

Delegate Annual Session Minutes
June 19-20, 1998
First Mennonite Church
Aberdeen, Idaho

Friday Morning, June 19

Gary Hooley, pastor at River of Life, led in prayer to begin the meeting.

Cleon Claassen, Moderator, led the opening and welcome. He introduced the conference officers and thanked the people of First Mennonite Church for hosting. He reviewed the past four years of putting together the new Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference as the putting together of a puzzle. He identified three main pieces of the puzzle being put together as growth, communication and decision-making; commenting that communication to and about the Conference was a very important piece.

Secretary Charlotte Hardt reported which churches did not yet have delegates present and signed in.

Pat Hershberger, Assistant Moderator, conducted an affirmation of the PNMC Board acceptance of the Corvallis Fellowship as a member of the PNMC. She gave a brief overview of the history of the Corvallis Fellowship. The delegates stood in affirmation.

Cleon introduced the new Missions Minister for the PNMC, Duncan Smith.

Cleon announced that slips of paper to sign up for the "Open Mike" time are at the registration table.

Special guests were introduced:

- Miriam Book, Mennonite General Church General Board
- Jim Brenneman, Guest Speaker
- Tim Burkholder, Mennonite Board of Education
- Jake Elias, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
- Rachel Friesen, Faith and Life Bookstore
- Stanley Green, Mennonite Board of Missions
- Cathleen Hockman-Wert, Mennonite Women
- Karen McCabe-Junke, Commission on Overseas Missions
- Dale Schrag, Bethel College
- James Schrag, General Conference Mennonite Church
- Brad Reimer, Mennonite Voluntary Service
- Dallas Stutzman, Hcsston College, and MC General Board
- Everett Thomas, Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries
- Juan Wall, Mennonite Mutual Aid

Minutes:

The minutes of June 20-21, 1997 annual meeting were approved as printed.

Nominating Committee:

George Leppert, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the ballot and offered thanks to those who were willing to be placed on the ballot. The completed ballots were collected for counting.

Conference Historian:

Conference Historian Margaret Shetler urged each congregation to keep a diary of the year's activities and to send a copy to the archives. She told of visiting the Hyde Park congregation's "service of sending out" five couples to begin a new church plant in Meridian, Idaho and how she urged the new group to immediately begin keeping copies of their decision making and to send them to the archives. She requested that copies of historical celebrations and the programs from them be sent to her.

West Coast MCC Representatives Report:

Pat told the delegates of the West Coast MCC re-organization which has allowed the PNMC to have two delegates to the Board. Our delegates are now Marty Freeburne and Gale Gingrich. Marty Freeburne introduced Mary Elizondo and Miriam Cardenas, workers with the West Coast MCC Refugee and Immigration Program. She announced the commitment that MCC has made to provide one million school kits for Korea. They need to be in Kansas by the end of July. Steve Penner has resigned as Director of West Coast MCC and will be serving a one-year interim term as Director of US MCC. A new West Coast MCC director will be announced by the Search Committee soon. Marty reviewed the recent death of MCC Bolivia volunteer, Krista Hunt Albens and the serious motorcycle injuries of two MCC Bangladesh volunteers. Following the report, Pat asked for silent prayer on behalf of our MCC workers.

Basin and Towel Presentation:

Cleon called Miriam Book forward to talk about the basin and towel presented to the PNMC leadership yesterday from the Mennonite Church General Board. The hosting church for each next annual conference will keep the basin and towel during the preceding year.

Congregational Nurture Committee:

Anne Hege shared a request from MBCM for writers from the PNMC to write the curriculum for the 1999 Advent/Christmas season. The Committee is still seeking a Young Adult Coordinator.

Charlene Schrag, PNMC Youth Coordinator reported that 15 youth were taking part in activities during the conference. They are doing a service project in the local park. She shared some insights from Orlando '97 in preparation for the Mennonite Youth Convention in Saint Louis '99.

Mennonite Mutual Aid:

Juan Wall of Mennonite Mutual Aid gave an update on the stewardship of MMA and the partnership grants program.

John Waltner, pastor of Evergreen Mennonite Church, closed the morning session with prayer.

Friday Afternoon, June 19

Gary Myers of Plainview Mennonite Church opened the afternoon meeting with prayer.

