



 Mennonite Church Canada

RECLAIMING JESUS™

GLADLY WEAR THE NAME

COLOSSIANS 3:15-17

ASSEMBLY 2010 • Calgary, Alberta
June 29 - July 3 • Ambrose University College

MINUTE BOOK

Mennonite Church Canada Minute Book 2010

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

Minute recorders: Don Friesen & Lynell Bergen

Editor: Don Friesen

Available on-line at: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1514

Abbreviations

ACOM.....Area Church Membership Only
AMBSAssociated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
AMIGOSMennonite World Conference Youth Committee
CAMSCanadian Association of Mennonite Schools
CBCColumbia Bible College
CCCCanadian Council of Churches
CCCC.....Canadian Council of Christian Charities
CFCChristian Formation Council
CGUCConrad Grebel University College
CMUCanadian Mennonite University
CPT.....Christian Peacemaker Teams
CWC.....Christian Witness Council
CWMCanadian Women in Mission
EFC.....Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
FLCFaith and Life Committee
FPAC.....Financial Policy and Audit Committee
FYEFiscal Year End
GAMEOGlobal Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online
GBGeneral Board
GMFGlobal Mennonite Fellowship
IMPACTInternational Mennonite Pastors Coming Together
JECJoint Executive Council
KPMGAuditors for Mennonite Church Canada
M/S/C/Moved/Seconded/Carried
MCMennonite Church
MCSASK Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
MCA.....Mennonite Church Alberta
MCA.....Mennonite Camping Association
MCBC.....Mennonite Church British Columbia
MCCMennonite Central Committee
MCCC.....Mennonite Central Committee Canada
MCECMennonite Church Eastern Canada
MCMMennonite Church Manitoba
MDSMennonite Disaster Service
MEDA.....Mennonite Economic Development Agency
MEI.....Mennonite Educational Institute
MFC.....Mennonite Foundation of Canada
MMMennonite Men
MOU.....Memorandum of Understanding
MPNMennonite Publishing Network
MWMennonite Women
MWCMennonite World Conference
P2P.....Person to Person
RJCRosthern Junior College
SSC.....Support Services Council
TWUTrinity Western University

Slate of Elected Nominations

General Board

Andrew Reesor-McDowell, ON – Moderator

Hilda Hildebrand, MB – Assistant Moderator

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, AB – General Board member at Large

Betty Loewen, BC – General Board member at Large

Financial Policy and Audit Committee

Ewald Boschmann, MB

Christian Formation

Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, ON

Campbell Nisbet, ON

Pauline Steinmann, SK

Rebecca Seiling, ON

Gareth Brandt, BC

Christian Witness

Rudy Dirks, ON

Lynell Bergen, MB

James Watson, ON

Bock Ki Kim, ON

Pat Gerber-Pauls, SK

Faith and Life

Doug Klassen, AB

Faith and Life Committee

Rudy Baergen, MB

The slate of nominees was approved as presented.

MINUTES

ASSEMBLY 2010

Mennonite Church Canada
11th Annual Session
Ambrose University College
Calgary, Alberta
June 29 – July 3, 2010

Theme: Reclaiming Jesus: Gladly wear the name

Colossians 3:15-17

1. Opening Worship

Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 8:30 a.m.

2. Morning Worship and Bible Teaching

Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 9:30 a.m.

Discernment Block 1

3. Preliminaries

- a. **Welcome.** Moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell welcomed everyone to Assembly 2010, the eleventh annual session of Mennonite Church Canada. He encouraged everyone to participate in the table discussions and in opportunities to speak at microphones, noting that only delegates can vote.
- b. **Quorum.** Andrew reported a total of 224 delegates, with 21 from the Area Churches, providing quorum.

4. Introductions

- a. **Willard Metzger.** Andrew introduced Willard as the new General Secretary, noting that Willard is known to many of us as the chair of the Christian Witness Council for the last nine years, and has been part of the General Board (GB) in that role. *Willard's response:* Willard indicated that he is humbled and honoured by the confidence placed in him by the GB, and by many expressions of support and encouragement. He considers it a privilege to be called by the Church to exercise leadership. "I will work to earn trust and respect," he said, "and to lead where we want to go – to have a church that is strong, vibrant and relevant." He pointed out that we all dream of a church that offers gutsy grace and courageous mercy, a church for which a disillusioned world is crying out. He offered the delegates his best, "though it will be insufficient," he added. He offered talent and experience, "though it will be inadequate". Willard also invited everyone to offer their best. This is our calling and joy as a people of God.
- b. **Sharon Waltner.** Andrew introduced Sharon, immediate past moderator of MC USA for the last two years, and representing MC USA. Sharon said that she was pleased to be at the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, and brought warm greetings on behalf of the MC USA Executive Board; Ed Diller, MC USA moderator; and Ervin Stutzman, MC USA executive director. She noted that the Executive Board passed a motion, unanimously, to express deep gratitude to God for Jack Suderman's leadership. "We recognize Jack's gifts of careful listening, astute theological observation, and commitment to the care of Mennonite Church Canada," she said. "His gifts crossed borders to provide hope and healing for the world." She noted that they look forward to working with Willard. "We are all a part of the body of Christ, and we value you as our Canadian brothers and sisters," she added.
- c. **Officials supporting the Assembly.** Andrew introduced Harold Peters-Fransen, the parliamentarian; the Listening Committee: Ardith Frey; Dan Nighswander; and Kristina Toews; and the Resolutions Committee: Hilda Hildebrand, Arnold Neufeld-Fast, and Marguerite Jack.

5. Minutes of the 2009 Assembly

- a. **Minutes.** Andrew indicated that the minutes of the 2009 Assembly were sent to all congregations, and he reviewed the actions and follow-up. (Report Book, page 9)
- b. **General Board Actions.** Andrew reviewed the actions of the GB (Report Book, pages 10-11) on behalf of the Assembly.
 - i. **Discussion:** A comment regarding the Consumer Price Index rate in Consensus #7 (Report Book, page 10), was noted.

Motion #1

(Don Friesen / Henry Block)

The delegate assembly adopts the minutes of the 10th Annual Session of Mennonite Church Canada as recorded and published in Minute Book 2009 issued by Mennonite Church Canada. Motion carried.

Motion #2

(Don Friesen / Florence Driedger)

The delegate assembly approves the actions taken by the General Board of Mennonite Church Canada in the past year. Motion carried.

6. Nominations Committee Report (Report Book, page 84)

- a. **The Committee.** Dave Feick reported on behalf of the committee, which he introduced: Clare Neufeld, to be replaced by Janet Bergen; Lorne Buhr; Justina Heese; and Gladys Bender. Dave noted that Jack Suderman and Lois Friesen Wiebe were of great assistance.
- b. **Appointments.** Dave named the following appointments, noting that they need to be affirmed by the delegates. He reviewed some of the changes. (Report Book, page 84)
 - i. Hilda Hildebrand will become assistant moderator.
 - ii. Donita Wiebe-Neufeld will move to the executive committee.
 - iii. Kate Janzen replaces Donita on the General Board as a Member-at-large.
 - iv. Betty Loewen has agreed to serve a second term.
 - v. Ewald Boschmann will be filling a position on the Finance Policy and Audit Committee.
 - vi. Tom Yoder Neufeld, Campbell Nisbet, and Pauline Steinmann will continue on the Christian Formation Council. Gareth Brandt and Rebecca Seiling will fill vacancies left by resignations.
 - vii. Lynell Bergen will continue on the Christian Witness Council; James Watson is a new nominee, to fill Rudy Dirks' position when he moves to the chair position. Bock Ki Kim and Pat Gerber-Pauls will fill vacancies left by resignations.
 - viii. Karl Koop served 2 terms on Faith and Life Committee; Doug Klassen will replace him.
- c. **Church Engagement Council (CEC).** Dave noted that a whole new Council may be created, and if so, those positions will need to be filled. He referred to the description of the Council in the Bylaws (Report Book, page 108) and read some of the things CEC will do. The length of terms is uncertain at this point. Dave named five nominees: Louie Sawatzky; Dori Zerbe Cornelson; Bryan Moyer Suderman; Kaye Rempel; and Emily Toews. Two more nominees are needed, and to date a chair for the committee has not been found. Dave announced that nominations will close at 5:00 p.m. this afternoon (June 30), elections to follow tomorrow (July 1) at 5:00 p.m.

7. Financial Report (Report Book, pages 47-76)

- a. **Statement Review.** Randy Wiebe, Director of Finance, highlighted the following:
 - i. The complete audited financial statements (Report Book, page 54)
 - ii. The cash position increased by just over \$500,000, because of underspending, some significant bequests, and the sale of church property in Thompson, MB.
 - iii. Capital assets were reduced to \$102,000. Most of our assets are older and will soon be fully depreciated. Capital purchases during the year were minor.
 - iv. Internally restricted fund balance: \$1,536,000, an increase of \$379,000. The financial situation was managed well, replenishing some of our depleted internally restricted reserve funds. Reserves allow us to smooth out the financial ups and downs from one year to another.
 - v. The current ratio has improved, as has the debt to equity ratio. We are in a good position.

- vi. Statement of operations (Report Book, page 58) gives a clear picture of the three areas of Mennonite Church Canada ministry. Donation and bequest revenues to Mennonite Church Canada continue to decrease. There is a steady decline in congregational support. Other donations fluctuate.
- vii. *Expenditures*
 - (1) Randy explained some of the changing categories.
 - (2) Christian Witness Council experienced another reduction; this continues to happen as congregational donations fall.
 - (3) CFC: A significant variance, due to the Youth Assembly, held every two years. Support Services Council's costs were significantly lower for the Assembly in Saskatoon than for the Summit the year before.
 - (4) The GB honoured its fair share commitment to the Mennonite World Conference.
 - (5) Partner Programs. These are set up as self-supporting ministries, administered by Mennonite Church Canada. There are fluctuations in these numbers. Core programs need to remain strong, however, in order for partner programs to remain strong.
 - (6) Related Organizations (Report Book, page 21)
- viii. Excess of revenue was transferred to reserves, allowing us to recover our losses from a year ago. We are prudently managing what is entrusted to us, but when congregational contributions do not arrive, adjustments to programs have to be made.

- b. **Appreciation.** Gordon Peters, Mennonite Church Canada Treasurer, expressed gratitude for congregational donations, and expressed appreciation, on behalf of the Finance Policy and Audit Committee (FPAC), to Randy Wiebe and his staff for all of their work; they work hard to make the money go as far as possible.

Motion #3

(Gordon Peters / Ingrid Peters Fransen)

The delegate assembly accepts the financial statements as presented. Motion carried.

– Break –

Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 11:00 a.m.

