

Table Group Discussion – Gathering 2019 Delegate Session, June 29, 2019
Summarized and transcribed by Katie Doke Sawatzky, MC Canada Communications Officer
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Summary of Responses (Recorded responses are below summaries):

Question #1: “What ignites your imagination about missional activity in your congregation, Regional Church or MC Canada?”

It was inspiring for folks to hear stories from other congregations (in Firestarter Stories and in the short presentations by Regional leaders at the AGM) – VERY IMPORTANT AND APPRECIATED. There was a feeling of change in the air at the event, that Spirit is moving. Folks wondered how to bring this energy back to congregation.

Still an experimental phase (transfer of church “work” to younger generation who are busy – churches trying to figure this out)

Being okay with failure that some ideas won’t work; recognition that with imagining comes uncertainty.

There was a common focus/affirmation for missional projects at the local level that meet the needs of the church’s immediate surrounding community, or meet the needs of minority groups in the city (refugees, new Canadians). Examples often included the following:

- dialogues with other faiths
- sharing meals with neighbourhood
- involving both kids and seniors in worship
- before and after-school programs; offering food at schools

Some discomfort with the word “mission,” (or at least a recognition that it’s evangelical association is a turnoff for some folks), there was a general affirmation that “mission” involves stepping across societal lines, such as race, class, age, etc. and in all cases *being present*.

A few responses for what’s happening regionally and nationally: Re-Learning Community (MCEC) and MC Canada’s Indigenous-Settler Relations program were mentioned repeatedly as initiating strong and inspiring ideas, resources, events, etc. Both are appreciated very much.

Summary of responses

Question 2: How can the Regional and Nationwide Churches support the mission, ministry and witness of your local congregations, and better connect them to what we do together as MC Canada?

Communication is key – more and more often!

Craving more information/stronger connective tissue between local, region, and nationwide churches; leadership at all levels needs to take responsibility to ensure these connections and communicate them

There were questions about the role of MC Canada. Gaps in communication between three levels of church are felt.

Call for strong vision.

Recognition that storytelling is important in inspiring mission – can the larger church facilitate that?

- idea to bring MC Canada personnel to local churches to “tell stories”
- idea to have churches “tour” across country to share ideas and communicate stories
- how to share what MC Canada is up to with the local congregation?
- nationwide programs are less well-known and advertised in MCBC
- note that Firestarter stories are hyper-local stories, what about nationwide and global focus?
- Question of whether we are losing our nationwide identity

Need to make sure first-generation churches and “new” Mennonites feel connected to wider church

Desire to build partnerships between churches (emerging, existing) and with other non-church community organizations

Much praise for Commonword, although a request for more multi-lingual resources

There was confusion and concern over WSTs, although a general affirmation for the idea. Some were not familiar with where the idea of the model comes from.

- more Witness workers
- impression that Witness has been demoted and more responsibility being placed on local congregations

General affirmation and excitement for new congregational website hub; will be a good tool

Desire for the civil disobedience policy to be considered by the broader church; understood more clearly

Table Group Discussion– Gathering 2019 AGM, Delegate Session, June 29, 2019

Recorded responses

Question #1: “What ignites your imagination about missional activity in your congregation, Regional Church or MC Canada?”

Table 1

1. Hearing stories from other congregations (e.g. **Simple¹**) which illustrate that there is not one way to e the church.
2. Our church works hard to be intergenerational (e.g. recently the children communion)
3. I have started a program to be more missional but my congregation has not been supportive.
4. Being part of a pastoral reading and support group has given me freedom to be more explicitly evangelistic in our missional activity.
5. Our congregation has a remedial reading program for children in the nearby elementary school.
6. Our Spanish Mennonite church needs to be more multicultural or we will lose our English speaking children.
7. As someone who grew up outside of the Mennonite Church, I am frustrated that while we *do* a lot of good, we fail to verbally connect it to the Christian message.

Table 2

1. There is intentionality with the way churches are connecting with the neighbourhood/community around them.
2. It is good to come to gatherings like these and hear stories about what folks are doing in their communities.
3. Not every idea always works. You have to release the outcome, keep listening to God and not beat yourself up/see it as a failure.
4. Folks at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford are reaching out to folks from a nearby Sikh temple.
5. Participating in a lunch program that serves folks from Winnipeg’s West Broadway neighbourhood is an exciting thing happening at Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.
6. Moving away from a strategy of attracting folks to the church and instead building relationships with them in schools, businesses, etc.

¹ All highlighted words mean the MC Canada Communications Officer could not confirm the spelling of the word on the written page.

