

Mennonite Church Canada Zoom AGM
June 24, 2023
12:00 – 1:30 CDT
FINAL MINUTES

Present: 24

JC Members (10 Delegates): Bruce Baergen, Geraldine Balzer, Jennifer Regehr (MCBC), Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (MCA), Margaret Kruger-Harder (MCA), Sharon Schultz (MCSask), David Wiens (MCM), Cheryl Braun (MCM), Ben Cassels (MCEC), Yoel Masyawong (MCEC)

EMG (4): Gary Peters (MCSask), Michael Pahl (MCM), Ann Schultz (MCEC), Tim Wiebe-Neufeld (MCA)

MC Canada Staff (7): Doug Klassen, Al Rempel, Ken Dueck, Zachary Entz, Susan Reynar, Jeanette Hanson, Sandy Plett

Other registrants: (4/13): Travis Martin (MCBC), Cornel/Martha Rempel (MCM), Byron Rempel Burkholder (MCM), Allen Harder (MCBC), Garry Janzen (MCBC),

Regrets: JC: Paul Gilbert, Gerry Grunau, **EMG:** Kevin Barkowski

Amended Agenda:

1. Welcome/Call to Order

- Bruce called the meeting to order and gave meeting instructions.
- Regions have appointed their Joint Council representatives and moderators as delegates.
- Questions for discussion can be raised by delegates and by non-delegates.
- For voting, please use the Zoom raise hand feature, and by telephone that is done by *9.
- The meetings are being recorded by Fathom, which also transcribes.

2. Devotional

Psalm 104: 1-15, 24. The backdrop of this Psalm calls forth some of the OT covenants, starting with Noah (that the waters shall not again flood the earth). With these covenants, humankind is called to be a people of God to engage as caretakers of the earth, to name what God has created, to name the praises of God, and to articulate what God has done. Galatians 4:4 In the fullness of time, God sent the Son Jesus Christ, who lived, ate, slept, traveled, and taught among us.... offering himself up on the cross, and in so doing, he showed us the way to redemption that is not through power over something, but yielding ourselves and taking the path of love. Last summer at our gathering in Edmonton, Phil Campbell Enns offered us a song that spoke to the good news of God's actions in the world and God's actions in Jesus Christ. But this song also lamented how we've gotten it wrong, sometimes in small ways and other times in catastrophic ways. These are the words drawn from the interaction between Philip and Nathaniel, where Nathaniel says, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" ... and further on in the Gospel of John where Jesus told his disciples that he would be departing and said "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. We are one". And then Jesus says, "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do...And in fact greater works than these" which are words captured in the following song that Phil wrote for Gathering 2022. It is an invitation to be part of a faith community, more than inviting them to a community as a place to belong. We shouldn't diminish that because there are so many people that don't belong anywhere that need a place to belong. But it's more than just being together. It's about joining together as a people of God, joining with God in the project of the redemption of all things. Some things along the way will be reflective of who Jesus was and is among us, some things will be greater than what his disciples saw. And we praise God for this today that we live with this as our mission and our vision for the church, and we also meet today with the hope of this expectation.

49 3. Song: "Greater Things than These" written by Phil Campbell Enns

50 4. Agenda Approval

51 *Motion: That the agenda be approved as amended with the addition of the Proposed Date Changes*
52 *for the next Delegate Gathering as number 12 on the agenda.*

53 *Moved by Ben, seconded by Jen Regehr. Approved by Consensus*

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55 5. Introduction/Recognition of MC Canada Joint Council Reps as listed above by Geraldine.

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57 6. Approval of July 30 and Aug 1, 2022, AGM Delegate Session Minutes

58 *Motion: that the minutes of the July 30 and Aug 1, 2022, AGM meeting in Edmonton be approved as*
59 *distributed with the addition of the year 2022 after the dates at the top of the minutes.*

60 *Moved by Bruce, seconded by Margaret. Approved by Consensus*

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62 7. Moderators Report (Geraldine Balzer)

63 • It has been a fruitful year in continuing to process the documents for the 2017 structure change.

64 • Significant transition at the Joint Council table with Bruce and Paul and Jennifer on the JC executive
65 and 5/10 new JC members from across the country. This has been a time of learning for everyone.

66 • Thankful for the ways we are supported by our congregations with prayers and financial gifts.

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68 8. Executive Staff Reports

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a. Minister's Report (Doug Klassen)

70 • It is hard to know where to begin to cover the good that is happening in the Nationwide
71 Church. Reports on pg. 14 – 19 give the highlights.

72 • This was a Covid catch-up year. Last year at this time international travel opened and we had
73 situations to attend to overseas which led to a lot of travel to visit international partners.

74 • It was amazing to see how God is working. There is so much to celebrate in the global
75 church.

