

**2003 Delegate Sessions  
Healthy Congregations in Mission  
Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference  
Moses Lake High School  
Moses Lake, Washington**

**Afternoon Session One - June 20, 2003**

**Welcome**

Moderator Marion Schrock opened the first Delegate Session of 2003 at 1:35 PM with a welcome for delegates and guests. Moderator Schrock noted the compressed format this year comprising only 1-1/2 days. The schedule has been arranged to offer some times when delegates will not have sessions and will be able to attend seminars.

**Roll Call of Congregations**

Secretary Harold Nussbaum called the roll of member congregations asking delegates from each congregation to stand.

**Moderator Comments**

Moderator Schrock thanked the delegates for the opportunity to serve as PNMC moderator for the past three years. He found it to be a very interesting experience. Following his previous 35 years of work in academia he found the Moderator role to be very intense. Before accepting the assignment he recalled that numerous times he had the desire to be more involved beyond his own congregation, but his wife reminded him of his heavy teaching workload. Just a month and a half after retirement Marion received a call from the Nominating Committee chairman, George Leppert. At that time, Marion again received good counsel from his wife. It's been a good three years, a bit intense at times. It was more work than he anticipated. He ends this term convinced of several things: PNMC and its congregations have much to offer to this region with our Christian, Mennonite anabaptist witness in the Pacific Northwest. We need to be thoroughly convinced that we have much to offer. We don't exist for ourselves. We exist to be the peoples of God and disciples of Christ. We have several unique things about our witness: 1) God's love and forgiveness for broken lives and a broken world; 2) a clear sense of the cost of Christian discipleship; 3) we have much to say about God's message of peace and justice to the world and our communities.

In this time of change and transition, Schrock reflected on Isaiah 6. There is a lot of change happening for us as a conference, and there are new challenges to face as we work into the future. Isaiah 6, verses 1-8 describe a time of transition in Israel. In verse 8, the prophet wrote, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'" Those words ring just as true now as they did several millenia ago to us as individuals, congregations, and agencies. There are no excuses for not listening, hearing or responding to God's call..

Schrock also reflected on Isaiah 40, verses 28-31:

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives vigor to the fainting and strengthens the powerless. Even youths shall faint and grow weary. Young men shall go down in exhaustion. But they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

This passage speaks about the other side of Isaiah 6. When we say "Here am I, send me," we need to remember that we do not go alone. We go with God's spirit and strength and enabling. Schrock noted that this relates very closely to this conference theme of "Healthy Congregations in Mission."

### **Introduction of Churchwide Agency Representatives**

Moderator Schrock invited numerous representatives of churchwide agencies to come forward and introduce themselves to the delegates. The following representatives responded:

Beverly Keck, Mennonite Mutual Aid Western region  
Marlene Kroeker, Mennonite Mission Network  
Dale Schrag, Bethel College  
Palmer Becker, Hesston College  
Eric Martin, Western Mennonite School  
David He'bert, West Coast MCC  
Phil Hestand, Mennonite Village, Albany, OR  
John Zook, Mennonite Men  
Ron Byler, MC USA Executive Board (also Ken Hawkley and Gilberto Flores)

### **Receiving Evergreen Heights Mennonite Church into PNMC**

Evergreen Heights Mennonite Church, Caldwell, Idaho has applied for membership in the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. The Board processed their application, and recommends this congregation to the delegates for membership into the PNMC. Doug Dorsing spoke on behalf of the group. They held their first formal meeting on December 19, 2001 in a home, and they decided to begin a new church. By March or April 2002, they located and purchased a facility. Originally 18-20 persons attended. They recently took in 5 new members, and had 3 baptisms. Their average attendance is now about 40. The delegates stood to formally welcome this new congregation. Moderator Schrock led in a prayer of blessing for their ministry.

### **Welcome of fraternal guests from Northwest Mexico Conference**

Simon Rendon introduced two guests from the NW Mexico Conference, Manuel Ruiz Suarez, President of the NW Mexico Conference, and Luis Neyoy Cantu, the conference Secretary, who are representing the conference at these meetings.

### **Introduction of New Conference Minister**

In his opening remarks, Marion Schrock announced the appointment of Sheldon Burkhalter as the new Conference Minister to fill the position formerly held by Larry Hauder.

### **Conference Minister Reports**

Duncan Smith did not refer specifically to his written report (delegate book, pp. 47-50), but reported that this is truly a year of transition and a time of change. He feels that there is good direction, strong direction, and that we are growing in new ways as a conference. He is excited to be working with Victor Vargas as a conference minister, and he is also very pleased with the new appointment of Sheldon Burkhalter. Duncan is eager to be working more with an organized team, and serving as team leader. This role will also link with the conference teacher and the youth ministry coordinator. Duncan feels this is a good approach to enhance PNMC's ministry and build the kingdom of God. Duncan is also pleased to be working with a new office assistant at the PNMC office in East Portland, Charles Ulinwa. He is already contributing very well workflow. The office is located next to Peace Mennonite Church at 19532 NE Glisan. The new e-mail address for office administration is: pnmcmal@cs.com.

Duncan finds the health of congregations to be good. We have our stress points and congregations have their stress points too. We are pushing out from within and from without. There is a bit of discomfort in reaching out in different ways, but that is a good tension.