Table 3

1. Involving/inviting community to meals
2. Could address low-income folks and also those that are lonely
3. Potlucks.
4. Meals as a place of connection.
5. Church planting
6. Youth groups involving those from community (from different cultures).
7. Open gym for community.

Table 4 – Trevor from Saskatoon, Mark from Winnipeg, Steph from Waterloo, Anthony from Ottawa, Zach from Leamington, and Troy from Stratford

1. Trevor from Saskatoon:
 - a. Inner city, Syrian and Filipino community
 - b. Day in the Park event each fall (BBQ) that's well attended
 - c. Person-to-person program
2. Anthony:
 - a. Appreciate stories
 - b. Blessing in the community
 - c. Still figuring out what it looks like
 - d. Refugees and new Canadians
 - e. Younger people are struggling to get involved.
3. Troy:
 - a. "Missional" as loaded and programmatic
 - b. Lots of deprogramming and unlearning
 - c. Lots of listening
 - d. People are busy.
4. Steph:
 - a. "Mission" has lots of baggage.
 - b. What are the experiences of our community that need good news?
 - c. Presence as mission
 - d. How do we go forward without being perfect?
5. Mark:
 - a. Wrote a congregational welcoming statement.
 - b. More than LGBTQ questions but about hospitality in general.
 - c. Hospitality is a core thing.
 - d. Land donated for parking
 - e. Fruit trees
 - f. Ministry of presence U of Manitoba

- g. Excited about openness.

Table 5

1. Reminded of the value of meeting in person – even though it’s very expensive.
2. Hearing the stories from different churches is inspiring in a way that’s different from *Canadian Mennonite* – even though the magazine does help with that.
3. It’s interesting that many churches seem to be doing neighbourhood events, without direct connection to worship.
4. Chinese churches reaching out to other Chinese people in U.S., across Canada, Laos; also arranging gathering among first-generation immigrant pastors for potlucks, canoe trip
 - a. Building sense of shared experience through cross-cultural conversation about spirituality, pastoral care
 - b. Leading to questions about how to bring some of that cross-cultural excitement to the Anglo churches
5. It’s good when the church acts on its sense of mission according to who the neighbours are.
6. To be missional – the first question is “who is my neighbour?” *and* the church also must look at who is in the church and attend to the needs of the people in the congregation.

Table 6

1. Stories we hear from others (inspires) to what is possible.
2. Excited about relationships being formed with people from different communities, ethnic groups.
3. New groups, people interested in Anabaptist teachings.
4. Excite about youth going on a mission trip.
5. Work with South Sudanese group in Edmonton in Edmonton
 - a. Heard about Mennonites and wanted to know how to be
 - b. Pray concern for pastor with tuberculosis, unable to work.
6. Excited when people come to us.
7. Treaty walk in Alberta.
8. Summer camp.
9. Shake youth event sponsored by Saskatchewan and Manitoba
10. New song books, worshipping ideas and resources.
11. Foodgrains project as a community event.
12. COSA groups that continue as friendship – belonging and relationships
13. MC Canada – youth delegates to Mennonite World Conference, from each region
14. When youth attend our schools and institutions.

Table 7

1. Connections
2. Synergy – coming together and making things happen
3. Openness to others – relationships that make no sense without Jesus
4. People willing to be in the most difficult places and finding friendship
5. Navigating interactions of many sources of support/resources
6. Acknowledging the realities of our communities (e.g. grieving for street people who have passed away)
7. Refugee work
8. Reciprocity – incomers bringing healing/awareness
9. Accepting people as being broken
10. Periodically sharing stories of traumatic experiences – an evening session, no time limit.

Table 8

1. Challenge to ignite an aging congregation
2. Inclusiveness of youth in leading services...very energizing!
3. In transition.
4. Church culture has shifted to much more involvement from congregation. Sponsoring refugees.
5. Connections to Indigenous neighbours are important
6. Church is changing...attendance patterns are different.