Discernment Block 2

8. The Faithful Church

- a. **Introductions.** Andrew introduced the General Board members sitting at the table in front.
- b. **Invitation to discern.** Andrew introduced the session of discernment, saying that the Church needs to discern God's purposes in all matters, and in all practice. In a time of hermeneutical ferment we want to interpret the same Scriptures we have interpreted in the past, led by the same HS, but we may come to different conclusions in so doing. We have tried to focus on five areas of ferment. The intent is to strengthen the Church's capacity to discern together from Scripture.
- c. **Dramatic Reading:** A king or shepherd? Jerusalem or Bethlehem? To which poet do we listen?
- d. **Affirmation Statement.** (Report Book, page 78) Andrew read the "Being a Faithful Church 2" affirmation statement.
- e. **Introduction to the Discernment Block** (Report Book, pages 80-83)
 - i. **Clarification.** Jack Suderman, General Secretary, offered clarity as to what we are doing. We are not intending to resolve the issue of pacifism, or to say whether our traditional understanding is good or sufficient. The intent this morning is to exercise and strengthen our muscles – our capacity to discern God's will for our life and for our ethics. We want to demonstrate why continuing discernment is critical and important in the life of the Church.

- ii. ***Why this particular theme at this time?*** The Mennonite Church has spoken on peace many times. We used to talk about non-resistance. Now we talk more of non-violent resistance, but basically we understand that the will of God for the Church is to have a non-violent understanding. That understanding is persistently under pressure, including pressure from other denominations. For example:
- (1) The CCC (Canadian Council of Churches), composed of 23 member churches, asked us to help them think through what it would mean for every church in Canada to be a peace church. It was an intense discussion, and the response was that they do not share our views of how we understand Scripture, faithfulness, ethics, or the role and vocation of God's people. Romeo Dallaire, who spoke at the recent World Religious Summit in Winnipeg, was given 400 troops by the UN (United Nations) and told not to use them in Rwanda, so he stood by and watched genocide happen, as described in his book, *Shaking Hands with the Devil*. If only the UN had allowed us to use our weapons, he said, this need not have happened. It caused him great mental anguish. Dallaire makes a strong case that "if only" the UN had sent more troops and given authority, this would not have happened. Ninety percent of those involved in this tragedy were Christians. Christians killing Christians. The idea of "R2P" (Responsibility to Protect) – that the nations of the world have an obligation to intervene when a local situation gets out of hand – is considered a Christian thing to do. The WCC (World Council of Churches) and the UCC (United Church of Canada) have approved the R2P approach, and there is significant pressure on the CCC to approve it. Being a pacifist in the world today is not simple. Mennonites are told they have their heads in the sand. Other churches around the table also see themselves as peace churches.
 - (2) The Christian Reformed Church asked to spend a day with us to explore pacifism. One person commented that he didn't think our way of reading the Bible was a faithful reading. There are too many voices in the Bible indicating other directions. What do we do with these difficult passages? I asked him what he does with the other passages? We also take Jesus seriously, he said, but we take him seriously for salvation, not for ethics. He was saying that we should change. There is too much violence – terrorism, neo-Nazism, genocide, etc. – in the world for us to be able to justify a pacifist position.
 - (3) We are being asked to support increased military spending and intervention. There is renewed articulation of the just war theory. Nations continue to justify increased use of armies and weapons. Barack Obama receives a peace prize, but makes an eloquent defence of war. This is why we need ongoing discernment.
- iii. ***How have we interpreted the Bible regarding peace?*** (outlined on pages 80-81, Report Book)
- (1) The Holy War tradition alongside Isaiah's Suffering Servant paradigm.
 - (2) The Magi were heading for Jerusalem, but when Herod called scholars to ask where the Messiah was to be born and they said Bethlehem, the Magi realized they were looking in the wrong place. Geographically close, but missing the mark by miles!
 - (3) We read the exodus differently.
 - (4) We look at Scripture through the lens of Jesus. If there's any doubt, Jesus trumps all! We have focussed on the Sermon on the Mount. The temptations of Jesus have informed us, and we know that it's possible to use the Bible satanically. We've read Romans 12, regarding non-conformity. We've re-read Revelation and discovered that the lamb is the one worthy to open the scroll.
- iv. ***We acknowledge we have given less weight to other biblical voices***, but they are definitely there. We have silenced voices that talk about killing and war. We have silenced the traditional interpretation of Romans 13, about what it means to be a nation-state. We have marginalised these passages. We have been accused of creating a canon within a canon.
- v. ***We bolster other voices***, like Gandhi and the Dalai Lama, that agree with our position. We are pleased that the Early Church appears to have been pacifist. Some have said we need to make a distinction between creation ethics and redemption ethics.

- vi. ***How do we decide, and what do we decide?*** Do we stick with what we have? People tell us that it's nice to have you around, but you're not very helpful. How do we sift through these voices? Do we change our understanding?
 - (1) There has been a lively debate at Goshen College of late. John Howard Yoder has been declared a naysayer, J. Lawrence Burkholder a yea-sayer. The "new school of thought" – though there's nothing new about it – says that we have been naysaying too long.
 - (2) When Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) had a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the General Conference (GC) and Mennonite Brethren (MB) foundings, there was an interesting workshop about the similarities and differences in the two confessions of faith. The MB confession, we were told, was softer on the nonviolent element. The person speaking to the MB confession claimed that the reason it's softer is because they are a binational church, and the USA segment of the MBs was not willing to take a stronger stand on the question of non-violence.
 - vii. ***What do we do?***
 - (1) Together we must develop criteria that would inform our next steps. (Report Book, page 83)
 - (2) Take time – personal time and Body of Christ time – even though Romeo Dallaire would say that there are moments when you don't have time.
 - (3) Pray, and listen to the voice of God.
 - (4) Focus on faithfulness, not on fear.
 - (5) Cloak this whole process in the warmth of worship.
 - (6) Listen to the biblical voices. We don't ignore them; we listen, and work with them.
 - (7) Allow the voices to speak from their own time.
 - (8) Allow the voices to speak to our time.
 - (9) Listen to the voices in our own context – voices within our community, and voices external to our community.
 - (10) Cultivate the virtues of humility and confession.
 - viii. Jack was asked to speak about peace after the UN's eight millennial goals were introduced at the recent global meeting of religious leaders. Jack suggested a ninth goal, addressed to the religions of the world, the houses of faith, that people of faith, regardless of which house, would commit to stop teaching and justifying the use of violence as potentially redemptive. The archbishop of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Iran came and embraced Jack, followed by two top Muslim leaders from Saudi Arabia and a Jewish rabbi. The new draft includes it, and, lo and behold, it was approved, with only one dissenting voice, a Canadian evangelical.
- f. **Table Group Discussions.** Andrew invited delegates to discuss the statement of affirmation.
- g. **Table Group Reports**
- i. ***Comments from Table #7***
 - (1) Growing up in a peace church, and knowing only that context, why would we look at peace any other way?
 - (2) Is the question who we should be as a peace church, or are we looking at the signs of the times and wondering how we fit into our current culture? Perhaps we fit into it too well.
 - (3) Our struggles are different than that of our forebears, who left countries because they didn't want to pay military taxes, but no Mennonites leave Canada for that reason.
 - (4) The traditional Mennonite position, and honouring what our ancestors did, receives no mention in the Report Book. (pages 80-81)
 - (5) We're happy to chat about the different positions, but unwilling to change our minds. We can engage the ecumenical community, but are we really prepared to change our minds?
 - (6) How long is this process of discernment supposed to take? When do we know we have reached the end?

ii. **Comments from Table #14**

- (1) The language of power dynamics is missing. Should we be aware of these?
- (2) It would be helpful to consider human experience in our approaches to peace. There are sciences that could be helpful. This world is not separate from the faith world. There are resources valuable to understanding poverty and power dynamics and systems.
- (3) We have to be careful with this language. Everyone likes peace, and even just war theory is a motion toward peace. Many wars were fought for peace.
- (4) We tend to speak a lot, strongly, and in a defining manner, but we have to be able to put it into action, like Christian Peacemaker Teams do.
- (5) What is the scope of the discussion? International violence only? Or should we also be talking about family violence?
- (6) Are we being relational enough to those who have been involved in violence? Are we willing to talk to veterans? To better understand them?
- (7) We should take courage in what we think. Sometimes we spend too much time back-peddalling and rationalizing. We may appear naive, but perhaps Jesus appeared likewise.

iii. **Comments from Table #21**

- (1) We recognize the affirmation before us is less powerful than millennial goal #9.
- (2) Our context is different. We've tested our ideas for 450 years, but those ideas are in stress outside our walls. We need to test them outside, acknowledge the inconsistency of prophetic voices in Scripture, and acknowledge we don't have an answer for Romeo Dallaire.
- (3) Jack's story about the millennial goal should be highlighted in the *Canadian Mennonite*.
- (4) We were reminded of the poster with the slogan, "Let the Christians of the world agree that they will not kill each other." We're extending that to "Let people of faith agree..."
- (5) We recognize that the religious leaders who responded to Jack may not have political power.
- (6) We call in police when our security is threatened; we have not explored the difference between police and military power.

h. **Affirmation Statement.** Andrew re-read the statement.

i. **Discussion** included the following comments:

- (1) Looking at the first line of the "therefores," our group talked about not believing in a flat Bible. We would like to add "Christocentric focus" to the end of the statement. Regarding the last sentence, I'd like to be more specific. Pacifism is a much better understood word; could we change it to being "a people who practice pacifism" rather than a "people of peace".
- (2) I'm concerned that it marginalises the voice of Jesus. There's no mention of Jesus being our final

Affirmation Statement

Whereas:

- We celebrate the many ways in which God's faithfulness has shaped us, as summarized in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (1995).³
- We celebrate the ways in which God's Spirit continues to strengthen our capacity to discern scripture and faithfulness together, as the Body of Christ, for our time.
- We celebrate and delight in being called, equipped, and sent to engage the world with the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ.

Therefore:

We encourage and exhort one another (in the spirit of Hebrews 10:23-25) to address the pressing challenges of our day with a renewed commitment to:

- Reclaim our conviction that Scripture is our "authoritative source and standard,"⁴
- Understand and engage our context,
- Grow in trust that the Holy Spirit accompanies us as our "insights and understandings are tested in the faith community."⁵
- Commit to God's will for peace by being a people of peace

³ Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective: Article 22, page 82, "Led by the Spirit, and beginning in the church, we witness to all people that violence is not the will of God."

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

- authority. An alternate wording: “reclaim our conviction that Scripture is our primary source and that Jesus is our ultimate authority to knowing and doing the Word of God.”
- (3) I like it, but it doesn’t say that we actually read the Bible. We should ensure we read it.
 - (4) The larger body of Christ needs our voice. We should use pacifism instead of peace.
 - ii. Andrew suggested these comments be noted, but that we go ahead with the statement, recognizing there may be possible changes. It’s a directional statement.
 - i. **Related workshops.** Jack noted that there are five themes of discernment, and that we will have additional opportunities to exercise our discernment muscles. Karen Martens Zimmerly introduced the two workshops on sexuality, and invited workshop participants to bring their Bibles. Rudy Baergen introduced the Faith and Life Committee workshop on “Whose Lord is Jesus?” – a look at the voices of Scripture that say that Jesus is the only way to salvation. Are there other voices? How do we sort them out?

– Announcements –

– Workshops, Wednesday afternoon –

Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 4:30 p.m.

