



Minute Book

Mennonite Church Canada Assembly
July 7 - 11, 2005

Charlotte Convention Center
Charlotte North Carolina, USA



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll free 1-866-888-6785
P: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
www.mennonitechurch.ca



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

felt blessed with a wonderful staff, enjoyed working together, people who are extremely competent. Value continued support for them, and the replacement. Nighswander stated that it has been a wonderful privilege and opportunity, and he is looking forward to other involvement. It was the right time to make a change.

Henry Krause thanked Yvonne for upholding Dan, acknowledging how difficult it is to walk alongside your friend and spouse when they are doing difficult work. Yvonne responded with grace, indicating it has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet so many people. Henry Krause read a Celtic Prayer of Blessing for Dan and Yvonne.

49. Commissioning Service

Denomination Minister Sven Eriksson led us in a commissioning service to recognize the service of those whose terms are ending and to pray for those who are continuing or beginning their service.

50. Closing

Henry Krause declared the 6th annual session of the MC Canada assembly closed.

Mark Diller Harder led us in a closing song and benediction.

51. Joint Worship “Speaking what we have seen and heard”

Reverend Ray Aldred, a member of the Swan River Cree Nation, Alberta and Director for the First Nation Alliance Churches of Canada, noted that neither conservatism nor liberalism has ever saved anybody. Aldred noted the limitations of traditional western theology, which depends on a scientific worldview, is not big enough to include what is happening among First Nations Christians and among other Christians around the world. Aldred shared his faith story, noting that he studied theology at our institutions, but God used aboriginal people to teach him the heart of theology. The theology of the future will come out of indigenous theology. Aldred left us with the challenge to sit down and listen with our hearts as we read the gospel.

Minutes recorded by: Marlene Janzen (Secretary)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”. Amen.

47. Resolutions Committee Cont'd

Resolution of Thanks:

We recognize the significant amount of organization and work that is necessary to put an assembly together. We have had an inspiring and challenging week. We listened to stories, we sang the Gospel, and we made progress in understanding our mission as the people of God.

- Thank you to the staff of MC Canada and to every person on each committee that planned this assembly.
- Thank you to the Convention Planning Office of Mennonite Church USA, which did much of the initial planning regarding facilities.
- Thank you to the volunteers who guided us on our way.
- Thank you to the workshop and seminar leaders who educated and informed us.
- Thank you to all the members of boards and councils, and especially the moderator.
- Thank you to the leaders of worship and those who spoke words of exhortation and inspiration to us.

All have contributed tirelessly to the ongoing work of promoting the Kingdom of God. Thank you.

m/s/c Resolutions Committee / Darrell Fast

48. Farewell to Dan Nighswander

Henry Krause invited Dan Nighswander and Yvonne Snider-Nighswander to come forward. Krause shared that he has deeply enjoyed working with Dan, and especially appreciates his ability to think through clearly. Dan's willingness to get things done, his humour, commitment, pastoral heart and vision of what can be - all have contributed to MC Canada. He gave leadership when it was not an easy thing to do. Helped us do what needed to be done, often doing the background work that made the board and executive task easier. Dan, the board, area conference and delegates want to thank you for the gifts you shared with us. This is not an end to the work, but it is the last time we as a delegate body have a chance to say this together.

Dan Nighswander responded that he thinks it is a blessing to live in interesting times. It has been a great satisfaction to tie up a number of loose ends on the transformation process. Hope that next assembly we can talk about other agenda than who we are and how we are organized. The opportunity to be this much involved in the life of the church is a privilege. Nighswander shared that he particularly enjoyed the conversation with young adults and hopes some of them even want this job some day. Nighswander

Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Mennonite Church Canada Assemblies	4
Moderator's Remarks — Assembly 2005	5
Abbreviations	6
Slate of Approved Nominations	7

Summary of table Group responses on the topic of:

Continuing Relationships Between Mennonite Church Canada And Mennonite Church USA	8
Confession Of Faith In A Mennonite Perspective	14
Definitions And Expectations Of Membership	16
Issues in Funding the Ministries of the Church	19

General Bylaws	21
MINUTES	36

Acknowledgements

Listening Committee members:

Ron Braun, Yarrow BC
 Nancy Brubaker, Kitchener ON
 Irene Crosland, Tofield AB

Parliamentarian:

Sam Steiner, Waterloo ON

Resolutions Committee members:

Jeremy Bergen, Toronto ON
 Helen Kruger, Saskatoon SK
 Hugo Peters, Winnipeg MB

Planning committee members:

Mildred Roth, New Hamburg ON
 Craig Friesen, Rosthern SK

Worship committee members:

Karen Schellenberg, Portage La Prairie MB
 Mark Diller Harder, Kitchener ON

Adult worship music leaders:

Angelika Guenther Correa, Leamington ON
 Carlos Correa, Leamington ON
 Linda Dueck, Leamington ON
 Paul Dueck, Leamington ON
 Andrea Weber Steckly, Kitchener ON
 Jamie Weber Steckly, Kitchener ON
 Bryan Moyer Suderman, Stouffville ON

...and the many additional volunteers and staff who helped.

Mennonite Church Canada Assemblies

Planning meetings for the first Canadian conference sessions in 1903 were held in 1902 at Tiefengrund, SK. Delegate sessions for Conference of Mennonites in Canada have been held annually since then. For information on meetings from 1903-1999, see the 1999 Minute Book of Conference of Mennonites in Canada. The Lethbridge 2000 Assembly marked the inaugural annual session for Mennonite Church Canada.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Moderator</i>	<i>Ass't Moderator</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>General Secretary</i>
2000	Lethbridge AB	Ron Sawatsky	Jake F. Pauls	Joy Kroeger	Dan Nighswander
2001	Abbotsford BC	Ron Sawatsky	Joy Kroeger	Sam Steiner	Dan Nighswander
2002	Saskatoon SK	Ron Sawatsky	Joy Kroeger	Sam Steiner	Dan Nighswander
2003	St. Catharines ON	Henry Krause	Joy Kroeger	Sam Steiner	Dan Nighswander
2004	Winkler, MB	Henry Krause	Esther Peters	Marlene Janzen	Dan Nighswander
2005	Charlotte, NC	Henry Krause	Esther Peters	Marlene Janzen	Dan Nighswander

The mandate is for all to speak of what we have seen and heard in our communities.

In the midst of this work of discerning we paused for worship and sang “Many times we disagree o’er what’s right or wrong to do. It’s so hard to really see from the other’s point of view. Jesus help us live in peace.”

Ron Braun noted that in our time of continuing relationships between MC Canada and MC USA we reviewed our history as well as the current relationship between the two churches. We were then asked to look at the future: goals, gifts that could be shared, what it is about our current relationship that that we share or what could we do separately and what about future assemblies. Most of our time was spent on the value of future joint assemblies. We recognized there are many aspects between MC Canada and MC USA that we share but we also realized that the value of an event that we just experienced is not shared by everyone. We realized this in that we just barely reached quorum, that the expense and effort for such an event is difficult for many churches to afford. It is not a priority for many. At the same time for those of us here there was a strong affirmation for us to continue to meet together. Within that were calls to meet in a more simple venue as well as finding other ways to connect with the call as well that MC Canada host the next gathering. The strongest affirmation, while not directly related to what we were doing here, came from our youth. We recognized throughout our time together that they experienced something beyond the ordinary. There is no doubt that in their minds and hearts the place of the church in the kingdom of God was significantly heightened. Their experience of worship and fellowship was for many a highlight they will not soon forget.

This year’s financial statements gave cause for muted celebration. There was a sense of relief that this part of the reporting brought a positive statement of spending under income, but the pain of past years’ struggles remains fresh in our minds. We continue to live and learn. We learned that income has been dropping incrementally over past years, as some churches have been reducing or not contributing at all. Concern was raised when it was stated that a proportion is and will have to be sourced from private and corporate donations. There was concern over the danger this might hold an undue influence from a few significant sources.

Another item that we observed at times was the lack of partnering language whenever other agencies or regions are involved in the agenda. Language that supports a joint ministry effort needs to be used to encourage this partnering effort. We were also reminded that our distinctiveness in the broader church is not something that we can take for granted. The issue of peace and justice must be something that we deliberately state at every opportunity. There were times when it should have been included and we were reminded that it was not.

We have experienced a time of family. We have worked very deliberately and are grateful to all those who so faithfully assisted us in making this possible. Most of all we are grateful to the one who gives us the reason for which we gather, the reason for who we are. Paul’s words in Romans 15:11 remind us of this and are also our encouragement as we return to our congregations.

- Our church decided to use the budget to send youth to assembly, but only 3 signed up so adults were given the opportunity to use the rest. The youth don't understand what conference is about, we need to teach them.
- Encourage the conference to subsidize delegates from churches that cannot afford to send participants. Recognize that for a low income person, staying in these hotels would also be a huge disconnect, and needs to be addressed.
- Henry Krause reported that MCEC and MCBC have been in conversation and invited the moderators of these area conferences to come up and share about that dialogue. Darrell Fast and Doug Epp reported that during the course of this week, leadership persons from MCBC and MCEC have been in conversation about an issue that deeply divides us. Had conversations, prayed together, and recognize that conversation about an issue at the area conference level has unique implications for all of MC Canada. They requested the trust, forbearance and support of the church, and they requested our prayers. Henry Krause led us in prayer.

46. Listening Committee

Nancy Brubaker noted that it was with cajoling, shoulder tapping and email prompts we crossed the border and rode into town as a triumphant, though lean quorum of delegates for MC Canada, at this first gathering with our partner church MC USA. Sent by congregations and area conferences with our own personal motivations – family, friendship, youth, adventure, learning, curiosity...and ultimately loyalty to this body called MC Canada.

No surprise then that we who are here, spoke affirmatively for coherent membership in MC Canada without the INACNIMCCan (In Area Conference Not in MC Canada) opt-out clause. “We must not make it easy to pull out of this covenantal relationship” we said. It is a commitment that must be cultivated in order that it grows strong through the journeys of discovery, through the conflicts that are inevitable. We expressed a yearning, a heart-felt desire for togetherness bolstered by faithfulness to God's call. Yet, just beneath the surface of the agenda and discussions, there was a sense of dis-ease; an awareness of our fragility as a new entity – a recognition that some of us hover at the exit doors.

We recalled the Rosemary church's tabled and expired resolution from Winkler, calling for doctrinal purity and accountability to the Confession of Faith statements. We are saddened to learn of their withdrawal, as we continue to move forward with their concerns in table group discussions. We wrestled with this heaviness as we worked through the Faith and Life Committee proposal, a forum that recognizes our theology must be held lightly, undergirded by the continual study of Scriptures and listening to the Spirit of God speaking through the multitude of voices that are a part of MC Canada – the range of those who call for accountability, standards and authority – and those who turn a spotlight on God's reconciling work in our broken and disenfranchised world. We stood clearly with the notion that no voice among us should be silenced, sent away nor drowned out.

Moderator's Remarks — Assembly 2005



Can't keep quiet about our assembly in Charlotte! Our 6th annual delegate assembly as Mennonite Church Canada is now history. This was our first joint assembly with Mennonite Church USA since the formation of our two national churches and it was a historical event. Our time together with our MC USA sisters and brothers was full of rich worship, fellowship and insightful discernment. It was

filled with the presence of the Spirit of God and was a blessing to all those who attended the assembly.

We spent time together as two national churches in worship and one joint delegate session where we talked with each other about the future of the partnership between our two country churches. We also spent time together in a variety of venues enjoying concerts, hearing reports and learning new things about our churches and ministries, and just visiting.

MC Canada delegates also spent significant time together this year discerning what we believe God is calling us to. Delegates met together around tables discerning, listening to reports and hearing from each other about how we hear God calling our national church and the ways in which our area conferences and local congregations are engaging in our joint mission.

We looked at a number of significant items that needed to be discerned and decided on:

- Delegates adopted a 'statement of identity and purpose' for Mennonite Church Canada which will guide us in our priority setting and direction as we make decisions about how to use the resources we have.
- Delegates also approved the formation of a Faith and Life Committee, which will help our national church in discerning how to interact with our society and culture from our Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective.
- We spent time around tables talking about the issues of funding the various ministries of the church – from local to national initiatives – in order to determine the best way to discern together how to use the resources available to our national church. This is an ongoing process, and will return to our delegate sessions for further discussion.
- We also worked together as delegates on the question of definitions and expectations of membership in MC Canada, in order to find ways to 'derive more joy from the privilege of belonging to each other under Christ our head'.
- Time was also spent in joint MC Canada/MC USA sessions making decisions on continuing to meet annual in delegate sessions, as well as transferring the title of 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard to Canadian Mennonite University.

We also heard reports from our Finance, Policy and Audit Committee about our financial status for the previous year and a projected budget for our next year's work.

We ended our sessions with recognition of Dan Nighswander's work as General Secretary over the past 6 years and an opportunity to publicly thank him and Yvonne for their service and ministry to the church.

Our theme, "I Can't keep quiet!" served us well this year as we celebrated the rich gifts we have in our congregations and area conferences from God through Christ.

— Henry Krause, Moderator, Mennonite Church Canada

STATEMENT OF IDENTITY AND PURPOSE

God calls, equips and sends the church to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are a community of disciples of Jesus,
a part of the Body of Christ,
covenanted together
as congregations,
area conferences, and
a national church body.

Gratefully responding to God's initiatives
and empowered by the Holy Spirit,

we commit ourselves and our resources
to calling, equipping and sending the church to engage the world
with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Abbreviations

MC - Mennonite Church

MVS - Mennonite Voluntary Service

YA - young adults

AB - Alberta

BC - British Columbia

MB - Manitoba

ON - Ontario

SK - Saskatchewan

- Erwin Warkentin, speaking as our appointee to Mennonite Properties Incorporated, requested that MC Canada also seek resolution on the property at 500 Shaftesbury.

- Discernment in the body of Christ is an important concept, and it does consume a fair amount of time. Acknowledge that sometimes people get impatient, but there are some discussions that are crucial and should go back to our congregations. Every congregation participated in the development of the Confession of Faith. The purpose and priorities is important, and thought we might have been able to use a staged vote (i.e., Yes I agree; Yes I support, but...; or No). Occasions like this bind us to the positive aspects of being a denomination. Consider making alternate years a major celebration of worship and learning.

- Responding to the young adult request for young adult discernment. A young adult fellowship is being planned for Sep 30-Oct 2, 2005. The focus is "Morality: Come to the Mountain". Encourage delegates to spread the news in your congregation, there was more detailed information in Equipping, or can visit the MC Canada website or contact MCEC.

- Appreciate the round table discussion and priority setting. Identified leadership as being a top priority. No clue what that will mean or how the leadership will use that. How does that fit with missional church and how does that impact budget?

- Want to highlight one small institution, and that is the Toronto Mennonite Theological Center. This is the only center that Mennonites have that works on the doctoral level, and we need to pay attention to the people who will be teaching in our colleges. Find a way to financially support these students, since living with a family in Toronto is very costly.

- Noted when meeting around the tables for the joint delegate session, there were 5 people from the US who had never been at a delegate assembly before. In the US this was a notable trend, bringing renewal to the church. Encouraged churches and conferences to name significant numbers of people who have not attended before, especially those under 35, as delegates.

