



Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference

Delegate Annual Session Minutes
June 20-21, 1997
Calvary Mennonite Church
Aurora, Oregon

Friday Morning

Duncan Smith, interim pastor at Menno Mennonite Church led in prayer to begin the meeting.

Cleon Claassen, moderator, led an opening and welcome to all present. Kathy Bilderback, secretary, followed with a roll call of churches inviting all pastors and delegates to stand as their church was called. A total of 128 pastors and delegates were present for all or part of the meetings throughout the weekend.

Special guests were introduced:

J W Sprunger, Mennonite Publishing House
Rachel Friesen, Faith & Life Bookstore
Dale Schrag, Bethel College
Cathleen Hockman-Wert, writer for the church-wide publications
Marlene Kropf, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
Lois Barrett, Commission on Home Ministries
Gilberto Flores, Hispanic Resource Ministries
Ken Hawkley, Commission on Education
John Heyerly, West Coast Mennonite Central Committee
Mark Vincent, guest speaker and director of the Giving Project
Alice Roth, Mennonite Board of Missions

Minutes from the 1996 Delegate Sessions were presented for any corrections. Loren Hartman, treasurer, made a correction on page 3, last sentence, noting that the *financial information* was presented, not the *budget*. Moved, seconded, and passed to accept the minutes with this correction.

Mission Statement

Proposed Statement:

To support the ministries of our churches in calling and nurturing of pastors and leaders, enabling mission, practicing justice, and strengthening congregational life.

Pat Hershberger, assistant moderator, presented a review of the process by which the board decided on the proposed mission statement. In November 1995 Larry Hauder challenged the board to define a mission statement for our conference. The board first adopted the Vision: Healing & Hope as a vision statement for the conference and then proceeded to more clearly define a mission statement. At Western 96 the delegates were asked to prioritize a list of conference task statements compiled by the board. From this list, four different mission statements were drafted by the board. Pat then took these four statements and drafted them into one statement. Guidelines that were followed were: under 30 words, understood by a 12 year old, poetic and easily memorized. From the draft presented by Pat, further refining occurred to present the proposed mission statement.

Comments on the floor included:

- * affirmation of the mission statement
- * possibly changing the wording to make it a stronger statement
- * questioning the life of a mission statement (5 years?)
- * questioning the elimination of education role in the statement

After several suggestions, a motion was made to accept the statement as it was proposed. The motion was seconded and passed with a few dissenting votes. The committees of the conference have been asked to work at the goals (major activities over time) and objectives (specific tasks) of the mission statement.

Greetings from General Conference

Lois Barrett spoke on behalf of General Conference noting that there are 410 member congregations and that income for 1997 is slightly above last year. Members of our conference who are serving for General Conference are Ardys Becker and Judy Miller on Commission on Education, John Miller on Commission on Overseas Mission, Tony Brown and Ralph Lind on Commission on Home Ministries. Lois invited us to attend Winnipeg 1997 beginning July 5 with the biggest topic of discussion being integration which is seen as an opportunity to grow, change, and create. The proposed name of "Mennonite Church" will be discussed as well as a new integrated periodical called "The Mennonite". The regional concept will also be discussed for additional feedback.

Greetings from Mennonite Church

Harold Hochstetler, Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference board member, shared in lieu of Mim Book who could not be at our conference because of the work of Orlando convention. Harold also spoke of integration as a topic of discussion in Orlando with the dissolution of the two boards and creation of a new integrated board by 1999. He highlighted two concerns: the injustice and intimidation happening among our Hispanic brothers and sisters as the result of the change in immigration laws, and the low pre-registration for Orlando 97 with the possibility of ending up with a deficit.

Rob Angerman, pastor of Plainview Mennonite Church, closed our morning session with prayer.

Friday Afternoon

Gary Jewell, pastor of Shalom Fellowship, opened the meetings with prayer.

Nominating Committee

Rick Bollman, chair of nominating committee, presented the ballot and offered thanks to all who were willing to be placed on the ballot. The completed ballots were collected for compilation.