Cleon re-announced the procedure for the Open Mike tomorrow. He announced the temporary web address for the new PNMC web page created by David Hockman-Wert. The temporary address is: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~dhwert/pnmc.htm>

Evangelism and Missions Committee:

Co-chair Jeanne Zook gave the report for the E & M Committee. Retiring Missions Minister John Miller introduced Weldon Nisly, Tim Cooper, and Cecil Miller. Weldon spoke about the ministry to east Africans of Seattle of Sisay Desalegn. Cecil spoke about the Hispanic Outreach in Warden with Doroteo Rivera. Tim Cooper talked about the "pregnancy" of the Hyde Park Fellowship that gave birth to the new church plant in the Meridian area of Boise which will call itself, Emmaus Mennonite. They had a commissioning service for five families three weeks ago. John Miller introduced Mary Kayaha and Bob Boli who are interested in African and Indian churches in the Portland area.

Brent Kauffman, E & M PNMC Board representative, made a presentation to Jeanne Zook in recognition of her years of work on the E & M Committee.

Cleon also recognized John Miller's additional year of service as Missions Minister while the search for the new Missions Minister was going on.

Mennonite Board of Missions:

Stanley Green of the Mennonite Board of Missions gave the report for the featured board this year. He spoke of participating in a Mission to Mongolia and how the five known Christians left in that country after Communism have now become 10,000. He further talked about how the last century had seen the change from a white European church to a

truly international one. He celebrated the fact that MBM received 217,000 dollars over budget last year for the first time in a decade and that they were ahead of budget this year as well.

Church Schools Representative Report:

Eric Martin, principal of Western Mennonite High School, presented the report of the church schools. He introduced Dallas Stutzman of Hesston College and Dale Schrag of Bethel College. Dale shared the comments of one of Bethel's non-Mennonite students in a recent chapel service and reiterated the role of the Mennonite colleges in evangelism as well as education. Dallas brought greetings from the faculty and administration of Hesston College. He told of a baptism ceremony in the Netherlands of two former Hesston students at which the Hesston College European Chorale was a participant. He mentioned integration activities that were underway between Bethel College and Hesston College.

Western Mennonite Schools Budget:

Eric Martin shared the proposed budget with the delegates and pointed out that there would be a \$1000 discount for students from PNMC congregations this coming school year.

Election Results:

The following persons were affirmed to serve in our conference:

Pat Hershberger	Moderator
Duane Oesch	Assistant Moderator
Lynn Miller	Church Schools Representative
Cecil Miller	Pastoral Leadership Chair
Carl Newswanger	Director at Large
Ginny Birky	Western School Board
Lee Schweitzer	Western School Board
Frank Woelk	Congregational Nurture Committee
Gary Hooley	Evangelism and Missions Committee
David Morrow	Evangelism and Missions Committee
Jean Hirschler	Evangelism and Missions Committee
Jim Schweitzer	Evangelism and Missions Committee (1 year term)
Paul Versluis	Pastoral Leadership Committee
Ed Good	Peace and Justice Committee
Margaret Shetler	Historian
Marty Freeburne	West Coast MCC Representative (3 year term)
Gale Gingrich	West Coast MCC Representative (2 year term)

Pastoral Leadership Committee:

Duane Oesch reported for the Pastoral Leadership Committee. Receiving ordination credentials this year were Gayle Scheller, Gary Jewell and Rob Angerman.

Licenses were granted to Kristin Kenagy and Allan Kenagy of Albany, Doroteo Rivera with the Warden Hispanic work, Richard Calaam of Calvary and Sisay Desalegn with the East African work in Seattle. Jon Yoder and Lynn Olsen of Pacific Covenant are in process of gaining licensure and that the license of David Morrow of Warden was extended in order for him to complete courses at AMBS.

Tim Cooper of Hyde Park, Ron Buck at McMinnville, Palmer Becker at Calvary and Ralph Lind at Portland have recently resigned.

Teresa Moser shared about the activities of the Theological Education Committee and the conflict mediation training supported this year. She urged attendees to meet Jodi Hochstedler who is participating in the Ministry Inquiry Program at Salem this summer and is attending the conference meetings.

Floyd Lapp spoke about the work of the Reconciliation Resource Team.