Victor Vargas reported that he is serving one-quarter time as conference minister with Hispanic churches and sometimes with the Anglo churches as well. He has enjoyed working with both Duncan and Larry. Victor expressed many thanks to the PNMC delegates and to his own congregation, and especially to his wife, for encouragement and support. He visits churches in Washington and Oregon, and discusses the vision and mission of PNMC and the Hispanic Concilio, CIHAN. He helped with the pastor search for Maranatha Spanish congregation here in Moses Lake. He also visited and preached in three Anglo churches this year (Zion, Salem, and Seattle). Victor also attends the Pastoral Leadership Committee meetings to discuss the placement of pastors, licensing and other issues. He has enjoyed working together with others to make changes in structures to help our relationships work well. This past year, he also attended the denominational Conference Ministers meeting in California, and found it to be very helpful. As noted in his written report (delegate book, pp. 51-54), he is working with some new Hispanic churches that have interest in joining the PNMC. Discussion are continuing with possible church plant for a Hispanic group that would use the Albany Mennonite Church building. Brother Carlos Aquino and his wife are doing community visitation in Albany and Jefferson. Victor also highlighted the historic process to make Simon Rendon pastor of both the Hispanic and Anglo congregations in McMinnville. Thanks for the gifts the Lord gives to us. We still need your prayers. The Evangel is a very useful newsletter to help keep us connected. We would like to have the Evangel available someday in Spanish too.

A questioner asked whether any Hispanic churches have applied to Mennonite Men for funding for buildings. Victor said he is not aware of any so far, although some churches are working to install ramps for accessibility and improving bathrooms.

Moderator Schrock reflected on the joint efforts of PNMC and CIHAN to work together while respecting each structure, and modifying them as necessary to improve working relationships. Marion is enormously encouraged about what is happening and about the potential for additional possibilities we have not yet begun to tap. One possibility is additional involvement for pastors in NW Mexico. Victor added that Anglos are invited to participate in CIHAN projects and activities. Numerous people in the PNMC know some Spanish and have previous missionary and VS experiences. He encourages all those people to utilize their skills.

### **Conference Historian**

Ray Kauffman reported that the next meeting of the Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society (OMHGS) on September 14 will feature Wilbert Shenk as speaker. Shenk is author of an important book, *By Faith They Went Out*. Kauffman also reviewed some recommended books for church libraries. OMHGS is also trying to expand the capacity for the archives. They are exploring various options, and will need more support from the PNMC. Margaret Shetler was the PNMC historian for many years, and is a walking encyclopedia of Mennonites in the Northwest. She is currently serving as archivist for the PNMC. She would like to groom a replacement, and Ray encourages interested persons to make their interest known to him or to Margaret.

### **Introduction of Gilberto Flores**

Marion introduced Gilberto Flores from the MC USA. He will be our evening speaker and a seminar presenter.

**BREAK**

### **Afternoon Session Two**

## **Fundraising Update**

Moderator Schrock noted that the pattern of introducing the financial and budget information early and then returning to it in the closing session would be continued. Janet Buschert of the PNMC Board reported that the current fundraising effort would continue from now through August. This special fund appeal is focused on supporting the PNMC Vision programs including the Hispanic Conference Minister or Conference Teacher, or special projects in NW Mexico. An anonymous donor has made a pledge to match the first \$5,000 of special gifts for these initiatives. Janet added that Hyde Park Mennonite has pledged an additional \$3,000 of matching funds to be made available for this fundraising challenge. If the total needed to match these two gifts (\$8,000) can be raised, this could fund the Hispanic Minister position for one year. So far, PNMC has received \$1,500 in gifts to match the challenge pledges.

Marion Schrock responded that this has been very encouraging. The support for these initiatives has been amazing. We really appreciate all who give and for those who put up the challenge grant amounts.

## **Financial Report 2002-03**

Treasurer Don Bacher highly recommends that one of the delegates from each church should be the church treasurer. It is important for church treasurers to be connected to the PNMC budget issues and discussions.

Don reviewed several highlights of the past year - special giving - Don first heard rumblings in early December about a work party going to NW Mexico. He received the first contribution on December 4, and the last on January 7. The total for these contributions was \$15,903.29, all above budget. Two additional checks were received in April bringing the fiscal year total to \$17,628.25. Don said, "That's phenomenal."

Other special contributions received during the year were \$19,410.17 for theological education (Conference Teacher), and \$14,445.18 for Hispanic Conference Minister. More than \$51,000 total was received during the year above and beyond the regular budget! This speaks very highly of the commitment of many people in PNMC to these ministries.

The second highlight from the Treasurer's viewpoint was hiring Victor Vargas as the one-quarter time Conference Minister for Hispanic churches. Both this position and the Conference Teacher position are funded out of Vision funds.

The third highlight for the year was the way the Board grappled with and addressed the use of the Revolving Fund. This is account 200701 on the second page of the balance sheet portion of the updated financial reports distributed to delegates. On the first page of the balance sheet, PNMC is owed payments on three notes. The interest on those loans is now being directed into the Church Extension Savings Certificate account (110305). Interest and dividends from accounts 110302, 110303 and 110305 are now being channeled into the Vision funds.

