

1 **Mennonite Church Canada Minute Book 2017**

2 **Mennonite Church Canada Minute Book has been published annually since 1996.**

3 **Minute takers: Lynell Bergen and Don Rempel Boschman**

4 **Parliamentarian: Harold Peters Fransen**

5 **Moderator: Calvin Quan**

6 **Assistant Moderator: Aldred Neufeld**

7 **Editors: General Board**

8
9 **Friday**

10
11 **1. 6:30 - Worship**

- 12 a. The Assembly worship team included Phil Campbell Enns, Moses Falco, Johise Namwira,
13 Vernelle Enns Penner, Alfred Penner, Anneli Loepp Thiessen, and Rebecca Klassen-
14 Wiebe. We sang, we prayed, a video was shown and Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and 2 Corinthians
15 3:1-6 were read.

16 **2. 7:00 - Opening**

- 17 a. Calvin Quan declared the 2017 Mennonite Church Canada Special Delegate Assembly
18 open, and welcomed everyone present – those in person and online.
19 b. Quorum – We had 33 of a possible 40 Area Church delegates are present, 292
20 congregational delegates are registered. We have quorum.
21 c. More than 412 are in attendance. Rules for engagement were shared.
22 d. Officials:
23 i. Resolutions Committee – Bruce Baergen, Laura Carr- Pries, David Driedger,
24 ii. Listening committee – Terry Stefaniuk, Anika Reynar, Tim Wenger;
25 iii. Parliamentarian – Harold Peters Fransen
26 iv. Recording Secretaries – Lynell Bergen and Don Rempel Boschman
27 e. Harold Peters-Fransen reviewed our discussion guidelines
28 f. Willard Metzger welcomed the delegates (balancing apologies for the tight space with
29 gratitude that so many had come out). He introduced:
30 i. Ervin Stutzman – MC USA
31 ii. Rick Cober-Bauman – MCC Canada
32 iii. Nelson Kraybill – Mennonite World Conference
33 iv. Steve Berg – Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches
34 g. Willard also welcomed the youth delegates.

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37 **3. 7:15 - Start of Business**

- 38 a. Review of agenda and process
39 i. Proposals and recommendations are in the discernment guide
40 ii. Each issue will begin with a presentation
41 iii. The presentation will be followed by a table group discussion
42 iv. Table groups can then share their discussion with the assembly
43 v. Voting: Only the bylaw vote will be a ballot vote and it will require a 2/3
44 majority. The other votes will be by show of hands and will require a simple
45 majority.
46 vi. Four advance resolutions were mentioned: Mennonite Women Canada,
47 Mennonite Men, and Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure resolutions are in

- 48 the program book, and will be discussed Saturday afternoon. There is also a
49 resolution from Emmanuel Mennonite in Manitoba which will be presented
- 50 b. The nominations slate was presented by the nominations committee and the assembly
51 was invited to make other nominations up until noon on Saturday with a vote on
52 Saturday evening. While normally nominations are closed 24 hours before the slate is
53 voted on, the assembly was asked to approve a shortened period of time between the
54 closing of nominations and the vote. Delegates voted in favour of this change. Nominees
55 were:
- 56 i. Calvin Quan: Moderator
 - 57 ii. Geraldine Balzer: Assistant Moderator
 - 58 iii. Allan Hiebert: Secretary treasurer
- 59
- 60 c. Presentation and discussion of new model and bylaws
- 61 i. Peter Rempel, Mennonite Church Manitoba moderator, presented the proposed
62 new structure and new bylaws (pages 10-23 of our discernment guide). Peter
63 highlighted significant/substantial changes from our current bylaws, including:
 - 64 1. Definitions;
 - 65 2. membership;
 - 66 3. delegate gatherings;
 - 67 4. duties and powers of voting delegates;
 - 68 5. composition of Joint Council, page 17;
 - 69 6. officers, page 21;
 - 70 7. other committees, page 29;
 - 71 8. amendments to bylaws, page 33
- 72
- 73 d. Each table group was invited to discuss the bylaws and structures and note two
74 significant comments on their feedback forms.
- 75
- 76 e. Bruce Baergen from the resolutions committee presented the following amendment
77 from Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler. This amendment proposes adding a new
78 Section 2 outlining our beliefs and commitments:
- 79
- 80 MC Canada Bylaw Addition
- 81
- 82 Add the following section at the beginning. All other sections increase numbering by 1.
- 83
- 84 Section 2 Beliefs and Commitments
- 85
- 86 As a community of believers, we affirm that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and
87 the foundation upon which we build. (1 Corinthians 3:11)
- 88
- 89 The following statements identify who God calls us to be, which guides our work and life
90 together:
- 91
- 92 Vision: Healing and Hope, 1995
- 93 God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow
94 as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us
95 to the world.

96
97 Statement of Identity and Purpose, 2005
98 God calls, equips and sends the church
99 to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.
100 We are a community of disciples of Jesus,
101 A part of the Body of Christ,
102 covenanted together
103 as congregations,
104 area churches*, and
105 a national church body.
106 Gratefully responding to God's initiatives
107 and empowered by the Holy Spirit,
108 we commit ourselves and our resources to
109 calling, equipping and sending the church
110 to engage the world with the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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112 In these convictions we draw inspiration from Anabaptist forebears of the 16th century,
113 who modelled radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. We seek to walk in his name by the
114 power of the Holy Spirit, as we confidently await Christ's return and the final fulfillment
115 of God's kingdom.