- Jack Suderman noted that it was likely a first, that a committee spent time thinking about the physical shape as well as the content, so he encouraged delegates to take note of and draw attention to the significant hour-glass shape of the Statement of Purpose and Identity. The echo idea that is so critical to the statement is visually supported by the hour-glass shape.

- We talk about diversity, and celebrate it, but we also have to recognize disparity. There is much disparity among our congregations. Rural congregations simply cannot send representatives to the annual assembly. Know there are other congregations who could send 10 times more, so wondering if MC Canada can develop a fund to which churches can donate and others can apply. Increase good will, allow younger members to come and make them feel we are all together. Part of missional mandate.

41. Nominations and Elections

Glenn Zehr reviewed the slate of nominees on the orange handout and pages 53-55 of the Report Book, and reported that there were no additional nominations.

Motion 14: The delegate assembly agrees the nominations cease and the slate be approved as presented.

m/s Glenn Zehr / Albert Durksen

Discussion:

- Esther Peters noted bylaw revisions indicate that the chair of the Faith and Life Committee, Rudy Baergen, is also a member of the General Board.

Motion carried. Nominees are acclaimed.

42. Invitation to Assembly 2006

Jim Shantz, Conference Minister for MC Alberta extended a warm invitation to Edmonton for Assembly 2006 next July. He encouraged delegates to come enjoy what God is doing in Edmonton, and in the rest of the province.

Saturday, July 09, 2005; 8:00am

43. Gathering

Mark Diller Harder led delegates in a gathering hymn and opening prayer.

44. Resolutions Committee

Reporting for the Resolutions Committee, Jeremy Bergen presented a resolution to follow up the comments on the Faith and Life Committee.

Motion 15: The delegate assembly agrees that the composition and mandate of the Faith and Life Committee be reviewed in five (5) years, that is 2010, by the General Board.

m/s/c Resolutions Committee / John Peters

45. Delegate Concerns

The moderator opened the floor for open discussion and comment.

Plenary Discussion:

- Concerned that the educational institutions have had a low profile in our assembly. The schools are pivotal to attaining our goals. Large majority of our effective leaders have trained at these institutions. Not hearing from them is creating a benign neglect. Suggest that next year our educational institutions be invited to share their stories of healing and hope.

Slate of Approved Nominations

July 2005



General Board:

Marlene Janzen *	Calgary AB	2007	Foothills MC
Clare Schlegel *	Tavistock ON	2007	East Zorra MC

Formation:

Earl Reimer	Winkler MB	2008	Emmanuel MC
Hoa Van Chau *	Winnipeg MB	2008	First MC
Veronica Dyck *	Vancouver BC	2008	Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship

Support Services:

Ed Janzen	Abbotsford BC	2008	Emmanuel MC
Rita Strickland	St. Catharines ON	2008	Vineland United MC
Mark Wurtz *	Rosthern SK	2008	Hague MC

Witness:

Andy Ahn *	Winnipeg MB	2008	Charleswood MC Korean Ministry
Dori Zerbe Cornelsen *	Winnipeg MB	2008	Hope MC
Ernest Epp *	Saskatoon SK	2008	Nutana Park MC

Nominating Committee:

Gladys Bender	Baden ON	2008	Steinmann MC
---------------	----------	------	--------------

* = position being renewed

Faith and Life Committee:

Rudy Baergen	Winnipeg MB
Karl Koop	Winnipeg MB
Doreen Neufeld	Calgary AB
Betty Pries	Waterloo ON

Continuing Relationships Between Mennonite Church Canada And Mennonite Church USA

Joint MC Canada and MC USA Discernment
Annual Assembly 2005 – Charlotte NC
Canadian Responses from Round Table Discussion Notes

1. Goals

(What are the goals of a relationship between our separate national churches in light of our present stage of separate development?)

a) A counter-political statement

- To represent the fact that nation and church are not one
- Countering the political forces that drive nationalistic agenda by modeling a unity of belief, goals & mission (as a witness)
- An understanding of the uniqueness of each country (esp. politically)
- An international church transcends nationalism

b) Mutual edification

- To contribute to each other and learn from each other's experiences—often learn more from issues with differences than similarities
- Fellowship and worship – a venue of togetherness
- Encourage each other in our common faith and individual conference missions
- Provide support in developing or maintaining our Confession of Faith
- Mutual accountability – theologically, sociologically, politically
- Learning from experience, expertise, and ideas of the separate churches and using them to build up the joint partnerships we share; not duplicating the focuses/efforts of the other national church

c) Common programs

- Keeping in touch at organizational level, avoid overlapping/duplication (i.e. curriculum, mission, MPN, etc.)
- Working together in publishing, mission, seminary education, informal networks
- “Do together what we cannot do alone.” (e.g. MPN, AMBS, Witness/MMN)
- We need to continue having connections if our written materials are to be sensitive to both countries

d) Other

- Develop a vision for the worldwide Mennonite church [Dan Nighswander—this is MWC's work, not ours]
- Maintain as many connections as possible while balancing need for autonomy of each body in some areas

Discussion:

- A number of typographic errors were noted (spelling of “Committee” in Part IX, duplicate use of Part XI numbering, skipped item number (c) in Article 32 Section (1), and spelling of “amended” and today's date in the revision record at the end of the document).
- Recognize that we are not currently able to staff the positions, but question the deletion of Part XI, Article 32(1)(f) and (g). Peace and justice are central to our entire ministry and we passed a resolution of support for service ministries last year. Jeremy Bergen reported the Resolutions Committee has processed an amendment to address this concern.

Amendment 13.1: The delegate assembly agrees to keep Items (f) and (g) of Part XI, Article 32 Section (1) in the bylaws of Mennonite Church Canada.

m/s Doug Woodburn / Pam Driedger

Discussion of Amendment 13.1:

- Core to faith tradition, don't strike from bylaws, just because we don't have staff.

Amendment carried.

Discussion of original motion cont'd:

- Part XI (which should be XII), Article 33, Section 5, Item (c) is not clear, could include relating to non-MC Canada institutions.

Amendment 13.2: The delegate assembly approves changing the proposed Item (c) of Part XII, Article 33, Section (5) in the bylaws of Mennonite Church Canada as follows:

- (d) Canadian Mennonite elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools related with MC Canada.

m/s Gerald Gerbrandt / Ingrid Peters-Fransen

Amendment carried.

Discussion of original motion cont'd:

- Noted under the duties of FPAC, Part X, Article 29 Section (g) Item (vii) is an internal function, and all the other items in this section are relating to external audit functions. Feel it is redundant since the revenue budget and performance is noted in Section (f).

Amendment 13.3: The delegate assembly agrees to strike the proposed Item (vii) from Part X, Article 29, Section (g) of the bylaws of Mennonite Church Canada.

m/s Ingrid Peters-Fransen / Ester Neufeldt

Amendment carried, with several votes in opposition.

Motion carried.

31 The Faith and Life Committee shall meet at least three times annually, and one of the meetings will be together with a Reference Council which shall include consisting of the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers and faculty members appointed by our higher education institutions one faculty member appointed by each of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Canadian Mennonite University, Columbia Bible College and Conrad Grebel University College, to:

- (a) Attend to the interface among Scripture, the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and our identity as Mennonite Church Canada.
- (b) Give leadership to Mennonite Church Canada in discerning God's will on issues of theology, ethics, polity and practice.
- (c) Work cooperatively with educational institutions and other church agencies to facilitate, create and distribute resources for study by and guidance for the church.

Motion 12: The delegate assembly approves changes to the bylaws of Mennonite Church Canada to incorporate Section XI Faith and Life Committee, Articles 30 and 31 as revised by the Resolutions Committee.

m/s General Board / Gerald Gerbrandt

Discussion:

- Might this group have a responsibility at the delegate sessions alongside the Listening Committee? Nighswander noted that is not precluded, giving leadership in Article 31 (b) could include giving leadership at assembly.
- In favour of resolution, but wondering who the "secretaries" are in the area conferences. Also wondering if it might be advisable to state that this committee is accountable to MC Canada through the GB? Nighswander noted the secretaries are understood to be the lead staff person of the area conference. Jeremy Bergen noted the accountability is not named for the other committees, that the mandate of the GB is to oversee all of the committees.

Motion carried.

40.3. Other Editorial Changes

Dan Nighswander noted the proposed editorial changes were to bring the other sections of the bylaws in line with the new additions, and update name changes.

Motion 13: The delegate assembly approves all other changes in the bylaws of Mennonite Church Canada as presented on pages 73-80 of the Assembly 2005 Report Book.

m/s General Board / Ed Janzen

2. Gifts

(What gifts can we share with each other, which are not being shared now? What gifts are we willing to receive from each other that we are not offering to each other at present?)

a) Specific programs

- Executives, conference ministers, leaders meeting together is very important
- In Canada, the youth need to get excited about the Assemblies, starting with their leaders
- Collaboration between Mennonite Church Witness & Christian Witness, also MPN
- AMBS – successful in recruiting young adults for ministry on both sides of the border
- Commitment to youth & young adult ministries (i.e. youth exchange); youth leaders connecting across borders
- Canadian Mennonite/The Mennonite – sharing articles, reading each other's papers more
- Combined investment/insurance/education/estate planning, etc.
- "Satellite" Seminary in Canada with teacher exchange
- Hospitality – Mennonite Your Way
- Pastoral leadership
- More sharing of expertise in particular ministries
- Resources for dealing with war & peace, God & country issues

b) Ethos and character

- Canadians can benefit from the more "entrepreneurial" spirit of the US
- Americans can benefit from the more pacifist tendencies of Canadians

c) Learning Together

- Get perspective of how other countries view US (i.e. Peter Stuckey's perspective from Colombia)
- Exchanges between pastors/theologians, rural & urban churches; choir and drama visitations, leadership meetings, seniors group visitations, radio & TV spots,
- Listening to each others stories and sharing excitement in them (even if support not expected); missionary insights & orientation for cross-cultural mission
- Health care – possible solutions, models
- Accountability
- Broader world view; identification, understanding & prioritizing of global issues; witness to world and state
- Each of us can offer outside perspective which may help bring new insight for the other
- North American Mennonite Church identity
- How we speak to government

- Questions & experiences from slightly more ‘post-modern’ and secularized setting, in relation to how faithful we are being to those new challenges
- Encourage across the border church-to-church relationships/partnerships
- Music - House of Doc!
- Lived experience of both countries needs to be shared – Canadians need to hear that their US counterparts are disturbed over Iraq, etc.; people in the USA need to hear about Canadian health care, same-sex marriage, etc.

3. Affirm current relationship

(What do we affirm about our current relationship as it allows for both separation and partnership?)

a) Separation

- Recognize the different material and human resources available to each conference
- Positive: - that MC Canada and MC USA can set their own agendas, pursue national ministries unique to each country
- Deal with national issues separately; each speak about own witness to government
- Allows for equality of voice in partnerships
- Different church structures defined by different national contexts, but need to be intentional about partnering (lest we drift apart)
- Allows each of us to put energy into issues which are peculiar/particular to our situations
- Opportunity to explore outreach opportunities within a national context separately
- Affirm the dignity of difference
- Freedom to express faith in new ways
- Cross-country “ethnic” relationships

b) Partnership

- Don’t affirm separation – speaks badly theologically; partnership should be strengthened both in celebration (as in joint Assembly) and structurally
- Sister church idea
- Common statement of faith and close identity; common goal of striving to follow Christ
- Joint seminary, publications (MPN), hymnal, Christian Education literature and Sunday school curriculum, Mennonite Men, ministerial leadership
- Willingness to keep our relationship open; a welcoming, cooperative spirit
- Partnership/cooperation between mission organizations is beneficial to prevent overlap and be able to do better mission
- Accountability, overall prayer support, and discernment for concerns impacting future decisions
- Joint Assemblies (adult & youth)
- Promotion of peace & reconciliation in a world of war, hostility & brutality

- Want to continue to have joint meetings every 4 years, perhaps in a more northerly location. Really learn a lot from each other, especially need the youth perspective to find more in common. Has to be at least every 4 years so every youth has a chance to go.
- Unity is a big thing. Need more conversation between our two countries. Wonder how there could be a conference in Canada.
- Encourage board to direct energy toward building relationships and keeping connections. Sister churches across the border.
- Affirmation for youth to get together once in their high school years. Joint gathering for worship, music and arts (modeled after MWC).
- Open to meeting together, but looking for a reciprocal relationship. Do more deliberate interacting on issues.
- Should meet jointly, if the issue is expense then meet in Winnipeg like MWC did, where billeting and dorms were used.
- Also wondering about alternate venues for large assemblies, like the Urbana (youth gathering) or folk festival (tents). Continue partnerships so we learn from each other.

40. Bylaw Changes

40.1. Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers Meeting

Motion 11: The delegate assembly approves changes to the bylaws of Mennonite Church Canada to incorporate Section XIII Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers Meeting, Articles 36 and 37 as presented in the Report Book.

m/s/c General Board / Hugo Peters

40.2. Faith and Life Committee

The Resolutions Committee used a PowerPoint slide to highlight the proposed changes to the draft bylaws Section XI Faith and Life Committee, Articles 30 and 31 (additions and deletions):

XI FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE

Composition of the Faith and Life Committee

30 The Faith and Life Committee shall consist of 5 people, namely:

- a chairperson, who will be a member of the General Board, elected at a regular delegate assembly;
- two additional persons elected at a regular delegate assembly;
- one additional person appointed by the General Board
- one staff member appointed by the General Secretary

Duties of the Faith and Life Committee

Following the plenary discussion, the delegates were instructed to submit a written table group response to question 4 from the Report Book.

38. Report from MCC Canada

Don Peters, Executive Director of MCC Canada, opened his report with a positive reflection on the work being done at assembly and gave strong commendation for having the youth participate in the discernment. Peters sensed the Spirit of God is present, and the manner in which we can dialogue is evidence of that. Peters then used a PowerPoint presentation to report on the work of MCC. The theme for the year is "Moving with Compassion". Peters used the example of a boy from Sudan to point out that the things we take for granted, like peace and education, are things the rest of the world longs for. The hope is that the theme will encourage us to bear the burdens of others.

We entrusted MCC with 8.9 million dollars in tsunami relief funds, and Peters reported that half of this was used for initial relief efforts. MCC acknowledges the high degree of responsibility associated with administering this level of funding and appreciates the strong vote of confidence in the organization. Peters noted that CIDA also supports the work of MCC, and the FoodGrains Bank. Other initiatives include white arm bands for the make poverty history campaign, and working with EFC on the Micah Challenge to raise Canada's contribution to the developing world from 0.25% to 0.7% by 2015. MCC has developed a FASD video and study guide, and they are pleased with the interest from the constituency and public. Peters shared concern that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has shutdown the mobile canner that is brought in for meat canning. Food security is still significant component of MCC relief efforts.

39. Relationship between MC Canada and MC USA

Esther Peters referred to the Report Book and noted the affirmation for meeting together and encouragement to pursue creative alternatives expressed during the joint delegate plenary session on Wednesday. Peters reported that the joint board meeting this week was an opportunity for introductions and sharing, and while there was strong support for gathering, the underlying question was at what cost. The delegates were invited to give feedback, to assist the executive committee in preparing for the joint executive meetings in August.

