

PNMC Board Meeting
Peace Mennonite Church, Portland, Oregon
Saturday, April 24, 2010
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

8:30 a.m. Welcome and Introductions / Devotions

Audrey

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

Devotions and Reflections: Audrey (whose board term is ending with this meeting) shared from Ephesians, chapter 2, about the rift between Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles, the latter “who once were far away” but Christ is their peace (and our peace). He has created one new man in Himself and so put to death their hostility. Members of both groups have access to Father through the Spirit. She went on to speak of the polarization in our country and even within our church. She challenged the board to pray and to listen or to listen, pray, and then act; to boldly be the leaders (of PNMC).

In addition to Audrey, Pedro’s term is also ending; Pedro is looking forward to more time with his girls at this point in their lives. He requested that the Board pray for the people of Arizona, especially for Mennonite workers there, for peace and understanding.

8:40 a.m. Consent agenda (Board minutes approval – November 2009, January 2010)
Corrections to February 2009 Minutes

The November 2009 and January 2010 board minutes were both approved as written.

Discussion ensued on the type of minutes available to the PNMC constituency as well as the speed with which they are made available to all on the PNMC website. Pat moved and Jeanne seconded that, within a month of a board meeting, a summary list of board actions be put up on the PNMC website, after approval of that list by the board; the motion was passed. The Moderator will be responsible for deciding on the release of confidential information.

An amendment to the February, 2009 minutes has been requested by District Pastor, David Morrow:

Suggested Updated Version of the February, 2009 board minutes

History: In 2006 at the Kalispell annual meeting, Pastoral Leadership reported to the Delegates regarding work with Weldon: How do we stay in fellowship, what to do about credentials? At that time, Weldon promised not to do another same-gender marriage for one year and his credentials were restored to “at variance” status. In 2007, his credentials were fully restored and a new agreement was reached with PLC that stated, in part, “should Weldon perform another same-gender ceremony, his credential would be suspended for review by PLC with a view to its withdrawal” and “PLC will continue to urge PNMC to hold open forums for discussing issues of faith and practice, conformity and dissent, on this and other issues facing the conference.” However, the promised dialog on the question never occurred. Eighteen months ago, the Pastoral Leadership Team planned on dialog/mediation on the topic. Again this never occurred, despite the fact that Weldon had requested dialogue. The Pastoral Leadership Team now says

that they are too busy with their load of credentialing and are asking another group to work with Weldon and the pastoral team there. How do we have dialogue with the pastors at SMC? We of PNMC, along with many others, are polarized.

Audrey moved to accept the requested changes in the February, 2009 minutes. Linda seconded. Pat abstained, as she was not present at the meeting in question; otherwise all voted to accept the changes.

8:45 a.m. Executive Conference Minister Report

Iris

Iris updated her report telling of a recent meeting she had with some members of Seattle Mennonite Church.

She also reported that Peace Mennonite Church would probably be closed (decision to be made by the congregation on May 9, 2010). Currently, in addition to Peace Mennonite (normally attendance of 12-14 people), three other churches are meeting in the building: Bethel Church (25 people meet regularly), Anawim, and a Hmong church (not affiliated with PNMC). There are three pieces of property. Peace is the owner of all three properties; if / when that congregation is dissolved, the property would revert to PNMC as per the deed restrictions. The taxes on the combined properties are \$40,000/year; there are also maintenance expenses; little has been done to the buildings for some time. There are concerns for the Bethel and Anawim congregations if the building is sold. Iris and others have explored options with EMU about a peace institute, and other possibilities. The Board needs to listen; ministry needs to happen wherever the Spirit leads. It is a gift of God that Duncan Smith has been able to fill in as interim pastor for Peace.

If/when Peace Mennonite does finally decide to close down, then the building would revert to the Conference. The Board needs to delegate decisions as to what to do with the property to a small group (4-5 members, plus 1 board member). The location of the property is in one of the most depressed regions in the greater Portland area.

Pedro asked what size of a group is considered a viable “church”? If some of these small congregations could revert to a “mission”, could those groups be “saved” or revived?

Approximately every other month, Iris meets with the Moderator. Iris meets with Barbara and Brenda every week. She also meets frequently with the District Pastors. At the upcoming conference, Iris expects to report that the District Pastor connections are working well.