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117 f. Section 4: Insert 4.1.b: "encourage and guide MC Canada in the process of Biblical
118 interpretation and spiritual discernment"
119 i. General Board has agreed to move this.
120
121 g. Delegates were invited to express their concerns and affirmations of the model
122 i. Ken Dueck of Zion Mennonite Church-against motion because moves control
123 away from delegates
124 ii. Erin Morash of Crystal City Mennonite Church – is 4.1b replacing or being added
125 into the motion
126 1. It is an insertion
127 iii. Kim Rempel of East Zorra Mennonite Church – affirm motion and the new
128 structure – good to place emphasis on local congregation; concern not a lot of
129 strategy to implement this – how is congregational vitality and local mission
130 going to happen? Where is the trickle down?
131 iv. Claire Ewert Fisher of Mount Royal Mennonite Church – clarification – secretary
132 treasurer – why is that being combined?
133 1. Want to keep joint council to a smaller size; many secretary duties
134 carried out by staff, so the onus is not as heavy
135 v. Marilyn Houser Hamm of Altona Mennonite Church – approval of the bylaws or
136 at what point will be able to raise concerns or considerations of amendments of
137 bylaws
138 1. Tomorrow morning offers for amendments will be considered
139 vi. Melissa Miller of Home Street Mennonite Church – concern about things falling
140 through the cracks – schools, Menno Media, etc
141 1. Response: we will be looking at the Witness proposal later; Menno
142 Media housed with CommonWord

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- vii. Brent Horst of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church – strength is that more congregations will have voice at larger church because opportunity to connect easier at Regional Church level
 - viii. Gordon Driedger of Petitediac Mennonite Church – grateful for addition of 4b – put in something specific re: theological gathering – have a set date rather than just a ‘suggestion’
 - ix. Peter Rempel – distinguish bylaws from other documents – operating agreement would be the place for this
 - x. Tom Yoder Neufeld of First Mennonite Church Kitchener – concern with platform for these bylaws – focus on the individual congregation re: foundational – theological question in privileging congregational over regional, national, international bodies; congregational individualism a reality, but congregation need to have a sense of being something whole.
 - 1. Peter Rempel– Christ the foundation, but structurally the congregation is the foundation ...
 - xi. John Klassen of Emmanuel Mennonite Church Winkler – in light of Tom’s statement – go back to the amendment; want to be sure our structure had some foundation; clarification about process
 - xii. Patricia Regier of Niagara United Mennonite Church– intention to make sure regional reps. have some diversity to represent the whole church
 - 1. Keith Regehr – diversity a live question throughout the process; retained a consultant to help build an ecosystem for diversity; shaping how we live and work together to make it easier for people who are marginalized to be part of our structures
 - xiii. Diane Lichti of Tavistock Mennonite Church – clarification about Exec. Committee and Exec. Staff Group
 - xiv. Gerald Gerbrandt of Bethel Mennonite Church Winnipeg – affirm Tom’s concern re theology – term foundational lead us to some difficulty; issue is with rhetoric – larger structures ASSIST congregations in mission rather than be part of the mission; inadequate understanding of church in the documents and the rhetoric around them
 - xv. Michelle Rizoli of Toronto United Mennonite Church – something lacking under 4.1 under expectations of members – languages talks to individuals not institutions; Regional Church should relate to congregations; explicit expectations
 - xvi. Dave Bergen of Bethel Mennonite Church Winnipeg – question about staff positions and titles – directors vs ministers – should we be incorporating more “churchy” language?
 - xvii. Ray Friesen of Emmaus Mennonite Church – emphasis on congregation gives our tiny congregation a sense that there is a place for us in the larger body – a balance we need to keep working at
 - xviii. Rick Cober Bauman MCC – even when denomination is not active at global level – ministry also works through MCC – congregation not the only place of ministry
 - xix. Ryan Siemens of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan – We are inconsistent among the regions on names for our roles – this would have to be dealt with at regional church level

- 189 xx. Ben Cassels of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church –We should build
190 into our bylaws or operational structures some sort of sunset clause to force a
191 periodic review of our structures
192 xxi. Ernie Epp of Nutana Park Mennonite Church – I am very impressed with the
193 work. It is important to articulate how MC Canada is going to initiate and
194 terminate programs. We should have references to a personnel policy
195 xxii. Nelson Kraybill of MWC – I commend the process for naming MWC, and invite
196 an additional foundational document that could be named – the Shared
197 Convictions of Mennonite World Conference
198 xxiii. Randell Neudorf of Mennonite Church eastern Canada – excited about new
199 direction – thankful for added Jesus statement; addresses some of the concerns
200 about church being foundational – the church lives in a neighbourhood
201 xxiv. Willard – re insert and confession – committed to engage in developments
202 pastorally following conclusion of Special Assembly
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204 h. Announcements – Virginia Gerbrandt – Richert of MCM
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206 4. Closing Worship
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208 **Saturday**
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210 5. 8:15 – Worship

- 211 - Norm Dyck of Listowel Mennonite Church spoke about Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s
212 “ReLearning Community” resource, an 18-month congregational program that has
213 discipleship at its core. So far, 18 congregations have participated. More information can be
214 found at <https://mcec.ca/relearning-community-0>
215

216 6. 8:45 - **Start of Business**

217 Calvin welcomed those joining via live streaming – noted that 77 people joined last evening

- 218 a. Feedback from last night was presented by Keith Regehr, which he summarized into
219 three categories:
220 i. What gives you hope – value of focus on local congregation; simplified
221 structure; networking; improved financial viability; national gathering; this
222 proposal faces reality
223 ii. What gives you concern – fear of sense of national identity; impact on smaller
224 regional churches; is this viable; finances; what is vision that underlies this; is
225 this going to strengthen congregations
226 iii. Questions – expectations of members (something might be added via resolution
227 committee); appointees to Regional Church re who and how appointed;
228 credentialing; can local congregation relate directly to local body. Keith tried to
229 answer some of the questions, or speak about how they would be answered
230 b. Motion 1: Implementing Bylaw
231 Whereas the Delegate Body at Assembly 2016 approved in principle the FDTF Final
232 Report and Addendum;
233 be it resolved that we approve the new structure in principle (see discernment guide
234 appendix 1 page 10)and be it resolved that the MC Canada Delegates rescind the

