

Simonhouse Bible Camp



Fact & Information Sheet

For potential Church Members

Does the conference support the camp?

Yes, the camp receives an annual grant from the conference, which they have committed to continue at least through the foreseeable future. Recently there has been some additional money which gave us an additional staff person for one year and another year allowed us to replace our seriously aged 15-passenger van.

What is the size of your annual budget?

For 2011 our budget is \$280,000.

What future plans or ideas do you have?

This could take a number of pages to write. We want to do more during the year to stay connected with our campers and help disciple them. We also want to reach further out into communities and reserves in order to evangelize. This could be a team of people that work year round connecting with campers and other youth providing Bible Studies, encouragement, support, etc. It could include operating drop in centres in critical areas. It could mean connecting more in the reserves with leaders to work with them and support their young people, all while "Pointing Lives To Jesus!" How we do this is being figured out and worked on, but the end result is a larger, and more lasting impact for the Kingdom of God!

How many staff do you have?

We have only have one full-time staff person. During the summer we have approximately 25 young people who commit for the whole summer working as Counselors, Counselors-In-Training, kitchen helpers, and programming staff. We also have a number of other people who come in for a week or so at a time helping as cooks, maintenance, etc. All told, we usually have about 45-60 different people help each summer. In order to begin doing more, particularly year round work with the youth, we will need to increase our year round staff beyond one person.

What programs do you run?

Our Summer Program currently consists of a week of staff training, a Senior High Camp (14-17), two weeks of Junior High camps (11-13), two weeks of Junior Camps (8-10) and a three day camp for six to eight year olds. Additionally we run two Weekend Youth Retreats, one in June and one in September. We also host the Northern Bible Conference, for the MB churches of the north and the Northern Women's Retreat for the MB churches in the north. There are also other churches who rent our facilities to host their own programs and we rent our facilities for a few school groups and other organizations.

There are camps closer to home for us, so why should we partner with a camp so far away?

This is a legitimate question and in part, forms the answer. The bulk of the camps and churches in the province are in the lower portion of Manitoba. There are many more supporting churches in the south than the north. Most businesses will support the organizations closest to them which means that we get rejected for funding quite often because of our distance. If you are currently supporting another camp and are unable to be a partner with SBC we fully understand that and aren't here to "steal" support. However, if you aren't connected with a camp we hope that you will be excited by what you hear is going on here and consider partnering with us! Camp is such an effective ministry. This past summer alone out of 365 campers we had 51 make first time commitments (that we know of) for the Lord! Now these young people need to be disciplined and encouraged. Being far away also has an element of adventure to it. Many youth pastors would probably comment that half the fun of going somewhere to do missions is the road trip. I know that for me, when I think back to past missions trips, the road trip was always very memorable. Instead of the distance being viewed as negative, it should be viewed as positive. For the crews that have done projects at the camp, that road trip was a great bonding time for them. When I drive staff up from Winnipeg to camp at the beginning of summer in the 15-Passenger van, that road trip is a great ice breaker and chance for the young people to get to know each other. The trip is ministry too.

How do you define support?

