

PNMC Board Meeting
Portland Mennonite Church, Portland, Oregon
Saturday, November 7, 2009
8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Welcome / Devotions

Present: Dave Hockman-Wert, Linda Dibble, Iris DeLeon-Hartshorn, Audrey Lowen, Isaac Hooley, Victor Vargas, Pat Senner via phone patch, Charlotte Derksen, Ed Miller; Absent: Pedro Olvera, Jeanne Rempel.

Devotions were given by Charlotte based upon I Chronicles 13-15. Sometimes we plan carefully and consult with others, and yet our projects can still fail. However, we needn't give up, but search the scriptures again, pray, work with others, plan, and try again.

Consent agenda

There was unanimous approval of the September, 2009 minutes.

Planning Upcoming Meetings

Next board meetings: The next meeting will be a board retreat held on January 22-23, in Portland. The spring meeting will be April 24 also in Portland.

Anchorage 2010 annual meeting – June 24-27, 2010

Speaker: the speaker will be David Radcliff (Church of the Brethren), a powerful environment speaker. David will be asked to put forward appropriate scriptural references. It is also planned to talk with Hubert Schwartzenruber, co-leader of the Tourmagination cruise to Anchorage and former pastor with a missional emphasis, about possibly leading some seminars.

Theme/ Scripture: Suggestions made included: "Caring for God's Creation" "The Concept of caring as revealed in scripture" ... The program committee may now wrestle with the phrasing.

Committees and chairs:

Local Arrangements Committee: John David Thacker is chairperson. Other members will be added. David and Pat will work together in the role of Board member liaison for Local Arrangements.

Program Planning Committee: Nan Gascho expressed interest in taking on the program chairperson role along with her husband, Tim. The board members gave affirmation for this couple to be the 2009 PNMC Program Planning Committee chairpersons, with Nan named as chair, but giving Nan the option of naming Tim as the co-chair. Audrey volunteered to be the Board member liaison for the Program Planning Committee. Jennifer Gingerich, last year's program chair, has promised to be available as a resource.

Tours/travel:

1. The cruise (Tourmagination) for conference attendees is scheduled.

2. Several local tours were also mentioned. Dave described two Alaska learning tours led by David Radcliff's group: a) Kenai Peninsula and Denali Tour, and b) the Arctic village tour. Pat says that the latter tour can be subject to weather problems, so it would be necessary to be flexible as to schedule; it was decided to opt for the Kenai Peninsula and Denali tour. Pat also noted that getting in and out of Denali takes at least 3 days.
3. Pat will do more work on local tours/information.

Request to support Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty -- Guests

The two guests were Eileen Kennedy (OADP) and Clarence Pugh (president of OADP). The group has been working for more than two years to get a repeal of death penalty in Oregon. The states of New Jersey and New Mexico both have repealed it, and they have talked with people there, as part of assessing the appropriateness of conducting a firm attempt to work on repeal in Oregon. The last Oregon poll showed that there were 60% of voters in favor of keeping it. The group wants to build a firm organization to work on the issue. They have a loose affiliation with the national organization.

They asked if PNMC has a stated policy opposing the Death Penalty? If yes, would we be willing to have it posted, with those of other groups, on their web site? Would we be willing to have it used in their publications? OADP now has sixteen denominations/faith communities who have so agreed. OADP's goal is to have 500 faith communities and 10,000 persons who are named as supporters. If we agree, they will prepare a document/statement appropriate to our faith that can be passed out to congregations to promote discussion and perhaps action.

OADP members are also working with murder victims' families reconciliation groups. They advocate life without parole and life with parole after 30 years detention, rather than the death penalty.

PNMC board members agreed that we would be willing to link to their web site and allow the conference name to be included on their list of faith groups who are against the death penalty. It was noted that people in Alaska are trying to keep death penalty out of state. Iris reminded our guests that Mennonites do a lot of work with restorative justice and reconciliation. The death penalty isn't the answer.

Subsequent board discussion: Should we plan to do a resolution at the conference in Alaska? The decision was made that we did not need a new resolution as the conference did pass such a supporting resolution in 1998, after a prolonged conference-wide study, including discussions within individual congregations. It was suggested that a review article on the topic be done for an upcoming *Evangel* issue. Further steps include adding information on the topic to the PNMC website, including the MCUSA statement on the issue and a link to the OADP website, a statement on Victim / Offender reconciliation, as well as other relevant documents. A motion was made by Audrey: "Whereas the Board affirms the work OADP is doing to repeal the death penalty, we reaffirm the PNMC "Statement in Response to Executions in Our Communities" passed by the delegates at Aberdeen in 1998 and we agree to be listed as a member of the faith

community supporters of OADP and allow our statement to be used by them.” The motion was seconded by Victor and the vote was unanimous in favor.

Retreat for Board?