The fourth highlight is the streamlining of payroll as we have added people to our staff. We have also streamlined our reimbursement process, providing simplified forms for conference ministers and committee chairs. Don has also attended several workshops related to church funding and finance issues. He will share this information in the seminar that he is presenting for church treasurers tomorrow.

## **What has happened within the last year's budget?**

First, Don reported on the first three columns on the PNMC Budget Proposal page handed out at the conference. This is updated from the version printed in the delegate book. This highlights the financial information for this year's experience. Nine congregations met the pledge they made last year, and seven

exceeded their pledge. Several congregations did not meet their pledge during the current fiscal year. Some of this is due to different fiscal years for congregations and the PNMC.

Income accounts 4701 and 4702 are placeholders to show the amount of funding needed to fund the Hispanic Minister and Conference Teacher positions. The income for these positions actually comes from the liability accounts for Vision funds. Line 4902 (Additional Need) is the amount of additional funds needed to balance the budget. The new budget proposal shows a sizeable amount in this category again this year, but it is lower than last year.

Expenses - On the bottom line, the overall total is \$3,500 short of projections. Larry Hauder retired at the end of April and Duncan Smith took a sabbatical during the year, both of which reduced expenses. As noted earlier, both the Conference Teacher and the Hispanic Minister were funded out of Vision funding. Hiring William Higgins as Conference Teacher earlier than expected reduced previously budgeted expenses for that work in the current fiscal year. Finally, the Youth Minister didn't actually begin until May, so that also reduced current year expenses. Additional savings occurred in some other budget items.

### **Questions or comments on last year's budget and expenses (2002-03)**

Did we not leave conference last year committing our congregations and delegates to go back and raise additional funds to meet this shortfall. Don estimates only about \$2,000 additional was raised since last year's delegate meeting in the "Additional Need" income account.

What does one-eighth/one-quarter mean in the financial report and budget document for the Conference Teacher? Don responded that this means William Higgins was hired one-eighth time beginning in March, and the new budget projects this position moving to one-quarter time because sufficient designated funds were already raised. Marion Schrock added that additional contributions were received during the year, so the Board decided to move ahead and begin this work at one-eighth time. Shortly thereafter PNMC received an additional \$7,500 grant from the Schowalter Foundation to fund the Conference Teacher position. This enabled the Board to bring the recommendation in this budget proposal to increase the time to one-quarter in the new budget year. Janet Buschert from the Board has been instrumental in applying for grants.

Have you been in discussion with congregations that are showing shortfalls about the different dates for fiscal years? Don Bacher reported that he sent letters to congregations at mid-year updating them on their financial status relative to PNMC and their pledges. He also sent a budget planning letter to congregations in the spring asking about their pledges for next year. This budget planning letter resulted in numerous contributions from congregations, even though he didn't specifically ask for funds in that letter. Marion Schrock added that a year ago, PNMC began initiating contact with each congregation about the level of their funding pledge to PNMC. This pattern was continued this year. The obvious dilemma is what to do about the ongoing difficulty in raising additional funds. Don added that he has been in contact with several congregations by phone (either treasurer or pastor). The economy is not good. Several churches are experiencing drops in membership, including some small congregations experiencing losses including death, and are having difficulty meeting their own budgets as well as their commitments to PNMC.

### **Initial Presentation on 2003-04 Budget**

Treasurer Don Bacher reiterated that to develop this budget proposal, he made contact with each church treasurer (or other congregational representative). The pledge amounts for the next year reported by each congregation is recorded in the column marked "Proposed 2003-04 Budget." The total increase for income from congregations is about 3%. This is not uniform for every church. Don added that both the Conference Teacher and Conference Minister for the Hispanic churches are budgeted at one-quarter time for the next year. Account 4902 ("Additional Need") is shown as \$14,318. The Expanded Vision (Account 4903) shortfall of \$1,568 is the additional amount needed in contributions to the liability account to fund

the Hispanic Minister position for the coming year. This is covered by gifts already received through the challenge grant process, as reported earlier by Janet Buschert.

Accounts 5100 and 5120 reflect budgeted amounts for the new Conference Minister, Sheldon Burkhalter. The budget only reflects 10-months of expenses given the delayed start for this position on approximately September 1. Account 5123 shows projected moving costs for Burkhalter. The amount is equivalent to up to one-month's salary as agreed by the Board.

Account 5510 shows the budgeted time for the Conference Teacher increasing from one-eighth to one-quarter time.

Rather than splitting out secretarial support into several portions as previously, this budget proposal includes a one-half time position for an Administrative Assistant to work out of the PNMC Portland office.

This is shown in Account 6011. The previous amounts in Accounts 5124 and 5224 were shifted into this line item, along with additional funds to make the position feasible.

After the original budget was developed, each committee chair went back and reviewed their committee budgets and made some additional cuts. The board believes this is a barebones budget proposal that will enable the conference to get its work done in a positive way.

Marion Schrock added that there were some interesting dynamics in the budgeting process. The base budget continues to be nip and tuck and nip some more, while the vision budget continues to draw in additional funds. Marion challenged delegates and the congregations to consider what additional efforts they can make to sustain this type of base budget.

