

**MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA  
JOINT COUNCIL MEETING  
December 8, 2017 - Calgary, AB  
As Approved**

**Joint Council Present:** Calvin Quan (Moderator), Geraldine Balzer (Assistant Moderator), Allan Hiebert (Secretary/Treasurer), Lee Dyck (Moderator MCBC), Ken Warkentin (Moderator MCSK), Paul Wideman (Moderator MCEC), Peter Rempel (Moderator MCM), Alicia Good (MCEC), Betty Loewen (MCBC), Gerald Gerbrandt (MCM), Vince Friesen (Interim MCA)

**Late Arrives:** Paul Neufeldt (Moderator MCA), Jacquelyn Janzen (MCSK)

**Regrets:**

**Staff Present:** Willard Metzger (ED), Tim Wiebe Neufeld(MCA), Ryan Siemans (MCSask), Ken Warkentin (MCM), David Martin (MCEC), Gary Janzen (MCBC)

1. **Opening:** Calvin called to order 8:00 am. Calvin mentioned the updated Joint Member Review Binder which was handed out at the start of the meeting. Ken Warkentin led the devotion with an advent reading/prayer.
2. **Agenda review/additions:** The agenda was reviewed and accepted as circulated.
3. **Approval of October 15 Minutes:**
  - a. Ryan Dueck should read Ryan Siemans
  - b. Tim Neufeld Wiebe should read Tim Wiebe Neufeld
  - c. Garry Janzen was omitted from line 10
  - d. David Martin represented MCEC
  - e. Rempel is spelled wrong in several places
  - f. Keith Regehr is the correct spelling
  - g. Line 85 should read "Mennomedia" rather than "MennoMeda"

**Consensus: The minutes of the October 15 Joint Council Meeting were approved as amended.**

**4. Business Arising:**

- a. MennoMedia Update
  - i. MennoMedia has a new Executive Director, Amy Gingerich
  - ii. Common Word is now the connecting link between MC Canada and MennoMedia

**Consensus: That Arlyn Friesen Epp represent MC Canada on the MennoMedia Board with their attendance as needed on the Board.**

5. **Moderator report:** Calvin presented the moderator's report as circulated with the meeting docket.

6. **Executive Director's Report:** Willard presented the Executive Director's report as circulated with the meeting docket.

a. **Additions to report:**

i. Staff Roles:

1. Travis Dyck will be starting as Executive Assistant replacing Tracey Degner who was hired as a temporary EA
2. Jason Martin has a Bachelor degree in Cultural Relationships and six years of experience in mission work. He also has experience in Church Engagement

ii. Communication Plans:

1. The regional communication staff are beginning to function as the national communication team with the encouragement of the ESG
2. The nationwide agenda and priorities will be communicated through the weekly Regional Communication platform

iii. Program Highlights:

1. Clarification of Arlyn role as director of CommonWord. This is a new joint position together with CMU and replaces the position of "co-director" positions in which MC Canada and CMU each held one of these positions
2. Steve Heinrichs title is Indigenous Relations; it is proposed that the title role be "Indigenous/Settler Relations."
  - a. It is noted that we want to discourage a binary approach to relationships however support this action of renaming.

**Consensus: Approved change of title from "Director, Indigenous Relations" to Director, Indigenous/Settler Relations"**

iv. Ecumenical:

1. CCC will take another look at the Christian/Jewish dialogue which has been suspended since the United Church of Canada joined the BDS movement. CIJA (Canadian Jewish org) limits their participation in this conversation as long as the United Church is part of CCC. CCC is now looking at whether there are other Jewish voices with which to engage on our interfaith dialogue.

v. Canadian Council Anabaptist Leaders (CCAL) met this week and indicate that restructuring is not unique to MC Canada but shared in the MB Conference and the EMC, as well as EFC and CCC congregations

vi. Church growth will come from immigration (mostly from the global south)

vii. The Meeting House (BIC) are looking to establish a North American Anabaptist network. They share this as information and are not asking for permission from CCAL

b. **Conversation:**

- i. Staff also includes a financial consultant/accountant who is currently engaged at approximately 2 days per week.
- ii. Is this the un-occupied space in the Conference Administration building a potential source of income? Yes, sub-lease discussions for the top floor are in progress.
- iii. The working reports need to be honored and need to be discussed on an ongoing basis
- iv. MC USA has also gone through restructuring: does our new covenant change our relationship with MC USA?
- v. Is the Special (Downsizing) Hiring Procedure (Appendix one) now rescinded? The bookkeeper and admin assistant positions were advertised following our standard hiring procedure.