Plenary Discussion:

- Separated con-joined twins are still family. Pursue joint efforts – education, Confession of Faith, joint discernment sessions, publishing, professional associations.
- Should meet jointly every 6 years (staggered with MWC), and in between share more stories in Canadian Mennonite.
- Favoured future meetings. Work deliberately to have more agenda in common to discuss together.

4. Do more, better/differently

(What could we do more, better or differently, separately or in partnership?)

a) Programs

- Make more use of networking opportunities – sharing of approaches & resources (conf. ministers, youth ministers, etc.)
- National sections in each of our papers
- International ministries might be better done together
- Discernment of current issues, work at addressing economic & social issues
- Sharing peace education – worlds are very different when it comes to issues of war, etc.
- Partnership – seminary/education, publishing, mission/witness, worship
- Seminary is good together, but how can we make AMBS more accessible to Canadians – credit courses at CMU, Conrad Grebel, Columbia, with final portion at AMBS?
- Student exchange programs
- Separately – our unique missions, promoting national church growth strategies, engaging our respective cultures, speaking to our governments (can observe relation of church to state more objectively and offer critique/counsel)
- MC Canada needs to rebuild native ministries
- Creative writing, drama, art
- Include minority/ethnic churches in joint conference
- Do more in areas of publications, education curriculum, overseas witness
- MVS – mission networks support one another, should be joint program to foster service opportunities for young adults
- We could do much more (mission, seminary, college training, local VS) together and could easily take care of Canadian agenda in a sub-conference format as part of larger united conference

b) Other

- Live as true disciples of Christ
- Share stories with each other
- For sisters and brothers in Christ, it is important that we meet
- An inspirational conference rather than an operational conference every 4 years
- Invite other Mennonite Conferences
- United voice more powerful for decision-making at times of crisis
- Combine statements together – model unity to the world
- Strong national conferences (to attract youth)
- Develop sister church relationships, congregation to congregation partnering, create more exchanges in service projects
- Sometimes things are more feasible geographically (i.e. MCC, MDS) – our distance is more workable north/south than east/west
- Need more face-to-face exchanges of leaders, to share expertise of leaders/teachers
- In partnership more finances available for relief

- Need to increase awareness of existing realities/relationship so constituents can respond to these questions
- Disappointed to see AMBS & MPN materials in folder both identified as MC USA (green) with asterisk signifying 'joint' – true partnership might be better shown as striped; may seem trivial, but it does reflect a certain sense of Canadian participation as an afterthought rather than a real partner

5. Conditions for joint delegate assembly

(Under what conditions would we want to invest in another joint delegate assembly?)

a) We must do it

- Under any conditions – this is very important and needs to be supported in any location, although good to have in Canada on alternate occasions
- Be creative when it comes to availability & cost, but do it!
- Let's do it for the sake of greater unity and fellowship, maintaining and strengthening existing relationship, CELEBRATION!
- A commitment to foster common identity & increased learning from each other
- Lack of these gatherings may lead to insular and isolated church bodies; may lose sense of togetherness even though partnered in a few things
- Great potential for mutual enrichment through song, sharing, and Bible study

b) Frequency

- Every 4–8 years; every 2–3 years; important, but perhaps every 10 years; every 4–6 years, 1 in 3 in Canada a given; every 1 in 4 years to be in Canada; every 5–10 years
- Delegation of fraternal delegates (alternately) attending every 2 or 4 years

c) Location

- Must be in Canada
- A centralized location to save costs; rotation schedule that we take turns hosting the convention (further west, closer to border)
- Travel expenses would be cheaper in Canada
- Canada welcomes the USA.

d) Other Possibilities

- North American Fellowship Gathering (no tasks)
- Use technology – video conferencing, etc.
- Could be on a smaller scale, involving a smaller representation, but not as small as joint executive committee
- Separate youth/adult conventions

forum for youth to challenge themselves and each other. Edgar thanked the adults for their support and hospitality. He noted that youth were most passionate about listing what should be in a Confession of Faith: Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; following Christ's teachings and examples; living in fellowship and community; seeking peace; praying, mission, service; practicing evangelism; the Trinity; love and acceptance; seeking authority of Bible; pacifism; and adult believer baptism. Edgar noted there was an underlying concern for tolerance and more global appreciation in our work.

37. Discernment on Definitions and Expectations of Membership in MC Canada

Henry Krause introduced the discussion, noting the similarity between the congregational membership lists that are often broken down into active and inactive members and the discussion of how we belong to Mennonite Church Canada. Krause referred to the background material in the Report Book and invited Dan Nighswander to report on the executive staff and General Board discussions earlier this week. Individuals spent some time formulating personal comments and concerns and then shared and discussed them as table groups.

Plenary Response to Question 2 “How can we accommodate the desires of some congregations to be affiliated with some parts of the church body but not with other parts?”

- Used image of church as family to think about the relationship. Family members have different levels of participation, but still part of the family whether they attend the reunion or not. Important to keep the conversation open. Suggest an option for self declaration of observer status for churches at variance. Encourage that we retain strong sense of covenant. Belonging to an area conference is a covenant not to be taken lightly. If you want out, you negotiate your way and have a dialogue with the regional and national body. It takes work to leave, not just something that happens.
- Also followed the idea of relationship like a family, the covenant being like a marriage. Make a commitment to the relationship, and within that you allow for a variety of views. The commitment is to the relationship, not the outcome of various discussions. Support a variety of membership statuses, with the area conferences bring those forward to MC Canada for dialogue.
- Wondered what the polity of the conference is, and role of congregation to the area conference. Some of the concerns are related to polity or authority of the national conference. Wondered if membership is a yes/no question or something deeper.
- Would like a formal process when a congregation decides to leave, that there be a proper process where the sides get together to talk about why the separation is occurring. Need tolerance and forbearance where there is uncertainty. Know that members of congregations have a variety of view points, so the congregation has tolerance. The all or non approach does not work. It tends to polarize certain points of view.

promotional presentation to address the situation. The discussion made him realize that he had the opportunity to take advantage of a Christian education, and guided him to working at camp rather than other higher paying summer jobs. After completing his degree, Unrau moved to Waterloo to take peace and conflict training, noting that is also where he met his wife, so his kids have a similar story. They served with MCC for a year in the Middle East, and then returned to Winnipeg where he studied at the seminary consortium. The call arrived, and Unrau is now a pastor at Sterling Mennonite Church, and teaches high school half time.

Unrau shared that he is trying to prompt people, particularly young people to figure out what God is calling them to be. Unrau noted that he would not have been an engineer that designs bombs, but if it hadn't been for CMU he would not be bringing youth to assembly and encouraging them to seek out Gods call. Church schools are not going to ensure church growth. Schools are tools, instruments made of imperfect people, but when these instruments are placed in the hands of God then they allow God to mend the community. Mennonite schools are one way that the vision statement of MC Canada has become real in his life.

Janet Plenert, Executive Director of International Ministries encouraged delegates to appreciate that we are being called into ministry in new places. In our short time here in Charlotte, Plenert reported that she has received requests for partnership from Brazil, a letter from the Tanzania Mennonite church raised awareness of the Congolese refugee camps, and she had lunch with a worker who outlined the urgent need for peace building between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines. Connecting these new opportunities with the previous financial reporting, Plenert challenged delegates to consider what it means when our revenues do not meet budget and we have to say no to these requests.

Plenert went on to share a story of peace and hope from Columbia. Beginning with the image of a single rose lying among the broken glass and debris, Plenert explained that the rose was a symbol of life and love, of hope and beauty and the glass, a reminder of violence and death. She went on to share how Pastor Javier Segura Gonzales, a Mennonite Pastor in Bogotá was killed by a bomb on the first Sunday of advent last year, and how the church used this tragic situation as a testimony of life and a call for peace in their city. Referring again to the rose in the rubble, Plenert noted that the colour and beauty of the rose is a reminder that, in the end, peace will overcome evil, and Jesus will come again.

Esther Peters led the delegates in a time of prayer for the persecuted church.

36. Youth “Speak Up” Report

Esther Peters invited youth delegates, Jacquelyn Janzen and Peter Edgar, to report on their discussion of issues in the life of the church. Janzen reported that the youth are passionate about their faith, and participated in the discussion with genuine and well thought out responses. Janzen felt the Spirit of God was present, and the discernment sessions were a successful

- Possibly 3 cross-border assemblies – west, central, east – connected electronically
- More in keeping with ‘simple life’ values; stay on university campus to reduce costs
- Youth conference strongly encouraged every 2 to 4 years
- Needs of youth should be met, as well as challenges of VS opportunities and rewards
- If there is a decision to be made jointly; joint theological discussion, not business meetings
- Continue worship with more flavour of MWC – worship + inspiration + fellowship

6. Enhance present/future ministry partnerships

(If there would be no future joint delegate assemblies, how could our energies be directed into ministries that enhance both the separate identities of each national church and/or enhance present or future ministry partnerships?)

a) Gatherings

- Joint worship celebrations
- Maintain yearly meetings with common groups such as MCC, MWC, etc.
- North-South meetings of area conferences
- Women’s gatherings
- More area to area interaction (regional Canada/USA conferences)

b) Other

- Keep communication open; more dialogue between executives & joint board meetings with communication via internet
- Leadership forums
- Administrative links & co-operation
- Workshops/seminars
- Joint educational exchanges between Mennonite schools, increased cross-enrollment
- Congregation to congregation partnering
- Co-operation between similar agencies (i.e. Witness/Mission Network)
- Inserts in Canadian Mennonite/The Mennonite to communicate each other’s work
- Strongly affirm common Confession of Faith, MCC resources, and creative sharing of periodicals between Canada & USA

c) Commentary

- This question is irritating – if we can’t even meet together every now and again, then why even bother to ask about ‘enhancing future partnerships’?
- Probably quite difficult and would grow more separated, tunnel vision, etc.
- Don’t want to think about no joint assemblies
- Work towards building leaders who can sustain joint ministries and grow them globally

Confession Of Faith In A Mennonite Perspective Discussion

Joint MC Canada and MC USA Discernment
Canadian Responses from Round Table Discussion Notes

1. What parts of the confession inspire & shape your personal & congregational life

- very helpful resource in knowing what Mennonites believe about God, peace, discipleship
- challenged to live out our beliefs more faithfully
- goodness of creation is affirmed & God's dream is to restore ALL creation
- high value on scripture being inspired & our reliable standard for Christian faith & life
- gives a clear role for the sacrament of baptism, Lord's supper & washing of feet
- nature of God, God's desire to approach us
- necessity of repentance/forgiveness are hugely important
- Christ-centered
- peace making – in home, church & world
- it's good to know that we are all on the same track, heading in the same general direction
- helps the congregation feel that they are part of a larger body-in solidarity
- valuable resource for new members, sermons & scripture references
- the existence of God is not up for argument
- believe in God, Jesus Christ & the Holy Spirit
- mission of church to be a sign of Kingdom of God
- allows us to use it as reference as issues arise
- have the assurance of salvation & eternal life
- the powerfulness of a Mennonite Heritage
- peace & justice issues-our relationship to government & society
- stewardship
- formulates our core beliefs & foundation of our faith
- worship
- used for catechism

2. How will it change us, our congregation, our area conference, our national church

- greater unity & help others see what we as a Mennonite Church believe
- we will have a deeper understanding of who we are called to be in Christ
- we will continue to engage with one another even if we don't see eye on all matters – seeking & giving counsel
- we would welcome & celebrate the diversity in our midst
- we would be more intentional in looking for ways to share God's saving grace with others we encounter
- it will free us from our fears & keep us very humble, allowing the Spirit to guide & give us joy

35. Stories of Healing and Hope

Dan Nighswander interviewed two young adults about church. Nighswander introduced Nicole Cober Bauman, noting she is part of an informally organized group of young adults initiating conversations with church leaders. Bauman shared that their message stems from young adults wanting to be more involved in the life of the church. She noted that young adults leave home and their identity changes, so looking to bridge the gap and facilitate making new connections. Bauman outlined four goals they are pursuing:

- Unite young adults around a passion for the church.
- Encourage young adults to take initiative, to discern gifts and needs.
- Work with the structure of the church, to make intentional space for young adults.
- Call young adults out so they can gain confidence and feel appreciated in mutual relationships of challenge.

Nighswander asked if there are particular things that young adults are being called to in MC Canada. Bauman felt young adults are called to increase accountability and mentoring, offering a new perspective to the church.

Nighswander introduced Suzanne Bender as the MC Canada representative on the planning committee for Nidus Festival 2006. Bender explained that Nidus, meaning nest is a grassroots ecumenical gathering, where young adults can participate in discourse, music and the arts to celebrate the broader Christian church. She noted the festival with the theme "Streams of living water" is planned for August 4-6, 2006 in Kitchener, ON. Bender suggested that the ecumenical dialogue would strengthen the message that Mennonites have to share and learn.

Nighswander wrapped up the interviews, noting that young adults have a profound influence on the church. Young adults started many of our institutions, and we look forward to seeing what God is calling the new generation to do.

Sue Steiner, chair of the Christian Formation Council, challenged delegates to consider where our pastoral leaders will come from in the future. Is a Mennonite education important for the church? Sven Eriksson reported that there are 31 pastoral openings for lead, associate, part time, youth and interim pastors. Over the next decade demographics will have many pastors retiring. Eriksson also noted more bi-vocational pastors are needed as the size of congregations in small towns decreases. Some congregations are looking beyond the Mennonite circle for their pastor. Eriksson noted that MC Saskatchewan requires new pastors of non-Mennonite background to acquire some Mennonite educational training.

Steiner then introduced Kevin Peters Unrau and invited him to share what impact Mennonite education had on his life. Unrau noted that biologically, he would not be here today if it were not for Mennonite education, since his parents first met at Rosthern Junior College. Unrau noted that he was intending to pursue an engineering degree until the first day of bombing in Iraq during the Gulf War changed all that. Unrau recalls that Canadian Mennonite University had been at his church that day and altered their

transfer of wealth from current individuals to organizations, significant wealth transfer.

Motion carried.

31. Appointment of Auditor

Motion 10: The delegate assembly appoints KPMG as the auditor for Mennonite Church Canada for fiscal year ending January 31, 2006.

m/s/c FPAC/Clare Neufeld

32. Report from Mennonite Foundation of Canada

Erwin Warkentin reported that he is appreciating the warm welcome and support of the constituency in his new role with MFC. Warkentin highlighted the options that MFC provides for individual estate planning. Although they are sometimes identified as stewardship experts, Warkentin noted that they need a context for developing those resources. Gratitude is a reaction to the grace and forgiveness we have received. Warkentin observed that the work at assembly is a form of stewardship, and encouraged us to gratefully share what we have.

33. Joint Worship “Of one heart and soul”

Bishop Leslie and Natalie Francisco, pastors of Calvary Community Church in Hampton, VA challenged the church to speak in boldness, live in grace and work toward unity. The pastoral team spoke about the five core values of their church: being Christ-centered, excellence-prepared, seeker-friendly, service-oriented and family-focused. Every believer is called to make disciples of others in our community, nation and world, and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit. They pointed out that it is a privilege to offer God’s word to all people, but speaking in boldness requires grace. Fortunately, God’s grace does not focus on condemnation, but on reconciliation. Through grace we are united together as one heart and one soul, putting aside the many things that divide us. Following the message, the assembly celebrated communion together.