Discernment Block 3

9. Bylaw Changes (Report Book, pages 95-111)

- a. **Introduction.** Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary of the Christian Witness Council, walked the delegates through the changes and additions, noting the provisions (page 108) for the Church Engagement Council (CEC). Changes include:
 - i. **Minor changes** – tweaks in language for clarity and accuracy; for example, the change from “area conference” to “Area Church,” and other changes to align the bylaws with current practice.
 - ii. **CEC changes:** All three Councils and the GB have dealt with these changes. The changes are built on the strength of the current system. The CEC will include communications from the SSC (Support Services Council), and congregational partnerships from Christian Witness Council. Administrative functions, such as property management, Assembly logistics, etc., will now be under the direction of the COO (Chief Operating Officer) and the GS (General Secretary). The new arrangement adds one member to the GB, because CEC will have two members rather than the previous one allowed to Support Services.
- b. **Discussion** included the following comments:
 - i. Who hires the staff? *Reply:* That is the responsibility of the GS.
 - ii. A question about the pension plan. *Reply (Jack):* That responsibility must remain with the organization; the Pension Plan Advisory Committee is broader than FPAC.
 - iii. I have problems with the word, “administration”. I prefer a different word.
 - iv. With Willard Metzger not in Winnipeg, what will happen with the signing authority of the GS? *Reply (Janet):* There are five executive staff persons who have signing authority.
 - v. When I look at the core activities of CEC, I don’t see any mention of some significant core activities. *Reply (Janet):* We have not worked out the details of that.
 - vi. Are they going to hire staff, draw up a budget, and so on? There’s no mention of these, or of the support staff that is now in place. *Reply (Janet):* Staff will be hired for the communications and congregational partnerships positions. The current SSC staff will be moving to CEC.
 - vii. I don’t see staff positions in the bylaws. *Reply (Janet):* Only the GS is mentioned in the bylaws.
 - viii. One of the items is about strengthening CEC’s missional vision. Who does “their” refer to? Clarity is needed.

- ix. Missional language is used a lot and is becoming vaguer as we use it. I also wonder about the meaning of some of the other language. The SSC mandate is very specific. The CEC mandate could be strengthened with more clarification. *Reply (Janet)*: There is ongoing debate about whether to use the missional word or not. We chose to put it in the bylaws. It's a concise way to say things without explaining them.

- c. **Appreciation.** Vic Thiessen declared the Support Services Council dissolved, but his first task as COO for Mennonite Church Canada was to invite forward Ed Janzen, SSC Chair. Vic noted the many tasks of the SSC and thanked Ed, Gordon Baergen, and others for their years of faithful services on the SSC, which has been a vital part of our national church. Vic closed with a prayer.

10. Frequency of Assemblies

- a. **Introduction.** Ed Janzen drew attention to last year's straw vote on frequency of assemblies. Vic summarized the respective advantages of annual and biennial assemblies, and pointed out the recommendation. (Report Book, page 77)
- b. **Amendment to the Motion**
- i. Renata Klassen, on behalf of Mennonite Church Sask, suggested an alternative resolution – that on alternate years the Assembly will focus primarily on study, worship, and intergenerational activity.
- ii. **Discussion of amendment**
- (1) Can we hear the reason for the amendment?
Reply: Our feeling was that we needed to do something other than business as usual, to make Assemblies more appealing and to allow for intergenerational interaction. Youth come to assemblies, but relatively few young adults. An alternative format may draw them.
- (2) What about the business the bylaws require be done by the annual assembly? *Reply*: There would still be business, and the GB is delegated to carry on business when the larger body cannot meet.
- (3) I'm pleased with the amendment, but I was alarmed at the financial report showing that the churches are giving less each year; this started even before the recession. Mennonite Church Canada can only thrive if the churches are in full support. If we go this way, we will end up a stronger church.

Motion #4

(Marco Funk / Erin Morash)

To approve the changes in the bylaws of Mennonite Church Canada, as presented on pages 95-111 of the Assembly 2010 Report Book.

Carried (by show of hands)

Motion #5

(Renata Klassen / Ken Warkentin)

Whereas the respondents at Assembly 2009 leaned in the direction of annual meetings; and **Whereas** the reasons are more compelling to continue annual meetings because they deal with fundamental reasons for meeting (building community, unity, strengthening family);

Therefore: Support Services Council recommends that Mennonite Church Canada continue with Assembly meetings on an annual basis with a recommendation that it be reviewed every five (5) years;

Furthermore: that in alternate years the Assembly meetings will focus primarily on study, worship and intergenerational activities

Motion carried.

Motion #6

(Ed Janzen / Jim Shantz)

Whereas the respondents at Assembly 2009 leaned in the direction of annual meetings; and

Whereas the reasons are more compelling to continue annual meetings because they deal with fundamental reasons for meeting (building community, unity, strengthening family);

Therefore, Support Services Council recommends that Mennonite Church Canada continue with Assembly meetings on an annual basis with a recommendation that it be reviewed every five (5) years.

Motion carried.

- (4) I'm assuming these would remain delegate sessions. We would still be carrying on some business? *Reply:* That is correct.

11. Nominations

- a. Dave Feick announced another nomination for the Church Engagement Council: Bud Kehler, Emmanuel MC, Winkler. He's a student, pursuing an education degree, and a Sunday School teacher. Dave reviewed the names of all of the nominees for this Council.

Motion #7

(Dave Feick / Barry Lesser)

That Nominations cease.

Motion carried.

– Announcements and Supper –

Wednesday, June 30, 2010, 6:30 p.m.

Discernment Block 4

12. Ministry Partners

- a. **Introduction.** Andrew noted that ministry partners are central to implementing the mission of Mennonite Church Canada. He invited three of our 25 valued partners to present to the delegates.
- b. **Canadian Mennonite**
- Greetings and Acknowledgements.** Dick Benner brought greetings from the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service board, and asked board members to stand. He acknowledged the contributions of his predecessors: Frank H. Epp, Ron Rempel, and Tim Miller Dyck.
 - Challenges.** Dick noted challenges: print in decline; an aging readership; discriminating advertisers. The *Canadian Mennonite* is on a sound financial, readership and distribution footing, but changes in society may change the way readers view our product. We face a tsunami of change. Seventy percent of our readers are 50 and older. The younger generation has few loyalties, is comfortable with chaos, image driven, and gets its information from a screen. We don't know where all this will settle; we need to keep an open mind.
 - Changes** include a news update blog on our web site; we've attached video clips to some items. The web site itself is due for a major update.
 - Gratitude.** Thank you for your continuing support of the magazine. Personal donations were up in 2009, and thus far in 2010, but we're down 500 subscribers.
- c. **Mennonite Foundation**
- Gary Sawatzky conveyed regrets from Darren Pries-Klassen, Mennonite Foundation's Executive Director. He reported that the Foundation is considered one of the top four charities in Canada in the area of governance, policies, and procedures. He introduced two new members of the Foundation board, and thanked others for their leadership on the board.
- d. **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS)**
- Ron Ringenberg**, Vice-President, brought greetings and shared the seminary's mission, adopted this spring. How can the seminary be more accessible? Ron reported forty graduates in May, of which over half are serving in local congregations or looking for congregations in which to serve. Ron thanked Mennonite Church Canada delegates for their support – for their prayers; for encouraging people to respond to a call to serve the Church; and for their financial support. AMBS needs \$80,000 to meet its year-end goal. It's not a big number, in light of a 52 year history in which God has always provided what was needed.
 - Sara Wenger Shenk**, the new president of AMBS, was introduced. She expressed gratitude for the connections AMBS has with the church in Canada. She noted that theological education is changing, and that more than ever we need our theological schools to hold together the past, to be discerning, theologically, in the present, and to guide us into the future.

13. Introductions and Congregational Transitions

- a. **Introductions.** We have been enriched in many ways by the global church. Guests who are bridge people between us and the global church were introduced: Peter Rempel Enns, Chair of Mennonites in Mexico; Yin Hongtao, China Vision; a considerable contingent from Korea who are part of the discussion between Korea Anabaptist Fellowship and the Korea Anabaptist Fellowship in Canada; a good number from the USA; and Christian Witness Council workers – Megan Enns; Todd and Jeannette Hanson; Dann and Joji Pantoja; Erwin and Marian Wiens; Palmer Becker; and George and Tobia Veith.
- b. **Congregations.** Jack acknowledged churches that were, or have become, part of us:
 - i. **Mennonite Church Eastern Canada:** David Martin announced, with sadness, the closing of the Welcome Inn Church, after 32 years of faithful ministry in Hamilton's north end. We give thanks for this congregation's witness to the wholeness of the Gospel, and its participatory, informal worship.
 - ii. **Mennonite Church Sask:** John Dyck shared about the ministry of the Breath of Life Church (house church) in Saskatoon. It has a membership of 10 or 12. John thanked Mennonite Church Canada for its welcome.
 - iii. **Mennonite Church BC:**
 - (1) Gary Janzen, executive minister of Mennonite Church BC, announced Abbotsford Mennonite Fellowship's last meeting in February of this year. It was a house church for 11 years; for various reasons it diminished in size, and it was no longer feasible to remain open.
 - (2) Dan Rempel, Mennonite Church BC Moderator, introduced a new congregation in Mission, the Western Hmong Mennonite Church, 70 people that meet in Maple Ridge. The congregation shared its history and challenging multi-lingual vision of growth at the Mennonite Church BC Assembly.
- c. **Prayer.** Jack offered a prayer of gratitude for both new and closing congregations.

14. Resolutions Committee and Listening Committee

- a. **Resolutions Committee.** Hilda Hildebrand, chair of the Resolutions Committee, introduced two resolutions.
 - i. **Christian Witness Council resolution.** Lynell Bergen and Rudy Dirks introduced the resolution inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) meeting in Winnipeg. Lynell provided background, and encouraged us to respond to this dubious legacy of the Church's involvement in aboriginal schools. Lynell and Rudy read the resolution, including the footnote about Mennonite involvement, and clarified the resolution's intention.

Motion #8

(Rudy Dirks / Lynell Bergen)

Background: The Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 led to the formation of Residential schools for Métis, Inuit, and First Nations children. The Canadian government and churches ran these schools in partnership with one another*. The schools operated for about 130 years, and had over 150,000 children pass through them. The impact of this schooling on now seven generations of aboriginal peoples in Canada is enormous. While there were committed, loving teachers, the overall residential school experience was marked by abuses of power, physical punishment for speaking one's own language, sexual and emotional abuse by persons in charge and other students. Its dubious legacy includes the breakdown of the family system, with successive generations raised in a context of increasing family and community detachment, violence and substance abuse.

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In 1970 the Conference of Mennonites in Canada offered a litany of confession at its annual Assembly that confessed the significant failing of our own faith community in relating to “Indians,” seeing them ‘as converts’ but not as children of God, in recognizing them by the ‘colour of their skin but not as fellow human beings, friends, and brothers’ (and sisters) in Christ. In the early 1990’s some of the key national churches involved in running Residential schools made formal apologies to Aboriginal peoples. And finally in June 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada issued a formal apology on behalf of the government and people of Canada. Since that time common experience payments have been made to approximately 80,000 living survivors and private hearings for determining appropriate compensation for those most grievously abused or violated have been offered.

