The church is to bless, respect, and fully include those who are single. Those who remain single may find unique opportunities to advance the kingdom of God. God calls all people, single and married, to live sexually pure lives.

FAMILY

God intends family relationships at all stages of life to be characterized by love. Children are a gift from God. Godly parents instruct and nurture their children in the faith. Parents are to discipline their children wisely and lovingly, not provoking them to anger. Children are to honour and obey their parents.

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| Genesis 1:26-31; 2:18-24; 5:1-2; 12:1-3; Exodus 22:16-17; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Deuteronomy 6:4; 24:1-4; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 31; Matthew 5:32; 10:34-39; 19:3-12; 22:23-33; Mark 3:31-35; 7:9-13; 10:6-11; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3; 14:12; 1 Corinthians 7:8-40; 2 Corinthians 6:14-15; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:3-16; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7 |
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12. SOCIETY AND STATE

THE STATE AS INSTITUTED BY GOD

We believe that God instituted the state to promote the well-being of all people. Christians cooperate with others in society to defend the weak, care for the poor, and promote justice, righteousness, and truth. Believers witness against corruption, discrimination, and injustice, exercise social responsibility, pay taxes, and obey all laws that do not conflict with the Word of God.

God has given governments authority to maintain law and order and to punish wrongdoers. Followers of Christ respect and pray for those in authority so that peaceful order may prevail. We deplore the loss of life in the exercise of state-sanctioned violence.

CHRISTIAN ALLEGIANCE IN SOCIETY

The primary allegiance of all Christians is to Christ's kingdom, not the state or society. Because their citizenship is in heaven, Christians are called to resist the idolatrous temptation to give to the state the devotion that is owed to God. As ambassadors for Christ, Christians act as agents of reconciliation and seek the well-being of all peoples.

Because Christ forbids the swearing of oaths, we simply affirm the truth in legal transactions. Believers do not participate in secret societies that demand the swearing of oaths or otherwise conflict with a Christian's allegiance to Christ and the church. At all times, believers are called to live as faithful witnesses in the world, rejecting pressures that threaten to compromise Christian integrity.

Exodus 20:13, 16; Leviticus 19:11; Psalm 82:3-4; Jeremiah 29:7; Daniel 2:21; 3:17-18; 4:17; Matthew 5:13-16, 33-37; 6:33; 17:24-27; 22:17-21; John 15:19; 17:14-18; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:6-13; Philippians 1:27; 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1-2; James 5:12; 1 Peter 2:13-17

13. LOVE AND NONRESISTANCE

GOD'S COMMUNITY OF PEACE

We believe that God in Christ reconciles people to himself and to one another, making peace through the cross. The church is a fellowship of redeemed people living by love. Our bond with other believers of Jesus transcends all racial, social, and national barriers.

CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKING

Believers seek to be agents of reconciliation in all relationships, to practice love of enemies as taught by Christ, and to be peacemakers in all situations. We view violence in its many different forms as contradictory to the new nature of the Christian. We believe that the evil and inhumane nature of violence is contrary to the gospel of love and peace. In times of national conscription or war, we believe we are called to give alternative service where possible. Alleviating suffering, reducing strife, and promoting justice are ways of demonstrating Christ's love.

Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 5:17-28, 38-48; Romans 12:9-21; 13:8-10; 1 Peter 2:19-23

14. THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe that all human life belongs to God. Each person is created in the image of God and ought to be celebrated and nurtured. Because God is Creator and the Author and Giver of life, we oppose all actions and attitudes that devalue human life. The unborn, disabled, poor, aging, and dying are particularly vulnerable to such injustices. Christ calls the people of all nations to care for the defenceless.

God highly values human life. Ultimate decisions regarding life and death belong to God. Hence, we hold that procedures designed to take life, including abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide, are an affront to God's sovereignty. We esteem the life-sustaining findings of medical science, but recognize that there are limits to the value of seeking to prolong life indefinitely. In all complex ethical decisions

regarding life and death, we seek to offer hope, healing, support, and counsel in the context of the Christian community.

Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; Exodus 20:13; Job 31:15; Psalm 139:13-16; Amos 1-2; Matthew 6:25-27; 25:31-46; John 10:11

15. STEWARDSHIP

GOD'S CREATION MANDATE

We believe the universe and everything in it belong to God the Creator. God has entrusted the care of the earth to all people, who are responsible for managing its resources. Good stewardship uses the earth's abundance to meet human need, but resists the unjust exploitation of the earth and its peoples. All God's gifts are to be received with thanksgiving and used responsibly.

RESPONSIBLE LIVING

To confess Jesus as Lord transforms values. Jesus warns that we cannot serve both God and wealth. Preoccupation with money and possessions, self-indulgent living, and eagerness to accumulate wealth for personal advantage are not in keeping with the teachings of Scripture.

GENEROUS GIVING

The Bible teaches cheerful, sacrificial, and proportional giving through the church in grateful response to God's goodness. Christians do not claim any of their possessions as their own, but manage all their resources, including money, time, abilities, and influence, in generous ways that give glory to God. They do not despise the poor but practice mutual aid within the church and share what they have with others in need. God's people seek to embrace a lifestyle of simplicity and contentment.

