

Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online

Report to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada
December 4, 1999

In October we added the Encyclopedia's 2000th article. The article referred to a peace statement approved during the Korean War by the joint U.S.-Canadian Peace Problems Committee of the Mennonite Church. Since our last annual meeting over 375 articles have been added to CMEO. Most of these were adaptations from volume 5 of the print *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. Topical articles from the earlier *ME* volumes have also been added. Almost 300 of these were added during Sam Steiner's sabbatical in the summer of 1999; his project also included some redesign of the web site and search engine and the addition of some multi-media features to a few articles. Another addition to the site in the past year was an introductory bibliography on Mennonites prepared by David Giesbrecht.

Presently about half CMEO's articles provide information on Canadian Mennonite congregations; the remainder are source documents, biographies, conferences, institutions and theological/historical subjects. Among the more recent additions are over twenty source documents, including major confessions of faith (some in translation), the classical Elbing catechism, and statements on a variety of theological issues by denominational bodies. The documents include a brief commentary outlining the origin of the document, and are referenced from the articles by the denominational bodies that created them. CMEO has received blanket approval from the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church Canada to publish all their formal statements in this way; it is hoped to approach other Canadian Mennonite denominational bodies as well for similar authorization.

A subgroup of the editorial committee based in Winnipeg, is continuing work on the criteria and formula for new articles, beginning with Mennonite institutions in Canada. That group will report separately.

The "Mennonites in Canada" site is presently receiving over 350 unique "hits" a week; over 250 of these proceed to the Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. For those interested in statistics, when search engines are used, about 38% of our hits come from Yahoo, 17% from Excite, 14% from Alta Vista and 10% from GoTo. It is also interesting to note that 36% of those coming to our site use some version of Netscape 4.x, 32% use Internet Explorer (IE) 4.0, 20% use IE 5.0, and 6% use Netscape 3.0.

Jon Harder, the manager of MennoLink, an independent inter-Mennonite Internet information service, says the Encyclopedia is "one of the top 5 Mennonite sites online." He adds, "I refer people with specific questions to it all the time." The Britannica Internet Guide describes CMEO as "noteworthy" and the Netscape Open Directory has awarded it an "editor's choice."

The "Who are the Mennonites" section of the web site has been much less successful. For reasons that are not clear less than 10 persons per week explore this part of the web site. The editorial committee, which is meeting just prior to the annual meeting, may want to consider to spend more effort on this part of the site, or whether to eliminate it in favor of other Mennonite "introductory" sites like the "Third Way Café".

Submitted by Sam Steiner,
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