76 • Financially we are still in lean times, as noted in the FS, reports. Across the country all
77 regions are in a deficit position.

78 • Canada travel: Doug has been at each region for their AGM as well as one or two additional
79 trips to meet with boards, councils, and donors – amazed at the dedication to the
80 Nationwide church.

81 • Al Rempel has started as AEM.

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b. Associate Executive Minister (Al Rempel)

83 • Serving as MC Canada staff is a homecoming, but it is also different than what it was 15
84 years ago. A steep learning curve but grateful for the Executive team (Doug, Susan) and
85 colleagues in CLM who have given orientation and helped shape the agenda at hand.

86 1. Company of 1000 award letters were sent for Forgivable loans and 50% tuition to
87 provide an opportunity for study towards tasks of leadership in the church. We are
88 hoping to invest more energy and creativity, promotion, and support into this fund in
89 the coming years.

90 2. A significant project is the shared polity statements with MC USA related to the
91 prevention of ministerial harm and accountability and the use of power. A larger
92 reference group is in place and the hope is to test new policy with regional churches this
93 fall.

94 3. If we do the work well, it won't be seen. I have a vision for the tasks before me and a
95 strong desire to be at the table with a heart that is set on discernment.

- 96 4. God is moving and it is our job to somehow keep up and to notice. As we move forward,
97 we're grappling with questions, and I'm hoping that God is working in advance of us. And
98 I'm trusting that if we come with hearts of discernment, we will see how God is taking
99 initiative, opening opportunities, and creating a path for us.

100 c. **Comments/Questions: None.**

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102 **9. Ministry Presentations (Videos)**

- 103 a. CommonWord (Arlyn Friesen-Epp)
104 b. Indigenous Relations (Jonathan Neufeld)
105 c. Climate Action (Sandy Plett)
106 Living Hope Video
107 d. Comments/Questions: none
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109 **10. Finance: led by Bruce Baergen in the absence of Paul Gilbert, Treasurer, and FPAC members.**

110 Bruce gave a strong endorsement for Paul's attention to detail and process and the preparation of the
111 following notes:

112 **a. Audited Financial Statements 2023**

- 113 • These were considered at the last Joint Council meeting.
114 • The delegates at Gathering 2022 in August approved changing the MC Canada fiscal year
115 end to March 31.
116 • These Financial Statements reflect the financial position of MC Canada as a March 31, 2023,
117 and the results of operations for the 14 months then ended. What we weren't anticipating
118 was that Sean East Financial Manager at MCEC, who also served as our accountant, would
119 leave his role mid-year. This led us to reorganize Zachary Entz's responsibilities and so
120 Zachary's first year with MC Canada was a 14-month fiscal year.
121 • KPMG has audited our Financial Statements and has given us a clean audit opinion.

122 **Balance Sheet**

- 123 • Assets have increased to \$5.7 million from \$4.7 million at last year's end. This was
124 contributed to by 2 large bequests during the year totaling over \$900k. We have a solid
125 balance sheet.

126 **Operating Results** General Funds operations resulted in a deficit of \$3k relative to a budgeted
127 deficit of \$95k.

- 128 • Contributions from all 5 regional churches exceeded budget, most significantly in BC which
129 was 40% over.
130 • Individual contributions exceeded budget by \$90k because of the 2 large bequests from
131 which 10% is taken into operating income in the year received according to financial policy.
132 These are not something we can plan for.
133 • International Witness contributions fell short of budget by \$35k.
134 • Gathering 2022 generated a loss of \$75k. Registrations fell short of the plan by \$15k due to
135 fewer people registering than anticipated, and expenses exceeded the plan by \$60k as the
136 contract with the hotel where the event was held had to be honored despite the shortfall in
137 registrations. Gatherings are budgeted to break even.
138 • Leadership Formation expenses were under budget by \$40k primarily due to the
139 unanticipated delay in hiring the Associate Executive Minister.
140 • Witness expenses exceeded budget by \$127k. The biggest variances by country occurred in
141 Ethiopia (\$58k), the Philippines (\$38k), South Korea, and Thailand (\$14k each). Many of

142 these overages relate to unanticipated adaptations that needed to be made coming out of
143 the pandemic.