**Consensus: With the downsizing completed, we will return to our normal hiring policies.**

**7. Governance in the new structure:** (pages 18-20 in docket)

- a. Document “Governance Protocols for MC Canada vis-à-vis Executive Functions” is on role of ESG, Moderators, and Joint Council in developing nationwide agenda
- b. Conversation:
  - i. How are the minutes of JC made public? Two options were discussed. First option is that approved minutes will be made available by request and delivered to the congregation rather than to an individual. The Regional Church will be notified that the minutes were sent to one of their congregations. Second option is that minutes will be limited to decisions and will be posted on the MC Canada website. This model may include general conversation (without names) so that key points of what was considered will be recorded. The minutes will be archived electronically.

**Consensus: JC Minutes will include the general discussion points and the decisions reached, and will be posted electronically on the website after approval.**

- ii. Assembly Minutes will include both decisions and floor discussion with names.
- iii. The Governance Protocols document is understood to be a companion document to the Operating Agreement and needs approval of the Regional church boards
- iv. Operating Agreement: It was understood that the OA was approved in principle at the October Assembly and this will be brought to each Regional Church for their approval: The amended Operating Agreement was included in the Joint Council Member Review Binder page 27.

**Action Item: Each Regional Church to bring to their next assembly the amended Operating Agreement for approval.**

- v. The Protocol should have some provision for major decisions needing Regional Church approval prior to Joint Council decision. Regional churches need advance notice to consider important decisions. Examples of important decisions include this protocol document, the Israel-Palestine decision, and the LGBTQ confession. Consideration for the need for flexibility and need for broader consideration and discernment requires ongoing consideration.

**Action Item: Willard prepared some suggestions for amending the document. This new document is prepared for Regional Board agendas and approval. This will be revisited in our January JC meeting.**

**8. Canadian Mennonite:**

**Note: Tim Wiebe Neufeld recused himself from the conversation on this topic due to a potential familial conflict of interest.**

**a. Renewing covenant to extend grant**

- i. Calvin invited feedback from the RC Moderators regarding this topic
  - 1. The direction of MCEC is not clear, it will be contingent on the Nationwide direction and vice versa. An additional year extension is provisionally agreed to
  - 2. MCM will also extend the agreement by one year
  - 3. MCA direction is unclear
  - 4. The working group was strongly represented by former staff of CM. Its recommendation is to strengthen CM
  - 5. MCBC will likely extend current agreement for one year
  - 6. There is a diversity of funding models from each of the RCs to pay for the Every Home Plan.

**Consensus: That MC Canada extend their agreement with Canadian Mennonite for one year and that we use that year to determine our communication goals and strategy.**

**b. Process for Evaluating Role of Canadian Mennonite in Communication Strategy**

- i. The meeting docket (p. 29) included the outline of a proposed process for determining a communication strategy, and what role CM would play in that strategy. The proposed process was discussed in detail. The term “Communication” needs to be understood as a “body building” term rather than a information dissemination tool.

**Action Item: Add to the first stage “include a review of the Working Group report”.**

**Action Item: Add the point “conversation” to step one – identify purpose of communication.**

**Consensus: The outlined process is affirmed as presented, with the above considerations.**

**Action Item: Calvin and Willard will share the direction of this process with CM as the current direction still needing ratification by the Regional Church Boards.**

**Action Item: ESG will come to the January JC meetings with more clarification regarding step one.**

**Action Item: Process to be highlighted/presented at each next Regional Church assembly.**

**9. AMBS:**

**a. A Process for developing a congregational/pastoral leadership strategy and evaluating AMBS bi-national status was included on page 30 of the docket**

- i. This process was developed to address the overall strategy for congregational/pastoral leadership development within MC Canada
- ii. Discussion:
  1. The meeting of School Presidents the ESG will always include AMBS alongside the other Canadian Schools
  2. Title includes AMBS but it seems bigger than a particular school. It should be renamed as “process for evaluating leadership strategy for the bi-national church” with a note referencing our relationship with AMBS
  3. Should we be asking about our relationships with all of our schools rather than one specific school (AMBS)?