Plan (“Dwelling in the Word”) to have scripture for all churches

9:15 a.m. Goals work

Iris & Linda

Communication, identity and diversity were selected as the first retreat goals to be worked on by PNMC. Linda and Iris suggested that these three topics be PNMC’s current focus. Youth engagement with these issues will be very important, together with the rest of the retreat goals.

The January Board Retreat was very beneficial, well worth the time spent. Linda plans to continue to hold annual board retreats, probably in August or September. Perhaps those new to the board might come a bit earlier. Pedro affirmed that having an outside “moderator” for the

retreat was very helpful. He suggested that perhaps an “outside” moderator could be used in the delegate session.

10:00 a.m. Policies – consider draft policies

Dave

With the hire of the Executive Conference Minister [ECM] there has been a shift within PNMC; the Moderator is no longer PNMC’s “Chief Executive Officer” – that is now the ECM. The Board’s job now is to be proactive in monitoring the ECM; especially that she does not over commit herself. The Board’s main job is to do the visioning work for the conference.

The Draft Policies committee (Dave Hockman Wert, Brad Roth, and Pat Senner) presented the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, Policies for the Board, Draft, April 15, 2010, for discussion by the whole board.

Pat thought there were some topics still missing from the draft policies, as written. She thought that there should be a more complete statement regarding financial policies. Pat also wanted to know how the Board and/or Iris should respond to whistle blowing complaints. Iris agreed that PNMC should have an employee handbook that should cover these areas.

A discussion then ensued on whether the Board should routinely review and approve the ECM’s policies? It was decided that the Board would rely on the ECM.

The Board does not need to approve the ECM’s specific policies, but does need to make sure that policies are indeed in place and that the ECM follows them. General policies and parameters need to be in place and followed. See policy points 3.2, and 3.3. There followed a discussion on the depth of the board’s involvement in approving individual policies and hires. Dave reminded the board members that the Board has one “employee” – the ECM. The ECM has more than a dozen “employees” (the district pastors, the administrative assistant and the Evangel editor). Board has confidence in Iris that she will set up personnel policies as directed in the policy (*BOARD-EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE MINISTER CONNECTION, (Category III) line 354.*)

The board needs to be sure that the ECM does what she needs to do, without peering over her shoulder all the time. As a part of the Board Policy document there is a monitoring schedule for ECM. See Appendix 1: Monitoring Schedule for Executive Limitations. The board is empowering the ECM to do her job, with the assurance that she has the board behind her, speaking with one voice and supporting her.

Audrey moved that the board accept the PNMC Policies For The Board policies document, and move forward to fully using those policies, following a review by an attorney and by subsequent future discussion by the board (possibly at the Fall Retreat meeting). Pedro seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

The members of the board thanked Dave, Brad Roth and Pat Senner for the amount of work they put in on the policies document.

The board members celebrated this year’s balanced budget (which was accomplished by hard work, pain and retrenchment). Audrey volunteered to lead these moments of celebration at the Anchorage meeting.

11:00 a.m. Anchorage 2010 annual meeting—June 24-27, 2010

The Annual PNMC meeting will be held on the campus of the University of Alaska. The Dorms are a mile away from the meeting site on the university. The sense is that worship services in the evening are still preferable, despite the distance.

Delegate sessions – what focus?

Review of structure change – maybe some pictures - celebration.

One 90 minute session is planned for everyone, sitting around small tables; Iris and Linda will together present the goals chosen for PNMC to work on; everyone will get a chance to talk about the new structure, see pictures. There will be small group discussions of some hot topics and a blue sky session. This session may provide direction for the Capacity Campaign group. This large group session will be divided into three segments. It would be good to have some type of ritual tied with celebration and to reiterate the annual conference scripture. Audrey will be giving a history of the conference and leading a celebration, starting with a morning service. Worship service will follow this large group session. The church roll call and introduction of “visitors” will also occur at this first morning session.

Two delegate sessions are planned, each to include “table talk” sessions. The first will be the Business Session, including the election, the ECM report, and financial report. The second delegate session will include the setting of conference goals and priorities. Blue sky visioning on the central points is also planned. Delegates should be given [financial] goals to take back to their congregations.

Registration Policy Update

Registration will be reimbursed for District Pastors. Others not expected to pay for registration include the guest speaker, song leader, worship leader and planning committee chairs, as well as the host church persons working for the duration of the conference, and persons that only attend the evening and/or Sunday morning services. Neither seminar leaders nor board members will have free registration.