Friday, July 08, 2005, 1:30pm

34. Gathering

Mark Diller Harder gathered us with a song. Esther Peters extended a warm welcome to the youth who have joined the delegates for this discernment time, and then called on Heather Gallian, MCEC Minister of Youth, to facilitate the table groups in a get acquainted exercise.

- “humble service & sacrificial love” will mean more giving & less need
- we will become more missional
- might revive the early church & early Anabaptist passion & compassion for evangelism, ministry & service
- we would have less conflict – more peace
- greater commitment to stewardship of monetary & environmental stewardship
- stewardship practiced faithfully would meet our budgets (beyond expectations!)
- we will stop spending so much time and energy on trying to make Mennonites and preserving our culture and start making Jesus Christ followers and expand God’s Kingdom here on earth

3. Comments on this 10th anniversary/acceptance of the confession

- it is very readable & very sound theologically
- sad when I see it used to set boundaries-to declare people “out”
- well written
- we need to be reminded that it is a guide, not a creed
- our theology should continue to grow out of our experience and we should not hesitate to do this corporately
- doesn’t communicate to the youth or young adults in our churches
- we still need lots of help with how to apply article 14 on church discipline
- Confession is still very relevant and represents who we are as a people of God
- important to put in writing what we believe & to adhere to it, without compromise
- thank-you to the people with the discernment & vision to write this document
- that it would be more visible in our churches-get people excited about it and make it their own confession (should be studied in the congregations)[Many had this comment]
- a lot may have changed in the denomination & the borders, but God has not & our tenets have not – Praise God!
- time to begin a review of the confession
- does not need revising at this time
- because of its length, only a very small percentage of our members know it; even less understand it
- a document which represents a community affirmation of faith, where representatives of my faith tradition worked at & came to an agreement on how to verbally express our faith fundamentals
- should this confession serve as a basis for disciplinary action when congregations make decisions in the areas of doctrine and ethics that are at variance with the Confession of Faith?
- vital to have a common Confession of Faith
- written in “insider” language?
- that both bodies be inspired by the Confession of Faith so that it can work together as 2 national bodies – reaffirm

Definitions And Expectations Of Membership

Mennonite Church Canada Discernment
Canadian Responses from Round Table Discussion Notes

I. Unfilled Expectations

- be more flexible about expectations; unless we formally decide to set faith policies, can't expect churches to follow expectations
- love unconditionally & embrace with inclusion; agree to dialogue & respect each others' opinions
- link failed expectations to new possibilities, always with concern for their welfare; help in form of printed resources, visiting conference staff, and area conferences based on issues of concern
- stay with present policy that area conferences are responsible for local congregations
- live with "grace," knowing that we too fail to live up to other aspects
- whose expectations are stronger – local, provincial, or national?
- some congregations unable to fully participate; still need to be encouraged in their ongoing journey (re. finance, alignment with Confession of Faith and scriptural teaching, etc.)
- intentional time of praying & working together, at the end release or keep them
- flexibility, continued dialogue & discernment; unrealistic to expect agreement on all points, but need to know where to draw the line/make a stand
- acknowledge sign of brokenness
- commitment to relationship, not to details (i.e. marriage)
- a community of disciples (learners) committed to the reconciling Gospel of Christ; work towards reconciliation
- covenant/family
- MC Canada=grandfathering

II. Distancing

- allow flexibility; let them (!), but keep the channels of communication open; continue to dialogue
- 5-year provisional for new congregations; 'grace period' good, but not long term - time of decision should come; need formal process, but set time frame
- encourage full membership; stress 'missing out' aspect if not fully involved (i.e. ineligible for MFC loans, pastoral pension plan)
- intentionally allow slow process of discernment, to encourage growth as opposed to departure; extend invitation to join, not a 'must do'; dialogue to see benefits of membership
- 'grandfathering' – provides stability and predictability in the system, to maintain credibility and integrity; new congregations automatically move into 'new' structure (join area conf = join national church), but 'grandfather' others who have long been part of area conference only
- *Provincially Active Only* (PAO) status seen as 'forbearance'; need to do clear thinking about limits to MC Canada benefits for such congregations

Motion 9: *The delegate assembly approves the budget presented for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2006, as well as the projected budgets presented for fiscal year ending January 31, 2007 and fiscal year ending January 31, 2008.*

m/s Clare Schlegel/Mervin Good

Discussion:

- Pleased that we have made AMBS a line item in the budget. Appears that they are flow through funds, wondering if the amount from MCEC is included? Plett confirmed that we have made our support of AMBS more visible by showing them as a line item, but noted that the budget amount is an estimate of the designated donations that will flow through, it is not commitment from general revenue. They will get the full amount of designated donations we receive, but if we get less they also get less.
- So there are no un-designated dollars going to AMBS in this budget? Schlegel noted this is a transition period that would enable us to possibly move from flow through donations to general commitment. We are open to counsel on how to do this. The objective is to find a way to strengthen the commitment of the church for our seminary.
- Pleased with the financial reporting. Concerned about direction on revenue sources. It is disturbing to have to count more on individual and corporate donations. What if one contributes extensively, they may then want significant influence, and that dependence makes us vulnerable. Schlegel agreed that the trends are more than numbers. Excited about the movement to a more missional focus, but wonder if it is one of the reasons that congregational dollars are declining? Monitoring our revenue (congregational, individual and corporate) has revealed a shift, so wonder whether we should try to change the trend with a marketing strategy. Schlegel challenged delegates to consider what they might be able to do in their own congregation with stories of leadership training, curriculum and missions? Al Rempel observed that the shift is incremental (1, 2 and 3%). Currently trying to address it by working to engage congregations in the programs of MC Canada, so there is greater appreciation, understanding and visibility of what we are doing together. Rempel noted they are also working to build relationships with individuals and corporate donors. Don't necessarily see a significant shift in addressing program.
- What are partner projects? Al Rempel explained that partnership projects were new initiatives that were not in the budget.
- The competition for individual donations is a reality, but would prefer to see stronger congregational giving. As for the AMBS line, there are many people in Canada who send funds directly to the school.
- Ray Friesen, Chair of AMBS, expressed appreciation for having AMBS as a budget line item.
- Would prefer to see the congregational revenue increase, but an increase in the corporate and individual donors is not a bad sign. Feels there is a demographic factor in that line: the increasing wealth of our community, and

Motion 8: *Be it resolved that Mennonite Church Canada transfer the title of 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard to Canadian Mennonite University for the consideration of one dollar (\$1.00) provided that:*

1. MC Canada will be able to use the conference offices and Heritage Centre for as long as it wishes, and will have the same responsibility for utilities, maintenance, taxes, etc. that it has now.

2. MC Canada will be able to recover the value of the conference offices and Heritage Centre if it chooses to move its offices elsewhere. MC Canada will share this value with MC Manitoba according to its share of the conference office building.

3. MC Canada will be able to borrow against the value of the conference offices and the Heritage Centre. MC Canada will share this borrowing capacity with MC Manitoba according to its share of the conference office building.

4. MC Manitoba's rights under its current long-term lease are preserved.

5. CMU will own 600 Shaftesbury and will be free to develop the property as needed for its ministry, although it will not be able to borrow against the value of the conference offices and the Heritage Centre.

m/s General Board/Ingrid Peters-Fransen

Discussion:

- Was dividing the property considered? Peters-Pries reported that subdivision was considered. The subdivided parcel would have been very awkward with the Heritage Centre in the middle of campus. There were also significant costs associated with subdivision.
- Are we only dealing with 600 Shaftesbury? Peters-Pries confirmed that we are only dealing with 600 Shaftesbury. Encourage the church to similarly also deal with the property at 500 Shaftesbury.
- What are the terms of the lease? Peters-Pries reported that it preserves the original obligations, so mirrors the MC Manitoba lease (87 years remaining). There are no lease payments, because the capital has been paid. The lessee is responsible for upkeep and utilities. If at some point there is a property assessment, we would be responsible for that.

Motion carried.

30. Budget for Fiscal Year End January 31, 2006

Lloyd Plett and Clare Schlegel presented the budget, using a PowerPoint presentation of the MC Canada operating statement. They also referred to the gross and net budgets in the Report Book that show the impact of self generated revenue and flow through funds. Schlegel concluded the presentation by assuring delegates that the budget was based on thorough and consultative work.

- allow for PAO status – add NAO (nationally active only); we have history of “temporary disruption” at both levels – greater flexibility allows healing over time; keep doors ajar
- tolerance/forbearance of in-between position; allow diversity – do not create another category
- perhaps better to allow partial affiliation, rather than not at all; forcing implies greater loss than gain
- let churches be involved where they choose - why would we prevent limited involvement?
- might help silence churches who are unhappy with MC Canada, but reduces accountability among us; prefer participation in all levels but, with pastoral concern, prefer to keep door open
- apply the “he who is without sin” principle
- decision for baptism means accepting invitation to join larger church family
- cannot accommodate if by accommodation we mean degrees of commitment & covenant
- does strength not lie in “big picture”? Isn't goal to be member of “whole body”?
- create opportunities for alternative options, but guard against abuse; leave options for church to choose, but review periodically (set time frame)
- goal is to become affiliated with MC Canada, but need a window of time for congregations not yet ready to commit
- concern to institutionalize this option, but don't want to turn away congregations permanently
- is this a matter of theology? (i.e. homosexuality, baptism but not membership, communion for non-baptized, peace stance)
- temporarily grant the right to belong to only one but to be in lots of dialogue & education
- encourage tolerance & interface with Faith and Life Committee
- we can be tolerant & open to other cultures & countries, can we do this at home?
- individual congregations should be permitted to join larger body if they choose to break with area conference
- perhaps churches who pull out of MC Canada could still attend national assemblies and interest may be reinstated with MC Canada

III. Categories of Member

- similar to what they have provincially
- is there room for a closer connection to the national body than to the area conference?
- remain in periodic discussion to move status to positive resolution
- keep boundaries open & perforated; treat in a way that is inviting
- value “connections” already there; allow as full status as possible, as soon or long as possible
- stress ‘all or none’
- should be unable to speak out on other area conference issues
- allow form of “associated” membership, but make it easy to ‘come back’
- should not be able to have membership in national body

IV. Belonging

- periodic (re)covenanting
- keep wider gatherings focused on worship, inspiration and learning, listening and recognizing needs
- effective communication with many opportunities for face-to-face meetings
- strongly encourage participation in area conference & national church activities
- annual meetings foster connections, especially round table discussions
- more area/provincial/national worship services (MB model very good)
- share resources
- encourage youth to connect to Mennonite schools, camps; let people know what schools are doing
- focus more on Christ our head, to live in him in committed ways
- keep moving into disagreement, as opposed to walking away from table
- MC Canada should communicate joys & benefits and invite churches to dialogue
- encourage growing together; power in sharing experiences and stories; celebrate shared vision
- create youth group exchanges, local & international; educate about Mennonite
- spirit & inclusion of youth in adult conferences
- focus on things we agree on, not issues that divide; work together through MCC, etc.
- ‘twinning’ with other congregations(from different provinces)
- how many view ‘belonging’ as privilege, joy, etc.? Is it a reality?
- need to see value in membership and give to it; more connection if we get together and do together
- need to look beyond national to MC USA and MWC; always differences, but need to focus on what we have/do in common
- affirm MC Canada going to different provinces – can connect and locals can see/be a part of more
- *Canadian Mennonite* is good medium for this; need to promote more (i.e. in classrooms)
- share struggles & joys: ie. If church has difficulty, perhaps write in bulletins
- use technology to get to know each other
- pray for each other
- pair different congregations(east with west) to share a mission trip
- MC Canada should create a CD/DVD which shares some of the excitement of what has gone on at Charlotte-what we do for conf., how can we as a congregation become part of this great work!

V. Other Comments

- Even if we can’t resolve issue of membership in MC Canada, take this issue and come up with a project that all can spend energy, resources, etc. on (i.e. new mission, education, evangelism).

- In favour of the modifications. The whole gospel is about reconciliation.
- The reconciling feels Anabaptist (2 Corinthians 5)
- Affirm the efforts and changes. Believe in reconciliation, but it seems redundant. Would again appeal for including “Lord”.
- “Engage” is cooler than would like to see in a relationship, suggested “embrace”.
- Statement engages other denominations and the word reconciliation helps make it more definitively Anabaptist.
- Strong call to include peace in this statement. Bergen asked for suggestions on how it could be added to the basic structure. Recognize that it is not a minor modification; the statement would have to be re-worked, but would really like to see something that says we are a pacifist church.
- The word “engage” has some aspects of what we do, like our openness to dialogue, but the word “embrace” commits us a bit more, suggesting we have something to offer.
- In support of the word “engage”. Missional church is more inclusive than embrace.
- Peace is in our vision statement, which we share with MC USA.

Motion 7: The delegate assembly adopts the revised Statement of Identity and Purpose for Mennonite Church Canada as a substitute to Motion 4.

m/s Resolutions Committee/Bernie Wiebe
Carried with some opposition.

28.2. Follow up on Assembly 2004 Resolution #2

The Resolutions Committee noted that the intent of the resolution was a doctrinal faithfulness related to controversial issues, with congregational accountability at the national level. There was a sense of urgency arising out of a perception that MC Canada was not doing enough. The Resolutions Committee is not bringing an alternate resolution, believing that the work at this assembly is a better approach than taking a vote on a resolution. The round table discussion and development of a Faith and Life Committee are steps in a positive direction.

29. Transfer of Title on Property at 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard to Canadian Mennonite University

Pam Peters-Pries reviewed with delegates the Assembly 2004 Motion #4, noting the action authorized the General Board to take steps as needed to assign the property at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. appropriately for the fulfillment of the original Christian education mandate for which it was purchased. Referring to the summary in the Report Book, Peters-Pries explained the conditions attached to the proposed transfer of the title on the property at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd. to Canadian Mennonite University.

- Requests to make it more distinctively Anabaptist (e.g., peace) and also heard that it is distinctive (e.g., community, covenant, disciples, and the way we first talk of the church is distinctive)
- Concern about the general tone or structure (too doing, not enough being, no “so that God’s...” clause)
- Questions about the structure (congregations, conferences, and national church).
- Questions about the meaning of certain words or phrases (covenant, world, church) and calls for improvement (“engage” and “efforts and resources”).

The Resolutions Committee responded to a number of the concerns, suggesting the structure, which reminds us of the various partner levels, is appropriate. They also considered the word “engagement,” and felt they could not come up with a better word, noting the holistic tone as pointed out in the Bible study earlier. Resolutions Committee heard strong overall affirmation, and can bring forward the following minor modifications:

*God calls equips and sends the church
to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.
We are a community of disciples of Jesus,
a part of the Body of Christ,
covenanted together
as congregations
area conferences, and
a national church.
Gratefully responding to God’s initiatives
and empowered by the Holy Spirit,
we commit ourselves and our resources to
calling, equipping, and sending the church
to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Henry Krause thanked the committee for this work. He noted that we have the vision statement, and that this purpose statement is another step in communicating what we do as a national church.

Discussion:

- Looking at it grammatically, reconciling is an adjective of the gospel. The whole gospel is intended, reconciling is only one aspect.
- See significant improvement with the minor modifications. Still concerned with the echo. God and church are two different entities, and then we are different from the church. Bergen noted the reference to the church is ambiguous to reflect that we are church at various levels and we don’t exhaust the Church of Christ. Participation goes beyond ourselves, not absolute precision because there is a larger reality. The “we-church” still not resonating.