Larry Hauder, Conference Pastor, called forward Frank Woelk of Spring Valley Mennonite Church to receive a retirement plaque for their retiring pastor, Bruno Penner. John Willems was called up to receive a retirement plaque recognizing his twenty-five years of service and his model of servanthood within our conference area.

Duane asked Jon Yoder of Pacific Covenant was called forward to receive scripture from Larry Hauder in recognition of being the newest pastor within the conference.

Peace and Justice Committee Report:

David Hockman-Wert gave the report for the committee. He reminded delegates that the Statement in Response to Executions in Our Communities would be voted on for acceptance at tomorrow's delegate session. He called attention to the P & J Committee display in the Fellowship Hall with special attention to the letters for writing to the President re the sanctions in Iraq. The display shows the amount of lentils and rice allotted per person per day under the UN standards.

David said the P & J Committee is interested in doing more work with Immigration issues but no one on the committee has some real expertise in the area. He invited interested members to join them.

David presented a "peace mug" to Jon Yoder and Pacific Covenant Church for their work in opposing and teaching in regard to a recent issue where a local high school athletic team in which the youths were dressed in military fatigues and posed for pictures on a tank.

Division of General Services/General Board:

Jim Schrag, Secretary of the General Conference General Board, gave the featured GC Board report. He commented that Cleon Claassen has consented to be co-chair of the Joint Nominating Committee for the meetings in St. Louis in 1999. He noted with gratitude the increase in giving which for the past two years has changed a pattern of shortfalls.

Karen McCabe-Junke said that Ron Fleming will be the new secretary of the Commission on Mission this coming November. Eighteen new adult workers are preparing to go into service; twelve of them are from Canada.

Jake Elias gave a report from the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary as well as the Commission on Education. He commented that the “Generation Why” materials have been adopted and was being used by other denominations.

Everett Thomas told how the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries was created in 1971 to care for congregations. They provide lists of candidates available for pastoral positions. It includes both MC and GC pastors. He reminded the group of their invitation for a team from this conference to write the Advent/Christmas worship resources. The Jubilee curriculum is being translated into Spanish. The first quarter will be debuted at the Hispanic Mennonite Convention in Texas this summer. Everett encouraged SS classes to donate offerings to the translation project.

PNMC Financial Report:

Loren Hartman reviewed the finances of the PNMC for the first ten months of this fiscal year. He stated there was a shortfall in giving from the congregations, which he hoped, would be made up in the next two months remaining.

1998-1999 Budget:

Loren Hartman presented the proposed budget for 1998-1999 with an increase of \$6000. The conference will use \$82,750 of Jubilee funds to balance the budget. There is \$6000 in the budget to support the work of John Miller in Mexico. Loren will be sending out a giving guide to congregations in July.

Questions from the delegates:

Are we using up all of the Jubilee funds to balance the budget?

We cannot continue a budget at this level without increasing our giving.

Can you give us clarification of the source of the Jubilee funds? Response: They were originally given through estate giving; some came from the sale of the east Fairview property. The funds have been invested through the Mennonite Foundation and have continued to grow.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the budget as printed. The motion was passed. Cleon commended Loren for his work on the financials and the detail of his reports.

The denominational representatives led by Mim Book and Jim Schrag came forward to sing “What is This Place” to the body of delegates.

Pastor John Slivkoff of Grace Mennonite closed the afternoon session with prayer.

Saturday Morning, June 20

Carl Newswanger, pastor of Salem Mennonite opened the morning session with prayers. Pat Hershberger announced Duncan Smith’s e-mail address (CKEPP4148@aol.com).

MC and GC Church-wide Representatives:

Miriam Book, Associate General Secretary of the Mennonite Church commented she was moved by the hospitality and graciousness of the First Mennonite Church here in Aberdeen. She is moved by the interdependency of the three states – modeling a core value. She defines leadership as modeling leading and listening; listening and leading. She will remember some holy moments – the Bibles piled on the table last night, the cheerful procession, the blessing by the children of the congregation. She reports that the Damascus Road experience of anti-racist training is changing the face and soul of the church; as are the Peace Ambassadors and Vision: Healing and Hope.

