

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA
JOINT COUNCIL MEETING
January 27-28, 2018 – Richmond, BC
Meeting Minutes

Joint Council Present: Calvin Quan (Moderator), Geraldine Balzer (Assistant Moderator), Allan Hiebert (Secretary/Treasurer), Lee Dyck (Moderator MCBC), Ken Warkentin (Moderator MCSK), Alicia Good (MCEC), Betty Loewen (MCBC), Gerald Gerbrandt (MCM), Paul Neufeldt (Moderator MCA), Jacquelyn Janzen (MCSK)

Late Arrives: Andrea De Avila (MCM) mid-morning

Regrets: Peter Rempel (Moderator MCM), Paul Wideman (Moderator MCEC), Vince Friesen (Interim MCA)

Staff Present: Willard Metzger (ED) (until 1:30 pm Saturday), Tim Wiebe Neufeld(MCA), Ryan Siemens (MCSask), Ken Warkentin (MCM), David Martin (MCEC), Garry Janzen (MCBC)

- 1) **Opening:** Calvin called to order at 8:34. He gave condolences on our behalf to Willard and Lois in passing of Lois' father. He noted Willard will be leaving at 1pm today, requiring a change of agenda to accommodate. Tim Wiebe Neufeld led the devotion based on Luke 4:14-21.
- 2) **Agenda review/additions:** A revised agenda was circulated and approved.
- 3) **Minutes:**

Consensus: The minutes of the December 8-9, 2017 Joint Council Meeting were approved as circulated in the docket.

Executive Committee Meeting minutes of December 15, 2017 were circulated for information.

4) **Business Arising:**

- a) Joint Council Meeting press debrief

After the meeting in December Willard and Calvin met with the local rep of the Canadian Mennonite to debrief on the work at the meeting. An article reported on that meeting in a recent CM issue. The future plan is to invite CM representation at a Saturday gathering of local church leaders, to debrief there.

- b) Letter to the CMPS Board.

As directed at the December meeting, a letter to CMPS board, re: Advertisements was sent. This was received and Henry Krause indicated it will be considered at their next board meeting. The letter and reply were included in the meeting docket.

- c) Letter to Canadian Mennonite re: Grant Renewal.

A letter was sent to Canadian Mennonite regarding the renewal of the funding grant for 2018. Tobi Thiessen acknowledged receipt of the letter.

- d) Letter to Mennonite World Conference
Calvin and Willard provided an update on the conversation between MC Canada and MC USA leadership had with MWC leadership regarding the expected Fair Share contribution.
 - e) Amended bylaws have been sent to the CRA Directorate and receipt acknowledged.
- 5) **Moderator report:** Calvin presented the moderator's report as circulated with the meeting docket.
- a) Calvin noted the decisions regarding Joint Council meetings and the creation of a public event the encouraged local church participation/interaction with Joint Council members. An event would happen later today at Peace Mennonite Church.
 - b) Response to the online survey about the Executive Minister Job Description was appreciated. It has informed the draft Exec Minister Job Description, which will be discussed later.
- 6) **Executive Director's Report:** Willard presented the Executive Director's report as circulated with the meeting docket.
- a) Willard indicated that he has regular meetings with Regional Church Communication staff. In newsletters and other MC Canada communication material they have begun using the branding, "MC Canada: Our Nationwide community of Faith." This is an interim branding and feedback is appreciated.
 - b) Willard has been meetings with the mission agencies that MC Canada has connected with in the past, and working on discerning how and which ones to connect to in our new reality.
 - c) Willard indicated that the Meeting House (Brethren in Christ) is starting a new neo-Anabaptist network, and has the resources to provide no-cost Anabaptist resources. The Meeting House has informed CCAL (Canadian Council of Anabaptist Leaders) about this. Willard is concerned about how to engage with the new network, and what this means for MennoMedia is looking to sell Anabaptist resources when the Meeting House is giving resources away for free.
 - d) It is a time of transition for MC USA, with leadership of various agencies changing.
 - e) Willard noted the Executive Assistant position has been difficult to fill. It is seen important to have this person be from our MC Canada constituency. Suggestions for candidates for this position are encouraged. Would be open to having candidates from areas and Regions outside of Winnipeg who are willing to relocate to the office in Winnipeg.
- 7) **Financial update:**
- a) **December statements.** A treasurer's report was circulated to accompany this.
 - i) Allan noted some significant variances on income of budget vs. actuals to date. The good news is that churches donations are ahead of budget. However, individual and corporate giving is down, as is designated donations. The deferred revenues accounts (surplus designated donations from past years) have been drawn on significantly to make up for the decreased designated donations.
 - b) **Transition Consultant** – Part of the transition plan was to hire a "change" consultant (Sue Hemphill) to assist staff with the transition and staff reductions. The total fees paid were \$6,126.19. It is proposed that money be transferred from the First Fruits internally restricted fund to cover this cost.