**Consensus: Affirm the Process as presented, with the above considerations, and accepting that time line may be modified).**

**Action Item: Moderators to alert each Regional Church board of this process.**

**10. International Witness: (page 31 in docket)**

- a. International Witness Proposal
  - i. We recommend a target for relational funding at 50% for all returning IW workers. This may be a three year term target.
  - ii. Willard shared the “MC Canada Ministry Initiative Development Guide” which is a screening grid for how we do our work together (previously shared with the General Board in October 2017)
  - iii. Current workers will be evaluated on the new “screening grid”. They will be informed before they return to Canada on whether they will be given another term. Those who fit the “screening grid” will be given time to live into the new relational funding model.
  - iv. Suggestions for Proposal: the Annual Cost should be MC Canada specific so as to differentiate between other sources of funding for individual workers.

- v. It may be helpful to add “overhead costs” to each of the lines so there is more accurate actual costs to MC Canada.

**Consensus: Both the International Witness Proposal, and the MC Canada Ministry Initiative Development Guide are approved**

**Action Item: The Development Guide will be shared with RC delegate body for their comments and consideration.**

**Action Item: The ESG will use the grid to begin the evaluation process of IW workers and bring back recommendations to the January 2018 JC meetings**

- b. MC Canada and Regional Church roles
  - i. Invitations come from Global Communities to the EM role (MC Canada) and then brought to the ESG to assess whether or not it fits our grid. ESG shares supportable projects with Congregations to see if there is support for them. Supported projects get turned over to the care of the Director of Mission (MC Canada) for oversight and CRA compliance. Each Regional Church would have some church engagement staff to support this process and to aid IW workers in their relational fund raising efforts.
- c. Discussion followed.

**11. MC Canada response to Maple View insert in CM:**

- a. What is the desire of this JC? The former GB formulated the letter of confession. Do we want to follow up with any action?
- b. Discussion followed.

**Consensus: The Joint Council of Mennonite Church Canada recommends that discussion and debate of theological and other divisive issues not be conducted through purchased space in any communication medium.**

**Consensus: The Joint Council of Mennonite Church Canada requests that the secretary make this recommendation known to the board of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Services.**

**Action Item: The Secretary/Treasurer with assistance of the ED prepare and send the letter. Our board representatives to CMPS and our communication staff people will be notified of this motion.**

**12. MWC fair share – MC Canada and MC USA joint letter to MWC (page 33-34 in docket)**

- a. The letter proposed by Willard and Ervin Stutzman (MC USA) was reviewed.
- b. Remove line 46 from the final format of this letter
- c. This letter has been considered and approved by MC USA

**Consensus: Approve Willard signing and the sending of the amended letter to MWC.**

**Action Item: Willard to coordinate with MC USA EC to send letter.**

**13. Finance Update:**

- a. Draft November Statements were circulated by e-mail.
- b. Cash Flow Risks and Use of Reserves – with the change to all donations to go to the RC starting in January, timely forwarding of MC Canada amounts is needed. Some motions may be made in January to use some of the Internally Restricted Reserves to cover severance expenses or donation deficits.
- c. Simplifying Balance Sheets (page 35-39 of docket). A number of motions with background information were circulated in the docket.

**Consensus: That MC Canada remove from our Balance Sheet and Financial Statements the lines for the following fully depreciated items: Witness Vehicles (original cost \$29134.27) and Witness Field Properties (original cost \$80,767.00).**

**Consensus: That MC Canada record a loss on disposal for the remaining, undepreciated value of the Heritage Centre Building, fixtures and office equipment (current amount \$15,431.95 at Jan 31 2017, subject to 17/18 dep'n provision) reducing this value to zero, once the agreement to transfer the archives and gallery to CMU is completed and signed.**

**Consensus: That Joint Council agrees to the transfer of the remaining balance in the Gallery Reserve (estimated to be \$81,177.95) as a grant to Canadian Mennonite University to support the on-going work of the Gallery, once the agreement to transfer the archives and gallery to CMU is completed and signed.**

- d. Loon Straits Property: MC Canada currently owns a property in Loon Straits, Manitoba. When this property was no longer needed by Native Ministries it was promised to sell it to a community group of the local residents for \$1.00. This has not yet occurred. A renewed effort has been made to have this happen.