Issues in Funding the Ministries of the Church

Mennonite Church Canada Discernment
Canadian Responses from Round Table Discussion Notes

1. Should ministry funding/priority decisions be made by local/national church?

- the national church should set priorities & opportunities for ministry for local/area congregations
- the local church can offer resources through finances, prayer, personal contact
- need a balance of both
- combined efforts allows us to do more
- national commitment is stronger & more long term
- local (more personal) initiatives are often easier to fund than a national initiative
- importance of communication & relationships from MC Canada*
- national church needs to continually sell the vision to constituents
- some ministries require participation of all churches, but don’t try to do what local churches can accomplish themselves
- need to consider generational dynamics – raise interest among emerging generation
- short-term programs through local churches
- local church is deciding how funds are used
Ultimately, who exists to serve whom?

2. Local church initiatives

RISKS

- larger body loses
- dependency upon certain resources
- narrow focus
- difficult time & energy
- lack of accountability
- lack of training
- not properly prepared to carry out the ministry
- too many ideas
- can’t be sustained long-term
- may compete with national church
- don’t see the big picture, especially internationally
- not necessarily equipped to deal with scam projects
- overwhelmed by numerous needs
- bypass Canada Revenue Agency guidelines

BENEFITS

- personal contact
- relationships established, connectedness
- encourages generosity

- being able to respond to initiatives quickly (meeting local needs, seeing needs that national church can't see)
- learned experience from doing personal ministry
- local impact
- hands on ownership
- high level participation
- public witness to community

3. National church initiatives

RISKS

- lack of local ownership
- inflexibility: harder to end initiatives & begin new ones
- inability to sell vision
- communication with mission isn't direct (distance)
- too slow
- feels like "them" not "us"

BENEFITS

- encourage broader opportunities
- more accountability & higher trust
- recognized body enables support of international entities
- long term relationships formed
- do more together than alone

4. Does the place where decisions are made affect the nature/quality of the ministry partnerships that are formed, or the reliability of funding to support a ministry? How?

- local decisions usually produce a great deal of investment in relationships, time & energy
- national decisions involve more financial investment
- leadership at the local level is key when it comes to decisions at both levels
- more passion at the local level offers more congregational support
- circuit rider a great idea
- "money follows vision"
- national initiatives must be communicated to and owned by local church
- affects long-term sustainability of giving
- how can "we" be involved in decision making? Become a "round" table?
- encourage churches to do additional projects above their commitments to national church
- pastor has incredible influence on how involved church is beyond itself – how does MC Canada influence pastors?
- engage the 20-something? National storytelling/drama group great idea
- videotapes of specific projects

- Does MC USA have a parallel body? What is the relationship between this committee and the GB? Does the committee have autonomy? Nighswander noted that MC USA does not have a parallel body, but they do have a Constituency Leadership Council that has an "elder" function. Schools were consulted and received notice that the proposal was being brought forward.
- Concerned about the role of and potential overload of staff.

The moderator conducted a straw vote to test the readiness for making a decision, and it was agreed that the Resolutions Committee would take some time to work on how the concerns might be addressed before delegates are asked to vote on the bylaws.

26. Joint Worship "Filled with the Spirit"

Barbara Green Moses shared how she resisted God's call to leave her comfort zone and become the principal of a school that didn't even have a building, and could only offer her half the salary she had been earning as a public school administrator and teacher. Moses told of sleepless nights and restlessness as she struggled with the decision, until she finally asked God to give her a clear sign. Then the text from Joshua 1:9 leapt off the page at her during devotions, and it completely blew her mind when, browsing in a bookstore she found one of those little cards with the meaning of her name and on it was the exact same scripture verse. Moses accepted the call and, now referring to herself as the blessed principal of Philadelphia Mennonite High School, publicly thanked the church for their prayers and financial support for the school over the past seven years. Moses knows the strength of God's call, and that he will do whatever it takes to move us from being believers to being trusters. She challenged the church to become a witness, to let people know what we are about, saying "God calls his people to be courageous advocates."

Friday, July 08, 2005, 8:30am

27. Gathering

Mark Diller Harder led us in an opening hymn and prayer.

28. Delegate Issues

28.1. Statement of Identity and Purpose

Reporting for the Resolutions Committee, Jeremy Bergen presented a high level summary of the previous discernment:

- Questions about whether it would serve the intended purpose, function and use (e.g., to long, could be more inspiring or catchy)

Discussion:

- Speaking against the motion. Recognize every year is different, but noting that this year we had difficulty getting quorum.

Motion carried.

25. Proposal for Faith and Life Committee

Garth Ewert-Fisher, a member of the Executive Committee, reminded delegates that this topic is also a continuation of work that was started last year, where there was a strong call for the creation of a committee to lead the church in discernment on questions of belief, ethics, polity and practice. Delegates were instructed to review the proposed mandate and strategies of the committee as outlined in the Report Book, and identify what is unclear or needs to be changed.

Plenary Discussion:

There were numerous statements of support for the establishment of the Faith and Life Committee. What follows are the suggestions for improvement and questions about clarity:

- Laity needs to be involved, congregational consultation process
- Address issues relevant to ordinary members, and to young adults
- Want ethnic minority involved and represented on the committee
- Consider non-academic, students, and ethnic minority participation on committee
- Seeking broader interface (e.g., MC USA, MCC, MWC and broader ecumenical)
- Is the mandate to put out theological fires or to lead in discernment?
- Appreciation for representation from schools on the reference council
- Refer to “post-secondary institutions” rather than listing each one specifically. Have the schools have been asked and agreed to do this?
- Not clear on the makeup of the committee, wondering what is meant by “theology” is it biblical studies or biblical training?
- Reference Council should be separated from membership.
- Doug Epp, Moderator of MCBC, presented an amendment to the proposal, with the suggestion that the Resolutions Committee be given time to consider the feedback and provide counsel before delegates are asked to vote.
- Unclear how much freedom this group has to be proactive in helping area conferences? Clarify by strengthening the final sentence in strategies section.
- The budget for the committee does not seem in proportion to the huge mandate of the committee.

General Bylaws (updated)

The previous edition of Bylaws are found in the Charlotte 2005 Report Book

PART I - DEFINITIONS

Definition of Terms

- 1 In these bylaws:
 - (a) “Act” means The Act of Incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada as amended by An Act to amend the Act of Incorporation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada;
 - (b) “area conference” means a body of constituent congregations visibly grouped in a region of Canada not necessarily bounded by provincial borders;
 - (c) “congregation” means a body of persons who have responded to the call of Christ in repentance and in faith, who symbolize their unity through the practice of baptism and communion, and who are visibly grouped for the express purpose of implementing their obedience to Christ as head of the church;
 - (d) “congregational member” means a person who is a member of a constituent congregation;
 - (e) “constituent congregation” means a congregation which is a member of an area conference;
 - (f) “MC Canada” means Mennonite Church Canada; and
 - (g) “MC USA” means Mennonite Church USA.

PART II - MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility for Membership

- 2 (1) An area conference in Canada which accepts the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, supports the mission statement of MC Canada and accepts these bylaws is eligible to become a member of MC Canada.
 - (2) Any area conference that wishes to become a member of MC Canada is invited to submit a request in writing to the General Secretary, who will submit it to the General Board which will, in turn, present the request and a recommendation to a delegate assembly.
 - (3) A constituent congregation is a member of MC Canada as long as the area conference to which it belongs is a member of MC Canada.

Rights and Privileges of Members

- 3 (1) Membership in MC Canada entitles area conferences to:
 - (a) send delegates to a delegate assembly, as specified elsewhere in these bylaws, with the right to vote;
 - (b) representation on the General Board, as specified elsewhere in these bylaws; and
 - (c) participate in programs and receive services from MC Canada.

- (2) Membership in MC Canada entitles constituent congregations to:
- (a) send delegates to a delegate assembly, as specified elsewhere in these bylaws, with the right to vote;
 - (b) have their congregational members serve on the General Board or stand for election to any elected positions except as otherwise provided in these bylaws; and
 - (c) participate in programs and receive services from MC Canada.

Expectations of Members

- 4 Area conferences and constituent congregations are expected to:
- (a) give faithful attention to the Scriptures;
 - (b) accept the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective;
 - (c) uphold statements of Christian faith and life made by MC Canada from time to time;
 - (d) respond to the invitation to become engaged in mission and service;
 - (e) participate in the church's life and mission through generous contributions of time and personal resources all in commitment to Jesus Christ in response to the grace of God and in loving service to the church in which the Holy Spirit lives and works; and
 - (f) assume all duties as defined in these bylaws.

Provisional Membership

- 5 (1) Provisional membership is open to any area conference which:
- (a) meets the eligibility requirement in bylaw 2(1);
 - (b) is not ready for full membership; but which
 - (c) wishes to evaluate the meaning of full membership for itself.
- (2) Provisional membership:
- (a) may be requested in writing to the General Secretary, and the process set out in bylaw 2(2) shall apply;
 - (b) is restricted to a maximum of five years;
 - (c) carries with it the expectations listed in bylaw 4;
 - (d) provides all the rights and privileges of membership listed in bylaw 3 except that:
 - (i) their delegates are not entitled to vote at delegate assemblies;
 - (ii) their congregational members may be elected to a Council, but may not serve on the General Board; and
 - (iii) participation in programs and services from MC Canada, and the costs associated with them, will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- (3) A constituent congregation is a provisional member of MC Canada as long as the area conference to which it belongs is a provisional member of MC Canada.

Thursday, July 07, 2005; 8:00am

22. Gathering

Mark Diller Harder led us in a gathering song, and a prayer in response to the bombings in London this morning.

23. Stories of Healing and Hope

News anchor Jack "Peter Mennosbridge" Suderman introduced the special feature report of the "Canadian Mennonite Broadcasting Corporation" called "God... in the news:" A story celebrating God's mission of bringing Healing & Hope to the world. There were several reports from Mennonite Church Canada correspondents from around the world of how churches in many cultures and languages are engaging Jesus' 2,000 year old ministry. Vignettes from fast growing house churches in Cuba seeking help in leadership training, to the dynamic Manigotagan Community Chapel with a vision for locally called and trained pastoral leadership, to the vibrant churches in Hong Kong anticipating the Chinese translation of the Confession of Faith, to the itinerant ministry of the Peters family for the scattered Mennonite congregations in Siberia, to the dramatic worship of God through song and creative movement with colorful flags in Vancouver, and a MWC meeting in Strasbourg France to plan for a major gathering of global mission leaders in the unlikely location of Kazakhstan in 2006 confirmed that God is present in the news. This is Peter Mennosbridge for Canadian Mennonite Broadcasting Corporation. Good day!

Pam Peters-Pries, Executive Secretary of Support Services, and Mark Regier, staff person at Meritas Mutual Funds working in shareholder advocacy, reported how the members of the MC Canada Pension Plan join faith and action with socially responsible investing. Promoting positive social practices with our investment dollars is one way we can "free the captives" and "restore sight to the blind" and "care for the poor, the widow and the orphan" among us in our global community. It is an inherent part of being a true steward of that which God has entrusted to us.

24. Discernment on Frequency of Assemblies

Esther Peters referred delegates to the background information on frequency of assemblies in the Report Book. A resolution at Assembly 2002 encouraged us to consider meeting every second year instead of annually. This was a subject for discernment last year, and the Support Services Council reviewed the comments from table groups and recommended to the General Board that we continue to meet annually. The General Board endorsed that recommendation and now brings it to the delegates.

Motion 6: Be it resolved that Mennonite Church Canada delegates continue to meet in an annual assembly and that we ask the General Board to review this decision in five years (i.e., 2010).

m/s General Board / Ingrid Peters-Fransen

and our broken world.” Delegates joined in a series of litanies and responsive readings to underscore the continuing importance of this statement and its application to our individual and collective lives.

21.3. Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective

The moderators turned attention to the summary statement of the confession found in the Report Book. It set the stage for the integration of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church, providing the cornerstone without which the subsequent transformation processes would not have been possible. Time was taken to remind the delegates how Mennonite confessions of faith serve the church, and then table groups were instructed to work, individually and collectively, with the following questions:

1. What parts of the confession inspire and shape your personal and congregational life?
2. If we fully live into this confession, how will it change us, our congregation, our area conference and our national church?
3. What other comments do you have on this 10th anniversary of the acceptance of the confession?

21.4. Greetings from Mennonite Central Committee (International) & Mennonite World Conference

Karen Klassen Harder, chair of MCC, and Rob Davis, MCC Executive Director, brought words of greeting, appreciation and affirmation from their organization.

Nancy Heisey, President of MWC, and staff member Liesa Unger spoke on behalf of their organization, and she also introduced MWC Associate Director Pakisa Tshimika. Unger reported on the serious situation in Zimbabwe where some 250,000 persons have been displaced by the government. Both MCC and MWC are responding with help to meet the serious needs of the displaced people. Delegates were invited to write messages of encouragement and support to those suffering in Zimbabwe. The pages of messages will be delivered to a representative of MWC from Zimbabwe when they meet in the US in a couple of weeks.

21.5. Bi-National Relationships – Present and Future

The Report Book included a discussion paper entitled “The Relationship between Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA”. The paper provided some history of the relationships between the churches in the two countries, a description of components of the current relationship between the two national bodies, and a look into the future. Table groups were invited individually and then collectively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the relationship, and dream about what the future should include. Individual response sheets were collected for each country, and a number of tables were able to share their collective response during a brief plenary session.

The moderators closed the joint session with appreciation for the value of having this time together as well as valuing their personal relationship as counterpart colleagues across the national boundaries.

Removal of Members

- 6 An area conference may be removed from membership in MC Canada only on the recommendation of the General Board, and such recommendation may only be made after the General Board has followed procedures defined in Guidelines for Building Faithful Relationships in the Church (1998) and Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love (1995) to try to resolve matters with the area conference in a way that would avert the need for such a recommendation.

PART III - DELEGATE ASSEMBLIES

Representation at Delegate Assemblies

- 7 (1) Area conferences and constituent congregations may be represented at delegate assemblies as follows:
- (a) delegates appointed by constituent congregations:
 - (i) in the ratio of one delegate for every 50 congregational members or a portion thereof; but
 - (ii) not less than two per constituent congregation; and
 - (b) delegates appointed by the area conferences:
 - (i) in the ratio of one delegate for every 1,000 congregational members, or portion thereof, of their constituent congregations; but
 - (ii) not less than six and not more than 12 delegates per area conference.
- (2) Each delegate may represent only one of either an area conference, or a constituent congregation, but not both simultaneously.
- (3) Delegates must be congregational members. There are no other restrictions on who may be a delegate.