Table 9

1. BC – Lyne (Renaud’s Firestarter) story about the homeless in Montreal. Abbotsford has a similar problem. Have been personal witness to the struggle, addiction, incarceration, homelessness, violence of our “neighbourhood.” Want to do something to add to efforts being made to address these struggles. Also wrestling w/ Indigenous land acknowledgement. Acknowledgement of the system decline and the emergence of new focuses.
2. MB – Really good organizations in the community. Partnering with them is key.
3. BC – Heart for social justice but church not located where the need is. Partnering is also key.
4. BC – If *all* the churches in Abbotsford would care for 1-3 homeless people, all would be taken care of. Need to be creative. And, part of the care is not resources, it’s also relationship.
5. MB – We need to bless the ministries of those in our congregation. Publically blessing those working on the edges of our own congregation.
6. BC – Indigenous culture and practices have been added to the services rituals and liturgy. Resources from the Indigenous Bishop in the Anglican Church and localizing it.
7. AB – Imagination very much being ignited at this event and other conference organized events. But the pastor somehow needs to communicate this back to the congregation.
8. SK – Church/congregation inward looking, so the challenge to conference is “what is God calling us to do?”

9. MB – Indigenous Relations still very much needed in the educational process, so we need more involvement in that.

Table 10

1. Dorothy Tumchyshyn, MCEC – more intergenerational small groups.
2. Tina Charbonneau, MCEC – challenge of families being so busy. Congregation families don't come to things. More grassroots?
3. Sandy Plett, MCM – intentionally a family that does not sign up for things. Church needs to be a place where we tell people they don't need to do anything.
4. Gloria Martin, MCEC – leads a young women's Bible study
5. GM – where does the busyness start?
6. SP – theme of building playgrounds and outside-church spaces
7. TC – making it easy for people to join what you are doing
8. Maria, MCM – work that Steve Heinrichs is leading with walks
 - a. Opportunities to arise when we choose to slow down.
 - b. How do we ignite the imagination of the people that we need to be with?
9. GM – as long as you have food, people will come. Eg. Food trucks at the different churches.

Table 11

1. Yarrow united Mennonite
 - a. B.C. Prison Choir in church
 - b. First annual Christmas tree lighting – business community invited churches to host this event, about 800 in attendance
 - c. Yarrow MB and Yarrow United Mennonite “YUM” Church, Yarrow Alliance Church
2. Springstein Mennonite
 - a. Build rel'ship with Springstein Community Club who come to the church to collaborate, i.e. use church for their events.
3. FMC in Winnipeg– Refugee Support – growing number of visits by Congolese newcomers and refugees. One family became members and brought vitality
 - a. Working towards passing Bill C-262
4. Tavistock, ON – Refuge sponsorship – working interdenominationally with other Mennonite churches
 - a. Softened hearts as a result of working together for a common goal outside of themselves
 - b. Prayer Garden inspired by a troubled person
5. Rick Cober Bauman – Visit to Netherlands – Service Agency linked with MCC
 - a. Mindset – not too worries about their youth coming only occasionally. God has not stopped talking and moving in our world.

6. Warmen Mennonite, Sask – decolonizing work for years and then someone from church had a partner who is Indigenous and the fire was lit for conversation about Indigenous Settler relations!
 - a. Their church has had a lot of conflict and have found a story of God working in our past and given a refounding of their identity and emerging into a positive direction.

Table 12

1. Point Grey – connections with refugees
 - a. Part of inter-church initiatives to sponsor families
 - b. Welcome, support
2. Eden Mennonite – connections with local schools and baking cookies and delivering them – strengthened ties with the community
 - a. Initiated a “come to church for coffee and games” to build relationship with seniors, an important ministry
3. Nutana Park (Sask) – Relational funding with Witness workers will provide relationships that we’ve never had before – surprised by the potential this has.
4. MC Canada – a renewed sense of relational connection across the national church is deeply encouraging.

Table 13

1. Excited at how inclusive my church is – free to express our views.
2. We simply try to be.
3. Seeing gifts of seniors used for life of the church.
4. Hard to ignite imagination when trying to survive.
5. Glad to be together – hard to develop ideas beyond “the walls.”
6. Sometimes one needs to receive, not just give.
7. Change Sunday School to weekday after school and connect with children in the community.
8. Soup and dessert – Third Friday community lunch.
9. Inner city church
 - a. New members from inner city
 - b. Growing edge
 - c. Growing engagement in issues
 - i. Israel/Palestine
 - ii. Indigenous/Settler
 - iii. Climate Change
10. Need to be real with death/loss around us
 - a. How does missional “language” help us in times of loss. Where is new life amidst death?
11. Joint worship for summer with local churches.