Tim Burkholder, Mennonite Board of Education and Dale Schrag, Higher Education Council, reported on their work and how the integration discussions are going. They invited the delegates to remember the difference that a Mennonite education makes.

Rachel Freisen, manager of the Faith and Life Bookstore shared their mission and vision as well as a few special book titles.

Brad Reimer, Mennonite Voluntary Service, Winnipeg, Canada. He has responsibility for the Voluntary Service Unit in Seattle. MVS has 120 volunteers in 30 locations in the US and Canada. Service Adventure Units are also part and there is a Unit in Albany. The MVS program is now integrated. One of the issues they are struggling with is the number of prospective volunteers who come to them with large outstanding student loans. They are working with MMA and the larger church to look at ways of paying interest so that these people can serve. Another issue is the number of requests for new units when there is difficulty in filling all the positions in the present units. A third is how to support those who are led to acts of civil disobedience.

Jim Schrag, General Secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church, spoke of reasons for integration: the Mennonite Anabaptist revival, the groups becoming more alike – the differences are greater within each group than with each other; the trend is toward more localism; a sense of ‘Who are we?’ ‘Who does God want us to become?’

How do we organize ourselves to further rather than hinder God's purpose? He spoke of the membership of the US Country Committee and a Committee on Membership standards.

Jim announced that the next gathering would be July 23-27 – St. Louis '99. The theme will be "Come to the River", Revelations (last chapter); Delegates will come as their usual structure – GC Congregational delegates, MC Conference delegates.

Peace and Justice Resolution re Statement in Response to Executions in Our Communities:

Cole Hull, Leonard Nolt and David Hockman-Wert of the Peace and Justice Committee propose the adoption of this statement by delegate vote. The statement drafted by the P & J Committee was language introduced at last year's conference. Packets of information were sent to every congregation during the past year. Hull made a motion, seconded by David Hockman-Wert to accept the statement

Discussion:

The resolution is consistent with the statement of faith, but capital punishment took the lives of 67 people, and we are silent about over a million lives lost through abortion. Abortion outweighs capital punishment in sheer numbers. Motion made that we table the proposed resolution until we address the larger issue first. The motion to table this proposed statement failed for lack of a second.

Speaking as a non-convert to the issue. Would like to commend the P & J Committee for the preparation work. The Confession of Faith takes a stand; I do not see the need for any additional statement. Response: The request came when executions were reinstated in Oregon. A request had not been made until today to prepare a statement on abortion. It can be done, but I don't think we should postpone this resolution.

I've been a long time opponent of capital punishment. I think the language in this statement is too "in your face" and we would win more proponents with milder language. Response: The language could be weaker, but we are responding to a harsh reality – people who cheer at executions. I'm prepared to work on the language if that is what's needed. There was a strong sentiment that a statement from the local entity would be more effective than a church-wide statement.

It's clearly a statement that is a good response to "where the Christians are?"

I agree we also need to deal with the abortion issue, but I am not willing to wait with this issue. Who is this statement addressed to?

I can sign this statement as it is, but there are some in my congregation that are not there yet. I would like a sentence or two that express compassion for victims.

I want affirm the work being done that challenges us.

We worked through this at our church retreat. We came up with some of the same issues re language and who was addressed to, but the strong sentiment was for adoption.

Is the statement to be used in its entirety or can we make the adjustments suggested as we use it?

Question called by Jon Yoder

Could the committee make the suggested changes over lunch and bring it back for discussion after lunch? Response: Would like to include the persons with concerns about language to meet with the group, not willing to modify it greatly.

Cleon recessed the discussion until after lunch.

Teresa Moser, pastor of Sunrise Mennonite Church, closed the morning session with prayer and a blessing for lunch.

Afternoon Session, June 20

Paul Versluis, pastor of Prince of Peace, opened the afternoon session with prayer.

A vote was taken on whether to go to the question called earlier. The vote was to move ahead with a vote on the statement. A ballot was called for. Cleon asked George Leppert and his tellers to distribute, collect and count the ballots.

Dialogue on Processing Difficult Decisions:

Cleon introduced Floyd Lapp and Paul Versluis of the Reconciliation Resource Team who led dialogue on processing difficult decisions.

After introductory comments about conflict, three suggested goals were put up on the overhead. Then Floyd asked for 6-7 minutes of silence, during which delegates were asked to allow God to speak to them during the first few minutes, then to write down either an affirmation of those goals, additional goals, or clarification of goals.

