

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

Welcome and Introductions / Devotions

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

Devotions were given by Isaac based upon Matthew 7:15-20, “beware of false prophets ... we shall know them by their fruit.” As a Board we should examine what our fruits are, what is being produced, not just what are our intentions; that is, despite good intentions, if division and anger might be some of our fruits, then we need to look again, plan anew, etc.

Consent agenda

There was unanimous approval of the April 2009 minutes.

Review of Past Meetings

PNMC Annual meeting - Treasure Valley 2009

The Board reviewed overall balance, evaluations, and feedback related to delegate session length, delegate roles.

A big plus was that many younger people were involved in the conference. It was good to have so many Idaho people attending. The music was not the “same/usual” but was non-threatening.

The small group discussion gatherings did not work well in an auditorium setting. Some felt that the business/delegate sessions were cut way too short, while others thought the length was just fine.

The Concilio pastors who were able to go enjoyed the connections.

It was suggested that the greetings from denominational representatives should be moved to the large group setting, rather than being made to the delegates.

Is the roll call of churches needed? The consensus of the group was that yes, there is a value to it, but maybe the roll call should also be done during the large group session, and that the respective delegates should stand as the roll is taken.

The program planning chairs have found it very useful to have consultation from previous year’s program planner.

CIHAN requested, and the motion was made and passed at one of the delegate sessions, to better define the role of CIHAN in the PNMC structure. CIHAN felt that “Constituency group” best described their role within the PNMC. The task of adding a section on “Constituency groups” to the Organizational Structure documents (Bylaws addendum) will be delegated to an ad hoc committee. Linda has volunteered to work with members of the Concilio on this project. The task group should also plan to work with Iris. We want to be a multicultural church; how to get there is the question. There is still no guidance from MCUSA on a clear definition of “constituency group.”

Columbus '09 Mennonite Convention

Linda/Dave

There were lots of representatives from congregations across the board, though not as many from the Spanish churches as there were in San Jose, probably due to location. Worship services were very good, but there was a disappointing lack of diversity. Delegate sessions dealt with some heated issues; perhaps better progress could have been made on the difficult issues, if those issues had been raised earlier in the week. There is a peaceful way to work together, even with difficult issues. The youth came home with good, even enthusiastic reports.

The Executive Board, via Moderator Ed Diller, had just sent out a request that all boards should covenant together to pray for MCUSA for thirty days, beginning right away.

Mennonite World Conference

Iris/Dave

Iris represented MCUSA (along with Ed Diller) at Mennonite World Conference. Two of the North American representatives have been assigned roles with MWC. Janet Plenert is now Vice President, and Iris has been elected a new member of the Executive Committee. There are many conflicts in areas across the world where Mennonites reside; how does MWC decide where to put its resources? There was dialogue about theological education for women in some cultures. Colonialism has had an enduring impact in a number of cultures. In Paraguay there was some difficulty allowing the Latin American Women Theologians gathering to take place, because some men still have trouble accepting women in ministry.

Planning Upcoming Meetings

Anchorage 2010 annual meeting - June 24-27, 2010

Dates: June 24-27, 2010

Location: Anchorage Alaska.

Speaker: Names/ideas were sought.

Theme: There was originally some thought about centering on Faith and Life issues, and beginning the PNMC discussion about difficult issues. However, it seemed best for several reasons to hold this theme for the next year. The next meeting, probably to be held in Oregon, would work better for the Faith and Practice Team.

The theme of Preserving God's Creation was suggested. 20% of Alaska's population is indigenous; the suggestion was made to invite people native to location of conference to open the meeting with a blessing.

For conference planning, two committee chairs are needed: the program planning committee and the local arrangements committee. There needs to be a Board connection with each of these committees. The Board's responsibility *vis a vis* the conference includes: speaker, committee chairpersons, scripture, and theme choices. John David will be the chair of the local arrangements committee; he should also be the local liaison on the program planning committee. Pat will look for another local liaison to the program committee as well.