**Consensus: That the Joint Council delegate the negotiation of the sale of the Loon Straits property to the Executive Director and Director, Indigenous/Settler Relations, following the proposed process listed in the finance motions report, and the Moderator and Secretary/Treasurer are authorized to sign such legal documents as required to complete the transaction.**

- e. Registration of Bylaw – The Charities Directorate of the CRA requires the addition of a non-profit clause in our bylaws. It was also noted that some section number references had not been updated when the section 2 was added by amendment.

**Consensus: Joint Council confirmed the circulated by-laws amended and passed at the Special Assembly of Mennonite Church Canada on October 14, 2017, with the correction of section numbers and the addition of the required non-profit clause.**

**Action Item: Willard to ensure the certified by-laws are sent to the CRA-Charities Directorate care of Shawn Deslauriers, File# 0198432, 1-613-946-6429**

**14. ESG Financial Recommendations (page 32 docket)**

- a. The ESG proposed a number of policies on handling designated donations, bequests, and attending to the financial health of the Regional Church and Nation-wide Church. Discussion followed.
  - i. Year-end issues (point 6 and 7) be delegated to the financial services folks of each regional church and the national church and they come back to the JC with a final recommendation
  - ii. We need to also establish protocols for how we operate together with common terminology and definitions.

**Action Item: This is commended to the ESG, FPAC and RC financial committees for further thought and work.**

**15. Budget setting for Regional Churches and MC Canada**

- a. After reassessing the Stress Test budget presented at the October 2017 Special Assembly, the ESG determined that these figures are a reasonable prediction
- b. We have also assessed and will continue to assess all of our reserves to ensure the good health of the system
- c. The ESG has also worked at financial protocols and look to aligning our systems
- d. We have also committed to preparing and sharing our RC budgets by the end of January 2018

**16. Israel-Palestine resolution**

- a. Working Group Report
  - i. This group has shifted its work emphasis by creating regional working groups to carry on their task
  - ii. Question: what is the life of a working group? Is there an expectation of a report from this working group at the 2019 Assembly?
  - iii. Would this group consider their work to be finished? We think that there is considerable energy to be considered in each region.
  - iv. They are planning an interim report for our January 2018 meeting but that is not their final report. We look forward to that report and ask them what their hope and expectation of their continuance would be. We would ask them what options going forward might be i.e. Regional working groups continuing, National working group continuing, etc.
  - v. Would it be possible to have them report to the RC?
- b. Is work of working group complete?

**17. Delegate Gathering and Study Conference 2019, Calgary**

- a. Planning considerations and date



- i. MCA feels that they do not have the volunteer base to host the first National Gathering and Study Conference. They would be open to taking a turn at hosting this type of event in the future
- ii. ESG recommends that the first Delegate Assembly be June 29 – 30 and the first Study Conference to be July 1-2 2019
- iii. Location proposed either MCBC or MCEC. Both of these Regional Churches will take this request back to their boards for their consideration. The decision will be made in January 2018.
- iv. A question of location also needs consideration of what type of venue is required i.e. what type of accommodation is best for our type of Gathering?
- v. Who plans the theme? The original hope of the Future Directions Task Force was that the Congregation of Ministerial Leadership would provide the theme as they presumably would have the closest sense of the spiritual needs of congregations

**Action Item: MCBC and MCEC take the request to host the study conference back to the boards for consideration.**

- b. It is understood that a 2018 JC meeting at the appropriate time will act as our 2018 Annual Delegate Gathering

**18. Executive Committee – Fourth member appointment**

**Consensus: That Betty Loewen be appointed as the member-at-large on the MC Canada Joint Council Executive Committee.**

19. **Friday Closing (approx 7:10 pm)** – Geraldine Balzer read an advent post and lead a prayer.