Consensus: Moved that \$6,126.19 be transferred out of the internally restricted fund 0-0000-3807 (First Fruits) to cover the costs of the staff transition/change consultant.

- c) Discussion on Joint Council Meeting Expenses.

Consensus: Moved that the travel, accommodation, and food costs for the January 27-28, 2018 Joint Council Meeting be paid by MC Canada.

Consensus: Moved that future MC Canada budgets include the cost of travel, accommodation, and food for all Joint Council and ESG members who attend these meetings.

8) Process for developing a Communication strategy:

- a) Feedback from Regional Churches regarding the draft document from December was received with a number of additions noted. MCSask and MCBC: have not had opportunity to discuss the proposal in any detail. There was some concern from MCM that the process timeline should be shortened to 12 months.
- b) The ESG provided an update on the progress to date.

9) Regional Church budget setting for nationwide priorities

- a) Willard provided an update of the situation as it sits now. The ballpark budget for MC Canada has been 1.922 million based on the October stress-test figures, including suggestions for Regional Church contributions. The most recent updates at the ESG group indicate we're still in the ballpark for what RC's can budget to give.

10) International Witness

- a) Feedback was received from the Regional Churches on the proposed screening grid for International Witness projects. A number of suggestions for changes were received, particularly from MCEC and MCM boards. The MCBC board has not yet had time to discuss the proposal.
- b) Discussion followed. Some suggestion include the use of "ad hoc" screening groups of experts with experience related to a proposed project. It was suggested that a more "operationalization document" be developed with check-lists and accountability clarified.

ACTION: ESG is to revise the witness project screening document based on the suggestions given.

- c) Current Witness Worker Proposal. A proposal from the ESG was circulated that allows workers to return for a 3 year term, with the expectation that they would work towards a 50% relational funding amount within that 3 year period. Most workers would return under this arrangement, pending normal term reviews.

Consensus: Moved that International Witness Workers return to their ministry placements for a three year term with the expectation that each witness worker will work to reach a 50% relational funding threshold within the three year period.

Consensus: A constituency communication to be issued as follows: "MC Canada continues to affirm and be strongly engaged in international ministry with its witness partners. Joint Council is pleased to announce the approval of a three-year transition plan during which each witness project, through national and regional support, will be enabled to achieve the necessary relational funding. This plan anticipates that most current workers will return pending normal term reviews."

Action: ESG is to draft a communication to witness workers on the proposed mission support team mechanism, which will help them to achieved more relational funding.

11) Executive Director (Minister) term review

- a) Revised Executive Minister job description. Calvin outlined the survey process followed and development of the Executive Minister job description to reflect the new structure. He went over the proposed document, including consensus and weak consensus aspects and some differences from past job descriptions. After a number of suggested changes and additions, Calvin agreed to revise the job description, and present the revised description later in the meeting (ie. next day).
- b) Calvin has been in conversation with Willard about MLI aspects. The will be referred to ESG for further consideration.
- c) Term review – next steps. Calvin outlined proposed review process, including the next step of a review survey. Discussion followed on who should be included in the survey.

Action: Moderators to provide Calvin with list of leadership board members for Calvin to send the survey.