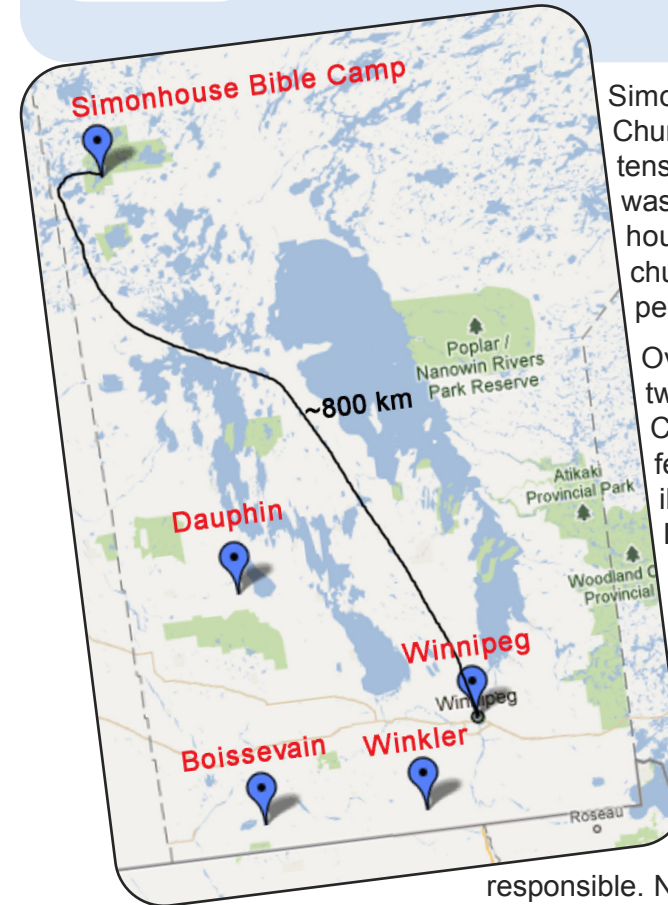
The support we are looking for as a partner church, includes regular informed prayer for the camp, encouraging your young people to work at the camp to gain hands on, invaluable experiences in ministry (which prepares them for service back in your church), financial support, support from individuals, families and groups who may want to serve hands on at the camp, and to have a voice at the camps' annual AGM giving vision and direction to the Board, electing Board members to provide leadership, etc. There probably are other definitions of support as well. Often the term support is in direct reference to finances. We see finances as one of the many definitions of support.

Since the AGM is a big part of a member church's involvement, can you explain how that will work?

Member churches can send three (3) voting delegates to the AGM. These delegates will vote on the budget, elect Board members, etc. Currently our plan is to have the AGM at the camp in the month of May. While our fiscal year-end is the same as the calendar year-end we feel that holding the AGM in May will have a number of benefits. It will mean that the roads are much safer to travel particularly for those who come from a distance. We also want to make the AGM more than just a meeting. We would encourage the delegates to bring their families with them for a Fun Day at the camp. We will have our spring staff on site who will plan some fun activities and give delegate families a great experience!

We are excited about what is happening in the north! How do we become a member church?

Just fill out the "Church Membership with Simonhouse Camp Inc." form and send it to the camp. We'll get in touch with you.



Simonhouse Bible Camp was an initiative of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba (the "Conference") through the Missions & Church Extension (MCE) Board in the late 70's. It was during this time that the north was a key initiative for MCE as six MB churches were planted and Simonhouse Bible Camp was established. Today there are still four MB churches and the camp in the north playing a vital role ministering to the people of northern Manitoba.

Over the past few years there has been considerable discussion between the Conference and various stakeholders of Simonhouse Bible Camp in regards to the relationship of the camp with that of the Conference. The Conference asked the camp to incorporate, following similar actions with Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute and Family Life Network. Prior to 2009, Simonhouse Bible Camp reported to the Conference through the Missions and Church Extension Board. With the adoption of a new governance model for the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba, the MCE Board no longer exists and the MCE director is the only remaining link between the Camp and the Conference. Charging one person with the responsibility for the operations of a camp 800 km's away was not seen as a reasonable or practical expectation. Even though a Camp Committee did exist and did a great job taking care of the issues, the Board of Management under the previous governance structure was ultimately financially

responsible. Now this was being channeled through the MCE Director who sits on the Camp Committee. Developing an independent board which would be responsible for all aspects of the Camp became more important. Secondly, the Conference began having some reservations about carrying all the liability for a camp for which it did not make operational decisions for and ultimately asked Simonhouse Bible Camp to incorporate. At Assembly 2010, MBCM recommended the incorporation of SBC, which passed the vote. In October of 2010 our incorporation with the government was granted.

Now, we still have some work to do. Part of structuring a corporation is to identify the "members" of the organization. According to our constitution, the "membership" is composed mostly of "church members" while it does also allow for a few members to be individuals. The membership has both privileges and responsibility as described in the attached form "Church Membership with Simonhouse Camp, Inc."