12. Imagination is about taking risks.
13. Embrace the struggle we are in and allow it to shape us.

Table 14

1. A group of Old colony Mennonite young adults have started attending Bethany MC and the congregation has enjoyed walking with them as they bridge the gap between their worlds.
2. Three churches in Niagara have been talking together about “the calling of church.” From those conversations they have been asking important questions about the role and need of various things in church life.
3. Emmanuel MC in Abbotsford has been involved in the breakfast program at the nearby middle school, even carrying it into the summer so that those needy kids can eat and play during the summer as well.
4. Trinity MC in Calgary is hosting a few community cook-outs, on a Friday in the summer, where people are free to roast hot dogs, etc. set up a tent/RV/etc and connect with family/neighbour/etc.
5. Students from Columbia Bible College sometimes come and play volleyball, etc. at Emmanuel MC and even though they don’t otherwise get involved, they still talk as though EMC is “my church.”

Table 15

1. Congregations:
 - a. Playgrounds and connections with other churches
 - b. People walking together in the work of church, church activities
2. Regional Church
 - a. MC AB Women’s Retreat – many new Canadians come (sponsorships available to them)
 - b. Established churches relating with the emerging churches
 - i. Church picnics, camp sponsorships, sharing building space.
 - c. Sharing personal stories
 - d. Conversations/**seekers**
 - e. Senior’s Retreat (MC AB) had an Indigenous Elder
3. MC Canada
4. Bilingual pastor at an emerging church
5. Settler/Indigenous walk from Edmonton-Calgary

Table 16

1. Ideas – fostering a culture where ideas can come forward
2. Annual area church gatherings – *hearing stories* from other congregations and communities

3. Coming across situations when we have no ideas what to do – imagination is required – creates space for the Holy Spirit
4. Coming together at Gatherings – hearing inspiring big-picture thinking-bringing these messages back to our communities.
5. Changes of words in new hymnal project – we are evolving and our theology is expanding
6. Shift from inward focus to engaging with broader community.
7. Hearing from others on a similar journey.
8. So much potential in all of these connections
9. Being honest about difficult seasons – we don't always have to be successful; trying new things will sometimes fail.
10. Being ok with failure – learning and trying new things.

Table 17

1. MC Sask:
 - a. Adult S. School at RMC in 6-week blocks on timely themes. Almost everyone comes.
 - b. Walking the path – just so **cov.**
 - c. Micah Mission (P2P and COSA) – so powerful
2. MCM:
 - a. Bible studies in Women's Prison
 - b. Learning consensus at CMC
3. MCEC:
 - a. Theme-based training on healthy boundaries
 - b. Training provided in English and French/Amharic
 - c. 1st Hmong – opening to Chin group for pm worship (2006-2012)
 - i. Purchased own building. Were baptized but wanted to learn about and become Mennonite. Split into 2 and bought another building. Now a Thai tribe (Karin) asked to use space.
4. Mennonite Women Canada – God in the good endings.

Table 18

1. Peace Mennonite in BC
 - a. Meal Outreach, building a community within those attending, community attendees slowly reaching out to the church, the pastors
 - b. Over 200 people from 70-80 people. Third of the congregation.
 - c. Giving back connecting includes attendees helping in kitchen, take down, even taking table clothes home to launder
 - d. Put up 28, now 32 flags that represent background countries from those attending
2. Charleswood Mennonite in Winnipeg

- a. Korean Church Ministry, new vision maybe this is a more organic, less colonial movement of gospel
- 3. North Star MC in Drake, SK
 - a. K-8 (55 students), Girls club that rush from school to that program, non-attending. Seeks to bridge seniors to these kids.
- 4. Mennonite Church Manitoba (Rick)
 - a. Infuse Event (equipping day for pastors and lay ministers) sharing stories. Dorothy Fontaine connecting camp resources for our Indigenous neighbours.

Table 19

1. Hearing from our sharing on the floor makes me feel I can be real and authentic rather than prescribing a “Way.”
2. Clear that “change” is in the air – new ways of doing church, Indigenous Relations and deepening spirituality all suggest movement and freedom to create new ways/paths.
3. New Dialogue/Engagement:
 - a. Indigenous/Settler Relations
 - b. Menno/Catholic
 - c. Larger Inter-Faith dialogue
 - i. **MEAWS** interaction with diversity
 - ii. “Igniting the spark” also means the excitement of not knowing what the outcomes will be
4. Moving beyond the walls of the church to wider engagement
5. Imagination needed to do this...
 - a. To see God at work more broadly
 - b. To hear others and develop the ability to hold and share deep Anabaptist convictions.
6. Finding points of identification with others that create common awareness – i.e. immigration
7. Note: Our conference theme this year was a very wise choice...
8. Note: Formation Precedes vision and imagination