- 144 • Travel exceeded budget by \$43k because when Covid restrictions were relaxed there was
145 great demand for Doug and Jeanette to visit church partners and witness workers
146 internationally, as travel had been curtailed by Covid for 2 years.
- 147 • Support Services expenses exceeded budget by \$33k because an FPAC approved reduction
148 in pension admin fees recovered from the churches was not reflected in the budget.
- 149 • Occupancy costs exceeded budget by \$30k as maintenance costs were higher than
150 expected and the budget had not provided for depreciation.
- 151 • Comments/Questions: None

152 ***Motion: That the audited financial statements for the 14 months ending March 31, 2023, as***
153 ***presented in the meeting today, be approved by the delegates.***

154 *Moved by David Wiens Seconded by Ben. Approved by Consensus.*

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156 **b. Approval of MC Canada Budget 2023-24**

- 157 • The 2024 Budget is for the 12-month fiscal year ending March 31.
- 158 • This budget was approved by FPAC (Financial Policy and Audit Committee) and
159 recommended to the Joint Council. The Joint Council is also in agreement and recommends
160 it to the delegates today.
- 161 • Regional church contributions are budgeted consistent with 2023 actual shared revenue and
162 percentages as outlined in the Shared Revenue Agreement, except in the case of Manitoba
163 which has budgeted using 27.5% rather than 30% as outlined in the agreement. Manitoba is
164 still aiming for 30%, but it is not reflected in the budget which increases our deficit.
- 165 • General Bequest Fund Amortization Revenue is increased substantially because the large
166 bequests received in 2023 have created a much larger General Bequest Fund balance which
167 is amortized to operations at 10% by policy.
- 168 • While MWC expense is budgeted at \$35k we expect that individual contributions flowing
169 through MC Canada to MWC will produce actual results, like previous years. This still falls
170 short of the requested amount in the Fair Share Agreement that is designed by MWC. We
171 are continuing conversations with MWC about how significant personal donations from
172 individual MC Canada congregants, outside of the MC Canada budget, augment that
173 number. We expect that donations to MC Canada for MWC from constituents will enable
174 exceeding this budget.
- 175 • Leadership Formation expenses reflect the Associate Executive Minister role for the full
176 year.
- 177 • International Witness expenses are expected to reduce to more normal levels as there
178 won't be "COVID catch-up" travel this year.
- 179 • Climate Action expenses will be funded by a draw on the Missional Initiatives Fund reserve
180 as approved by JC for the first 2 years of this new program.
- 181 • Philippines capital project is shown on both the revenue side and expense side. We are
182 fundraising for this.

183 **General Observations:**

- 184 • We are in structural deficits across the country (every region and the MC Canada budget) though
185 some regions have sizable reserves. By design in this new structure, MC Canada should not be
186 running a surplus or deficit budget. We will need to work hard moving forward so that we plan such
187 that we don't do this on an ongoing basis.

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- Do we have a revenue problem, or do we have an expense problem? The regions and MC Canada will need to address this.
 - *At our October JC meetings, we will begin to talk about what ministry efforts we are going to carry forward and which ones we cannot. OR...we are going to need to find a way to move more funds up to the nationwide level to support ministries.*
 - Responsibility for resource generation/fundraising was claimed by the Regional Churches in the 2017 restructuring. At this point, we don't have enough money to do what the regions want to do together at the MC Canada level and our senior staff still have far more to do than they have time to do it.
 - NO Questions/Comments

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199 ***Motion: "That the FYE 2024 Operational Budget and Capital Budget be approved as presented.***

200 *Moved by Ben, seconded by Jen. Approved by Consensus.*

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202 **c. Approval of Appointment of Auditors – KPMG**

203 ***Motion: That KPMG LLP be appointed as auditors of Mennonite Church Canada for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.***

204 *Moved by Yoel, Seconded by Dave. Approved by Consensus.*

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207 **11. Approval of Bylaw Changes**

- 208 a. These were circulated earlier. Housekeeping to deal with procedures.
- 209 b. Comments/Questions: none

210 ***Motion: That the proposed Bylaw changes be approved as sent to the Regional Church Moderators on April 18, 2023 - 60 days in advance of this meeting-- and recommended and submitted by Joint Council for this meeting.***

211 *Moved by Ben, Seconded by Bruce. Approved by Consensus.*

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215 **12. Gathering 2024 – Proposed date change**

216 Geraldine noted that conversations with MCEC's Executive Council, MCEC staff, and MC Canada staff led to the recognition that to host the MC Canada Gathering well in MCEC, which is our intent, we really do need to delay it by a year. It allows for various pieces to fall into place and resolve themselves and for us to give planning the attention that it deserves. Geraldine noted that this shift allows the Gathering to be off-cycle with MWC again and allows MC Canada to do some of its strategic planning work.

219 ***Motion: That there be a delay to Mennonite Church Canada Gathering hosted by MCEC by one year until Summer 2025.***

220 *Moved by Margaret, seconded by Jen. Approved by Consensus.*

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225 **13. Reflection/prayer – Doug**

226 Thank you to the staff for their work on the AGM and for all those (staff/volunteers) who do the work of the church.

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229 **14. Closing Song: "Our Eternal Host" written by Phil Campbell Enns**

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231 **15. Adjournment at 1:15 pm.**

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