Regarding the financial aspect of conference planning, last year's Treasure Valley conference had a \$2400 deficit, in part because fewer people came, and in part because registration fees weren't sufficient to cover room rental, speaker expenses, and other miscellaneous costs. Audrey volunteered to work with the Delegate Assistance Fund committee this year, looking at more ways to raise funds.

As the Alaska conference location is so unusual, it seemed an appropriate time to have tours/travel arrangements available. Dave had been talking with TourMagination and Menno Travel (Goshen); both were interested in providing a special cruise tour. Since there probably isn't enough demand to fill multiple tours, the travel agencies requested that the Board should endorse only one of the options. Thus, the Board members voted to select TourMagination. It was recommended that the tour leaders should pick either a before-conference tour or an after-conference tour, rather than plan two tours. Currently, TourMagination is planning to provide both a before and an after tour.

The Board is not a "sponsor" of any tour; tours are presented as an option for attendees. Pat will provide weblinks and information for other local air/land based tours and trips. Justice/equity issues could and should be raised also. There will undoubtedly also be an opportunity for an MDS project in Alaska; every spring there are floods or avalanches somewhere within Alaska.

The Technical/Communications Support Team is about to get started. Dave and the group are hoping to use videoconferencing or webcasting technology to make the Anchorage meeting sessions available to churches in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. This remote broadcast will need to be publicized early and well.

Board meetings in 2010 - schedule

The next meeting will be November 14, in Portland. (This was later changed to November 7, also in Portland.) Later meetings were planned for January 23 and April 24.

CIHAN Report

Victor

Jesus Munoz, Moderator, sent greetings to the Board. There are pastor cluster meetings monthly (next Monday). The men's and the women's groups are very active. The immigration committee is looking towards their next project. CIHAN members are working to raise funds for EBAFOM, the Hispanic theological education program.

Plans are under way to do a meal with music, inviting all nearby PNMC churches. They plan to publicize the meal event, having coordinated the timing with church calendars. Wendell is working hard to encourage pastors. A number of pastors have family members with health issues and others have financial and housing difficulties.

Concilio pastors are praying for the whole PNMC; they invite the other pastors of PNMC to pray for CIHAN churches.

Board/staff functioning: Policy governance/policy development; Iris/Board relationship

The congregations are the owners of PNMC. The Board is the group to whom the owners delegate the responsibility of governing PNMC and developing policy for PNMC. There needs to be a strong connection between the owners and the Board. The Board tells the CEO to "go forth and do" (within the outlined constraints). The ends are our goals; fewer limitations are good, until there is a need to more closely define limitations.

Brad Roth was on the Policy governance and development committee and has volunteered to continue with it. Pat volunteered to join it.

Iris asked if we had looked at other conferences that have this model of governance. Dave has talked with the Illinois Conference moderator and gotten helpful information. Iris volunteered that the MCC Great Lakes Board has done an excellent job working within this model. Pat thought there would likely be two main problem areas that the model would most need to address: financial issues and emergency situations. Jeanne noted that it would be helpful to have nondiscriminatory policies in place ahead of time for various scenarios (pastor crises, congregational disputes). Pat suggested that there should be specific goals in mind for Iris.

It was decided that a Board “retreat” in connection with a Fall meeting would be helpful, especially for people new to the Board. This would provide time to get to know one another, to learn, to actually plan, and to vision, not just “meet.” One suggestion was that new Board members could meet a day earlier than the whole Board for a general orientation.

Covenant with Executive Conference Minister (this discussion held without Iris)

PNMC may terminate the ECM contract “for cause.” The covenant is so written: point #13. In the event the Executive Conference Minister resigns, the conference has 90 days to make provision for her replacement; in the event the conference decides to bring the contract to an end before the end of the agreed term of employment, then the Executive Conference Minister would have 90 days before the actual termination took effect. Because this 90 day wait would be in effect in all cases, it seemed prudent to add a clause that covered the rare case where an Executive Conference Minister was proved to have committed illegal, unethical, or immoral actions; in that case then there may be grounds for immediate dismissal. A motion was made to approve the covenant with the following addition to the end of the last sentence in item #13 in the covenant: “except that illegal, unethical, or immoral actions may be grounds for immediate termination.” Linda seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Report/ Budget Plan