12) Palestine – Israel Resolution

- a) Joint Council reviewed the interim and final working group reports (included in meeting docket). While the working group is finished, it now exists as an informal network of those involved in justice issues in the Regional Churches. It was suggested that a quarterly teleconference of those involved (and Willard) be held.
- b) Letter to prime minister. The working group suggested sending a letter on the issue to the Prime Minister (included in docket)

Consensus: to support the sending of the proposed letter to the Prime Minister, with one person expressing dissent but supporting the decision of the group.

13) Community of Spiritual Leadership:

- a) David reported on the conversation at ESG with Gerald Gerbrandt, reviewing the Future Directions thoughts and working group documents related to developing a Community of

Spiritual Leadership. How would this group serve the church in the new structure? Discussion followed, but no specific actions were decided.

14) MCBC Church Engagement Prep:

- a) A public event, to which all MCBC church members were invited, was planned for Peace Mennonite Church in the evening. Discussion was held on travel arrangements, and the plans for the evening. These include a brief presentation by Calvin on the work of the Joint Council, storytelling from local congregations and also from other regions.

15) 2019 Inspirational Gathering

- a) At the last Joint Council meeting, MCEC and MCBC were asked if they would consider hosting the 2019 Inspirational Gathering, planned for the July long weekend in 2019.

Consensus: MCBC is asked to see if they can host the 2019 Inspirational Gathering. MCBC will confirm they can do it by the end of February. If they are not able to, MCEC will be approached to host.

- b) A discussion around possible themes and formats for such a gathering. Also discussed was where the responsibility for the event would lie, and what resources for planning were available.

Consensus: Develop a theme along the line of –“Reimagining the Congregation”, with a tagline involving “Celebration”

5:00 pm: Meeting adjourned for the day of January 27, 2018

Meeting reopened at 8:30 am, Sunday January 28, 2018

16) Morning Worship

- a) Worship was led by Ryan Siemens, with the scripture text: Luke 4. The message was given by David Martin concerning the mission of Jesus, and discerning mission of the church today.

17) MCBC Engagement – Debrief

- a) The discussion of at the public meeting the previous evening was held. Themes include collaboration and reframing. The discussion was good, with informal groups remaining in discussion around the tables after the meeting was formally ended.
- b) People were there to listen and learn because the picture of the new nationwide church is new. The conversation later on was only possible once some learning had taken place

18) Review of Operating Agreement and Governance Protocol

- a) Feedback from Regional Churches was received and the **JC approved the following edits:**
 - i) Operating Agreement
 - (1) 4)b) Change to, “This Operating Agreement is based on and grows out of the Covenant signed by the 5 Regional Churches”
 - (2) 8)c)iv) iv) Change to, “Communication with the broader church community and outside the church in the national and international context.”

- (3) 9)b) ESG asked to develop a single version of this section on Delegate Gatherings, consistent with the Bylaws to be brought to the next Joint Council.
- (4) 13)2) Change to: “The development of MC Canada funding and expenses projections depends on Regional Church transparency regarding their **annual** financial information, including current income and expenses as well as high quality good faith projections of future Regional Church income and expenses. The Regional Churches agree to maintain the level of transparency needed for this process to work well.”
- (5) 13)5)
 - ii) Governance protocols
 - (1) 3.c. add the recommended clause in the MCEC handout
 - (2) 5.d.i change to say, “be circulate sufficiently in advance (60-90 days) of the Joint Council meeting”
- b) As some confusion arose due to members looking at different versions of the documents, it was decided that consideration should be given to having a web based document storage system that would be available to members of JC and ESG.

Action: ESG, together with Allan Hiebert, to work together at lodging Joint Council documents in one web location which would be accessible to all JC and ESG members. Possibilities such as Microsoft Office 365 Share Point or Google docs should be considered. Document versioning should be possible.

19) Process for developing a Pastoral Leadership Strategy

- a) Feedback was received from Regional Churches on the proposed process. Several changes were proposed
- b) Update from ESG on the process progress
 - i) Regarding AMBS, Sara Wenger Shenk has said that they are continually assessing this exact question as to what leadership development is needed for today.
 - ii) CLM meeting of February 1st and will be addressing this matter
 - iii) Probably will not be until April or June before any results will be available

20) Evaluating nationwide priorities – Key Impact Indicators.