- 235 current bylaw and approve the following bylaw in its place. (begins on page 11 of the
236 discernment guide)
- 237 i.
- 238 c. Proposed Amendment
- 239 Insert in section 4.1 all existing sub points are renumbered accordingly:
- 240 i. Listen to and be attentive to member congregations, giving opportunity for
241 congregations to speak into Nationwide Church issues and priorities and for
242 leaders to communicate what is heard into the Nationwide Church dialogue
- 243 ii. tend to the health of member congregations
- 244 d. Moved by the resolutions committee. **Carried.**
- 245
- 246 e. Proposed Amendment
- 247 i. To allow electronic voting for special delegate sessions as well as regular
248 assemblies.
- 249 ii. Moved by Matthew Froese of Hamilton Mennonite Church and seconded by
250 Ben Cassels. **Carried.**
- 251 f. Proposed Amendment
- 252 g. To the new section 2 entitled “Beliefs and Commitments” add Mennonite World
253 Conference’s statement on “Statement on Shared Convictions”
- 254 i.
- 255 Mennonite World Conference Shared Convictions - Adopted by MWC in 2006
256 By the grace of God, we seek to live and proclaim the good news of reconciliation in
257 Jesus Christ. As part of the one body of Christ at all times and places, we hold the
258 following to be central to our belief and practice:
- 259 1. God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to
260 restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service
261 and witness.
- 262 2. Jesus is the Son of God. Through his life and teachings, his cross and
263 resurrection, he showed us how to be faithful disciples, redeemed the world, and offers
264 eternal life.
- 265 3. As a church, we are a community of those whom God's Spirit calls to turn from
266 sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith, and
267 follow Christ in life.
- 268 4. As a faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life,
269 interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in the light of Jesus Christ to discern
270 God's will for our obedience.
- 271 5. The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become
272 peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our
273 possessions with those in need.
- 274 6. We gather regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to hear the
275 Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability.
- 276 7. As a world-wide community of faith and life we transcend boundaries of
277 nationality, race, class, gender and language. We seek to live in the world without
278 conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God's grace by serving others, caring for
279 creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord
- 280 h. Moved by Marcus Shantz of Rockway Mennonite Church and seconded by Ron Rempel
281 of Stirling Ave. Mennonite Church. **Carried.**

- 282 7. **Proposed Amendment**
283 a. Add to 19.1.m (appointments to other bodies) “and determine awareness of,
284 engagement and identity with these bodies at the congregational level”
285 b. Moved by Marilyn Houser Hamm of Altona Mennonite Church and seconded by Jamie
286 Kerr of Listowel Mennonite Church. **Not carried.**
- 287 8. **Ballot Vote on Motion 1. Carried**
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289
- 290 9. 10:00 – 10:30 – Break
291
- 292 10. **Worship.** Bryce Miller, from Jubilee Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, spoke about Jubilee’s
293 ministry of bridging gaps, especially through community ministries.
294 11.
- 295 12. Results of By-Law Vote
296 a. No abstentions, 281 Yes, 18 no, 9 spoiled – 94% in favour
297 b. Moment of silence
298
- 299 13. Presentation on Covenant and Operating Agreement
300 Lee Dyck (MCBC moderator) gave an overview of our Covenant and Operating Agreement and
301 asked the delegates to commend these documents to the regional churches and to give
302 feedback on the Operating Agreement.
303
- 304 14. Table discussions of Covenant and Operating Agreement
305 15. Reporting on paper and notes collected
306 16. Open discussion:
307
- 308 a. David Driedger of First Mennonite Church Winnipeg – theologically speaking the
309 trajectory in this document always flows one way– whatever is good always flows from
310 us to others. Does not allow us to receive from others. Addressing those issues has
311 begun (IM, IR); part of our covenant has that statement – healing and hope – flow
312 through us to the world. Rarely allow us to speak of how we receive good news or
313 become attentive to what is unintelligible to us.
- 314 b. Karl Langelotz of Sargent Ave. Mennonite Church – table discussion 2g – foster
315 Anabaptist identity – concern that this is discussed in yearly theological meetings; and
316 what does that mean? Talk about identifying factors
- 317 c. Paul Klassen of Hanover Mennonite Church - bless and support each others’ ministries
318 as if they were our own, and strengthen each other...what if church goes off the deep
319 end, how do we bless and support them?
- 320 d. Ruth Boehm of Faith Mennonite Church – suggesting an addition to covenant – Commit
321 to develop structures and practices to listen deeply to the wisdom, dreams, and
322 struggles of its congregations and to share these within each region and within
323 Mennonite Church Canada’s commitment to change structures to reflect what we are
324 hoping to do.
- 325 e. Claire Ewert Fisher of Mount Royal Mennonite Church - #13 – financial agreement
326 between regional and national – asked to turn our understanding of how we support
327 each other on its head. We are agreeing to first fruits to national body, and the rest is
328 up to individual churches.

