



*Common Spirit, an SCN community from its inception, will be welcomed as a fellowship at the COB Annual Conference this week.*

## **NewsNet June 2010 - Happy Pride**

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### **1. Mennonite Church Canada Assembly (June 28-July 2, Calgary)**

#### **Proposed Discernment Model:**

At last year's assembly the General Secretary, Jack Suderman, presented a [paper](#) discussing how ongoing discernment on various issues is a necessary part of being a faithful church. The paper proposed a model for discernment, and identified five themes that "require ongoing attention," including "human sexuality in the life of the church." This year the delegate body will be practicing this discernment model on the issue of being a peace church ([2010 paper](#)). Some smaller groups will be practicing discernment on other issues, including sexuality.

Practicing a discernment model is not actually discerning, nor is it making a decision or taking action. Nonetheless, a discernment model that is fair, allows for a plurality of voices and is particularly sensitive to those most impacted is usually good news for the LGBTQ and allied community. We are interested in your insights, and invite you to evaluate the discernment model and share your comments with BMC and your area church / denominational leaders.

#### **Notice of 2011 Motion:**

Several individuals from MC Canada congregations have submitted a notice of a motion that will be presented at next year's Assembly. The motion calls for the revocation of the [1986 and 1987 resolutions](#) on sexuality. If you are interested in discussing the [2011 draft resolution](#), the writers can be contacted through the BMC office.

### **2. Activities at Brethren Annual Conference (July 3-7, Pittsburgh)**

If you attend a Brethren congregation, please pass on these announcements:

### **BMC Luncheon: Tuesday July 6th, 12-1:30**

At [Smithfield UCC](#), a welcoming congregation three blocks from the Convention Center. Hear a general update on BMC activities, as well as individual reflections upon the value of welcoming congregations. Reserve your sandwich (indicate turkey or vegetarian) for \$12 by signing up at the BMC mobile booth or stopping by the VOS booth before Monday. If you don't want a sandwich, just show up!

### **BMC Community Meeting: Tuesday July 6th, 1:30-3**

Also at [Smithfield UCC](#), following the luncheon. A chance to talk about the welcoming movement - you are invited to bring any questions along with the wisdom of your own experiences to an open and relaxed conversation convened by Carol Wise.

### **Wear Rainbow Scarves**

Join Womaen's Caucus again this year by creating a visible lgbt-supportive presence. Pick up a FREE rainbow scarf from the Womaen's Caucus booth, or join the crochet corps and help make them ([instructions and details](#)).

### **BMC Mobile Booth**

As BMC was denied a booth this year before we even asked, we will once again be rolling out the mobile booth, spreading welcome wherever we go. Volunteers are needed to staff the booth. Please contact Carrie Fry-Miller ([carriebeth.fm@gmail.com](mailto:carriebeth.fm@gmail.com)) for details and to volunteer.

## **3. Progressive Brethren Launch New Website**

A new website, [www.progressivebrethren.org](http://www.progressivebrethren.org) has been launched. This is a joint venture of VOS, Womaen's Caucus, and BMC that aims to collect in one place all the information progressive Brethren need to network, inform and resource themselves in order to work for change in the Church and world. The site includes resources for the Special Response Process and online registration for the next Progressive Gathering.

## **4. Progressive Brethren Gathering (November 12-14, Indiana)**

Progressive Brethren are invited to the Manchester Church of the Brethren in Indiana on November 12-14, for the third Progressive Brethren Gathering. Noting the importance of new conversation topics and partners in order for the church to remain relevant and alive, the planning committee has chosen the theme, Forward Together: Conversations Toward an Enlivened Community. Ruthann Kneckel Johansen, President of Bethany Theological Seminary, will be our featured speaker. Her selected topic is Becoming Incarnational People. To download a brochure or register for the conference, go to [www.progressivebrethren.org](http://www.progressivebrethren.org). This event is sponsored by Womaen's Caucus, Voices for an Open Spirit, and BMC.

## **5. Rainbow Scarves**

Didn't get a chance to make a rainbow scarf for the Brethren Annual Conference? There's still time to dust off those hooks and needles before the National Youth Conference (July 17-22)! The La Verne Church of the Brethren youth attending NYC invite those who knit or crochet to make rainbow scarves. [Directions](#) can be found on the Womaen's Caucus website. Mail to: Maurice Shenk, 1601 West Swallow Rd., Unit 6-D, Ft. Collins CO 80526.

## **6. Marriage Equality Conference in Iowa**

Midwesterners are invited to the campus of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa on August 13-14 to explore ways to expand marriage equality to neighboring states, maintain it in Iowa, and build alliances and support for work throughout the heartland. The conference will bring together Midwestern PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), allies, faith-based groups, legislative leaders and policy makers for a lively time of conversation, workshops and keynotes. Cost of the event is \$50. To access a conference brochure and registration form, go to [www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/humanRights/ConferenceBrochure.pdf](http://www.icgov.org/site/CMSv2/file/humanRights/ConferenceBrochure.pdf).

## **7. Lesbian Mothers Study**

According to a 20+ year study recently published in the Journal of Pediatrics

(<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/peds.2009-3153v1>), adolescent sons and daughters raised in planned lesbian families are doing just fine. In fact, the 17-year-olds "were rated significantly higher in social, school/academic, and total competence and significantly lower in social problems, rule-breaking, aggressive, and externalizing problem behavior than their age-matched counterparts." This is one more reason to believe that what children need most is to be loved and wanted by adults of any gender.

## 8. Congratulations to Johanna Sigurdardottir

Iceland's Prime Minister married her partner, Jonina Leosdottir, on June 27, the same day that Iceland became the the 9th country to legalize same-sex marriage. Sigurdardottir is the first openly gay head of state in modern times. Can you name the other eight countries with marriage equality?

## 9. Happy Belated Pride Month!



Pride is a time to celebrate the LGBTQ community and affirm our lives as good. Pride is most often celebrated at the end of June in memory of the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion, usually heralded as the beginning of the modern LGBTQ liberation movement. Communities often celebrate with parades, fireworks, picnics, parties, film festivals and other gatherings. It's a good time to show your pride by making a commitment to ensuring that your church or community is a safe and just place for LGBTQ people and our families.

Picture: BMCers LaVonne Blowers and Eileen Wilson showing their support in the Portland Pride Parade.

## 10. Take Action

BMC operates outside of official denominational structures, which continue to be closed to us. This allows a certain amount of freedom, but also creates many barriers. BMC does not have access to normal channels of communication to congregations and leaders. The average person in the pew often does not have access to information about who BMC is, or what we do. Be a BMC Ambassador by:

- + sharing this email or other BMC articles and resources
- + witnessing about your own experiences related to BMC
- + advocating for the importance of becoming an affirming congregation

## 11. Upcoming Travel

July 3-7 - Carol at Brethren Annual Conference in Pittsburgh

July 22-25 - Carol and Kirsten in Chicago with Christian Peacemaker Teams

Sept 24-26 - Carol and Kirsten in Washington DC for board meeting

*If we're going to be in your area, let us know! We'd love to meet with you.*

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## BMC Staff

[Carol Wise](#) - Executive Director, SCN Coordinator

[Kirsten Freed](#) - Kaleidoscope Coordinator, BMC Volunteer

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