Table 20

1. Winnipeg, Manitoba:
 - a. Excited to hear about the unique things happening in the area of reconciliation with settlers and Indigenous people and in the neighbourhood (with immigrant and newcomer families) working in community.
2. Calgary:
 - a. Buffalo Shout group – serves food and is 3x per year, half settler, half Indigenous community.
3. Montreal:

- a. MCEC started Re-Learning community as a form of discipleship training. I always have on my mind discipleship, and re-learning reminds me we are always in mission. My passion is living with God – all times in life.
- 4. Toronto:
 - a. What ignites my imagination: That an Indigenous person would be at this Gathering.
 - b. Our Sunday School invited an Indigenous drumming circle and we've had a smudging ceremony.
 - c. Have talked about using "decolonizing the Word" in our SS. Two outcomes in this conversation either feeling righteous or totally guilty. What is the alternative? Maybe not feeling guilty but feeling responsibility.

Table 21

1. Connections between churches and corrections inmates.
2. Ability to relate to diverse backgrounds of attendees and recognize their gifts.
3. Ability to honour original language but also learn to connect with Canadians in English. Ability to welcome immigrants into congregation.
4. Commitment to supporting refugees
5. Attention to social issues: death and dying, mental health
6. Ability to bring together multiple viewpoints.
7. Need to be inclusive of all ages for worship.
8. Recognize we need to engage all generations to engage in work of the church
9. Good youth leadership in Regional and local congregations.

Table 22 – Representing MCEC, MCA, and MCBC

1. Youth, kids:
 - a. Honest about likes/dislikes: important to listen and give them permission to share – different generation
2. Intentionality about dealing w/ diversity within, letting it be seen and expressed: intentional in selecting delegates, leadership is constantly encouraging difference [does not equal] deficit: encourage walking with community regardless of identity: use of music for outreach – "Singspiration" – inviting community to come and sing, inviting other churches to host and offer fellowship "the true fellowship w/o 'swallowship'"
3. Changing (aging) demographics:
 - a. Actively planning intergenerational activities, car show, chili cook-off, crokinole, youth conference attendance even though only one 'youth'
4. Emphasis on local congregation as foundational unit of church:
 - a. Gets involved "across the street and around the world"
 - b. Global work interpreted on local scene

5. Refugee families expanding character of congregation
6. Sense of equality among Regional Churches – true!
 - a. Under new structure – no “third level” – much more regular relationship among regions
 - i. On other hand, some think MC Canada doesn’t exist anymore; fewer delegates from individual churches; it will take time and effort to assure link between individual congregation and MC Canada
 - ii. Some opposing opinions re: whether the new structure increases or decreases feeling of connection within individual churches – regional and local leaders need to take responsibility to ensure understanding

Table 23

1. Ontario churches have been welcoming many refugees, we discussed ideas of how to share our resources with these folks (bring clothes, household goods, etc.)
2. How can we revisit our radical historical identity through Anabaptism?
3. Manitoba is working on reconciliation with Indigenous communities as well as connections with other diverse communities. We imagine how we can also remember our global connections and contribute to those even with lessening financial resources.
 - a. Need for continued growth of relationships
 - b. Not just limited to financial support
4. Imagining how we can recognize we live in a multicultural society and embracing that rather than a constant focus on evangelism/conversion.
5. Creating experience and relationships across cultures to enrich our own lives and others’
6. Imagining how we can change our focus from results-drive to relationship-driven. Think about planting the seed not worrying the harvest.
7. Thinking about how we can be available for dialogue with other Christians.
 - a. Example of Mennonite Centre in London that has after many years sparked the beginning of a new church/movement

Table 24 - Hannah from Montreal, Randal from Hamilton, Rose from Regina, Gerald from Winnipeg, Marilyn from Kitchener, Wayne from Abbotsford, Gordon from Petitedcodiac.

1. Extending greetings from one congregation to another
2. Sharing with each other about our Anabaptist faith – shared views and differences
3. What would be ways of accumulating resources and sharing experiences
4. Idea of more established and wealthy churches being a partner with those in outlying areas.
5. Various programs run out of the church that meet needs in the community, such as ESL and daycare.
6. Challenges of reaching local or church or when church mentors leave.
7. Balance of taking Sabbath during the week so you can spring into Sunday and missional activities

8. Some of this is witnessing to what is already being done instead of being so shy about it
9. Being intentional about being intercultural
10. The existing connections our church has with the community.

Question #2 : How can the Regional and Nationwide Churches support the mission, ministry and witness of your local congregations, and better connect them to what we do together as MC Canada?

