

Missio Dei

Exploring God's work in the world

Together in Mission

Core Beliefs, Values and
Commitments of Mennonite
Mission Network

Number 10 ■ Series editor: James R. Krabill



**Mennonite
Mission
Network**

Missio Dei is published by Mennonite Mission Network to invite reflection and dialogue about *God's mission* in today's world. Some features in the series focus primarily on the biblical and theological foundations of the mission task. Others present ministry case studies or personal stories of attempts to be faithful to Christ's call. Perspectives represented reflect the passion and commitment of the agency: to declare in word and demonstrate in life the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, "across the street, all through the marketplaces, and around the world."

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Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA, exists to lead, mobilize and equip the church to participate in holistic witness to Jesus Christ in a broken world. With offices in Elkhart, Ind.; Newton, Kan.; and Harrisonburg, Va.; the Mission Network supports ministries in more than 55 countries and 31 U.S. states.

ISBN 1-877736-99-6

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Printed in the United States of America

Together in Mission

Core Beliefs, Values and Commitments of Mennonite Mission Network

We live in a fragmented world. We see the brokenness played out on televised news and experience it in our communities. War shatters lives and uproots people. Violence and poverty devastate our cities. Political terrorism threatens the social order. Natural disasters — earthquakes, tidal waves, hurricanes, plagues — bring death and despair. Our earth reels from environmental degradation and the exploitation of its resources. Some of us suffer from economic and political oppression. Others find themselves enslaved to sin, materialism and other false gods of our day.

As Christians who long for God’s new creation, we acknowledge our own brokenness and dependence upon God. But we also find hope in the promise that in Jesus Christ “all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col.1:19-20, NRSV). As Christians we are called to help bring about this reconciliation and peace, since we know, with the apostle Paul, that God is “entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us” (2 Cor. 5:19b-20a).

Mennonite Church USA, the largest branch of the Anabaptist movement in North America, has commissioned Mennonite Mission Network to lead, mobilize and equip the church to carry God’s message of reconciliation to the world.

Mennonites are spiritual descendants of the 16th-century Anabaptists, who were radical disciples of Jesus Christ. Rather than appeal solely to church tradition or the Bible, the Anabaptists sought to restore the church’s primary allegiance to the person of Jesus Christ. They were so committed to demonstrating their faith in daily life and extending love and forgiveness to those who opposed them that they were tortured, drowned and burned to death in a wave of martyrdom nearly unprecedented until the 20th century. They persisted, however, in telling others about their faith, prompting authorities in some cases to physically clamp their tongues in order to silence them.

The description of core beliefs, values and commitments presented here grows out of the vision of the Mennonite Church USA for the

ministry of the church through Mennonite Mission Network. Although the Mission Network has roots in the 19th-century missions movement that propelled North Americans into global relationships, Mennonites are now being made new through a fresh movement of the Spirit that leads us to envision our role in God's mission through new eyes. This document expresses how God is leading us in mission today.

The motto that captures for us our task and calling is: "Together, sharing all of Christ with all of creation."

What is our vision for the future?

The Mennonite Church USA vision statement sets before us this challenge:

"God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flows through us to the world."

Mennonite Church USA commissions each member to be an ambassador of reconciliation and each congregation to serve as a channel of God's grace, joy and peace to the world. Although congregations represent God's primary means for carrying out the mission of the church, Mennonite Mission Network is the agency that helps accomplish this vision in a special way.

The vision statement of Mennonite Mission Network dares to imagine a time when:

"Every congregation of Mennonite Church USA is engaged in holistic witness and participating in God's work of reconciliation through Jesus Christ throughout a broken world."

When this dream for the church matures, what will our world look like?

1. Mennonite Church USA will have a missional focus, with all parts of the church engaged in mission.

- ◆ Congregations, area conferences, program agencies and leaders will have the vision, skills, opportunities and resources they need to be engaged in mission.
- ◆ New missional congregations will emerge.

2. Every congregation will be missional in identity (centered *on* mission) and in practice (a center *of* mission).

- ◆ All congregations will be engaged in mission in their own community (across the street) and in international mission (around the world) in partnership with overseas workers and partner agencies, mission associations and area conferences.
- ◆ Congregations will be visibly Christlike, carrying out a mission shaped by Anabaptist perspectives.
- ◆ Missional identity will be strengthened and expressed through worship, nurture, spiritual discernment, life together, discipleship, witness and the stewardship of resources.
- ◆ Leaders and all members will possess the understanding, commitment, skills and opportunities to participate in mission.

3. People of all societies and cultures will encounter the gospel of Jesus Christ through congregations, individuals, and partners of Mennonite Church USA.

- ◆ They will see Christ made visible through local congregations, individuals and partners.
- ◆ They will receive the good news of Jesus proclaimed through both word and deed.
- ◆ They will experience social, physical and spiritual wholeness through ministries of prayer, compassion, anti-racism, peace and justice.

What is our purpose?

It is important to clarify the distinct roles in enacting this vision that are played by the broader church and by the denominational mission agency, Mennonite Mission Network.

We believe that:

- ◆ **The purpose of the church** is to participate fully in God's work of setting things right in a broken world, redeeming and restoring all things in Christ to God's intended design as we live into God's future that has already begun.
- ◆ **The purpose of Mennonite Mission Network** is to lead, mobilize and equip the church to participate in holistic witness to Jesus Christ in a broken world.

Who are we and where did we come from?

Mennonite Mission Network was born Feb. 1, 2002, as one of four program agencies – mission, education, publication, stewardship – of the newly formed Mennonite Church USA. The new denomination grew out of a decade-long period of negotiations that resulted in the merger of the former General Conference Mennonite Church and the former Mennonite Church. Mennonite Mission Network succeeded the Commission on Home Ministries and the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church) and Mennonite Board of Missions (Mennonite Church). Eastern Mennonite Missions of Lancaster area conference, and Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions of Virginia area conference, both remain separate but cooperating agencies. Also born as the result of the merger were Mennonite Church Canada and its agency, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, a counterpart and partner in ministry.

Mennonite Mission Network inherited the rich legacy of its predecessor agencies' involvements in ministries in 55 countries and 31 states in the United States. A few historical highlights of this heritage include:

- 1860 – Ministry among native peoples in North America
- 1882 – Evangelism among other groups in U.S. towns and rural areas
- 1893 – Urban missions, beginning with Chicago, St. Louis and Canton, Ohio
- 1899 – International ministries, beginning in India and eventually expanding to encompass ministries in 55 countries
- 1926 – Peace education and counseling
- 1944 – Voluntary service programs, beginning in Chicago
- 1950 – Increased collaboration with other international groups, indigenous movements and denominations
- 1951 – Use of mass media to engage culture, beginning with radio
- 1957 – First workers placed in an Islamic state
- 1969 – Out-Spokin' bicycle program in youth ministry (to 1981)
- 1973 – Choice Books, mass market book-rack evangelism (to 1999)
- 1988 – Bible-based training in Spanish for Hispanic church leaders in North America
- 1994 – City on a Hill holistic ministry in urban communities

What do we believe about mission?

Our beliefs shape who we are and how we carry out our ministry. For Mennonite Mission Network, the following nine beliefs inform and guide our approach to ministry.

The first three are of particular importance. We sing: “The work is thine, O, Christ Our Lord.” We remember, “With God, all things are possible” (Matt. 9:26). We agree with Gamaliel, who said of the first apostles in mission: “If this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them” (Acts 5:38b-39). It is our deepest prayer and desire that any of our human endeavors in mission be infused with the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

The mission and glory belong to God.

1. **God’s redemptive reign sets the agenda for our mission.** God’s mission is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it and to restore it to its intended purpose. This mission of God is the church’s reason for being. By participating in God’s mission, the church becomes a living sign of God’s intended future for the world.
2. **Mission is rooted in God’s love, focused on Jesus and empowered by the Holy Spirit.** The mission is *God’s*. We are involved in mission because we are recipients of God’s grace and have been invited by God to share the same love for the world that God demonstrated in sending Jesus. *Jesus*, who went about preaching, teaching, healing the sick and delivering people from evil spirits, who was crucified and resurrected, is the means (the way), the message (the truth) and the model (the life) for all mission. After Jesus’ ascension, the *Holy Spirit* was poured out to move, transform, inspire and empower the church in mission. The church nurtures its life in the Spirit through Bible study, prayer and other spiritual disciplines.
3. **Our mission overflows in joy in response to God’s abundant grace.** When we experience the immeasurable height, depth and breadth of God’s love, we are compelled to pass on to others the grace, joy and peace that overflows in us.

The church is the primary model and messenger of God's love.

4. The church is a sign of God's redemptive reign. It is called and sent into the world to invite all people into that reign and to demonstrate the living presence and power of God through announcing salvation, proclaiming and demonstrating peace, and serving a needy world in the spirit of Jesus. The church demonstrates its faithfulness to God's purposes by being a responsible steward of God's creation and living as a prophetic community and a holy nation in relation to the powers of the world. The church is an alternative society, giving its allegiance to God over any human government.

5. Faithful congregations extend and reproduce themselves.

Every congregation is called to be faithful, healthy and vital and to initiate activities that give birth to new congregations and ministries. Faithful congregations nurture all believers into loving accountability and bring seekers to commitment to Christ and the church. They live out the practices of the reign of God.

6. The church expects opposition and is willing to suffer. In a fallen world, the church expects opposition and hostility. Members of the church risk their lives to represent the love and presence of Jesus, even if their witness results in misunderstanding and suffering because of the many authorities and powers in the world that oppose God's reign. The church stands in solidarity with poor and oppressed people, trusts in God for its defense and places its hope in God's providence.

Reconciliation and transformation are possible.

7. The gospel reconciles and transforms creation. By word and deed, the church announces to the world the good news that people and communities can be reconciled to God and to one another – that they can be transformed into Christ's image and experience the healing of God's grace and peace. Christ empowers his followers to love their enemies and to believe that no one is beyond God's love and forgiveness. Christ's ministry shows that the gospel is to be proclaimed and demonstrated to all, and that only love can overcome evil.

- 8. The model of Jesus' earthly ministry requires that the gospel be adapted to cultural context.** The mission of God is always embodied in a specific culture, as best demonstrated by the Word having “become flesh.” This does not mean that God has been absent from the culture before the arrival of those human agents bearing the good news. What it does mean is that the approach of the church must always be one of seeking to discover how God is already at work in the culture, and then engaging in serious reflection about how best to participate in this divine activity in ways that are culturally sensitive, relevant, life-giving and transforming.
- 9. The final victory already belongs to God through Christ.** The future of God's plan to “bring all things together in Christ” is not in question. It will be just as John described it in the book of Revelation — a great multitude of people from every language, tribe and nation, standing before the throne of the Lamb, praising God.

What core values guide our work?

To carry out its mandate, Mennonite Mission Network will foster an organizational culture that produces leaders, staff members and workers who embody the values, attributes and abilities needed to become successful partners in mission:

Vision. Staff and workers will understand and be committed to God's reconciling mission to the world and to the vision of Mennonite Mission Network. Leaders will articulate the vision in such a way as to inspire a passion for God's reconciling mission. All will be knowledgeable, purposeful, committed and passionate about the organization and its mission.

Diversity. Staff and workers will respect and want to work with people who differ from them in age, race, color, national origin, gender and abilities. Leaders will work to increase the involvement of congregations and agency staff with people of different backgrounds. All will be culturally adept, anti-racist and open to new experiences.

Community. Staff and workers will practice compassion and forgiveness in interpersonal relationships. Leaders will be trustworthy and foster compassion and forgiveness in interpersonal and cross-agency relationships. All will be empathetic and community-oriented.

Innovation. Staff and workers will be flexible and open to new ideas, opportunities, strategies, and procedures. Leaders will take risks and encourage others to implement new ideas. All will be learning-oriented and will cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit.

Interdependence. Staff and workers will strengthen connections and communication between groups. Leaders will build networks within the staff, in the agency's constituencies, and among other agencies, and will communicate the need for groups to work together. All will promote working relationships characterized by mutuality and reciprocity.

Collaboration. Staff and workers will work cooperatively, accepting and sharing responsibility. Leaders will work together with staff in making decisions, avoiding extreme forms of authority or consensus. All will contribute to harmony in making and carrying out decisions.

Stewardship. Staff and workers will use natural and financial resources with care and promote personal health and well-being. Leaders will manage resources well and support reasonable workloads in order to foster strong family relationships for staff and workers. All will take good care of themselves, nurture good relationships and make economical use of resources.

Church-centeredness. Staff and workers will value and participate in congregational life and church-wide events. Leaders will be guided by the mission agenda at all levels of the church and will plan agency strategies accordingly. All will feel accountable to the church and trust in God's working in local congregations.

Spiritual vitality. Staff and workers will be committed to Jesus Christ and demonstrate spiritual sensitivity. Leaders will be models of spiritual vitality and keep others aware of God's leading in daily work. All will be faith-filled, prayerful and joyful in responding to God's calling and direction.

How do we go about our mission?

Our approach to mission is embodied in Mennonite Mission Network's motto: *"Together, sharing all of Christ with all of creation."*

TOGETHER, SHARING ...

We will work closely with members of Mennonite Church USA, together pursuing ministries around the world. The church's outreach throughout most of the 20th century was structured around mission agencies. The agencies took initiative in planting churches, in establishing partnerships with national churches overseas, and in relating to area conferences in North America. As we move into the 21st century, however, the whole missional church — including individuals, families and households, congregations, area conferences, racial-ethnic groups, national organizations and program boards — is seeking to be involved more directly in responding to God's mission in the world. We believe that the most seasoned and sustainable initiatives in mission happen when they emerge from people inspired by and committed to a common vision of seeing God at work.

We will cultivate increased partnerships-in-ministry with the global Mennonite Church mission community. We are committed to facilitating and participating in mission initiatives "from all six continents to all six continents" around the globe. Although we work with brothers and sisters from many parts of the Christian family, we will give special attention and energy to those initiatives that emerge from Mennonite Church USA and our international partners within the global Anabaptist/Mennonite community of churches. The newly formed Global Mission Fellowship of Mennonite World Conference will serve as an important forum for generating and testing new ministry possibilities with partners worldwide.

We will foster a missional understanding of the church. Mission is much more than simply one among many activities of the church, existing alongside Christian education, leadership training, mutual aid and others. Rather, it is embedded within the very character of the church. The *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* states

that the mission of the church is “to proclaim and to be a sign of the kingdom of God.” Everything a missional church shares — everything it says and does — flows out of its very nature and character.

... ALL OF CHRIST ...

We will work at mission in a holistic manner. The teaching, preaching and healing ministry of Jesus, as described in Matthew 9:35, is a model for us as we seek to continue the work of Jesus in working toward the kingdom of God. It is impossible to capture everything included in holistic ministry. At a minimum, it is preaching the word, healing the sick, making peace, building communities of grace, and helping the poor achieve stability and dignity. We believe that God’s good news in Jesus Christ brings salvation, healing and hope to a person’s mind, body and soul; to human relationships in conflict at all levels of society; and to the physical environment in which God has placed us in the world today.

... WITH ALL OF CREATION

We will work in a spirit of humility and mutuality. We recognize that anywhere and everywhere in creation is a mission location. The mission field is not just “overseas” or in large urban centers, although these locations certainly deserve ongoing attention. It is also in the neighborhoods in which our Mennonite Church USA congregations are located. Indeed, mission is not only an outreach activity that Christians perform, but it is also a process that, in turn, transforms us and our communities. The church in every continent is therefore both subject and object, both giving and receiving in mission. Believers and non-believers alike are included in God’s great desire and cosmic plan to “reconcile all things to himself in Jesus Christ” (Col. 1:20).

We will work as responsible stewards of the world God has created, loved and redeemed. God’s reconciling project is as big as the world in which we live. We believe, with the apostle Paul, that God’s plan is to “bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head” (Eph. 1:10). Though we may not understand the full scope of God’s deepest desires, we know that participating in God’s mission means loving what God loves and caring for the world he has so graciously created for our good.

God wants people to be mutually interdependent and desires that followers of Jesus work together in a spirit of Christian love. Mennonite Mission Network therefore seeks to work with partners as we test new ministries in all parts of the world. We will choose and nurture mission partnerships based on the values described above, always being flexible in light of new needs and realities.

How do partnerships develop?

Mennonite Mission Network works actively to develop partnerships and to respond to opportunities that may originate from a variety of sources.

1. **When a vision and call are identified by Mennonite Mission Network staff, partner groups or workers**, we will use our experience to evaluate the call and will prayerfully consider asking others to share in these ministries — usually as active partners but sometimes as supporters with less direct involvement.
2. **When a vision and call to new ministry originates with a Mennonite Church USA group**, we will use our experience to evaluate the call and will consider with the group how best to respond. We will expect the group to share responsibility in responding to the call and to provide the resources to do so.
3. **When a vision for new ministry comes from the interest of an individual rather than from the Mennonite Church USA or partner groups**, we will invite dialogue, interpret criteria for vision and partnership, and cultivate the development of broader vision in one or more Mennonite Church USA congregations.
4. **When Mennonite Church USA groups hear a call directly from international or independent North American partners** and turn to Mennonite Mission Network to help with the invitation, we will use our experience to evaluate the call and consider with the group how best to respond.

Once Mennonite Mission Network leaders have decided to respond to a call, we will make public the vision and call on people to share that vision. We will do so by approaching specific people and groups, or by issuing a more general call through the communication outlets of Mennonite Mission Network.

Who are our partners?

In describing the values we seek in our partners, there are several flexible points of reference that characterize our preferred partners in North America and around the world.

What do our partners believe?

- ◆ They confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
- ◆ They understand, appreciate and, to some extent, share our Anabaptist/Mennonite perspectives and approach to mission.
- ◆ They desire ultimately the emergence of communities of followers of Jesus.
- ◆ They want to advance the mission of God through cooperative efforts that resemble the partnership patterns used by Mennonite Mission Network.
- ◆ They use missiological strategies that are compatible with a partner relationship.

What groups are ready for a partnership?

- ◆ They are willing to be an active, reciprocal partner in carrying out a variety of mutually agreed-upon activities.
- ◆ They demonstrate clear vision and take responsibility for a specific project that emerges from partnership discussions.
- ◆ They expect that a well-defined need, a compelling purpose and a viable plan for pursuing ministry will emerge as we explore a mission partnership.
- ◆ They want to develop direct church-to-church relationships that could involve establishing support groups or partnership networks.

How do we choose ministry projects?

- ◆ They fulfill priorities held by members of Mennonite Church USA.
- ◆ They are compatible with the existing program, structures and scope of Mennonite Mission Network.
- ◆ They align with priorities identified by the leaders of Mission Network's Global Ministries.
- ◆ They fulfill priorities established by Mission Network partners beyond Mennonite Church USA.

What do we bring to partnerships?

“Together, sharing all of Christ with all of creation” represents more than just a slogan for Mennonite Mission Network. Collaborating with others in the work of God’s mission represents an inherent characteristic of what it means to be a missional church.

As the Mission Network works with partners, we seek to expand the mission capacity of the broader church. On many occasions, we receive ideas for ministries that suit an already existing program outside of Mennonite Mission Network. In such cases, our commitment to being one part of the whole church, sharing together in God’s mission, means that we connect prospective partners with other organizations better suited to making their vision a reality. The Mission Network has also pioneered in efforts to form partnerships or strategic alliances that enable new ministries to emerge, grow and thrive.

Our partners have identified the following characteristics that we bring to any collaborative relationship and that have measurable and demonstrable value for our partners:

Developing

- ◆ We help form a learning community in which each partner is enriched through connections to efforts broader than their own and to specialists with experience in such fields as urban ministry, church planting, peace and justice education, discipleship, and short-term mission.
- ◆ We enable groups to see the big picture of what God is doing in the world, making possible a more cohesive focus and an ability to set clear priorities for ministry.
- ◆ We encourage and empower those with vision to use their gifts more fully.
- ◆ We extend the scope of an emerging ministry through our experience in administration and in understanding local contexts and cultural sensitivities.
- ◆ We expand the capacity of mission endeavors through specific services that eliminate the need for partners to provide duplicative

services. These include management, assessment of personnel for service, worker care, communication, information technology, financial services and fund-raising.

Connecting

- ◆ We provide direct connection to partners and ministries throughout North America and in more than 55 other countries.
- ◆ We enhance networking by introducing potential partners to a broad range of mission and service organizations in North America and around the world.
- ◆ We foster personal involvement in active ministry for the largest possible number of mission participants by providing a wide variety of Christian service options for all ages.

Nurturing

- ◆ We promote an Anabaptist/Mennonite mission identity — inseparable from a holistic witness to Jesus Christ — through ministries leading to personal and social transformation.
- ◆ We offer validation and accountability within the Mennonite Church USA, especially as we collaborate with both area conferences and international partners in ministries that grow out of local contexts.
- ◆ We contribute seed money and financial or in-kind services for new and innovative ministry projects, and we help mobilize churchwide resources for use at the point of greatest need.

What might the future hold?

In our fragmented world, it takes all of Christ — his concern for the spiritual and the physical, the personal and the social, the private and the public — to address the needs of all of creation. Mennonite Mission Network is committed to sharing these concerns with our partners in Mennonite Church USA and around the world. We want to reach a new level of mutuality and shared initiative with our global partners, as co-laborers in God's mission in the world.

For those of us living in what has been called the world's only remaining superpower, we seek to discover the full meaning of mutual-ity. When we discover global partners' physical needs and vision for mission, how together may we share our resources with them? How also will we receive and experience the gifts they have to share with us? Mennonite Mission Network will foster relationships and partnerships with the church beyond our own borders because we believe mission is expressed in its fullness when all of the church on all of the continents share all of Christ with all of creation.

Sources that Have Shaped Our Vision

The following sources, many developed during the transition to the new Mennonite Church USA, helped shaped the vision outlined in this document. Complete texts of these documents are available on request.