- 329 f. Lydia Crutwell of First United Mennonite Church – grateful included VHH statement, and
330 not tried to rework that. Small question about operating agreement p 27, #8.7 re HR
331 policies for church staff, should include regional churches in that process because small
332 churches cannot do this on our own.
- 333 g. Walter Bergen of Emmanuel Mennonite Church Abbotsford – using the word covenant
334 without reference to what it means in Scripture. May lead to misunderstanding – Elmer
335 Martens’ book where covenant and contract are explained – begin with a Scriptural
336 foundation
- 337 h. Debbie Baergen of First Mennonite Church Edmonton – responding to Paul Klassen – we
338 can support our sister and brother churches who are going off the rails – we can find
339 ways to connect with churches we don’t agree with. God can work through the
340 strangest places – God is in those people who read the Bible differently than us.
- 341 i. Florence Driedger of Peace Mennonite Church Regina – think about the large and small
342 regions. Sometimes as small regions we feel less capable but small sometimes can free
343 us to do way more creative things than the large. Challenge the small to feel they can
344 contribute, and invite larger groups to learn from smaller.
- 345 j. Ray Friesen of Emmaus Mennonite Church – CCC, EFC, no reference to interfaith
346 dialogue – encourage to include this in our agenda
- 347 k. Stephanie Chandler Burns of Bloomingdale Mennonite Church – affirm covenant, but
348 seeing missing reference to power – power is unequal – needs to be recognized – size
349 and make-up of regional bodies
- 350 17. International Witness Proposal was presented by Paul Wideman, MCEC moderator
351
- 352 18. Paul Neufeldt. MCA moderator introduced the focus group discussions which will happen after
353 lunch.
- 354 19. 11:45 - Worship & Announcements – Margaret Ewert Peters, from the Fiske and Herschel
355 congregations in Saskatchewan, spoke about how these congregations have served a family in
356 their community.
357
- 358 20. 12:15 to 1:15 – Lunch
359
- 360 21. It was announced that nominations are closed.
361
- 362 22. Focus group discussions in break-out rooms
- 363 a. Canada Witness
 - 364 b. Communications
 - 365 c. Community of Spiritual Leadership
 - 366 d. Congregational Vitality
 - 367 e. International Witness Report and Proposal
 - 368 f. Vision and Identity
369
- 370 23. Reporting from focus group which talked about the Witness Proposal
- 371 a. It is important to send more resources - including money - to Mennonite World
372 Conference
 - 373 b. It is important to build on the expertise which our workers have developed over the
374 years

- 375 c. It is important that MC Canada continue to manage and oversee our international
376 Witness work
377 d. Our workers need a sense of security about their future
378 e. Question: Which parts of the Witness Working Group's report were picked up and which
379 were not?
380 f. The international witness agenda needs to be lodged with specific staff people at the
381 regional church level
382

383 24. Plenary discussion of Witness Proposal

- 384 a. Palmer Becker of Waterloo North Mennonite Church: This proposal still envisions a large
385 role for the nation-wide church in international witness. Many immigrants have come to
386 Canada and desire to do ministry in their home countries. They need our help to do this
387 but our nation-wide staff is often too far away. We need to develop regional teams to
388 help those congregations which are interested in international mission.
389 b. Clare Hanson of Rosthern Mennonite Church: One danger of this proposal is that the
390 donors with the most funds will determine our Witness priorities.
391 c. Willard Metzger: The Executive Staff Group has developed a ministry grid to help shape
392 our priorities. Congregations will also help determine our priorities.
393 d. Clare Hanson of Rosthern Mennonite Church: What is the future of our current ministry
394 commitments?
395 e. Willard Metzger: Our first set of commitments is to our current Witness work.
396 f. Rafael Duerksen of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church: So much is left unsaid and is
397 unclear in the proposal. Our congregation is concerned that there a slow backing away
398 from international witness ministry.
399 g. Moses Falco of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship: Our present model is being starved
400 financially. I am concerned about the lives caught in transition. On Monday some staff
401 will be laid off. In July, some of our Witness workers may be facing an unwanted
402 transition. We need to remember the people who will be affected by these changes.
403 h. Kyle Penner of Grace Mennonite Church Steinbach: Currently, congregations send
404 money to both their area church and to MC Canada. In the future, they will only send
405 money to the area church, part of which will be forwarded to MC Canada. A portion of
406 the MC Canada amount will be budgeted for International Witness. Will churches be
407 expected to give additional funds for relational funding of specific workers or projects?
408 i. Willard Metzger: Some churches are already doing this through mission partnerships
409 and those churches will be encouraged to continue to do so. Congregations which are
410 not part of congregational partnerships will be encouraged to enter into them without
411 decreasing the undesignated donations which they are presently making.
412 j. Clare Ewert Fischer of Mount Royal Mennonite Church: What have we heard from the
413 countries and ministries which are receiving our workers?
414 k. Suzanne Guenther Loewen Nutana Park Mennonite Church: We work with other
415 organizations with international mandates (e.g. MEDA and MCC). Let us make sure that
416 we do not duplicate what they are doing.
417 l. Joanne De Jong of Holyrood Mennonite Church: What will the process be to develop
418 new initiatives? Who will be doing the fundraising? There is a lot of talk about structure
419 but not about vision.
420 m. Andrea De Avila of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church: Why are we trying to reinvent
421 the wheel and not working with Mennonite Mission Network in the United States?