- a) ESG has been doing some work on this. They reported on their work and asked for Joint Council input. The key point is to think about “How does what we are doing as ESG and JC effect congregational vitality”. MCEC shared a tool that they have been developing “Congregational Reflections” which provides a graphical representation of 10 characteristics of a church.

21) Working group reports

- a) ESG has reviewed the working group reports produced during the Future Directions work and will make sure that the appropriate reports are referenced whenever that particular topic is being addressed.

22) Regional Church Reporting

- a) MCBC

- i) 2 congregations have left MCBC and 1 congregation has voted to leave with a majority, did not meet the bylaw change threshold of 75%, so they are still with MCBC
- ii) 2018 LEAD Conference theme, “Made in the Image of God: Engaging Power, Privilege and Prejudice”
- iii) “Reading the Bible Together” Conference with Tim Geddert on April 14: An effort in recognition that biblical interpretation is a major issue in the internal challenges MCBC is facing
- b) MCA
 - i) Paul Neufeld’s last Joint Council meeting, new moderator to be elected at MCA AGM in March
 - ii) Things looking relatively positive budget-wise
- c) MCKS
 - i) Ken Warkentin finishing up as moderator. Terry Stefaniuk nominated as the next moderator
 - ii) Continuing Refresh, Refocus, Renew with Betty Pries going well
 - iii) Building connections with Witness in China
 - iv) Moderator and EM have been faithfully visiting all the congregations, and the resulting good relationships are encouraging
- d) MCM
 - i) Peter Rempel is stepping off the board after 6 years
 - ii) News is both encouraging and concerning. Encouraging: MCM met their budget, 5 congregations getting excited about engaging in International Witness partnerships. Concerns: 2 congregations indicated that they will give less to MCM, just due to less available resources, 1 congregation seriously questioning their relationship with MCM
 - iii) Development plans for Camp Assiniboia likely to be delayed by a year due to provincial flood control work.
 - iv) Alice Pound recently retired MCM staff person, connected to MCM and MC Canada since 1978, just passed away
- e) MCEC
 - i) Marilyn Rudy-Froese becoming the full-time Church Leadership Minister in May, with Henry Paetkau’s retirement
 - ii) Some changes in admin/support staff positions
 - iii) Norm Dyck begins February 1 as Mission Engagement Minister
 - (1) First assignment is going to Myanmar to teach and build relationship with church there
 - (2) Confession of Faith in Chin completed in time to take on the trip to Myanmar
 - iv) 4 congregations have motions to leave MCEC
 - (1) What is MCEC’s voice?
 - (2) Effort to bless them, with hope that MCEC will be in the conversation
 - v) A group of laypeople and pastors working ecumenically to bring Ted & Co.
 - (1) Hopefully an MCEC Indigenous/Settler working group to form out of this
 - vi) MCEC exploring making the Meserete Christos a more substantial part of the MC Canada Witness connection, thus developing more accountability and ministry opportunity.

- vii) Paul will likely give up his moderator role at the end of April. Gift discernment committee looking for nominee for moderator. Paul will likely still be at the May JC meeting
- f) Question if something is being done to empower women leaders in new Canadian congregations?
 - i) Agreement that this an important consideration
 - ii) Recognition that the second generation are much more oriented to equal opportunity in leadership

23) Next Meeting Dates

- a) May 5-6, 2018 Spring Meeting in Greater Toronto Area
- b) June 16, 2018 – AGM by teleconference. Joint Council at 12 Noon (Eastern Time). AGM at 1 pm (Eastern Time)
- c) October 20-21, 2018 Fall Meeting in Winnipeg
- d) January 26-27, 2019 Winter Meeting in Saskatoon
- e) April 6-7, 2019 Spring in Alberta (TBD)

24) Review of amended Executive Minister Job Description

- a) Calvin presented the updated Executive Minister Job Description, with changes based on feedback from the discussion yesterday (see item 11). A number of new sections were added or reordered.

Consensus: The revised EM job description was approved with some changes.

25) Closing (with staff).

26) In Camera

27) Adjournment at 3:30 pm.