Genesis 1:28; Leviticus 25; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Psalm 24:1; 115:16; Proverbs 14:31; Amos 6:4-7; Malachi 3:6-10; Matthew 6:19-34; 25:14-30; Luke 6:38; 12:13-21; Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 1 Corinthians 4:7; 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 6:7; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; James 2:1-7, 15-16; 5:1-6; 1 John 3:16-18; Jude 11

16. WORK, REST AND THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that God's act of creation is the model for human activity. While sin has corrupted work and rest, redeemed people are called to restore labour and rest to their proper place.

WORK

As creatures made in the image of God, Christians imitate the Creator by working faithfully as they are able. They are to use their abilities and resources to glorify God and to serve others. Because they bear the name of Christ, all believers are called to work honestly and diligently and to treat others with respect and dignity.

REST

As God rested on the seventh day, people are called to observe regular times of rest. Rest is an act of thankfulness for what God has provided. Rest is also an act of trust, reminding humans that it is not their work but God who sustains them. Finally, rest is an act of hope, anticipating the future rest assured by the resurrection of Jesus.

THE LORD'S DAY

Following the New Testament example, believers gather to commemorate the resurrection of Christ on the first day of the week. On the Lord's Day, believers joyfully devote themselves to worship, instruction in the Word, prayer, breaking of bread, fellowship and service. They limit their labour to work of necessity and deeds of mercy.

Genesis 1:26-2:3, 15; 3:14-19; Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 25:1-7; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Psalm 46:10; 95:6-11; Ecclesiastes 3:13; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 24:1-36; Acts 2:42-47; 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 2:16-17; 3:22-4:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10; Hebrews 4:1-10; 10:23-25; Revelation 1:10

17. CHRISTIANITY AND OTHER FAITHS

JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

We believe that the saving grace of God in Jesus is the only means of reconciling humanity with God. Although salvation is available to all, only those who put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have the assurance of eternal life.

GOD'S UNIVERSAL WITNESS

God has not left anyone without a witness to the Creator's goodness and power. Due to human rebellion, people have chosen to suppress the truth. While elements of truth may be found in other religions, Scripture warns against false teachings. Christians treat people of other faiths and philosophies with respect, but lovingly and urgently proclaim Christ as the only way of salvation for all peoples.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

God loves the world and does not want anyone to perish. In sovereign grace, God may communicate with people in ways that are beyond human comprehension. The Bible teaches that those who reject the gospel are under divine judgment; the eternal destiny of those who have never heard the gospel is in God's hands. Our task is to proclaim Christ as the only way of salvation to all people in all cultures. The Judge of all the earth will do what is just.

Genesis 18:25; Psalm 19:2-4; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Isaiah 46:1-10; 55:8-9; Ezekiel 33:1-20; Jonah 1-4; Matthew 8:5-13; 25:31-46; 28:18-20; Mark 7:24-30; Luke 9:51-56; 12:47-48; John 1:12; 3:16, 36; 4:8-42; 12:12-26; 14:6; Acts 1:8; 4:12; 10:1-8, 34-36; 14:16-17; 17:22-31; Romans 1:18-24; 2:1-16; 10:9-21; 11:33-35; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 12:3; 1 Timothy 2:4-5; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 20:15

18. CHRIST'S FINAL TRIUMPH

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ will return visibly and triumphantly at the end of the present age. The church must always be prepared to meet the Lord, living in expectation of his imminent return.

THE LAST DAYS

In these last days, between the first and second coming of Christ, the church carries out its mission in the world. Believers often endure suffering and persecution because of their witness to Christ. In spite of opposition by evil powers, the church is assured of the final victory of Christ's kingdom. These last days come to an end with Christ's return.

DEATH

Since Christ destroyed the power of death through his resurrection, believers need not be afraid of death, the last enemy. Christ's followers go to be with the Lord when they die. When Christ returns, they will be raised and receive new bodies. Believers who are alive at Christ's coming will be transformed and will also receive new and glorious bodies, fit for life in God's eternal kingdom.

JUDGMENT

When Christ returns, he will destroy all evil powers, including the Antichrist. Satan and all those who have rejected Christ will be condemned to eternal punishment in hell, forever separated from the presence of God. Believers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to have their lives examined and their labours rewarded. By God's grace, they will enter into the joy of God's eternal reign.

THE NEW CREATION

All God's children will be united with Christ when he appears and will reign with him in glory. Pain, sorrow, and death will be abolished and the redeemed will be gathered into the new heaven and new earth, where together with the angels they will worship God forever. God will make all things new and God will be all in all. This is the blessed hope of all believers.

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| Matthew 24:29-31; 25:13; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 16:9; 23:43; John 14:1-3; Acts 2:17; Romans 8:18-22; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 15:26; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12; 2:1-12; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:2; 9:26-28; 1 Peter 1:20; 4:7; 1 John 2:18; 3:2-3; Revelation 19:17-21; 20:7-15; 21-22 |
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Appendix B – Listing of Provincial Conferences

The following provincial conferences are recognized by the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches:

- AEFMQ, L'Association des Églises des frères mennonites du Québec
- OCMB, Ontario Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
- MBCM, Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba
- SKMB, Saskatchewan Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
- ABMB, Alberta Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
- BCMB, British Columbia Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches