

# THE CONSTITUTION



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evangelical  
mennonite  
conference

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**THE**  
**CONSTITUTION**  
  
and  
**BILL OF INCORPORATION**  
of the  
**EVANGELICAL MENNONITE**  
**CONFERENCE**

**1994**  
**(2017 Revision)**

**440 Main Street**  
**Steinbach, Manitoba**  
**R5G 1Z5**

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## FOREWORD

The first Constitution of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference was written in German and printed in June 1956. In 1960 a revised and enlarged Constitution and By-laws was adopted and printed in German and English. In 1967 discussions on further revisions began that resulted in a new printing in May 1973. Of the subsequent printings, the 1981 and 1988 printings included some revisions.

But even before the last printing, there was a realization that the Conference had grown to the extent that changes were needed, especially in the administrative structure of the Conference. As early as 1987, a paper suggesting some areas for consideration was presented to the General Board.

By September 1988 a time line had been prepared and committees formed to review the three main sections of the Constitution. Members of the committees were as follows:

<i><b>THEOLOGY</b></i>	<i><b>LOCAL CHURCH</b></i>	<i><b>CONFERENCE STRUCTURE</b></i>
<i>Ben Eidse</i>	<i>Ferlin Abrahamson</i>	<i>Phil Friesen</i>
<i>Milton Fast</i>	<i>Frank Friesen</i>	<i>Menno Hamm</i>
<i>Stan Hamm</i>	<i>John Koop</i>	<i>Dennis Plett</i>
<i>Cameron McKenzie</i>	<i>John P. Loewen</i>	<i>Glenn Plett</i>
<i>Tom Peachey</i>	<i>David Thiessen</i>	<i>Stan Plett</i>
<i>Edwin Plett</i>		<i>Ed Reimer</i>
<i>Dave Wiebe</i>		<i>Arden Thiessen</i>

These committees received the mandate to review the Constitution and prepare drafts of revision proposals. The first drafts, as well as subsequent drafts, were submitted to the General Board, the churches and the Conference Council. The theology section was also discussed by the Conference ministerial. At the Council level the theology revision received a setback when the first draft was rejected and the committee was requested to prepare a new draft with a stronger reference to the existing Statement of Faith.

Involved very closely in each stage of the project was the Editorial Committee, who ensured that the final document would adhere to good principles of grammar, readability and consistency. This committee consisted of Dave Schellenberg, Myrna Friesen and Ben Dueck.

In December 1990 the Church Administration and Conference Administration sections were approved and implemented in July 1991.

The theology section, possibly rightly so, took a longer time going through a series of readings by the churches and the Conference Council. The final draft, which included the Statement of Faith and the Church Practices, was approved by Conference Council in July 1993.

This Constitution is a response to changes in the Conference and addresses these especially in the new administrative structure. Theologically, the aim has been to update the language and express our beliefs in contemporary terms, retaining our commitment to the Scriptures as our final authority and recognizing our Anabaptist roots.

We acknowledge the time and energy contributed by the committees, churches and Conference Council. On behalf of all in the Conference, we express our thanks to each one who has been involved in developing this document. We trust in the Lord's blessing and reward for each one.

We anticipate that this Constitution will continue as a useful guide for us as a Conference in our work together in ministering in our society.

***The General Board, February 1994***

#### **SUBSEQUENT UPDATES TO THE CONSTITUTION:**

**DECEMBER 2005:** Various changes to the Conference Administration section to implement the name change and restructuring of Board of Ministers and Deacons to Board of Leadership and Outreach.

**DECEMBER 2007:** Change to section VI 1.a) under Conference Administration to add church board chairpersons as delegates to Conference Council.

**NOVEMBER 2017:** The Statement of Faith Section was updated after a four-year long process of discussion and discernment. The new Statement of Faith retained the same thirteen articles, but each was updated to some degree. Also, the article on the Ordinances was modified by moving the ordinance of footwashing to a practice in the Church Practices Section.

A Statement of Faith Review Team was established by the Board of Leadership and Outreach in 2013 to give guidance to the review process. All EMC churches were invited to engage in the discussion through a series of study guides on the articles of faith, and a ministerial day with workshops in 2016 to review the revisions. The ministerial met in November 2016 to give approval to the revised Statement of Faith, and Conference Council gave final approval in November 2017.

We are grateful for the hard work and perseverance of the Review Team throughout this process. We give thanks to God for guiding the EMC Ministerial and Conference Council in these decisions. We have experienced the unity of the Church as we have grappled with the changes and sought to remain faithful to the Scriptures.

**STATEMENT OF FAITH REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS:**

*Darryl Klassen (chair)*

*Cameron McKenzie (chair)*

*Ward Parkinson (Conference Pastor)*

*Flo Friesen*

*Henry Friesen*

*Angel Infantes*

*Doris Penner*

*Colin Peters*

*Ed Peters*



# STATEMENT OF FAITH

## *PREAMBLE*

This Statement of Faith is a consensus reached after several years of discussion. It should be seen as a confession, showing how the teachings of the Scriptures are currently interpreted and understood by the congregations of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference.

These are the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith as they have been discerned in the Scriptures. While this statement reflects convictions inherited from the Anabaptist-Mennonite theology of the 16th-century Reformation, the Bible has been regarded as the final authority on what is to be believed.

This statement has been designed to create clarity, to give direction and to provide the basis for fellowship and working together. Because of the confessional nature of this statement, it will be normal to continue to reflect on the accuracy with which it reflects the teachings of the Scriptures.

## **1. THE BIBLE**

We believe that the Bible, both the Old and New Testament, is the Word of God. Inspired by God and without error in all that it teaches, it is the final authority in matters of belief and conduct.

(Deut. 6:5-6; Josh. 1:8; Neh. 8:5-6; Ps. 119; Zech. 7:12; Matt. 5:18, 24:35; Mark 7:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:16-21).

## **2. GOD**

We believe in only one God, loving, holy, eternal and unchanging. God alone is Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Judge. God exists and reveals himself in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All persons in this Trinity are fully and equally God.

(Gen. 1:1; Deut. 6:4; Pss. 90:2; 96:10; 139:7-12, 147:5; Isa. 40:28, 44:6, 57:15; Mal. 3:6; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:8, 12; 1 John 4:8)

## 2.1 GOD THE FATHER

We believe in God, the Father of all believers and, in a special sense, the Father of Jesus Christ. He has revealed himself in nature, in the Scriptures and especially in the person of Jesus Christ.

(Pss. 19:1-4, 47:1-9; Mal. 2:10; Matt. 6:9; John 3:16, 14:8-9; Acts 17:28; Rom. 1:20, 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:4-6)

## 2.2 GOD THE SON

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He became human, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human, tempted and yet without sin.

We believe that Jesus Christ, the divinely appointed Substitute, provided the only atonement for sin by shedding his blood.

Through his death he defeated the Devil, enabling people to be set free from the power of sin and to be reconciled to God.

He conquered the power of death by rising from the dead, bringing life and hope. He ascended to the right hand of the Father. There he rules as Lord and lives to intercede for those who come to God by him until he comes again as King.

(Isa. 7:14, 53:5-6; Matt. 1:20-23, 28:6; John 1:1-4, 14; Acts 1:10-11; Rom. 3:25-26, 5:8-10, 6:6-8, 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:20, 55-57; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 2:14, 4:15, 7:25)

## 2.3 GOD THE SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit exists eternally as one of the persons of the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son. He convicts the world of sin, of God's righteousness, and of coming judgment. The Spirit comes to live within every believer from the time of salvation giving assurance of salvation. He encourages, comforts, intercedes, and guides God's people into the truth. The Spirit empowers and equips believers for kingdom service through the giving of spiritual gifts to each one. He enables believers to grow in holiness and to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

(Gen. 1:1-2; John 16:7-8, 13; Acts 1:8, 5:3-4; Rom. 8:9, 26; 1 Cor. 3:16, 12:4-11; Gal. 4:6, 5:22-23; Eph. 1:13-14, 4:11-13)

### **3. THE CREATION**

We believe that God created the world, as revealed in the Bible, and that nothing exists apart from what God has made.

(Gen. 1-2; Exod. 20:11; Neh. 9:6; Job 38-39; Pss. 8, 33:6-9, 136:5-9; Mark 10:6; John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Rom. 11:33-36; Heb. 1:1-3; Jer. 10:12-13; Rev. 4:11)

### **4. THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN BEINGS**

We believe that God created human beings, both male and female, in his own image. Therefore every human life is sacred from conception to death, and must be protected regardless of age, ability or stage of development.

(Gen. 1:26-27, 2:7; Ex. 20:12-17; Ps. 139:13-16; Acts 17:24-29; Gal. 3:28)

### **5. THE FALL OF THE HUMAN RACE**

We believe our first parents, Adam and Eve, through unbelief in God's goodness and disobedience to his command, by their free choice brought themselves and the whole human race into a state of sin and separation from God. This act resulted in death, corrupting our relationship with God, with each other and with the whole creation.

(Gen. 1:26-27, 2:7, 16-17, 3:1-24; John 6:44; Rom. 3:23, 5:12; Eph. 2:1-10)

### **6. SATAN**

We believe that Satan is a real spirit being, not simply the personification of evil. He is a fallen angel who rules over the kingdom of all evil, opposing God and seeking to destroy humankind.

(Gen. 3:1-5; Job 1-2; 1 Pet. 5:8-9)

Satan is the father of lies, masquerades as an angel of light, and leads the world astray. However, through faith in Christ and the power of the Spirit we can resist him.

The destiny of Satan will be the eternal lake of fire, which God prepared for him and his angels.

(Matt. 4:1-11, 25:41; Luke 10:17-21; John 8:44; 2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14; Eph. 6:10-18; Col. 1:13, 2:14-15; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 2:14; James 4:7, 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12, 20:7-10)

## **7. SALVATION**

We believe people are saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. The basis of this salvation is Christ's life, teaching, his atoning death and his resurrection. Justification, the new birth and the trans-formed life are experienced through repentance and faith in Christ. His atonement is sufficient for all, and all are invited to accept the free gift of salvation.

(Isa. 53:4-6; Matt. 18:1-14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 24:47; John 1:9-13; 3:3-8, 15-18, 14:6; Acts 4:12, 20:21; Eph. 2:1-10; James 2:14-24)

We believe it is the privilege of all Christians to know that they have passed from death to life and that God can keep them from falling away. Faith and obedience are essential in maintaining this assurance and growth in grace.

(John 8:31-32; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:10-14; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 1 John 3:14, 5:11-13)

## **8. DISCIPLESHIP**

We believe that our relationship to Jesus Christ is to be an unconditional commitment to discipleship. Discipleship is the total life of the believer lived in community and patterned after the life, teaching, death and resurrection of our Lord.

(Matt. 4:16-22, 28:19-20; Mark 8:34-35; Acts 11:26; Rom. 12:1-2, 7-12, 13:8-14; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 1:1-10, 4:32-5:2; Col. 3:1-17; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:13-24, 4:16)

## **9. THE LIFE OF PEACE**

We believe in the life of peace. We are called to walk in the steps of the Lamb of God, the Prince of Peace. Everything about his life, his

teachings and his redemptive death on the cross, summons us to a life of nonviolence.

As Christians committed to love and nonviolence, we may not participate in or support anything that will violate this life of peace.

We should do whatever we can to lessen human distress and suffering, even at the risk of our own lives. In all relationships, we should be peace makers and ministers of reconciliation.

(Isa. 53:3-9; Matt. 5-7; Mark 9:50; John 18:36; Rom. 12-13; Eph. 2:14-18; Phil. 2:3-4; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 2:9, 20-23)

## **10. THE CHURCH**

We believe all who have experienced new life in Christ belong to his body, the church, of which he is the head. All who repent of sin and make a commitment to Jesus Christ by faith are baptized into his church by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

(Matt. 16:18, 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8, 2:38-39, 42-47; 1 Cor. 12; Gal. 3:25-29; Eph. 1:19-23, 4:1-6, 11-16; Col. 1:18)

We believe the church is the visible expression of his body. God calls the church ...

To grow in maturity to be like Christ;

To care for fellow believers;

To gather the believers together in fellowship;

To worship God through Christ;

To make disciples through teaching God's Word;

And to share the love of God in word and deed with all people.

(Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 3:12-17; Heb. 10:25; 1 Pet. 2:4-10; 1 John 3:16-18)

## **11. THE ORDINANCES**

An ordinance is a symbolic observance, instituted according to the Bible, which is to be administered by the church body as a visible sign of spiritual truth.

We believe Christ instituted two ordinances: water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

### **11.1 BELIEVER'S WATER BAPTISM**

We believe a Christian should be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit following a personal recognition of and repentance from sin, and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Water baptism represents the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion and the washing of regeneration which the believer has experienced. It is an act of obedience which identifies the believer with the church of Christ.

(Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:36-47, 10:47-48, 18:8, 22:16; Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:13, Titus 3:5-6)

### **11.2 THE LORD'S SUPPER**

We believe that Christians are to celebrate the Lord's Supper as instituted by Christ. The elements – the bread and the cup – symbolize the body of Christ and his shed blood.

With this celebration, Christians call to mind Christ's suffering for the sins of the whole human race and proclaim the Lord's death until he returns.

The Lord's Supper, also called communion, involves fellowship, self-examination, and thanksgiving. Christians should examine their own relationship to God and to other people before participating in this commemoration.

(Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:17-34; Eph. 2:11-22)

## **12. THE RESURRECTION**

We believe Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead. When he returns, all, believers and unbelievers, will be raised bodily from the dead as well, the believers to the resurrection of life, and the unbelievers to the resurrection of condemnation.

We also believe that those in Christ, at the time of death, enter into the presence of their Lord.

(Dan. 12:2; Matt. 22:29-32, Luke 16:19-31, 23:43; John 5:28-29, 20:20, 24-29; Acts 24:15; Rom. 8:19-23, 1 Cor. 15; Phil. 1:19-26; 1 Thess. 4:13-18, Rev. 20:11-15)

### **13. THE RETURN AND FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST**

We believe in the visible, bodily return of Jesus Christ at the end of the age. When He returns in glory, He will judge the living and the dead. Those who died in Christ will be raised to join living believers to reign with Him forever in a new heaven and new earth. The unrighteous will suffer eternal hell in separation from God.

In Christ's final triumph, Satan and his angels will be thrown into the lake of fire prepared for them from the beginning. All rulers, powers and authorities will be brought into subjection, and death, the last enemy, will be destroyed. God will reign supreme. This is the blessed hope of the church.

(Matt. 25:31-46; John 14:1-6; Acts 1:11; Rom. 8:12-15; 1 Cor. 15:24; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 20-22)





## A. CHURCH PRACTICES

### PREAMBLE

*The statements in this section are to give direction to the congregations as they seek to apply the teachings of the Scriptures to specific issues of Christian living.*

*It is understood that the different historical backgrounds and geographical locations of the congregations will have a bearing on how the Bible will be interpreted and applied. However, membership in the Conference assumes a covenant relationship in which there is a commitment to listening to each other and learning from each other. There is value in giving respectful consideration to the cumulative insight which the different congregations bring to the larger body.*

*This is not to be seen as an exhaustive statement on Christian ethics; rather, these are the issues on which it was felt necessary for the Conference to speak at this time. As new or different issues emerge, they also will need to be addressed.*

#### **1. THE LORD'S DAY**

We believe that in the fourth commandment we have the principle of one day of rest in seven. During the New Testament period, the first day of the week was designated as the Lord's Day. It commemorated the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the Lord's Day, Christians worship the Lord, teach the Scriptures, have fellowship and refresh themselves in body and spirit (Deuteronomy 5:12–15; Exodus 20:8–11; Isaiah 58:13–14; Mark 2:23–27; 16:2; Hebrews 10:23–25; Revelation 1:10).

#### **2. CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

We believe God owns and sustains his creation. He calls us, God's people, to be trustworthy stewards of creation. Stewardship is demonstrated in our lifestyles, in our relations with the poor and the disadvantaged, in our view of possessions, in our concern for all of God's creation and in our response to global economic injustice. Biblical stewardship includes faithful proclamation of the Gospel,

careful exercise of our gifts and abilities and proper use of our powers, possessions and time, to accomplish God's will "on earth as it is in heaven" (Genesis 1:1, 20–21, 28; 2:15, 19; Leviticus 25:23–24; Psalm 8:6–8; 24:1; 104:16–18; Micah 2:1–2; Haggai 2:8; Malachi 3:8–10; Matthew 25:14–30; 28:18–20; Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 4:1–3; 10:26; 2 Corinthians 8–9; Ephesians 4:7–16; 1 Peter 4:7–11).

### **3. THE CHRISTIAN HOME**

We believe in the importance of Christian homes. A Christian home is where Christians reside. Both the celibate single and the heterosexual married life are honourable and respectable in the sight of God. In the Christian home, the lordship of Christ is recognized and people worship regularly. It is a place of security and peace; a place to learn to work, play and plan together. In the home, members are to regard one another as equals before the Lord, while recognizing God-given roles.

God instituted marriage for the intimate companionship of husband and wife and for the procreation and nurture of children. Marriage pictures the relationship between Christ and the church. God's will for marriage is the union of one man and one woman. Since it is a lifelong covenant, those who marry should share a common Christian commitment. Believers should not marry unbelievers. Social friendships which tend to lead towards courtship with unbelievers are discouraged.

God planned for marriage to be permanent. We believe that divorce violates God's intention for marriage. Divorce, permitted under the Law of Moses, was a concession to the sinfulness of people. It should not be seen as a solution to marital problems. Instead, couples with problems should seek spiritual or professional help to mend their marriages. The church must deal redemptively with those who have broken the marriage covenant. Even in judgement of sin, God deals redemptively. The church, too, must judge sin and yet exercise genuine forgiveness.

Our belief in a God who heals and our commitment to community enables the church to play a role in ending discord or domestic violence. The church should confront and counsel the abuser and provide comfort and safety for the abused. Separation may be necessary in certain cases of violence, sexual abuse or other serious

problems (Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 24; Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Malachi 2:13–16; Matthew 5:31–32; 19:4–12; Mark 10:1–12; 1 Corinthians 6:12–20; 7:7–9, 32–38; 2 Corinthians 6:14–16; Ephesians 5:21–6:4).

#### **4. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

We believe people should pattern all their relationships, personal and official, after Christ. He loved others and forgave those who mistreated him (Matthew 4:16–22; 5–7; Acts 11:26; 26:28; Romans 5:5; 12–13; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 4:32–5:2; Colossians 3:1–17; Titus 2:11–14; 1 Peter 2:13–24; 4:16).

#### **5. DEVOTIONAL LIFE**

We believe Christians should seek to know God better through studying the Scriptures, through prayer, fasting and Christian service. They should refrain from anything that would dishonour God, bring reproach to the church or exert a harmful influence on others or on themselves (Joshua 1:8; Matthew 4:2; Acts 17:11; 13:2–3; Romans 12:1–2, 9–21; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 11:2,3; Colossians 3:1–14; 1 Timothy 2:8–10; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; James 3:17–18; 1 Peter 3:1–6; 1 John 3:1–3).

#### **6. COMMITMENT TO SERVICE**

We believe Christian disciples seek to serve rather than to be served. They work to relieve suffering and would rather personally suffer than inflict pain on others. Disciples of Christ commit themselves to righteousness, justice, peace and love, in their homeland and in the global community. Foundational to these commitments is the commitment to the verbal proclamation of the Gospel (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 10:35–45; John 12:26; Acts 1:8; Galatians 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 9:14).

#### **7. DIVINE HEALING**

We believe that the redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ is for the whole person. God may choose to bring healing and encouragement through medical care, through prayer or through the anointing of oil and prayer by the elders of the church.

However, God often achieves his purposes through permitting suffering. Believers who find help and hope in suffering by faith in a sufficient God are valuable witnesses. Through faithfully enduring suffering, believers may experience a healing of the spirit. We should leave to God the results of all prayers and the means used. Our attitude should be the same as that of Jesus when he said, “Not my will but thine be done” (Matthew 8:1–17; 26:39; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10; James 5:13–18).

## **8. SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS**

We believe Christians are not to become part of any organizations where oaths or secret vows are required for membership or where such membership might foster the formation of intimate alliances with unbelievers.

Christians should not become involved in cults and in the occult (Matthew 7:15; John 3:21; Acts 19:17–20; 2 Corinthians 6:14–18; Ephesians 5:8–13; 1 Timothy 4:17; James 5:12; 1 John 4:1–2; 2 John 7).

## **9. THE STATE**

We believe that God has instituted human government.

We also believe this arrangement of government includes two basic functions: directing the interaction of society and serving as God’s agent of wrath or punishment.

Christians should respect civil authorities and pray for them; pay taxes; assume social responsibility; oppose corruption, discrimination and injustice; and obey all their requirements that do not conflict with the Scriptures.

Concerning the second function of the state, that of serving as God’s agent of wrath, the Scriptures urge Christians never to exercise vengeance but to leave it to God’s wrath. Authorities carry out this particular function; Christians leave vengeance to God.

We should determine all matters concerning the Christian and the state by carefully interpreting the Scriptures with a deep sensitivity to the moral problems involved (Matthew 4:8–10; 5:39–48; Luke 4:5–8; John 12:31; 16:11; 18:36; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Romans 12–14; 1

Timothy 2:1–3; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13–17; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 13).

## **10. LAWSUITS**

We believe Christians should take seriously what the Scriptures teach about lawsuits and strive to deal redemptively with victims and offenders, working for restitution and reconciliation. We believe Christians are not to initiate any lawsuits which would violate the principle of love (Matthew 5:38–48; Romans 12:17–21; 1 Corinthians 6:1–11; 1 Peter 2:19–21).

## **11. JURY SERVICE**

We believe regular court jury service to be incompatible with the non-resistant position. There is, however, a difference between an inquest (e.g., coroner’s jury) and a regular court jury (Matthew 5:38–48; John 18:36; Romans 12–13).<sup>1</sup>

## **12. SWEARING OF OATHS**

We believe that Christians should be people of integrity and truth. The Scriptures forbid the swearing of oaths and of anything beyond an affirmation (Matthew 5:33–37; James 5:12).<sup>2</sup>

## **13. FOOTWASHING**

We believe in the practice of footwashing. When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples he gave the church an example to follow. Footwashing is an expression of humility, love, and equality. It symbolizes cleansing from sin and a Christian’s commitment to a lifestyle of servanthood.

When we accept the washing of our feet by other Christians we demonstrate that we accept Jesus’ ministry to us. (John 13:1-20)

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<sup>1</sup> **The Canadian government requires its citizens to serve as jurors in a court of law. However, exceptions are made for members of Mennonite churches.**

<sup>2</sup> **An affirmation is accepted in Canadian courts and in other public offices.**



## **B. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION**

### **Section I.**

#### **THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The church expresses itself in local congregations. A congregation is a body of believers who have a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other. This covenant is visibly expressed by believer's baptism and by a membership commitment to a local church.

The congregation is a fellowship committed to practice love and intercession, mutual discipline and edification, healing and forgiveness.

The congregation organizes itself and conducts its work consistent with its God-given calling. This includes the orderly form of church membership, the exercise of church discipline, the calling of church leaders and the effective outreach of missions (Matthew 18:15-20; 28:18-20; Acts 6:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 6:1-6; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:1-6; Titus 1:5-6; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:9).

### **Section II.**

#### **MEMBERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

##### **1. CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP**

To qualify for membership in the local church, a person must

- a) have a personal faith commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b) have a witness of being a new creation in Christ.
- c) be in agreement with the Statement of Faith.
- d) be baptized on confession of faith.

##### **2. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS**

- a) Baptism

- 1) A person identifies with the local congregation by believer's baptism.
  - 2) A baptismal candidate shall
    - i) receive instruction in the faith.
    - ii) be examined as to commitment to Christ.
    - iii) be accepted as a candidate by the congregation.
    - iv) give a public testimony of a personal relationship to Christ.
  - 3) A covenant shall be made between the person being baptized and the local congregation to support and encourage each other and to work together as outlined in Section II, 3.
- b) Transfer
- 1) A non-resident member should be encouraged to transfer membership to an EMC or other believers' church.
  - 2) When a baptized member of an EMC church or other believers' church joins an EMC congregation, the transfer of membership should normally include the following:
    - i) a personal interview with the pastor (ministers)
    - ii) an acceptance of the EMC Statement of Faith
    - iii) a letter or certificate of transfer
    - iv) an advance announcement of intended transfer
    - v) a testimony to the congregation, either personally or by someone speaking on behalf of the candidate
    - vi) a covenant between the congregation and the new member mutually to support and encourage one another and to work together as outlined in Section II, 3.
- c) Associate Membership
- 1) The local church shall have the privilege to welcome a member from another believers' church or denomination as an associate member into its membership, provided that
    - i) the candidate qualifies in the same ways as candidates in full membership



- ii) it is understood to be temporary
- 2) The associate member has all church privileges, except voting and candidacy rights in ministerial elections and ordinations.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

Membership is a covenant relationship in which all the believers are committed to Christ and to each other. Each member of the congregation brings a giftedness for ministry, as well as the need to be ministered to by others (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:1–16).

It shall be the responsibility of the members

- a) to live godly lives and pursue holiness (Titus 2:12; Hebrews 12:14).
- b) to be concerned for the salvation of people outside of Christ, for the salvation and spiritual growth of their families and households, and for the welfare of the corporate church body (Romans 9:1–3; Galatians 6:10; Jude 22–23).
- c) to partake regularly of the Lord's Supper and in footwashing after self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:23–32).
- d) to read and study God's Word and to practice a life of prayer. This is to be done privately, as families, and in other suitable group settings, in order to receive help and guidance for Christian discipleship (Deuteronomy 6:5–9; Colossians 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:1–4; 2 Timothy 3:15).
- e) to participate regularly in the services of the church for personal growth and for the building up of the church, giving heed to the preaching of the Word and the counsel of spiritual leaders (Hebrews 10:19–25; 13:17).
- f) to nurture strong, wholesome relationships, whether single or married. Celibate life and heterosexual married life are both honourable and high callings from God. Both should be pursued with a concern to extend God's Kingdom and to serve Christ. This involves a commitment to enduring and healthy marriages, family relationships, and friendships,

characterized by love, discipline, purity and integrity (1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5:21–6:3; 1 Timothy 5:1–2).

- g) to seek to work faithfully within the guidelines and principles of the Conference Constitution.
- h) to serve within the local church and Conference structures as needed and called upon, giving and receiving counsel, working together to fulfil the Biblical mandate.
- i) to be faithful financial stewards by contributing regularly, generously and proportionately of their income to the local church and, through that channel, to EMC ministries in general (Matthew 6:19–21; 1 Corinthians 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8–9).

#### 4. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

##### a) The Intent

Restoration to full fellowship is the goal of all church discipline. Restoration is possible only through the atonement of Jesus Christ, by grace, through repentance and faith (1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 2:5–8; Ephesians 2:8–9). Discipline should focus on both sinful attitudes and actions. The restoration process may involve counselling and accountability to a spiritual overseer for a period of time (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Galatians 6:1–2; 2 Timothy 2:25–26).

##### b) The Procedure

- 1) When a member sins, spiritual people shall communicate privately their concern to the erring one, and shall work gently toward restoration.
- 2) If the member needing discipline does not respond to the counsel of one person, then two or three people shall endeavour to guide the member to repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:16).
- 3) If the private efforts of restoration fail, the local church shall be informed about the erring person. The response should be to pray for and warn the member personally and by written notice, with restoration as the goal (Matthew 18:17; Romans 16:17–18; 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15).
- 4) If all attempts at restoration fail, then the church is left with no alternative but to acknowledge, sadly and

publicly, that the erring person has broken covenant with God and His church. This includes a dismissal from membership in the church. The church should continue to long, pray and strive for restoration. This is fully possible through repentance and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, the Redeemer (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

### **Section III.**

#### **CHURCH LEADERS**

Local churches will be at different stages in their development and growth. Therefore, appropriate adaptations may need to be made in the application of the structures outlined in this section.

All leaders in the local church, whether ordained, commissioned or lay leaders, should be elected or appointed on the basis of spiritual qualifications and are accountable to the congregation. Ministers and deacons of the local congregation may function as the ministerial (Exodus 18:17-23; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-10).

#### **1. MINISTERIAL LEADERS**

##### **a) Pastors**

- 1) As a spiritual overseer, the pastor is the shepherd and guardian of the local fellowship of believers. This ministry is accomplished by studying and teaching, praying and preaching, and visiting and counselling on the basis of the Holy Scriptures. The pastor's life should be characterized by a servant attitude, an exemplary lifestyle and a spirit of submission (Matthew 20:25-28; Acts 20:28-31; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- 2) The pastor is responsible to oversee the life and work of the congregation for its spiritual well-being. Where the church has a plural ministry, the pastor and the ministerial shall work together.
- 3) The pastor or leading minister of a local church should be a male. He may be chosen from the local church

ministerial or membership, or may be called from another locality. Transfer of a pastor from one locality to another should be done in consultation with the Conference.

- 4) The local church shall make satisfactory arrangements with the incoming pastor. These include salary, housing and job description.

b) Ministers

- 1) Ministers may be elected from the male members and ordained or commissioned by the church.
- 2) Ministers share in the work of the pastor and function as a team under his leadership.

c) Deacons

- 1) The responsibility of deacons is to oversee the caregiving ministry in the local church and community, in cooperation and communication with the pastor and ministerial (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).
- 2) Married couples or individuals may be called to serve in appropriate areas of ministry.
- 3) Specific duties may include the following:
  - i) Overseeing a program of visitation, hospitality and encouragement.
  - ii) Promoting understanding and harmony within the church body and between the congregation and its leaders.
  - iii) Watching for any needs and crises that may arise and responding with counsel and emotional support.
  - iv) Supporting and assisting people who suffer loss or misfortune and administering local aid programs.
  - v) Assisting in the communion service.

d) Administrative Leaders

- 1) Local churches normally have a group of administrative leaders who work together with the pastor and ministerial in giving direction to the work of the church. Possible titles for this group are Board of Elders, Church Board, Council or Executive. The

chairman of the administrative leaders may also serve as the congregational chairman.

- 2) The administrative leaders are normally responsible for the following tasks:
  - i) Proposing policy for the operation of the church.
  - ii) Developing job descriptions for the various church offices.
  - iii) Setting short- and long-term strategies and goals.
  - iv) Coordinating the various departments in the church for a unified and balanced ministry, and terminating or initiating programs as needed in keeping with congregational goals.
  - v) Planning agenda for all congregational and annual meetings.
  - vi) Serving as the group through whom the pastor, other staff members, committees and departments are accountable to the congregation.
  - vii) Giving counsel, helping resolve problems and providing stability during times of crisis.
  - viii) Taking administrative responsibility for pastoral evaluation and transition.

e) Missionaries

- 1) Missionaries are workers of the local church who concentrate their time, effort and ministry outside of the local church community and its immediate area of ministry. Their work is evangelism, discipling, church planting and ministering to human needs. They are normally either ordained or commissioned.
- 2) Responsibilities of missionaries to the local church:
  - i) Keep the church informed of their activities, struggles and blessings.
  - ii) Identify with their home church when home from the field and become involved in its ministry as they are able.
- 3) Responsibilities of the local church to its missionaries:
  - i) Support and pray for its missionaries and visit them when possible.

- ii) Show sensitivity to their spiritual, emotional, physical and material needs.
- iii) Keep them informed about church life at home.

## 2. CALLING OF CHURCH LEADERS

### a) Calling

The calling of God to a church-related ministry comes through personal conviction and the initiative of the local church. Both should be born of the Holy Spirit and prayer. While it is not important which comes first, the personal call or the call by the local fellowship of believers, it is important to experience both. A person sensing a call should approach the home church. The church, sensing God's call to a person, should approach that member.

The local church should also encourage potential leaders to prepare for future ministry in the home church or other places of need (Acts 13:1-3).

### b) Elections

The local congregation may elect its leaders from its membership. Elections may be open or closed. In all elections there should be an effort to achieve unity.

- 1) A "closed" election is the high majority validation of one candidate by a secret ballot. For ordination the requirement is 80%.
- 2) An "open" election has more than one candidate. The congregation determines the method of nomination and the number of candidates. A majority of at least 50% constitutes a valid election.
- 3) The term of office of church leaders is determined by the local congregation.
- 4) Retirement is not mandatory at a particular age. Every congregation should consult with its elderly leaders to define what roles such leaders will have in the congregation.

### **3. EXAMINATION, ORDINATION AND COMMISSIONING OF CHURCH LEADERS**

(Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Timothy 5:22; 3:6; 2 Timothy 1:6)

#### **a) Examination**

Before anyone can become a member of the EMC ministerial or be ordained, that person must be approved by the Board of Leadership and Outreach in the following areas:

- 1) doctrinal position
- 2) spiritual integrity
- 3) concern for the welfare of people, both inside and outside the church

#### **b) Ordination**

Ordination is a rite by which a church and the Conference recognize the gift of spiritual leadership and service in a person. It involves commitment to a lifetime of service and acceptance of leadership privileges and responsibilities.

#### **c) Commissioning<sup>3</sup>**

Commissioning is a rite by which a church recognizes a gift of spiritual leadership in a person and sets apart such a person for a determined period of time and usually for a defined task.

### **4. EVALUATION OF PASTORS**

Periodic evaluation should take place. The purpose of the evaluation is to strengthen leaders for the benefit of the church.

### **5. RELOCATION OF LEADERS**

A pastor or other leader may not assume office in another EMC congregation or become a member of a local ministerial except by consent of that congregation. This occurs only after a transfer of membership.

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<sup>3</sup> For more information about this or for information about registration or licensing, see the Conference Handbook.

## 6. **DISCIPLINE OF CHURCH LEADERS**

When ordained or commissioned leaders are unsound in doctrine, disloyal to their vows as spiritual leaders, or of questionable moral conduct, it becomes the duty of the congregation to report the matter to the Conference. The Conference, in cooperation with the congregation, shall deal with the matter. If a congregation fails to act in such a case, then it becomes the duty of the Conference to take the initiative. The goal is spiritual restoration, with a view to future ministry.



## **C. CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION**

### **Section I.**

#### **NAME**

The name of the body shall be The Evangelical Mennonite Conference.

### **Section II.**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE**

The purpose of the Conference is to glorify God by building His Kingdom. This will be done by

1. proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ at home and abroad.
2. ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of people.
3. establishing and nurturing local congregations of believers.
4. building and maintaining community among member churches.
5. coordinating the concerns and resources of the member churches for the various ministries within the Kingdom of God.
6. forming affiliations with other groups within the body of Christ in order to carry out the worldwide mandate of the church.

### **Section III.**

#### **MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONFERENCE**

1. The Evangelical Mennonite Conference consists of all churches that are members of the Conference on the date of the adoption of this Constitution.
2. Membership in the Conference requires acceptance of the Conference Constitution.
3. All groups of believers established by the Conference or by any group or person within the Conference are encouraged to organize as a church and to apply to the EMC General Board for membership in the Conference.

4. Other local churches or groups of believers may also make application to the General Board for membership.
5. When the General Board is satisfied that the church or group understands and accepts the requirements for membership, the application shall be presented to the Conference Council for decision.
6. When a congregation wishes to withdraw from the Conference, it shall make its intention known to the General Board in writing. After having done any necessary counselling or consulting, the General Board brings the request to the Conference Council for its response.

## **Section IV.**

### **CONFERENCE AND CHURCH RELATIONS**

1. Individual congregations retain full privileges of self-determination within the framework of the Conference Constitution. However, membership in the Conference implies the responsible support of resolutions and programs developed together.
2. The Conference does not normally get involved with the affairs of the local church. However, Conference leaders or staff may assist local congregations as needs arise. When serious irregularities or problems occur in the local church, the General Board shall work prayerfully and redemptively toward a resolution of the problem. Any local church board, pastor or other group within the church has the right to approach the General Board for help.
3. The Conference retains the right to dismiss a local church from membership. Such a decision shall be made only after all other avenues of problem resolution have been exhausted. The decision to dismiss a church is made by the Conference Council, not earlier than two months after Council members have been informed of the problem. The vote to dismiss a church requires a two-thirds majority to carry.

## **THE CONFERENCE MINISTERIAL**

### **1. Membership**

The Ministerial consists of all ministers and deacons within the Conference. Ministers and deacons become members of the Ministerial when they have been processed and approved by the Board of Leadership and Outreach.

### **2. Purpose**

- a) To meet for spiritual fellowship, mutual sharing and counselling in the work of the ministry.
- b) To strengthen the bond of unity among the ministers and deacons of the Conference.
- c) To give direction to the Conference in theological issues, spiritual and ethical matters and social concerns.

## **Section V.**

### **THE CONFERENCE COUNCIL**

#### **1. The Council Members**

- a) Each church has representatives on the Council. The representation is i) one delegate per fifty members or less, and ii) the pastor or other official leader of that congregation, and iii) the church board chairperson of that congregation. In addition, all members of Conference Boards are also members of the Conference Council.
- b) The term of office for the church representatives is determined by the local church.
- c) It is the duty of the Council members to attend the Conference sessions, to represent their local churches as they participate in Conference business and to strengthen Conference/church relationships by representing and interpreting Conference issues and concerns at the local level.

## 2. The Role of the Council

- a) Receive reports from all Boards and have the final authority over all Board action.
- b) Approve the annual budget.
- c) Amend the Constitution.
- d) Approve all changes in general Conference policies.
- e) Consider applications of churches wishing to join the Conference.
- f) Authorize the release of a local church from membership in the Conference.
- g) Receive reports from para-Conference organizations directly related to the Council.
- h) Elect Conference officers, members on Conference Boards and representatives on para-Conference organizations.

## 3. Council Meetings

- a) The Council meets at least once a year. Time and place are determined by the General Board.
- b) Observers may attend Conference Council sessions but do not have voting privileges.

## **Section VI.**

### **THE GENERAL BOARD**

#### 1. General Board Members

The Evangelical Mennonite Conference is divided into regions. The General Board is composed of one ministerial member from each region; the chairpersons of the Board of Leadership and Outreach, the Board of Missions, the Board of Church Ministries, and the Board of Trustees; the Moderator and the Vice-moderator. Each region is responsible for electing or appointing its Board member and determining the term of office.

#### 2. Election of Moderator and Vice-moderator

- a) The Moderator and Vice-moderator are elected by the Conference Council. Nominees must have been ordained for three years.
- b) The terms of office of the Moderator and Vice-moderator are two years. If a moderator has served two consecutive terms, one year must elapse before he can be re-elected.

### 3. Duties of General Board

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

### 4. General Board Executive

- a) The Executive consists of the Moderator, the Vice-moderator and three other members appointed annually by the Board from the regional representatives, one of these being the Secretary.
- b) The Executive carries out Board duties between Board meetings.

5. Duties of Executive Officers

- a) The Moderator presides at all meetings of the General Board, the Executive and the Conference Council and at the Annual Convention.
- b) The Vice-moderator, in the absence of the Moderator, or when assigned by him, exercises all or any of the rights and duties of the Moderator.
- c) The Secretary assures that minutes are recorded and distributed of all meetings conducted under the jurisdiction of the General Board.

6. Signing for the Conference

Two signatures are required for any legal document relating to the operation of the Conference. Signers are two of the following: the Moderator, the Vice-moderator and the chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

## **Section VII.**

### **THE CONFERENCE BOARDS**

1. Elections, Terms and General Duties

- a) Members of the Board of Missions, Board of Church Ministries, Board of Trustees and Board of Leadership and Outreach are elected by the Conference Council at the annual convention.
- b) The terms of office are three years.
- c) In the event of a Board vacancy occurring during a member's term of office, the General Board may appoint a replacement to complete that term.
- d) Each Board may appoint two members-at-large. These appointments are made for one year at a time, for a maximum of three consecutive years.
- e) Each Board may appoint representative members to Conference-affiliated agencies related to its jurisdiction.

- f) Each Board may appoint committees as needed to take care of any Board projects and programs.
- g) The Boards are self-organizing.
- h) The Boards report to the General Board and the Conference Council. They function under the direction of the Conference Council.
- i) The Boards appoint and supervise staff in accordance with policies established by the Conference Council.

## 2. Board of Leadership and Outreach

- a) It consists of seven elected members. A minimum of four must be members of the EMC Ministerial.
- b) Duties:
  - 1) Serve as the executive for the Conference Ministerial.
  - 2) Arrange for the examination of Ministerial candidates.
  - 3) Identify and respond to theological issues.
  - 4) Identify and respond to spiritual and social concerns.
  - 5) Arrange Ministerial activities.
  - 6) Foster pastoral fellowship.
  - 7) Promote recruitment, orientation and training of ministers.
  - 8) Cooperate with local congregations or regions in Canadian evangelism and church planting.

## 3. Board of Missions

- a) It consists of seven elected members.
- b) Duties:
  - 1) Promote missions according to the Scriptures and the directives of the Conference Council.
  - 2) Receive counsel from the Conference Ministerial in theological matters.
  - 3) Inform the Conference of the Board's activities.
  - 4) Establish goals of the mission programs, formulate basic policies and enter new fields under the authority of the Conference Council.

## 4. Board of Church Ministries

- a) It consists of seven elected members.
- b) Duties:
  - 1) Provide resources and services to help congregations with Christian education, family life teaching, music ministries and youth work.
  - 2) Minister to post-high school students and make arrangements for Conference youth events.
  - 3) Produce Conference publications and periodicals.
  - 4) Promote the writing and publication of Christian literature.
  - 5) Administer the Conference Archives.

5. Board of Trustees

- a) It consists of five elected members.
- b) Duties:
  - 1) Prepare the annual budget.
  - 2) Raise funds and manage all Conference money.
  - 3) Manage the Conference Office.
  - 4) Administer the Church Building Loan Fund.
  - 5) Promote stewardship and estate planning.
  - 6) Prepare and present an annual audited financial statement to the Conference Council.

## **Section VIII.**

### **REPRESENTATIVES ON AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS**

1. Appointments

- a) Representatives are appointed by a particular Board in accordance with policies set by the Conference Council.
- b) Duties
  - 1) Represent faithfully Conference needs, wishes and decisions.
  - 2) Report regularly to their appointing bodies.



## **Section IX.**

### **THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee consists of eleven members elected by the Conference Council for three years.

1. Duties
  - a) Select enough candidates for all elected offices of the Conference, other than the Nominating Committee.
  - b) Conduct annual elections.

## **Section X.**

### **HOLDING PROPERTY**

All Conference property is held in the name of the Corporation. This includes real estate, moneys, other properties, legacies and donations held in trust and used by the Conference for its work.

1. Local Church Privileges
  - a) It is the privilege of any Conference church, as well as any agency, group or official functionary of the Conference, to place any of its property and possessions into custody of the Conference, provided that the procedure is acceptable to the General Board.
  - b) Any property transferred into the Corporation remains under the authority of the church, group or agency under whose ownership such property was transferred. Exceptions are stated in Section XI, 3. a. and b.
  - c) Whenever a mission church becomes a Conference member, the Conference transfers the property of that group to the newly organized church, as agreed upon between the Board of Missions and the church concerned.
2. Property in Cases of Dismissal or Severance

- a) When a Conference church, in which at least twenty percent of the members request to stay in the Conference, is dismissed from the Conference, the saleable value of its property is calculated and settlement is made on a per capita basis.
- b) When a local church with internal divisions secedes from the Conference, the property of that church remains Conference property, except where at least seventy-five percent of its members vote to secede. In that case, the saleable value of its property is calculated, and settlement is made on a per capita basis.
- c) The vote to secede is held at a meeting of the congregation called at least one month in advance of the meeting.

### 3. Safeguards of Local Church Property

In order to preserve and protect the right of each local church to hold property and to safeguard its privilege to place its property into the Conference, Section XI, sub-section 2.b. cannot be repealed or altered except by unanimous vote at an annual session of the Conference Council.

## **Section XI.**

### **AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

Amendments to the Constitution are made only with a two-thirds majority vote of the Conference Council. At least two months must elapse between the motion to amend and the voting on that motion. Motions to amend the Constitution are to reach all local churches at least one month before the voting.

## **D. BILL OF INCORPORATION**

### **THE SENATE OF CANADA**

#### **BILL S-11**

#### **An Act to incorporate The Evangelical Mennonite Conference**

##### **PREAMBLE**

Whereas a petition has been presented praying that it be enacted as hereinafter set forth, and it is expedient to grant the prayer of the petition: Therefore Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

##### **INCORPORATION**

1. David Plett Reimer, clergyman, of the postal district of Giroux; Archie Penner, clergyman, of the town of Steinbach; and Peter Loewen Friesen, clergyman, of the postal district of Morris; all in the province of Manitoba, are hereby incorporated under the name of

##### **CORPORATE NAME**

The Evangelical Mennonite Conference, hereinafter called “the Corporation,” for the purposes set out in this Act and for the purpose of administering the property, business and other temporal affairs of the Corporation.

##### **DIRECTORS**

2. The persons named in section 1 of this Act shall be the first directors of the Corporation.

##### **HEAD OFFICE**

3. a) The head office of the Corporation shall be in the town of Steinbach, in the province of Manitoba, or at such other place as may be decided by the Corporation.

## **NOTICE OF CHANGE**

- a) Notice in writing shall be given to the Secretary of State by the Corporation of any change of the head office and such notice shall be published forthwith in the Canada Gazette.

## **OBJECTS**

4. The objects of the Corporation shall be
  - a) to promote, maintain, superintend and carry on in accordance with the Christian faith, doctrines, constitution, acts and rulings of the Corporation any or all of the work of that body;
  - b) to advance and increase the diffusion of the Christian faith of the Corporation in all lawful ways;
  - c) to organize, maintain and carry on churches and missions and to erect and maintain and conduct therein churches, seminaries, schools, colleges, hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages and homes for the aged;
  - d) to promote the erection and purchase of houses of worship and parsonages;
  - e) to administer the property, business and other temporal affairs of the Corporation;
  - f) to establish, support and maintain a publishing house for the purpose of printing and disseminating Gospel literature for the support of the doctrines and faith of the Corporation;
  - g) to promote the spiritual welfare of all the congregations and mission fields of the Corporation.

## **POWER TO MAKE BY-LAWS**

5. The Corporation may from time to time make by-laws not contrary to law, for
  - a) the administration, management and control of the property, business and other temporal affairs of the Corporation;
  - b) the appointment, functions, duties and remuneration of all offices, agents and servants of the Corporation;
  - c) the appointment or deposition of an executive committee or any special committees or boards from time to time

- created for the purposes of the Corporation, and defining the powers of such committees or boards;
- d) the calling of regular or special meetings of the Corporation or of the executive committee or the board of directors;
  - e) fixing the necessary quorum and the procedure to be followed at all meetings referred to in the preceding paragraph;
  - f) determining the qualifications of members;
  - g) defining and applying the principles, doctrine and religious standards of the Corporation;
  - h) generally carrying out the objects and purposes of the Corporation.

## **MANAGEMENT**

- 6. Subject to and in accordance with the by-laws enacted by the Corporation under section 5, an executive committee consisting of such persons as the Corporation may from time to time elect or appoint thereto shall manage all the temporal affairs of the Corporation.

## **INCIDENTAL POWERS**

- 7. The Corporation may do all such lawful things as are incidental or as may be conducive to the attainment of its objects.

## **COMMITTEES**

- 8. The Corporation may exercise all its powers by and through an executive committee or through such boards or committees as may from time to time be elected or appointed by the Corporation for the management of its affairs.

## **POWER TO ACQUIRE AND HOLD PROPERTY**

- 9. a) The Corporation may purchase, take, have, hold, receive, possess, retain and enjoy property, real and personal, corporeal and incorporeal, and any or every estate or interest whatsoever, given, granted, devised or bequeathed to it, or appropriated, purchased for or in favour of the uses and purposes of the Corporation, or to, for or in favour of any religious, educational, eleemosynary or other institution established or intended to be established by, under the

management of, or in connection with the uses or purposes of the Corporation.

- b) The Corporation may also hold real property or estate therein as is bona fide mortgaged to it by way of security, or conveyed to it in satisfaction of debts or judgements recovered.

#### **INVESTMENT IN AND DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY**

- 10. Subject always to the terms of any trust relating thereto, the Corporation may also sell, convey, exchange, alienate, mortgage, lease or demise any real property held by the Corporation, whether by way of investment for the uses and purposes of the Corporation or not; and may also from time to time, invest all or any of its funds, or moneys, and all or any of its funds or moneys vested in or acquired by it for the uses and purposes aforesaid, in and upon any security by way of mortgage, hypothec or charge upon real property; and for the purpose of such investment may take, receive and accept mortgages or assignments thereof, whether made and executed directly to the Corporation or to any corporation, body, company or person in trust for it; and may sell, grant, assign and transfer such mortgages or assignments either wholly or partly.

#### **OBLIGATION TO DISPOSE OF LANDS**

- 11. a) No parcel of land or interest therein at any time acquired by the Corporation and not required for its actual use or occupation, and not held by way of security, shall be held by the Corporation, or by any trustee on its behalf, for a longer period than ten years after the acquisition thereof, but shall, at or before the expiration of such period, be absolutely sold or disposed of, so that the Corporation shall no longer retain any interest or estate therein except by way of security.

#### **EXTENSION OF TIME**

- b) The Secretary of State may extend the time for the sale or disposal of any such parcel of land, or any estate or interest therein, for a further period or periods not to exceed five years.

- c) The whole period during which the corporation may hold any such parcel of land, or any estate or interest therein, under the foregoing provisions of this section, shall not exceed fifteen years from the date of acquisition thereof, or after it shall have ceased to be required for actual use or occupation by the Corporation.
- d) Any such parcel of land or any estate or interest therein, not within the exemptions hereinbefore mentioned, which has been held by the Corporation for a longer period than authorized by the foregoing provisions of this section without being disposed of, shall be forfeited to Her Majesty for the use of Canada.
- e) The Corporation shall give the Secretary of State, when required, a full and correct statement of all lands, at the date of such statement, held by the Corporation, or in trust for it, and subject to the provisions of this section.

#### **APPLICATION OF MORTMAIN LAWS**

12. In regard to any real property which, by reason of its situation or otherwise, is subject to the legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada, a licence in mortmain shall not be necessary for the exercise of the powers granted by this Act; but otherwise the exercise of the said powers shall in any province of Canada be subject to the laws of such province as to the acquisition and holding of lands by religious corporations, insofar as such laws apply to the Corporation.

#### **TRANSFER OF PROPERTY HELD IN TRUST**

13. Insofar as authorization by the Parliament of Canada is necessary, any person or corporation, in whose name any property, real or personal is held, in trust or otherwise, for the uses and purposes of the Corporation, or any such person or corporation to whom such property devolves, may, subject always to the terms and conditions of any trust relating to such property, transfer such property or any part thereof to the Corporation.

#### **EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS**

14. Any deed or other instrument relating to real estate vested in the Corporation or to any interest in such real estate shall, if executed within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada, be deemed to be duly executed if there is affixed thereto the seal of the Corporation and there is thereon the signature of any two officers of the Corporation duly authorized for such purpose, or of his lawful attorney.

#### **DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY BY GIFT OR LOAN**

15. The Corporation may make a gift of or lend any of its property, whether real or personal, for or to assist in the erection or maintenance of any building or buildings deemed necessary for any church, manse, seminary, college, school or hospital or for any other religious, charitable, educational, congregational or social purpose upon such terms and conditions as it may deem expedient.

#### **BORROWING POWERS**

16. a) The Corporation may, for time to time, for the purposes of the Corporation
  - 1) borrow money upon the credit of the Corporation;
  - 2) limit or increase the amount to be borrowed;
  - 3) make, draw, accept, endorse or become party to promissory notes and bills of exchange, and every such note or bill made, drawn, accepted or endorsed by the party thereto, authorized by the by-laws of the Corporation, and countersigned by the proper party thereto, authorized by the by-laws of the Corporation, shall be binding upon the Corporation and shall be presumed to have been made, drawn, accepted or endorsed with proper authority until the contrary is shown; and it shall not be necessary in any case to have the seal of the Corporation affixed to any such note or bill;
  - 4) mortgage, hypothecate or pledge any property of the Corporation, real or personal, to secure the repayment of any money borrowed for the purposes of the Corporation;
  - 5) issue bonds, debentures or other securities of the Corporation;



- 6) pledge or sell such bonds, debentures or other securities for such sums and at any such prices as may be deemed expedient.

### **LIMITATION**

- b) Nothing in the preceding subsection shall be construed to authorize the Corporation to issue any note or bill payable to bearer thereof, or any promissory note intended to be circulated as money or as the note or bill of a bank, or to engage in the business of banking or insurance.

### **INVESTMENT OF FUNDS**

17. The Corporation may invest and reinvest any of its funds
  - a) in any bonds or debentures of any municipality or public school corporation or district in Canada, or in securities of or guaranteed by the Government of Canada or of any province thereof;
  - b) in the first mortgages on freehold property in Canada and for the purposes of the same may take mortgages or assignments thereof whether such mortgages or assignments be made directly to the Corporation in its own corporate name or to some company or person in trust for it, and may sell and assign the same;
  - c) in any securities in which life insurance companies are authorized from time to time by the Parliament of Canada to invest funds subject to the limitation of investments in stocks, bonds and debentures set out in the Canadian and British Insurance Companies Act (R.S., c. 31).

### **JURISDICTION**

18. The Corporation may exercise its functions throughout Canada.

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