A discussion ensued about the upcoming board meetings; how to do visioning? Stay within budget? Work effectively? The Board needs to verbalize why we do things and that we are trying to become what the delegates were asking for. The January meeting (23rd) will provide an opportunity for vision; to make it a retreat type of meeting it was decided to also meet on January 22. The agenda for the “retreat” should include the following: visioning together, looking at what should be direction of conference over next years, training in policy governance, as well as periods for reflection, worshipping together as a group, and receiving God’s vision. What does the conference need to do to support broader church and to get to where we are going? What does “belong” mean to us (as individuals, as churches, as the broader church)? We need to ask for prayer from individuals and congregations as we meet.

Executive Conference Minister’s Report

Iris

In her written report Iris gave an overview of her work in these first months. She’s trying to take Mondays off; the board supported this. Her email load could be pretty heavy in the evenings. When asked whether she was getting in the pastoral care she needs, Iris responded that she has been able to renew old friendships that are helping with this.

The board wanted to know how Iris felt about the District Pastor structure. Iris responded that the multiple skill levels among the group can create challenges.

There is a heavy load of administrative work with credentialing and pastoral searches; this workload, coupled with a question as to who can get into the pastor profile database, has created problems. PNMC has many District Pastors, all of whom potentially could be involved with pastoral searches and credentialing. The administrative assistant will help to manage this work for Iris and the District Pastors.

For Iris’s workload, fourteen District Pastors are too many to mentor and supervise. She is looking forward to the District Pastor training weekend in January. Iris wants to help District Pastors learn to assess conflict situations and then to recommend a mediator. In addition, it is very important for District Pastors to help to keep the ball rolling on searches.

Iris is hopeful that she can help them streamline tasks, guide them to resources and learn to give their respective congregations the needed tools, then the load on an individual District Pastor won’t be so heavy; at that point maybe the number of District Pastors can be reduced.

Background Checks: There are special challenges for Concilio pastors; some of them don’t have proper papers. Thus regular background checks can’t be done. If one of them does something unethical, PNMC could be held liable, if background checks have not been done. PNMC needs to have a constant policy/process in place to check backgrounds. What about pastors’ spouses?

Can CIHAN work with Iris to develop appropriate procedures? Victor volunteered to work on this.

Audrey affirmed Iris' ministry since she's been here. Iris has been listening to people all over PNMC. She's well aware that she embodies changes within PNMC and that there will be questions. Some people have expressed concern about the possibility of things being lost in the transition. PNMC is one of eight district conferences that have been undergoing restructuring.

Financial Report/ Budget Plan

Ed

PNMC Profit & Loss Sheet - discussion

Five churches make up nearly 50% of total PNMC giving. Several medium sized congregations have not yet given their usual amount this year. \$150 in the budgeted contribution column means that a congregation hasn't in general given.

Several investments have fallen off. The income statement includes two items, totaling about \$16,000, that are not ongoing income production. Current budget may have about \$4,500 shortfall, but that means that about \$20,000 is not in the structure of ongoing budget. The recent reduced Administrative Assistant time has helped to reduce the budget shortfall. The Evangelical costs were also smaller than usual this year.

Barbara Buxman, the new Administrative Assistant, is beginning work on Tuesday (November 10). She will be telecommuting from her home (in Portland). Iris also works from home in Portland. The Albany office (as an office) will be closed, but the PNMC archives will remain there. Thus the actual office will become a virtual one. The office work will be backed up online. The question of the location and handling of the phone is still being worked on. One question still to be answered is how to get an 800 number connected to a cell phone. Another question is the logistics of the snail mail; should it be a PO Box? Contributions are the big question, as they are mailed to the conference office address. Internal office controls need to be put in place to handle the contributions. Bank statements should be mailed to the Treasurer. Who is the CPA? We do need to have an audit done for the conference books. Does the church do 990s? We are not required to do so by the IRS. Audits are expensive. Can the denomination offer advice? Can the denomination provide audit resources?

This month we went to online QuickBooks for tracking income and expenses.

PNMC Balance Sheet—discussion

Looking at the status of various funds: sharing fund is a restricted fund, held separately. Are the separate Equity funds (special funds for special purposes) still needed? Ed will research and document what the purposes are and if they are still needed. These funds are actually held in the general funds, just listed separately.

The discussion moved to the stock and bond funds. Ed's recommendation is that the conference should get out of these funds and into a socially responsible money market fund (with a current

interest rate of 0.75%). Either we should draw out all of these funds or leave a small amount in fund for capacity campaign funds. Pulling all of it means that there will be a loss of \$1000 - \$1500 interest per annum. Linda moved that Ed take action based on his recommendation to move all but \$10,000 from these funds to a MMA money market account, providing that is an allowable amount. Isaac seconded. It was passed unanimously.

2010 Budget

Some of the old budget categories have been rearranged, in an attempt to group like things with like. Total budgeted income is \$161,666, whereas the budgeted expenses are \$173,247, therefore shortfall of \$11,551 is predicted.