- 422 n. Willard Metzger: The proposal has a preference that we would receive invitations from
423 our sister national churches, often coming through the Mennonite World Conference.
424 But we also want ideas to come from our own congregations. Since congregations are
425 not always best equipped to do the initial screening of opportunities, discernment
426 should be the task of both the local congregation and the nation-wide church working in
427 partnership. Witness has always tried to work in work in partnership with existing
428 Anabaptist churches in other parts of the world and this will continue.
- 429 o. Rick Cober Bauman: MCC wants to work in partnership with MC Canada.
- 430 p. Paul Wideman: The international witness file will be one of the first things which the
431 Joint Council will work on but the Interim Council could do only limited work on this
432 until the delegate body passed the bylaw motion this morning.
- 433

434 25. 2:45 – Worship

- 435 a. Joanie Neufeldt from MC Alberta shared about how her congregation worked with
436 seven other churches to sponsor about 30 Syrian refugees.
- 437

438 26. Break – 3:00 – 3:30

439

440 27. Keith Regehr on the written feedback from the morning’s discussion on Covenant and Operating
441 Agreement

- 442 a. What was hopeful in what you read?
- 443 i. The covenant language and interdependence which we have
 - 444 ii. Diversity
 - 445 iii. Believing the best of each other
 - 446 iv. Gratitude for the clarity of relationships
 - 447 v. Resource sharing
 - 448 vi. The importance of theological language
- 449 b. What created fear for you?
- 450 i. No one response dominated
 - 451 ii. Finances
 - 452 iii. Will the covenant work?
 - 453 iv. Are we really going to be more diverse?
 - 454 v. Communication and listening to each other across the church
 - 455 vi. How well will the regional churches do in carrying congregational voices into the
456 national conversation?
 - 457 vii. The training and raising up new ministerial leaders
 - 458 viii. There is not enough to hold us together
 - 459 ix. Power differences between regional churches and a worry about a drift towards
460 centralization
- 461

462 28. **Motion 2 to commend the Covenant and Operating Agreement to Joint Council and Regional**
463 **Church boards for finalization**

464

- 465 a. Whereas the Area Churches and MC Canada currently operate within a covenant that
466 describes their relationships;
- 467 b. Whereas the new structure calls for close collaboration among the Regional Churches in
468 setting nationwide priorities, funding those priorities, and shaping the identity of the
469 church as a nationwide community of faith

- 470 c. Whereas the General Board and Interim Council recommend the draft Covenant as
471 printed in the Discernment Guide for describing the relationships among the Regional
472 Churches
473 d. Whereas the Regional churches desire to define with greater clarity some of the details
474 of how they will work together
475 e. Whereas clarity on the matters in the Operating Agreement contributes to the health of
476 the covenant
477 f. Whereas the General Board and Interim Council recommend the Operating Agreement
478 as printed in the Discernment Guide for describing how the Regional Churches will work
479 together.
480 g. Therefore, the MC Canada Delegates accept the draft Covenant in principle and invites
481 the Regional Churches working together in Joint Council to finalize the Covenant,
482 making changes within the spirit of collaboration, if needed to clarify the relationships.
483 h. Therefore, the MC Canada Delegates support the draft Operating Agreement in principle
484 and invite the Regional Churches working together in Joint Council to finalize the
485 Operating Agreement, making changes within the spirit of the covenant, if needed to
486 further clarify how the Regional Churches will work together.
487

488 29. Additional Discussion on Covenant and Operating Agreement

- 489 a. Vic Thiessen of Hope Mennonite Church: This has been an incredibly stressful year for
490 Mennonite Church Canada's staff, many of whom are facing unemployment. Despite
491 this, they have been working very hard. As we move into the new structure, we need to
492 build in safeguards that prioritize staff well-being. In the new staff structure, for
493 example, one person should not be asked to do the work that was formerly done by two
494 people.
495 b. Gabby Martin of Zoar Mennonite Church: I have some concerns regarding diversity.
496 There is no definition of diversity and goals have not been outlined.
497 c. Lee Dyck: Regional churches will each send a representative to a diversity working
498 group. That person will in turn lead others in the regional churches.
499 d. Ben Cassels of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church: We should strengthen the
500 description of the review done by the regional churches. For example, point 19 of the
501 Operating Agreement on the "Health of the Covenant" should specify how often the
502 Covenant should be reviewed.
503 e. Zoe Cressman of Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship: Clarification is needed on the
504 relationship between our mission and our vision.
505 f. Ian Funk of Langely Mennonite Fellowship: Our schools have always been a significant
506 part of who we are. The schools working group did not include congregational
507 representation and there was no focus group today. There is very little detail outside of
508 point #18 in the Operating Agreement (which states that the Joint Council will address
509 this).
510 g. Josh Wallace of Warman Mennonite Church: Our vision statement is 20 years old. A
511 study conference should be convened to renew our vision statement.
512 h. Gerry Grunau from the MCBC finance committee focused on point 13 of the Operating
513 Agreement which says that regional churches will work with MC Canada staff on
514 fundraising. MCBC does not, however, have the staff or volunteers to do this.
515 i. Debbie Baergen of First Mennonite Church Edmonton: expressed concern about the
516 size of the financial contribution expected from MC Alberta.