Table 1

1. Re-Learning community is a great connection
2. Storytelling between churches is really helpful to inspire us in mission. Can the larger church facilitate that?
3. A church from Ontario (Steinmann) supported us in Montreal to renovate our basement. Are there ways to be/create sister churches or “adopt a new church” to offer mutual support. We need to build more partnerships with emerging and existing churches.
4. Each Sunday our church includes a write-up about a Manitoba church in our bulletin, could this be a national, could it be done in video form across churches to strengthen our identity as a national church?
5. CommonWord is great as resource, library, bookstore and more is free. It pulls us together. Excellent, but multi-lingual would be good.
6. Positive is the Transition into Ministry (TiM program) which is an MCEC, but could be totally fantastic across Canada, is such an outstanding program should be spread across Canada.
7. Difficult dealing with past ministerial boundary violations:
 - a. We need more support and resources for pastors who enter into the congregation after the violation, it’s very hard work.
 - b. Can we develop a structure (similar to AA) where we can support people who previously broke boundaries.
 - c. And resources for those who have been violated, things should be in place and ready for those who want to report.
 - d. Other cultures are more open in naming their pain and seeking prayer, can we learn from them?

Table 2

1. Some discussion centering on the flux caused by the shifting of funding source for Witness workers.
 - a. Not easy for Witness workers to establish those funding connections.
 - b. Communication could have been better.

2. Affirmation for the increase in resources from MC Canada for pastors and church leaders to think about/understand missional
3. That video about WST and finding changes should be distributed/or its availability advertised for congregations to use.
4. WSTs have not been heard of by the churches represented at this table.

Table 3

1. Ministry is imagined so locally.
2. Intentional push to nurture and push that inter-relatedness between congregations as we become more international in congregations. Mennonite name game will not carry us for the long-term.
3. Conflict in churches has often had familial ties to it so will conflict change in our churches when we're less "familial" i.e. European Mennonite.
4. Elaine Heath says our trauma/conflict from past will resurface later.
5. Create, nurture ways to build and connect that's not DNA connected. We're less likely to develop this without guidance.
6. Indigenous-Settler relationships, CommonWord, Pension/Benefits Plan are huge assets of support for local congregations and other things that we can't be mobilized to do on our own.
7. MC Sask: Growing sense of relationship as Regional Church
8. Training support for leaders – portable CMU's, workshops, etc., online and on site. Because some leaders come with very little formal theological training.

Table 4

1. CommonWord an essential resource
2. Communication flow keeps us learning from each other, supporting each other, praying for each other, *Canadian Mennonite* keeps us in touch with each other
3. Facilitating Witness program is essential
4. New website will be important
5. We need more Witness workers and stronger partnership with Global Mennonite Churches.
6. Send out and train national workers return to their home country.
7. More cross-fertilization about multi-cultural church life from Regional Churches, where there are more non-Caucasians.

Table 5

1. A pastor at our table says he feels connection to see Region and that it is part of his responsibility to let the congregation know about regional support.
2. Congregation does not feel supported or connected to the national body, particularly when a difficulty arose.

3. Is a new connection between MC Manitoba churches – in the bulletin, we pray weekly for an MCM church and there is a brief description of the church in the bulletin.

Table 6

1. Website potential a joint conference is a good idea. Perhaps we could create some sort of subsidized program so that smaller congregations could afford this proposed program.
2. Still hard to get 'buy-in' for the need for a Nationwide Church (among MCBC congregations). There is decreasing institutional loyalty. This is coupled with the complexity of congregations who have gone back and forth regarding this affiliation with the Nationwide conference.
3. The global witness piece continues to be a struggle (i.e. young people choosing other para-church mission agencies that aren't Anabaptist in orientation).
4. Bring MC Canada personnel (or Regional Church rep.'s) to tell stories – but this is dependent on the invite to come from local congregants, who have ownership of the wider expressions of the church (In MC Canada, MCBC).

Table 7

1. Support local churches within Regional Churches to connect with each other.
2. Support to grow into the new model of relating to Witness workers.
3. Train people in local congregations to share faith stories; nurturing missional impulse
4. Where to send people interested in church planting
5. Develop a spirit of adoption
6. We are so anxious that church is dying that we're not thinking about life.
7. How to share our faith with words, not just be doing.
8. Learning sessions with multi-cultural leaders.
9. Listening to emerging churches.
10. Making assemblies like this more financially accessible.
11. Sharing stories from each other, hearing from Witness workers.