In addition a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed and is currently hosting a series of seven events in different regions of Canada. The events will allow survivors to tell their stories, to validate their experiences, and to educate the rest of Canada about this tragic part of our history which continues to shape families, relationships and our society as a whole. The first TRC event was held in Winnipeg, June 16-19, 2010 and had significant Mennonite Church Canada presence.

*There is one school included in the settlement that was Mennonite (but not Mennonite Church Canada) run. There are three additional Mennonite affiliated schools we know of whose students are requesting inclusion in the settlement. While none of these were formally Mennonite Church Canada run, the informal connections are less clear.

Resolution: Be it Resolved that Mennonite Church Canada congregations and individual members recognize and confess our complicity in the failing of the Christian Church and its role in the tragic physical, emotional, mental, and sexual abuse, denial of culture, language, and peoplehood of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. In recognition of this past failing, and in acknowledgement that destructive individual attitudes, such as paternalism, racism, and superiority are still present among us, we as Mennonite Church Canada congregations and as individuals will seek renewed opportunities to walk with Aboriginal people of Canada, opening our hearts, minds, and ears to engage the pain resulting from the legacy of the Residential Schools, and strive to recognize each other as sisters and brothers created in the image and likeness of one God.

Motion carried.

- ii. **Resolution acknowledging our oneness in Christ with the Mennonite Brethren.** Harold Peters Fransen noted the importance of acknowledging the Mennonite Brethren Conference’s 150th anniversary and our shared history.

- b. **Listening Committee.** Kristina Toews and Ardith Frey reported:

i. **Highlights:**

- (1) A sense of expectancy and openness to being surprised, especially in our worship times. We felt cloaked in worship. It’s been a good time of building community with people from across our nation.
- (2) An enjoyment of being a part of the wider church, the Mennonite Brethren, and international visitors.
- (3) An awareness that this facility serves us well.

Motion #9

(Harold Peters Fransen / Len Siemens)

Regarding 150th Anniversary of the Mennonite Brethren Movement

It is with gratefulness to God that we extend our best wishes as you celebrate your 150 years of God’s faithfulness to you. God has used you in witness in many places and in many ways. Often we have been able to share God’s love together, from our local communities to around the world. We recognize that within our Canadian bodies we share a variety of ministries as witness to our oneness in Christ.

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- (4) The *intergenerational-ness* of this gathering. The young adults had a great discussion last night. We have more young adults at this Assembly than we've had in recent years.
- (5) Living with a sense of gratitude has come through in our sessions.
- ii. **Questions and Observations**
 - (1) Discernment has been a big topic for us, as reflected in the paper on "The Faithful Church," as well as the "discernment blocks" in our business sessions. Jack advised us to take time, pray, listen, etc. Sometimes, however, we rush to conclusions. We have not taken enough time for prayer. Voices have been cut off. Do we really mean that we are engaging in discernment when we do church business?
 - (2) How well is the breadth of the church represented in our discussions? Who is present on the platform in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity?

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Often we have been called to separate ministries, and where this has brought many closer to God we give thanks. For those times and places where we have not acted as true sisters and brothers in Christ to you we ask for forgiveness. We commit with the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be alert to new areas where we can be salt and light together.

We encourage our congregations which are in proximity to congregations of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren to find new avenues for ministry together.

Motion carried.

– Announcements –

15. Evening Worship

Thursday, July 1, 2010, 8:30 a.m.

16. Morning Worship and Bible Teaching

Thursday, July 1, 2010, 9:30 a.m.

Discernment Block 5

17. Young Adults and Seniors

- a. **Introduction.** Garth Ewert Fisher, Assistant Moderator, expressed his gratitude that young adults were given the opportunity to serve when he was young. It made a difference. Questions about the place of seniors in the life of the church, and the place of young adults, came up time and time again during the *God's People Now* tour. The declining numbers of the latter are a concern. Dave Bergen, Christian Formation Council Executive Secretary, and Elsie Rempel, Christian Nurture Director, presented some background to this significant discussion.
- b. **Voices:** Two seniors, three young adults, a young senior, and an aboriginal elder.
- c. **Character Vignettes from Scripture**
 - i. Exodus 35 and 36, read by Elsie Rempel. Moses supported craftspeople in using their gifts. Are we willing to support others in using their gifts?
 - ii. 2 Kings 5, read by Dave Bergen. A servant girl played an important role in Naaman's cure of leprosy. Are we open to receiving the gifts that our young adults have to offer?
 - iii. 1 and 2 Timothy, summarized by Anna Rehan, Youth Ministries Facilitator. Eunice and Lois encouraged Timothy, who grew up into the church, and was called to leadership. How do our leaders train younger ones?

d. **Presentation**

- i. **Seniors.** Elsie Rempel shared some pervasive myths regarding seniors: old, frail, hard-of-hearing, brittle, etc. However, older adults are often the undiscovered treasures of the home and the congregation. They bring humour, integrity, and wisdom to congregational life. Now baby boomers are becoming seniors. What impact will they have on the health of the church? Their numbers and life expectancy are high. They are geographically and technologically mobile, which can make them reluctant to be tied down. Most of them don't have grandchildren in their own congregation. They're learning how to use Facebook. They've grown comfortable with a pluralistic context. Many of them are part of a club sandwich generation, with family responsibilities toward children and grandchildren, as well as aging parents. Doubts about faith are not unfamiliar. They've learned about the critical approach to the Bible. Many seniors entered church leadership at an early age, carrying amazing responsibilities as young adults. Many of them are comfortable and can claim *Freedom-55*. Seniors are in a position to help the church meet the challenges reflected in their stories.
- ii. **Young Adults.** Who are they? Today's young adults have things in common with young adults of earlier generations. There are distinctive elements, however. Every generation grows up in a particular context – economic, spiritual, etc. No generation before has had this exact combination of circumstances. Young adults are roughly 18-30 years of age. They're often called millennials, or Generation Y, the echo-boom, or the thumb generation, because of the use of their thumbs in communication. They're the fastest growing segment of workers in the workplace. They have been shaped by the events of their time, like today's environmental crisis. About 65% call themselves Christian but may not be able to identify a denomination, and do not read the Bible, or pray with others. They're generally more progressive in their social views than their parents and grandparents. They're tech-savvy. Watch someone of this generation, and they're likely to be texting, micro-waving a snack, and downloading a favourite TV show, all at the same time. They share information on-line. They have money and time. They crave regular feedback. They're more responsive to coaching than bossing. A healthy balance of work with private life is a core value. They're innovators, creators, and collaborators. They need to be listened to "now". They want to know they're succeeding. They've been rewarded for constant successes. They're idealistic, optimistic, and have a can-do attitude. They know they're special, because their parents have told them so. They're trusting and accepting of institutions and authority. A sense of meaning is an important factor in their work lives.

e. **Experiences of Young Adults and Seniors**

- i. **Panelists.** Anna Rehan introduced the panelists: Henry Block, a senior; Rachel Bergen, a young adult; Gladys Bender, a young senior; Justin Zacharias, a young adult; Walter Hiebert, a senior; and Stephanie Dueck, a young adult. Anna then asked them several questions.
- ii. **What do you share with each other?**
 - (1) Henry: We all share our faith in Jesus Christ. We share the peace of Christ, the need of fellowship with each other across boundaries.
 - (2) Justin: We are different, but we know what it's like to want to be someplace where someone understands who we are and why we are who we are. Our values are the same, but our expressions of those values are different.
 - (3) Walter: I would suggest that we share the same diversity. Some of us are relational, some of us are doctrinal, or emotional, existential, logical, etc. I have a lot of experience with seniors who are afraid of their emotions.
- iii. **How can these two groups learn to work well together?**
 - (1) Stephanie: Breaking down the intimidation we might feel would help. Common projects bring people together. We created blankets for our high school graduates across generations. We should get rid of the idea that we need to stick with our own age group. We need to create the space where we can be together.

- (2) Gladys: People are now housed in same-age settlements. We can all benefit from intergenerational dialogue. The Church is one of the last places in society where generations mix. Seniors miss the potential of mentoring younger people, and hearing the voice of young adults and how they make sense of the world.
- iv. ***How can these groups worship well together?***
 - (1) Rachel: Worship is putting aside the negative to focus on God. We tend to dwell on things we dislike about the Church, rather than focussing on praising God.
 - (2) Walter: I have asked young adults to consider the grace of Jesus, but also the grace of ministry, which focuses on the other person and is excited about what God can do among us. We worship together blessedly.
 - (3) Justin: We need to be careful about assumptive language. We have a common language and common songs, but every congregation has a distinctive style.
 - (4) Gladys: The transiency of young adults should be recognized. Do we offer space and time for young adults when they return home?
 - (5) Stephanie: We are often away, and when we come home and are asked to do something in worship, it helps our sense of belonging to be recognized in that way.
 - (6) Rachel: I'm at CMU, but whenever I go home lots of people ask how I'm doing. It's very heartwarming, and I'm very appreciative of that.
- v. ***How can these groups learn well together?***
 - (1) Henry: They will learn from each other if they're intentional about spending time together. Create the scene if necessary, like creating intergenerational tables at potlucks.
 - (2) Rachel: People need to focus more on the strengths of each age group rather than the differences. People are too hasty to look at the differences between the age groups. Diversity, and learning to understand peoples' backgrounds, can strengthen the Church.
 - (3) Gladys: Our congregation threw out our organization and re-organized in a way that allowed a lot of time for re-visioning. It gave young adults an opportunity to share their ideas. They became more engaged.
 - (4) Stephanie: There are times when we need to be together with our own age group – in Sunday School, for example, but it's also beneficial to bring groups together.
 - (5) Justin: Let's not underestimate the power of story, of listening to each other's stories.
- vi. Rehan thanked the panelists for their sharing.

– Break –

Thursday, July 1, 2010, 11:00 a.m.