Ed

We are 7/12 or approximately 58%, through the fiscal year. There are several unusual reasons why prediction is difficult:

- Due to the executive conference minister coming later than originally projected, both Sheldon’s and Victor’s terms were extended longer than originally projected, so the budget ran over considerably.
- In addition, the District pastor program ramped up slower than expected; therefore that program was under budget, and more off kilter than expected.
- Investments have brought in less than expected, due both to the investment downturn, and because we’ve drawn money out of the funds, so there is less to generate income.
- Capacity building expenses were spent but not budgeted, so we were well over budget in the Board section.
- The Executive Conference Minister’s moving expenses were not budgeted for.
- The travel budget is also running over.
- The conference office expenses are under budget, thanks to reductions in expected Administrative Assistant time and expenditures.

Total expected overrun is about \$36,000; budgeted overrun was \$33,000.

A big concern for next year is how congregations will fare in the economic situation and thus if and how they will be able to contribute to PNMC. As this downturn continues, many may not be able to keep their commitments.

A process for getting information to and from congregations/treasurers is needed. Ed would like to ask them how much they expect to give for the rest of this year. He would also like to know when they are able to give their commitment for the next year. Pat recommended calling each treasurer personally. Audrey suggested that it is also very important to present the needs and the pluses of PNMC to the congregations. Prayer requests going out, blurbs for the bulletins would be helpful.

Board members gave their approbation for the timetable/process for the development of the 2010 PNMC budget.

Budget goals/priorities – discussion

It was expected that with only one full-time conference minister and one half-time administrative assistant the expenses should be within budget, as long as the income continued as it had been. With the economy as it is now, the income will probably be lower. The Passion Based Ministry expense requests probably need to be tightened.

The new budget will be a struggle to meet. For several churches, their contribution is only the base request: \$150. Quite a few churches are unable to meet even this level and often do not pay anything in to PNMC. The Board advised that it is important to continue to “expect” contributions from each member church. The suggestion was made that when visits are made by the Executive Conference Minister (ECM) to one of the churches, the visited church should take an offering for that ECM visit. Funding requests may also be made for specific items, such as Mexican missions.

Capacity Building Campaign – update/moving forward

Work on recruiting the campaign task force members continues. Iris was encouraged to jump into this effort; it is especially important for her as it would further her contacts with the congregations. Iris will contact our advisor, Mark Vincent.

Other Items

Request to support Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

A question arose as to the reputation of this group. There is no question regarding our support of such alternatives. Audrey thought it would be a good thing for us to do. It was suggested that we invite the group to give a ten minute presentation at the November meeting. The suggestion was made that the PNMC “statement in response to executions in our communities” should be on the PNMC website.

PNMC Evangel

As Sue Palmer has moved out of the PNMC area, it is necessary to find a new editor. The administrative assistant will be able to compile the Evangel. An Editor will be sought.

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

The Northwest Mexico conference is made up of fourteen churches and three new missions. CIEMNM is grappling with how to raise funds, relate to the national Mexico

Mennonite conference, etc. PNMC's funding support for CIEMNM is currently scheduled to be phased out by 2012. CIEMNM has requested that we slow down our "tapering or phasing out." CIEMNM represents an opportunity for special congregational giving – a mission opportunity. The Board will consider this request more carefully in a future meeting.

CLC representatives for this biennium

The Moderator Elect and Moderator are in their respective second years of service. Linda started early as CLC representative as CLC was short of women. This year Linda will attend as PNMC's "Moderator;" her first year of two in this role. Iris, as ECM, will also attend. Isaac has agreed to attend as PNMC's third representative for the next two year term, with the first meeting being a time of testing. Isaac's appointment was affirmed by the Board.