Duties and Powers of Voting Delegates

- 8 The delegates entitled to vote and present at a delegate assembly shall:
- (a) have the authority to act on behalf of MC Canada;
 - (b) discern MC Canada's participation in God's work as reflected in its mission statement;
 - (c) debate issues facing the church and, from time to time, issue statements, including, but not limited to, statements pertaining to faith and life, position statements, and statements to governments;
 - (d) review the work and ministry of MC Canada and of its mission agencies;
 - (e) approve the budgets of MC Canada;
 - (f) receive the General Board's recommendation on the appointment of an auditor to hold office until the close of the next regular delegate assembly, and accept or reject such recommendation;
 - (g) consider and accept or reject the financial statements of MC Canada and the auditor's report;

- (h) receive the General Board's recommendation and accept, reject or remove area conferences as members or as provisional members;
- (i) elect MC Canada's officers, members of the Councils and members of the Nominating Committee; and
- (j) make the bylaws of MC Canada, amend bylaws as deemed appropriate, and monitor adherence to those bylaws.

Delegate Assemblies

- 9 (1) Regular delegate assemblies shall be held:
- (a) annually, beginning normally during the first two weeks of July,
 - (b) at a place determined by the General Board.
- (2) Elections shall be held at regular delegate assemblies except where the General Board determines that it is necessary to hold elections at a special delegate assembly. The General Board and all Councils shall provide written reports of their activities, plans and relevant financial statements for consideration by delegates at regular delegate assemblies.
- (3) A special delegate assembly may be called from time to time by the General Board at a time and place it may determine.

Notice of Delegate Assemblies

- 10 (1) The date and place of the next regular delegate assembly shall be announced at the conclusion of each regular delegate assembly.
- (2) Notice of a special delegate assembly shall be given to area conferences and to constituent congregations not less than 21 days in advance.

Voting at Delegate Assemblies

- 11 (1) The quorum for a delegate assembly shall be one half the total number eligible voting delegates from the area conferences plus 200 voting delegates from constituent congregations.
- (2) The business of a delegate assembly may be conducted:
- (a) by consensus without a formal vote;
 - (b) by a show of hands at the discretion of the chair or on the request of a voting delegate; or
 - (c) by ballot vote when directed by the chair, or when a motion to require a ballot vote is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion.
- (3) Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, or if a motion to require a larger number is passed by a majority of votes cast on such motion, a simple majority of the votes cast is sufficient to carry a resolution.
- (4) In the event of a ballot vote, the votes shall be counted by tellers who have been appointed in advance.

20. Joint Worship "We Cannot be Quiet"

Peter Stucky, a pastor and president of the Colombian Mennonite Church, shared that living, working and being faithful in a country ravaged by a 60-year-old civil war has meant that the "gates of hell" are often very close by. He told stories of church members facing the reality of being refugees, and of kidnappings, torture, executions, and death threats from illegal and legal groups in Colombia. The issues of faith in God, loving enemies, forgiveness and pacifism are at the forefront for the Colombian Mennonite church as the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness oppose each other. Stucky encouraged the church to act with the same power as Peter and John, "You have authority and power you don't know about and can't imagine. Jesus is asking you to put it into practice and heal individuals and whole nations."

Jim Schrag, executive director of MC USA, and Dan Nighswander, general secretary of MC Canada, offered blessings to the Colombian Mennonite Church. Peter Stucky responded with a blessing for the North American churches, observing that it must be hard to remain faithful in a society like this – maybe harder than it is for those in Colombia.

Wednesday, July 06, 2005; 1:30pm

21. MC Canada and MC USA Joint Delegate Session

21.1. Welcome & Introduction

MC USA moderator Duane Oswald and MC Canada moderator Henry Krause shared responsibility for leading this session. Each welcomed the others' delegates, noting the variety of common interests and commitments that bring us together as one body. They recalled that the General Conference and Mennonite Church bodies adopted the Vision: Healing and Hope statement, and the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective ten years ago in Wichita, Kansas. Then in St. Louis, a decision was made to form MC USA and MC Canada, and meeting together in Charlotte this week is the result of a commitment made in 1999 to join together occasionally. Whether that will happen again, and at what frequency, remains the subject of discernment.

In separate PowerPoint presentations, information from and about MC Canada and MC USA was displayed on the screen, with narration by the moderators. Table groups, designed to include one or two Canadian delegates and eight US delegates, were instructed to take time for getting acquainted.

21.2. Healing and Hope Vision Statement

This meeting marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Vision: Healing and Hope statement. As noted in the Report Book, the statement "was created to provide focus and energy for the church. It builds on distinctive emphases of Mennonite faith. It encourages us to discover a new intimacy with God, to experience grace and joy in our communities and to seek healing and hope for ourselves, our churches

19. Report from Listening Committee

On the listening committee we have been given the task of looking and reading the timbre of the discernment sessions as if looking down from a balcony into the activity of the congregation below. We offer you our observations and invite you to continue to speak to us the remainder of the week.

Beginning with Dan Nighswander's hopeful opening comments – expressed in the analogy of the "successful separation of conjoined twins" to describe the transformation of our two country model seemed like an image one could explore when addressing several areas of our work in MC Canada. Not all is free of pain, but if managed well, we can come away with the necessary organs for functioning.

While our meetings are pressed for optimal time constraints, we need to be aware of the prophetic if challenging nature of our speakers. Michelle Hershberger dared to call us the needy, not the healer, but gave hope that God will heal us. We need to incorporate these challenges into our decision-making processes.

The twins have been successfully separated, but at least one is still medically fragile with unstable vital signs. Dan Nighswander reported with enthusiasm that the fiscal year ended in the black with excess revenue. This sounds positive, but the auditor's report indicated otherwise. It is not positive, but a negative, as it was achieved through expenditure/program reduction.

As conjoined twins, we were and are the much smaller of the two. In sharing the resources of the larger and more flamboyant twin for so long, we became accustomed to a standard of programming and activity that is no longer sustainable. A feeling of heaviness settled in as we recognized ourselves to be the broken beggar, who must rely on being saved in the name of Jesus, by the power of God, rather than through our programs.

The finance people declared, "The downward trend in congregational giving must be offset by individual and corporate giving." This seems to work against our patient, diverting blood from the heart to save the brain. Dan said we are all parts of the whole – the individual, the congregation, the area church, the national body. For the national body to by-pass the parts and appeal directly to the individual donor, is to work against our partnership commitment with the congregation and the area church.

In our discussions this morning around funding, it is obvious there is a high level of interest and recognition of the complexities of funding issues for initiating and sustaining ministries. It is not clear yet what interventions are needed to sustain this twin's long term viability.

We heard confusion in the priorities exercise. The results uncovered may not reflect reliable answers to the prioritizing question. The top 2 priorities, leadership and pastors, were the most concrete and straightforward of those listed, and yet the spending formula allocates more than 50% of our funds to Witness. Another apparent misalignment is the lowest priority, related to the Confession of Faith, and the proposed Faith and Life Committee we will be asked to consider on Thursday morning. We advise utilizing caution in applying the findings.

PART IV – NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, TERMS OF OFFICE AND VACANCIES

Qualifications for Elected Positions

- 12 (1) Each person nominated for an elected position must be a congregational member. However, congregational members of provisional constituent congregations are not eligible for election to the General Board.
- (2) In the event that an elected person ceases to be a congregational member, that person's term shall be deemed to have expired at that point.
- (3) No person may hold more than one elected position at the same time. Where a person who holds an elected position is elected to another elected position, that person is deemed to have resigned from the previously held elected position.
- (4) Staff of MC Canada are not eligible for election to an elected position in MC Canada.
- (5) Any question of eligibility for election shall be resolved by the General Board.

Nominating Committee

- 13 (1) Each area conference shall nominate one person to the Nominating Committee for election at a delegate assembly.
- (2) The Nominating Committee shall:
 - (a) in advance of a delegate assembly where elections are to be held, use its best efforts to prepare a slate of nominees consisting of one nominee for each elected position that needs to be filled;
 - (b) recommend, upon the request of a Council, persons to serve on its committees; and
 - (c) on request, suggest to the General Secretary names of candidates for vacant staff positions.

Election Procedures

- 14 (1) The Nominating Committee will receive further nominations at a delegate assembly if:
 - (a) it is endorsed by five voting delegates;
 - (b) the nominee has agreed to stand for the elected position; and
 - (c) it is presented to the Nominating Committee at least 24 hours before the scheduled election.
- (2) Twenty-four hours before the scheduled election, the Nominating Committee shall present its slate of nominees, including those nominated in accordance with 14(1) above, to the delegate assembly.
- (3) Where only one person has been nominated for a given elected position, that nominee shall be declared elected by acclamation.
- (4) Where multiple nominations have been received for any elected position, there shall be a ballot vote.

Terms of Office

15 (1) The terms of office:

(a) for the officers and the two General Board members at large not serving as appointees to the General Council of Mennonite World Conference:

(i) shall be two years; and

(ii) they shall be eligible to serve for up to three consecutive terms;

(b) for members of the Christian Witness and Christian Formation Councils and General Board who serve as appointees to the General Council of Mennonite World Conference:

(i) shall be six years; and

(ii) they shall not be eligible to serve consecutive terms;

(c) for all other members of the Councils:

(i) shall be three years; and

(ii) they shall be eligible to serve for up to three consecutive terms.

(2) A person's term shall begin at the end of the delegate assembly at which the person was elected.

Vacancies

16 (1) Where a vacancy occurs in any elected position between regular delegate assemblies, such vacancy may be filled by the General Board, at its discretion, until the next regular delegate assembly.

(2) Where a person has been appointed to fill a vacancy, the time spent completing that vacant term of office shall not be considered as a portion of any succeeding term.

PART V - GENERAL BOARD

Composition of the General Board

17 The General Board shall consist of:

(a) the officers;

(b) the moderator or a designate of each area conference;

(c) the chair of the Faith and Life Committee

(d) the following from the Councils:

(i) the chair of the Christian Witness Council and one other named by the Council;

(ii) the chair of the Christian Formation Council and one other named by the Council; and

(iii) the chair of the Support Services Council; and

(e) three members at large appointed by the General Board and confirmed by the delegate assembly, one of whom will be appointed by the General Board to the General Council of Mennonite World Conference.

- Strive to balance the passion of local congregations with wisdom and expertise of the national church. Saw a benefit to offset every risk. Personal commitment to a specific project is what makes it inspiring and engaging. Communication doesn't get to the local level so there is less accountability to the national church ministries than the local ministries. Need expertise in being able to let the stories and needs trickle down to congregations.

- The MCEC and AMBS leadership training initiative was shared as a positive example.

- At the congregational level, people can get so invested in what they are doing they might miss the mark. There are many good ministries, but want national body to help identify those that fit our theology.

- Disconnect in the local congregations in thinking about the national church. Listen to what people are saying in the church, but also get the word out through story telling. What if MC Canada had a national storyteller (e.g., Peter Dyck of MCC), someone that everyone connects with and helps us share our stories.

- Risk to local body is we flit from one project to another without sustainability, and the national body risks getting stuck in a rut and not moving on.

- Felt local ministry comes with more enthusiasm, so able to generate instant funds. If the national church is providing resources to help think through the pros/cons then there can be quality initiative from the local level as well.

18. Stories of Healing and Hope

News anchor Jack "Peter Mennosbridge" Suderman of the "Canadian Mennonite Broadcasting Corporation" introduced the morning's newscast, with a focus on long term change and perseverance in ministry. He noted we eat drive-through to save time, we cook instant rice, we "insta-bank". In a world of instant stuff, things that take a long time are often appreciated less. How long does it take to do something well? How long does it take to generate positive change? Long-term commitment and perseverance are not hot news items. Mennosbridge warned that our preferences for instant everything may be challenged by the reports. From the church in Daming, China poised for growth based on seeds planted over 80 years ago, to the churches in Saskatchewan that renewed their covenant as members of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, to the national Brazilian Mennonite church that is celebrating its 50th anniversary this month and has asked us to stop sending money for the administration of their regular church ministries, to a church in St Jacobs that has enjoyed 8 years of partnership with Christians in Benin West Africa, we learned how commitment and perseverance help long term ministry partnerships work.

training that puts all on the same footing. Congregations need help in caring for pastors, and conferences need to care for ethnic churches coming on board. Equity in addressing the needs of the various churches is an issue.

- Provide college and seminary education. Leadership needs to be present in the various careers that people work (e.g., MEDA for business, what about teachers, farmers, etc). Felt that leadership development happens in local church, with resources from MC Canada.
- Target leadership training for young people and help those exploring options. Congregations can be equipped to do it, but they need resources from national church.

Wednesday, July 06, 2005; 8:00am

16. Gathering

Mark Diller Harder led the delegates in a gathering hymn and opening prayer.

Introduction of visitors included:

- Karen Klassen Harder, Mennonite Central Committee Chairperson;
- Rob Davis, MCC Executive Director, and
- Nancy Heisey, President, Mennonite World Conference.

17. Discernment on Funding the Ministries of the Church

Dan Nighswander introduced the discussion topic of funding ministries, referring to the background material included in the Report Book. Delegates were encouraged to talk about how we make decisions regarding how to use the resources of the church. Churches and conferences budget and plan, and yet new opportunities arise and MC Canada is seeking counsel on how to respond.

Plenary Discussion:

- Both local and national church decision making is important.
- Noted that local churches, in their desire to be involved in a mission project, perhaps lack information on how to make wise decisions on how to be involved in international ministries. Should encourage local churches to do a lot of consultation with MC Canada. Also talked about the appeal of mission trips. See positive value of getting to know what is happening in another country, but also see the downside of members going on trips with non-Mennonite agencies. MCC and MC Canada need to work harder, especially with youth to provide more opportunities.
- Wonder how informed the local church is about what is happening at the national church level. Work at getting the information to the congregations and local leaders then have the responsibility to spread the word. Need to engage the constituency. Acknowledge that it takes skill to work that kind of information into a worship service.

Duties and Powers of the General Board

18 The General Board shall:

- act on behalf of MC Canada between delegate assemblies;
- act as the legal representative of MC Canada, authorize such of its officers to sign contracts, cheques and other documents on behalf of MC Canada as the General Board may consider advisable, and prescribe the limits, if any, of such authority;
- report to, and be accountable to, its members at delegate assemblies;
- between delegate assemblies, continue the process of discerning MC Canada's participation in God's work as reflected in the Identity and Purpose Statement;
- lead MC Canada in developing its identity and vision;
- create forums for interaction among the leaders of the area conferences;
- direct and coordinate the work of the Councils;
- review financial statements and direct the preparation of budgets;
- make recommendations at regular delegate assemblies on the appointment of auditors for MC Canada;
- appoint the General Secretary;
- at its discretion, fill vacancies in elected positions that occur between regular delegate assemblies;
- process issues of membership in MC Canada and make recommendations thereon at regular or special delegate assemblies;
- foster relationships with other church bodies, including appointments as appropriate to:
 - MC USA;
 - Mennonite World Conference;
 - other Mennonite church bodies;
 - Canadian Council of Churches; and
 - Evangelical Fellowship of Canada;
- in partnership with the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba and the Friends of Menno Simons College, oversee the work of Canadian Mennonite University;
- in partnership with MC USA, oversee the work of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary; and
- do any other thing which is likely to support and promote the mission of MC Canada.

General Board Governance

19 The General Board shall formulate and adopt rules of procedure and governance under which it shall operate.

PART VI - OFFICERS

Officers

20(1) The officers of MC Canada shall be the:

- (a) Moderator;
- (b) Assistant Moderator;
- (c) Secretary; and
- (d) Treasurer.

(2) The officers shall be elected at a regular delegate assembly.