My five summers on staff at Simonhouse have prepared me for full time work in ministry. I feel confident in leading a team of volunteers and students at Eastview Community Church because of my experiences leading staff at Simonhouse. I highly encourage our youth to attend or staff at Simonhouse in the summers. Simonhouse trains young people in leadership, teamwork, and spiritual growth. I speak highly of Simonhouse everywhere I go, and encourage young people to get up there and be involved in the north.

~Cory J. Bell~
Student Ministries Director
Eastview Community Church, Winnipeg

It is our hope that your church will consider partnering with us in our ministry here in northern Manitoba by becoming a "member church" of the corporation.

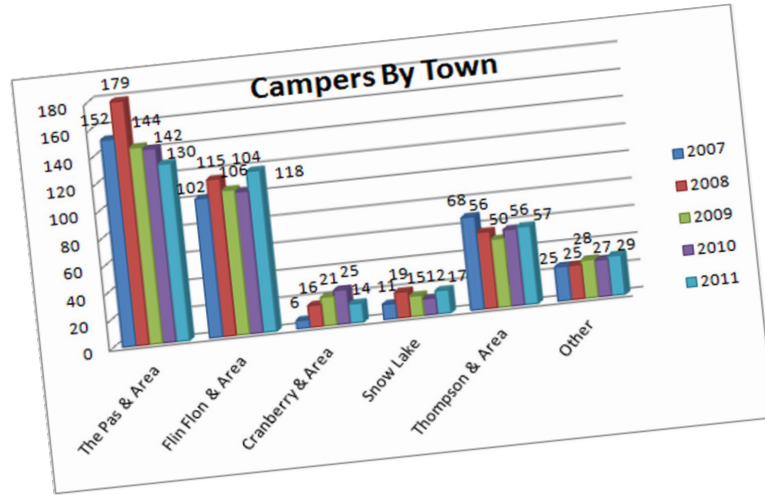
Enclosures:

- Invitational & Promo DVD
- SBC Mission Statement
- SBC Constitution
- "Church Membership with Simonhouse Camp, Inc." Form

Darrell Janzen
Executive Director



Quick Facts...



Simonhouse Bible Camp offers an incredible training ground for youth and young adults to put practical faith into action. The encounters that young people have with God and other people while they are trained as leaders in serving at Simonhouse often end up being a jumping point for future missions, and lifestyle evangelism. Churches can talk about this and do it in Short Term Mission Trips, but encouraging youth and young people to go to Simonhouse for a summer or more gives a far broader picture of what living faith can really look like, right in our own backyard. Getting involved with Simonhouse by supporting the camp (both financially and with volunteers) is a practical way that churches looking for outreach opportunities can get involved in the work of God's kingdom - what a blessing!

~Curtis Klassen ~
Associate Pastor of Youth & Young Adults Ministries
Elmwood MB Church, Winnipeg

- SBC is the only **Accredited** camp of the **Manitoba Camping Association** (<http://www.mbcamping.ca/>) located in the north. Being an Accredited member of the MCA means that our standards are being monitored and we undergo inspections as to how we operate camp. Of course we fall under many government regulations (Food, Recreational Camp, Onsite Waste, Fuel Storage, etc) too, but this is above and beyond standard government regulations and insures quality and the best care of campers!

- SBC is completely off-grid. We have our own diesel power plants, and treat our own water. Our phone system is bounced via radio waves and our internet is currently through satellite. We are completely self-sufficient as the nearest powerlines are 19 km away. We have a good balance of remote isolation, and expected amenities.