- 517 j. Bryce Miller of Jubilee Mennonite Church asked why next year's budget is referred to as,
518 FYE 2019? Answer: Our fiscal year ends at the end of January. Thus FYE 2019 begins in
519 February 2018.
- 520 k. Virginia Gerbrandt Richert of MCM : 13.4 of the Operating Agreement states that the
521 regional churches will forward their nation-wide contributions even if the regional
522 budget is not met. This is surprising.
- 523 l. Kathleen Bergen of Mennonite Church Alberta : When do we use the word "Mennonite"
524 and when do we use the word Anabaptist? Why did we change the word from
525 "executive director" to "executive minister?" Is there a change in role?
- 526 m. Willard Metzger: We usually use Anabaptist as a theological descriptor. We are using
527 the word "minister" in an attempt to move in a more ecclesial and less corporate
528 direction.
- 529 n. Henry Paetkau of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada: Item 10 focuses on our special
530 relationship with MC USA. Currently, our ministerial leadership information forms are
531 shared with MC USA. Who will be responsible for this in the future?
532

533 **30. Motion to approve in principle both the Covenant and the Operating Agreement**

- 534 a. **Carried**
535

536 **31. Ken Warkentin (MCS moderator) presented the financial plan.**

- 537 a. Implications: The documents we are looking at are not budgets. The most recent chart is
538 found in the supplement. Money will flow from the congregation to the regional church
539 and then to the nation-wide church. MCEC has been doing this for a while and MCS has
540 started to encourage churches to do this.
541

542 **32. Advance resolutions printed on page 10 of the program guide:**

543
544 a. **Motion 3: Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure**

545 Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure (MVSA) requests that MC Canada continue to
546 be the official holder of our MVSA Shared Funds and to provide related administrative
547 support in the managing of our financial transactions. **Carried**
548

549 b. **Motion 4: Mennonite Men in Canada**

550 Mennonite Men in Canada have been and continue to function as a partner organization
551 with Mennonite Church Canada that seeks to a) support Mennonite men in spiritual
552 growth from an Anabaptist perspective under the JoinHands program and b) support
553 new Mennonite church plants with grants to help them realize their first owned worship
554 space under our JoinHands program. We request that Mennonite Church Canada enable
555 the continuation of the Mennonite Men in Canada ministry by committing to remain the
556 official holder of our funds and to provide the related administrative support in the
557 managing of our financial transactions." **Carried**
558

559 c. **Motion 5: Mennonite Women in Canada**

560 Whereas Mennonite Women Canada strongly affirms and aligns with Covenant New's
561 stress on relationships and mission, and Whereas Mennonite Women Canada deeply
562 appreciate the possibility of conducting nationwide gatherings of women at Mennonite
563 Church Canada's nationwide gatherings, and
564

565 Whereas the previously independent regional associations of Mennonite Women are in
566 process of aligning with their Area/Regional Churches and therefore still need
567 Mennonite Women Canada to fulfill several important functions for them, and
568

569 Whereas Mennonite Women has a valued and imbedded history with Mennonite
570 Church Canada and continues to be a partner organization that promotes supportive
571 Christian relationships and mission among women in Mennonite Church Canada, and
572

573 Whereas we are a national partner organization who depend on MC Canada to comply
574 with CRA regulations, and
575

576 Whereas we are the stewards of the substantial Pennies and Prayer Legacy fund
577 (\$70,000) with which we support Witness workers who include ministry with women in
578 their work, as well as of other more current funds with which we support Mennonite
579 Women engaged in theological studies and the production of annual Bible Study Guides
580 in partnership with MWUSA,
581

582 Be it resolved that Mennonite Church Canada enable the continuation of MWCANADA's
583 ministry by committing to remain the official holder of our funds, to provide the related
584 administrative support in the managing of our financial transactions, and to welcome
585 nation wide gatherings of Mennonite Women Canada at those of Mennonite Church
586 Canada. **Carried**
587

588 33. Bethel Mennonite Church has expressed concern about the lack of a national leadership
589 development plan. Calvin Quan responded that the Joint Council will address this.
590

591 34. Listening Committee Report by Anika Reynar (Anika Reynar of Hope Mennonite Church, Tim
592 Wenger of North Kildonan Mennonite Church, Terry Stefaniuk of Mennonite Church
593 Saskatchewan)

- 594 a. We have been working on a new structure but we know that this not our end goal;
595 rather, being faithful followers of Jesus Christ is our goal.
596 b. We have done well at believing the best of each other.
597 c. We want to nurture relationships between congregations, across the regions and
598 around the world.
599 d. We are fearful that congregations will not be able to shoulder the responsibilities which
600 are being thrust upon them.
601 e. We know that there are many people who wished to be here but couldn't do to a lack of
602 space or a lack of finances.
603 f. The Listening Committee also invited Katrina Woelke from EVI, and one of the youth
604 delegate hosts, to share something that she had heard: Earlier in our deliberations, one
605 of the youth asked a question and the response was laughter. I am disappointed. Let us
606 engage respectfully with the youth.
607 g. The Listening committee offered their thanks for the opportunity to listen, and for the
608 passion for the church held by those present.
609

610 35. Worship

- 611 a. Lydia Crutwell, the pastor of First Mennonite Vancouver, spoke about the revitalization
612 of the congregation in the context of a changing neighbourhood.

613 b. Ken Warkentin from MCM prayed for Rick Neufeld of MCM who was involved in car
614 accident this morning.
615

616 36. 5:00 - Supper
617

618 **37. Motion 6: Motion to Approve the Financial Plan in Principle**
619

- 620 a. Whereas the new structure more clearly grounds the work of the nationwide church in
621 congregational mission, ministry, and financial resources
622 b. Whereas the financial principles ground the work of the church in the financial
623 resources of the congregations
624 c. Therefore, the MC Canada Delegates approve the planning principles as set out in the
625 Discernment Guide in principle and commend them to the Joint Council in its ongoing
626 work of building a financially sustainable nationwide church, and approve the structure
627 of the financial plan in principle and commend it to the Joint Council for its future work
628