Discernment Block 6

- f. **Table Discussions.** Dave Bergen introduced the table discussions.
- g. **Table Reports**
 - i. ***Comments from Table #33***
 - (1) Seniors would like to ask young adults: Why are you not dressing like you're coming to church? It seems disrespectful. However, we don't have the courage to confront them. How do you ask a young adult about where they're at in their spiritual life?
 - (2) A senior woman told me a story about seniors who threatened to walk out of the church because their young adults wanted to start a choir. In the end they got a choir, and the seniors didn't walk out. She helped to bring about change.
 - ii. ***Comments from Table # 25***
 - (1) The calling of God's people has been the same for 2000 years.
 - (2) We heard stories of creativity, leadership, rebellion, and being stifled by the men. Seniors show a willingness not to give up on the Church despite being stifled. Seniors grew up much more independently than young adults today. Seniors had a readiness to engage

and lead that may not be present in young adults today.

iii. **Comments from Table #3**

- (1) Young adults want to ask seniors: Why do you see everything in black and white? The seniors got defensive, and said they see young adults seeing things that way.
- (2) What were today's seniors like as young adults? Some of them grew up with a language transition. They were drawn on much earlier to make a contribution because they knew the new language. They grew up in churches which didn't think they needed a youth worker, and so in late teens they became youth leaders. There was no professional staff.
- (3) When today's seniors were young adults they were preoccupied with choosing a profession which would contribute to the betterment of society, while today's young adults want a profession that is going to be fun.

iv. **Comments from Table #37**

- (1) The calling of the Church is be faithful, and to build relationships, across generations and across boundaries.
- (2) Common projects are helpful, as is finding common ground.
- (3) Letting go of assumptions about each other, and seeking understanding, are important.
- (4) Help each other to break down barriers; for example, older adults see the sacred and secular as different realms. Young adults seem more equipped to navigate that.
- (5) Age expectancy is longer now. That made a difference a few generations ago, since there weren't as many seniors to provide leadership.
- (6) There's been a significant shift with women in theological training and leadership.
- (7) Many of our seniors were first generation Canadians, and were working out those dynamics. Today's young adults were born here.
- (8) Spirituality was tied to communal church life when today's seniors were young. Social action is more of a focus for young adults in terms of church.

v. **Comments from Table #13**

- (1) We tried to find common ground on hot topics, but there wasn't even agreement among people in the same age group. We had different ideas about baptism.
- (2) We would like to ask young adults: Where do you see evidence of God? Spirituality is different for young adults. Young people could initiate dialogue about diversity.
- (3) It's important to have a relational rather than a programmatic approach.
- (4) Seniors as young adults knew themselves as the radical ones. Can we be radical seniors?

vi. **Discussion** included the following comments:

- (1) Seniors have a lot of time to volunteer, to contribute to social justice, and so do young adults. The middle generation is busy.
- (2) The young adults of yesterday were very aware of the many changes happening in the Church, and modernism deeply affected them. We got excited about historical-critical ways of reading the Bible and Robert's Rules of Order. We were the first wave of the modernist mind-set. Young adults today are post-modern.
- (3) Those who dressed too well for religious services were criticized by a young man in his 30's, but they crucified him. Young adults want to break down the walls between church and community, while seniors want to invite the community into the walls of the church. The problems of young adults are more hidden; some of us are children of divorced parents; face insurmountable mortgages; are single longer; etc.
- (4) Thanks for this conversation. Some parts of the conversation seem strange. Young adults are a minority here; it's like we're a creature being dissected. I appreciated Dave's description of young adults but we just want to be ourselves and show you who we are. We have a lot of questions, and we don't always feel our questions are welcome.
- (5) We want to emphasize the need for seniors to mentor young adults.
- (6) We continue to look at young adults from the outside. Relationally, and in terms of our joint calling, we would not say we don't need each other or each others' gifts, but boomers have not found a way to let young adults take leadership early. How do we give

- leadership to young adults that is actually leadership?
- (7) How have young adults been supported or provided opportunities for leadership? That's different than asking what's wrong. For example, I was sent to a camp as an extension of the church's ministry, and that was incredibly important to me.
 - (8) I'm close to the finish line, but that's not a bad place to be. Today's seniors had children at a much earlier age, and in this way kept up the Sunday School population at church. They tried to bring new music into the church.
- h. **Listening Committee.** Kristina Toews and Dan Nighswander reported:
- i. We all care passionately about the Church. How does this connect with the churches back home, and particularly with those who are on the periphery of the Church.
 - ii. All ages have faith, and a desire to serve, in common, but do we have the same values?
 - iii. How do we communicate our values and faith? The generations have different ways of communicating that. Are there times when we are saying the same thing but in different ways? We need to work at understanding each other's language and assumptions.
 - iv. Both seniors and young adults expressed the desire for respect.
 - v. We have a history of intergenerational ministry; what lessons can we draw from that?
 - vi. Baby boomers and seniors are not necessarily synonymous. A senior is anyone who's more than five years older than I am!
 - vii. Young adults and seniors have commonalities not shared by the generation in-between.
 - viii. Seniors share the feeling of dissection, and the sense that their questions are not welcome. We shouldn't be content with stereotypes of each other. Let's bring the same skills to this as we do to cross-cultural bridging. Our experience with the language transition could be helpful.
 - ix. It's been great to have this conversation; we also need to have it in our congregations.
 - i. Elsie thanked everyone for their engagement on this topic. Everyone read a blessing together.

18. Peace in the Public Square

- a. **Presentation**
- i. ***The Proposal.*** Communications Director Dan Dyck reviewed the proposal presented last year, in which we invited each church to "commit to one act of peace every year". The assumptions of the proposal: to inform the public and governments that peace is possible; and that there are Christians that believe in non-violent peacemaking and work at it. We made suggestions. Delegates supported this initiative, by vote and with action. Dan said that he was thrilled by the encouragement.
 - ii. ***Examples:***
 - (1) Dan invited applause for the folks in Alberta who put forward a great effort.
 - (2) Congregations and individuals have logged a variety of acts of peace. For example, people at the Vancouver Olympics wore *liveforpeace* toques. Bryan Moyer Suderman wrote a song called "It's Peace in Public – and it's Breaking out all over".
 - (3) The *liveforpeace* web site has clocked an amazing number of hits, from all over. Statistics jumped after the campaign in Calgary.
 - iii. Dan showed a closing slide, indicating that negotiation to end a war prevails in 92% of cases. Negotiation, rather than decisive military victories, bring wars to an end.
- b. **Discussion** included the following comments:
- i. Garth thanked Dan, and everyone, for their efforts in this initiative.
 - ii. I'm wondering if we have been doing anything to help pastors in our churches deal with funerals for soldiers returning to our churches. Some of our Mennonite churches have had military funerals. How do we support families in deep mourning, while standing on our principles? *Reply:* It's a good question, and a critical issue to address. I have taken note of it, and Christian Formation can also struggle with it.
 - iii. Our congregation has been deeply hurt and estranged by this campaign, especially when the

- name of Christ is separated from the campaign.
- iv. It would be good to have stickers that don't leave marks. It would also be neat if we could showcase the reconciliation that occurs when people of diverse perspectives are joined in one body. How could we name and celebrate that conservatives and liberals can get together?
 - v. I'm excited about the proposal, and I would encourage us to be bold. I also come with a heavy heart because I was completely unsuccessful in engaging our congregation in this effort. Our congregation includes people who have served in the military. We aren't quite sure how to talk about our differences.
 - vi. All who were conscientious objectors in WWII, or the children of such, were asked to stand.
 - vii. Could we do an act of peace during Assembly each year?
 - viii. I'm glad for this campaign, but peace begins at home, in our congregations, in our relationships, and in ourselves. It would be a shame if those who see our campaign and come to our churches do not see us being peaceful. *Reply:* There are resources on the web site to help congregations welcome visitors that the *liveforpeace* campaign generates.

c. **Appreciation.** Garth thanked everyone for their hard work.

– Announcements –

Thursday, July 1, 2010, 4:30 p.m.

Discernment Block 7

19. Budget (pages 49-53, Report Book)

- a. **Announcement: No applause.** The Listening Committee requested we return to an earlier process where there is no applause after someone has spoken at the microphone. We want everyone to feel free to speak, and even to express things that are not popular.
- b. **Budget approval.** Randy Wiebe, Director of Finance, talked to the proposed budget, explaining several things, including format.
 - i. **Donation numbers** were very good in the fall, but we were forced to make adjustments. No CPI adjustments for salaries were needed, but 2% adjustments were made to put them in line with pastors' salaries. We are also expecting further reductions from congregations.
 - ii. **The Christian Witness Council budget** has been reduced. Returned workers have not been replaced.
 - iii. **Difficult decisions** may lie ahead. Further cuts will involve cutting a program line. Congregational donations have decreased. Can other congregations pick up what is lost?
 - iv. **The communication budget** has increased in support of the Church Engagement Council. GB expenses were somewhat unusual because of the Mennonite World Conference meetings in Paraguay.
 - v. **Detailed view.** Randy provided a more detailed review of the budget, noting income sources and budgets for each Council. All Councils have reduced their net budget. Vacancies in resource development account for much of the under-expenditures.
 - vi. **Partner programs** are revenue-neutral, by and large. It's a dynamic part of the budget that fluctuates without affecting the bottom line.
 - vii. **Deficit financing.** Mennonite Church Canada financial policies do not permit deficit financing.
 - viii. **The financial situation**, as of the end of May, is an uncomfortable start to the current year.
 - ix. **Appreciation.** Randy thanked all the individuals, congregations, and corporations who support Mennonite Church Canada, even in the midst of difficult financial times. He invited delegates to take a look at all the valuable ministries Mennonite Church Canada undertakes and asked them to consider increasing their contribution. He noted that a Church Engagement staff person would be happy to visit.

- c. **Discussion** – one comment: J.D. Penner indicated he has been on the Christian Witness Council since 2006. He was very excited when he started. Every year, however, Witness has to find a way of working with a reduced budget. Something needs to change. It no longer requires a haircut; we're going to have to cut off limbs. It's difficult to maintain programs and ministries as we envisioned them. He encouraged the GB to explore ways to help us do that.
- d. **Auditor.** We're beginning the second of our three year arrangement with KPMG.
- e. **Appreciation.** Andrew thanked Randy and his staff.

Motion #10

(Gordon Peters / Hilda Hildebrand)

The delegate assembly approves the budget as presented for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2011. Motion carried.

Motion #11

(Gordon Peters / Ingrid Peters Fransen)

The delegate assembly appoints KPMG as auditor for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2011. Motion carried.

20. Open Microphone

a. The following comments were shared:

- i. I appreciated the conversation around young adults and seniors. When is a young adult no longer so? I would also like to engage those who are not ethnic Mennonites who also experience a language difference between generations. Was this discussion applicable to them?
- ii. I'm the father of two young adults, one who attends church sometimes, and the other rarely. I'm appreciative of the way we engage young adults in discussions, but I would like to ask young adults who aren't part of the church: What it would take for them to come back?
- iii. Do we have written copies of the resolutions we passed yesterday? I'm wondering about procedure here. I abstained from voting on the resolution around the native concern; I did not have time to think it through. *Reply:* What you're suggesting would be useful. The committee has a set of guidelines, but there is no reference to having copies in hand. We need to make sure information is in the hands of the Resolutions Committee. Would it be helpful to hand out the resolutions at the beginning of Assembly, and deal with it a day or so later? Yes.
- iv. People need to understand the resolutions they are discerning. It would also have been helpful if discernment guidelines were distributed so that people understand how to speak on the floor (for example, comments come to chair, not to each other). *Reply:* We will clarify this.
- v. We need more help with gift discernment. People feel marginalised when their gifts are not used. We need resources to help us do this better. We need guidelines on doing careful one-on-one gift discernment. I encourage us to explore this. *Reply:* A good suggestion. It has been the focus of a conference, and we also have a booklet on the topic which one can download.
- vi. I was troubled by the resolutions we passed. I suggest that we use the seminar blocks to have extended conversations around the resolutions. I was troubled by how short our conversation was. Could three of the 12 seminar blocks be used to converse around the resolutions?
- vii. I have a related concern. We're asked to read the discernment topics carefully and come prepared to participate. The frequency-of-assemblies resolution was not discussed. We only discussed the amendment; the original motion went immediately to a vote. Mennonite Church Eastern Canada had some creative suggestions regarding the "whereas" statements, but there was no opportunity to share them. *Reply:* We realized within minutes that this was an inadvertent slip.
- viii. It being Canada Day, we would like to offer a prayer of gratitude and petition for Canada on Canada Day. Ardith Frey so prayed.
- ix. The First Nations resolution was done rather quickly. I will have a problem explaining that motion to our own congregation. I need help explaining it. For example, does it have financial implications? Could the Witness Council write an article explaining what it means? The implications could be significant. *Reply:* This motion comes from a sense of being a missional church. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission event was a significant event for those of us in Manitoba. The pain of this was caused by the Christian Church, and the Church must

address it. It seemed a responsible thing to respond to it, even on short notice. The resolution is not an apology. It's not a statement of liability, although if we can, we should make wrongs right. It's carefully worded to unite ourselves with the larger Christian Church that has committed this wrong. We commit ourselves to providing something in writing that will provide background for delegates.