#### **Questions and Comments on Proposed Budget for 2003-04**

What services of the Conference Teacher are available and to whom? Duncan Smith responded that the services are available for all of the churches. William Higgins added that he is increasingly doing more teaching of classes. A table with literature is available in the display area. He is trying to get out into more congregations and groups of congregations about Anabaptist identity, faith and practice, and may initiate a school of discipleship in the future. Other classes already offered are Anabaptist History, Mennonite Theology and Mennonite Polity. This practical training will serve both pastors and laity. The question comes from the belief that some things are the responsibility of congregations. William added that seminars will be offered and freewill offerings will be taken. Another question is how PNMC or the Conference Teacher would respond to love offerings from congregations toward this ministry?

One delegate said they see more than financial benefit from this ministry. This type of collaboration will bring congregations together in different ways, and also lead to additional links between congregations, and with PNMC. In this process, we will learn together and gain more than just the financial impact.

Cecil Miller reported that one thing the Pastoral Leadership Committee runs into with licensing of ministers is the emphasis PNMC wants to put on Mennonite distinctives in faith and practice. The PLC believes there are some anabaptist roots and ways of thinking that are very valid for PNMC to promote. Steve Kimes reported that William Higgins taught a recent seminar at Anawim Community where no one is from a Mennonite background. Very few Anawim participants are even aware that Anawim is a "Mennonite" organization as such. Bringing William in from the PNMC brought a very authoritative perspective about what Mennonite is, and the importance of anabaptist history, etc. Steve appreciates the availability of a PNMC resource to provide this service in an authoritative way.

Marion encouraged delegates to reflect on the budget proposal, including the significant questions raised, and to discuss issues and concerns over meals and breaks. Don added that he would like to see the

Pledged Income budget line in Account 4901 increased and welcomes individual contributions and pledges. The budget will come back for formal action in tomorrow afternoon's delegate session.

### **Iraq Experience**

Weldon Nisly shared with the combined gathering of delegates and other conference participants about his trip to Iraq with Christian Peacemaker Teams during the recent Iraq war.

### **Presentation of Gardner Hanks Memorial Peace Award**

Rob Hanson presented Weldon Nisly with the 2003 Gardner Hanks Memorial Peace Award on behalf of the Peace and Justice Committee of the PNMC.

### **Morning Session Three - Saturday, June 21, 2003**

#### **Presentation/discussion on the proposed change in structure/function of the PNMC Evangelism and Mission Committee and the PNMC Board's decision to establish a Transition Interim Mexico Committee (2003-2006) independent of the Evangelism and Missions Committee**

Marion Schrock provided some background on the relationship between PNMC and NW Mexico, and reminded delegates of the guests from Mexico who were introduced yesterday. Up to last year, there has been an Evangelism and Missions Committee of 8-9 members with a Mexico Subcommittee giving guidance to the Mexico work. The reality of our experience is that for the last couple of years the E & M Committee has essentially not been functioning. We have been unable to find a chair. During this time the Mexico Committee has continued to function. How shall we move ahead? The Board recommends two steps - develop an interim Mexico Committee for 3 years to give specific attention to the work with NW Mexico. The covenant agreement with NW Mexico is a six-year agreement; with a provision for review at mid-point. Marion reported that the interim Mexico Committee will be chaired by Simon Rendon, with additional members Harold Nussbaum, Myron Shenk and Richard Micklewright. This committee will review the covenant and examine the future shape of the relationship. PNMC has a financial relationship with the NW Mexico Conference. This has been a decreasing financial commitment, but has perhaps not decreased as quickly as originally envisioned. This region of NW Mexico has suffered a serious economic decline that has impaired their ability to assume more financial self-support.

The second step developed by the Board restructures the Evangelism and Missions Committee. The proposed bylaw changes recommend a new four-member structure of the Evangelism and Missions Committee, to be the same size as the other standing committees. The new committee will focus locally and resource new congregations that have interest in the PNMC, similar to the way the Pastoral Leadership Committee works with new pastors. The new, smaller committee will hopefully be more functional. No nominations are presented on the current ballot for this committee, because the committee's role is dependent upon the bylaw changes. The proposal is that the Board will appoint the first members of this committee for one year if the bylaw change is approved. Then, appointments on a staggered basis will be brought to the ballot for delegates at next year's conference.

Marion Schrock has spoken with Jeryl Hollinger about potentially serving as chair of this new committee for one year, assuming the bylaw change approval. Jeryl has agreed to this.

#### **Presentation on the current status of the fraternal relationship between PNMC and CIEMNM (NW Mexico)**

Marion noted that some congregations are very involved in this work, but others are not, and there is some confusion about what is happening in this relationship. Duncan Smith reported that this relationship goes back almost 40 years through the relationship with the Pacific Coast Conference Missions Board.

John Miller was the former PCC staff person who worked for many years with these churches. He is still viewed as a bishop in that context. John continued in that role even after Duncan began his work as PNMC Missions Minister in 1998. Duncan highlighted several different aspects to the current relationship:

Pastoral; Work projects; Move the relationship in a fraternal way - sister church possibilities. Duncan has visited NW Mexico four times in recent years. As Duncan moved into his conference minister role, he began pulling back from some of the activities related to Mexico, and others in CIHAN began picking up more responsibility. Simon Rendon has picked up more of that relationship in recent years.