Duties of the Officers

21(1) The Moderator shall:

- (a) preside at all delegate assemblies;
- (b) chair all meetings of the General Board and the Executive Committee; and
- (c) act as the official representative of and spokesperson for MC Canada.

(2) The Assistant Moderator shall:

- (a) assume the duties of the Moderator:
 - (i) in the absence or incapacity of the Moderator; or
 - (ii) at the request of the Moderator or of the Executive Committee.

(3) The Secretary shall be responsible for recording all minutes of delegate assemblies and meetings of the General Board and the Executive Committee.

(4) The Treasurer shall oversee the Financial Policy and Audit Committee established by the General Board.

PART VII – GENERAL SECRETARY

Appointment

22 The General Secretary shall be appointed by the General Board.

Duties of the General Secretary

23 The General Secretary shall:

- (a) coordinate the total program of MC Canada;
- (b) hire and supervise the MC Canada staff;
- (c) participate, without a vote, in meetings of the Executive Committee and the General Board;
- (d) receive and record the credentials of all voting delegates prior to each delegate assembly; and
- (e) publish proceedings of each delegate assembly.

The *Canadian Mennonite* published over 1200 articles last year, which works out to an average of 4 per day. Dyck reported on the actions taken with regards to three specific items coming out of the Winkler assembly. They are working to develop a partnership agreement for the partners in the *Canadian Mennonite*. The board of *Canadian Mennonite* has developed a proposal, and a task group is soliciting feedback. Still hope to build agreement by end of year. Second, Dyck shared that the listening tour, a total of 33 days in five separate trips, was a wonderful time of meeting and connecting with the constituency. Heard clearly that the *Canadian Mennonite*, as a magazine that goes to everyone, needs to connect church and regular life for people, and encourage us to live faithfully. The magazine has worked hard to find balance with difficult topics and Dyck expressed appreciation for the positive feedback. The third item Dyck noted is that there has been significant progress made around an editorial advisory board. They are in the process of filling positions, and looking forward to having that come to full fruition.

Including Dyck, four out of the six people in head office are new, and within the whole organization five out of the 12 staff are new. Transition is stressful, but it is also renewing and exciting. Dyck encouraged delegates to think of the *Canadian Mennonite* as things happen in congregations and to share the stories. He also noted the importance of ensuring new members are added to the distribution list. The church is a letter, written not with pen and ink, but with our hearts.

15. Discernment of Purpose and Priorities (Cont'd)

Andrew Reesor-McDowell reported to the assembly the results of the previous priority ranking exercise, noting the top two priorities were:

1. We will find and form people who can lead individuals, congregations, area conferences and the national church toward what God wants us to become.
2. We will find and form pastors /leaders who have a vision to expand our sphere of influence.

Table groups were invited to review the results and comment on the implications.

Plenary Discussion:

- These priorities suggest there should be greater support for the AMBS program (put our resources behind the priorities). Talked about this needing to involve more than pastoral training. Networking among congregations, network or library of sharing resources (skills). Talked about need for multicultural leadership training. Keep eyes and ears open for those who could respond to the call. Put time and effort into formation and support for the journey after the initial call and bring resources to bear.
- Felt the two top priorities are related. Talked about what funding for education might include. MC Canada should be in charge of what is going on because pastors move between congregations and conferences. Need

- Mennonite World Conference is doing a gift inventory project. In November the General Board identified many gifts MC Canada can offer the global family. The gifts identified include teaching missions in partnership with MWC, inviting pastors to come to Canada, and the Company of 1000 setting aside funds for international leadership training. Nighswander reported that Pakisa Tshimika, Associate Executive Secretary of Global Networks and Projects, was moved by our response.
- MC Canada is impacting and being impacted by our partners in Canada and around the world.

What is the church's priority internationally? Willard Metzger, Chair of the Christian Witness Council, shared a reflection on healing and hope in Israel from Glenn Witmer, Witness worker in Jerusalem. Plans were made for Palestinians and internationals to walk the 8 km from Bethlehem to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. As expected, Israeli soldiers stopped the demonstrators at a military checkpoint. A statement of 'peaceful intent and vivid description of the injustice' was read, then everyone peacefully rose and left. International journalists recorded the demonstration, but few Western media picked up on the stories. Two thousand years ago under Roman occupation Jews were free to make that trip, but if Jesus tried it now, he probably couldn't get there from here. Peace making in Jerusalem involves building bridges to help people get things accomplished, and it also involves learning how to use roadblocks advantageously. With the Mennonite tradition of peace, and growing expertise in the area of conflict transformation studies, Witmer is confident that there is a way to go the distance.

Jack Suderman, Executive Secretary of Christian Witness, shared the story of growth and persecution experienced by the **Mennonite Church in Vietnam**. The Mennonite Church is not yet officially registered with the Vietnam government, and during the past year has suffered ongoing harassment by local officials, including the arrest of six Mennonite leaders. MC Canada has been involved in advocating for the situation of these brothers and sisters in the church, and there is some indication that this has had a significant impact. Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, General Secretary of the Vietnam Mennonite Church a several others were recently released, but 2 of the leaders are still imprisoned and more work is needed. Suderman reported that MC Canada wrote a letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin asking him to convey our concerns about religious freedoms in Vietnam to the Vietnamese Prime Minister at their meeting on June 23. The difficult situation continues, and Suderman urged us to continue to pray for our brothers and sisters there.

14. Report from the *Canadian Mennonite*

Tim Miller Dyck, editor of the *Canadian Mennonite*, noted that MC Canada has four representatives on the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services board. Dyck reported that the past year has been a time of significant transition as they strive to set up the structures to serve the church better.

PART VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Composition of the Executive Committee

24 The Executive Committee shall consist of:

- (a) the officers; and
- (b) one member at large of the General Board appointed by the General Board from among its members.

Duties and Powers of the Executive Committee

25 The Executive Committee shall:

- (a) act on behalf of the General Board between its meetings;
- (b) report its activities to the General Board; and
- (c) between meetings of the General Board, continue the process of discerning MC Canada's participation in God's work as contained in the Mission Purpose and Identity Statement.

PART IX - JOINT EXECUTIVE CTTEE.

Composition of the Joint Executive Committee

26 The Joint Executive Committee shall consist of:

- (a) the Executive Committee of MC Canada; and
- (b) the Executive Committee of MC USA.

Duties of the Joint Executive Committee

27 The Joint Executive Committee shall meet at least annually to:

- (a) foster relationships between MC Canada and MC USA; and
- (b) oversee binational partnership programs.

PART X – FINANCIAL POLICY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE (FPAC)

Composition of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee

28 The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall consist of 3 people, namely:

- (a) the Treasurer, as chairperson; and
- (b) two other persons appointed by the General Board whose term shall be three years; and who shall be eligible to serve for up to three consecutive terms.

Duties of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee

29 The Financial Policy and Audit Committee shall meet in person at least once annually and otherwise by teleconferencing as required to:

- (a) Review the financial statements (YTD) prepared by the Director of Finance and report to the General Board.

- (b) Recommend financial policies and procedures as needed.
- (c) Recommend investment policies and procedures as needed.
- (d) Ensure that MC Canada has implemented appropriate systems to identify, monitor and mitigate significant business risks.
- (e) Monitor the review of senior management's expense claims.
- (f) Provide initial recommendations regarding the budgeting process for the upcoming year and review proposed budgets before submission to the General Board.
- (g) Act as an audit committee with the following responsibilities:
 - (i) Review and recommend the appointment of the external auditor.
 - (ii) Review annually the audit plan and fees presented by the external auditor.
 - (iii) Review the annual audited financial statements prior to submission to the General Board for their approval.
 - (iv) In camera meeting with the auditor.
 - (v) Review and report to the General Board the results of the external auditor's annual audit including the management letter and significant issues encountered during the audit and how they were resolved.
 - (vi) Review with management and the external auditors MC Canada's systems of internal control to ensure compliance with legal, ethical, regulatory and financial reporting requirements and report to the General Board as required.
 - (vii) Review revenue generation plans and performance.

XI FAITH AND LIFE COMMITTEE

Composition of the Faith and Life Committee

30 The Faith and Life Committee shall consist of 5 people, namely:

- (a) a chairperson, who will be a member of the General Board, elected at a regular delegate assembly;
- (b) two additional persons elected at a regular delegate assembly;
- (c) one additional person appointed by the General Board
- (d) one staff member appointed by the General Secretary

Duties of the Faith and Life Committee

31 The Faith and Life Committee shall meet at least three times annually, and one of the meetings will be together with a Reference Council consisting of the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers and one faculty member appointed by each of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Canadian Mennonite University, Columbia Bible College and Conrad Grebel College, to:

- (a) Attend to the interface between the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and our identity as MC Canada.
- (b) Give leadership to Mennonite Church Canada in discerning God's will on issues of theology, ethics, polity and practice.
- (c) Work cooperatively with educational institutions and other church agencies to facilitate, create and distribute resources for study and guidance to the church.

Motion 5: *The delegate assembly refers the Statement of Identity and Purpose to the Resolutions Committee for further work and requests that they bring a recommendation back to delegates on Friday.*

m/s/c Ray Friesen / Gary Janzen

Discussion:

- The Resolutions Committee asked for guidance on what kind of work is expected. Table group responses were collected and passed on to the committee.

11.2. Priorities

Delegates were asked to fill out a questionnaire on priorities for MC Canada. Individual response sheets were collected so they could be compiled for follow up discussion later on in the session.

12. “Speaking Up” Report

Esther Peters invited Heather Gallian, Interim Minister of Youth Ministries for MCEC to share about what has been happening at “Speaking Up!” Heather reported there are almost 300 youth participating in the youth discernment sessions, of which 35-40 are Canadian. They have already talked about the image they have of God and what they believe about God, and how that affects choices they make. In another session they developed a list of what they consider to be essential or core beliefs. In the discernment session tomorrow youth will look at the Confession of Faith and compare it with their list of essentials. Heather also noted that later this week they will look at some questions about our relationships and the expectations of membership.

13. Stories of Healing and Hope

This series of stories provided additional insights about the purpose and priorities of the church.

Dan Nighswander shared a number of stories of how MC Canada is partnering with the wider church:

- We have become affiliated with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and joined the Canadian Council of Churches. Nighswander reported that the Salvation Army, one of four other churches that is also a member of both organizations, expressed delight that we are joining both bodies. The Anglican archbishop expressed joy and appreciation that we have joined.
- The theme for the World Council of Churches this year was healing and reconciliation. Nighswander shared that Janet Plenert represented MC Canada at the conference and returned with the report that we must be bold in proclaiming and living the message of healing, hope and reconciliation. Mennonites have much to offer to an ecumenical movement.

- Agree with previous comment. Wondered if there could be emphasis on worshipping God rather than just doing. Also wondered why an identity and purpose statement was needed?
- Biblically sound. Asked whether this identifies us as Mennonite, what makes it specific to us? Seems fairly generic. Wondered if peace stance needed to be included here.
- Biblical, strong and positive about presentation. Recommendation to insert “our Lord” [i.e., gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.]
- Question about what “engage” means. Felt it was a good word, but not in complete agreement with explanation for the word. Whole statement seems a little bland. Others who are not Mennonite would not see anything particularly distinctive in this.
- Says nothing about the transforming nature of our experience with God. “Commit resources and efforts” doesn’t seem to encompass all we try to do. Wonder who the “we” is and who the “church” is in the phrase “We call equip and send the church...” What we do should be in response to what God does.
- Too long to be memorized, but too short to spell out in any detail. Had some misgivings about engage – not a biblical word like call, equip and send. What do we expect to have as a result or outcome?
- Saw an echo between congregations, area conferences and national church with the great commission (Jerusalem, Judea and all the world). Suggest inserting “Jesus” [i.e., Jesus’ gospel of peace and justice].
- Found peace and grace, but missing the word love
- Wondered about “engage” and “initiatives”
- “Commit our resources and efforts” is mild; suggest, “Commit ourselves and our resources”.
- Question whether the statement would catch our youth and young adults. Sharpen it up.

The Listening Committee was invited to give their sense of whether there was more work required on the statement or if delegates seemed ready to make a decision. The Committee reported hearing strong affirmation that the statement is biblical. There were a number of questions and suggestions about a word here and there, but overall sensed some degree of affirmation for the statement. We could spend a lot of time discussing this, but expect that even with further work there will continue to be a similar response.

Motion 4: The delegate assembly adopts the Statement of Identity and Purpose.

m/s General Board / Lydia Harder

Discussion:

- Feel uneasy making a decision, would like to see someone work on it with this feedback.

PART XII- MINISTRIES OF MC CANADA

Christian Witness Council

32(1) The core activities of the Christian Witness Council shall focus on carrying out mission work together with area conferences and their constituent congregations including, but not limited to:

- evangelism and church planting;
- international missions;
- multicultural ministries;
- Native ministries;
- peace and justice advocacy; and
- service ministries

(2) The Christian Witness Council shall consist of 10 people, namely:

- a chairperson elected at a regular delegate assembly;
- one member elected at a regular delegate assembly to serve as an appointee to the General Council of Mennonite World Conference; and
- eight other persons elected at a regular delegate assembly.

(3) The Christian Witness Council shall have authority to:

- select any other officers from among its members that it deems desirable;
- hire staff to oversee its programs;
- modify the organization of its programs to adapt to the needs of MC Canada and the availability of resources;
- oversee its programs, staff and budgets;
- delegate parts of its authority to various committees, and
- appoint representatives to related organizations.

(4) The Christian Witness Council shall prepare financial budgets for their own programs with assistance from the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and reports for presentation at regular delegate assemblies, covering their activities since the last regular delegate assembly, and shall prepare and provide to the General Board such other statements or reports as the General Board may request.

(5) The Christian Witness Council shall, on behalf of MC Canada, relate to:

- Mennonite Central Committee;
- Canadian Women in Mission;
- Christian Peacemaker Teams; and
- any other organization or group assigned to it by the General Board.

Christian Formation Council

- 33(1) The core activities of the Christian Formation Council shall focus on providing leadership and resources to enable area conferences and their constituent congregations to promote the Christian formation of their members, including, but not limited to:
- (a) congregational and ministerial leadership;
 - (b) youth and young adult ministry;
 - (c) Christian education and nurture; and
 - (d) resources and publishing.
- (2) The Christian Formation Council shall consist of 10 persons, namely:
- (a) a chairperson elected at a regular delegate assembly;
 - (b) one member elected at a regular delegate assembly to serve as an appointee to the General Council of Mennonite World Conference; and
 - (c) eight other persons elected at a regular delegate assembly.
- (3) The Christian Formation Council shall have authority to:
- (a) select any other officers from among its members that it deems desirable;
 - (b) hire staff to oversee its programs;
 - (c) modify the organization of its programs to adapt to the needs of MC Canada and the availability of resources;
 - (d) oversee its programs, staff and budgets;
 - (e) delegate parts of its authority to various committees, and
 - (f) appoint representatives to related organizations.
- (4) The Christian Formation Council shall prepare financial budgets for their own programs, with assistance from the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and reports for presentation at regular delegate assemblies, covering their activities since the last regular delegate assembly, and shall prepare and provide to the General Board such other statements or reports as the General Board may request.
- (5) The Christian Formation Council shall, on behalf of MC Canada, relate to:
- (a) Mennonite Publishing Network;
 - (b) Mennonite Camping Association; and
 - (c) Canadian Mennonite elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools; and
 - (d) any other organization or group assigned to it by the General Board.

worship, and that will be the power of our mission. Kraybill ended with a prayer asking God to give us the words to say who we are and to help us be excellent at the work of the kingdom.