- x. Regarding greetings to our MB brothers and sisters, it's easy to send best wishes. Our troubled history was reflected in that statement. Some serious work needs to be done to acknowledge sins of the past. We said we are owning this; it's a lot for us to own. We shouldn't hurry past it. I would hope that we could communicate more, perhaps an unqualified prayer for God's blessing on them.
- xi. Regarding frequency of assemblies, I would express caution. It may get us locked into an uncomfortable pattern. Most of the things we've done here need to be done every year. We've done a fair bit of worship, but I can't imagine increasing that. I would add one component not reflected in the resolution. If we want delegates to buy into programs, we need to hear more about programs, and to be inspired to support them. This was a feature in years past. It's not enough to have them in the Report Book.

- b. **Clarification.** Andrew noted that when the nominations slate is presented, if there is only one person per position, the closing nomination ratifies the slate. That's why we don't have a vote.

– *Announcements* –

21. Evening Worship

Friday, July 2, 2010, 8:30 a.m.

22. Morning Worship and Bible Teaching

Friday, July 2, 2010, 9:30 a.m.

Discernment Block 8

23. Financial Trends

a. **Presentation**

- i. Jack Suderman, General Secretary, and Andrew Reesor-McDowell, Moderator, introduced the concern regarding financial trends for our denomination. Mennonite Church Canada is part of a network of relationships that has the same base of members as individual congregations. There are more than 25 related organizations in our system, responding locally, regionally, nationally, internationally. There are many ministries, in a variety of forms. The gifts and contributions of members are intended to build the whole church and strengthen all of its ministries. Each part of the system has the responsibility to ask questions about the health of the system as a whole. There are trend lines that are worrisome – donations from constituents to the national church and Area Churches are on a downward trend, weakening significantly the work of Mennonite Church Canada. We thought it time to seek counsel from delegates.
- ii. ***The trends are based on hard data***, based on forms submitted to the government. Annual revenue, not only donations, of agencies total \$46 million; this continues to go up. The annual revenue of Area Churches is \$6.5 million; Mennonite Church Canada, \$5.5 million. Schools – elementary schools, high schools colleges, and seminaries – have annual revenue, including donations, of \$58 million per year. MCCs in Canada have revenue, including donations, of \$85 million per year. The total revenues of these Mennonite-related organizations is over \$200 million per year. This does not include health care institutions, seniors' homes, or Mennonite Foundation.

- iii. ***This represents an incredible generosity!*** Other denominations drool when they see the Mennonite Church Canada numbers. We have much to celebrate.
- iv. ***Congregations spend the money*** that they get in this way: 79-80% on local program; 15% beyond the congregation, within Canada; and 4-5% beyond Canada.
- v. ***Good trends:*** We are one of the few denominations where giving has inclined, slightly ahead of cost-of-living increases. For related organizations the incline in giving is steeper.
- vi. ***Worrisome trends:***
 - (1) *The trend toward decreased giving is in the national church and Area Churches.* This is worrisome because vocationally we are called to use our gifts in service to others; and legally, it is increasingly difficult to defend our status as charities when a high percentage of income is used for the direct benefit of donors.
 - (2) *There is decreased capacity for international ministries.* This aggravates the sharing of resources in an inequitable world.
 - (3) *There is a decreased willingness to support and strengthen the church that inspires its activities,* even while there is an increased desire to support the activities of the church. This is not sustainable.
 - (4) *When a common identity is weakened, the church will become increasingly fragmented, with a multiplicity of identities.* This is not healthy for the life and strength of the church. A common Anabaptist identity is necessary for our ministry of the gospel. What kind of church is needed for the century we are poised to engage with the gospel?

b. **Table Group Discussions:** In light of this long-term trend, what counsel do you have for the GB?

c. **Table Group Reports**

- i. ***Comments from Table #2***
 - (1) Two ideas: 1) Perhaps this is an opportunity to encourage baby boomers to put Mennonite Church Canada in their wills. 2) We need to keep our international ministries in front of us; more reporting in our home churches could help.
- ii. ***Comments from Table #9***
 - (1) We understand the reasons for the trends. Jack's word about the Roman Empire is a prophetic word to us. There are spiritual reasons for our predicament.
 - (2) It's good to know that our denomination looks good to other denominations.
 - (3) We need to build stronger trust with local churches, and strengthen allegiance to the denomination.
- iii. ***Comments from Table #23***
 - (1) Our giving reveals the priorities of church members. They may not see the international needs of the church every day, as they see, for example, the troubles in Haiti. We suggest church pastors and leaders provide more education that is in peoples' faces. A Sunday School session on the work of the church may be helpful.
- iv. ***Individual responses:***
 - (1) Our mission field is shifting to the local congregation. There is a paradigm shift. It's like on the aeroplane, where the mother puts on the oxygen mask first, then on the child.
 - (2) The question seems to be how to get more resources out of the people we already have. However, we're a church in decline. These things are symptomatic of the reality that we need to be growing; we need to build our capacity for evangelism and church planting.
 - (3) We have worked at this in various ways over the years. There used to be a letter coming out every fall, with a per-member giving suggestion. Churches got discouraged. We need new, more nuanced guidelines. Some churches have decided to give a percentage of their giving to the wider church. Perhaps we could borrow some ideas from the Giving Project, which recognizes that some congregations have more capacity to give.
 - (4) We need more exposure to what we are doing internationally. Could we highlight this more at Assemblies? Or through the *Canadian Mennonite*? In a way that gives them a

face? Rather than focussing on board members in articles, we might highlight the ministries we do together. Pastors, delegates, and board members have a responsibility to educate. The downward trend in giving is in Manitoba and Ontario, not in the other provinces, and I wondered why. We often talk about the ministries that we do together that we can't do alone; we should add that there are some ministries we *should* not do alone.

- (5) I have a deep appreciation for the year I spent in Winnipeg, interacting with Mennonite Church Canada staff, and finding out what our financial people do. They work hard and are passionate about what our church does. Could we send volunteers to the Winnipeg offices to find out what is happening? That too would be an education.

– Announcements / Break –

Friday, July 2, 2010, 11:00 a.m.

Discernment Block 9

24. Christian Witness Council

- a. **International Ministries.** Tim Froese, Executive Director International Ministries, Mission Partnership Facilitator for Latin America, introduced the work of International Ministries, with its partners around the world. We invest heavily in long-term workers and in direct church-to-church relationships. Tim invited some of the Witness workers to share about their ministries.
 - i. **Nhien Pham** is with the North American Vietnamese Fellowship, and is on an Mennonite Church Canada Witness Special Assignment in Vietnam and Cambodia. He relates to the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, though he doesn't live there. He visits the ministries, and can do direct teaching of pastors from his home through internet and telephone. One of the exciting developments is a Bible school that provides training for future pastors. It is not a recognized school, but it is tolerated by the government and has been a safe place to study the past two years.
 - ii. **Palmer Becker** has a special teaching ministry in Korea, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Macau. The Chinese and Koreans respect age, and the warm welcome he received in Asia encouraged him to use his retirement years to do mission work.
 - iii. **Marian and Erv Wiens** say that they dearly love their children and grandchildren, but their life's calling is more than living in proximity to them. They have been invited to be resource workers at the Korea Resource Centre. They're grateful for their previous experience in Korea. They want to help strengthen the network of Anabaptist churches in Korea.
 - iv. **Joji Pantoja** spoke on ministry in the Philippines. Two short-term Witness workers will be joining her to help them accomplish some long-term goals: to increase global awareness, to enhance credibility, and to help them become channels of blessing. Short-term workers also build awareness in Canada of peace and conflict issues with which Christians struggle there.
 - v. **Megan Enns** is one of the short-term workers Joji mentioned. She has been studying peace and conflict at CMU the last several years, and looks forward to using what she has learned.
 - vi. **Dann Pantoja** expressed his gratitude for the support he received while being treated for angina. The congregations in Canada embraced him with lots of love, through prayer notes, cards, emails, medical attention, and lots of Facebook messages of encouragement.
 - vii. **George and Tobia Veith** are taking mediation courses in Winnipeg that will help their work with the Macau MC efforts to become peacemaking churches. Their tasks include providing resources, leadership development, and teaching Anabaptist history and theology.
 - viii. **Todd and Jeanette Hanson**, who work with the CEE (China Educational Exchange), said that in the last 30 years of exchange between Mennonite teachers and Chinese professors many relationships have developed which extended to local churches, and expanded into partnerships. China Vision (CV) is a new partnership group; their priorities include education for church leaders, leadership training classes, Sunday School teacher training, and

scholarships to high school students. Growing urban congregations need leadership with education comparable to the education of those in the congregations. The challenges of working together include different ideas, different visions, different needs, the fast pace of change, and a changing relationship with government.