Table 8

1. How can we speak as a collective?
 - a. National leadership to speak?
2. How do we empower congregations to speak and act?
3. How can the Nationwide Church set direction on issues or concerns?
4. How does the prophetic voice speak?
5. I get support through the executive minister, pastor peer group, Regional gatherings. But distance hampers our ability to meet with more urban groups.

6. BC has less stability than groups in the prairies. A sense of imposition from other regions, of legalism from other congregations. BFC felt like an imposition because BC's church's felt a sense of autonomy. MCBC churches are separate in ways that MBBC churches aren't.

Table 9

1. Help us as congregations to find new Witness workers to support, especially if the workers we were supporting have returned.
2. Clarify the role or ethos of the Regional and Nationwide Churches in connection to the Witness Support Teams.

Table 10

1. Multimedia resources – videos, etc.
2. Witness workers visiting.
3. Use social media to connect people across country.
4. Print options of Canadian Mennonite are being read less by some – still appreciation of printed copies by some.
5. Uncertainty with Witness structure
 - a. Upset by new model, where are people engaging?
6. Witness is not dead! Communication will be critical.
7. E.g. MCEC gives strong leadership support – does the congregation feel that it's supported in *its* mission?
8. E.g. MCEC – ReLearning Community initiative

Table 11

1. Congregations are as connected as they want to be...
2. The question should be framed the other way
 - a. i.e. 'how can congregations support the Regional and Nationwide ministry...?'
3. Is there a 'speakers' bureau' from National/Regional Church that could be available?
4. Weekly Connect/Communication is *very* important
5. Church Engagement Minister in MCBC is vital

Table 12

1. Our Regional Executive Ministers and Church Leadership Ministers should listen for congregational themes and then plan for multi-year focus on a few themes. The focus should include more than education but should help churches develop concrete plans and accountability structures for carrying out those plans.

Table 13

1. Need good communication to bring a national voice for local concerns.
2. Gap between local churches and international work and concerns.
3. CommonWord can be more proactive in distributing materials.
4. Identify gaps in communication between local congregations and Regional and Nationwide Churches.
5. Need to engage congregations to care for themselves and their relations to other congregations
6. Provide worship resources for common practices for local churches to learn what is happening in other Regional Churches.
7. Need a vision to align local, regional and national organizations into a stronger alliance. Those without background need good reasons to align with larger church bodies.

Table 14

1. Focus: Hiring a Church Engagement Minister – MCBC
 - a. Encourage embedding such a position within all of MC Canada
 - b. 50% position focusing on engagement, and donor relations.
2. “more connections”
 - a. Hearing from others churches helps develop a “collective imagination.”
 - b. With new structure, status of International Witness seems demoted, but increases the responsibility of congregations.
 - c. Awareness of this need, how we work locally to support the larger operation/work of the church needed.
3. Caution – complexity of WSTs and possible imbalances of possible “pocket” programs.
 - a. Organizational questions persist.
 - b. How do WSTs form? Help needed in set-up of a WST? What is needed?
 - c. MC Staff International Director Q – does it include a support role for congregations....
 - d. Needs a strong integration with existing MC Canada Programs.
 - e. Fundraising to Regional Church causing additional strain without skills and resources to do fundraising.
 - f. Communication tools needed to keep vision and focus alive.
 - i. Short video clips from workers to congregations.
 - ii. Ideas on how a WST can happen with a broader base of partners – *how to network* beyond the local congregation.

Table 15

1. We affirm current communication efforts and wonder what we can do to make that communication better within the churches
 - a. Learning what MC Canada is doing and how it impacts our congregations
 - b. More education and communication about the roles of the larger church body

2. We need systems in place for members to truly understand how our larger church bodies operate and how we are meant to contribute to them
3. We want to see more integration of young people into these systems
4. Set up more agile/fast-moving processes for creative/new ideas coming out of congregations so that new movements don't have to take 3-4 years to come to fruition.

Table 16

1. Bill 262:
 - a. In MCEC we hardly knew about it, but MCM: much more info – MCEC did invite congregational support; MCBC similar – marches in Ottawa, Alberta.
2. The issue of the word 'genocide'.
3. Does every region have an Indigenous initiative? Not sure: yes...Steve is active with each regional group.
4. We need regional organizations to hold individual churches and staff accountable; to be a redemptive force between allegations, victims, investigative directives
5. SMARRT, Sacred Trust, documents and version for camps – need easy access. MC Manitoba would be a template of policy that could be adapted for individual churches – websites have resources, new MC Canada website will be very helpful
6. Direct visits by executives to local congregations
7. Communication.