Executive Conference Minister–District Pastor role delineation

Iris is trying to meet with every pastoral cluster as soon as possible. District pastors are meeting with local pastors. What about meetings between Iris and elders/local leaders? In the case of congregation/pastor issues is there a need for her intervention? How should she, as ECM, be involved in pastoral term reviews? Iris would like to establish a consistent relationship with pastors and leadership groups. A PNMC congregational care team would be very helpful/necessary. Craig Morton has approached Dave about assembling this kind of PNMC congregational care team for emergencies and for larger church needs (financial, legal, missional, etc.).

Background check for pastors

All non-Hispanic pastors, including Iris, have had or are currently getting a background check. Since some Hispanic pastors do not have Social Security numbers, we might need to follow a different process. Iris feels that we should work with Wendell and CIHAN to come up with a standard background check that works within the culture. One possibility is to follow the standard (Anglo) procedure for those who are US citizens and work with CIHAN to come up with an appropriate procedure for those who are not. Someone needs to talk with Lynn Miller of the Pastoral Leadership Team, as they have done more of the pastoral credentialing. Questions were raised about what PNMC's role and responsibility is in these matters: legal, liability, insurance needs, etc.

Dialogue on Difficult Issues – Next steps

Mark Thiessen Nation and Ted Grimsrud, of Eastern Mennonite Seminary and University, respectively, will be presenting a workshop at Portland Mennonite on February 5-6, 2010, on how to dialogue respectfully when differing on the theological aspects of homosexuality.

Do we want to spiral the discussions wider within PNMC before the Seattle Mennonite Church/Faith & Practice Team dialogue on the sexuality issue or not? The goal is to bring about conference wide discussions, or at least wider than small group discussions, about differences. The suggestion was made to wait for the thirty-day prayer period, then to see what MCUSA brings up. Iris commented that there is a need to start to talk about the homosexuality issue. However, we also need to build up capacity for us to discuss difficult issues.

Might the Anchorage conference be an opportunity to discuss a difficult topic: e.g. undocumented aliens, environment, etc.?

Old Business – Updates

Corinthian Plan – Congregations need to enroll by October 1!

Duncan, working with 50% of the PNMC congregations, reported that approximately 80% of the churches he has contacted plan to participate. Don Bacher, working with the other 50% of the congregations, has not yet reported. MCUSA is looking at getting 80% of pastors enrolled/on board.

Gift Discernment Team – There is an ongoing challenge to fill positions, including GDT members!

Volunteers are needed for PNMC. Iris is automatically on the Gift Discernment Team. Board members are talking with possible GDT members.

Passion Based Ministries' communication

The recommendation for PBM is that they use PNMC Office/email for outgoing messages and incoming funds, but people they are working with can and should contact them directly.

Plainview Mennonite Church –

So far there has been no movement on the sale of the Plainview building

Relationship of Associate Groups with PNMC

Audrey found records of the Memorandum of Relationship with Mennonite Village; there were meetings in 1998 about “affiliated ministries.” Part of that understanding is that Mennonite Village will contribute to PNMC (see item #4240 on budget). Dave will send a thank you note to Mennonite Village for their regular contributions. Similar memorandum information needs to be found on Western Mennonite School’s relationship with PNMC, if available. Dave will send these documents to WMS Board chair, Cheeri Barnhart. We do need to give more thought and work to formalize the affiliated ministries.

Interns/Leadership Development at Board meetings

Should we have a seat for a certain age group? The Board is not “representative” by design. How do we groom potential young pastors and leaders?

Brainstorming of ideas for conference.

Jennifer Gingerich, Program Planning chairperson for Treasure Valley 2009, will be asked to be “consultant” to the next planning group. Usually the sponsoring church is fully occupied with logistics: ushering, children and youth, food, lodging, a welcoming committee, making sure there are ways to get to and from the airport to the facilities, etc. It was suggested that they contact Don and Judy Bacher for ideas for the children’s program and that they combine Junior High and High School programs, since attendance will undoubtedly be smaller than usual. Child care should be planned for newborns to age 5. The Board names committee chairs only, and the chairpersons fill out the rest of the committee. Audrey will talk with Jennifer. John David will be chair of local arrangements. Perhaps someone else from Alaska can be on the program committee.

Iris closed the meeting in prayer.