The Administrative Assistant expense has been broken out from other office costs. The Congregational Care Team, New Congregations Team, and Technical/Communication Support Team were new additions to the budget.

The amount budgeted for all travel items was \$23,200. Board non-travel expenses probably are very little and can be folded in to another board category. Discussion arose as to whether it made sense to set aside MCUSA conference delegate travel in a non-conference year? It was agreed that there were good reasons to continue doing it.

The administrative assistant budget line can be reduced by \$2000, as the new AA can only work 15 hours per week.

Faith & Practice Task Force has not yet been included in the budget, but they should be. Dave suggested adding funds to budget line #6112 – as most committee expenses are for travel.

Board members are to closely review budget within next two weeks and send to Ed suggestions for reductions or where to get more money. \$11,000 needs to be found in order to balance budget.

CIHAN has suggested that each of its congregations should contribute some amount to PNMC's budget. A suggestion was made that board members should contact each non-contributing congregation. Ed has been contacting such congregations already and planned to do another round of contacts in the next couple of weeks. It was decided that Ed should finish his round of contacts and that then the board would pick up those that still have not contributed any amount to the budget. Iris will contact CIHAN churches, to suggest that each CIHAN church give something concrete, like \$10 per month. During the second round perhaps contacts should be made to both the pastor and the treasurer.

Northwest Mexico conference (CIEMNM) – Request to maintain funding level

The CIEMNM covenant states that PNMC will reduce its contribution by \$750 each year, until no more PNMC contributions are made. CIEMNM has requested that we continue the support and not reduce the contribution any further at this time. The current PNMC/CIEMNM covenant expires in 2012. Much careful thought was given to the covenant and to the subsequent

funding reduction schedule. We do not want to develop a dependency relationship; although it is good for us to give to others. Dave proposed to continue the reduction, as per the covenant, but he, Linda and Iris will talk to the Northwest Mexico Liaison Ministry members about this soon. Simon understands the risk of dependency, but also has a real heart for the ministry there. After the funding support has ended, then Evangel articles (for example) might let people know of opportunities for special funding, such as building projects.

What about funding the Educational exchange? (Simon Rendon will go again this year and plans are to continue funding a representative of CIEMNM to attend PNMC's annual meeting.) Right now the educational exchange is limited to Simon – some thought that PNMC could send more people than Simon and work to cultivate a more equal relationship with them.

CIHAN Report

Victor

Jesus Munoz, Moderator, sent greetings to the Board. There is enthusiasm among the broader Spanish speaking Mennonite community. The Concilio is making changes in line with broader conference and denominational changes. An annual Consultation is now held, consisting of the pastor and elders of each congregation; there the broader group can make recommendations to the smaller governing body. Victor felt that the Concilio is developing good participation and dialogue within the conference and with the executive group. They feel more included in the conference. The unity of the churches and fellowship, strengthening of the women's and youth groups, and of the worship teams are important. The Bible institute had six graduates last May. CIHAN has commissioned Brother Jose Hermida, pastor of Vida Nueva in Keizer. CIHAN congregations are working hard with the Corinthian Plan. It is very hard to afford; so far two churches have signed on. They are planning for the meeting with Iris next month. They are glad that the PNMC churches are welcoming. Churches are growing; there are also outreach groups in Wilsonville and Gervais, Ore., and Battleground, Wash. A lot of families are suffering due to loss of jobs; more jobs that are part time, and less and less hours of part time. Those without papers have been facing more harassment. Victor requested prayers for those suffering.

Victor closed the morning session in prayer.

Faith & Practice Task Force – next steps

It was urged that Iris become directly involved in the work of F&P, particularly when they meet with a church. F&P wants to be perceived as a resource for congregations. F&P have requested a daylong meeting with the board to demonstrate their model. The Task force feels that skill building is one of their primary responsibilities. Another primary responsibility is that of Ombudsmen; how do “we” talk about a difficult issue.

CLC Report

Linda, Iris, Isaac

Isaac wondered whether PNMC should have CIHAN representation at CLC in his stead. The Board does value this idea and will keep this possibility in mind, but at this point, it wanted to affirm Isaac in his role as the third CLC representative from PNMC and value his representation of younger adults.

MCUSA Resolution on Dialogue – Responding to Questionnaire (Conference response form)

MCUSA wanted responses to 6 questions on a form entitled: “Following Christ and growing together as communities even in conflict.” Dave filled in the form, based on the group’s consensual input, and will send the responses on.

Capacity Building Campaign – update/moving forward

Several people are being contacted as potential active participants in the planned Capacity Building Campaign

Executive Committee Discussion

It was agreed that the Moderator, Moderator-elect and Executive Conference Minister are de facto the Executive Committee.

Old Business – Updates

PNMC Evangel – the new Administrative Assistant will have enough to do during her fifteen hours per week. It will be necessary to find a different person to be the editor.

Status of the Corinthian Plan – Congregations need to enroll by November 15 – it is moving forward.

Iris closed the meeting in prayer.