Mennonite Publishing House

JW Sprunger reported the activities and news of the MPH. He shared an article in *Christian Retailing* that promoted the Provident Bookstores as the fourth top Christian retailer. Other items of interest were the integrated new periodical proposed to be "The Mennonite", new logo identity, new integrated handbook/yearbook, new teacher training video for Jubilee, Adult Bible Study Guide with perforated lessons so they can be easily detached, new Believers Church commentary, new Sunday School electives, literature, resources, and books available.

Congregational Nurture Committee

Rachel Yoder, chair of the committee, introduced the committee members and invited Charlene Schrag, youth coordinator, to share. With excitement, Charlene reminded us of the stories among the youth of our conference. In the midst of the fun activities are youth who are trying to be faithful, who enjoy taking part in service projects, and who find retreats a place to grow in faith and with one another. Charlene thanked the youth pastors and sponsors who work alongside the youth and challenged them to attend the youth workers retreat in November. She invited everyone to the "Thank You Dessert Bar" offered by the youth after this evening's worship session.

Ken Hawkey from Commission on Education reported that there will be a teacher training session Aid to Christian Teaching (ACT) March 6-8, 1998 in our conference (location yet to be determined, but in Portland area). It is a hands-on teaching training experience that will help

teachers become more excited teachers. The event is sponsored by Herald Press, Mennonite Board of Education and Commission on Education.

West Coast Mennonite Central Committee

John Heyerly reported on some of the activities of the West Coast MCC highlighting that their activities go worldwide as well as local. Through a process of miracles, food and supplies were sent to North Korea. The fruit drying project has begun in California. There is discussion within MCC of more regional offices. He closed his report by sharing of his work over 17 years with developmental disabilities which provides resources and advocacy for the developmentally disabled in our area.

Peace and Justice Committee

Jeff Hackman, chair of the committee, introduced the committee members. One activity which the committee did this past year was to phone all the congregational contact persons to inquire what the churches of our conference are doing in the area of peace and justice. Their findings encouraged the committee with the variety of work that continues to occur. Some of the challenges for the committee include the issue of the death penalty, the need to raise more money for church-wide peace and justice activity, and how to continue to live out compassion when our churches will be demanded to provide more and more as a result of the changes in government. Congregations were invited to study the death penalty issue over the next year and use the resources and special speakers available from the committee. Jeff also encouraged all congregations to recognize Peace Sunday at least one time per year.

Jeff presented a Peace Mug to Lois Kenagy for her many years of work and passionate energy for the variety of peace and justice issues of which she has participated. Lois was not be able to attend the meeting but her recognition was honored. The mug presentation was recommended by the wider church peace and justice committee of the Mennonite church.

Pastoral Leadership Committee

Duane Oesch, chair of the committee, reported that one of the tasks of the committee is to serve as the gatekeeper for pastors which at times becomes difficult. Duane encouraged congregations to engage the conference minister early on in selecting pastors for their congregation. Some of the nurturing of pastors and leadership of the conference happens with the education classes which are held in our conference each year. The Reconciliation Resource Team is now available to help congregations in conflict.

Larry Hauder, conference minister, joined Duane in recognizing the pastors who were given a particular credential over this past year.

Receiving ordination credentials were:

- Garry & Gloria Jost, Pacific Covenant Mennonite Church
- Bill Higgins, Peace Mennonite Church
- Ron Buck, First Mennonite Church of McMinnville
- Richard Regier, Zion Mennonite Church
- Samuel Moran, Iglesia Pentecostes Restauracion
- Gary Hooley, River of Life Fellowship
- Rob Angerman, Plainview Mennonite Church
- Gary Jewell, Spokane Fellowship

Receiving a license credential were:

- Randy Eisele, Logsdon Neighborhood Church
- Richard Calam, Calvary Mennonite Church

Kristin and Allan Kenagy will soon be interviewed for licensing as associate pastors at Albany Mennonite Church.