- ◆ A Guiding Theology of Missions: Final Report (study group)
- ◆ Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, 1995, Summary
- ◆ Context and Theology (excerpt from other documents)
- ◆ Emerging Trends in Mennonite Congregational and Conference/ District Level Missions (study group)
- ◆ Emerging Trends in North American Mission Agencies (study group report)
- ◆ Envisioning a New Mennonite Church (congregational study)
- ◆ Final Report on Vision, Strategy and Organization of the Mission Agencies of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA (long version)
- ◆ Mission Community Foundations: Common Understandings about Collaborative Mission Relationships in the Mennonite Church USA Mission System
- ◆ Mission Transformation Proposal for Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA
- ◆ Networking and Partnership in a Virtual System: Final Report
- ◆ New Ministry Assessment Grid
- ◆ Partners in God's New Creation: MBM and the Road to Partnership
- ◆ Program Development Mission Transition Team Final Report
- ◆ Responding to New Ministry Opportunities
- ◆ Strategic Priorities for the Mission Agency of the Mennonite Church USA (program development team)
- ◆ The Emerging Context in Missions (study group report)
- ◆ Virtual Mission System: Concept Outline
- ◆ Vision, Core Ministries and Strategic Priorities for the Mission Agency of Mennonite Church USA (shorter version)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. This discussion of Christian mission uses the term *mission workers* rather than *missionaries*, and *mission network* rather than *mission board*. Comment on the differences in meanings. What kind of shift in emphasis do these words suggest?
2. How would you explain to a friend what the word *missional* means? Is it a new way of phrasing an old idea, or does it communicate a new vision and reality?
3. Consider the new Mennonite Mission Network motto, “*Together, sharing all of Christ with all of creation.*” What new directions in mission does this motto imply?
4. The word *creation* implies the physical world as well as human beings. To what degree is or should Christian mission also be concerned with environmental and ecological issues?
5. What benefits and problems are associated with emphasizing partnership in mission?
6. What is meant by the statement that “the activity of God” is “already present” in a culture where the gospel has not yet been taken? What proof for this assertion can you cite from history? From Scripture? From theology? If it is true, then what is the proper role of missions?
7. This document was written to be read by many different audiences. How do you think you would react to it if you were a Christian in Asia or Africa? A Muslim in the Middle East? A non-Mennonite in the U.S.? A donor considering a gift of \$1 million to Mennonite Mission Network? A missiologist in a seminary?
8. If you or your congregation identify a pressing need that the Mission Network has the capability to address, how would you go about developing the idea with the agency? Cite some actual or hypothetical examples. Might it be different if you were a member of a Mennonite Church in India, wanting to enlist the help of Mennonite Mission Network?

For Further Reading

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- ◆ BLOCK, Tina Ediger, *Window to the World: Extraordinary Stories from a Century of Overseas Mission, 1900-2000* (Newton, Kan.: Faith & Life Press, 1999).
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The *Missio Dei* Series

- No. 1 Calvin E. Shenk, *Understanding Islam: A Christian Reflection on the Faith of our Muslim Neighbors* (2002).
- No. 2 James R. Krabill, *Does Your Church “Smell” Like Mission? Reflections on Becoming a Missional Church* (2003).
- No. 3 Donna Kampen Entz, *From Kansas To Kenedougou ... And Back Again* (2004).
- No. 4 Alan Kreider, *Peace Church, Mission Church: Friends or Foes?* (2004).
- No. 5 Peter Graber, *Money and Mission: A Discernment Guide for Congregations* (2004).
- No. 6 Craig Pelkey-Landes, *Purpose Driven Mennonites* (2004).
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*Available in Spanish.

Together in Mission

Core Beliefs, Values and Commitments of Mennonite Mission Network

The 20th century was a remarkable century in mission, marked by an initial outpouring of energy and periodic bursts of renewal. In the closing decades of the century, something was happening that was almost unseen except by a perceptive few: the emergence and incredible growth of the church in the global south. In the west, a growing relativism led to a failure of nerve for mission. At the same time, a growing interests emerging in direct participation in mission by congregations and individuals.

In the face of these significant shifts, an agency such as Mennonite Mission Network could choose to become entrenched in past traditions that reflect the “way we have always done things.” Or, we could be discerning about how we might renew our commitment to core biblical convictions and remain faithful, even as we allow ourselves to be transformed to be effective in a changing context. We chose the latter option. Here we report the core values and convictions that we have embraced as we seek to be an effective and faithful community in mission. At the heart of our transformation is a commitment to partnership — with God who is the source and energy for mission; with congregations that are primary agents of mission; and with counterparts in the global Christian movement who are partners with us in this awesome and exciting task of announcing God’s good news of reconciliation, restoration and renewal through Jesus Christ. We welcome you as a partner in this exciting venture!



Stanley W. Green
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ISBN bar-code imprint area

U.S. \$3.95



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