629 **38. Discussion of the Financial Plan and suggestions for Joint Council**

- 630 a. Gerry Grunau of Mennonite Church British Columbia: Are we agreeing to the principles
631 laid out in the financial plan, or are we agreeing to the numbers presented?
632 b. Subrata Chakrabarti of Mennonite Church British Columbia: The expected contributions
633 per person are not that large and I think we can grow from there.
634 c. Elmer Hildebrand of Bethel Mennonite Church Winnipeg: We have allocated too little
635 for leadership development.
636 d. Judith Friesen Epp of Home Street Mennonite Church: Will the indigenous relations staff
637 role be full time (MC Canada) or will it be split between half time (MC Canada) and half
638 time (Prairie Region)?
639 e. Gerd Heinrichs of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church: It looks like we are trying to do the
640 same amount of work with less money in the regional and nation-wide church system.
641 f. Sharon Schultz of Eyebrow Mennonite Church: We are doing a lot of voting in principle
642 but will we be voting on the specifics at some point?
643 g. Willard Metzger: We want to show that while we are not proposing concrete numbers,
644 we are following historic giving trends and that this is doable. We need to make sure
645 that this is doable. This is a conservative budget. We have not entirely factored in the
646 generosity of individuals. Budget decisions will become the responsibility of the regional
647 churches and their delegates to the nation-wide assembly.
648 h. Kyle Penner of Grace Mennonite Church Steinbach: What is your financial expectation of
649 congregations?
650 i. Willard Metzger: Combine what you have been giving to the national and area churches
651 and give it to the regional churches. If you have been in a congregational partnership
652 with an international witness worker, continue with that as well. If you are not in a
653 congregational partnership with an international worker, consider doing that.
654 j. Ron Rempel of Stirling Ave. Mennonite Church: I would like to hear a response to the
655 question about if we are going to do less ministry. What is not going to be done at the
656 national level?
657 k. Willard Metzger: We will be doing less international witness work, less communications,
658 less leadership development and less executive team work. Some of these tasks will
659 become the responsibility of the regional churches.

- 660 l. Waldimar Neufeld of Emmanuel Mennonite Church Abbotsford: Years ago, we just gave
661 to a ministry and we trusted leadership to spend it on the right things. The challenge for
662 us as a church is to have a group that has some expertise in fundraising and to put
663 projects in front of the constituency which sparks their interest.
- 664 m. Dave Bergen of Bethel Mennonite Church Winnipeg: None of our current regional
665 churches (except perhaps MCEC) has expertise in fundraising.
- 666 n. Ryan Siemens of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan: The Future Directions Task Force
667 Report pointed to a lack of ownership of our work. By lodging responsibility in the
668 regional churches, our regional workers can bring the MC Canada agenda with them.
- 669 o. Stephanie Chandler Burns of Bloomingdale Mennonite Church: Our history points to
670 declining giving. But isn't the plan based on stable giving?
- 671 p. Ken Warkentin: The amount projected to go to MC Canada is significantly reduced.
- 672 q. Jonathan Seiling of Vineland United Mennonite Church: Shouldn't we try direct
673 fundraising to individuals, coordinated by the regional churches?
- 674 r. Adam Robinson of Doulgas Mennonite Church: Even though we can't afford expansion
675 now, we should think theologically about what we might be called to be do in the
676 future.
- 677 s. Scott Brubacher Zehr of Rockway Mennobnite Church: Why is MCBC contribution
678 proportionally less than the other regional churches?
- 679 t. Keith Regehr:
- 680 i. The initial calculation was not done properly
- 681 ii. Four out of the five regional churches have budgeted for deficits. These deficits
682 will in turn impact the national church budget.
- 683 u. Willard Metzger: The giving to the nation-wide is not a set percentage of giving to the
684 regional church. It is a commitment to a certain dollar amount.
- 685 v. Matthew Froese of Hamilton Mennonite Church: Does this mean that every year we are
686 starting with fresh new numbers or will we have a reference point for our giving?
- 687 i. Response: Both the regional churches and the nation-wide church are
688 responsible for each other's health.
- 689 w. Palmer Becker of Waterloo North Mennonite Church: We need to go home and do some
690 creative thinking about what we need to do at the regional level.

691
692 **39. Motion 6 Motion to Approve the Financial Plan in Principle**

693 a. **Carried**

694 **40. Report on Focus Group discussions:**

695 Keith Regehr provided feedback from WG reports

- 696 a. Congregational vitality – equipping saints; we want to hear stories about what is making
697 congregations vital; there are no technical solutions; What is there to work with – we
698 would like to have resources curated to easy to find them; vitality is rooted in the intent
699 of congregation
- 700 b. Communication – polarity of journalism vs info from denomination; budget
701 requirements for Regional Church communications. What is equity in distribution;
702 concerns about language of materials.
- 703 c. Canadian Witness – thankful for the full time Indigenous Relations position; attending
704 to how we do witness at Canadian level – what are we already doing?
- 705 d. Vision/Identity – be intentional; priority on camps and schools; what does it mean to be
706 a nationwide church together; fears of loss – shape ourselves; need for inspiration re

707 what nationwide church is doing; what holds us together when times get tough;
708 Learning together to live as Anabaptists in our context
709 e. Spiritual leadership – given that community of spiritual leadership is a key role, how
710 does this work with MC Canada and RC. What happens with what is discerned there?
711 Schools? Is this a primary place for doing discernment together? What is discernment?
712 What is relationship with community of spiritual leadership with Regional Church
713 ministers
714 International – strong collaboration with RC; we need to provide additional resource to
715 Mennonite World Conference if we use their expertise.
716
717