A special prayer of blessing was given for Randy Eisele and Richard Calam who are new pastors in our conference for this year.

Evangelism & Mission Committee

Jeanne Zook, chair of the committee, invited others to tell stories of the variety of mission activity in our conference. Sisay Desalegen and his wife Jodit Alemu from Ethiopia shared of their outreach and sense of call to Ethiopians in the Seattle area. Victor Vargas shared of the leadership of Ramon De La Pena for the emerging Hispanic church in Keizer, Oregon. The church is using Salem Mennonite Church's facility for their meetings. Kathy Bilderback shared of the development of a small group that is excited but yet fearful as they work towards planting a new church in the Meridian, Idaho area.

Jeanne closed her reporting time by showing a brochure that the committee has available which highlights the activities and resources of the committee.

Commission on Home Ministries

Ralph Lind who serves on the Commission on Home Ministries introduced Lois Barrett who reported. CHM is partnering with the Taiwanese church plant and the Mexico work which our conference is involved with. This year the City of a Hill Project is in Vancouver, British Columbia. They appreciate all who collected Campbell Soup Labels for the Hopi Mission School who can now get a van.

Gilberto Flores encouraged more support for Hispanics, especially as they face the change of immigration laws. They are deeply concerned about what is happening among Hispanics in America. There is a lot of fear.

Evangelism & Mission Questionnaire and Missions Minister Position

A questionnaire concerning the work of the evangelism & missions committee and missions minister was sent to all delegates and pastors in January of this year. This was a data gathering tool for the board and the E&M committee to discern a direction for the future. There was a strong response with 86 questionnaires returned. The executive committee, board, and evangelism & missions committee have met to discuss these results.

The executive committee felt the questionnaire results indicated that the conference constituents want to do mission in a lot of areas. E&MC should be more connected with the congregations. The results were conflicting on several occasions. There was a high affirmation for Hispanic ministries and the missions minister position.

E&MC felt there was general affirmation of their work but more fine tuning was required. They have spent time in developing a job description for the missions minister. This was handed out as a rough draft and for further feedback. This job description is a change of direction for what is currently happening.

Responses from delegates:

- * Who is staff person for missions in Mexico?
Answer: John Miller might be asked to remain on if the new position is not qualified for the Mexico work.
- * Encouragement us to look at overall thinking of conference. What kind of wineskin do we want to create here? Think beyond missions minister job and think about structure of how to set up staff.
- * Conference minister and missions minister are a parallel position right now. Where is the accountability structure for staff?
- * How is this a change in direction?
Answer--Presently more staff time is being given in church plants than in church resourcing. Through the questionnaire responses, the delegates called for more time in resourcing congregations.

- * Job description does not include Mexico work. John was given a job description to help more with the Hispanic churches.
- * Please define the leader for those coming in the future.
- * We need to integrate staff. Dual structure does impair leadership.
- * Missions minister is accountable to whom? Establish lines of accountability and reduce those lines.
- * Expressed joy of inclusiveness of continued involvement with Hispanic groups. The LIFE program would provide the resources which congregations are asking for.
- * Anyone interested in the LIFE program, please talk to Mary Jane Eby, Mim Hooley, or herself.
- * Churches need to have a vision and passion for resources and growth.

The feedback time was brought to a close by Cleon.

Election Results

The following persons were affirmed to serve in our conference.

Charlotte Hardt	Secretary (2 year term)
Loren Hartman	Treasurer (2 year term)
David Hockman-Wert	Peace & Justice Committee Chairperson & Board Member (2 year term)
Brent Kauffman	Evangelism & Mission Committee Board Representative (2 year term)
Anne Hege	Congregational Nurture Com. Chairperson & Board Member (2 year term)
Cecil Miller	Board Appointed Member-At-Large (2 year term)
Palmer Becker	Pastoral Leadership Committee Member (3 year term)
Lois Wedel	Evangelism & Missions Committee Member (3 year term)
John Schantz	Evangelism & Missions Committee Member (3 year term)
Jennie Thiessen	Evangelism & Missions Committee Member (3 year term)
Linwood Rush	Western Mennonite School Board Member (3 year term)
Patti Baker	Western Mennonite School Board Member (3 year term)
Diana Eshleman	Western Mennonite School Board Member (3 year term)
Cole Hull	Peace & Justice Committee Member (3 year term)
Nancy Nelson	Peace & Justice Committee Member (2 year term)
Judy Miller	Congregational Nurture Committee Member (3 year term)
Gloria Jost	Congregational Nurture Committee Member (1 year term)