Simon Rendon reported that he has been visiting NW Mexico for the past 30 years. He will take a more active role as the liaison for PNMC with NW Mexico. Simon referred to the work of Raul Tadeo, a previous missionary to NW Mexico. Simon's previous work in this area has been mostly evangelistic. In the future, he anticipates doing more pastoral work, perhaps visiting once or twice each year. There will be some financial implications and constraints too. Simon will also have to struggle to balance the Mexico work with his duties with the PNMC Board, CIHAN, and serving as pastor of both the English and Hispanic congregations in McMinnville. Simon requests the prayers of the delegates.

Marion Schrock added that the pastors in NW Mexico would like someone to come work with them in a teaching role. Samuel Moran has been serving that function for CIHAN here in the PNMC, and this may be possible to extend to NW Mexico.

Manuel Ruiz, President of the NW Mexico Mennonite Church Conference, reported on the most recent construction project to build a worship temple in the church at Los Suarez. Nine people from the Pacific Northwest came with Curt Dorsing to work on this project. They got the construction up to the level of the windows. Then the people of the local church finished the rest of the construction, including the roof and the floor. The building is now ready to be used. The cost was more than 100,000 pesos (\$10,000 US). This was a lot of help from the PNMC churches. People from the congregations at Warden, Filer, Sweet Home and River of Life came to work on this project.

Marion Schrock added that there is growing exploration of sister church connections between 5 or 6 PNMC congregations and the churches in NW Mexico. One formal relationship has been established so far - between Las Lajitas in Sinaloa and the Warden congregation. This type of relationship is part of a broader trend being encouraged by Mennonite Mission Network and other agencies.

A questioner asked about sending people from PNMC to Mexico to teach, and wondering whether we should invite more people from NW Mexico to come to the Pacific Northwest to meet us and teach for us too. We have much to learn from them as well. Marion noted that these two men are in the U.S. for two weeks and have been speaking and meeting with various PNMC churches and connections. Next week Luis and Manuel will be at the Fairview church in Oregon to speak. This church is a strong supporter of the NW Mexico work and relationship, even though it is not currently a PNMC member congregation.

What involvement will the Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) have in this type of relationship? Is this something PNMC should be doing on our own? Duncan Smith responded that it is not feasible for MMN to take over this work. MMN is encouraging conferences to assume more responsibility for missions in general. Marion Schrock envisions that MMN will provide resources to help conferences engage in active missions. MMN is encouraging sister church relationships. The question about resources needs to continue to be raised with MMN.

Victor Vargas encouraged us to pray for these relationships with NW Mexico. They have needs - pastors are only serving part-time while working at other jobs. We receive many blessings from this work, even when we don't notice it. PNMC is sowing seeds through this ministry. Victor encouraged Marco Guete to go to NW Mexico, and he did some teaching there too. We need to have a common identity as a family of churches. Maybe the Concilio will be able to help with some administration of this relationship in the



future. Maybe NW Mexico will be able to send us some missionaries to help us in our area too. They need us. We need them. Let us all pray about it. It is good for us to be involved in this way.

Simon Rendon reported that last Monday the CIHAN President Samuel Moran and the CIHAN Executive Board met with these Luis and Manuel as representatives of the Executive Board from NW Mexico. That was an historic meeting. CIHAN is exploring the idea of sending Samuel Moran to NW Mexico to teach, and there is also the possibility of bringing someone from NW Mexico to CIHAN congregations to do some teaching here. Marion encouraged each congregation to carry back this relationship to their congregations as an item of prayer, communication and relationship as we move ahead with this interim Mexico Committee. This relationship also needs to receive continuing attention from the PNMC board.

### **Mennonite World Conference Meeting in Zimbabwe**

Jeanne Zook (Peace Mennonite) shared with the delegates about the upcoming Mennonite World Conference meetings in Zimbabwe, and the current turmoil in that country. MWC is still planning to hold the conference there in August. MWC is becoming more a family of the world (not just Europeans and North Americans). They anticipate 4,000 African participants and only 1,000 from Europe and North America. Six years ago in India, the MWC meeting was the first time the three different Mennonite groups in India had met together. Now those three bodies are developing new cooperative efforts. Jeanne expects similar progress to come out of the Africa meeting of MWC. Please remember to pray for those who go to MWC, for a positive witness in the midst of the chaos of Zimbabwe and numerous other countries. About 93 countries may be represented at this meeting. She encourages each congregation to have a specific prayer time for this gathering. Ron Byler of Mennonite Church USA added that Jeanne is one of 5 Mennonite Church USA delegates to MWC.

### **Search Committee**

Marion Schrock offered a strong word of thanks to the Search Committee that processed the selection of PNMC's new Conference Minister, Sheldon Burkhalter. Jim Wenger chaired the committee, and served along with Gayle Sheller, Linda Nafziger-Meiser, and Chak Ng in this important discernment process. Marion expressed profound thanks to this committee for their work on this important task.

### **Thank You from Kathy Bilderback**

Marion recalled the 11 years that Kathy Bilderback served as conference minister secretary to Larry Hauder. She wrote a note of thanks to Duncan Smith and the Executive Committee. She reflected, "It has been a great place to grow, work with wonderful individuals, and get to know people in the Pacific Northwest." Marion added that Kathy has served PNMC very well and we are grateful.

