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**MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA & MENNONITE CHURCH USA**  
**JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & JOINT COUNCIL MEETING**

May 15, 2021

Via ZOOM

**Session 1 (11:00 AM – 12:45 Noon CST)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Joint Council Present:** Calvin Quan (Moderator), Geraldine Balzer (Assistant Moderator), Allan Hiebert (Secretary/Treasurer), Gerald Gerbrandt (Moderator MCM), Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (Moderator MCA), Margaret Kruger Harder (MCA), Gerry Grunau (Moderator MCBC), Betty Loewen (MCBC), Arli Klassen (Moderator, MCEC), Ly Vang (MCEC), Terry Stefaniuk (Moderator MCSK), Alison Jantz (MCSK)

**Staff Present:** Tim Wiebe Neufeld (MCA), Michael Pahl (MCM), Leah Reesor-Keller (MCEC), Garry Janzen (MCBC), Ryan Siemens (MCSK), Doug Klassen (Executive Minister); Kathy Fast/Susan Reynar (Exec. Assistant)

**MC USA Executive Present:** Joy Sutter, Phil Rich, Linda Dibble, Joyce Kusuma

**MC USA Staff Present:** Glen Guyton, Michael Danner

**Regrets:** Andrea De Avila (MCM), Iris de Leon-Hartshorn (MC USA)

## Session 1

1) **Welcome:** Calvin called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM (CST) and outlined ZOOM protocols. Our struggles with the pandemic is real, still it is good that we can meet together. He acknowledged the collaboration between MC Canada and MC USA. Introductions were made.

2) **Opening:** Brenda Tiessen-Wiens opened the meeting with reflection on themes that she has written and presented in the past 3 years as moderator. She generated a word cloud with the words called: "Stuff I Say". Words like God, church, MCA, congregation, people stand out as most commonly used. Community also stood out and other words central to our church experience. This exercise causes us to pause and think about the words we use and the words we think we use. For example, Peace and Service are central to our faith yet they weren't as prevalent as other words. Do we think about them and actually use them or do they begin to disappear from our vocabulary? We need to be intentional about how we keep themes present in our discussions and presentations.

3) **MC Canada Covenant Litany:** The MC Canada Covenant Litany was read with all Joint Council and ESG members present participating.

### 4) Agenda and Minutes

a) **Agenda Review** (pp. 3 of docket) – Agenda was accepted as presented.

b) **Joint Executive Committee Minutes, September 28, 2020** (pp. 4-5 of docket) – The draft minutes of the JEC were reviewed.

**CONSENSUS: The minutes of the September 28, 2020, Joint Executive Committee meeting were approved as circulated.**

c) **Joint Council minutes, January 30, 2021.** (pp 6-11 of the docket) The draft minutes of the previous Joint Council meeting were reviewed.

49 **CONSENSUS: The minutes of the January 30, 2021 Joint Council meeting were approved as circulated.**

50

51 **d) Joint Council E-mail vote minutes** (pp 12 of the docket) The draft minutes of the Joint Council E-  
52 Mail vote of March 30, 2021 were reviewed.

53

54 **CONSENSUS: The minutes of the March 30, 2021 Joint Council E-mail Vote were approved as**  
55 **circulated.**

56

57 **5) Joint Executive Committee**

58 **a) MennonMedia and Commonword** - Doug

59 i) Doug gave a review from the report. The 'standing' MOU is difficult to maintain around  
60 acquisition of books. Since CommonWord has become a retail centre as well as Resource  
61 Centre, it falls under a different category of US law and thus has to be treated the same as  
62 other bookstores that Menno Media works with (eg: Provident). CommonWord has  
63 explored different options such as buying in bulk and storing at 600 Shaftesbury. There is a  
64 need to adapt the MOU.

65 ii) Encouragement to work at making Menno Media truly Bi-National. There is more Canadian  
66 content on Menno Media but still much more work to do.