Monty Ledford, pastor of First Mennonite Church of Aberdeen, closed the meetings with prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

**Delegate Sessions
Saturday, June 21, 1997**

Tim Cooper, pastor of Hyde Park Mennonite Church, began the delegate sessions with an opening prayer.

Church Schools Representative

Lynn Miller invited several persons to share stories of their experience with church schools.

Von Hershberger shared from the perspective of a parent and alumnus of WMS. She currently has a son attending WMS. He always had a difficult time in public school so they switched to WMS which has been the best place for him. He was involved with the tutoring program which is great and his grades and self-confidence have improved dramatically.

Darrell White, Director of Development at WMS and alumnus, spoke of his very positive experience attending WMS and how happy he is being on staff at the school now.

Western Mennonite School Budget

Eric Martin, principal, expressed appreciation for the support through prayers and for the financial support. WMS is affirmed as one of the ministries of the conference. The budget was presented. Tuition rate increased about 12% but discounts also increased. He reminded the delegates that Christian education is very important but is also expensive and highlighted the importance of remaining connected to the churches.

Conference Historian

Margaret Shetler reminded persons to send any records of Pacific Coast Conference or Pacific District Conference to the archive office for their files. She encouraged all churches to have a historian. A pamphlet is available that explains the role of the church historian. Margaret reminded churches to not discard anything until it is carefully inspected. She shared an example of finding several important papers in a box that was going to be thrown out at Zion Mennonite Church.

PNMC Financial Report

Loren Hartman began his report by thanking the congregations for the support over the year. He tried to keep the churches updated of their financial situation after they sent money to the conference this past year. All churches will receive a financial package in July for this coming year.

The conference delegates for Orlando 97 should submit their costs for air fare to the conference for reimbursement. Other expenses may be reimbursed as well, depending upon on how much financial assistance we receive.

A question came from the floor concerning designated giving. Loren clarified that he has added line items for designated giving for the committees that have received designated money this past year. Some year end adjustments may need to be made and possibly add them to the balance sheet for fiscal year 1997-98.

Budget Presentation

Loren Hartman presented the proposed budget for 1997-98 with an increase of \$19,000. The conference will need to use \$70,000 of Jubilee Funds in order to balance the budget.

A comment from the floor was made concerning giving by churches. Should the criteria for congregational giving be adjusted? Some churches are not giving their full share and that is a concern. This should probably be an agenda item for the board.

A clarification was made concerning the missions minister job description and possibly having additional staff for Mexico. The 1997-98 budgeted amount for the missions minister includes both the missions minister and any staff to work in Mexico. So no further funds than what is budgeted should be required to fill the missions minister position.

Moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to accept the budget as presented.

George Leppert, pastor of Filer Mennonite Church, closed our morning session with prayer.

Saturday Afternoon

Jeff Long, pastor of Columbia Basin Mennonite Church, opened the afternoon session with prayer.

Counsel on Policies

The Nomination Process Policy had been revised this past year reflecting the elimination of late nominations after the ballot is printed in the delegate handbook. There was general support of the change. A new policy, Annual Conference and Registration Policy, was presented for feedback. A comment was made that display requests often come at the time of the weekend which makes it hard to go through the board's approval which is part of the policy.

Moved, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve all the printed and oral reports.