Table 17

1. No comments for Arlyn = "to me, that reflects a job well done."
2. The web hub that is in the works is an exciting development.
3. Would like to see continued leadership on Bill C-262.
4. Perhaps there could be more nationwide coordination when it comes to youth (under 18).
5. How often do our Mennonite summer camps interact with one another, i.e. communicate to "talk shop" and discuss solutions to common problems, share ideas, etc.

Table 18

1. Talking about what we are all doing.
2. Stories communicate powerfully
3. Videos for Sunday morning
4. Affirm commonWord
5. MennoMedia
6. Resourcing of the new hymnal
7. More info re: Indigenous issues
8. Listening church video

Table 19

1. With South Sudanese church in Edmonton – pastoral support was given in transition time. It was a new initiative so no pattern.
2. Now, how do we help people get to provincial and national gatherings?
 - a. When languages and economies are a barrier for new Canadians. Technology hinders some people, exclusionary.
3. Working with new Canadians requires resources, people to walk with them.
4. Technology keeps us connected – get weekly update of our Witness workers
 - a. Less clear about connecting with International workers – harder to get people excited about anything beyond local.
 - b. Travel opportunities to China with Jeanette.
5. Appreciate CommonWord and resources instantly available.
6. Appreciate the advocacy work of Steve Heinrichs
 - a. Struggle with political taking of sides – hard to separate personal/job.

Table 20

1. CommonWord is important!
2. Carol Penner's resources!
3. New hymnal resource
4. Indigenous Relations work is important.
5. More information on relating to our hosting nations.
6. Caring the Land.
7. **Eastern** good agricultural conversations
8. Fossil fuels – how can we talk about that?
9. Assist the church in political conversations.

Table 21

1. MCEC has a part-time staff to help build bridges with first-generation churches – it is very helpful. Keep going, and do more, if possible!
2. As Ethiopian pastors, we have good connections with other Ethiopian pastors (all denominations) across Canada. But when we come here to MC Canada, we hear new ideas and we are touched by what we hear. We want to be part of the mission of MC Canada.
3. Noted that Firestarter Stories are all about what churches do on a very local level, which is great, but how do we retain or bring any view of the wider world (Nationwide Church or International Witness) in this hyper-local focus?
4. In terms of Nationwide Church support, keep encouraging connections between first-generation churches (remember a former MC Canada position called multi-cultural church director). Is there a way to bring that kind of work back?

Table 22

1. Facilitate more networking with congregations in similar circumstances
 - a. With similar missional calls
2. Make congregations feel more connected – it has to be a reciprocal relationship.
3. International connections – offering internships?
4. What do we do together? What are we jointly responsible for? It seems there aren't as many of those things anymore. What requires us to join together?
5. Bring cross-sections of congregations together for mutually beneficial relationships.
6. Feels more like an obligation than a benefit
7. Average church member doesn't feel connected
8. Do hand-picked delegates give voice to those in the pews?
9. Disparities among regions make it feel different from region to region
10. Where do church resources come from?
11. Foster a sense of belonging? How can congregations feel like they fit?
12. Everything is becoming more regional. Are we losing our national identity?

Table 23

1. Support churches "touring" across country to share ideas and communicate the stories
2. Support *Canadian Mennonite* magazine.
3. Continue education opportunities – driving online resources.
4. Needs for most part – how to keep building more funding needed. How do we get increased funds? We will have ideas how to use the finances.
5. Bite sizes of information that can be shared with the church.

Table 24

1. How connected is your church to Regional and Nationwide church?
 - a. Young adult connection through camps
 - b. Regional and Nationwide Churches do a lot to transition.
 - c. Regional Churches willing to connect with churches.
2. Plugging in with the wider church have found it rewarding.
3. "New" Mennonites have no connection to the broader church – how do we build this connection?
4. Excitement about the younger representation at conference
5. How do we connect what we've learned from this conference back to our congregations/communities?

Table 25

1. Doing fine for resources
2. CommonWord is useful
3. Decent with pastors and congregations and less with future leadership development
4. We need to create a culture of call.
5. We need more discussion on staff policy for Civil Disobedience. Policy needs to allow for delegates to prove the policy in the first place.
 - a. Can a worker speak “as” Witness worker instead of “for” the church but still as official?
 - b. There are lots of points of view for issues of civil disobedience that needs a fuller body conversation.
6. We need more room for conversations about Indigenous Relations that feel safe for people to voice and hear their experiences.
7. We need lots of room for inviting the wider Mennonite Church into all kinds of conversations on relevant issues.