Following this exercise, various delegates read their goal statements. The entire set of suggested goals were collected and will be synthesized by the Board.

Open Mike Time:

Sign-up Slips were drawn from a box. The persons whose names were drawn were called to the mike. Following each statement, Paul Versluis of the Reconciliation Resource Team paraphrased the statement to ensure that the concern had been heard.

Gary Jewell, Shalom Fellowship: He stated that in September of this year, his congregation blessed Rusty Nelson, one of their members, and a friend, Paddy Inman, to travel to Georgia to demonstrate against the School of Americas. Both were arrested. It was Paddy's second offense and he is serving a six-month prison sentence in a federal prison. He asked that we keep them in prayer and consider it an issue of prayer concern against such a harsh sentence.

John Zook, Peace Mennonite: He spoke to the issue of creating a Mennonite Men integrated body. He invited all men present to attend their meeting at 4 PM.

Monty Ledford, Aberdeen Mennonite Church: Read a statement on the issue of homosexuality. His concern is about pastors or congregations who implicitly or explicitly endorse such behavior. He wanted to make his views perfectly clear and encouraged others to make their stands known and also not to be critical of those who have made a stand. He would like to have the issue put on the table and all other issues put aside until it is settled.

John Willems, Bethany Mennonite: Expressed appreciation for the Conference and the 25 years he has served it. He appreciated Larry's presentation to him yesterday. He expressed appreciation for Charlene Schrag's report on the youth activities at Orlando. He expressed appreciation for Cleon, Pat and Charlotte for their roles in the conference.

Steve Kines, Peace Church: He stated that he has been called to be an evangelist. He feels that the Lord is calling all of us to minister to the homeless. Peace Church is presently serving two meals a week to the homeless, providing showers, etc. He finds the poor are already believers – they know the words, but don't yet know the power. Their dream is to establish a house for the homeless similar to the Catholic Worker house model. It would not necessarily be unbelievers, but believers that have not been able to claim the righteousness of God. They have the basic plan, the personnel, but not the resources. He has brochures and will meet with those interested after this session.

Larry Hauder, Conference Minister: Made a plea to the E & M Committee to urge the denominational institutional entities (COM, EMB, MB, MCC, etc.) to provide a seamless entry into our congregations. He listed incidents during conference where there was not inclusivity due to this fragmentation.

His second comment had to do with racism. Romero Hernandez, long-time pastor, is living in Palmer Becker's house temporarily. His children were playing in the back yard, the neighbors called 911, and the police came with guns drawn. Blatant racism is alive and well in the Northwest.

John Slivkoff, Grace Mennonite Church: Expressed support for his fellow pastor's stand against homosexuality. He feels that we value community more than truth. He called upon the Conference Minister and the Pastoral Leadership Committee to take a stand and for pastors and churches to withdraw from the Conference if they cannot accept the Confession of Faith on this matter.

Acceptance of Reports

A motion was made, second and passed to accept all reports as printed in the delegate book.

Death Penalty Statement:

Cleon reported that the vote was for acceptance of the Statement Opposing the Death Penalty by 69% (58 yes, 26 No)

Commissioning Service:

Larry Hauder came forward and conducted a service of commissioning for newly elected and re-elected persons.

Cleon expressed his appreciation to the denominational staff for their participation and support. A special thank you was given to the Aberdeen Congregation for their wonderful hospitality.

Brent Kauffman tendered an offer to host the 1999 Annual Meeting in Lebanon, Oregon, which was graciously accepted. The dates are June 17-20, 1999.

Pat thanked Cleon for his leadership over the past several years and presented him with a gift. She led the group in the Lord's Prayer in closing.

Adjournment was at 3:10 PM.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship services were held each evening of the conference. The worship services followed the conference theme, "The Bible: Hope for the 21st Century." Larry Hauder gave the sermon on Thursday evening and Jim Brenneman spoke Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning. Jubilee materials were used to have a Torah Celebration as the Friday night service in which the children participated. The children blessing the congregation for the benediction was described as a 'holy moment' by attendees. A communion service was part of Sunday morning's worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlotte Hardt, PNMC Secretary