### **PNMC Committee Reports**

#### **Peace and Justice Committee**

Rob Hanson reported on the work of the Peace and Justice Committee during the past year. The committee developed a mission and vision for the next couple of years, building on the peace and justice work of individual churches within the conference. One idea is to partner churches with strong programs with some who would like to strengthen their programs. We haven't tested that model, but want to explore it.

Does the committee know of congregations that have stronger peace and justice committees or activities, and how would you pair churches? Rob responded that the committee hasn't yet defined this. The idea is to test the concept with the peace and justice contacts at each church. Our vision is to respond to churches who express interest in strengthening their peace and justice witness. We also want to stress

peace and justice activities as part of discipleship. Some expressed caution about labeling "strong" or "active" peace and justice churches. Some churches may be active but not have committee structures, etc. Marion added that there is a larger issue of a tendency for some to not see peace and justice as part of the overall mission and witness of our congregations.

### **Christian Nurture Committee**

No verbal report given.

### **Pastoral Leadership Committee (PLC)**

Marion Schrock acknowledged the six years that Cecil Miller has served as chair of the PLC. PNMC is very grateful for Cecil's commitment and the wisdom he brought to the committee work. Cecil Miller responded that he is reminded throughout this conference of the connections we have through the world community. Jesus spoke of a grain of mustard seed. He highlighted several additional items that have been completed since the written report was filed: Kevin Schumacher was re-licensed at Calvary Mennonite. Prince of Peace (Adair Village) called Scott Dyer to serve in their congregation. The Pastoral Leadership Committee licensed Scott Dyer for this assignment since the report was written. Cecil expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work together with the others on the committee this past year -- George Leppert, Gayle Sheller, Brent Kauffman, German Rodriguez from CIHAN, and Pat Hershberger. We have a challenging balancing act of being consistent with our understanding of Christianity and the various interpretations people bring of that message. We try to love each other, challenge each other, and work together as things change. Sometimes we get accused of wanting to be more "Mennonite" than "Christian." Cecil's personal response is that we need to be in a position to receive and give counsel, and in our case to be part of an organization such as PNMC. Back in the 1960's Cecil was in a Sunday School class with Lawrence Burkholder who advised, "As soon as you go your own separate way and do your own little thing, the first thing that happens is that someone needs to be a leader." When that happens, you immediately go from independence to the need to organize.

Marion noted that pastors have a major role in setting the tone for congregational life within our conference. The PLC has a major role in bringing new pastors into our congregations. How do new pastors coming in see their role in an anabaptist/Mennonite context? Marion has seen the PLC work very thoroughly, carefully and honestly with this task over the past three years.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Merlin Aeschliman gave the verbal report from the Nominating Committee, and recognized Leonard Nolt for his role as chairman of the committee for the past few years. One mandate from the Executive Committee has been to work at greater gender balance among our committees. This year you'll note there are seven women and seven men on the ballot. Terry Rediger (WA), Larry Eby and Merlin (OR), and Leonard Nolt (ID) met by phone conference several times, and also had at least one meeting in person. Larry Eby and Terry Rediger will be going off the committee after this meeting.

Merlin noted the ballot's assumption of the proposed transition back to the Moderator-Elect/Moderator approach. He offered thanks to both Jim Wenger for his willingness to extend his service as Assistant Moderator for one more year, and to John Willems for accepting the nomination to become PNMC's next Moderator. It is great to get to know people from other areas by working on the Nominating Committee. Merlin appealed to congregations to make people available to serve on various conference positions and committees. This type of service is a tremendous opportunity to grow and participate for individuals within the conference.

### **Affirmation/Election Process**

Merlin introduced those candidates who are present.

A motion was made to accept the ballot as printed. It was Moved/Second/Carried.

Marion Schrock asked the delegates to stand in affirmation of the ballot as written.

Marion added a personal appeal to delegates to help educate their congregations about the various persons serving in different roles and responsibilities on behalf of PNMC. Merlin added that the Nominating Committee Chair usually sends out a letter asking for nominations from congregations for openings on PNMC committees and other positions. The response to that letter has been very minimal in recent years. Additional input from delegates would be very helpful in this process. One responder observed that it is difficult to determine the responsibilities, job description, frequency of meetings, in order to know who might be available to serve in these roles. This part of the process could be improved by providing more complete information about expectations and roles to congregations.

Marion added a concern that the current Executive Committee, and soon all three conference ministers, will be residents of the Willamette Valley. "I know that geographic representation is no idle matter," he added. Congregational leaders in states other than Oregon must talk and work in your congregations to identify persons who would be capable and willing to serve in the Moderator-Elect position in the next election. We need to continue to work at geographic representation, and this needs significant work in the next six months. It is not healthy for the conference long-term to become too heavily dependent on one region for its leadership. Duncan and Sheldon will be meeting with pastoral groups to assist with this discernment process too. In the Nominating Committee process, very often the persons contacted had not ever previously thought about serving in a conference role. It will help for delegates from congregations to begin having these discussions ahead of time with potential candidates.