Jeanne moved and Linda seconded the updates to the Annual Conference and Registration Policy. It passed unanimously.

This year meals are included as a part of registration because of the way the site is structured.

LUNCH (lunch was at Peace – made and served by Cathleen Hockman-Wert) Thank you, Cathleen!

1:00 p.m. Capacity Building Campaign

Board members continue to work on assembling the team members. Those who have a vision for PNMC and a heart for others have the qualities needed for the Capacity Building Campaign team.

The intent is to have the team in place by Fall. Mark Vincent will come out and do the training/visioning session with them then. The Capacity campaign originally had aimed at raising \$300,000. It is hoped to have a five person steering committee for the campaign. The Board also needs to have a representative on the Capacity Campaign team. Desirable gifts for Campaign members include the ability to talk with people and an enthusiasm for PNMC. (see campaign timetable for more information).

A concern was raised that there is not more participation from CIHAN; Pedro urged the board to consider younger Hispanic participation. The current board members felt that more Hispanic involvement on the board is needed. This involvement could include mentoring younger members, showing the need for their input, as well as adding an additional slot on the PNMC board. Donna Moran's name was mentioned.

1:30 p.m. CIHAN Report / Constituency Group Proposal

Jesus Munoz and Orfilia Moran

Keizer church (Vida Nueva) has been working together with the Salem Mennonite Church.

Constituency Group proposal

Jesus and Orfilia presented the Constituency Group Proposal, supported by Iris. The board joined Jesus and Orfilia in appreciation of the PNMC structure diagram as drawn by Iris. It was noted with appreciation that the diagram arrows go both ways – from and to the constituency groups to the PNMC Board and the delegates, as well as to the Teams and the Passion Based Ministries. The proposal was written so that there is room for other constituencies. Benefits would go to all of the PNMC congregations. CIHAN is the beginning point for all future PNMC constituency groups. Constituency groups will be invited to make suggestions to the Gift Discernment Team. The Board members are thankful to CIHAN for working on this proposal.

The next step is for the delegate session to approve the draft written by CIHAN. Jesus and Orfilia gave permission for the Board to take the proposal as written to the delegates.

2:00 p.m. Faith and Practice Team - next steps, meeting in Seattle on June 12

It is planned that on June 12 there will be a practice process forum among the Board and the SMC leadership, together with Faith and Practice. The meeting is scheduled to be 9 – 4:30. The session with board and SMC members is to be a prototype test case of the process. The session will give SMC an opportunity to talk directly with the Board. Every congregation within the conference needs to communicate. Painting/mopping one's-self into a corner is not helpful. Admittedly, PNMC did not set up the forums promised to SMC in 2006; however, Duncan did make efforts to work with them. Relationship within the conference is important. SMC has proceeded with posting a position statement on the web, with no word to PNMC; their actions impact all congregations within PNMC, and have an even wider impact on the broader church. On SMC's side, they feel that PNMC could have moved more quickly. SMC has not felt listened to. The board, PNMC and SMC need to move forward. Iris said that this meeting at SMC should be an educational session, a learning event.

Board members then did some brainstorming on how to do the dramatized demonstration assigned to the board for the workshop.

2:30 p.m. CLC Report

Linda/Iris/Isaac

When polarization occurs, there are two main options – build stronger fences or strengthen the center; in PNMC we can work on strengthening the center. Our center is Jesus and the scripture.

Linda was impressed with CLC's opening prayer session, which included an hour and half of prayer, preceded by sharing of concerns; it was a centering time. This prayer session allowed the group to proceed with some difficult discussions, such as the building issue.

Ervin has brought an atmosphere of change to CLC. The building issue was a major concern; unfortunately it was a bit late. The younger generation was clear that the building wasn't the future for them. It was a healthy discussion, but held a bit too late to change the outcome. The money for the building came from the older generation who want a building built in the old location. There were also reports from Franconia, PNMC and one other conference.

At the end of the meeting Joanna Shenk gave a presentation on women in ministry. The group was divided by gender and age which demonstrated our diversity well and showed how we need to invite more young people to the table.

Most moderators are "lay" persons, with other jobs. It was suggested to have a leaders' forum with time for everyone to share, but the Executive Board then had its own ideas. Now CLC will plan on a day and half meeting during the week of September 23-26.

3:00 p.m. Other business

Iris closed the session with prayer.

Submitted by Charlotte Derksen
PNMC secretary