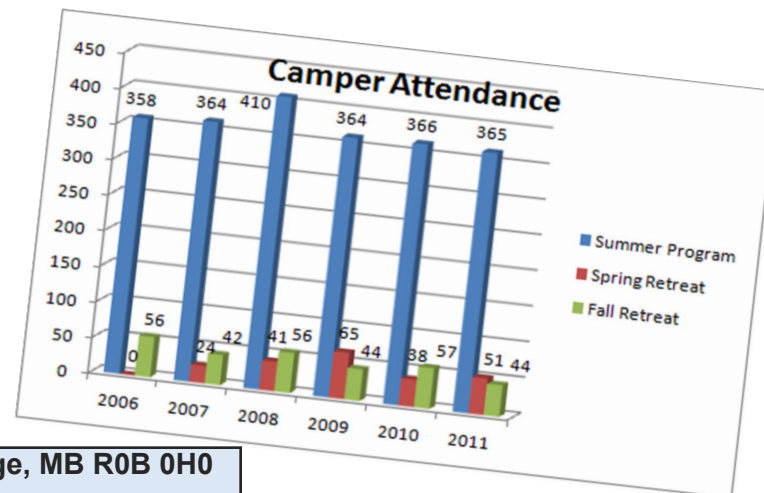
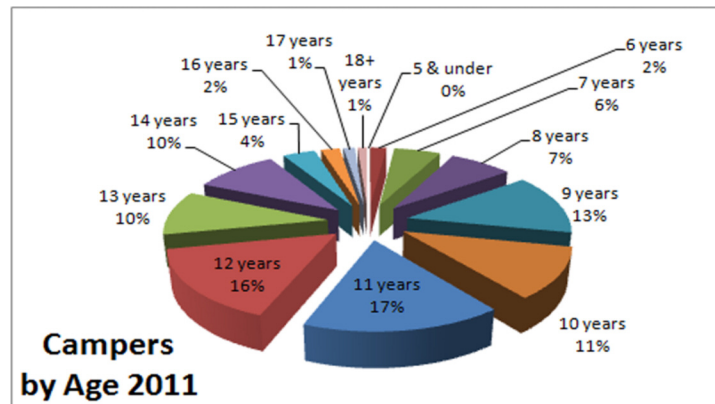
- SBC incorporates many "green" initiatives including a solar power system, a windmill power system, and a recycling program.

- In 2005 we began construction of a new dining hall/office complex. This facility is incredibly efficient with 12" walls, a 8" deep concrete floor with in floor heating that requires very little to keep it warm, and a type of geothermal heat collection system whereby we collect the heat created in our attic in the summer and store it in a heat sink in the ground. In the winter we slowly pull the heat back out of the ground and keep our building from freezing.

- Staff mostly come from southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan, some from the north, and Abbotsford, BC. Yep that's right, we have been having a solid contingent of staff coming from Abbotsford, BC due to a long time connection.

- SBC has some of the lowest camper fees around, for the programs we offer! We work hard to maintain this so that finances aren't prohibitive and our programs are available for all.

- As an Accredited camp of the Manitoba Camping Association, we also have access to funding for campers who may not be able to afford camp, through the **Sunshine Fund**.



Simonhouse Bible Camp, Box 250, Cranberry Portage, MB R0B 0H0
Phone/Fax: 204-472-3025, Email: info@simonhouse.ca,
Web: www.simonhouse.ca

Frequently Asked Questions...

Why do some forms say "Simonhouse Camp Inc." instead of "Simonhouse Bible Camp"?

The camp continues to operate as "Simonhouse Bible Camp" and nothing has changed on that front. In fact, many Bible camps have changed their names to take the word "Bible" out of it. We have chosen to retain the name of Simonhouse Bible Camp for a number of reasons. It allows us to witness boldly. In fact, at our closing programs where parents and relatives come to see their kids, we proclaim the word of the Lord boldly and encourage reconciliation with Christ for not just the campers, but the families and visitors. We recognize that it may be somewhat prohibitive in that some campers may not sign up because the word "Bible" scares them away. However, we want to be forthright and not be accused of trickery or anything else. Given that approximately 70-80% of our campers do not regularly attend a church, we don't think our name is too scary. We have a good reputation in the north and it is because of that, that non-churched kids continue to come.