**Meeting adjourned for the day of December 8, 2017**

**Meeting reopened at 8:00 am, Saturday December 9, 2017**

**20. Regional Church Reporting (Written reports from each RC)**

- a. MCBC
  - i. Several congregations have left since October, Burns Lake Church, and Chinese Grace Church, Vancouver. MCBC leadership met with Chinese Grace.
  - ii. Tim Geddert is coming to MCBC on April 14, 2018 to lead “Read the Bible Together”.
  - iii. Working on MCBC Budget and needing to make adjustment.
  - iv. For those who want to stay within MCBC have a strong sense of togetherness.
  - v. Despite the challenges, there is hope in moving forward and we need to focus on the stories of hope.
- b. MCA
  - i. Working through developing structure in Alberta, including moving Executive Minister Full Time and a Part Time communications person

- ii. One congregation has left due to BFC 7 and one congregation is joining who is aware of BFC 7 and doesn't express concern over the issue.
  - iii. 250 people participated in the Christian-Muslim dialogue and was represented by civic and ecumenical leaders.
    - 1. This event was created to be proactive in building relationships
- c. MCSK
  - i. How to implement our new vision is our next step.
- d. MCM
  - i. Staff terminations of MC Canada impact is strongest in Manitoba because of involvement with MCM congregations.
  - ii. Visual change is evident at 600 Shaftesbury.
  - iii. Peter's term expires in March, Gerald Gerbandt will be stepping in as the new moderator.
  - iv. MCM is on the cusp of holding meetings with CMU about the transition of CMU to the prairie regional churches.
- e. MCEC
  - i. ReLearning Community continues to grow as a program within MCEC and there is interest to share that across MC Canada.
    - 1. Extensive conversation around "how" ReLearning Community works.
  - ii. Question regarding the role of "Pastor Emeritus" – how often is this happening?
  - iii. Conversation regarding the role of "retired" pastors within our system.

## **21. Meeting Debrief and Arrangements**

- a. BFC Process was characterized as an MC Canada thing even though it came from the "people." Under our new "system," something like BFC will be in conjunction with the Regional Churches.
  - i. Conversation regarding how the executive staff work together on both regional and national priorities.
  - ii. Need to make sure the congregational voice speaks into the "system".
- b. The challenges and happenings of the regions are now each other's concerns.
- c. Discussion on physical layout of JC meetings, including the seating of staff (RC Executive Ministers)
- d. What kind of "intake" or "orientation" is given to new board members?
  - i. Whose responsibility is it to get the board review manual out?
    - 1. A Joint Council Review Binder was prepared for the meeting, based on the previous General Board Review Binder. Secretary (Allan) and Moderator (Calvin) will share ownership of this document. Additional revisions of some documents in the binder are needed to reflect the new structure.
  - ii. Encourage new board members to stop the process and ask necessary questions for context.

- iii. MCBC is currently discussing ways for their second board member to receive information regarding discussions at MCBC Leadership Table. One option is to share the minutes of Leadership Meetings with the second board member.
- iv. It's important that the second board member is well informed about regional conversations while representing the nationwide church.
- v. Question about second regional church member terms on JC. How will those be developed to avoid simultaneous turn-over of large parts of the board?

## **22. Policy Regarding Open Board Meetings**

- a. Open board meetings create transparency and allow non-board members to engage in the church. At the same time, there are times when having the press attending meetings is inappropriate, particularly when we are discussing:
  - i. Staff issues
  - ii. Connections with related Anabaptist organizations
  - iii. Issues surrounding litigations.
- b. Discussion followed

**Action Item: The Executive Committee will prepare a draft timetable for the January meeting that includes time to engage MCBC pastors/people during the meetings, to learn about the work of the church in the area where the meeting is held, and to provide an opportunity for church members to bring their comments, questions, and concerns.**

## **23. Next Meeting Dates**

- a. Jan. 27 & 28 in Vancouver. We are considering finding a hotel that is close to congregations so we can engage.
- b. May 5 & 6: This date was chosen to look at audited statements and to have a meeting after all the Regional Meetings.
  - i. Consensus: Meet May 5 & 6 in Greater Toronto Area.
- c. AGM: June 16, 2018, 9am Pacific Time, 12pm EST. Teleconference or zoom.
- d. Fall Meeting: October 20 – 21, 2018. Saskatoon.

## **24. Debrief**

- a. Calvin – Acknowledged Peter Rempel's final meeting at Joint Council and presented a card on behalf of Joint Council.
- b. Question; on timing/process for determining if CMU ownership will pass to three prairie RC. Prairie ESG will meet at renew to determine the process.

## **25. In Camera**

## **26. Adjournment at 12:00, Closing by Betty Loewen.**