- ix. **Yin Hongtao** is the first Mennonite pastor ordained in China since 1949, and is attracted to the Anabaptist ideas of building the kingdom of God, and a servant style of leadership. Many churches are attracted to Anabaptist theology. CV has asked Mennonite Church Canada Witness to be on their advisory board. Two of their people will be part of IMPaCT this fall. “We have the strongest influence of any denominational ministry in China,” said Tau. A great opportunity!
- x. **The Witness Prayer Directory** should be available in the New Year. New Witness workers are listed on pages 18-19 of the Program Book. Prayer cards are available for those workers you want to support through prayer.

b. Multi-cultural Ministries

- i. **Samson Lo**, Director of Multi-cultural Ministry, noted that we are a diverse ethnic and theological group of churches. We are 33,000 members, in 221 congregations, who worship in about 20 languages. We desire to live out the love of Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. Samson introduced some of the others engaged in multi-cultural ministry.
- ii. **Chau Dang**, of Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church (CVMC), read from Colossians 3:15-17 in Vietnamese and shared about his congregation. CVMC began in 1983, meeting at Trinity MC. A church also began in Edmonton. In 2006 CVMC sent 19 short-term mission workers to Malaysia to work with Vietnamese people there, and there is now a MC there. They have also sent tracts and CD’s to Vietnamese people in Saskatoon, who are now meeting regularly and will join Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church Sask in the near future.
- iii. **Bock Ki Kim** read the theme text in Korean. I’m wearing Korean clothes, he noted, though not the traditional clothes. We are to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. About 15 years ago he learned of Mennonites and Anabaptists from a book, but there were no Mennonite churches in Korea. He chose to become Mennonite in order to wear the clothes of Jesus Christ in a different way. Many more Korean Christians want to change their clothes. Fifteen years ago there was no Korean MC in Korea or North America. Fourteen years ago Charleswood MC helped Koreans to put on new clothes. Eight years ago TUMC helped in a similar way. Seven years ago Sherbrooke welcomed a Korean church; five years ago families from Winnipeg and London moved to Calgary and formed a MC there. They have many joys and concerns: identity; losing believers to evangelicalism; moving from being nominal Christians to serious disciples. They’re working at a vision for their church.
- iv. **Chinda Komalla**, Lao Canadian Evangelical MC in Toronto, read from Colossians in the Lao language. Laos has been at war for many years. Mennonites have Jesus Christ, like other denominations, but they also have Anabaptist theology. How are we going to use that gift? It’s a precious gem, and we should pass on that gift to other people. I want to thank God for you who have carried on that precious gift. We have had enough of war.
- v. **Joseph Liou**, of Calgary Chinese MC, read the Colossians passage in Mandarin. Their church just celebrated its 29th anniversary. They are people who came to Canada as refugees sponsored by Mennonites. They are now established. It’s hard for their church to reach out to the people from Hong Kong, because they speak differently. 30,000 Chinese have migrated to Canada every year since 1999. There are 45,000 visa students here. The congregation decided to switch from Mandarin to Cantonese, to help their outreach. It’s a big change – not just of language, but perspective. Is this a crisis? Or an opportunity? It’s a prayer request!
- vi. **Lucy Roca**, of Sherbrooke MC in Quebec, read the theme passage in Spanish. Arriving in Canada in 2006, she was commissioned by the church in Columbia to plant a church in Quebec. The Lord showed her brother a vision which confirmed this was from God. After two

weeks they had 40 people. A second confirmation came, and we worked with the assumption that we would be multiplied, she said. They are in three places: Sherbrooke, Montreal and Quebec, ministering to Latino/a refugees, some of whom are still to be processed. Adaptation is very difficult. There are many losses in leaving one's country, but they share the good news of Jesus, and have seen restored lives. They have persevered, and are appreciative of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's support. It's not easy to start a church. A third confirmation was received by a person on the missions committee who dedicated himself to pray, and the Lord said, yes, there will be various churches. We are proud of being Mennonites, she said. From the first time we knew this church we have been very glad for the way in which it works. We believe that there are also many people who don't know, but if they did, they would become Mennonites. With concerns about the national church today, what happens to the local churches? Local churches need to be concerned about the national church, and especially new churches. Our passion needs to carry us, she said, so that we continue multiplying, in Quebec and in all of Canada.

25. Congregational Partnerships.

a. Learning Tours.

- i. **Norm Dyck**, Director of Congregational Partnerships, introduced learning tours, which help us to grow together as a global church. There were two tours to the Philippines this year to experience the work of the Pantojas.
- ii. **Lois Konrad**, from Leamington, shared from a participant's perspective. The tour was an opportunity to more fully engage our congregation in partnership, she said. One of the highlights of the tour was a brief history lesson on the impact of colonialism on the Philippines. Peacebuilders are engaged in providing coffee growing seminars and encouraged groups to work together at a common goal. Lois shared her excitement in being a part of a global church. She now has a better understanding of how much it takes to begin a Witness ministry. The results, however, are amazing. As a result of the tour, one of their people has been accepted to work there. Such a tour is costly, she noted, but it is worth every penny, and she would do it again. It's beneficial to be there in person, and to experience things first hand.
- iii. **The next learning tour**, Norm indicated, will be to Burkina Faso, in February, 2011.

b. Native Ministries

- i. **Neill and Edith von Gunten**, co-directors of Christian Witness Council's Native Ministries, reported that twenty-one people took a tour of the Saskatchewan River Valley after Assembly 2009, and heard stories of displacement, history, and culture. Two worlds intersected.
- ii. **Blackfoot Nation**. This year the von Guntens will be leading a tour to the Blackfoot Nation.
- iii. **Paraguay**. The visit to indigenous peoples in Paraguay and Argentina was a life-changing trip. A DVD clip, *North Meets South*, was played. A Metis man reported: "Our trip to South America is not something we will not soon forget." A man from Paraguay wrote: "We had long awaited this day when we would meet face to face.... We have different languages and customs, but we have the same struggles and the same faith."
- iv. **The TRC event**. Neill and Edith attended four intense days of learning, and heard the stories of survivors. Anger was expressed, but so were signs of hope; the journey of healing has started for many. Members of congregations were encouraged to attend TRC events.
- v. **The Institute of Aboriginal Theological Studies** Seventh symposium took place this month. Neill and Edith attended.
- vi. **Mennonite Church Alberta** celebrated thirty years of bridge-building by Alvin Lepp of Rosemary and Siksika nation. The big question is: Who will continue this work?
- vii. **Mennonite Church BC**. We are working with Mennonite Church BC to explore how authentic relationships can be built. A similar assessment is happening in Winnipeg this summer.

- c. **Areas of Ministry.** Rudy Dirks indicated that the Witness Council's four major areas of ministry: international, cross-cultural ministries, Native Ministries, and congregational partnerships, will now become three areas, with the latter shifting to the Church Engagement Council.
- d. **Appreciation.** Rudy thanked Willard Metzger for his nine years chairing the Christian Witness Council and shaping that ministry in significant ways. Rudy also thanked the staff.

– Announcements –
– Lunch –

Friday, July 2, 2010, 1:30 p.m.

Discernment Block 10

26. A New Ministry. Loretta Kroeker, Moderator, Mennonite Church Alberta, introduced Joanne De Jong, chair of the Mennonite Church Alberta Mission Committee, and announced that Donna and Loren Entz have accepted a call to minister to immigrants in Edmonton, beginning November 1.

27. Church Engagement Council. Norm Dyck, the new CEC Executive Secretary, noted Paul's language of "full armour" and "running the race" are competitive images that may cause us discomfort, but they declare the passion, intensity, and vision of the Church. Being the Church in a post-Christendom, post-modern context means we must work as a team. "Remember who you are," was my parents' counsel. Whatever you do, do all in the name of Jesus. This is about the mission of God, and our place in it – our opportunity, our calling, remembering who we are and whose we are. This is the ultimate purpose of the Church, the reason for church engagement. The bylaw changes indicate the core activities, like working closely with congregations in formation, partnerships, strategies, engaging and inviting the financial involvement of congregations, and business people. Church engagement is also a response to delegates' requests for more – more visits to congregations, more opportunities to listen, challenge, and inspire. CEC is here to help with the various challenges of congregational life, to help the ministry capacity of the Church, and to develop international and national partnerships. We get to talk about a ministry vision that will challenge our pocketbooks.

28. Formation Council

- a. **Introduction.** Lisa Carr Pries, the chair, and Dave Bergen, CFC executive secretary, introduced staff and Council members, and pointed out their report. (Report Book, page 21) CFC seeks to serve the Church so that all people will claim their identity in Jesus Christ, and so that the Church will prosper. After *God's People Now* tour, CFC came up with a set of priorities.
- b. **Pastoral Leadership.** Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister and Director of Leadership Development, asked: How do we ensure that we are calling pastors who can lead our churches? Our pastors are diverse, in their calling, training, and formation. Some of them have an MDiv. degree, the standard we desire for all pastors. Many of our pastors come with other kinds of training. Some are studying part-time as they pastor. Many are gifted, but with little or no training. A growing number of our pastors come with languages other than English. MC USA faces the same kind of diversity. We have been working together with them and with Area Churches to talk about competency, and have developed a document called "Ministerial Credentialing, Competencies and Education," which names six areas necessary for effective ministry:
 - i. Knowing the biblical story
 - ii. Understanding Anabaptist and Mennonite theology
 - iii. Growing in Christian discipleship and spirituality
 - iv. Growing in self-understanding and self-awareness
 - v. Understanding the contextual awareness of the place in which we minister
 - vi. Growing in leadership skills

This will be the standard for leaders coming from other denominations, and will help to determine additional formation and training required. Area Churches are already using this document. Karen encouraged delegates to attend the workshop on Thirty-six Ways to Grow a Pastor.

- c. **A strategic task force.** Where will our pastors of the future come from? In the next two decades many of our pastors will retire. The multi-cultural nature of our church is a growing edge of our denomination; where will we find leaders for multi-cultural churches? And leaders for new, emerging congregations? We are talking with leaders of our schools, and have a strategic task force with the mandate to ensure we have sufficient and qualified congregational leadership for the next two decades. Members of the task force: Karen; Rebecca Slough; Arnold Neufeld-Fast; Jim Pankratz; Bruce Bergen; and April Yamasaki. We need a partnership that addresses the role of congregations, Area Churches, schools, and the national church. Helping congregations identify new leaders is critical. Strengths we can build on include stories from our congregations that have a rich history of calling out leaders. There are many other programs, like camps, that are involved in leadership development. We are considering how schools can work together to offer online courses. The beginning years of ministry determine whether a pastor will continue in ministry for the long term. We need to develop pastors for non-Caucasian churches, and for new models of church. The task force is responsible to CFC, and the goal is to bring a strategic plan to Assembly in 2011.
- d. **Youth**
 - i. ***A good experience.*** Anna Rehan told the story of planning for last summer's youth assembly in Saskatchewan. They decided to do a service project, a school kit challenge, the kits to be sent to Cuba to be distributed by the church there. Many contributed to this effort: MCC, congregations; women's groups; etc. MCC Sask and MCC MB contributed bags and transportation. Many gave generously. Over \$16,000 came in by the end of June. 5000 kits were made within six hours, a project that was supposed to take a week. The kits arrived in Cuba a few weeks ago. An email Jack received from Cuba said: "It is a joy to process this donation that your people have worked at with so much love. Please accept our gratitude...."
 - ii. ***Youth Assembly 2011.*** Anna Rehan and Kathy Giesbrecht reported that planning is underway for the July 4-8 event at the Conrad Grebel campus. The theme: "It's Epic: Remembering God's Future," a variation on peace in the public square, which we're calling the public polygon. This is also the theme of the larger assembly.
 - iii. ***MWC Global Youth Summit.*** Kristina Toews was a delegate from Mennonite Church Canada to the MWC Global Youth Summit in Paraguay. It was an amazing experience, reported Kristina. There were 800 participants, and 48 delegates from 33 countries. They discussed challenges and dreams. There was great excitement about how God is at work in our church. MWC has appointed a youth task force to create a new structure and programs to help young people be involved in the global church. The YAB (Young Anabaptists) Committee has five objectives: networking, fellowship and learning from each other; capacity building; providing space for young people to influence decision-making; peacemaking; and Anabaptist identity. An African youth summit is being considered.
- e. **Resource Centre.** Arlyn reported that the Centre adds an average of three new items every day. The Centre has partnerships with MPN, AMBS, CMU, etc. Materials are sent across Canada, free of charge, both ways. Borrow, purchase, download, link – that's our motto. The CMU bookstore is starting to use the Centre to sell their materials online. Mennonite Church Canada resources are also available. The DVD collection has expanded. The Centre is collaborating with others in the Anabaptist Resource Consortium, making 15,000 resources available. Many resources are available to us in a *Google* world; the Centre has done some of the selecting and discerning in advance. The online catalogue is regularly updated. Our Scripture search will find resources by text. Electronic files continue to be added. The Centre had over 100,000 downloads last year. Congregations were invited to submit original materials, and to suggest what and how they should provide it.