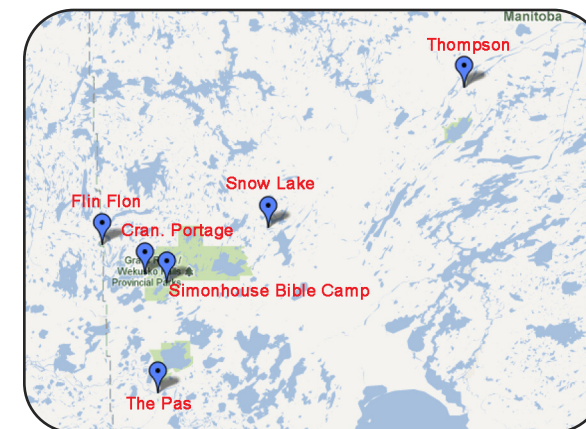
So where does "Simonhouse Camp Inc." come in? We have chosen that name as our legal name. This legal name is only used on top administrative documents and is the name that ownership is in. We chose this name as a strategic move for a few rare times when it may be beneficial for us. There are certain potential funding sources that want to give to us because of our good work, but they are prohibited from doing so because the word "Bible" is in our name and they are unable to give because someone thinks that word looks bad on their reports or they can't give to blatant "religious" organizations. In actuality, this may or may not make a big difference for us, but since we were making the legal change anyway, we built this in. Again, rest assured that the camp ministry and feel has not weakened in the slightest when it comes to our mission!

There's something really good happening at Simonhouse Bible Camp! Two of our youth left for camp as boys in June and returned as men in September. It has been inspiring to see the on-going change in these guys, and I would credit it to God's work at Simonhouse, calling youth to discover His desire for their lives.

~Denver Wilson ~
Youth Pastor
McIvor Ave. MB Church, Winnipeg

Where do your campers come from?

Our campers primarily come from the northern towns of Flin Flon (100 km), Cranberry Portage (40 km), The Pas (100 km), Snow Lake (100 km), Thompson (300 km), and a number of smaller towns and reserves in between. That being said, a number come from across the province and even other provinces.



What is the percentage of aboriginal kids who attend camp?

This is a little hard to determine as we don't ask kids when they register about their ancestry. Attempting to determine this by appearances would not be accurate, or appropriate. We would estimate it would be about 40-50%, but could be way off on that. In terms of ministry, we see a greater distinction not between aboriginal kids and non-aboriginal kids, but between town kids (white, aboriginal, etc.) and those who are on the reserves, particularly the more distant reserves. The difference is noticeable in language (many reserve kids still speak Cree or other aboriginal languages) as English may well be their second language and they may not be as fluent in it as those of us with English as our first language. Also, the camp has had many connections and a great reputation in the towns for many years so the level of trust starting point is automatically higher. We are making more and more connections in the reserves and improving the level of trust there but certainly it is slower than our established town connections. However, there is great opportunity here for ministry as well. Many reserves in the north are only accessible by plane, train, or winter road. We are hoping to try out some of those modes of transportation in the future as we meet with people and share with them about the camp programs.

"We send people to all ends of the earth, but there is hesitation in our own province. It is our reality and we are committed to 'Pointing Lives To Jesus' here in northern Manitoba"

Ministry in the north is similar to ministry in the south isn't it?

Not at all. I grew up in Kelowna, BC, finished my Bachelor of Religious Education in Youth Ministry in Alberta and moved to Cranberry Portage, population of around 600 people. I may as well gone to a different country. Ministry here, is really different. The people here are wonderful. The distance and isolation of many of the communities makes it challenging. It takes much longer, and costs much more, to do everyday tasks. While mining is one of the predominant industries in the north, and miners bring home good salaries, the concept of tithing is relatively unknown or understood so financial giving is not in line with income. Many people come north to make their money and then leave again, which means that relationships that are worked on are often short. It feels like on-going church-planting since there is a high transiency of people. In conversations with other youth ministry agencies to encourage them to come north to operate, the answer was short and simple, "it's too expensive to do ministry in the north." We send people to all ends of the earth, but there is hesitation in our own province. It is our reality and we are committed to "Pointing Lives To Jesus" here in northern Manitoba.