### **Special meeting for consideration of Bylaw changes**

Marion Schrock introduced this session, noting that it is important to keep bylaws and structures up-to-date. Over the past couple of years, the Board began finding that we were doing some things that were not consistent with our bylaws. The changes presented to the delegates in the delegate book (pp. 101-108) attempt to clean up many of those items. Harold Nussbaum did much of the editing work on the proposed changes, and he reviewed the "Summary of Proposed PNMC Bylaw Changes" (delegate book, p. 100). Harold also made available a Spanish version of the Summary that was not available at the time the delegate book was printed.

If the Finance Committee has not been functioning, has the Board been functioning in that role? Marion responded, saying that the Treasurer has been sending out questionnaires to congregations about budget commitments. The previous Treasurer did not see much need for a finance committee. The Board could always reinstate such a committee if it is needed.

A speaker cautioned that changing the geographical requirement in Section 4.01 from a mandate to preference might make it more difficult to attain regional representation. Marion says the intention was to make the current Executive Committee function more consistently with the bylaws.

A question was asked about the budget line for reconciliation resources, which shows no expenses for the current year and a \$1,500 budget. The proposed budget still shows \$750 in that line item. Why? Marion responded that during 2000 and 2001, the Pastoral Leadership Committee came to the Executive Committee asking for resources to identify trained conflict mediators as resources within the conference. About 18 months ago, we thought we had the core identified and we put money in the budget for some expenses for those persons as needed. Soon after that, several of the resource people moved out of the area. The PLC encouraged leaving that item in the budget to identify additional persons to address those needs. Congregations will also need to pay some of those costs as services are provided. We acknowledge that those efforts need to be renewed, but it depends on trained persons being available. Conference ministers as PNMC staff do not have sufficient time to engage in extensive conflict resolution

intervention within congregations. Marion recalled that an investment in conflict resolution services by the Salem congregation about 10 years ago was a very helpful, meaningful investment.

Another speaker expressed more concern about Hispanic representation (which is being worked at by the Board), and less concern about geographical representation on the Executive Committee.

Eric Martin (Western Mennonite School) reported that we affirm these changes, especially as they relate to clarifying PNMC's relationships with Western Mennonite School. The Western board will need to revise their bylaws to make them consistent with these changes, if approved.

Another delegate said using the word "mandatory" makes you get stuck with the language. Some smaller churches don't have people to help with conference, so maybe the geographic representation is unrealistic.

Another speaker related back to General Conference [previous structure] concerns about geographical representation. He is in favor of keeping strong language and sticking very close to that. Marion stressed the importance of PNMC communication happening through Executive Committee representation in various geographic areas. Another speaker expressed understanding of the dilemma about geographical representation. Will the board and Nominating Committee still keep that as a priority if the language is changed? Marion stated that the Board would continue to be concerned about geographic representation and gender balance.

Another delegate encouraged us to try the new language and revise it three years down the road if it's not working.

M/S/C The proposed bylaw changes were moved, seconded and carried as written in the delegate book.

This concluded the special meeting to consider bylaw changes.

## **BREAK**

### **Saturday afternoon, Session Five**

Marion Schrock introduced Mark Weidner, the new representative from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary to the PNMC.

### **Final Discussion of the PNMC Budget Proposal for 2003-04**

Marion clarified the budget report tables in the updated PNMC Budget Proposal materials handed out to delegates at the conference. The first page shows Income Sources by Congregation in four columns of information. Marion noted that congregations made their pledges for the current budget 15-16 months ago. That is represented in the first column of figures. The second column shows income received so far this fiscal year through June 18. The third column shows that the current shortfall in congregational income compared to budgeted pledges is \$31,000. The fourth column shows the Proposed Budget for 2003-04, the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2003.

Marion added that the Vision budget is currently shown as funded support for the Hispanic Conference Minister and the Conference Teacher. Those items are funded outside of the base budget. If those positions disappeared it would not change the base budget. The Vision budget is built on separate funding sources and fundraising initiatives.

Don Bacher added that the actuals for this year reflect information as of Wednesday evening of this week (June 18). Percentages for previous years are full year figures. This year 81.2% of pledged amounts for

congregational giving has been received. Last year the percentage received was 90.5%. In 2000-2001 it was 95.8%. In 1999-2000 it was 89.9%, and the previous year it was 93.6%. The percentages are for congregational giving only. Assistant Moderator Jim Wenger said he has the impression that in the past we have received significant income during the last week or two of the fiscal year, perhaps 5-8% of the total.

A delegate reflected on the message of Brother Gilberto Flores from last night that "We exist for mission." This also applies to PNMC. She noted that Section 5800 of our expense budget is labeled for "Evangelism and Missions," but these items have been deleted or reduced quite a bit. She understands that we need money to do the business of the church. "I wonder about the cuts in these areas," she added. Marion Schrock said that the PNMC budget does say something about how we're viewing things and looking to the future. A significant part of who we are is reflected in the importance of conference ministers. They are a huge part of what we are. Much of what a conference does revolves around the services provided by conference ministers.

The delegate responded, "Where is my faith commitment as a person from my church? Can I go back to my church and see how we can perhaps respond more strongly in faith to these challenges?"