718 41. Comments

- 719 a. Jeff Friesen of Charleswood Mennonite Church – speaking as chair of CW Working group
720 – regrettable that people involved in WG were encouraged not to attend conversations
721 – would have made a more robust conversation. Understand need for people to speak
722 freely if they want to be critical but people good enough and strong enough that they
723 could have been in these rooms in good ways.
724 b. John Peters of Charleswood Mennonite Church: I am concerned that if a local church's
725 idea is not approved by the national church it could strain the relationship between that
726 local congregation and other levels of the church.
727 c. John Peters of Charleswood Mennonite Church: We have given careful thought to some
728 of our long-term programs. How will their future be weighed against new ideas?
729 d. Rafael Duerksen of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church: How will designated
730 donations to international witness be treated? Will it benefit the area church or
731 international witness?
732 e. Keith Regehr: Designated donations will benefit international witness.
733 f. Garry Janzen of Mennonite Church British Columbia: The regional churches will have
734 access both to the witness evaluation grid and to the invitations coming from the global
735 church. Regional churches will also work with congregations to shape their proposals.
736 g. Lydia Crutwell of First United Mennonite Church: I commend the humility of the
737 leadership in reversing plans based on responses to initial ideas. I also appreciate the
738 quality of the questions.
739 h. Tom Yoder Neufeld of First Mennonite Church Kitchener: In Saskatoon we committed
740 ourselves to congregational discernment. The working group materials should continue
741 be available for congregations.
742 i. Tom Yoder of First Mennonite Church Kitchener: We need a clearer definition of
743 mission. Our mission and the Great Commission could be a theme of a future study
744 conference.
745

746 42. **Motion 7: Working Group Summaries**

747
748 Whereas the Working and Reference Groups have made a significant contribution to the
749 Covenant New process and their work offers significant guidance to the ongoing work of the
750 nationwide church, and whereas the Joint Council will need to attend to many of the items in
751 the terms of reference of the Working Groups
752 Therefore, the MC Canada Delegates express their gratitude to the many people who
753 contributed to church through their participation in the Working and Reference Groups, and

754 commend the Working Group reports to the Regional Churches working together in the Joint
755 Council for their ongoing deliberation regarding the life of the church

756 i.

757 43. **Carried**

758

759 44. **Motion 8: International Witness Proposal**

760 Whereas International Witness is a vital part of the ministry of MC Canada and there is urgent
761 need to revitalize international Witness and to connect this part of the churches ministry more
762 deeply to congregational energy

763

764 Therefore, the MC Canada Delegates approve the proposal in principle and commend it to Joint
765 Council as it shapes the structure of International Witness

766

767 45. **Carried**

768

769 46. **Motion 9: Slate of Officers**

770 a. No other nominations were received

771 b. Nominees

772 i. Calvin Quan: Moderator

773 ii. Geraldine Balzer: Assistant Moderator

774 iii. Treasurer / Secretary: Allan Hiebert

775 c. Motion 9: Accept these nominees for approval

776 d. Moved: Renate Klassen

777 e. Seconded: Ryan Siemens

778 f. **Carried**

779

780 47. Closing resolutions

781 48. **Motion 10:**

782 Whereas putting together an event of this magnitude has required the hard work and
783 commitment of many people and whereas this Assembly in particular is in addition to the
784 normal functioning of MC Canada

785

786 We extend our heartfelt thanks to all those involved in the planning, organization and
787 implementation of this special assembly.

788

789 We are grateful for the hotel and staff, who have served us well and kept us fed.

790

791 We are grateful to the worship committee who have led us in powerful ways, through worship
792 and reflection, which has helped shape our conversation.

793 We extend our thanks to all the delegates, who came from across the country, from different
794 backgrounds and ages, devoting their weekend to discuss the future of our church.

795 **Carried**

796

797 a. **Motion 11:**

798 Whereas this Assembly brings to a close a long and difficult process and the beginning of
799 a new journey

800

801 We thank those who have worked diligently; meeting together, writing documents, and
802 taking the time to listen.

803
804 We want to extend our gratitude to:
805 The General board
806 MC Canada Staff
807 Area church staff and volunteers
808 Congregations who gave time to consider and discuss
809 Those who sat on working/reference groups
810 And everyone that participated in this process at any level

811
812 We realize that people may have been hurt during this process, and that there are those
813 who are excited for what is to come.

814
815 We want to thank those whose formal roles have now finished; whether volunteer or
816 employed. We acknowledge your hard work and commitment to the church.

817
818 We thank our leaders who continue to revise and work with these new structures.
819 We commit to pray for this continued process and those who will be bringing it into
820 being.

821
822 **Carried.**

823
824 8:00 - Closing ceremony and worship

825
826 Litany of thanks for faithful leaders and a committed staff

827
828 **Sunday**

829
830 9:00 - Worship

831
832 General Board and Joint Council meets Sunday for lunch

833
834
835
836 49. AMBS Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
837 50. BFC Being a Faithful Church
838 51. CBC Colombia Bible College
839 52. CGUC Conrad Grebel University College
840 53. CM Canadian Mennonite
841 54. CMU Canadian Mennonite University
842 55. ED Executive Director
843 56. FDTF Future Directions Task Force
844 57. FYE Fiscal Year Ending
845 58. HWB Hymnal: a Worship Book
846 59. IR Indigenous Relations
847 60. MCC Mennonite Central Committee

848	61. MCA	Mennonite Church Alberta MCBC
849	62. MCBC	Mennonite Church British Columbia
850	63. MC Can	Mennonite Church Canada
851	64. MCEC	Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
852	65. MCM	Mennonite Church Manitoba
853	66. MCSask	Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
854	67. MW Canada	Mennonite Women Canada
855	68. MWC	Mennonite World Conference
856	69. MVSA	Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure
857	70. MM	Mennonite Men
858	71. LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer
859	72. MC USA	Mennonite Church USA
860	73. NC	Nationwide Church
861	74. RC	Regional Church
862	75. TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
863	76.	