67

68 **b) Comprehensive Policy on Ministerial Leadership Proposal** -Michael Danner. There have  
69 been a number of policy documents for pastors that have been updated through the  
70 years. There have been gaps and overlaps in the policies with inconsistencies between  
71 regions. Since 2017 there has been an increased use of the procedures in the policies,  
72 particularly concerning sexual misconduct and other pastor misconduct. There is also  
73 an increase in questions related to non-credentialed leaders and misconduct, both in  
74 USA and Canada. There is an attempt to standardize definitions and consolidate all  
75 policies in one place to increase integrity.

76

77 **PROPOSAL: that we create a comprehensive policy that brings together the Shared**  
78 **Understanding, Pastoral Sexual Misconduct policy, misconduct policies for non-**  
79 **credentialed leaders, and non-sexual misconduct policies into one integrated framework.**

80

81 i) Discussion:

82 • MCEC expressed value and appreciation in the work being done on the shared  
83 policies, recognizing that some pastors 'float' across the borders.

84 • MCBC acknowledging the need for policies that also hold internationally for  
85 workers and pastors credentialed with the church, noting there are challenges in  
86 accessing information, along with facing cultural differences.

87 • It is important to be able to hold people accountable to a standard that is  
88 thoughtfully approved by regions, national, and bi-national structures, which  
89 adds strength to the policies, and makes them more binding. These will need  
90 approval from Executive Ministers across US and Canada.

91 • MCA expressed need for accountability. As policies come into place how do we  
92 ensure that resources are there so that we can follow through on them. MCEC

- 93 notes that it takes resources (money) to access resources (investigators, legal  
94 resources) to do this work with integrity.
- 95 • Encouragement/suggestion to build in resources (shared) that can be drawn on  
96 to uphold the policies.
  - 97 • There may be some differences between employment law in Canada and USA
  - 98 • Affirmation for creation of document and scope, noting importance for these to  
99 be presented to the delegate bodies, so that the congregations can be drawn in  
100 to see what the issues are and that a process is in place.
  - 101 • MCSK noted that this whole process is to support congregations.
  - 102 • Timeline? Yearlong process of development, including various levels of input,  
103 then vetting at the delegate body. Pieces will be in line for presentation at the  
104 next meeting and with hopes for full presentation at the 22/23 delegate  
105 sessions.

106  
107 **Affirmation of the proposal was expressed, with Michael Danner / Doug Klassen putting in**  
108 **more work in the preparing the comprehensive Policy.**

- 109  
110 c) **Intercultural Church Proposal – Glen** Increasing awareness around diversity and inclusion in  
111 Canada and US churches. It is important to re-imagine how we interact with different groups and  
112 how we integrate and interact with diversity in our churches. The proposal seeks to provide  
113 guiding principles for structure, governance and relationships between individuals. There is a  
114 need to work together to ensure that we have culturally competent practices. We recognize  
115 that with the shift in generations, our leaders need to lead effectively in the face of changing  
116 expectations.

117  
118 **PROPOSAL: that we create a document that aids MC Canada and MC USA in our efforts of recovering the**  
119 **biblical vision of intercultural church.**

- 120  
121 i) **Discussion:**
- 122 • Encouragement for document to not only be aspirational but also call for action.
  - 123 • It will be a document that looks at how different parts of our community relates to state  
124 institutions (I.e. police) from a theological perspective.
  - 125 • As AMBS has lots of practical knowledge and experience, it is important to have someone  
126 from AMBS involved.
  - 127 • Biblical and Theological view needs to be held alongside of changes in structure, noting  
128 that current governance practices used in meetings may not be how other cultures  
129 operate, noting multiple ways of doing things.
  - 130 • Important to harmonize this document with other documents such as misconduct  
131 policies through an intercultural perspective so that it effectively supports people from a  
132 variety of cultures who respond differently to interventions?

133  
134 **Affirmation for the proposal for the development of guidelines was expressed, noting the goal for diverse**  
135 **cultures to work together effectively.**

- 136  
137 d) **AMBS - Doug**

138 AMBS did not receive the Lilly grant this year. Lilly does have more money coming  
139 available for ATS grants (Accredited Theological Schools). AMBS is now engaging in  
140 survey process with congregational leaders to put together a proposal for another grant  
141 application.

142

143 6) **Adjournment of JEC** - Glen closed in Prayer.