Another delegate said it appears that the proposed budget is fairly optimistic in terms of income. Is it realistic? Marion clarified that the budgeted income is based on pledges from congregations, which are the result of direct communication between PNMC and each congregation. An additional question was raised about Section 4700 (Apply Vision funds). Do we have additional funds to draw on? We had some fortunate circumstances this past year that we cannot necessarily count on repeating.

Janet Buschert responded that we do not have additional Vision funds beyond next year yet in place.

We currently have on the table the \$8,000 challenge pledge to match additional funds needed for Vision funding. Don Bacher added that, as in most churches, PNMC often spends less than we budget, even while we are receiving less income than we budget. In addition, we collected over \$50,000 this year for our Vision program. Don does not envision coming back next year and reporting that we are really in trouble with finances.

Another delegate questioned the line item for income from the PNMC Annual Meeting (4201), noting that the budget changed from \$3,000 in the current budget to \$2,000 in the proposed budget. Marion gave background related to this annual meeting being one day shorter than previous ones, and that only two offerings would be collected compared to four at previous conferences.

Marion added that if there is a future deficit, PNMC will need to withdraw from the funds invested in Mennonite Foundation, account 110302 (Money Market Fund).

Another delegate expressed a little concern about raising Vision funds outside of budget. My perception is that we've been trying to get away from this in recent years in churches and the conference. If we're not careful this has the potential to get away from us. This could be used to manipulate people's giving. He is concerned about that. Marion said there have been ongoing discussions on the Board about this. Would any of the Vision funds raised have come into the PNMC budget if we didn't have this Vision budget? He is skeptical. He wonders if congregations that have struggled to meet their pledges may have individuals who are giving to Vision budget items. We have no way to know that specifically.

Another delegate shared the concern about Vision funding, adding that the Hispanic Conference Pastor should eventually be mainlined into the regular budget for consideration along with the other budget priorities for conference minister. Janet Buschert responded from the Board and fundraising perspective, saying, "I agree." We are on a walk in this process. We would like to see this move into our regular budget over time. As we move ahead, we can use grants and individual contributions to help us move this important work ahead.

Another delegate affirmed the budget proposal, saying their church made some decisions last year, and maybe all of us didn't follow through as we envisioned. We need to dream and move the PNMC work ahead with things we really care about. We need to go back to congregations and talk about how this fits in with the ministry of our home congregations. Marion added that this is a recurring issue in the history of the church and PNMC. We need to address the balance of giving within vs. outside the congregation. Those discussions need to happen in each congregation. He hopes good ways are found to engage with households on this issue within each congregation.

Cecil Miller somewhat jokingly challenged the newest PNMC congregation, Evergreen Heights Mennonite Church, to make up the \$14,000 in the "Additional Need" income line. He also used the analogy of the price of coffee drunk by 50 people at \$75 per month each, would yield \$900 per year each, or a total of \$4,500. "We buy what we want and we beg what we need."

Larry Hildebrant reflected that he just completed his third year on the PNMC Board, and worked through his third budget cycle. The development of this budget was not arrived at easily. He described the concept as PNMC's base budget vs. a Vision budget for additional things we really want to do. In the current year's financial experience, Larry noted that if all congregations had met their pledges, we wouldn't have a budget shortfall, and we would have additional funds available to add additionally to the Hispanic Minister and Conference Teacher.

A pastor recalled reading that tithing for pastors may be more meaningful if it goes somewhere other than the congregation that pays their salary. Reflecting on this, he began sending his tithe to PNMC. He hopes his congregation will meet their obligation next year too. Perhaps other pastors could give in this way too and help PNMC achieve its vision, at the same time challenging their congregations to meet their pledges - to buy what they want.

Marion challenged each delegate and pastor to communicate and discuss this topic with your congregations. Another delegate encouraged the delegates to take a few moments in prayer to catch our breath a bit. John Willems led in prayer.

Roma Eicher asked where we show PNMC giving to the broader church, Mennonite Church USA?

Marion responded that the decision of the PNMC board a year ago was that giving to MC USA and Mennonite Mission Network would continue to go directly from congregations rather than through PNMC (as desired by MC USA under the Firstfruits Funding model). PNMC has not instructed congregations to give through PNMC. PNMC does not yet have the updated reference figures on congregational giving from MC USA, even though they have been requested some time ago. Marion assumes the board will have continuing discussion with MC USA and MMN about this funding flow and related issues.

M/S/C to accept the budget as printed and distributed to delegates.

Don Bacher, PNMC Treasurer, said that most of his congregational contact is with church treasurers. Please pass on information from this delegate session to your treasurers if they're not here. He also encouraged churches to name treasurers as delegates if you see fit. Also please communicate any issues and suggestions to the Board.

### **Thank You to Outgoing Moderator**

Jim Wenger, Assistant Moderator, spoke on behalf of the PNMC board, giving thanks to Marion Schrock for his three years of service as Moderator. Thanks for your persistence, creative ideas, and good humor.

Marion responded that it has been a privilege to work with you, the Board and the delegates. Thank you for this opportunity.

### **Blessing for Staff, Board and Committees**

All current and future PNMC Board members, committee members and staff were invited to come forward for a prayer of blessing. Rod Stafford led in a prayer of dedication.

### **Adjournment**

The 2003 PNMC delegate sessions were adjourned at 4:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Harold Nussbaum  
PNMC Secretary