Tuesday, July 5, 2005; 1:30pm

10. Gathering

Mark Diller Harder opened the session with a gathering song.

Muriel Bechtel shared that Osiah Horst, former pastor at Danforth Mennonite Church, and mentor of many pastors and leaders in MCEC, had passed away.

11. Discernment of Purpose and Priorities

Table groups took time to get acquainted before the round table discussion time started.

11.1. Statement of Identity and Purpose

Andrew Reesor-McDowell introduced the proposed Statement of Purpose and Identity, and invited Jack Suderman to outline the biblical foundations for the statement. Suderman explained how the “echo” design of the first and last lines in the statement indicates that the church understands its own vocation in light of God’s initiatives and purpose. Numerous Old and New Testament passages were used to examine the meaning and intent of key words and phrases in the statement:

- God initiates and the church responds: Genesis 12:1-3 and II Corinthians 5:17,21;
- Has been called (by God) to its calling: Ephesians 3:21-4:6;
- Equips: I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4: 1-16, Romans 12: 1-8;
- Sends: John 20:21;
- Engaging the world: John 3:16, John 1:10, John 7:7, Luke 12: 54-57, Matthew 18: 15-20
- Gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ: Mark 1: 14-15, Ephesians 1:10, 3:10.

Suderman concluded with the summary “God initiates, the church is called to respond. This is our identity and our purpose.”

Table groups spent time considering the statement and whether it represents a biblically sound understanding of who MC Canada is and what we are called to do.

Plenary Discussion:

- Agree that statement is biblical, concerned about whether the connotation is still too focused on “doing” rather than “being”

Center exhibit hall and shared his perspective on art as ministry. Using stories from the Global Family project, Dirks showed how art is building bridges across cultures and traditions.

7. Financial and Auditors Report

Lloyd Plett, Chief Financial Officer, and Ingrid Peters-Fransen, member of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee referred to the Auditor's Report in the Report Book and used a PowerPoint presentation to report on the Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Operations. In fiscal year ended January 31, 2005 (FYE'05) the revenue exceed the expenses, however revenues did not meet budget. Delegates were advised that the consequence of donations not meeting budget (i.e., declining revenue) is that ministries will need to be scaled back.

Discussion:

– Ray Dirks noted that the archives and gallery raise funds through individual and corporate funds, and are not supported by the budget. Lloyd agreed that they are not a budget item; however the gross numbers used in the financial report accurately represent how the funds flowed through our books.

– Why are revenues on deferred contributions down? Lloyd clarified how the decision made last year, to transfer those deferred contribution funds allocated for Canadian Mennonite Bible College to Canadian Mennonite University for administration, are reported in the financial statements. The transaction steps involve recording the deferred contributions as revenue, transferring them out and recording that as an expense.

Motion 3: *The delegate assembly approves the audited financial statements for MC Canada for the year ended January 31, 2005.*

m/s/c Ingrid Peters-Fransen/Ron Rempel

8. Nominations

Glenn Zehr, reporting on behalf of the Nominations Committee, referred to the slate of nominees presented in the Report Book, and outlined for delegates the process to follow if they wished to make further nominations. Zehr also distributed a supplemental slate of nominees, in preparation for the proposed Faith and Life Committee.

9. Joint Worship “By the Power of Jesus”

Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. called on Mennonites not only to make peace but also to name the Peacemaker. Kraybill noted that we are pressured to stop talking about Jesus because of sensitivity to other religions, and we are also pressured to choose a civil religion that talks about Jesus but takes part in society's consumerism and militarism. A clear christology is needed to bring us to

Support Services Council

34(1) The activities of the Support Services Council shall focus on structures and staff to provide support services to MC Canada including, but not limited to:

- (a) planning delegate assemblies;
- (b) communication;
- (c) information technology;
- (d) human resources management;
- (e) pension plan;
- (f) property management; and
- (g) development and constituency relations.

(2) The Support Services Council shall consist of six persons, namely:

- (a) a chairperson elected at a regular delegate assembly;
- (b) five other persons elected at a regular delegate assembly.

(3) The Support Services Council shall have authority to:

- (a) select any other officers from among its members that it deems desirable;
- (b) hire staff to oversee its activities;
- (c) modify the organization of its programs to adapt to the needs of MC Canada and the availability of resources;
- (d) oversee its programs, staff and budgets;
- (e) delegate parts of its authority to various committees; and
- (f) appoint representatives to related organizations.

(4) The Support Services Council shall prepare financial budgets for their own programs, with assistance from the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, and reports for presentation at regular delegate assemblies, covering their activities since the last regular delegate assembly, and shall prepare and provide to the General Board such other statements or reports as the General Board may request.

(5) The Support Services Council shall, on behalf of MC Canada, relate to:

- (a) Mennonite Foundation of Canada;
- (b) Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service; and
- (c) any other organization or group assigned to it by the General Board.

Council Governance

35Each Council shall formulate and adopt rules of procedure and governance under which the Council shall operate.

PART XIII – MODERATORS, SECRETARIES AND CONFERENCE MINISTERS MEETING

Membership

36 The members of the Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers meeting shall consist of the moderator or a designate, leading staff member and conference minister of Mennonite Church Canada and each of its member conferences.

Functions

37 The Moderators, Secretaries and Conference Ministers will meet annually to:

- (a) Report to each other the ministries and state of health of the national church body and its area conferences.
- (b) Serve, together with others, as a reference council for the Faith and Life Committee.
- (c) Discuss issues of common concern in order to provide mutual counsel and support and to seek common approaches where appropriate.
- (d) Develop relationships of trust, respect and mutual subordination.
- (e) Other functions that may be helpful to building up the unity and faithfulness of the church.

PART XIV – OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Fiscal Year

38 MC Canada's fiscal year shall end on the 31st day of January in each year.

Corporate Seal

39 The Corporate seal shall:

- (a) have inscribed thereon Mennonite Church Canada; and
- (b) be affixed to such signed documents as the General Board considers necessary or advisable.

Indemnities

40 Every officer, member of the General Board and member of a Council of MC Canada, and their heirs, executors and administrators shall at all times be indemnified and saved harmless, out of the funds of MC Canada, from and against

- (a) all costs, charges and expenses whatsoever which such officer or member sustains or incurs as a result of any claim, demand or proceedings made or brought against him or her for anything done, or omitted or permitted to be done, in the course of carrying out his or her responsibilities as an officer or member, except for any costs, charges and expenses sustained or incurred by the officer or member because of the wilful neglect of such officer or member; and
- (b) all reasonable costs, charges and expenses incurred by such officer or member in the course of carrying out his or her responsibilities as an officer or member.

Returning to his original analogy of co-joined twins, Nighswander concluded that this surgery has been a success for MC Canada and MC USA. In spite of setbacks, unexpected developments and continuing challenges, the separated twins are not just surviving they are thriving and growing. Nighswander looks back over the six years with considerable satisfaction and with surprised gratitude that he was able to be a part of it all. He acknowledged his mistakes and shortcomings, and expressed gratitude for the wise and skilled persons on staff and on the board that he was blessed to work with and who have compensated for him. Nighswander felt he was blessed with an excellent staff and a wise board, and has great hopes for MC Canada because of what God can do. God is working in and through and also sometimes in spite of us. God is faithful. God will bring to completion the work that God began. God is faithful. God is.

6. Stories of Healing and Hope

Krause directed attention to the written reports regarding the ministries that MC Canada has been engaged in this past year in the Report Book and noted that oral reporting this year would focus on sharing stories, by or as told by people who have been impacted by our ministry.

"Why be Mennonite?" Sue Steiner, Chair of the Christian Formation Council, suggested one reason is because people around the world are asking for our perspective, and invited Gordon Allaby, a pastor from Saskatchewan to share his perspective on being a Mennonite. Allaby used phrases from Bob Dylan's song "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" to tell his faith story, sharing that when he became a Mennonite, he met people who welcomed him, people who do work for peace and justice, care about the environment, practice hospitality and help those in need. Allaby is grateful for this acceptance, and yet still remembers what it feels like to be judged and excluded and is concerned when he hears echoes of those sentiments in the Mennonite Church. "Oh, what'll you do now, my blue eyed son?" Allaby encouraged listeners to accept the challenge presented in the final verse of Dylan's song, and walk toward conflict rather than away from it.

Should the church be committed to funding, developing and distributing distinctive Anabaptist curriculum and resources? We listened for answers as Dave Bergen, Executive Secretary of Christian Formation, interviewed three pastors. April Yamasaki (Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford BC), Gordon Driedger (Altona Mennonite Church, Altona MB) and Ray Friesen (Zion Mennonite Church, Swift Current, SK) work in very different communities and churches, but they were all eager to talk about the importance of biblically sound, contextually relevant resources for the ministry of the church. We heard that the church of the future is a church that is able to engage meaningfully with its context. It is equipped to clearly demonstrate and support its people in faith formation, and it is able to grow a people with great capacity for carrying out God's mission in the world.

Ray Dirks, Director of the Heritage Centre Gallery, encouraged delegates to visit the Global Family art exhibit on display in the Charlotte Convention

Motion 2: The delegate assembly approves the actions of the General Board taken between July 10, 2004 and July 5, 2005.

m/s/c Marlene Janzen/Ed Janzen

Discussion:

Ingrid Peters-Fransen, member of the Financial Policy and Audit Committee, reported that Canada Customs and Revenue Agency dropped the employment insurance assessments and refunded the employment insurance premiums paid on overseas mission workers.

5. Reflection and Hopes

Henry Krause reported that Dan Nighswander would be leaving the office of General Secretary at the end of November 2005, and that following a six month study leave, Dan and his wife Yvonne will begin serving as Witness workers in South Africa. Krause invited Nighswander to share some of his reflections on the last six years as General Secretary and some of his hopes for the future of MC Canada.

Dan Nighswander used the analogy of separating con-joined twins to describe what we have been doing since the Mennonite Church and General Conference merged and formed MC Canada and MC USA six years ago. Looking back through the assembly minutes, Nighswander found we have taken action on many important issues. Nighswander's hope is that we will learn to practice a "generous orthodoxy", to realize more fully how God moves amongst us and encourage each other towards God's intention with grace.

Nighswander shared that the most serious challenge faced by MC Canada as a church in transition was the financial crisis of three years ago. It was painful to let go of some dreams and cut staff, but we have come through and the hope is to strengthen our ministries and extend our impact. Similarly, there was also significant effort expended in the area of publishing, because we believe it is vital to the ongoing health of the church. Nighswander hopes that the publishing ministry will achieve financial stability and sustainability in the near future.

Nighswander noted that Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) has evolved faster and further than ever anticipated, and even as we give up sole ownership of one school we are engaging the Mennonite schools across Canada and the joint seminary in Elkhart, in new ways. Nighswander hopes for closer ties and stronger cooperation between these schools and our other ministries.

Reflecting on how the governance structure of MC Canada changed the connection with area conferences, Nighswander noted that we continue moving toward more integration of ministries and services. Nighswander hopes that we will learn to think with our minds and feel with our hearts the gift of belonging to each other, not as a matter of control or obligation or suspicion, but as a wonderful privilege.

PART XV –AMENDMENTS OF BYLAWS

Amendments to the bylaws

41 (1) These bylaws may be amended at any regular or special delegate assembly; provided that the proposed amendments have been sent to the member area conferences and their constituent congregations at least two months in advance.

(2) In order to pass, bylaw amendments require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Coming into force

42 (1) These bylaws come into force at the conclusion of the delegate assembly at which they are adopted.

(2) Any subsequent amendments to these bylaws come into force at the conclusion of the delegate assembly at which they are adopted.

Approved: July 14, 2001

Ammended: July 6, 2002

Ammended: July 9, 2005

MINUTES

ASSEMBLY 2005 – Mennonite Church Canada

Hilton Charlotte City Center
Charlotte, NC
July 4-9, 2005

Monday, July 04, 2005; 7:00pm

1. Worship Service “Walking and Leaping and Praising God”

The assembly participants of Mennonite Church Canada (MC Canada) and Mennonite Church USA (MC USA) gathered for a joint evening worship service. The worship team led by Paul Dueck directed us in much joyous singing, making all people feel welcome as we sang songs of praise from countries around the world.

Representatives of Virginia Mennonite Conference, MC USA and MC Canada brought greetings and welcomed delegates to Charlotte, NC. The worship leaders, Paula Hochstedler Stoltzfus and Kenneth Thompson, introduced the theme for Charlotte 2005. Based on Acts 4:20, “We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard”, the theme “Can’t Keep Quiet!” captures the wonder and excitement the disciples felt when they saw what God was doing through them.

Michele Hershberger, Chair of the Bible Department at Hesston College, speaking on Acts 3: 1-10, suggested this story is problematic if we, as North American Mennonites, think of ourselves as the disciples, but it becomes meaningful when we think of ourselves as the beggar. When we acknowledge our brokenness there is healing and joy for the church in the powerful name of Jesus. Joy is not something that our structures or ministries create. Joy is a response to God’s healing.

Tuesday, July 5, 2005; 8:00am

2. Welcome and Introductory Matters

2.1. Gathering

Worship leader Mark Diller Harder led us in singing two songs from Sing the Journey the new hymnal supplement and an opening prayer.

2.2. Opening

Henry Krause, Moderator of MC Canada, greeted delegates and declared the 6th annual session of the MC Canada assembly open and then led us in a prayer of invocation.

2.3. Quorum

Referencing the requirements outlined in the bylaws, Krause declared quorum was established, with 27 area conference and 207 congregational delegates registered for the assembly.

2.4. Floor Privileges

Floor privileges were extended to all guests at the assembly sessions. It was noted that delegates were sitting in assigned table groups and visitors were encouraged to join a non-delegate table group. With the exception of voting, non-delegates were encouraged to participate in all aspects of the assembly.

2.5. Greeting Each Other

Attendees were invited to greet each other, and encouraged to introduce themselves to someone they didn’t know.

2.6. Review of Agenda

The agenda and discernment guide, as printed in the Report Book, were reviewed.

2.7. Introductions

The following introductions were made:

- a) Assistant Moderator, Esther Peters;
- b) General Secretary, Dan Nighswander;
- c) Secretary, Marlene Janzen;
- d) Parliamentarian, Sam Steiner;
- e) Resolutions Committee: Jeremy Bergen (chair), Helen Kruger, and Hugo Peters;
- f) Listening Committee: Ron Braun, Irene Crosland, and Nancy Brubaker.

3. Minutes of Assembly 2004

Krause reported that the Minute Book 2004 was distributed to churches in December of last year. Marlene Janzen referred to the Assembly 2004 Actions printed in the Report Book and reported on the work done by staff and the General Board to follow up to those actions.

Motion 1: The delegate assembly adopts the minutes of the 5th Annual Session of Mennonite Church Canada as recorded and published in Minute Book 2004 issued by Mennonite Church Canada.

m/s/c Marlene Janzen/Albert Durksen

4. Actions of General Board

Marlene Janzen directed attention to the summary of General Board Actions printed in the Report Book and reported on the additional actions taken by the General Board in the time between the printing of the Report Book and this assembly.