Recognition of John Miller

Cleon Claassen recognized the work of John Miller as missions minister over the past three years. John will complete his term as missions minister September 30, 1997. His willingness to be a servant among us has been a blessing in strengthening missions and evangelism in our conference. When he began in 1994, his role was one-half time missions minister and one-half time non-resident missionary with Mexico. That role has changed over the years and John has served very well over the past three years. He has asked to retire. Jeanne Zook also expressed her deep gratitude for the work that John has done and presented John with a plaque of service. This was closed with a prayer of blessing upon John's life.

Next Year's Annual Conference

Monty Ledford, pastor of First Mennonite Church of Aberdeen, Idaho invited everyone to attend next year's conference June 18-21, 1998, to be hosted by the church in Aberdeen. Monty promised plenty of good Idaho potatoes.

Open Mike Time

John Zook reported on attending the Mennonite Men meeting in Elkhart, Indiana and asked the men of our conference to work at strengthening men and boys in our churches. The PNMC Mennonite Men have \$3000 on hand with \$1000 available to those who attend one of our seminaries. There is also a house in Elkhart available for persons to live while attending AMBS.

Dennis Russell, director of the Mennonite Home, invited our conference to attend the festivities at the home for celebrating their 50th anniversary in July. He expressed the desire to formally explore ways to maintain the connections with PNMC. What happens when an organization flourishes and could money back to their birthing organization/congregation? He challenged the conference to help the Mennonite Home be more accountable to their "birthing" organization.

Dale Claassen of Eugene Mennonite Church shared of their church's study of farm labor issues and the treatment of immigrants. He and the church invite the Peace and Justice Committee to be a funnel for this kind of information.

Ramiro Hernandez asked for prayer and support of our Hispanic brothers and sisters as they face the change in immigration laws. There is much fear and it is affecting the congregations. Ramiro also expressed thanks to John Miller for the work he has done and how he has supported them.

Clif Kenagy asked the conference to become informed on homosexuality. The church seems to be void on this topic while it affects many individuals and families within the church.

John Slivkoff acknowledged the pain of parents of homosexuals but asked that we not endorse this kind of behavior. Hatred is never an excuse but we should always be redemptive.

Gwen Gustafson-Zook expressed the need to have deep and thorough study of the issue of homosexuality before we make blanket statements about what the Bible says.

Victor Vargas asked the conference for continued support of the services of the missions minister with the Hispanic community. The Hispanic churches have a goal of having a church for every 1,000 Hispanics.

John Willems expressed concern that churches are not using the agreed upon form in making contributions to the General Boards of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. All churches were strongly encouraged to use the integrated form; otherwise the agencies are not receiving the correct amount. Loren Hartman could provide copies of the form if needed.

Jeanne Zook reminded the conference that Mennonite World Conference is a mission event rather than only a fun event, and we need to continue to fund this to keep it going.

A very special thanks was expressed to Calvary Mennonite Church for opening their church and their lives to us as we have spent these days with them. We appreciated all the time and talents given to help us be comfortable, provide a setting for meetings, and hospitality shared in food and fellowship.

Cleon Claassen, moderator, closed the annual delegate sessions with a prayer.

Meetings adjourned about 3:00 p.m.

Worship Services

Each of the days was capped off with a worship service. It was evident in the gifts shared throughout worship sessions that our conference enjoys a wide variety of worship styles. Our theme of "Empowered to be Stewards" flowed throughout the services in the music, scripture readings from Genesis, sermons, and responses. Larry Hauder, Conference Minister, invited each of us to accept the role from God to be housekeepers of the "house" which God has created. Mark Vincent of the Giving Project challenged us to rethink our beliefs about money remembering that as Christians we are instructed to embrace God's values in all of our life and live a life of abundance and true generosity.

Each worship session began with a procession of banners from the churches in our conference. Color and richness was represented and displayed in the banners as they remained in the sanctuary throughout the weekend. Special music and dramatic scripture readings were clear evidence of the presence of God in our worship time. We are thankful for all who shared their gifts with us.

Recorded by,

Kathy Bilderback
Secretary