- f. **Young Adult Fellowship.** Alissa Bender is on the planning committee. The primary task of the YAF, which has been active since 1999, includes supporting regional young adult ministries, providing resources to young adults and other church leaders on issues important to young adults; and encouraging young adults to be active in congregational and broader church life. A retreat takes place every fall, across two denominations. It's challenging to make people aware of our existence. How can we engage young adults in the church? This fall we are holding a young adult think tank. Our annual retreat provides meaningful times of connection; we also pay attention to how content can be taken home, and sometimes we issue statements to the broader church.
- g. **Conclusion.** Lisa introduced Gareth Brandt, the newest member of CFC. She also pointed out related agencies that are listed in the Report Book.
- h. **Table Group Discussions**
- i. **Table Group reports**
 - i. **Table 18:** We need multi-cultural resources, worship material, children's stories, and ways of doing Sunday School in the context of diminishing commitment and attendance, in other words, ways of doing Christian education in non-traditional ways.
 - ii. **Table 11:** The Resource Centre is becoming more helpful. The sharing of original material is very helpful. Youth assemblies are well attended.
 - iii. **Table 4:** We appreciate the Resource Centre, and the number of related organizations included in online resources. We're amazed at how much money we spend on print; we also need human resources to help us use the material. The Sunday School material is excellent. It's prepared so that teachers can be ready in 10 minutes – perhaps a sad reflection of things.
 - iv. **Table 25:** The Resource Centre has been very helpful with worship planning and children's materials, both online resources as well as print material. What's missing? It's not easy to find point-making stories that relate to a Scriptural issue.
 - v. **Table 17:** Sunday School materials focussing on Anabaptist content is lacking. We also need help for Sunday School teachers – youth especially, but also for children.
 - vi. **Table 6:** We are considering a shift away from the *Gather Round* material to more of a workshop model. It would be helpful to arrange *Gather Round* in a story by story fashion. *Reply:* There are ways to adapt the GR material to a workshop approach.
 - vii. **Other responses:**
 - (1) Basic Biblical literacy is a major issue. Our seniors do well, but skills of interpretation are needed – like how to read the Bible, and to know how it was formed; how it's constructed; the different ways we can read it; a tour through it; etc. One could match worship material to it. We couldn't find anything in that regard.
 - (2) Our congregation decided to discontinue using *Gather Round* material. We had some frustration with the content, including youth dissatisfaction, but the main dissatisfaction came from teachers, who don't find it engaging enough. At the end of Sunday School, youth are still lacking the understanding of the Bible as a whole. How do we work with that? They get stories in isolation. Our kids get the sanitized version of David and Bathsheba. Somewhere they need to hear the power of that story. The ways we read Scripture – the creation story in Genesis, for example – do not equip our youth when they go to university. There are solid biblical ways to deal with that. There are ways of reading Scripture that would better equip them for higher education. *Reply:* The Faith and Life Committee is working on the theme of "Delighting in Scripture".
 - (3) How do we help parents and grandparents to extend the teaching of the Church?
 - (4) In the Jubilee experience in Boissegvain, they cut almost all of their programmes for a year, except worship and small groups (optional). They have gone through a Bible reading process as an entire congregation. After this year is done they are going to have to sort out which programs to adopt next year. This is a challenge.

29. Resolutions Committee

- a. **Appreciation.** Andrew thanked Ed Janzen and Garth Ewert Fisher for their contributions to the GB.
- b. **Resolutions.** Hilda Hildebrand reported that two resolutions came this morning:

- i. **Creation care.** Stephanie Dueck presented the resolution, regretting that the Assembly is not as green as we had hoped.

Motion #12

(Stephanie Dueck / Henry Block)

Background: We are grateful that we can gather as a National Church, but we regret deeply the negative impact our travel and our assembly has had on the earth – which is the Lord's. The assembly is not as "green" as we had hoped and planned for. We acknowledge the environmental efforts many have made with their mode of transport, using their own cups, reusing disposable cups, etc.

Resolution: Be it resolved that we, at all levels of Mennonite Church Canada, commit ourselves to continued efforts that care for the earth which sustains us, in faithfulness to our calling as stewards of God's good earth. Motion carried.

- ii. **Residential School Abuse.** Ernie Epp thought some elaboration necessary for the resolution on residential schools. Janet Plenert's article in *Round Up* is helpful. Ernie was involved in attempts at resolution of residential schools issues, and said that it would help to think about this more. There are different feelings about these things. We need some help explaining these things when we go back to our churches. He read a resolution, which states, in part, that Mennonite Church Canada needs to make clear that it in no way minimizes the dedicated service of past mission workers.

Motion #13

(Ernie Epp / Paul Penner)

Background: In view of the concerns already expressed about the resolution passed regarding Mennonite Church Canada's participation / complicity in the Residential Abuse of First Nations children, and the different ways the resolution might be interpreted, the following resolution is being presented:

Resolution: Be it resolved that Mennonite Church Canada provide each delegate with adequate information describing the nature and extent of the abuse of Aboriginal children attributed to the staff and type of mission-like services provided by and under the auspices of Mennonite Church Canada and its predecessors. In addition, Mennonite Church Canada needs to clearly declare that the passed resolution does not in any way minimize the highly valued and extensive mission services to Canada's First Nations people and communities already provided over the past number of decades in Canada. A life time of dedicated service has willingly and selflessly been provided by most conscientious, honourable, and committed staff persons that ought not to have any abuselike implications directed their way.

Editor's Note: The above resolution calling for further investigation regarding potential involvement in residential schools by Mennonite Church Canada and its predecessors was rescinded (see footnote to the original resolution). The above resolution also sought to acknowledge the good and effective work that has been done by Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministries program and its predecessors in the past. Instead, the movers entrusted the General Board to give attention to the intent of this part of the rescinded resolution.

Motion rescinded.

iii. **Discussion** included the following comments:

- (1) I was disturbed that we passed the resolution so quickly, because the attitudes that produced the residential school abuses are so deeply within us. We have the potential to hurt people again if we don't think this through. Our mission workers have changed, but I'm not sure we as a church have changed. Receiving the gift of an Aboriginal daughter, my spouse and I were, unwittingly, part of the assimilation process. Our daughter could not fit into our Euro-centric world. Stopping to think is part of discernment. This is going to be an issue for a long, long time. If we want to be part of the healing, there is a need for us to change our attitudes – a long term commitment.
- (2) This resolution asks for a report on the extent of abuse. On the other hand, we are not implying that there was abuse. I'm not sure how to hold those two statements together.
- (3) I affirm the intent of the resolution, which I understand to be to affirm our mission workers. They have done an excellent job of sensitizing us through the years.
- (4) This needs more consideration. We don't need to pass this in one day; we're going to have to wear this for decades. We helped put these people into bondage. In the 1920s God graced us with a miracle, when many Mennonites were saved from bondage in Russia. I demand we apply the same leadership and resources to this situation.
- (5) We have a motion on the floor. There is an option to rescind a motion. Could we call for a year in which to work at this, to prepare ourselves with the spirit of these two statements in view?
- (6) It has been indicated that this is very complex, but part of this, if I understand the intent, may be very simple. The previous resolution already answers the question in a simple way. There are no schools that were attributed to Mennonite Church Canada, or its predecessor, on the list. It doesn't engage the complex things others spoke to, but if you are wondering if Mennonite Church Canada is being accused of running these schools under our auspices, the answer is "no". In the bigger sense, confessing complicity in the failing of the Christian church, that is clearly true. This policy of assimilation, over seven generations, was an official government policy, and the churches were co-opted to implement that policy, over 130 years. There is complicity in that we voted for these governments, year after year.
- (7) We could ask Ernie to rescind this motion in favour of the intent, and commit ourselves to examining it over the next year or two; or have an amendment; or, thirdly, we can vote on the motion as it is. *Reply:* I'm pleased with the discussion, because it shows how complex and important the issue is. We are both willing to table it, if it would be helpful, and yet I have a concern that if it comes forward and the services of some of our workers are negatively reflected, that would not be good.
- (8) The parliamentarian explained that rescind means there will be more discussion next year. If you want this motion to be the beginning point next year, then table it.
- (9) Ernie and Paul agreed to rescind the motion. (It was later on pointed out that "withdraw" would have been the preferable term)

30. Closing Business

- a. **Gratitude.** Hilda Hildebrand noted that we have much for which to be thankful, and she extended a special thank you to MCA, the Area Church, and the many committees, churches, and volunteers that helped to host us. We're grateful for the use of Ambrose College; the hospitality at Menno Simons Christian School; those who provided billets; worship leaders; team song speakers, presenters, Bible study leaders, musicians, exhibitors, etc. We have been blessed by the work of so many people. Our hearts have been stretched and we give thanks. We're also thankful for the dedication and fine work of the Mennonite Church Canada staff, the GB, Councils, and educational leaders. We are most grateful for the unity within a diverse community. Andrew thanked Harold Peters-Fransen for his very helpful counsel.

b. Listening Committee

- i. **Report.** Ardith Frey, Dan Nighswander, and Kristina Toews presented their final report:
- (1) We have much to be thankful for in these days: worship; Bible study; conversations around meal tables and discernment tables; stories; reports; discernment times, and more.
 - (2) We have been challenged to live out our unity in diversity. We appreciate what it means to be the global church.
 - (3) We're also sensed an excitement to participate in discernment, but recognize that there is never enough time for discussion.
 - (4) We want to affirm the children's assembly, and we're excited about the youth ambassadors that are here.
 - (5) The date of this assembly was troublesome, so we wonder who really can participate in assemblies. This assembly occurred on week days, and before school closed.
 - (6) We would like to affirm the participation of young adults and seniors, and all in-between.
 - (7) We think we are making progress in incorporating gender and age, but it's less apparent that we are making progress in incorporating the many Mennonite congregations of languages other than English and German. We apologize for being slow to recognize you as real Mennonites. However, we are one body in worship, fellowship and discernment.
 - (8) The Peace in the Public Square report stimulated and energized this group, inspiring us to imagine creative ways of witnessing for peace. We also heard concern about this trust, reminding us that the peace that we proclaim is the peace of Christ.
 - (9) We want to assure Lucy Roca that we heard her challenge regarding the Scriptural injunction not to abandon the love of God we had at first. We need to hear this challenge and think prayerfully about what we will do about it.
- ii. **Prayer**
- iii. **Appreciation.** Andrew thanked the Listening Committee for their work.

– Announcements –

31. Closing Worship



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